

XS-Models 1/32 Pond Racer – Kit review

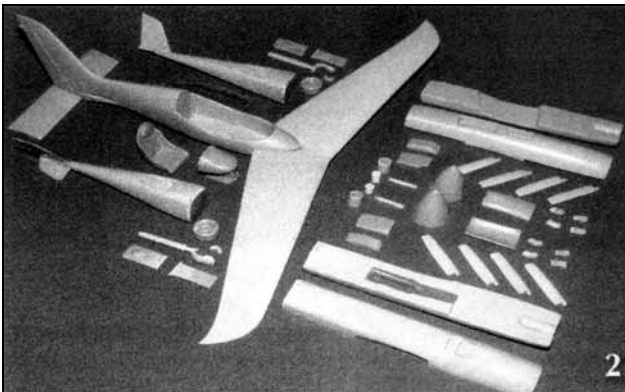
Anders Bruun



XS-models kit "**Pond Racer #21**". 1/32 kit, containing 35 resin parts, ten white metal parts, twenty etched parts, two vacform canopies, seven pieces of various rods and tubing, an instrument panel film and complete decals. Available from XS-models, www.xs-models.com, Neuer Weg 18, D-38302 Wolfenbüttel, Germany (phone +49 53 3197530, fax +49 53 31975353, info@XS-models.com)

The famous/infamous 1988 Pond Racer has been made in kit form before, probably around 20 years ago, by the Czechoslovak resin producer NKR Models. The XS-models kit shows some relationship with that kit, but there are many changes and the level of detail and quality of production is much better.

The complex construction of the original plane leads to several kit engineering difficulties. This means that even though the central fuselage and the wing are single parts, the main basic airframe consists of nine parts. Each of the engine booms is assembled from three parts. The front halves are horizontally split and lock the wing in position when assembled. The rear halves are separate. It will be very important to line everything up and make sure that everything is straight and parallel. This includes straightening the wing, which (at least on my example) is a bit warped, by using some mild heat. You will need quite a bit of filler, because there are many joints



The detail is a bit soft in a couple of places, for example the exhaust fairings and around the control surfaces. In my view the biggest shortcoming of the kit is the radiator outlets, which are merely holes down into the top of the

booms. I think most builders will want hollow out the radiator ducts forwards. This doesn't look overly difficult, but will involve removing quite a lot of material and making a new section of skinning to form the top of the duct.

Looking at the small parts, there are a lot of nice things, but also some that are a bit disappointing. The etched instrument panel, harness and centre console looks great, but I think there should be a couple of side panels too? My kit included two seats – it is the simple ribbed one that should be used, not the bucket seat. The top of the instrument panel part looks very shapeless, but it is correct – this was just cloth on the real plane. The metal landing gear legs and the resin gear doors look very nice, but the wheels and tires are not convincing. Some scoops are supplied in both resin and etched metal, so that the builder can choose. The rather prominent stainless exhaust panels on top of the booms are supplied as etched parts, which have to be bent to fit the cross section of the booms. This will look very good, but I guess they will require careful adjustment.

Casting quality is relatively good, but I found some bubbles, particularly in the bottom of the fuselage, and the wing and the tail surfaces were a bit warped. There are also some rather visible mould joints, for example along the booms. The two canopies, of different thickness, are clear, but a bit softly moulded. The decals look very good.

The kit parts match Taichiro Yamashita's drawings well, with a couple of exceptions.

- The fins at the ends of the tail booms look too big and the lower ones have too little surface at the rear tips. However, the kit parts match early photos of the plane well, and these surfaces were modified during the plane's career and you should check with photos of the particular version that you want to build.
- The chord of the horizontal tail is noticeably too short, also when you compare with photos – however, this is a minor error and unless you compare with photos or drawings you won't notice.
- The cowlings look more bulged in the drawings. I think this really has to do with the middle parts of the booms, which should have flatter sides, tops and bottoms than the kit parts. This will not be too difficult to correct, since there is hardly any detail in these areas.

Conclusion

This is an ambitious kit, which if properly built will result in a very eye-catching model. However, it's not a kit for the novice. The complicated airframe configuration and slightly awkward parts layout means that assembling the fuselage will require very careful aligning and adjusting, and quite a bit of filler – but if you buy a 1/32 resin kit you probably know what you are getting in to!

References

You can find some great Dutch video coverage of the plane on YouTube, search for "pond racer skybound". There's an interesting Flight Magazine article, including a cutaway drawing, at <http://tinyurl.com/34w3428>

Thanks to XS-Models for the review sample!