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KLINGON
BATTLECRUISER

STAR TREK (2009)

SPECIAL ISSUE

D7 CLASS

OPERATIONAL: 2258

KELVIN TIMELINE

KLINGON WARBIRD

KLINGON BATTLECRUISER

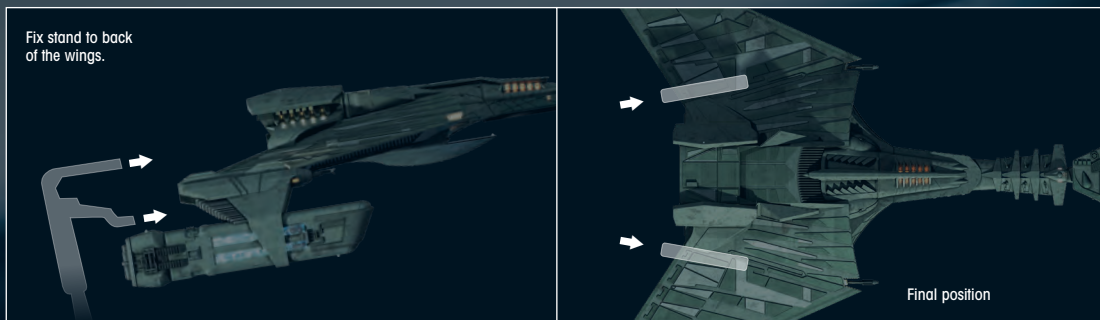
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KLINGON BATTLECRUISER

SPECIFICATION



CLASS:

D7

OPERATIONAL:

2258

WEAPONS:

CLOAKING DEVICE

PHOTON TORPEDOES



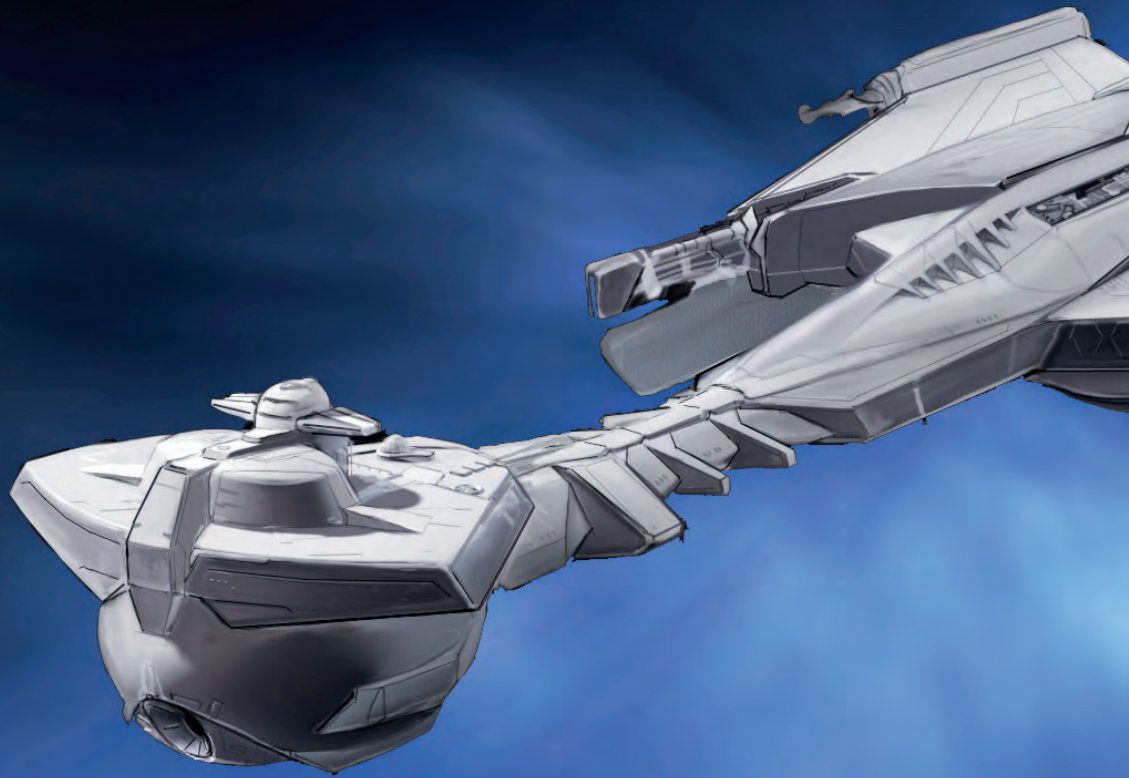
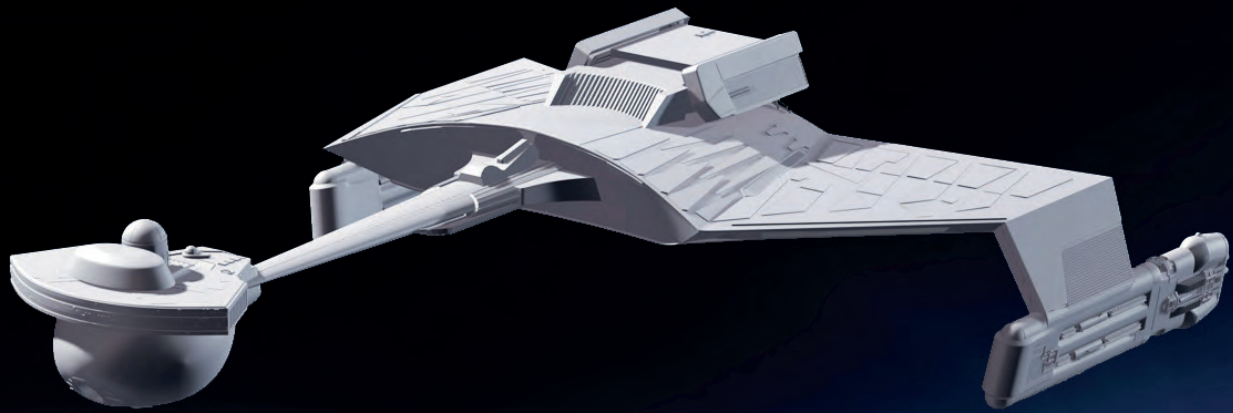




