

FORTNIGHTLY

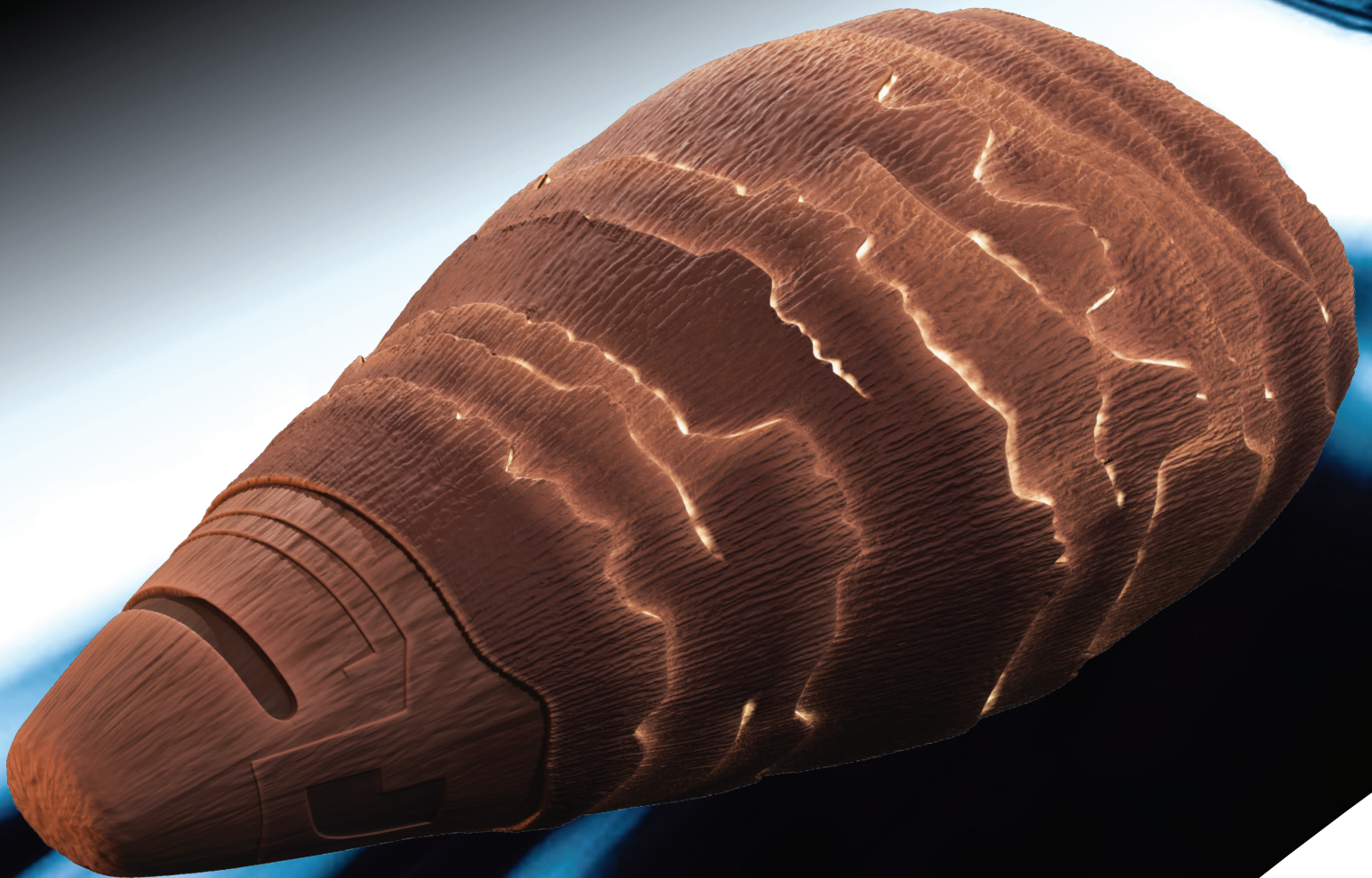
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STAR TREK™

