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XINDI-AQUATIC CRUISER

TYPE: CRUISER

LAUNCHED: 22nd C

LENGTH: 1,125 METERS

WEAPONS: PARTICLE BEAM

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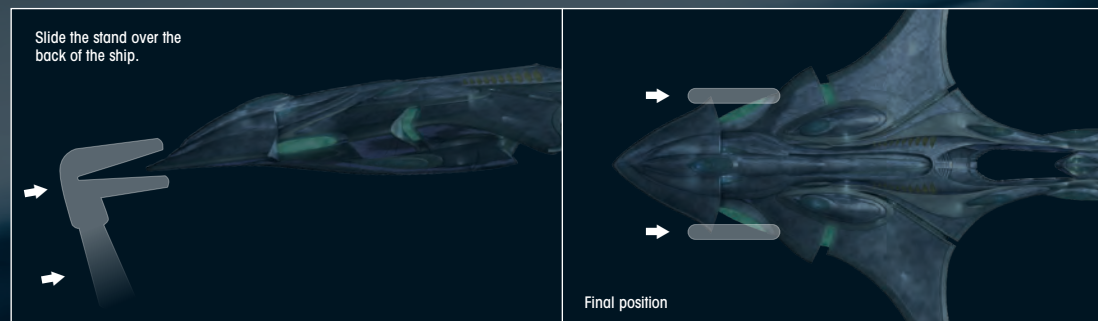
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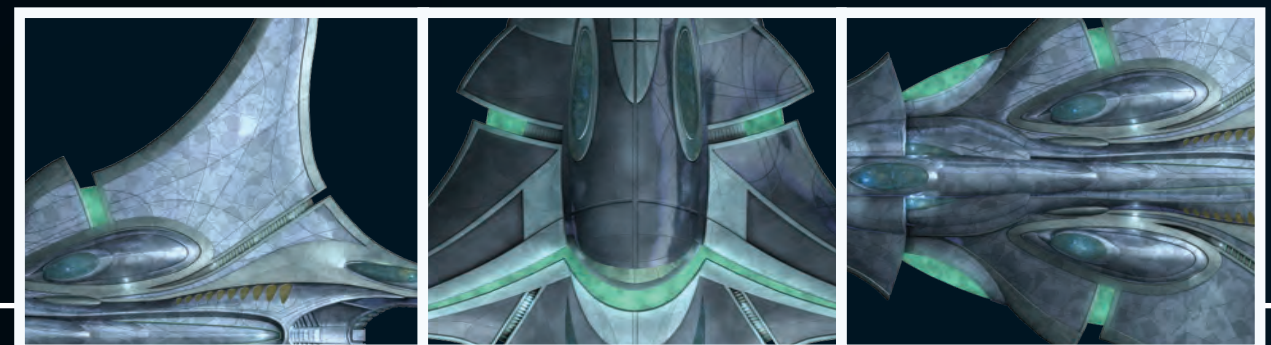
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XINDI-AQUATIC CRUISER

SPECIFICATION



TYPE:	CRUISER
OPERATED BY:	XINDI-AQUATICS
LAUNCHED:	22nd CENTURY
LENGTH:	1,125 METERS (APPROX.)
PROPULSION:	SUBSPACE VORTEX
WEAPONRY:	PARTICLE BEAM



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XINDI-AQUATIC
CRUISER

DATA FEED

Originally, the Xindi comprised of six intelligent species that evolved on their homeworld of Xindus. In the 2030s, a civil war destroyed their planet, and by the 2150s it was believed that the Xindi-Avians were extinct. This left the Xindi-Aquatics, the Xindi-Arboreals, the Xindi-Insectoids, the Xindi-Primates and the Xindi-Reptilians.

XINDI-AQUATIC CRUISER

Among the Xindi species' ships, the Aquatic cruiser was the most tactically advanced, but also the slowest.

The Xindi-Aquatic cruiser was a huge type of starship, approximately 1,125 meters long, which was in use in the mid-22nd century. It was the largest and most powerful vessel of any operated by the five Xindi species at this time. It featured superior firepower in the form of particle beam weaponry, and highly-resistant defenses.

In order to accommodate the Xindi-Aquatic crew, the interior of the cruisers were almost entirely filled with water, in effect turning them into giant flying aquariums. The water added a great deal of weight to the cruisers, and together with their huge size, meant that they were the slowest and least maneuverable in comparison to other Xindi ships. They were nevertheless faster than *Enterprise NX-01*, which was the quickest human ship of this time with a top speed of warp 5. They did this by opening a subspace vortex through the generation of a phase deflector pulse, and could travel dozens of light years in a matter of hours.

The Aquatic cruiser featured an arrow-shaped front section, behind which was a narrow neck structure, and then the main body flared out into a swept-wing design before narrowing again at the rear, so that it resembled a manta ray. The overall shape of the ship was extremely hydrodynamic, meaning it was as at home underwater as it was in space. There were huge windows at various points around the hull allowing the aquatic-based crew a view outside the ship.