KLINGON BATTLECRUISER

(KELVIN TIMELINE)

Cadets completing the *Kobayashi Maru* test faced destruction at the hands of Klingon warships.



REDESIGNING THE **BATTLECRUISER**

For *STAR TREK* (2009) the classic Klingon D7 battlecruiser was given a redesign that made it more robust and warlike.



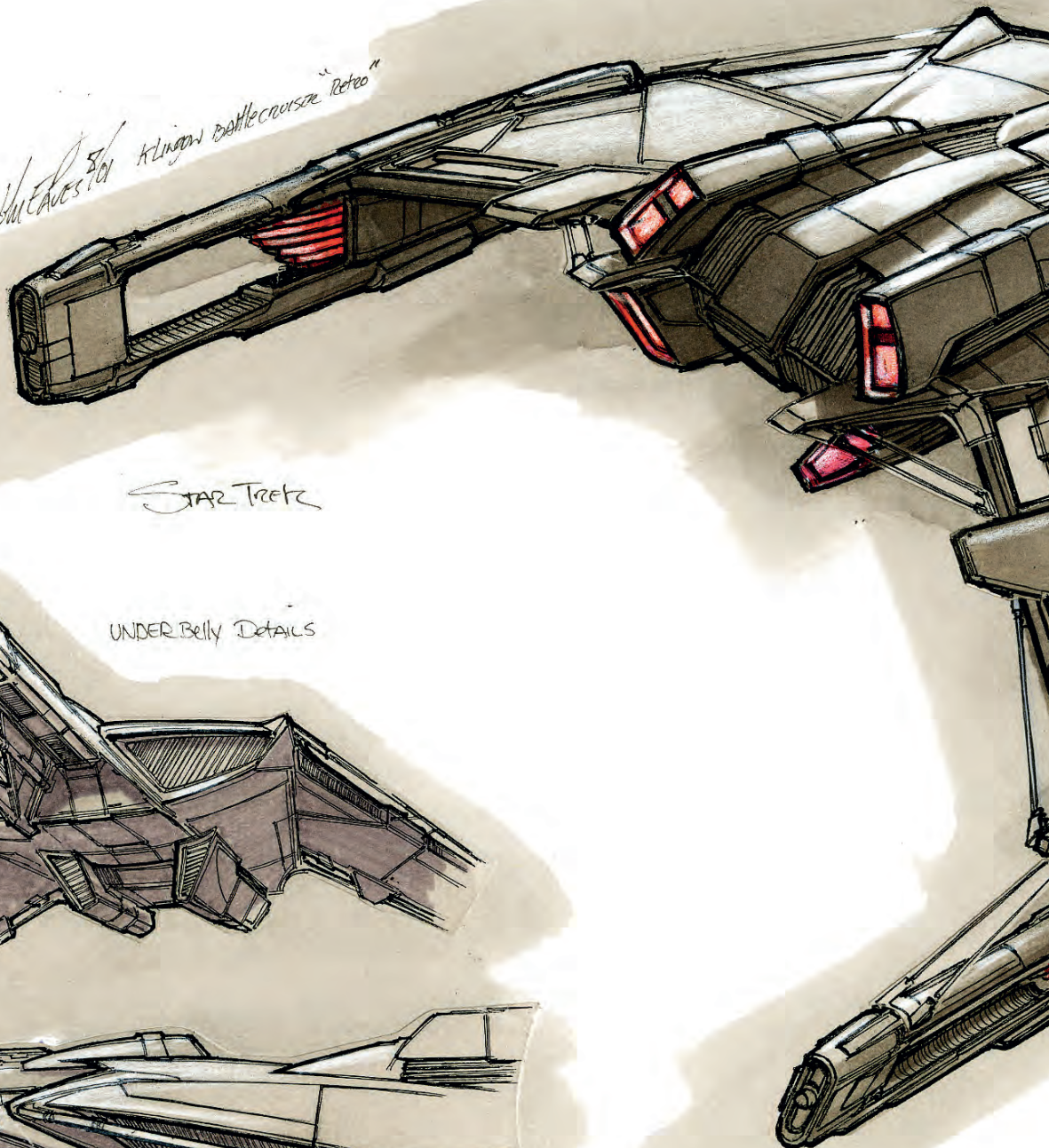
It's *STAR TREK*'s classic catch-22: a Starfleet ship receives a distress call from a freighter in the Klingon Neutral Zone. If they do nothing, the freighter will be lost with all hands, but if they enter the Neutral Zone they will be surrounded by Klingon warships and destroyed. It's known as the *Kobayashi Maru* scenario and it's a test that cadets at Starfleet Academy have to sit. It's meant to be a test of character to see how budding starship captains cope when confronted with the