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GOMTUU

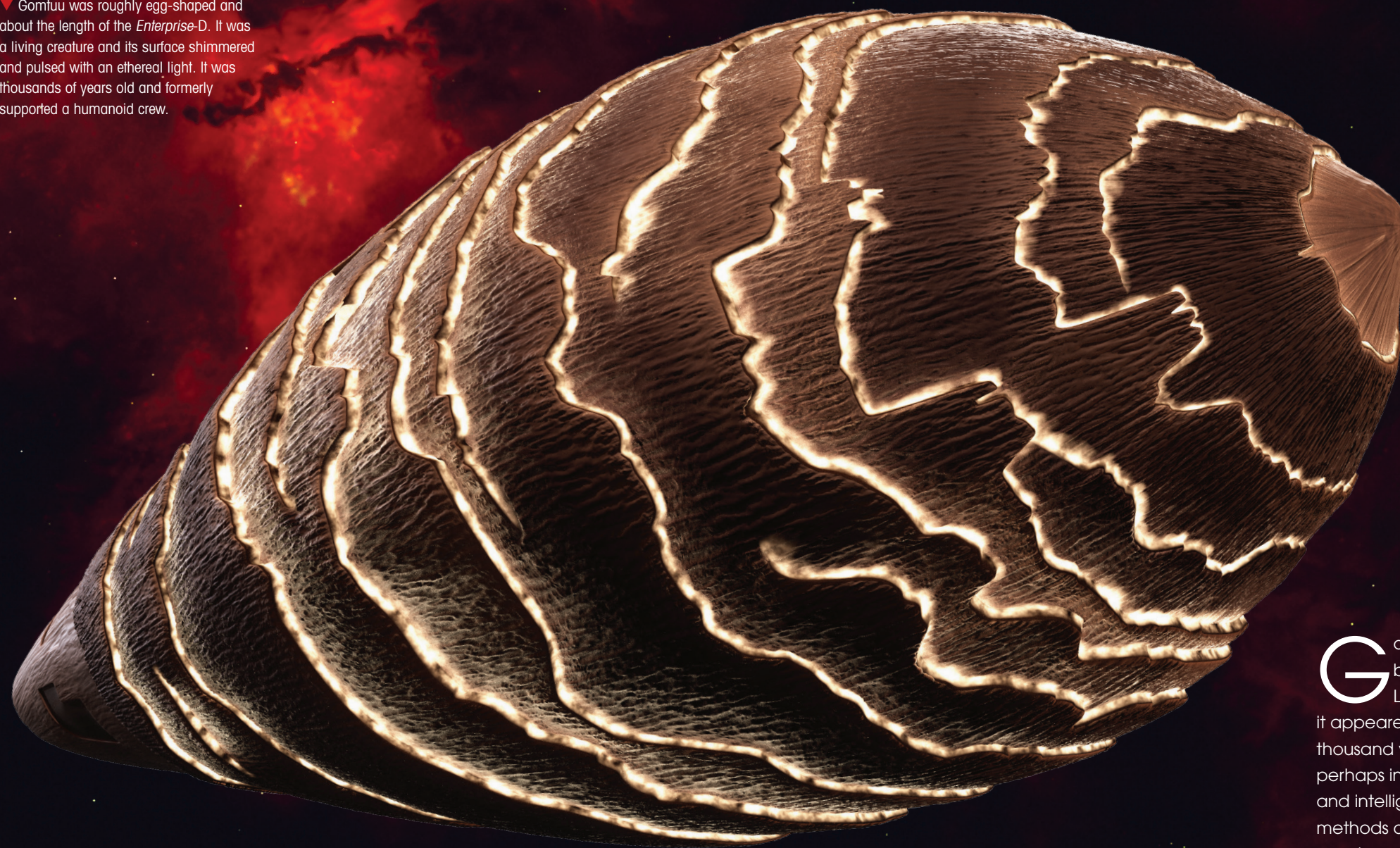
TYPE: LIVING STARSHIP

ABILITIES: TELEPATHIC

LENGTH: 600 METERS

WEAPON: ENERGY PULSE

▼ Gomtuu was roughly egg-shaped and about the length of the *Enterprise-D*. It was a living creature and its surface shimmered and pulsed with an ethereal light. It was thousands of years old and formerly supported a humanoid crew.



Gomtuu, or 'Tin Man' as it was first labelled by Starfleet, was an organic spaceship. Little was known about its origins, but it appeared to have been 'born' at least a thousand years earlier far from Federation space, perhaps in another galaxy. It was self-aware and intelligent, but did not respond to traditional methods of communication using linguacode or universal translation. It did, however, have impressive telepathic abilities, and could interact

telepathically with an attuned humanoid over a distance of several light years.

Gomtuu could travel at warp speed, and had a teleportation device and impressive weapons capabilities. When deploying one of its weapons the creature revolved, emitting a blue light that transformed into hundreds of streams of small pulses; these pulses could completely destroy a Romulan warbird. In fact, the weapon was so powerful that it could seriously damage any vessels that were nearby, not just its target.

Gomtuu could also produce an energy wave that had the ability to propel two vessels 3.8 billion kilometers through space, and could generate a forcefield sophisticated enough to prevent the use of Starfleet transporter systems.

COOPERATIVE EXISTENCE

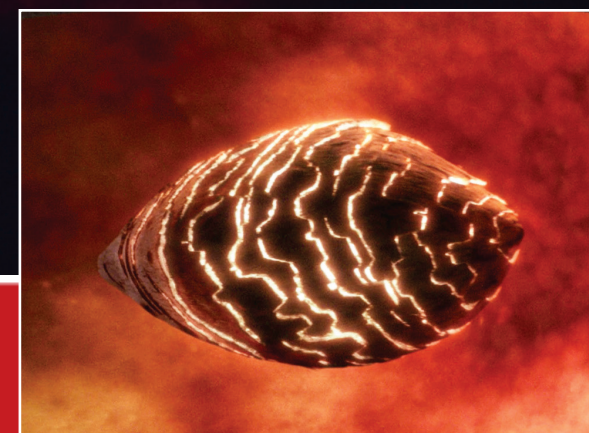
It appeared that Gomtuu's original purpose was to act as a spacefaring vessel, and it functioned symbiotically and telepathically with its crew. Inside, Gomtuu had a Class-M environment, and the creature could manipulate its interior structure to accommodate the needs of its occupants.

Before 2367, Gomtuu had been unoccupied for at least a millennia, and little was known about its original crew. They died following an explosion in space, when fatal levels of radiation penetrated Gomtuu's outer layers.

Although Gomtuu originally worked with a crew, it was capable of acting on its own. But, as it was largely dependent on symbiotic interaction, the death of its passengers was such a traumatic

GOMTUU

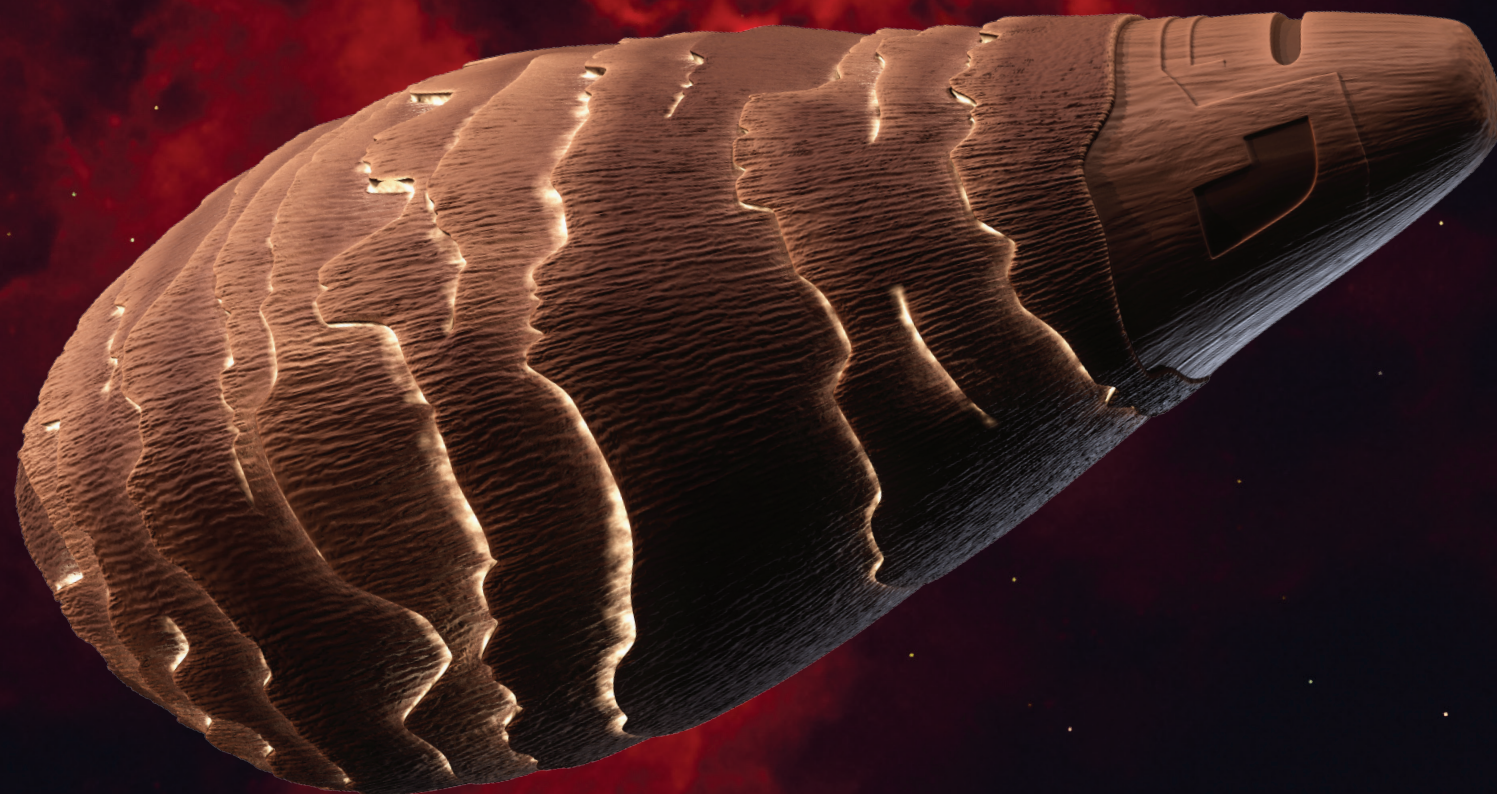
Gomtuu was the last of its species, an organic vessel of enormous power that lived symbiotically with its crew.