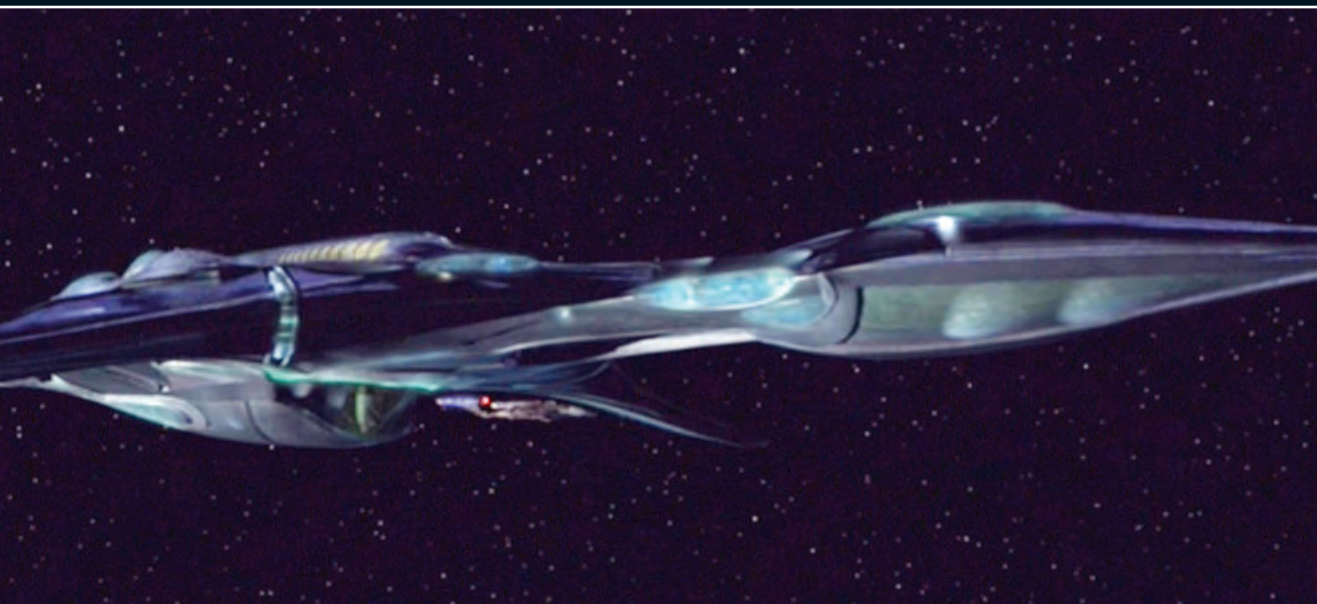
HOSTING VISITORS

While most of the interior of the vessel was filled with water, there was at least one small area that was dry and contained breathable air. This meant land-based life forms could come aboard and communicate with the Xindi-Aquatic crew.

On the ventral side of the cruiser, towards the rear, was an enormous cargo hold, or hangar bay, which was comfortably large enough to house the *Enterprise*. This proved particularly useful in 2154 when an Aquatic cruiser was used to transport the *Enterprise* into battle in order to help stop the Xindi superweapon.

All five of the Xindi species had created this superweapon in order to destroy Earth. They had been told by a race of transdimensional beings they called the Guardians that humans would eventually wipe out the Xindi. As the superweapon neared completion, the crew of *Enterprise* managed to convince the Xindi-Primates and Xindi-Arboreals that it was not humans that posed a threat, but the Guardians themselves. These transdimensional beings, also known as Sphere Builders, were in the process of reconfiguring space around Xindi worlds in the Delphic Expanse to make it habitable for them, but deadly for everyone else.

◀ The Xindi-Aquatic cruiser was as powerful as its huge size suggested, and was the most tactically-advanced vessel of all the Xindi ships. Its overall appearance approximated that of a manta ray with its wings being similar to the ray's triangular pectoral fins, while its interior was filled with water.



◀ The Aquatic cruiser had an enormous cargo hold on the underside of the rear section. It was easily large enough to accommodate *Enterprise* NX-01, and was used to transport the Starfleet vessel into battle against the Xindi superweapon. Later, another cruiser took the badly damaged *Enterprise* back to Earth in order to shorten the trip as thanks for destroying the spheres.



◀ A powerful Aquatic cruiser led a combined force of 18 ships in an attempt to stop the Xindi superweapon from reaching Earth. At first, they easily overpowered the Reptilian and Insectoid ships that were protecting it.



◀ The superweapon was designed to destroy Earth and was protected by the Reptilian and Insectoid ships. Without the help of the Aquatic cruisers there was no chance of stopping it.

▶ The spheres generated huge spatial anomalies that tore the cruiser apart, causing the windows to smash and leaving water to gush out into space.



▲ There was at least one room on the Aquatic cruiser that was free from water, where atmosphere breathing life forms could come aboard. This allowed them to talk face-to-face with the Aquatics through an oval shaped window.

While the Primates and the Arboreals were convinced by the evidence presented to them about the Guardians' duplicity, the rest of the Xindi species were not. The Reptilians and Insectoids were still determined to destroy Earth, while the Aquatics, notorious for taking an excruciatingly long time to come to a decision, needed longer to evaluate the evidence.

Eventually, after the crew of *Enterprise* promised to find a way to reverse the effects of the spheres in the Delphic Expanse and safeguard Xindi worlds, the Aquatics decided not to proceed with the superweapon. Unfortunately, by this time, the Reptilians and Insectoids had taken matters into their own hands and begun the journey to Earth with the superweapon.

On February 13th, 2154, an armada of 18 vessels that included six Aquatic vessels, plus ships from the Primates, Arboreals and *Enterprise* engaged the Reptilian and Insectoids' ships that were protecting the superweapon. The Aquatic vessels' superior firepower soon proved decisive as the Reptilian and Insectoid lost eight ships while *Enterprise's* new allies only had two ships disabled.

GUARDIAN INTERVENTION

It would not have been long before the Reptilian and Insectoid vessels would have been defeated, but then the Guardians intervened. They triggered their spheres to create spatial anomalies, which ripped through the hulls of the Aquatic ships, disabling them and releasing water into space.

The superweapon and a Reptilian ship then opened another vortex and resumed their journey to Earth. While the remaining Aquatic ships had the firepower to stop them, they did not have the necessary speed to catch them before it would be too late. Fortunately, Captain Archer was able to lead a team in a much faster Primate vessel to intercept the superweapon and destroy it before it reached Earth.

Meanwhile, *Enterprise* destroyed sphere 41, which created a cascade effect, wiping out all the spheres and safeguarding Xindi space. With the threat from the Guardians over, a Xindi-Aquatic cruiser helped *Enterprise* return home in less than a day by transporting it in its cargo hold to a distance of 800,000 kilometers from Earth.



DATA FEED

Despite living in water, the Xindi-Aquatics had similar facial features to humanoids. They had three fingers on each forelimb, while their hind limbs were fins. They were renowned for taking an interminably long time to reach a decision, but their caution also made them the most level-headed of the Xindi species. This was why Degra, the Xindi-Primate scientist, had the Aquatics build the superweapon underwater on Azati Prime, as he felt that they could be trusted.