no-win scenario. Of course, one man – James T. Kirk – refused to accept this and reprogrammed the test so that he could win. In the altered timeline in the 2009 *STAR TREK* movie, we would finally see Kirk take the test.

The script called for us to see not only the *Kobayashi Maru*, but the Kelvin timeline's version of the classic Klingon battlecruiser, which it also refers to as a "warbird." The first people to think about the redesign were in Scott Chambliss's art

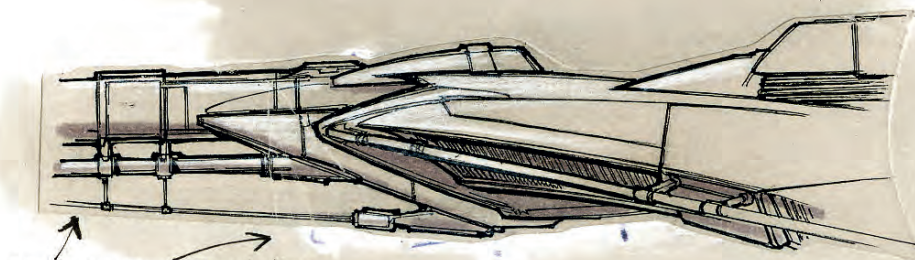
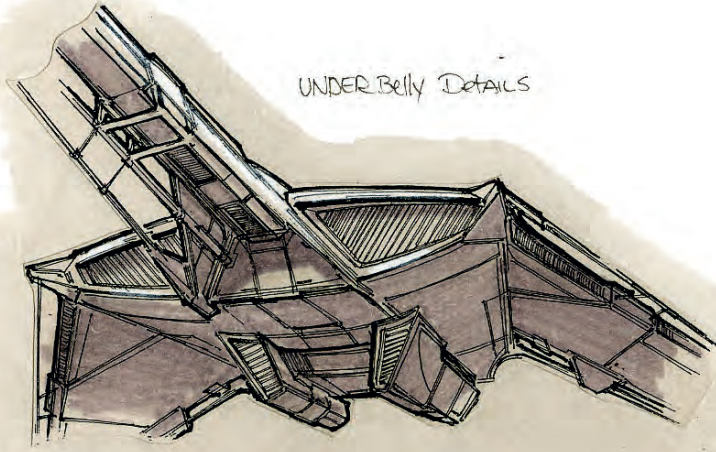
▲ VFX art director Alex Jaeger designed the final version by taking a simple CG model of Matt Jefferies' original design for the battlecruiser and painting over it in Photoshop.

John Eaves 2011 Klingon Battlecruiser "Retco"



