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New McF Dragons out -- quick review

Posted by L - 2007/11/11 07:29

So most of you know I'm a big fan of this Dragons line, they're fantastic figures for fantasy fans generally (Say that five times fast!) but they're also mostly in scale with 28mm figures so they're particularly great for folks like us.

The latest series is a bit of a let-down in some respects, since two of the four carded figs are essentially repaints with only minor tweaks (and the new colors on them are worse than the original schemes). But two of the figures are mostly new, and adequate. But the real deal in this wave is the boxed set.

The two carded figures -- Ice Dragon and Warrior Dragon -- are pretty interesting. There are two paint schemes on the warrior, a rare blue-and-orange version and a far more common grey-green-and-brown version. That latter one makes him a neat sorta forest dragon, companion to elves and druids and such. His great curling horns almost look like they're wooden, and his curling, arching pose sort of suggests nature-gone-wild. I wasn't crazy about him at first, but he IS kinda cool looking.

The Ice dragon is going to be very popular with people looking for wintery-themed stuff -- he's got clear icicles hanging from his wings, neck, arms, etc. He's not quite as much of a white dragon proxy as the previous McF Ice dragon was, but he's still pretty great. And he's in a classic, 1st ed. AD&D pose, very like a Dragon magazine cover circa 1987 or so. He's maybe not super-exciting, but for all of you with ice caverns out there, you could do worse....

The big ticket this time around is the Hydra boxed set. I posted a pic awhile back, this is a massive sea wyrm with three great heads (and no legs -- his bottom half just sort of spirals, serpent-like, into a curling tail). He's funky, definitely not a traditional beastie. He's got extra wings, which is something I haven't seen before -- his main wings, and then vestigial-lookin' things trailing behind them. It mostly works. It suggests some strange medieval woodcarving of a sea-dragon. He's also HUGE -- towers over the others, only the tiniest bit smaller than the WOTC Colossal Red. (for around half the price, or less, depending on where you get him -- Bigbadtoystore had him for \$35, but he could be \$30 or even \$25 at TRU)

EDIT: Found the old pic. It's here: http://www.figures.com/databases/news/actionfigures/31/505.jpg

You'd need a lot of room to use this guy in a game, and you'd need VERY powerful players to take him on. Then again, there's no INSISTING that he's evil, since he's not an iconic D&D type. He could always be a strange ally for the heroes, or just the catalyst for their Quest. Or he could just do a damn fine job of setting the mood for a coastal-themed adventure. Either way, he's worth picking up.

New McF Dragons out -- quick review
Posted by jackattack - 2007/11/11 13:43

I'm going to do my impression of a Greek chorus and agree with you a lot.

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I'm probably less enthused about the Warrior Clan dragon, but I'm less enthused about Warrior Clan dragons in general, and with other armored, shackled, or saddled dragons. I don't want dragon figures that describe a particular element of McF's storyline, I want dragon figures that can be slotted into my own (or others') storylines.

The ice dragon is very nice, and the base is typical of McF's best -- bases that you can put on top of your DF or your battlemat or your terrain with minimum clash.

I find the boxed Hydra to be very Harryhausen (which is a good thing). There is just nothing about this figure I don't like, except possibly the size. It is a bit large for many gaming tables, and for most DF set-ups.

(And that's what's important here, how well things work with DF...)

Do you have any thoughts on the upcoming Series 8 (The Rise of Man), due in Jan 2008? http://www.spawn.com/toys/series.aspx?series=367

New McF Dragons out -- quick review Posted by L - 2007/11/11 21:34

They continue the trend of "hmmm... hmmmm?" for me. Not the best they've done, but not bland at least.

The "dangling crazy" dragon is one of those "just might be crazy enough to work... or not" items. Just so bizarre I won't regret getting it, but also one I don't see really loving.

The water one is strangely thin, and I don't like the people (as with series 5, not my thing).

The big hulk on the cliffside is pretty neat, if a bit bulky.

The leaping one has a neat face sculpt and looks good, but his bizarre balletic pose takes some getting used to.

All in all, it gets more credit than series 7 since it isn't half repaints, but it's certainly not my favorite wave. May be my least favorite wave.

For me, nothing really tops wave 4, and some highlights from the first three waves. Five was a letdown, and they never really recovered for me. Six gave us a neat warrior and ice dragon, but all in all I think of the series as peaking at 4.

L

New McF Dragons out -- quick review

Posted by jackattack - 2007/11/12 21:28

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Hunter Dragon Clan 2

This one is definitely one of the weirder ones they've done. A dragon with a maybe-bat-like face, a set of straight horns and a set of curling horns, and lower tusks, dangling from a tree branch by its tail while two tiny figures attack it from the branch. (The dragon is meant to be very large, or the figures are brownies with delusions of grandeur.)

The thing I like least is actually the tree trunk -- it is flat on one side, rather than sculpted around the entire circumference. This limits display and play options. It also sits on a clear plastic base with a black rod supporting the dragon, which further limits play options. (Unless they intend to add a forest floor base before production, perhaps with more suicidal brownies.)