THE GUARDIANS - THE TRUE VILLAINS

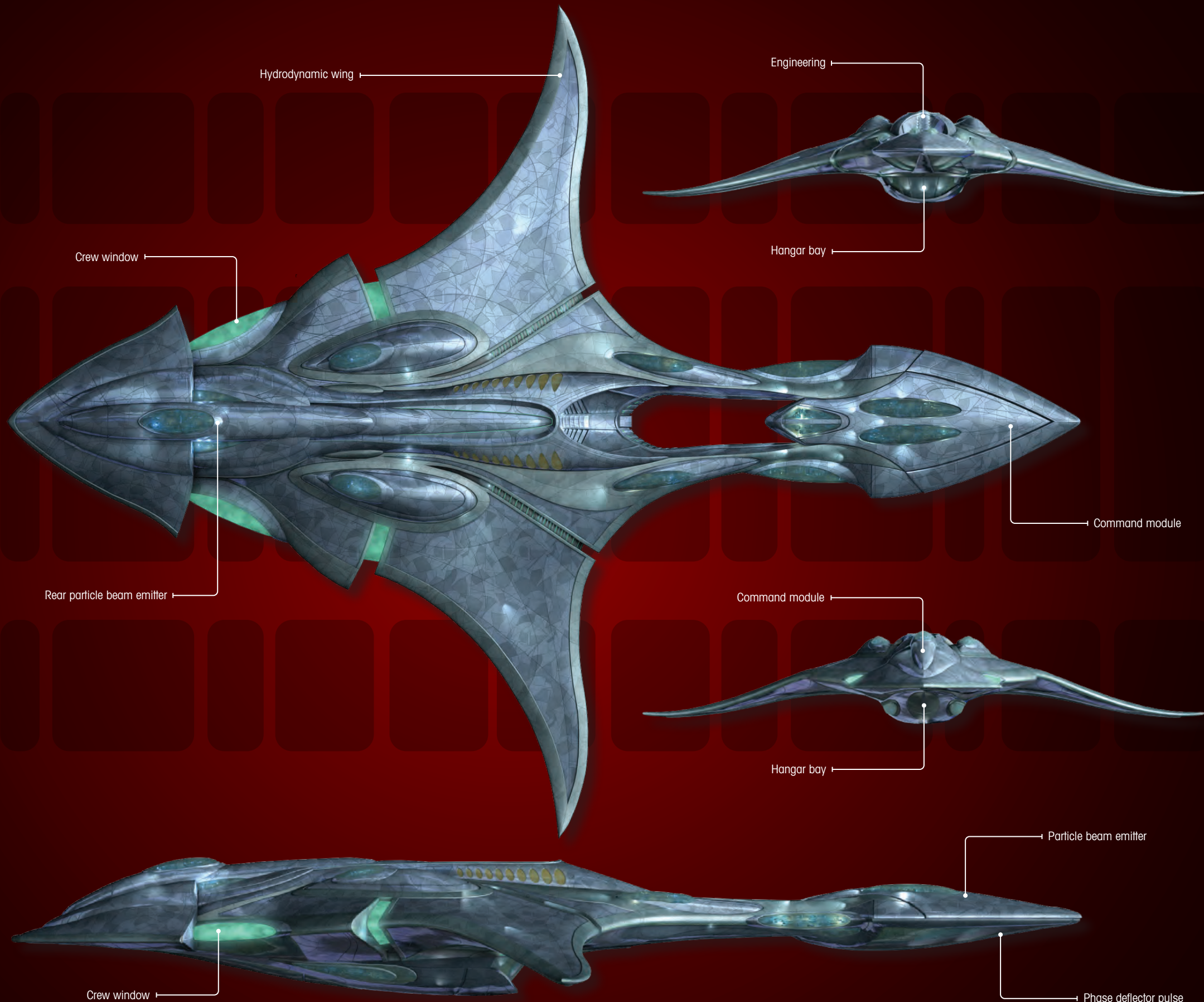
All Xindi species revered the Guardians, a race of transdimensional beings, as they had helped them find new worlds and valuable resources after the destruction of their homeworld. What the Xindi did not realize was that the Guardians were also responsible for the spheres that were turning their area of space into transdimensional wasteland. In effect, the Guardians were turning Xindi space into a home for themselves, and making it uninhabitable for any other species. As the Xindi treated the Guardians almost like gods, it was difficult for them to accept this truth, but eventually the crew of *Enterprise NX-01* brought them compelling evidence. The Primates and the Arboreals were the first to be convinced, but the Reptilians and the Insectoids were unmoved. It was only when the Aquatics were persuaded that they had enough firepower to take on the Reptilians and Insectoids, and stop the Guardians' plans that would have killed them all.



▲ The Aquatic cruiser was more powerful than other Xindi ships and proved crucial in the battle against the Reptilian and Insectoid vessels that were protecting the superweapon.

DATA FEED

In addition to the cruiser, the Xindi-Aquatics also operated smaller, more maneuverable scout ships in the 22nd century.



LANGUAGE BARRIER

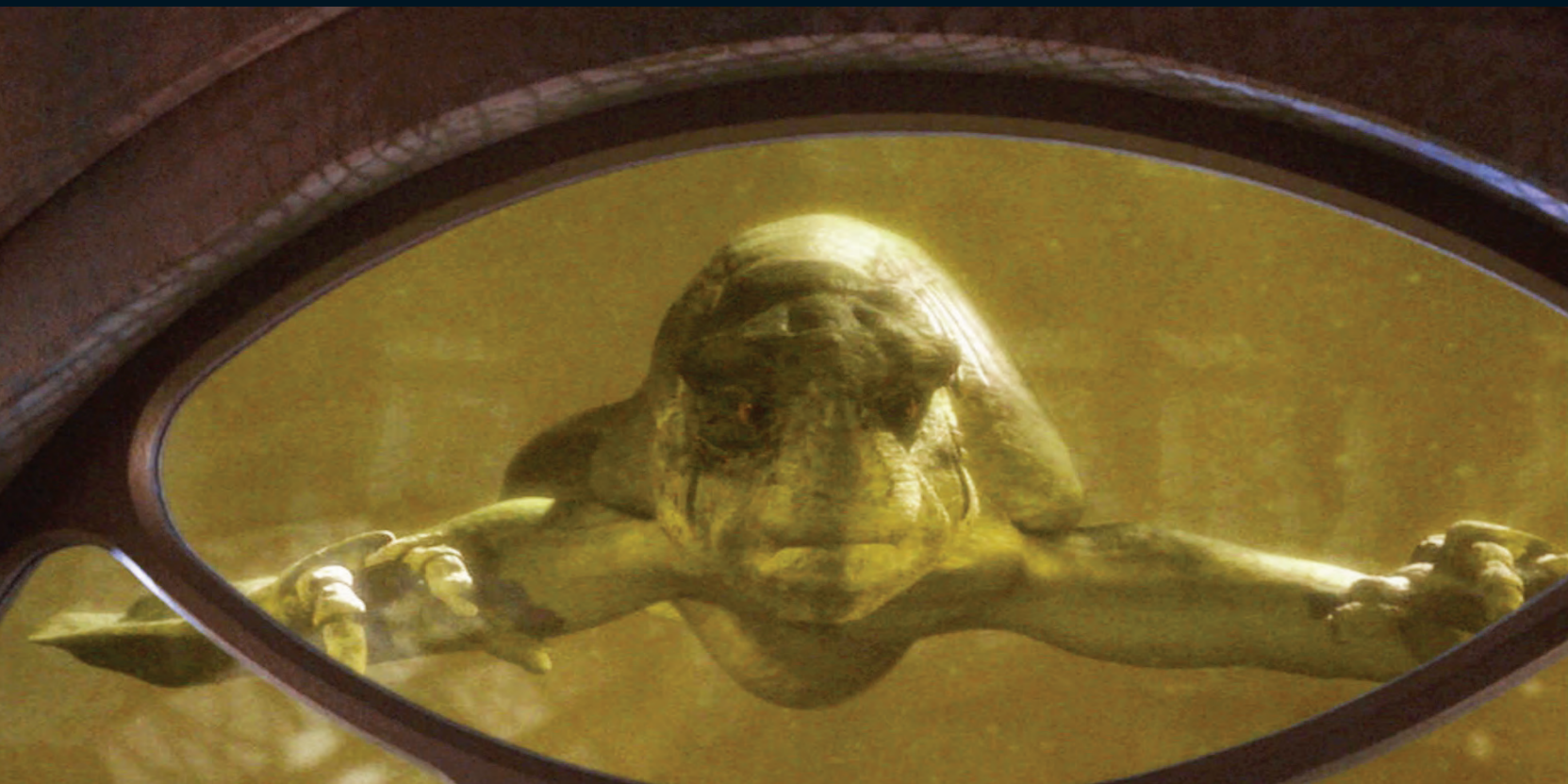
The Xindi-Aquatic language was similar to that of humpback whales. When the Aquatics spoke in the past tense, they switched to SONAR, but they also had a mistrust of the spoken word.

