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STAR TREK™

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MERCHANTMAN

TYPE: FREIGHTER

LAUNCHED: 23rd C

LENGTH: 150 METERS

MAX SPEED: WARP 5

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Stand assembly:




MERCHANTMAN

SPECIFICATION



OPERATED BY:	INDEPENDENT
TYPE:	FREIGHTER
IN OPERATION:	23rd CENTURY
LENGTH:	150 METERS (APPROX.)
CREW:	THREE
MAX SPEED:	WARP 5
WEAPONRY:	PHASERS

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► By 2285, the *Merchantman* had seen better days and its rust-red exterior looked in urgent need of some care and maintenance. It was obviously a well-used freighter, whose crew of miscreants were prepared to take on assignments of dubious legality.



MERCHANTMAN

The *Merchantman* was a run-down freighter that met its end during the handover of illicit data to the Klingons.

DATA FEED

The *Genesis Device* was a torpedo-shaped projectile that had the potential to turn a lifeless planet into a thriving Class-M world. In the wrong hands, however, it could be a devastating weapon.

had a flared bow that tapered into a narrower central section, so it resembled a ray-like sea creature. The small bridge was located in a dome structure on the dorsal side of the ship near the bow, while warp nacelles were fitted below the main body. They were enclosed in a protective outer rusty-red paneling that shielded the entire front half of the vessel, while a similar colored metal plates wrapped around the fuselage just in front of the impulse engines at the stern.

DILAPIDATED STATE

The main body below these outer panels housed the cargo holds. It was covered in conduits and pipes, with many of them looking the worse for wear. The general condition of the ship was shoddy, giving the impression that it was barely holding together. It was clear that the vessel had seen better days.

The crew appeared to number just three, two humans – one of which was the captain – and an exotic-looking alien. They also appeared to be smugglers, or at least individuals who could be hired to take on less-than-legal ventures.

Perhaps due to their dire circumstances, they took on a dangerous, and highly-illegal job from a striking Klingon woman named Valkris. They stole a device containing classified data regarding the *Genesis Device*, and agreed to sell its contents to Valkris' superior. This turned out to be Commander Kruge, but when he learned that Valkris had seen the information, he ordered his bird-of-prey to fire on the *Merchantman*, destroying it and killing everyone on board.

The *Merchantman* was a small warp-powered freighter, or cargo vessel, of indeterminate provenance that was in use in the 23rd century. By 2285, it was worn and battered, indicating that it had been in operation for some time and had not been well maintained.

It was approximately 150 meters in length, and



◀ The female Klingon operative Valkris directed the captain and the helmsman of the *Merchantman* to a prearranged meeting point with Commander Kruge's bird-of-prey. She had hired the rogue crew to steal data regarding the *Genesis Device*, but instead of being paid for their efforts, they were rewarded with a volley of disruptor fire.

DEADLY ENCOUNTER

In 2285, the *Merchantman* was seen alone in a remote area of space, as if it was abandoned. In fact, it was waiting for a rendezvous with Commander Kruge's Klingon bird-of-prey.

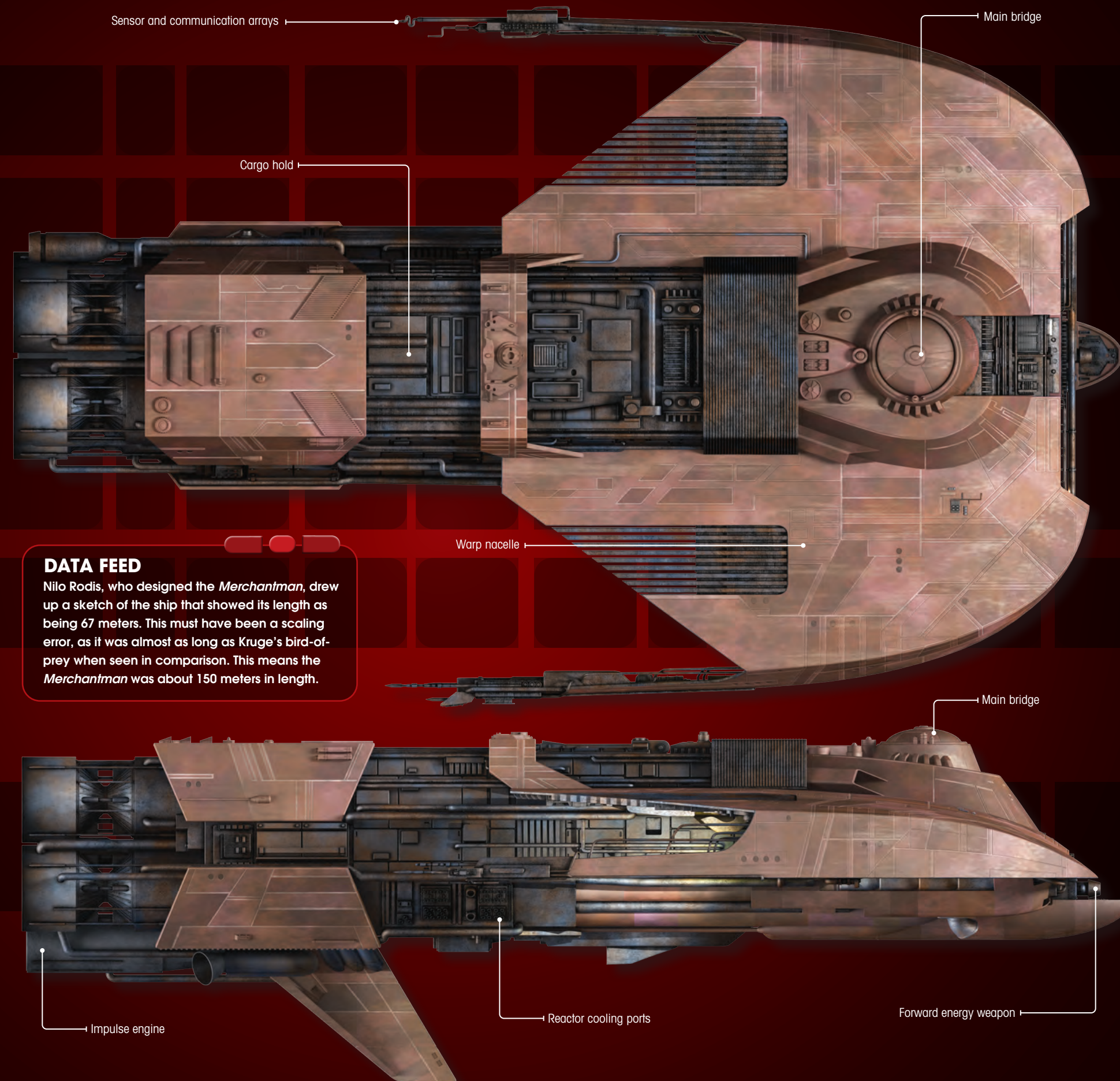
Valkris, the female Klingon who was on the bridge of the *Merchantman* with the three-man crew, revealed that Kruge's ship had been in close proximity for some time. She had hired them to steal information on the Genesis Device. It was evident that they had been successful, as Valkris asked for a hailing frequency, so she could transmit the data.