STAR TREK

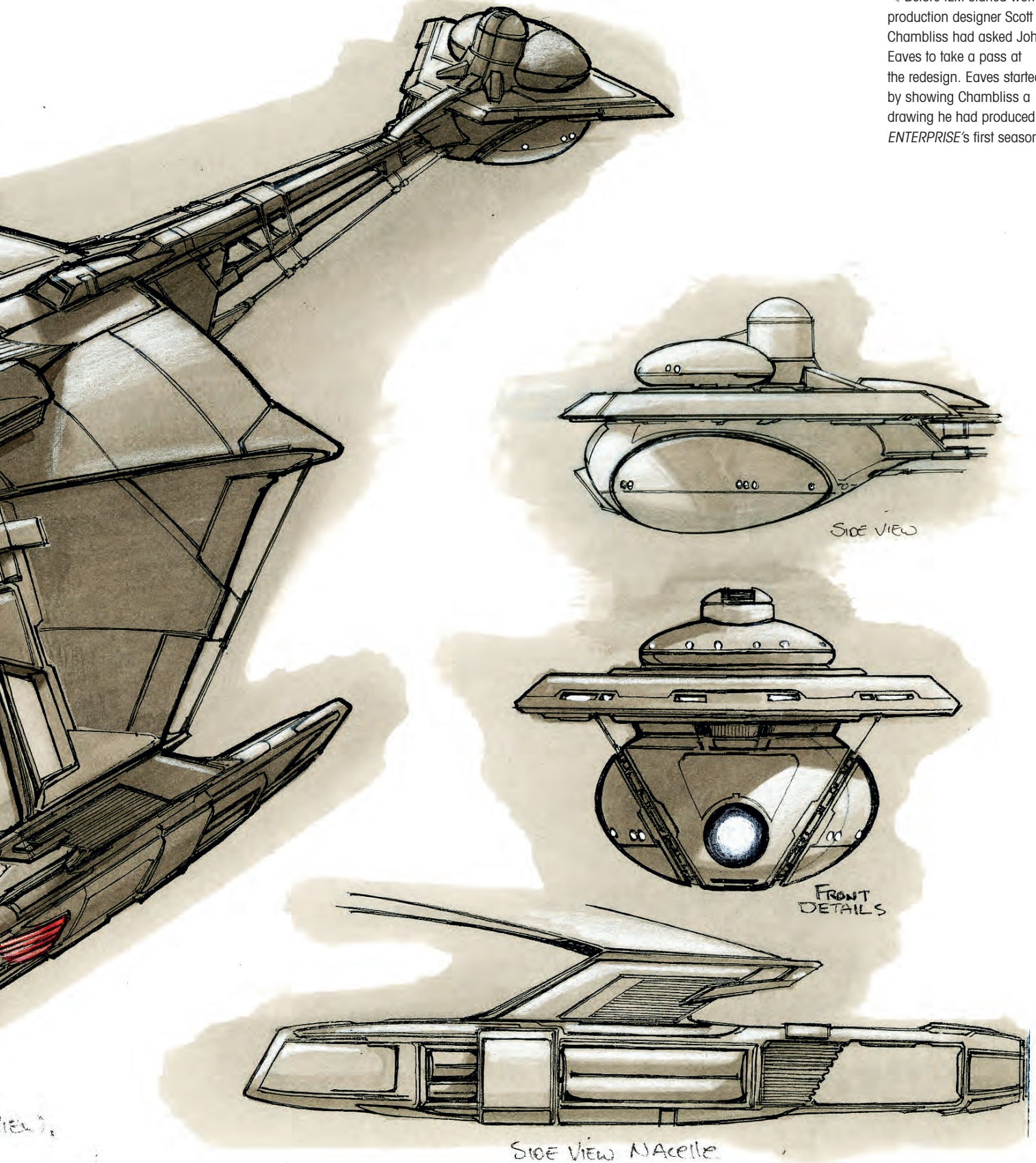
UNDER BELLY DETAILS

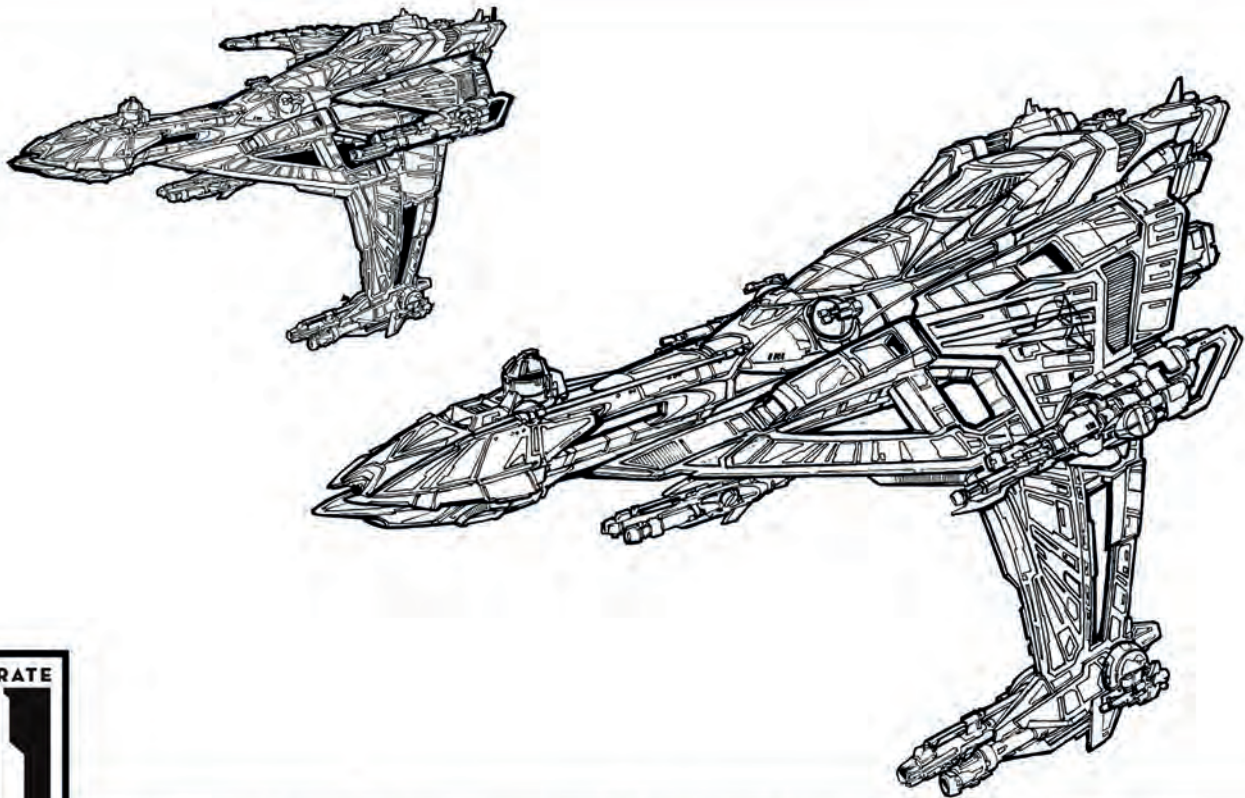


NECK to Body DETAILS

3/4 REAR VIEW

◀ Before ILM started work, production designer Scott Chambliss had asked John Eaves to take a pass at the redesign. Eaves started by showing Chambliss a drawing he had produced for *ENTERPRISE*'s first season.





KOBAYASHI MARU BIRD OF PREY RETRO CONCEPT JOHN EAVES 7-07

▲ Eaves also suggested using a redesign of the *bird-of-prey* that he had originally produced years before for the *DS9* episode *The Way of the Warrior*.

department, but they didn't actually produce anything new. John Eaves had already redesigned the Klingon D7 when he was working on *STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE*, and since his new version had never actually made it on to the screen, he dug out his original drawings and offered them up. As he recalls Chambliss liked the design and told him there was no need to do any more work.

"They wanted a fresh look. They didn't want any

influence from the older stuff. He had me on the shuttlecraft first. Then this came along. I told him this was a reject, but he said, 'Let me have them, because these are good.' They just had me change the title block. That was it. These were just basically to start the conversation."

Eaves also dug out an even older sketch, showing a redesign of the Klingon bird-of-prey, which he'd produced during his earliest days on

► The redesigned battlecruiser was only destined to appear on the viewscreen in the simulator, when Kirk took the *Kobayashi Maru* test.



STAR TREK when he joined the *DEEP SPACE NINE* art department. Eaves had no more involvement, and admits that he didn't even notice the Klingon ships in the sequence when he finally saw the movie.

OVER TO ILM

Despite Chambliss's positive response, the VFX team at ILM never saw Eaves's drawings, and when it came to designing the model that would appear in the film, ILM's VFX art director Alex Jaeger started over. As he explains, they were handed drawings for the *Enterprise*, the *Narada* and Spock's Jellyfish ship, but director JJ Abrams was always keen to see ILM's take on the material.

"At this point in the production," Jaeger says, "JJ wanted us to refer to our own 'grounded in reality' style. I didn't have a ton of interaction with Scott other than the initial turnover of art and the work we did on the *Enterprise* details. From then on JJ gave direct feedback to us as Scott would not be on the show through much of post-production. That is typical of most production designers on big VFX films like this."