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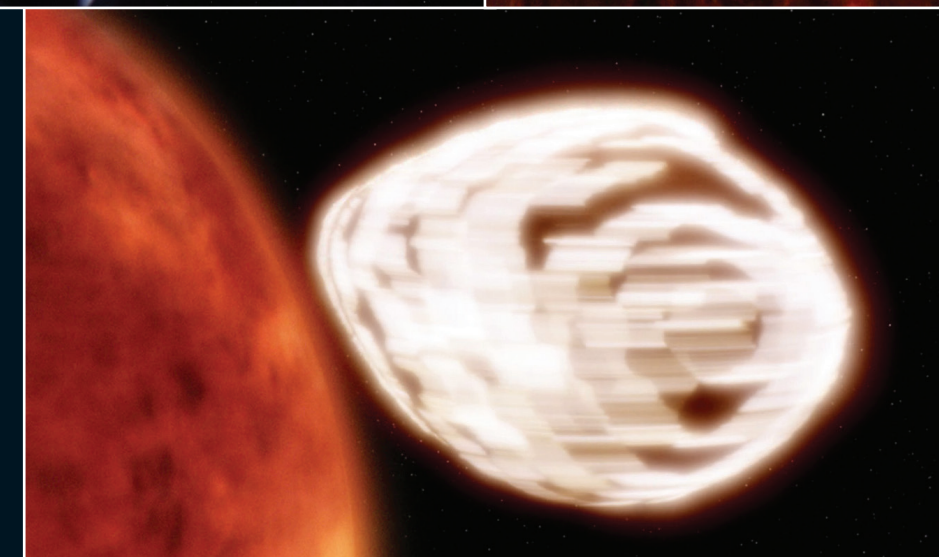
Federation scientists originally labelled the living spacecraft detected in the Beta Stromgren system as "Tin Man." It was only later, after Tam Elbrun revealed that he had been in telepathic contact with it that he said the creature referred to itself as Gomtuu.

◀ Gomtuu was both an ancient life form and a spacecraft. Its hull was formed of several overlapping layers with bright white energy light in between. Its whole appearance resembled a glowing pine cone, which gently vibrated like it was breathing. Its energy source was unknown, but it possessed enormous power.



▲ Gomtuu generated an energy wave that split into smaller pulses, before ripping through the Romulan warbird's shields and tearing the ship apart.

▶ Gomtuu could also generate a pulse of bright white light that could send a starship hurtling many light years through space without causing it damage.



▲ The interior of Gomtuu was organic-looking and dark. It could also sustain a class-M atmosphere for a humanoid crew. When Elbrun and Data rounded a curve in a corridor, they came across a membraned wall, which opened and led them into a control center. A chair then 'grew' out of the floor, which Elbrun sat in before a viewpoint emerged in front of him, giving a surrounding view of space.

▲ It was unclear if Gomtuu had been 'bred' to be a starship, or had evolved naturally to fit that role. What was clear was that without a crew, Gomtuu felt that it did not have a purpose and had become depressed. It was so lonely that it deliberately positioned itself near a star that was about to go supernova in order to commit suicide.

event for the living vessel that it still felt the loss thousands of years later.

Without a crew, Gomtuu was incredibly lonely, and it existed without purpose, swimming aimlessly in the wastes between the stars. Eventually, it became so depressed that it decided to commit suicide by taking up orbit around Beta Stromgren, a star that it knew was on the point of supernova.

Gomtuu was detected in 2366 by Starfleet's long-range automatic Vega IX probe, which had been sent to monitor Beta Stromgren's supernova. This was located 23 parsecs beyond the furthest manned explorations, and was in an area of space claimed by the Romulans.

Starfleet's attempts at subspace lingual contact with Gomtuu were unsuccessful, so Tam Elbrun, a powerful Betazoid telepath and specialist in

first contact situations, was assigned to the *U.S.S. Enterprise* NCC-1701-D and sent to establish communication. The mission was made more complicated by the fact that the Elbrun was highly-strung and had a history of mental instability. What was more, the Romulans had also detected Gomtuu and were determined to be the first ones to make contact.

ATTACK WARNING

When the Romulan warbird failed to get a response from Gomtuu to their attempts at communication, they decided to attack it. Elbrun was horrified by this development and telepathically warned Gomtuu of the danger. Gomtuu unleashed an energy wave that tore the warbird apart and also damaged the *Enterprise-D*.

Captain Picard was furious with Elbrun for endangering his crew, but with another warbird on the way, Picard had no choice other than to trust Elbrun. He wanted to be beamed over to Gomtuu, as he believed this offered him the best chance of establishing full telepathic contact.

Once on board Gomtuu, Elbrun was briefly overwhelmed when it transmitted a lifetime of experience to him in a few seconds, but their relationship ultimately proved mutually beneficial. The two of them decided that their survival depended on each other, and they left Beta Stromgren together. Elbrun provided Gomtuu with an alternative to suicide, and Gomtuu's tranquil and soothing nature calmed the highly-strung Elbrun, providing him with the peaceful, isolated atmosphere for which he yearned.