Much to the shock of the *Merchantman*'s crew, Kruge's ship decloaked, shimmering into view directly over them and dwarfing their small vessel. The crew were now panic stricken, as Valkris revealed she had reviewed the stolen data on the Genesis Device.

Upon being apprised of the situation, Kruge told her that this was unfortunate, but she knew what this meant, as the secrecy of the mission had to be preserved. Kruge's vessel then began a swooping maneuver, while the *Merchantman*'s captain anxiously wondered when he was going to be paid. Fearing that he was about to be ripped off, the captain and his crew's circumstances suddenly got a whole lot worse. The bird-of-prey opened fire, and in a few short salvos blew the ship to pieces, despite the pleas of its crew.



▲ After learning that Valkris had viewed the information on the Genesis Device, Kruge's bird-of-prey arced in on an attack run and unleashed a barrage of disrupter fire that destroyed the *Merchantman*.

**DATA FEED**

Nilo Rodis, who designed the *Merchantman*, drew up a sketch of the ship that showed its length as being 67 meters. This must have been a scaling error, as it was almost as long as Kruge's bird-of-prey when seen in comparison. This means the *Merchantman* was about 150 meters in length.

PROLIFIC PRESENCE

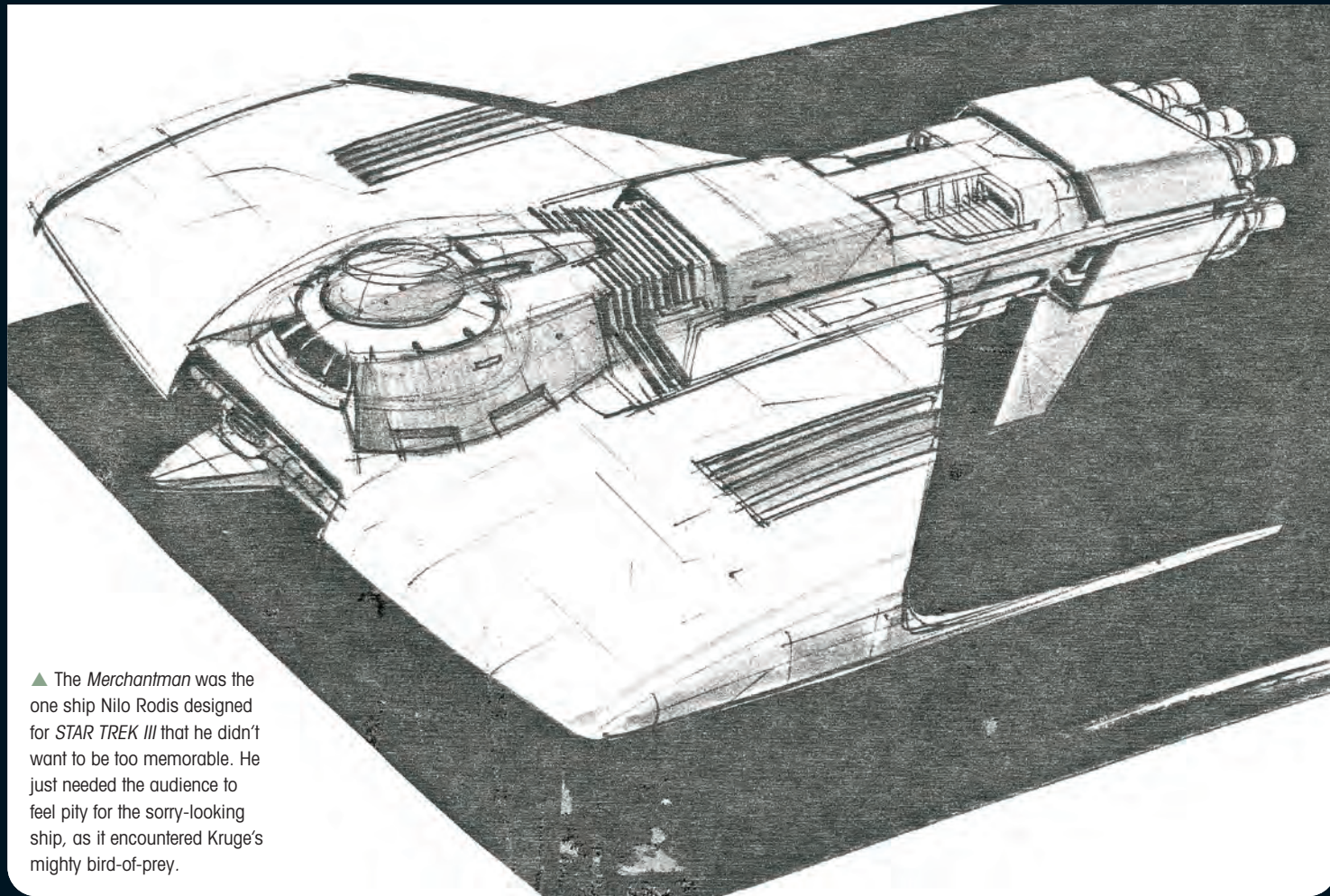
The alien crewman of the *Merchantman* was played by Tom Morga. He was a stuntman and holds the record for being the most seen stuntman on *STAR TREK*, appearing in six films and four TV series.

COMPARABLE SHIPS

The *Merchantman* appeared to be a civilian ship from Earth. Other similar vessels from the 23rd century included the *Aurora*, the *Whorfin*-class transport and *Stella* – Harry Mudd's ship.

MEETING PLACE