Jaeger says that for all of the ships in the 2009

reboot JJ's directive was to "do the *STAR TREK* you've always wanted." Jaeger wanted to stay true to the existing design and to make sure that it would be instantly recognizable, so he began by pulling up Matt Jefferies' original designs for the Klingon battlecruiser. More precisely, he turned to the more detailed version that had been produced for *STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE*, which ILM had used in several films. "Although this was a 'reboot'," he says, "we were all very sensitive to the source material and wanted to pay our respects to not only the fans, but also the original designers. So we usually started with the original shapes and layouts and updated around those features."

ROBUST AND AGGRESSIVE

Jaeger took a basic model of the original design and rendered some views that showed all the essential elements of the ship. He then began to paint over this in Photoshop. As he remembers, his goal was to make the new version of the ship look more muscular. "I wanted to give it a more robust appearance as a battleship and also add more scale cues to it. So I started by strengthening the

▼ Jaeger's initial drawings also showed the ship from the underside. The more curved design echoes the shapes of the bird-of-prey.





▲ Jaeger's drawings were passed on to ILM's CG modellers. Once they had constructed the basic shapes, they passed a set of renders back to him so he could add the paint scheme and show how he wanted the ship to be illuminated.

neck visually while still trying to maintain its original skinny main structure."

At this point the Klingons actually appeared in the film, in a sequence where Nero escapes from prison on Rura Penthe. Very little work had been done on the look of the Klingons but new helmets had been designed for them. These helmets had distinctive bony notches down the middle of the forehead, which echoed the Klingons' own brow ridges. Jaeger picked up on this and added a series of vertebrae to the battlecruiser's neck.

"I pulled some cues from the helmets and the makeup. I added these vertebrae off the side of the neck but kept the central tunnel thin. Once the guns were added, the vertebrae became a more functional turret support – like bunkers." He carried

the idea of exposed vertebrae on further down the rest of the neck, adding 'bony' sections to it. He also made the neck heavier as it joined the wing body.