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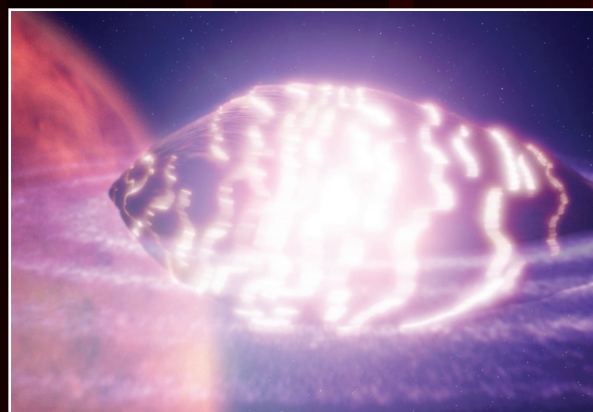
Tam Elbrun was a Betazoid, who was born with telepathic abilities, unlike most of his species who developed these skills in adolescence. As a result, his extrasensory perceptions were off the scale, but he was unable to ignore the thoughts of others. This made Elbrun very sensitive, and he was hospitalized on several occasions. Later, Elbrun became a specialist in first contact scenarios involving non-humanoid life forms. He was asked to communicate with Gomtuu, but his abrasive personality meant other humanoids found it difficult to trust him.



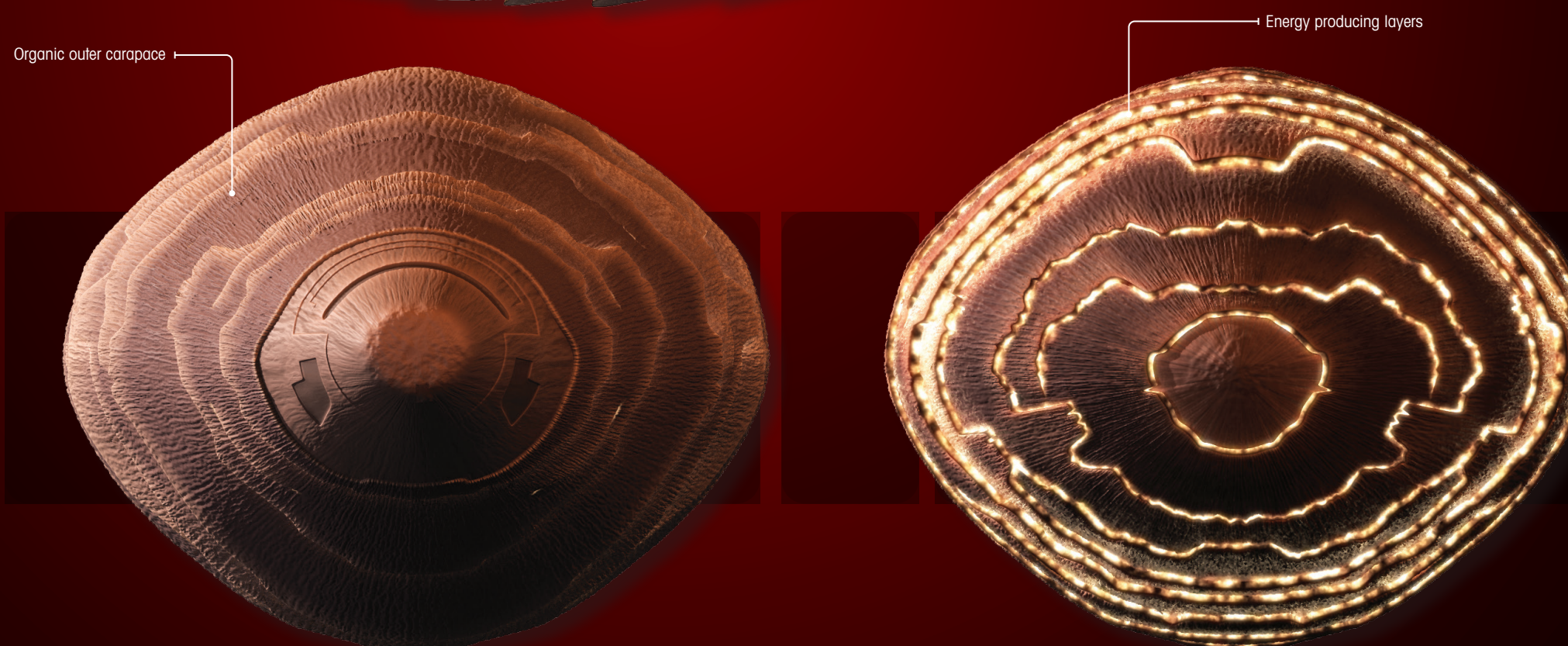
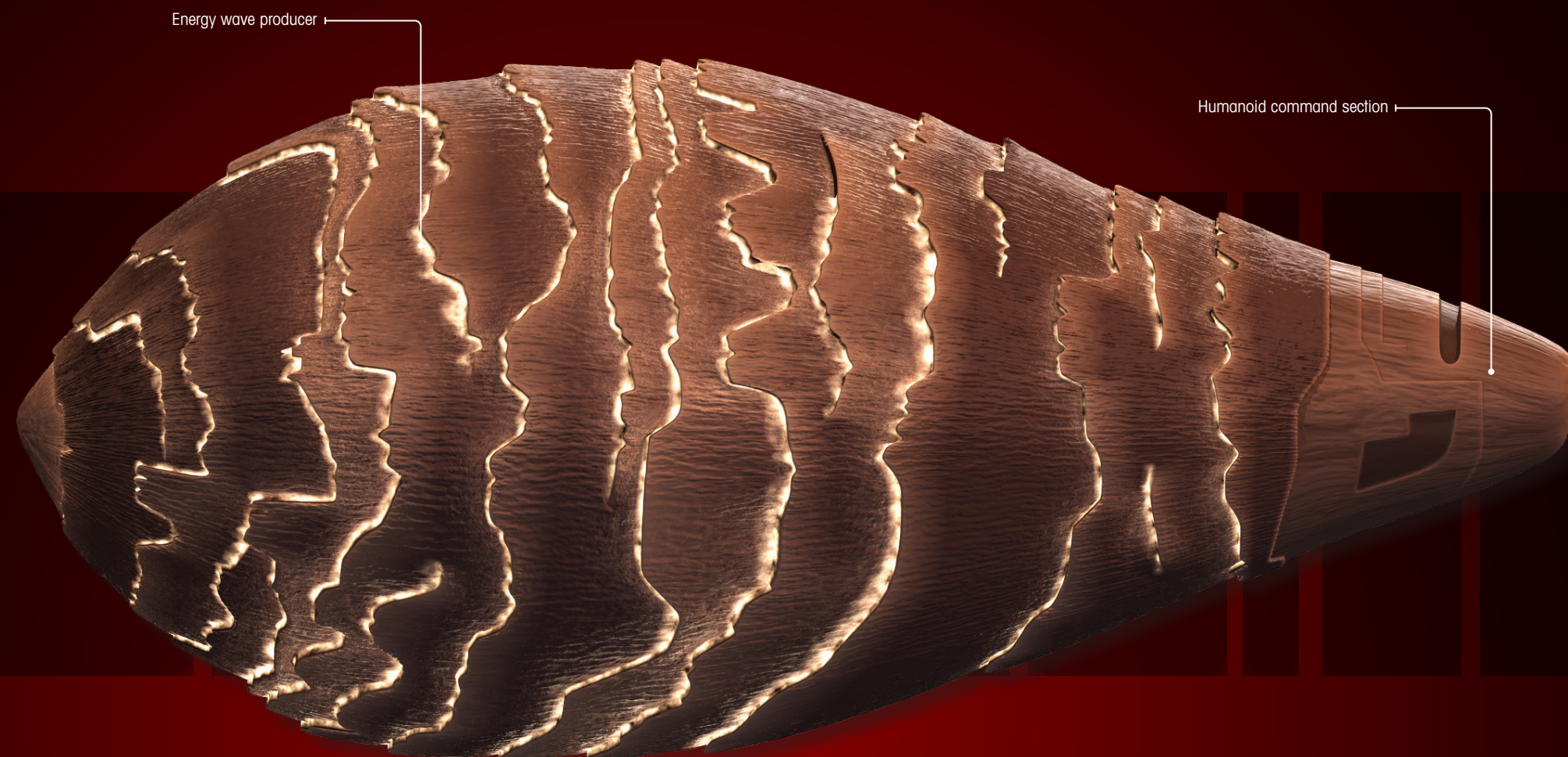
DEFENDING ITSELF