It was written in the script for *STAR TREK III: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK* that the *Merchantman* waited for Kruge's bird-of-prey "somewhere in Organian space," although this fact was left out of the movie. The Organians were powerful non-corporeal beings first seen in *THE ORIGINAL SERIES* episode 'Errand of Mercy.'



▲ The *Merchantman* was the one ship Nilo Rodis designed for *STAR TREK III* that he didn't want to be too memorable. He just needed the audience to feel pity for the sorry-looking ship, as it encountered Kruge's mighty bird-of-prey.

DESIGNING THE

MERCHANTMAN

Art director Nilo Rodis designed the *Merchantman* to be a dismal-looking ship that stood no chance against the Klingon bird-of-prey.

The studio model for the *Merchantman* was designed and built specifically for *STAR TREK III: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK*. The script described it as "dark-looking" and "small and grubby," which left plenty of room for interpretation.

As with the other starship models that were created for the movie, art director

Nilo Rodis designed it. He was happy to admit that before working on *STAR TREK*, he had never seen an episode of the series, and came to it with a fresh perspective. To Rodis, the purpose that the *Merchantman* and its crew fulfilled in the script informed how it should look.

"They were fodder for the Klingons," said Rodis. "I wanted you to see them,

but I didn't want you to remember them because we were going to blow them apart anyway. With the *Grissom*, my design impetus was to make sure that, even though it looked like another ship in the same family, it didn't steal thunder from the *Enterprise*. The *Merchantman* was a derelict, used up, beat up, tin boat that was going to be destroyed

by the German U-Boat. I didn't want it to be fancy. I wanted it to be lumpy so that when the bird-of-prey hovered over it, you just felt sorry for these guys. They didn't have a good-looking ship, and they were about to be blown up."