It's well-executed, but it is definitely weird.

Eternal Dragon Clan 6

Mostly greys and blue, a very... muscular dragon with serious attitude -- this one looks mean. The pose has the dragon looking (and reaching) back at something (not included with figure) while climbing(?) a spire of jumbled rocks that features a waterfall, with one foot on a rock in the middle of a "pool" of water. The "pool" is unbordered, so will look a bit odd sitting on top of your DF lake, but modders should have little difficulty adding a border of stone, or perhaps adding material to make the base a square that will slot into a lake setup (although the water material still won't match).

I think the pose would work better if the dragon were more sinewy, but that might have lost a bit of the menace that the figure conveys. I'm reserving final judgement until I can see it in person.

Water Dragon Clan 7

A wingless purple dragon with beige underside and webbing on the arms and hands; one arm's webbing has been pierced by a harpoon from which an armored figure dangles. I will reiterate (again) my preference against including people in these displays -- the scale is never right, the person(s) is (are) usually difficult to remove or ignore, and they only serve to discourage the customer from using the display as a game prop.

The base confuses me a bit. The dragon stands on hind legs on a water base, with splash sculpted around each foot. Is the dragon just touching down (and from what, it clearly can't fly), is it standing on top of the water, or is the water supposed to be really shallow?

There may have been an interesting idea behind this, but I find the sculpt boring, with a couple of additional flaws that make it a non-buy item for me.

Berserker Dragon Clan 6

This is a good design and paint job. Grey and green and yellow, an armored brute with heavy scales and good proportion supported completely on a post. The execution is excellent.

The pose, though, is odd -- the dragon seems to be in the middle of a running leap, which makes no sense whatsoever given the (position of the) wings. I've tried to rationalize this as the dragon taking off or landing or even pouncing, but it just doesn't convey any of those actions; this is a dragon that is

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running on its hind legs with its wings half-folded behind it. Again, weird.

New McF Dragons out -- quick review

Posted by L - 2007/11/13 05:31

Yeah, I'm with you on that awkward leap pose on the Berserker. Nice dragon in other respects, but wtf?

And the water dragon, I realized, what kills me are the lack of wings. They seem to be folded up, but whatever the situation, I just don't like such anthropomorphic dragons -- he's practically a purplish-blue man standing in water. Somehow awkward and dull at the same time.

The Eternal one keeps growing on me, though. I really like the pose. The bulk is odd, but it may work.

I'm looking forward to/curious about the next stuff McF will be releasing. First we've got the new fantasy line which will include more dragons here and there, but also other types. And then we've got the "minidragons" coming, reissues of the previous Dragons figures (some of them, at any rate) in a smaller scale. Might make them even cooler with DF -- right now they're all gargantuan, so a few that aren't would be neat.

L

New McF Dragons out -- quick review

Posted by jackattack - 2007/11/13 16:56

I'm okay with wingless dragons (they really dropped the ball with their Oriental dragon) in moderation, as well as wyvern-winged dragons. I think the idea with the water dragon is that it started as a wyvern configuration (forelegs as wings), but the webbing has moved to the top of the arm and the fingers. Leaving some form of vestigial structure would have got the point across better.

Someday I'd like to see a wave that is based on distinctive real-world reptiles.

A crocodilian dragon would have a long snout, short legs, and powerful wings to lift its bulk.

A basilisk-lizard dragon would have a slight build, small forelegs, lots of fin (rather than spines), and small quick wings.

A chameleon dragon would have pop eyes, a long tongue, and might be painted to blend in with its background.

A cobra dragon would have a massive (spined?) hood, but might have small closely-spaced legs about halfway down its overall length.

A tortoise dragon would have a beak snout, and massive segmented plates on its belly and its back.

A horned toad dragon would have back-swept spines all over its skull and back.

A gliding lizard dragon would have an oval shape to its wingspan, or wing-skin between the front and rear legs on either side.

You get the idea.

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And I know it's not a lizard, but a poison dart frog dragon would be interesting. Ooh, and a serious version of Phoglio's "growf" dragon perhaps the little version's mother.
New McF Dragons out quick review Posted by Ghenghis Ska - 2007/11/14 09:54
I have to say the Jack Frost from the Twisted Christmass is more interesting than some of the recent dragons.
New McF Dragons out quick review Posted by jackattack - 2007/11/14 15:17
It's a terrific sculpt, but the scale is all over the place. The trees coming out of its shoulders are tremendous in comparison to the buildings at its base, and the club in its hands is much bigger than the trees growing out of its shoulders. And the buildings make it difficult to use as a game prop, unless it is a village of pixies or something.
New McF Dragons out quick review Posted by Ghenghis Ska - 2007/11/14 18:36
Or just paint them white, the buildings
New McF Dragons out quick review Posted by jackattack - 2007/11/14 19:30
I had honestly not considered that.
Curse my non-modding ways! Curse them, I say!