COUNCIL INFLUENCE

Each Xindi species had two representatives that sat on the Xindi Council. One of the Aquatics representatives was Kiaphet Amman'sor, a female member of the Ibix dynasty, a very wealthy, very powerful family. Her opinions carried considerable weight with the rest of the council.

INDECISIVENESS

The Aquatics weighed up all options carefully, and the rest of the Xindi species had a saying that it was easier to count the stars in the sky than it was for an Aquatic to reach a decision. It once took the Aquatics six days just to agree to attend a meeting over a simple logistical matter.



CREATING THE AQUATICS

▲ The Xindi Aquatics were entirely CG creatures that pushed the boundaries of VFX technology.

One of the great innovations in *STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE*'s third season was the introduction of two Xindi species that would be created entirely in CG. "We wanted to get away from guys in suits," *ENTERPRISE*'s VFX producer Dan Curry recalls. "It was something that Rick (Berman) and the writers wanted to do, and now we had CG technology and a great team of animators to do the work for us so it was possible."

Berman and Braga's concept for the Xindi called for genuinely alien designs for the insectoid and aquatic creatures, both of which were designed by Curry, working with the CG teams at Eden FX.

Curry's design for the Aquatics was loosely based on a Mosasaurus, a kind of aquatic lizard from the Cretaceous period that, visually at least, had a lot in common with monitor lizards and eels. "I wanted something that had that kind of prehistoric look," he explains, "but I made it mammalian rather than reptilian. Then I gave it bigger arms and opposable thumbs so it could have technology. Since it's a sentient species it was important to me that it looked intelligent. The other Xindi species had to be able to relate to it and respect it. If it didn't look wise it would be sushi!"

In order to give the Aquatics that sense of wisdom, Curry drew inspiration from

some marine creatures on Earth and, as he explains, a slightly more unexpected source.

"I always think of whales and dolphins as having a wisdom of their own that is difficult for us bipeds to fathom. I didn't articulate it much at the time, but I lived in Thailand for a long time when I was in the Peace Corps, and I got a chance to work with elephants, which have genuine wisdom. I think that led us to a kind of pachyderm-like skin texture and the way the eyes are set. In a lot of sea creatures the eyes are set on the side because they are looking out for predators, Moving the eyes forward so it has stereoscopic vision helped with that



▲ Dan Curry's original design for the Xindi Aquatics was based on a Mosasaurus. He added larger arms with opposable thumbs so that the Aquatics could credibly use technology.

sense of wisdom here and it also gives it a little bit more of an anthropomorphic quality."

Curry produced a concept drawing show what he planned. The executive producers signed off on it without asking for any modifications. The next stage was to take the concept to Eden FX, where CG modeler David Morton and animator Eric Hance would actually make the creature.

BROUGHT TO LIFE

"Each one is a really great artist," Curry says. "It's easy for me to do a drawing. It's another issue for them to make it look real. You can see how beautifully modeled it is and the fluidity. Dave's beautiful facial textures made a huge difference and gave it a feeling of



▲ The Aquatics only lived in water. For the Xindi council chamber, the team at Eden FX built a CG set filled with virtual water that the Aquatics could move around in. Curry says that this made the virtual water much easier to deal with since it avoided the need for waves.

intelligence. Using those textures, giving the skin the proper amount of crenellations and folds and the way the gills move. That was Dave's artistry.

"When it came to the rigging that was Eric. We didn't want it to move like an excited guppy. We looked at research on tails and stuff but mostly I think I just went in and mimed how I wanted it to move!"

Designing and animating the creature was only part of the job. It is notoriously difficult to produce convincing water effects in CG.

"And in those days," Curry says, "it was a lot tougher. We were before embryonic stage, we were in zygote stage. Where water becomes really difficult is where you have waves and it interacts with physical objects and stuff like that."