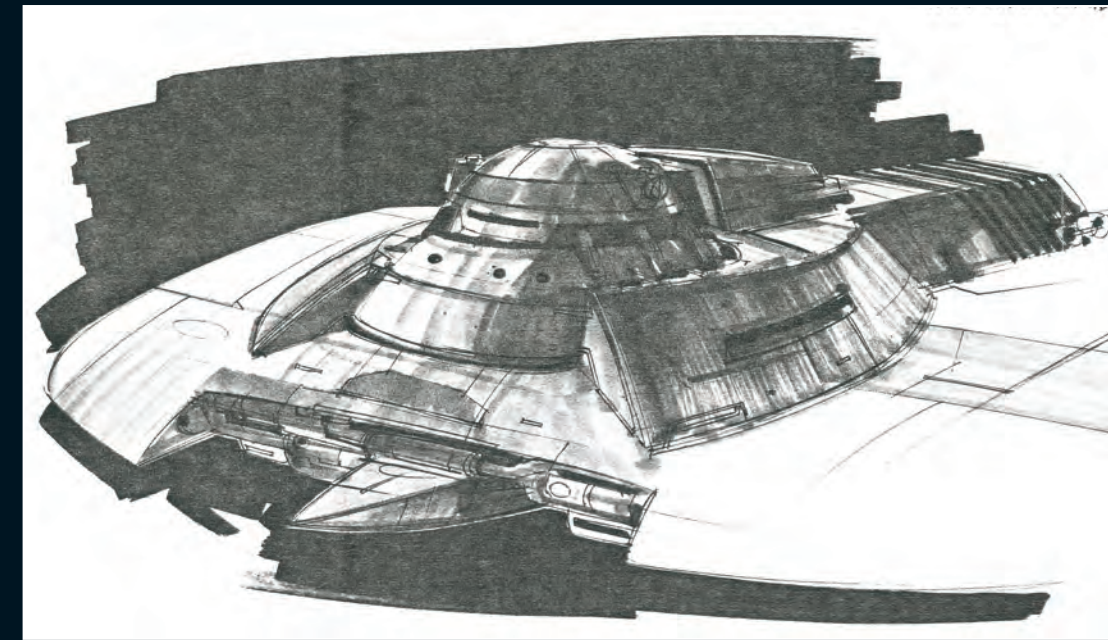
The model was built at Industrial Light & Magic by a team that included modelmakers Bill George and Steve Gawley. They took the sketches done by Rodis and created the model based on them. Gawley confessed that they did not spend much time building the *Merchantman* as it was going to be destroyed anyway. It was therefore partly 'kitbashed' from existing model parts, while still retaining the design elements Rodis wanted.

LATER REUSES

While the *Merchantman* was blown up in *THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK*, the studio model must not have been too badly damaged, as it was rebuilt and reused with minor alterations several times in the later *STAR TREK* TV series.

The first time it reappeared was as an Altec ship in 'The Outrageous Okuna.' The color was somewhat different and the fin on the bottom of the ship was shorter, but it otherwise looked very similar as to how it did in the movie.

It next appeared with more extensive modification as a Sheliak colony ship in 'The Ensigns of Command.' Several parts were added to the model, most



▲ Rodis drew up some detailed sections of the exterior of the *Merchantman*, such as the bridge. He wanted the ship to look worn and frayed, as if it had been used and abused by many years of service. Rodis was trying to evoke a feeling of sympathy for the motley crew, who were heavily outgunned by Kruge's bird-of-prey.

notably two long tubes mounted either side of a built-up rear section, and it was colored blue, or filmed with a color filter.

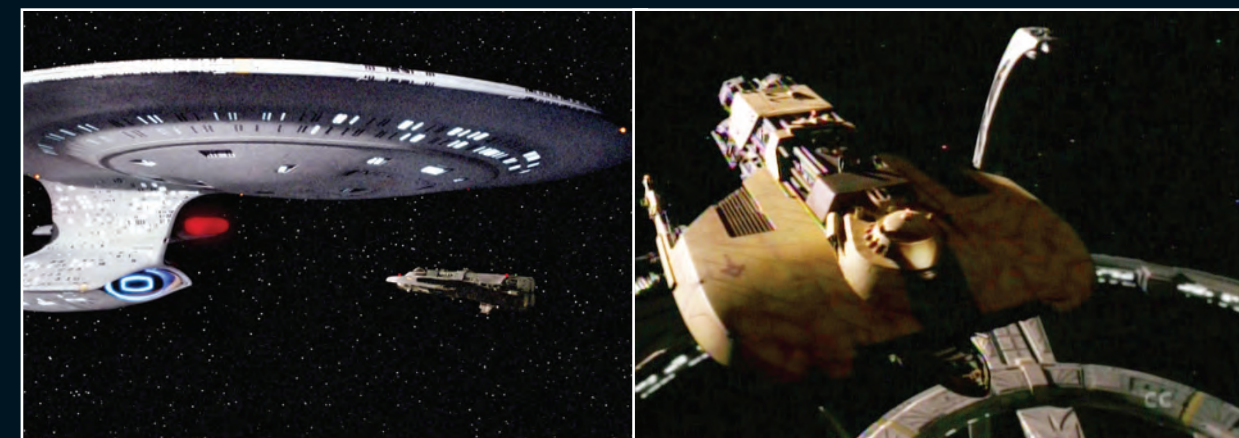
Most of the modifications were removed for its next outing as a Pellar Zel escort vessel in the episode 'The Host.' The color also reverted back to how it had been as the *Merchantman*.

The miniature returned when it was seen in the *DEEP SPACE NINE* episode 'The Maquis, Part I.' Here, it was used to depict the Cardassian freighter, the *Bok'Nor*, where it was repainted in the familiar Cardassian ochre color and a red Cardassian emblem was added on top of the wings.

The model then jumped series to *VOYAGER*, where it appeared with extensive modifications as a Vidlian ship in the episode 'Phage.' It retained the same coloring, but a whole new superstructure was built over the front section and the end sections of the wings were removed.

It made a final brief appearance as a Klingon transport in the *DEEP SPACE NINE* episode 'Rules of Engagement,' where Worf, in command of the *U.S.S. Defiant*, accidentally blew it up.