Gomtuu was capable of generating an enormous amount of power. During the encounter with the *Enterprise-D*, it used two weapons that were far more effective than anything that was available to the Federation. When Tam Elbrun telepathically warned Gomtuu that a Romulan warbird was about to attack it, the living spaceship turned its back on the approaching Romulan ship and began to glow with energy. Within seconds, a thin ring of white energy, like a shock wave, radiated away from its surface in all directions. When this immensely powerful energy ring reached the Romulan warbird, it caused the ship to explode into a million tiny shards of metal. The wall of energy then began to dissipate, and by the time it reached the *Enterprise-D* much of its power had faded. It still caused the Starfleet ship to shake violently and many of its major systems failed, but its structural integrity remained undamaged.

Later, Gomtuu unleashed another type of energy pulse, similar to the first in that it radiated out in the form of bright white halos. The power generated was beyond the *Enterprise-D*'s sensor range, but it sent the ship tumbling through space and in an instance it ended up 3.8 billion kilometers away from Beta Stromgren. It was clear that Gomtuu had defensive abilities far in advance of anything known to Federation science.



▲ Both Gomtuu and Tam Elbrun found new purpose in life when they decided to remain together. Gomtuu then emitted a powerful pulse, which flung the *Enterprise-D* far away from the dying star.

**SPACE CREATURES**

Apart from Gomtuu, other spaceborne life forms encountered by Starfleet included the dikironium cloud creature, the Beta XII-A entity, the Farpoint alien, a plasma energy being known as Junior, the Crystalline Entity and the nucleogenic cloud creature.

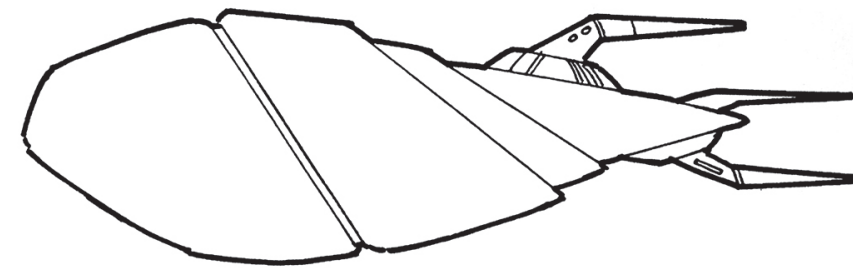
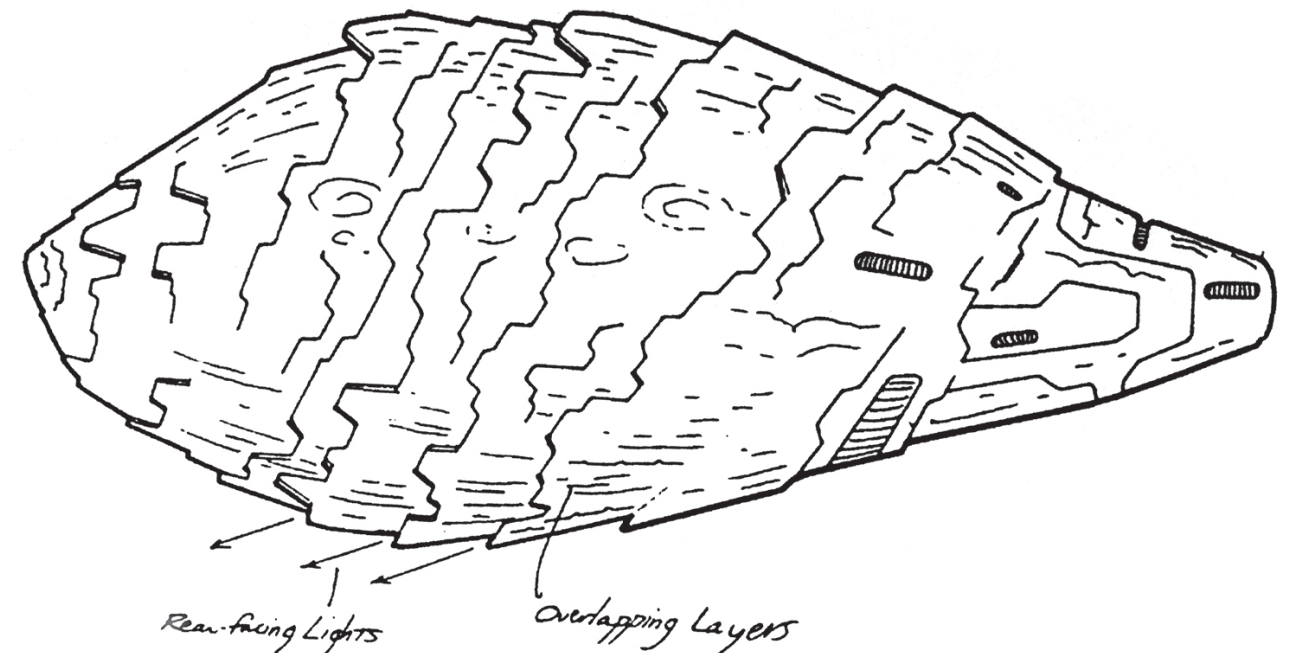
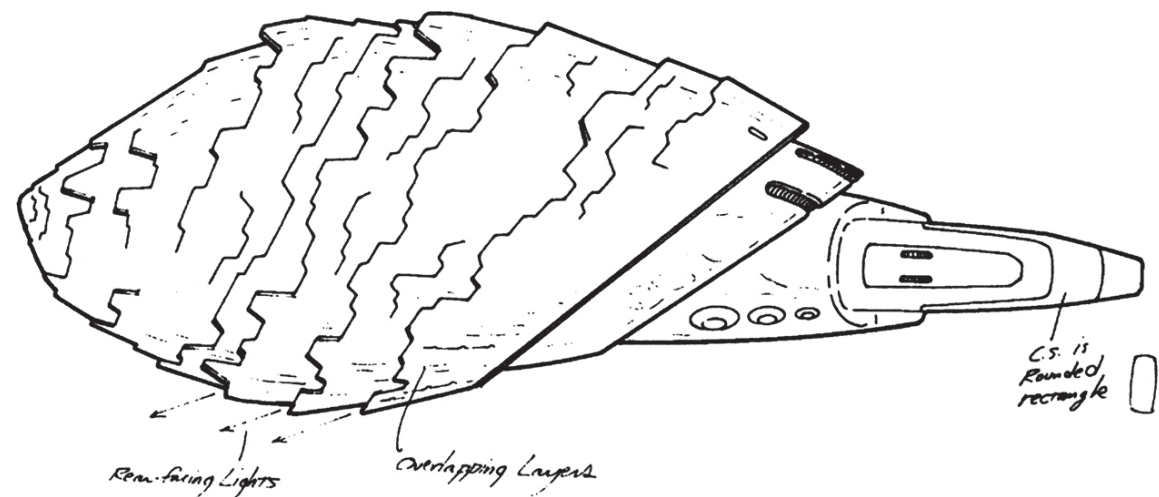
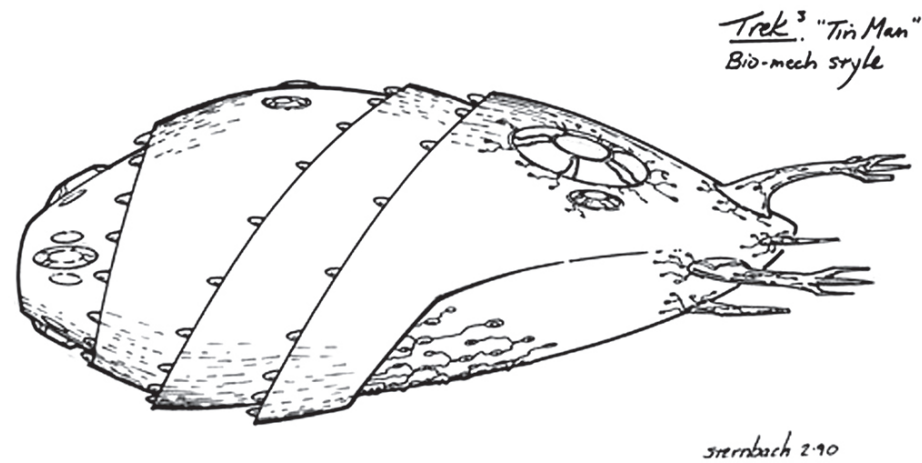
SOLITARY EXISTENCE