KLINGON UNITY

Jaeger also wanted to tie the look of his battlecruiser into the design of the other classic Klingon ship, the bird-of-prey. "I really love the swooping lines of the bird-of-prey," he says. "So I added a bit more of that feel to its larger brother with a smoother connection between the different body masses and a more pronounced curve over the rear wing connection." He also added prominent guns at the junctions between the shoulders and the wings, and between the wings



and the warp nacelles. "In general," he says, "the robust nature of the Klingons as a race led me to make this ship feel more imposing and dangerous, visually as well as functionally."

Jaeger produced two drawings that showed top and bottom three-quarter views of the revised ship. Once these were approved by Abrams, ILM started to build the CG model. When this was half complete, it was handed back to Jaeger who went over it in Photoshop to suggest a color scheme and how it might be illuminated.

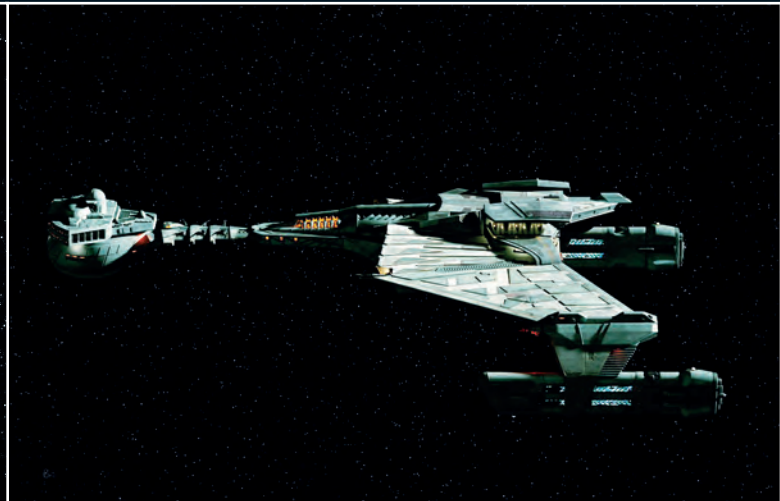
"The paint scheme," Jaeger says, "was also borrowed heavily from the bird-of-prey look." The hull was given a grey-green color, the nacelles glowed cyan, and in a significant departure from what had gone before, Jaeger added various

orange light sources, indicating that there were power sources inside the ship. During the modelling process the panel lines were also made more pronounced, emphasising the Klingons' robust nature. "It was all part of an effort to update the look and feel of this 'old but new' universe we were going for with the new series," Jaeger says. "Much of the scale came from the new lighting and smaller frequency details like windows, flood lights and detail within the nacelles."

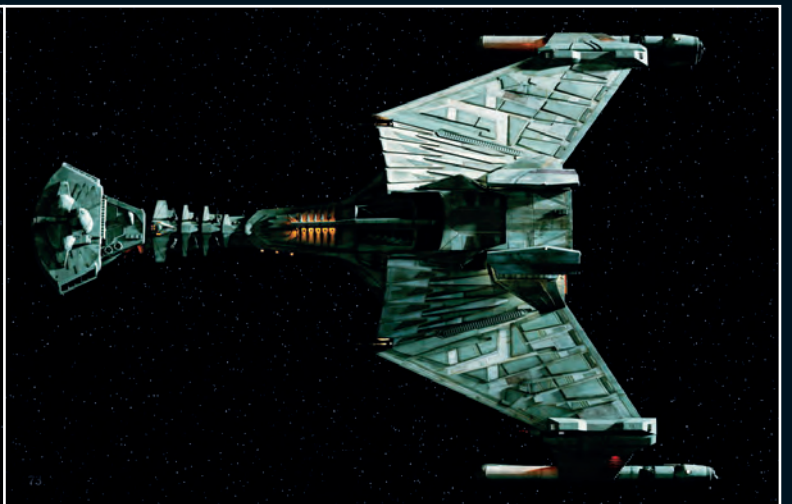
Jaeger remembers that Abrams greeted his version of the ship with enthusiasm. "JJ loved it, and it went through without revisions." The finished ship only appears in a handful of shots in the film, but is a significant addition to the Klingon fleet and a memorable redesign of a classic *STAR TREK* ship.



▲ Jaeger produced a second fully-colored drawing showing how the rear lit up.



▲ Once the model was complete, ILM produced an animated turntable showing it from a wide variety of angles.





THE EVOLUTION OF THE BATTLECRUISER

Matt Jefferies established a design for the Klingon ship that has been embellished and reinterpreted for 50 years.

▲ The most detailed version of the Klingon battlecruiser was built for *STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE*. It followed the architecture established by Matt Jefferies, but added much more surface detail.

The Klingon ships glimpsed in the *Kobayashi Maru* scenario in the 2009 *STAR TREK* movie were just the latest in a line of ever-evolving Klingon battlecruisers seen on screen over the preceding 40 years. The original on-screen iteration of the vessel was the *D7-class* battlecruiser, which was originally created for the third season episode 'Elaan of Troyius,' though it actually made its debut as a Romulan ship in 'The Enterprise Incident,' which was filmed later but broadcast first.

