

This Bus Stops at Official Stops Only!

by John DeRosia

Please - don't get in an uproar. 2001: A Space Odyssey, to me, is still the best of the best of the best in science fiction movies. After seeing it maybe 30+ times, I finally understand all the monkeys at the beginning. Considering it was released WAY BACK (1968) before many of our IPMS model friends were born, it showed the way you would think future space travel and space vehicles should be.

'Simple' flight decks and instrument panels compared to what we see today in new sci-fi movies. They even had 'HAL' a master computer to run everything even though he had a 'little glitch' later on. I think we have his relative living in our computer at home: a mind of its own.

The sci-fi movies today show more bells, whistles, and disco lights than you would think the future vehicles should have.

Even Boeing's early 747 flight deck (1970s era) went from about 1,000 switches, lights and gauges to about 350 for the newer 747s today. The future - simpler...or?

Finally - after all my years drooling over wanting models of the 2001 movie- I just bought my first one a month ago. The rereleased Aurora/Moebius Models 1/55th Scale Moon Bus. The box it comes in is the heftiest model box I have ever seen. Kind of like our 25-year-old Monopoly game box. Strong to the hilt. I'll probably use the empty model box to support our house when we jack it up to add a second story.

The model, like its movie counterpart, was simple and didn't have 2001 parts like some 1/350th models today. It does come with a full interior and lots of figures. I painted the inside in simple colors and also added the two pilots and the seven passengers that were included.



Thank goodness that you cannot really see their faces. I'm still about 3,345 figures plus or minus a dozen) behind in practicing painting model figures.

After test fitting the roof on my model, I realized I was not going to make it removable.

It would have shown too much of an 'Abyss' (another all time favorite sci-fi movie of mine by the way) - that is, real deep panel-lines. Gluing the roof on for me was much easier.

I'm getting so much better at multi-tasking on all model projects. I was able to complete this kit in about 15-20 hours or so. While waiting for some items to dry from painting - I would already start

gluing other parts (like all the landing gear legs or rocket motors). Then, while the glue set on these, I'd get back to painting different parts and so on. I crank out many models fast because I can't afford to spend 2001 hours on each!

This model was nothing but fun and joy to build. The parts were 99.99% crisp with hardly any cleanup needed. Of course, the whole time building it, I imagined myself on the bus going out to be one of the first to see the monolith on the moon. Yes - Dr Haywood Floyd called me personally to be the one to find out where it came from and what it was made of. Actually, he knew I was a paper pushing FAA/Boeing/ Airplane



Certification psycho. There would eventually be mountains of paperwork to write about the monolith. Nothing about that has changed in the now 'future' (paperwork-r-us)! Being that this was an 'official' USAA (United States Astronautics Agency) moon bus trip, they also did not stop at any other sight-seeing stops.

You know - like the moon's Micro-Gravity Disney Park or Tranquility Base to show us where the first U.S. Astronauts landed.

Anyway...

I glued all nine figures together at once. To add to the simplicity of the figures, they ALL got silvery suits - none of those modern 101 designer colors and patches like Captain Kirk's crew has! ALL also got silver boots and black hair. Forget opening 12 different bottles of paint for their hair color. You want to go to the moon in 2001?

You get a silver suit and matching boots. Period. I did take liberty with the helmet docking collars around their necks though.

They got either green, red, or yellow. I figured red for project bean counters (gotta stay within budget!), green for LEPA officials (Lunar Environmental Protection Agency people to see if the monolith is leaving contaminants in the soil), and yellow - the ones who have to do any actual cleanup work-grunts like me...laugh will you?!

I remember the scene inside the Jupiter mission Discovery space ship where the

PODs were stored. There were three different color suits hanging. Colors to match my docking collars. How convenient.

That was supposed to be six months later in the movie, after the monolith was found on the moon. Quite possibly that's how long the paperwork took to read through about the moon trip. Report 7-1- 2001: Pages 1 thru 1267...."What is the monolith made from and how did it get there?"..."Don't know and haven't got a clue" written in 1267 ways - just like trying to understand the many government forms that say a lot but make absolutely zero sense.

I decided to dirty the awesome landing gear - why? Come on! You've seen pictures of our NASA astronauts' space suits when walking on the moon. Dust, dust and more dust. I'm sure the real Lunar Lander had a sign at the door that said, "Must Remove Shoes Before Entering!"

Well, something like that. I also weathered the outside of the moon bus to simulate lunar use.

The moon bus is sort of plain looking, but cool nevertheless. Our minds are so used to thinking sci-fi vehicles need 456 weird

things added on and 124 thrusters and 87 different colors for panel lines. Not to mention 93 of the latest death ray weapon add-ons. Not the case in 2001. I did take the liberty to add on lots of headlights, tail lights etc. I did not have the back-drop of the movie to show my model against so I wanted a few extra eye-catchers.

When my dad took me to see the movie when it first came out - over thirty years BEFORE the real year 2001, it showed us what the future would hold. It seemed so real. Big screen movies were as real as we could get back then. Our minds had been shocked. We were literally speechless. All of a sudden, we had monoliths to be scared of along with nuclear bomb annihilation. Afterward, for some reason, all we could do was sing "Daisy" v-e-r-y-s-l-o-w-l-y to ourselves. Well, here we are in 2011, life is kind of normal, the bills still come in monthly and I'm always fighting the latest viruses with cousin 'HAL' at home. Also to my knowledge, we still have made no 'CONTACT' (yup, another one of my favorite sci-fi movies) with alien life forms - Microsoft upgrades sure comes close though.