When Tam Elbrun was in telepathic communication with Gomtuu, he learned that thousands of years earlier there were millions of these living spaceships in existence, but it is now believed that it was the last of its kind.

DISTANT DISCOVERY

Gomtuu was originally recorded by the Vega IX probe in the Beta Stromgren system. This was about 23 parsecs beyond the borders of the Federation in the Beta Quadrant. As one parsec equalled 3.26 light years, this meant 23 parsecs was about 75 light years.

► All four of these illustrations were some of the final designs that Rick Sternbach came up with for Gomtuu. All of them shared a similar organic look, but some of them included more details that might be found on a standard starship, particularly at the front.



DESIGNING GOMTUU

When designing Gomtuu, Rick Sternbach came up with an organic look that resembled a huge sea creature with a tough outer shell.

What should a living starship look like? How do you conceive a giant sentient creature that has been born, or bred, to swim through the vastness of the universe? This was the tricky task that faced Rick Sternbach when he was asked to come up with a look for the outer appearance of Gomtuu.

The script for 'Tin Man' described the space-based entity as, "A slender object which pulses with light, (and) of organic appearance. At the aft end of the object are two glowing orange grids - clearly engines. The whole surface of the thing is networked by faintly pulsing pale white energy paths, suggesting something between lightning charges

and a human circulatory system." This information at least gave Sternbach something to go on, and a few ideas as to what direction he should take.

As always, Sternbach began by making a few quick sketches without any definite goal in mind aside from satisfying a few basic requirements. He wanted to give the producers a few

quick ideas to see which design direction they favored, and then he would refine them later. This process helped Sternbach to focus in on a design that the producers wanted, rather than wasting time by drawing up detailed sketches of ideas that the producers did not like.

FINAL DESIGNS

Eventually, the design of Gomtuu was narrowed down to four similar alternatives, which looked similar to a cross between a snail's shell and a pine cone. "On the final designs, I think I was going for something armored, something that might look like a creature with tough re-growable organic plating," said Sternbach. "They were like some sort of critter that might molt and reform its outer layers. I thought of them as a combination of

an armadillo and a sea cucumber or a pine cone. I wanted the details of their appearance to suggest biological functions. For example, the final designs had glowing bits visible between the plates, which could be interpreted as propulsive energy emitters."