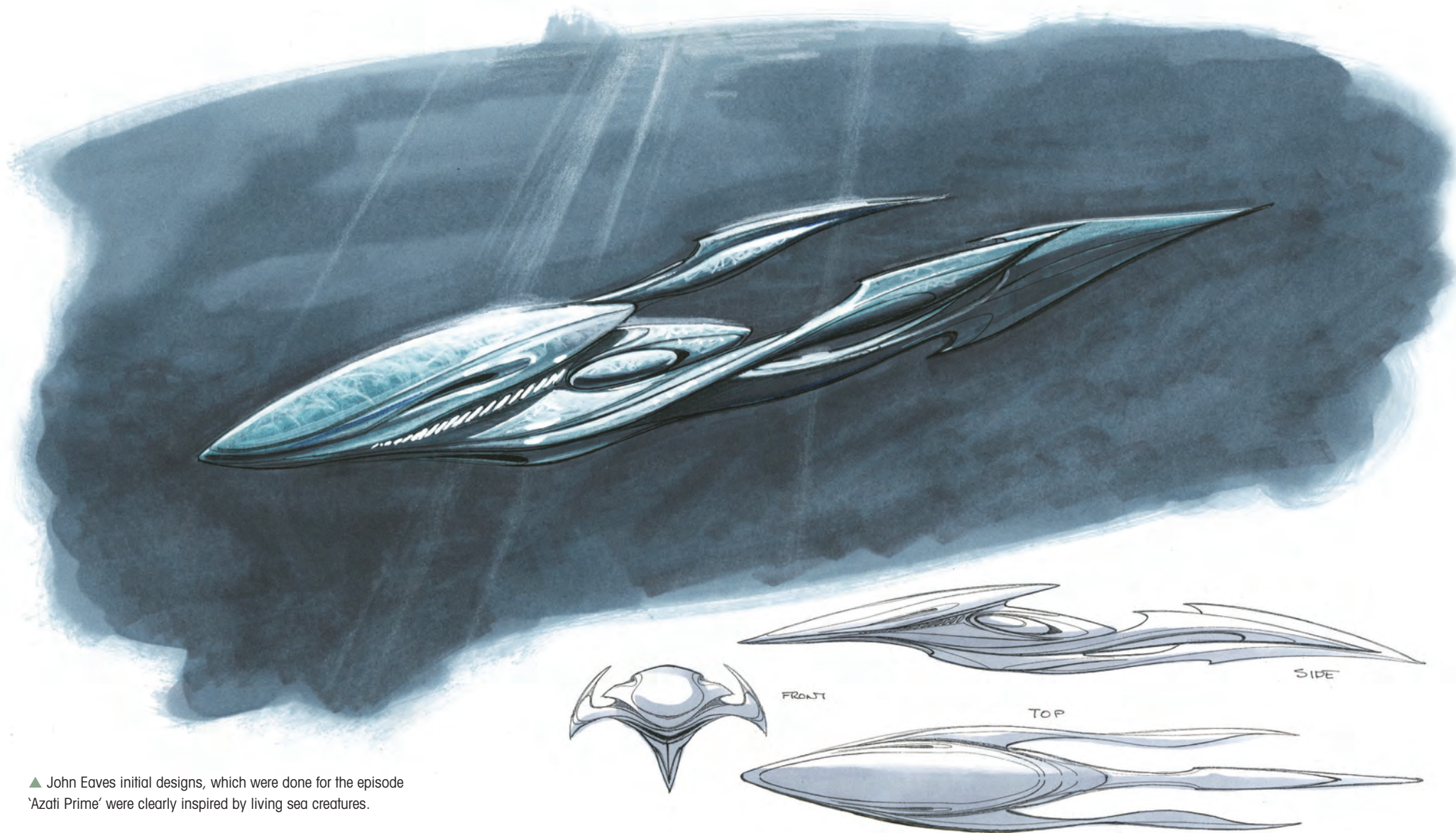
The team's solution was to keep the Aquatics in tanks filled with water. This meant there would be no need for waves and since the entire environment would be CG, it could be kept under control. "We knew what our limitations were going to be," Curry explains. "We saw them mostly in tanks and then it's just like putting them in a smoke field."

TEAM EFFORT

The finished result was one of the most genuinely alien creatures that has ever appeared on *STAR TREK*. Curry was delighted with the Aquatics and insists that enormous amount of credit is due to the team at Eden FX. "We all had a really close working relationship but the final version is a tribute to those great animators."



▲ Creating the Aquatics as CG models was a team effort. The basic modelling and texturing was done by David Morton, while animator Eric Hance created the CG rigging that was put into the model to allow it to move. The whole process was supervised by Dan Curry, who sat with the team at Eden FX suggesting changes as they worked.



▲ John Eaves' initial designs, which were done for the episode 'Azati Prime', were clearly inspired by living sea creatures.

DESIGNING THE XINDI II III IV

AQUATIC SHIPS

The finished Xindi Aquatic cruiser was a massive ship, but John Eaves' first designs could almost have been sea creatures.

STAR TREK ENTERPRISE's third season was dominated by the Xindi – a culture that consisted of five different species all of which came from the same planet. Despite their common origins, each Xindi species had their own

distinct look and technologies so required their own design of ship. The Aquatics had been introduced at the beginning of the year but we only got to see their ships towards the end of the season, and as concept artist John

Eaves remembers, the first Xindi Aquatic ship was something of a false start. "The first ship is an unusual little thing. You see it in 'Azati Prime', the episode where they find the bomb underwater."

That ship made the briefest, blink and

you'll miss it, appearance and can just be seen 'swimming' around the Xindi weapon.

As Eaves recalls, his first pass was rejected for being too like something that could be made on Earth. "I was trying to find a shape that was different. Ages ago I drew a spaceship for an Australian show. It had this big cannon that sat underneath the vessel. Kind of like a B-58 that has that gigantic fuel tank underneath. My first idea was 'What if the armament was concealed underneath the ship, in between the wings, kind of like a belly stinger gun that was hidden away and was its own little independent piece?'"