The model was sold at the '40 Years of *STAR TREK: The Collection*' auction in 2006 for \$14,400.



◀ The studio model of the *Merchantman*, which was made of styrene and cast resin, was redressed several times for various *STAR TREK* TV episodes. It first reappeared as an Altec ship [far left] in *THE NEXT GENERATION* episode 'The Outrageous Okuna.' Among its other outings, it was used to depict the *Bok'Nor* in the *DEEP SPACE NINE* episode 'The Maquis, Part I.'



STAR TREK III

VISUAL EFFECTS

The visual effects for *STAR TREK III* were created by Industrial Light & Magic. The team found themselves building starships, creating puppets and destroying Captain Kirk's iconic *Enterprise*.

▲ Industrial Light & Magic created amazing visual effects for *STAR TREK III*. The stealing of the *Enterprise* from Spacedock was one of the best effects sequences of the whole franchise, and involved the building of several beautiful models.

STAR TREK III: *THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK* was very much an Industrial Light & Magic project. Director Leonard Nimoy involved them from the very beginning, and they didn't just produce shots to order – their art department was responsible for designing the new ships and drawing up the storyboards. ILM's Kenneth Ralston – who had been one of two visual effects

supervisors on *STAR TREK II* – headed up the entire project and, because he was able to supervise the work from its inception, ILM was never presented with any unpleasant surprises.

There was no question that ILM was ideally suited to taking on so many aspects of the production. George Lucas had set the company up to be capable of anything, and the staff weren't used

to strict demarcation lines. If someone at ILM came up with a good idea, they were encouraged to run with it. For example, on *STAR TREK III* the art department and the model shop worked together to design the new ships. Using drawings that were supplied by the art department, the modelmakers produced a series of study models of the new ships for Leonard Nimoy and the producers to approve. They built three or four alternative versions for each design so that Nimoy could assess their various merits.

As supervising modelmaker Steve Gawley recalled, this approach had several advantages. "You had all these models sitting on a table so that the director could really get a feel for what we were talking about," said Gawley. "It just made everything easier to understand, and insured that everybody was on the same page. It also made it easier for us to give cost estimates."

Most of the study models were built by spacecraft and prop designer Bill George, who remembered that the original sketches were often very loose, leaving him with plenty of room to refine the design. In fact, his input was so great he is credited with co-designing both the *U.S.S. Excelsior* and the bird-of-prey.

THE BEST IDEAS

In some cases, Nimoy simply picked his favorite model, but in others, the design was refined by combining elements from different models. "With the Spacedock," Gawley recalled, "there were four or five study models. The one that we finalised actually used good parts from two or three of them. It was a question of taking the top of this one, and the bottom of that one."

Once Nimoy had selected the designs he wanted, the model shop had to build the actual models that would be used in filming. "We had to plan the shoot schedule around our delivery schedule," Gawley said. "So, of course, the first things they could do were shots of the *Enterprise*, because that model was already complete. While they were shooting that, we generated all the other models that were required."

As they planned the shots with Nimoy, the ILM team discovered that this was going to be very different to the kind of work they had been used to on the *Star Wars* movies. As effects cameraman

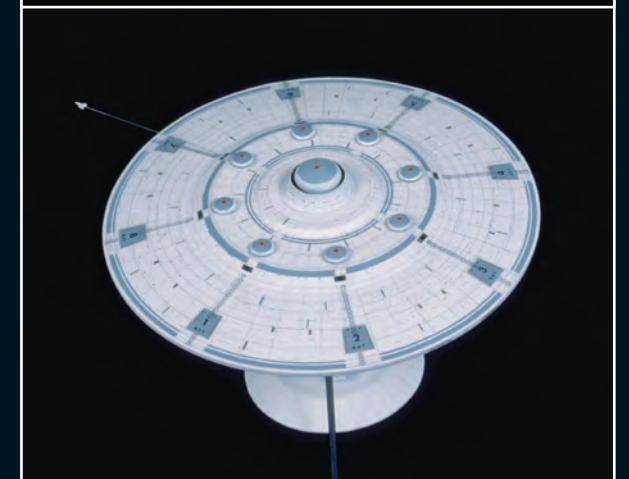
► ILM produced study models, showing alternative designs for all the new models, including Spacedock, that were needed for the movie. Once director Leonard Nimoy and the producers had chosen the design they wanted, the study models were further refined, until everyone was happy with how they looked.



► The study models were small three-dimensional maquettes, which gave everyone a better idea of how they would look. Once approved, the effects team created a huge Spacedock model that was six feet tall.



► Several different designs of Spacedock were created in maquette form, and each design was depicted from several different angles. The final design that was chosen comprised of elements taken from different study models. The actual Spacedock studio model was mainly made from clear Plexiglass.





◀ Although the Spacedock was a large model, it was nowhere near large enough to accommodate the normal shooting models of the *Enterprise* and the *Excelsior*, so these had to be filmed separately and then composited (added) into the final shot.



◀ Lighting the Spacedock model was something of a challenge for the effects team. It was filled with fiber optic lights, which gave it an eerie iridescent glow, and this was enhanced by using blue gels (filters) on the lights.