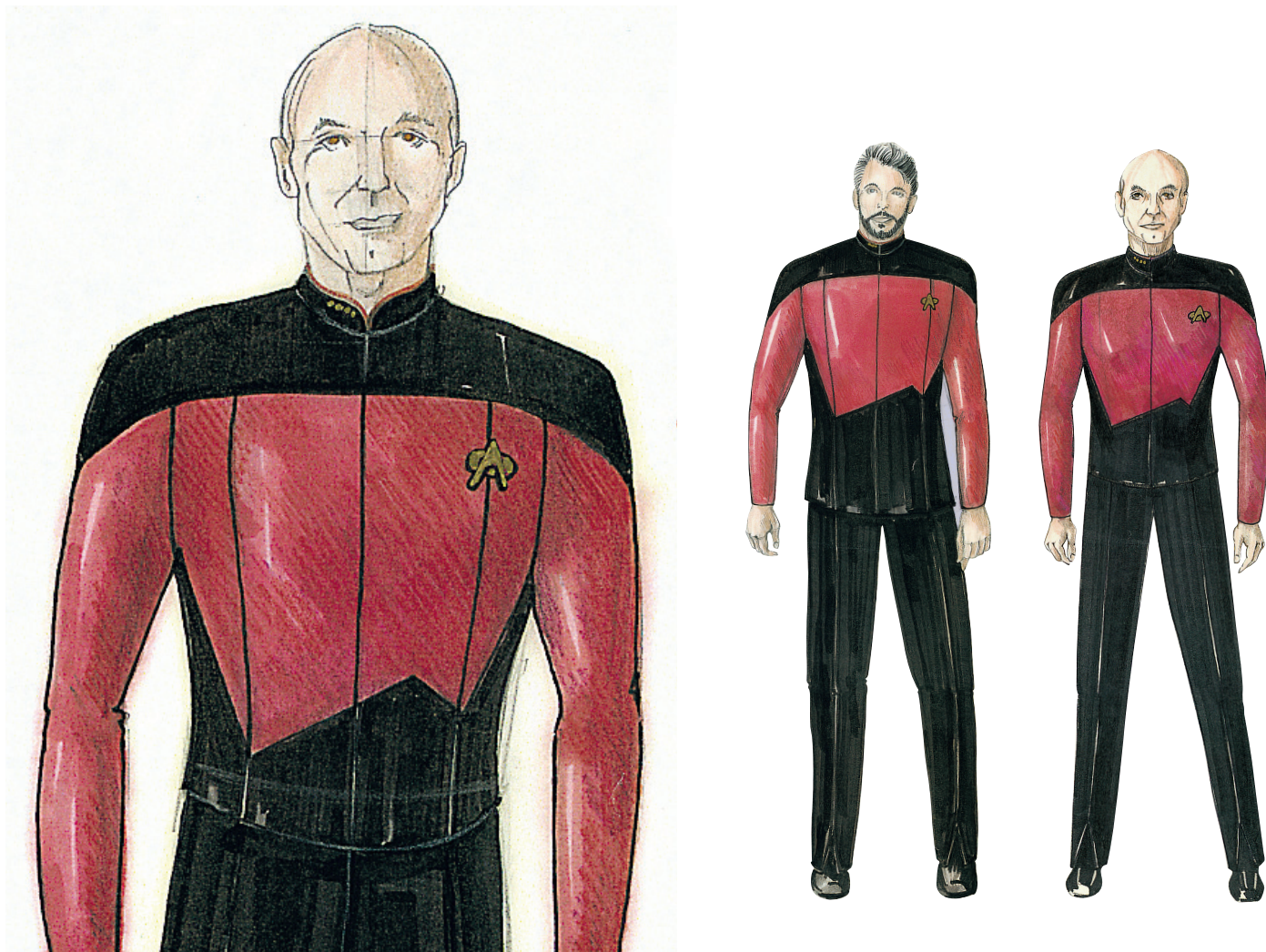
While Sternbach added some details to these final sketches, such as what looked like antennas to the front, or oblong-shaped grid notches, he did not give too much thought as to their actual function. "I added certain details just to suggest something alien and different from a 'normal' spacecraft," said Sternbach. "The negative details, and certain parts at the front, were simple shapes that were added to give a slightly more hardware-ish feel instead of them being purely organic."

Once the final design was chosen, the studio model of Gomtuu was built



▲ Sternbach's design from the top of this page shows that it was illustration chosen for the look of Gomtuu.

by Greg Jein, while the design of its interior was based on set designer Richard James' proposal of a very organic look. To achieve this, the set was coated with spray foam, although Sternbach provided a sketch or two of the chair that grew out of the floor on the creature's bridge.



STAR TREK: TNG SEASON THREE COSTUME DESIGN

A new costume designer, Robert Blackman, was appointed for the third season, and here he explains the challenges he faced.

ROBERT Blackman was signed as costume designer as *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION*'s second year drew to a close. He immediately focused on the Starfleet uniforms, which had been designed by *STAR TREK*'s original costume designer William Ware Theiss, but had remained untouched during the following year. Blackman recalled, "My major task was to reconceive and reconstruct the uniforms. The male actors, more than the females, had issues with the Spandex that they were made of; it seemed to pull down a lot on their shoulders, and it was hot – it

didn't really breathe – and it retained odor, especially the cleaning fluid. Patrick Stewart was especially uncomfortable with back pain."

IMPROVING DESIGNS

Apart from practical considerations, Blackman felt the overall style of the original uniforms wasn't quite right. "I felt they did not seem heroic enough," said Blackman. "They were too casual and, for want of a better word, a little too pajama-esque. Those were very deliberate choices by Bill Theiss, but I had a different

▲ Robert Blackman redesigned the Starfleet uniforms as two-piece suits for the start of the third season. The actors had found the previous one-piece uniforms very uncomfortable as they pulled on the shoulders. Blackman experimented with several choices before arriving at the final version.

interpretation. I felt we needed to formalize it, so we added a collar to pull the neckline up. We went through many versions of collars: was it to be a band collar, a notched collar, a split collar? I decided we had to keep the jagged chest piece as it was and that we would not mess with that, but that we would adapt it to a two-piece garment. The image, I think, was successful, and was one of the things that helped to tighten up the show as it gained popularity. It gave it a little more dignity and didn't look quite so 'science fiction.'"

There was a certain amount of trial and error before the new style was perfected, however. Blackman said, "If you look at those early episodes of the third season you will see that not until about halfway through did we finally come up with the blouson jacket over pants. Before that we tried to do something that was as sleek as the Spandex uniforms but out of very lightweight wool fabric. They were two-piece, with very sleek tunics, but were of little use except to stand up or sit down. The actors couldn't climb ladders, throw a punch, or do any of the action things. We shot a few episodes with them, but we had to scramble to come up with something else."