The ship was designed by art director Matt Jefferies, who based both its shape and color on a manta ray to give it a predatory feel. It was always intended to be a Klingon ship even though it was shown under Romulan control (this was later revealed to be down to a technology exchange

between the Klingons and Romulans) and it boasted an array of weapons including nacelle-mounted disruptor cannons and photon torpedoes. Jefferies set the template for many other Klingon ships that were to follow, including an elongated neck leading to the command section and a main hull set into the winged body.

A new six-foot model of the *D7* was constructed by miniature experts Magicam in 1977-78 for the aborted *STAR TREK: PHASE II* TV series. When it was decided that *STAR TREK* should instead continue in movie form, an upgraded version was designed for 1979's *STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE*. While the ship seen in the movie has many similarities to its previous iteration, production illustrator Andrew Probert and his fellow designers realised that the

ship would need much more detail to impress on the big screen. As art director Richard Taylor recalled: "We redesigned all the surface textures, the photon torpedo tube and many other details. I tried to put a kind of bird-feather design on the surface. One of the things we did with all the models was give them surface textures and interesting designs. A smooth object has no scale, so it's important in model work to find ways of creating scale."

MAKING CHANGES

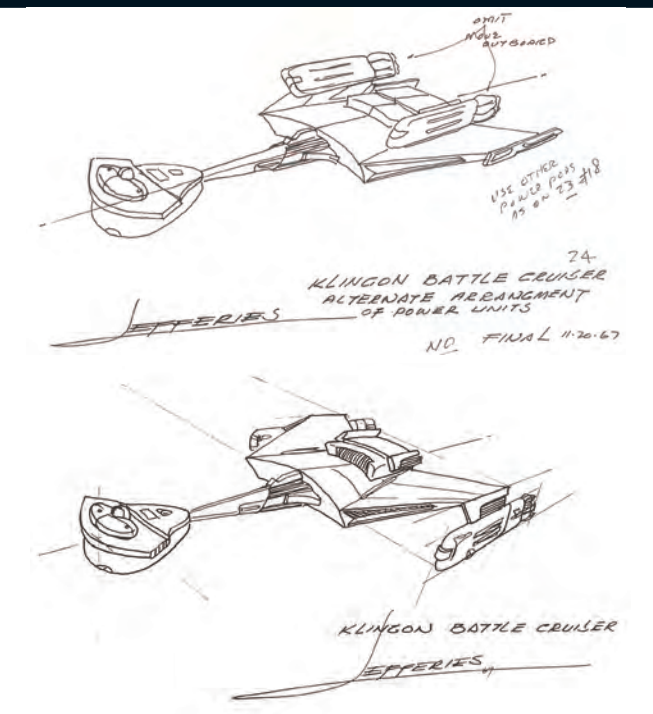
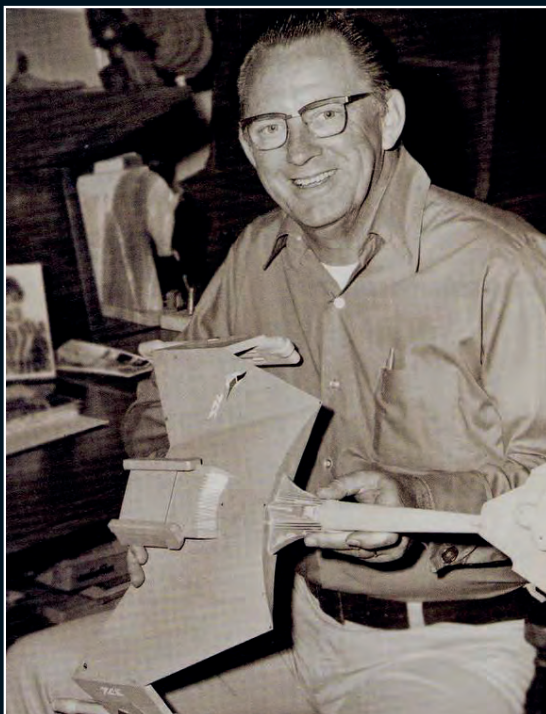
Further changes to the *D7* design evolved as the film's production process continued. The ship was colored green rather than grey and had a larger bridge dome, while special effects supervisor Douglas Trumbull told Probert to make the ship's bridge look "like the interior of a Japanese submarine." The changes meant that the ship could no longer be deemed a *D7*, and Gene Roddenberry's novelization of *THE MOTION PICTURE* confirmed it as being *K't'inga* class.

Stock footage of the *K't'inga* model was used for a handful of episodes of *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION*, but the original model was difficult to work with and *TNG*'s producers felt the need for a more modern ship. Accordingly, they tasked Rick Sternbach with designing the powerful

Vor'cha-class attack cruiser. Sternbach remembers that he wanted to keep the overall proportions of Jefferies' original design. "Right from the beginning the intent was to echo Matt Jefferies' original design. We wanted to give some sense of continuity in the evolution of Klingon warp vessels. The basic shapes were the head, long neck, wide aft body, and canted nacelles. I worked up a few variations, but tried to stay within the original proportions. It isn't hard to see that this is a Klingon design, given our art department penchant for keeping the shapes and color schemes of different cultures distinct."