◀ The inside of the Spacedock necessitated the creation of an additional model, which was approximately 20 feet across, and had a removable center section. Much of the detail on the walls was created by drawing just one section, and then photocopying that to produce a type of 'wallpaper' that could be pasted over the rest of the interior.

Scott Farrar explained, there was a significant difference in the philosophy behind the shots. "Often, the idea behind the *STAR TREK* shots was to have these gloriously beautiful, wonderfully lit ships moving slowly," said Farrar. "That was very different than the movies we had worked on before, especially *Star Wars*. George Lucas liked to see how much a person could absorb in 40 frames or so (about two seconds of film). That was part of the look of *Star Wars*, where you had lots and lots of quick cuts, with lots of production value in each one. *STAR TREK* was more like large ships at sea that moved slowly – big tankers."

PAINSTAKING PROGRESS

Farrar went on to say that this had major implications for ILM, who now found themselves shooting hundreds of frames, rather than dozens. "That changed the way we shot things," said Farrar, "and it changed the length of time it took to shoot them, because every single pass took hours and hours and hours."

As a consequence, Farrar actually spent a couple of months filming the sequences that were inside Spacedock. This was a spectacular model that required some ingenuity on the part of the model shop. "It was a huge project to build," Gawley said, "because the walls were incredibly detailed. Bill George came up with this great idea. He said, 'Hey, why don't we just make a drawing of what a panel section would look like, then let's make a bunch of colored Xeroxes.' We literally just wallpapered the whole thing. We actually put three-dimensional shapes on a few areas, but the idea was to give it such scale you would never see it up close. It worked out really, really well; when you didn't have a lot of money to spend, you were forced to be innovative."

LIGHTING PROBLEMS

The Spacedock model also featured a series of tiny lights that represented windows. These were created by punching hundreds of pinholes in it and then positioning lights around the outside. These lights generated an enormous amount of heat, so the model had to be constantly cooled with fans to prevent it from warping.

The pinholes were a simple solution to one problem, but they created another. The main



▲ Bill George built and painted the studio model of the Klingon bird-of-prey, although Steve Gawley constructed its interior mechanics.

sequence involved the *Enterprise* flying through the Spacedock's massive doors that opened to let it through. "When the door opened, it had to go somewhere," Farrar laughed. "So it slid along and blocked the lights that were shining through the holes on either side of the doorway. We solved that by putting fiber optic lights into the model."

SMOKEY ATMOSPHERE

In order to communicate the enormous size of the Spacedock's interior, the team decided that they needed to introduce some atmospheric haze. This meant filling the model with smoke, which had to be carefully regulated.

Farrar recalled that the smoke also caused problems because the design called for the ships to be illuminated by enormous shafts of light. "I remember a big issue was trying to make those shafts of light prominent enough," said Farrar. "We wanted to have these beautiful up rays, but there was no way to get a really good-looking ray in the smoke. Eventually, I shot a pass where we literally cut out pieces of white cardboard in the shape of the light beams. I photographed that with some diffusion on the lens. We used that as its own pass, put that in very gently and it gave us this fantastic light beam."



▲ The giant eel that attacked Commander Krige was actually just a slimed-up hand puppet that was operated from beneath the stage.

The Spacedock sequence also featured one of the movie's two major new starships – the *U.S.S. Excelsior*. The final model was effectively designed by Bill George, who described it as "a Japanese version of the *Enterprise*."

NEW BUILD TECHNIQUE

While the *Excelsior* was considerably longer than the *Enterprise* in the *STAR TREK* universe, the model was actually about the same size. Gawley recalled that building it involved some innovations. "We had to build a model that looked as good as, if not better than, the *Enterprise* and we had to do it in a much quicker fashion. That required us to



▲ The sequence in which the *Enterprise* was destroyed involved several different models and VFX techniques, including setting fire to steel wool that had been placed on a separate saucer model.

▼ Kruge's ragged 'dog' was a puppet that was sprayed with adhesive before clumps of hair taken from cheap wigs were added to make it look more unpleasant.



come up with a different way of building it; we actually used vacuum forming."

ARTICULATED WINGS

The other major ship was the Klingon bird-of-prey. Again, George built the study model which expanded on the drawings that art director Nilo Rodis had given to him. One of Leonard Nimoy's requirements was that the wings moved. "Bill George came up with the interesting concept of a radio tuner," Gawley recalled. "If you look at old radios, they have plates that lock inside other plates. They are all on a single shaft. The wing assembly of the bird-of-prey was very similar. It

was a really clever innovation but, when we built the final model, I had to make that thing work! I designed all the mechanics, and then Bill did a great job on the exterior."

KLINGON PET

ILM also became involved with the interior of Kruge's ship when Ralston suggested that the Klingon commander should have an 'alien dog.' Since Ralston's background was in ILM's creature shop, it wasn't too surprising he came up with this idea, and he devoted himself to sculpting the maquette that showed what the dog should look like. The creature shop's supervisor David Sossalla recalled that Ralston also did a lot of work on the full-sized puppet. "Ken Ralston was pretty involved with the dog," said Sossalla. "Once he had gotten to a certain point with it, I finished the sculpting and did all the mold work with a crew and built the puppets and the mechanisms."