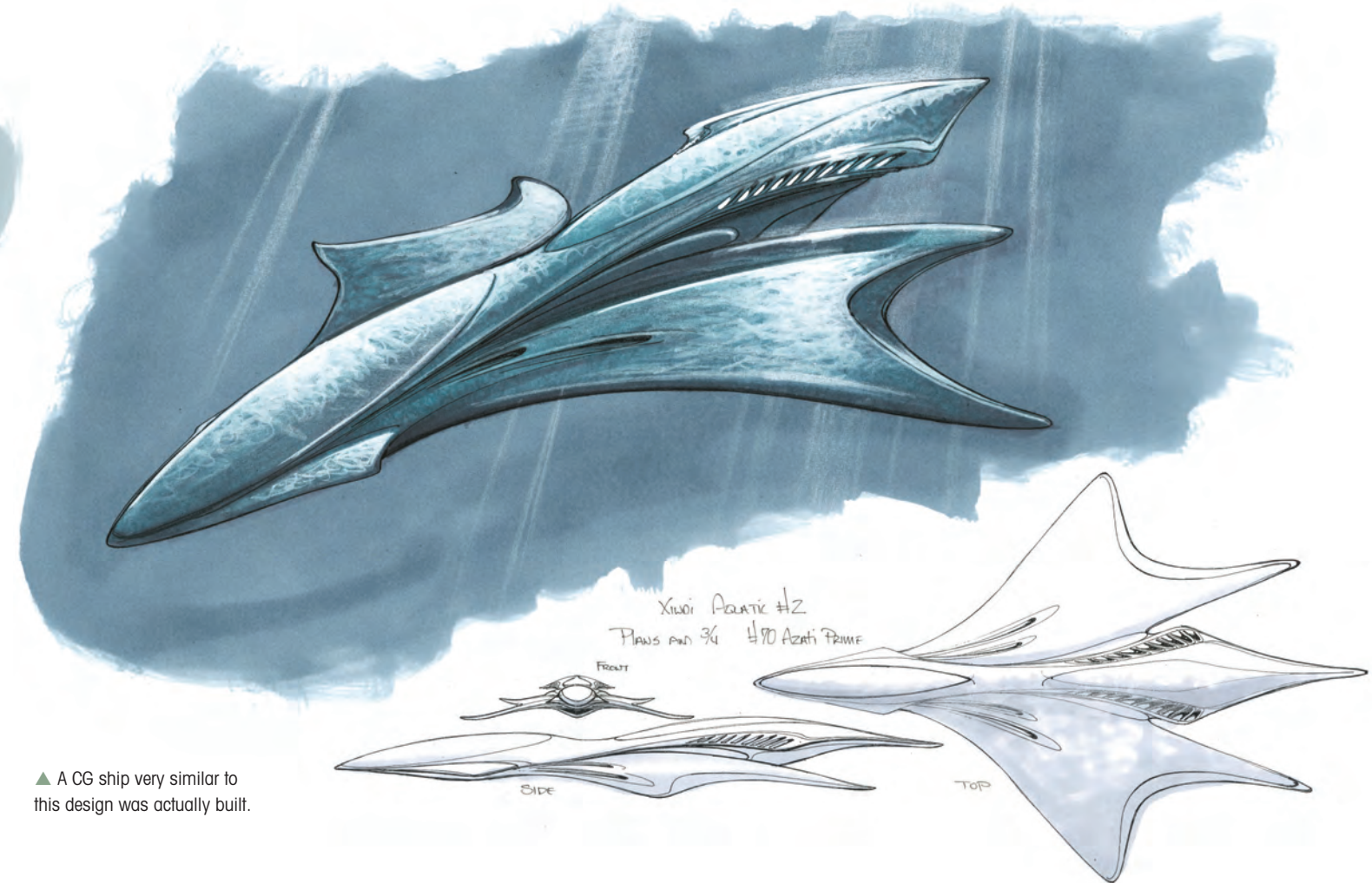
That first rejected design was



▼ The script called for Aquatic ships to be patrolling the water around the Xindi weapon, but at this stage no more information was given about them.



▲ Eaves's first pass at the Aquatic ship that appeared in 'Azati Prime' was rejected on the grounds that it was too conventional, but some elements, such as the squid head, were already in place.



▲ A CG ship very similar to this design was actually built.

relatively conventional and looked like something that had been manufactured. When Eaves returned to his drawing board he started to push in a more organic and "marine" direction.

WATERY INSPIRATION

"The Aquatics were an area that we'd never explored before. Using fish and stingrays as reference was a lot of fun and added a new direction that you couldn't use for the other stuff."

His next designs were clearly inspired by sea animals, in particular squid. To Eaves' mind the Aquatics' ships would have been produced by genuinely alien technologies and could even be mistaken for creatures. "I was trying to suggest a different kind of material, where there were not a lot of panel lines, or bolting, like you'd see on a

normal ship. I was imagining some kind of molded material so I tried to steer away from obvious panel lines that would make you think it was assembled.

That was kind of the identity of it. Instead of cloaking, it would just blend in with whatever kind of life forms were in their ocean."



▲ The Aquatic ships only play a tiny role in 'Azati Prime' and can only just be glimpsed in the corner of the frame. Similar ships can also be seen as part of the Xindi fleet, but they never played a major role.

HIDDEN VESSEL

One of these designs was actually made as a CG model, but it only appeared in the background and didn't have a major part in the story. A few months later the scripts called for the Aquatics and their ships to play a much greater role, and, as Eaves recalls, it was one that really wasn't compatible with the design that he had come up with.

"The story was very distinct – the Aquatic ship had compartments that hid the *Enterprise*. That dictated that it was going to be big. They felt the first version had too friendly a shape. It was more animal than ship, and the scale felt a little too small to house the *Enterprise*. The angles weren't sharp enough and it didn't have the aggressive nature they wanted.

"I think I did maybe three passes on this new one. There was a wild one. I still had *INSURRECTION* in my mind. I always liked that piano detail that we did for the Son'a ships, so I made a kind of Aquatic version of that. That was a fun one. But the producers said, 'It's kind of a nice idea, but keep going'.

"From there we went to a design with a bunch of windows down the side. That one looks more like the other Xindi ships. I tried to tie the architecture in to what we'd done before. It had a lot in common with Degra's shuttle but that wasn't what they were looking for so it didn't get much more of a response other than 'Give it another go'."