The model of the *Vor'cha* was built by Greg Jein and was first seen in *TNG* episode 'Reunion.' It went on to make frequent appearances in *TNG* and *DS9*. Even larger was the *Negh'Var*-class warship, again designed by Rick Sternbach. The design made its first appearance as the future Klingon ship seen in the *TNG* finale 'All Good Things...' It then reappeared with some modifications in the *DS9* episode 'The Way of the Warrior'.

The original model of the *K't'inga* was re-used for 1991's *STAR TREK VI: THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY*, albeit with extensive modifications. Seen as Chancellor Gorkon's flagship *Kronos One*, this battlecruiser was altered to become light gray with



◀ Matt Jefferies designed the Klingon battlecruiser for *STAR TREK*'s third season as part of a deal with modelmaking company AMT.

► This rare photograph shows the TMP model of the battlecruiser from the underside, revealing the inclusion of a large Klingon symbol.



maroon paneling and gold accents, along with glowing nacelles. The ship was “very regal” according to visual effects art director Bill George, who added that it was designed to contrast with the *Enterprise*. “The *Enterprise* is smooth, monochromatic and cool, while the Klingon ship is “adorned, ostentatious and warm.”

The original *K't'inga* model was used in the *DEEP SPACE NINE* episode ‘The Way of the Warrior’ and the *VOYAGER* episode ‘Flashback’. On *DS9* it was supplemented with other versions made from model kits and from the original molds for the 1970s TV series.

Greg Jein took the opportunity to build an upgraded version of the original *D7* for the episode

‘Trials and Tribble-ations.’ This new model was slightly more detailed than the original 1960s version and had additional lighting.

Later, a similar CG version of the *D7* was created for use in the remastered versions of the original series, and the team took the opportunity to add a bird pattern to the underside for its appearance in ‘The Enterprise Incident.’

A NEW ERA

A CG version of the *K't'inga* was built for use in later seasons of *DEEP SPACE NINE* and also made an appearance in *VOYAGER*. This model also appeared in the *STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE* episode ‘Unexpected’. Vorok’s battlecruiser was initially designed by John Eaves as a *D4* class starship, appropriate for the earlier time period. But when the producers rejected the design, there was no time to create a new model so the CG model of the *K't'inga* was used instead – creating something of a continuity headache, since this class of ship now appeared to have been in service for over 200 years.

Eaves and Doug Drexler also designed several other Klingon ships for *ENTERPRISE* that were clearly inspired by Jefferies’ original *D7*, including the raptor from ‘Sleeping Dogs’, the ship used by the augments in ‘Affliction’ and ‘Divergence’, and the *D5* battlecruiser. After appearing as a Klingon freighter with deuterium tanks in ‘Marauders’, the *D5* appeared as battlecruiser minus the tanks in three later episodes.

Eaves suggested using his design for the abandoned *D4* as the battlecruiser seen in the 2009 version of *STAR TREK*, with the ship’s final design created by Alex Jaeger. The ship was

▼ *TNG*’s *Vor’cha* and *Negh’var* classes were designed to be updated versions of Jefferies’ classic design and maintained the same basic architectural principles.





◀ The raptor was the first new Klingon ship to appear on *STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE*. It was designed by John Eaves, and the design was refined by Doug Drexler who built an initial CG model. It was intended to be a smaller, more primitive precursor to the *D7*.

actually dubbed the 'warbird' rather than battlecruiser in the film, tying in to the term used in *ENTERPRISE*'s debut episode 'Broken Bow'. According to co-creator Brannon Braga, this was originally the result of the writers confusing the Klingon bird-of-prey and the Romulan warbird.

Five of these ships are seen in *STAR TREK*'s *Kobayashi Maru* training scenario. During the scene, the Klingons decloak and fire photon torpedoes at the starship commanded by Kirk. Though the training scenario ensures that the Klingons maintain shields as they fire, Kirk inserts a sub-routine that cancels out the shields – allowing

Kirk to destroy them with photon strikes. The Klingon ships were also going to feature in a scene in which 10 of the vessels encircle the *Narada* when Nero first arrives in the past.

Most recently, a Klingon ship referred to as a *D7* battlecruiser has appeared in *STAR TREK: DISCOVERY*, ambushing Captain Lorca's shuttle in the episode 'Choose Your Pain.' Many of the Klingon ships in this era retain echoes of Jefferies' original design but are a radical departure. However, after 50 years it seems unlikely that the classic Klingon battlecruiser has made its last appearance.

▼ *ENTERPRISE* featured two other ships that drew their inspiration from Jefferies' design for the *D7*: the small ship captured by Soong's augments (left) and the *D5* (right), which had a variant that carried tanks.



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