The idea with the dog was that it would simply sit by Kruge's chair, so it wouldn't place too many demands on the VFX crew. "It was never expected to do an extreme amount of performance," Sossalla said. "It wasn't like it was going to go from one side of the room to the other. Most of the action with the dog was right by the chair, so it was sophisticated, but not fully blown out. It had bladders in the lungs so that we



▲ ILM built a separate model of the *Enterprise's* bridge, which they blew up for the self-destruct sequence.

could get the breathing, and rods for the legs. Then the face had brow and eye movements and eye blinks, tongue action, and snarls."

CRAMPED AND UNCOMFORTABLE

Unfortunately, the stage area under the dog couldn't be raised off the ground to accommodate the puppeteers, so Sossalla recalled that to operate it he had to jam himself into the tiny space under Kruge's chair. The face movements were controlled by cables that ran behind the dog and were hidden in the background. "I think we had to have close to five puppeteers on the head," said Sossalla. "Some of them would do more than one operation - they'd have eye blinks plus the ability to move the eyes. Another person would be handling the snarling."

Sossalla said that they had actually built a second dog, which they planned to use for scenes that featured its corpse on the bridge, after it was killed in Kirk's assault on the bird-of-prey, but this proved unnecessary. When the moment came for Kruge to cradle his dead pet in his arms, they used the working puppet. "I glued it back together real quick," said Sossalla. "And I mean quick - they were all standing around waiting for me. I just removed all the cables and put lead weights into



it. Because of the way the puppet was made it had a nice weight to it, so it flopped around in a convincing fashion."

MORE PUPPETS

Puppets also featured on the surface of the Genesis Planet, where the microbes on Spock's coffin were growing into enormous eel-like creatures. The first time we saw them they were a mass of strange creatures that were scattered around the coffin. As Sossalla explained, these were the simplest puppets imaginable. "They were just clear vinyl that had been cast and painted," said Sossalla. "They were slimed up and made real

▲ For this shot of the *Enterprise's* saucer melting, ILM created a model with a thin styrene surface, and then sprinkled it with acetone, which dissolved the top layer. When the footage was speeded up, it looked like fire was consuming the ship.



▲► ILM built a miniature landscape of the Genesis planet on which they could safely create some pyrotechnics and show it erupting in flames. They also devised an element that showed the ground being split apart and lava erupting out it.

slippery so that we could pull them around to get some life in to them. We had a raised platform for the stage, and we had puppeteers underneath and up above, with fishing line moving things around as best as possible.”

OOZING EEL

As the eels grew, the puppets became increasingly sophisticated. By the time Kruge and his party encountered them, they had evolved into large creatures. “There were a mass of them,” said Sossalla. “I think they were about 15 to 20 feet long. Those were actual castings that had air bladders in them. I had compressors that I could inflate and deflate so they would also have some

movement to them as the air was going into the bladders. That made them throb and sort of serpentine a little bit. We also had puppeteers to pull them so they were slithering along as well.”

Kruger then grabbed one of the eels, which wrapped itself around him before he squeezed the life out of it. This eel was a hand puppet that was operated by Ralston, who lay down in the coffin for the shot. “It was not overly sophisticated,” Sossalla said. “There was a mechanism inside with some cables coming out for opening and closing its toothy maw. It was filled with bladders, so when Kruger was putting his grip on it, we were able to inject colored slime which would ooze out as he crushed it.”

BLOWING UP THE ENTERPRISE

After dealing with the eels, Kruger returned to his ship and confronted the *Enterprise*. He succeeded in overpowering the already damaged ship before sending a boarding party over who were killed when Kirk activated the self destruct systems. Ralston always revelled in the fact that he was the man who got to destroy the *Enterprise* – not least because it was an extremely heavy model that he hated working with – but, Farrar couldn’t help pointing out, he had some help. As Farrar noted, “Ken always says, ‘I’m the one who destroyed the *Enterprise*,’ but of course he had a team of us helping him.”

As Gawley recalled, there was no way they could actually blow up the shooting model of the *Enterprise*, but Ralston had some ideas of what he wanted to see. “We built a bridge section that we blew up and a large dish-only model that we could use pyrotechnics on,” said Ralston. “And we actually built a partial *Enterprise* for that distance shot where it flew away after the explosion.”

For the shot that showed explosions spreading across the surface of the saucer, the model shop built a special version of the dish, with a very thin styrene surface. They were then able to drop acetone on to the surface, which ate the plastic away. When the film of this was sped up it looked as if the surface of the dish was melting away.

FIERY END

The next shot showed the front of the dish blowing up – this involved another model that was custom built for the purpose. Finally, the half-destroyed ship flew toward the camera with fires burning all over it.

For this shot Farrar recalled that ILM used one of their favorite techniques. “We put lots and lots of steel wool everywhere on the ship, set fire to it, and then rolled the camera until the steel wool burnt out,” said Farrar. “That gave you all that sizzling burning stuff, and it looked great.”

The burning wool was shot in darkness and used as a separate element that could be combined with the rest of the ship.