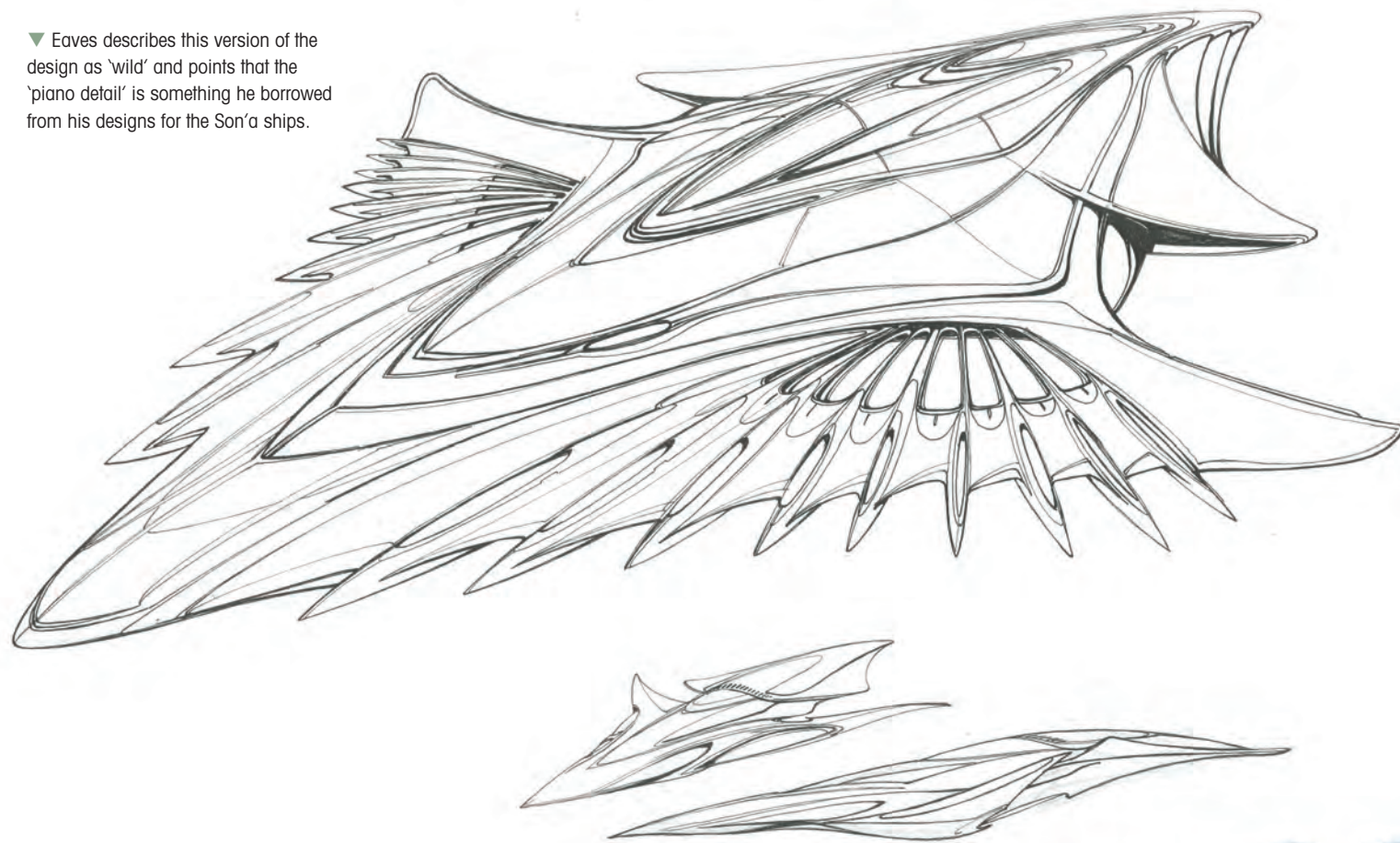
AQUATIC ENVIRONMENT

This design did, however, have elements that gave Eaves the clues that would

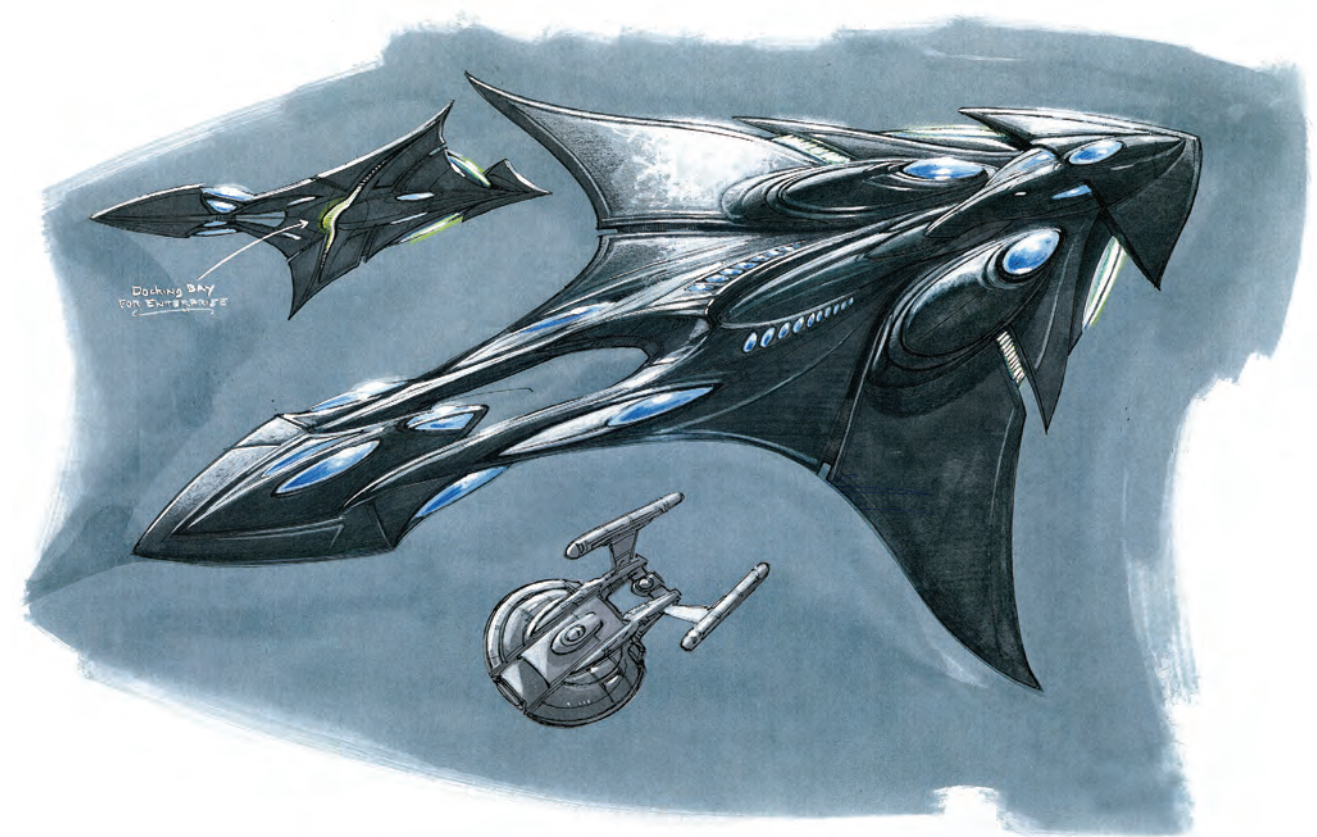
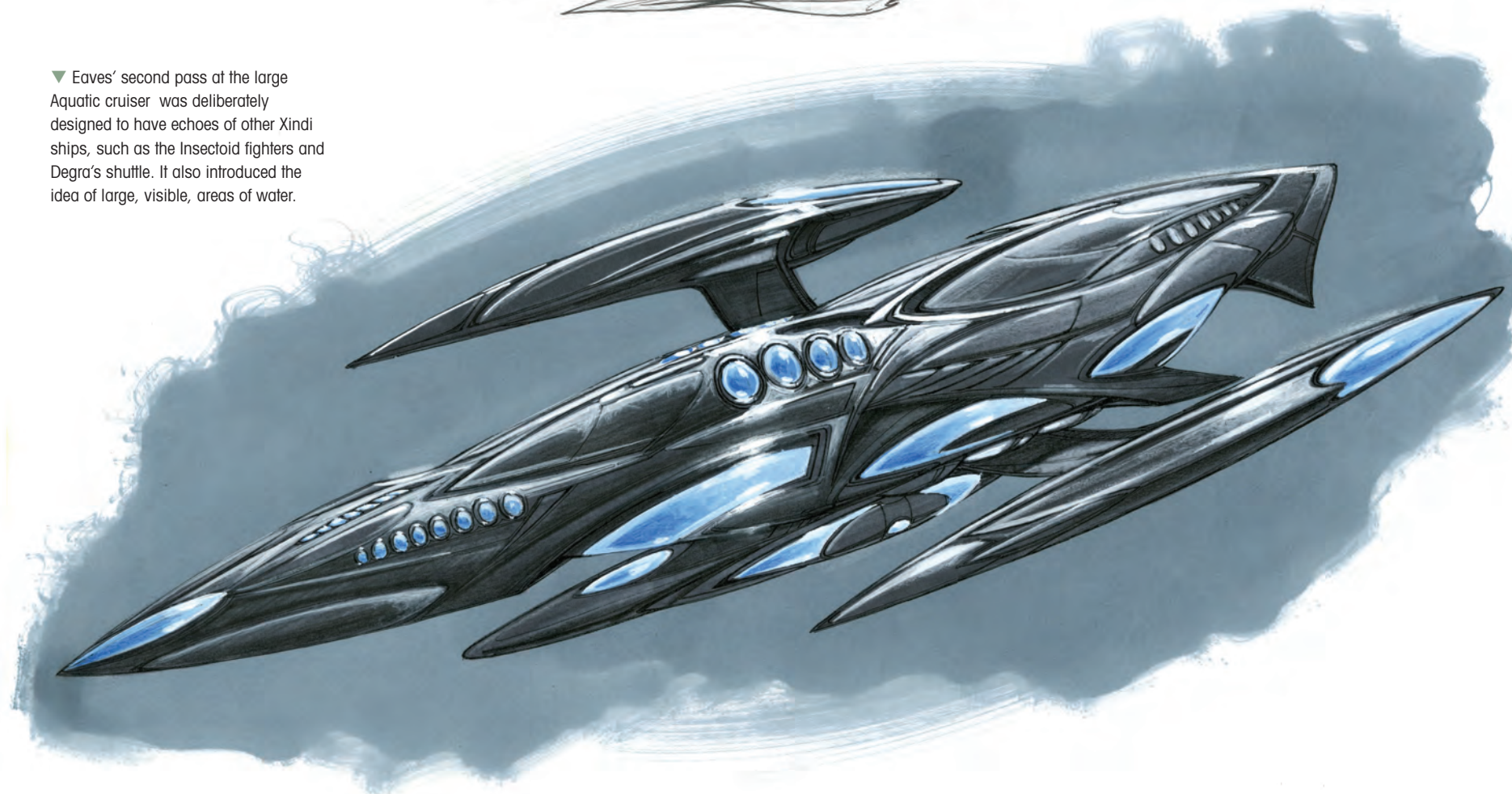
take him to the final version. "They liked the fact that it had a lot of glass on the outside. One of the story points was that it cracks open and the Aquatics float out through the damaged portions, so I kept that. That squid head was something they always liked. It travels through all the versions in one way or another so I kept that too. In the final design I just made everything more angular. I was a fan of the 'Stingray' TV show so I tried to do a combination of those kind of ships with my own Manta ray kind of thing." Eaves's new design had a squid head at the rear with extended wings and an open neck and this version was approved without any changes.