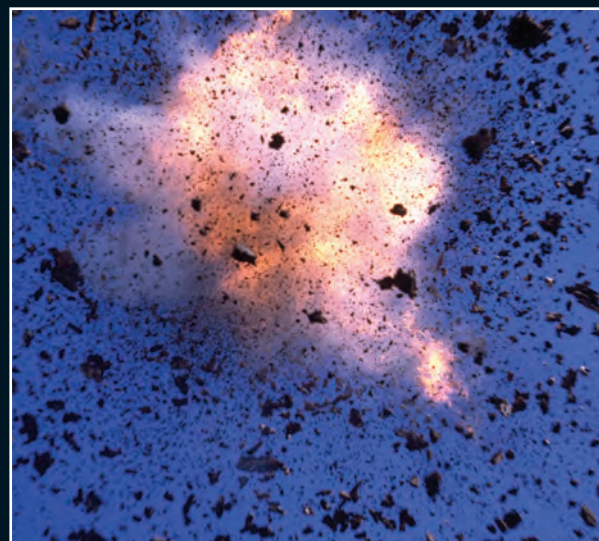
DESTROYING GENESIS

The *Enterprise* wasn’t the only thing the team got to blow up. For several shots, ILM created a miniature version of the planet’s surface, which was rigged to erupt in flame and tear itself to pieces. Every movement on this set – which featured collapsing trees, falling rocks, and jets of flame – was carefully storyboarded by Ralston.

The original plan involved the planet falling into the sun, but this was rejected because it didn’t create the desired effect. Instead, the *Bird-of-Prey* escaped as the planet, now reduced to molten lava, exploded behind it. The shot was actually made by blowing up a ball of cork that was covered in white powder. For the final shot, the white elements were all turned red and orange, creating the desired impression of a fiery hell.

The film ended with a series of matte paintings as the crew walked up to Mount Seleya, where Spock was finally resurrected. When everything was done, ILM had firmly established themselves as part of the *STAR TREK* family and were eagerly waiting to see how they could top their work in *STAR TREK IV*.

▲ The final shot of the Genesis planet exploding was accomplished by blowing up a ball of cork that had been covered in white powder.



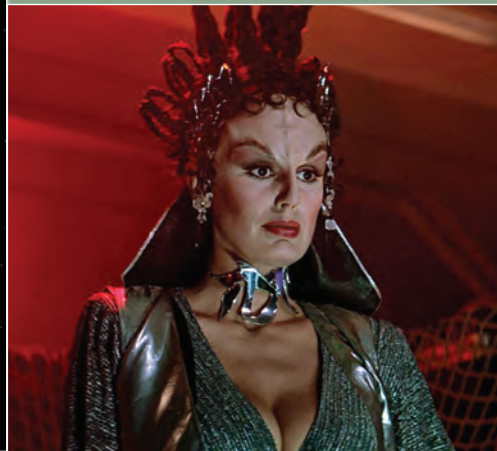
◀ The last effect of Genesis showed the crew escaping in the bird-of-prey as the planet exploded behind them. Some of the rivers of lava on the planet surface apparently spelled out Ken Ralston’s name.

ON SCREEN



TRIVIA

Canadian actress Cathie Shirriff played Valkris, the Klingon operative who hired the *Merchantman*. This made her the first actress to portray a female Klingon character following the race's updated look for the movies. According to an interview she gave with *Twilight Zone* magazine shortly after filming, she was not the first actress approached to play the role, as she heard that Glenda Jackson was offered the part, but had to pass due to scheduling reasons.



Grace Lee Whitney, who played Yeoman Janice Rand in *THE ORIGINAL SERIES*, had a cameo appearance in *THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK*. She portrayed an unnamed commander in the viewing lounge at Spacedock, who witnessed the damaged *U.S.S. Enterprise* NCC-1701 returning.



Spacedock was imagined to be around three miles long. In fact, the model of it was actually six feet long, which was still impressive. Spacedock would go on to appear in the next three films, and footage of it was reused four times in *THE NEXT GENERATION*, with the *Enterprise-D* inserted over where Kirk's ship had been.

- FIRST APPEARANCE: STAR TREK III (MOVIE)
- FILM APPEARANCE: STAR TREK III: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK
- DESIGNED BY: Nilo Rodis

KEY APPEARANCE

STAR TREK III: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK

Fans have much to be thankful for when it comes to *STAR TREK: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK*. Not only did it bring Spock back to life, but it also introduced, not one, but four new starships.

ILM really put the 'special' in the special effects for this movie, and created some wonderful models. The *Merchantman*, the Klingon bird-of-prey, the *U.S.S. Grissom*, the *U.S.S. Excelsior* and Spacedock all made their debut here, and would go on to be used again and again in the later movies and TV series for the next 20 years or so.

The previous film, *THE WRATH OF KHAN*, was supposed to be the last in the

franchise, but it did so well at the box office that within days of its release the studio green-lit a follow-up.

The story ultimately sees Captain Kirk reunited with his friend Spock, but there is a very heavy price to pay. The crews of the *Merchantman* and the *Grissom* die, Kirk's son David is stabbed to death by the Klingons and the iconic *Enterprise* meets a fiery end as it crashes into the Genesis planet. Oh, and the planet blows up, taking anyone who might have managed to survive with it. The movie ends optimistically, though, as Spock's body is reunited with his katra, and the triumvirate of Kirk, Spock and McCoy are back together again.

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