"They liked that shape," he recalls. "They liked the split hole in the center. I always tried to do that – give it that

▼ Eaves describes this version of the design as 'wild' and points that the 'piano detail' is something he borrowed from his designs for the Son'a ships.



▼ Eaves' second pass at the large Aquatic cruiser was deliberately designed to have echoes of other Xindi ships, such as the Insectoid fighters and Degra's shuttle. It also introduced the idea of large, visible, areas of water.



◀ The final design was easily Eaves' favorite and, he says, it combines the best elements of everything that had come before.

negative space in the openings so you could see through parts of it. I thought you could have something fly under the ship and you could see it through the holes. You couldn't do that easily with traditional models, but in the CG world that was much easier. I thought it would be fun to do the docking bay like a whale mouth. It's like a clamshell kind of thing on the bottom. It's not an obvious hatch until it opens up."

Eaves also points out a little nod to one of his own earlier designs. "The final one actually has a little bit of the Romulan *Valdore* on it. Those big round pods on the back of it - I liked the way it looked on the *Valdore* so I pulled that over here and gave it a Xindi twist."

The ship was then handed over to Eden FX where it was built as a CG model. The VFX team were excited by the idea that when the ship was attacked, the shell would rupture and the water would turn to ice as it froze in

space, and it was important to them to make it clear that the ship was filled with water. Although VFX producer Dan Curry did pause to wonder how the Xindi had transported such a large volume of water into space.

ALIEN TEXTURES

As Eden FX's Rob Bonchune remembers they came up with a texture for the hull that was "like semi-translucent glass with lots of refraction of light going through the 'water' and then the 'hull.' It also had a fresnel/oily/soap bubble surface effect that made areas change specular color as it moved or rotated from the camera."

The finished model was one of the most impressive Xindi ships, which dwarfed its Reptilian and Insectoid rivals. And the VFX team got the shot they always wanted as the climatic battle involved a shot of the Aquatic ship cracking in two.

ON SCREEN



TRIVIA

Scott MacDonald, who played the Xindi-Reptilian Commander Dolim, also featured in the other modern *STAR TREK* series. His first appearance was as Tosk, a reptilian-like species, in the *DEEP SPACE NINE* EPISODE 'Captive Pursuit.' After this, he was promised a less makeup-intensive role in any future appearances. He then played N'Vek, a Romulan, in *THE NEXT GENERATION* episode 'Face of the Enemy,' and then Ensign Rollins in 'Caretaker,' the pilot of *VOYAGER*. His other appearance was another heavy makeup role as the Jem'Hadar Goran'Agar in 'Hippocratic Oath.'



In 'Zero Hour,' T'Pol finally reveals her age to be 65, something Trip Tucker had wondered about from 'Carbon Creek,' the second episode of the second series.



Three of the Xindi species – the Primates, Arboreals and Reptilians – spoke a common language that could be understood by Starfleet universal translators. The Insectoids and Aquatics understood this language, but were physically incapable of speaking it, which meant the other species had to learn their language. This was not easy, as there were 67 dialects of Insectoid.

- FIRST APPEARANCE: 'COUNTDOWN' (ENT)
- TV APPEARANCES: STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE
- DESIGNED BY: John Eaves

KEY APPEARANCES

STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE 'Countdown'

The Reptilians and the Insectoids are in control of the Xindi superweapon, but they are unable to launch it. Three Xindi species must give their codes for that to happen, and the kidnapped Hoshi Sato is forced to decipher the Aquatics' code. Meanwhile, Captain Archer convinces the Aquatics to help stop the weapon with their powerful cruisers in return for destroying the Delphic Expanse spheres. The Aquatics' ships give *Enterprise* NX-01's allies the edge, but just as it looks like they will win, the Sphere Builders create spatial anomalies that tear the allied ships apart.

STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE 'Zero Hour'

The superweapon and a single Reptilian ship have entered a vortex on their way to Earth. Captain Archer takes a small team in Degra's fast ship in the hope of catching them, while *Enterprise* prepares to destroy Sphere 41 and bring down all the spheres. With help from Commander Shran and his Andorian ship, Archer and his team successfully stop the weapon, and *Enterprise* uses a deflector pulse to destroy the sphere network. As thanks, an Aquatic cruiser takes *Enterprise* home, but Archer appears to have perished when the superweapon exploded.

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