ADDITIONAL STARFLEET STYLES

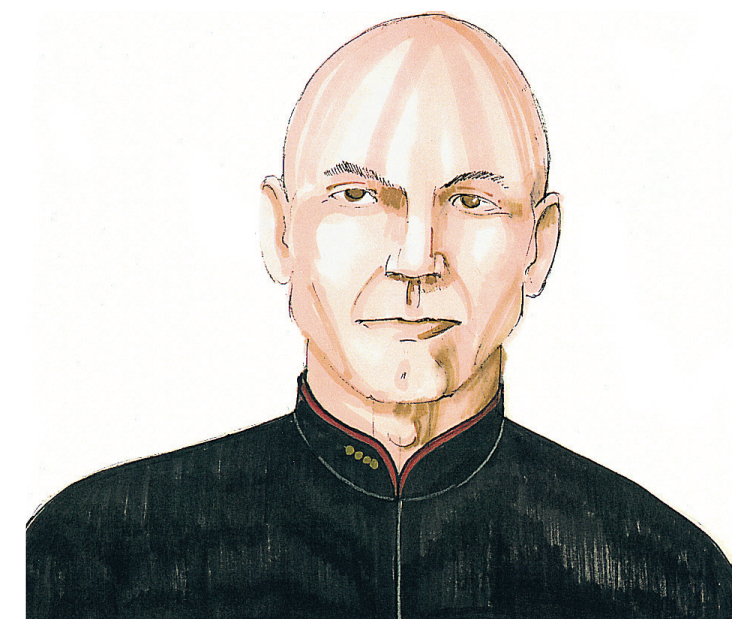
Blackman also came up with a new admiral's uniform, first seen in 'The Defector'; and in 'Yesterday's Enterprise' there was a whole new Starfleet crew to deal with, for the *U.S.S. Enterprise* NCC-1701-C. "We had to make use of the feature film costumes because of the expense of making new uniforms," said Blackman. "It was a big deal to do episodes that required more than seven new costumes. My solution for that crew was to take the tunics off; you could see that the uniform didn't have the white collar standing up."

Blackman also turned his attention to Troi's costume. Her jumpsuits were seen as day clothes, not uniforms, and he thought they were too official-looking for that purpose; he designed a blue-green dress with matching, close-fitting pants and an asymmetrical neckline. Beverly Crusher, back on board after a year at Starfleet Medical, continued to wear the loose-fitting blue lapel-less jacket she had in Season One, but late in the season it became shorter, with lapels and an asymmetrical hemline. Guinan, introduced during

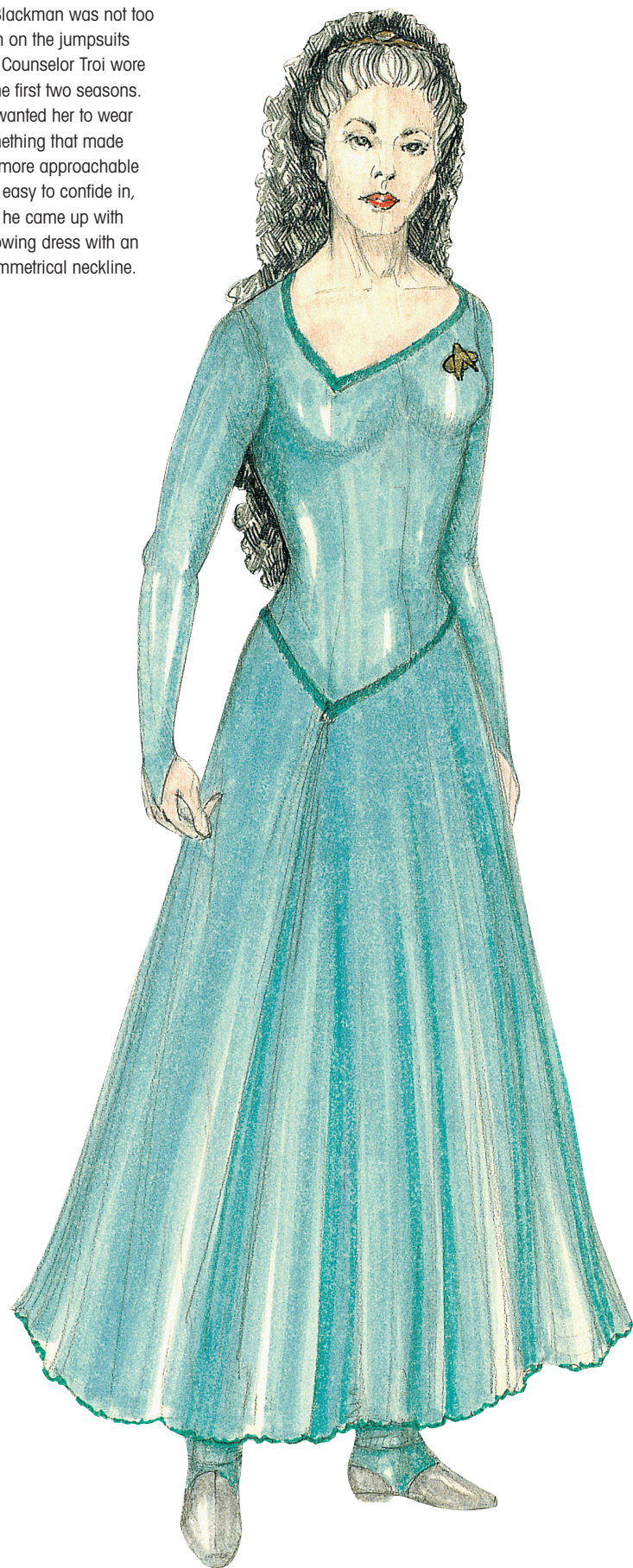
► Blackman paid a lot of attention to the collar of the new uniforms. He felt that a notched band collar gave the uniforms a more formal look, and were much more dignified than the previous collarless round-neck version.

► Starfleet admirals also received a new uniform design in the third season. This was first seen in 'The Defector' and on Admiral Haffel [pictured] in 'The Offspring.' These uniforms featured a separate jacket and were much more elegant than the diagonal stripe with gold piping uniforms that admirals had previously worn.

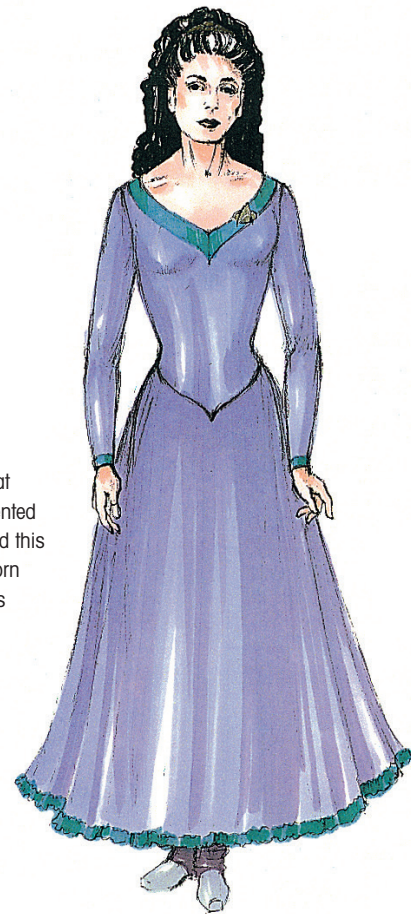
► A whole new era of Starfleet uniforms had to be created for 'Yesterday's Enterprise,' which featured the crew of the *U.S.S. Enterprise* NCC-1701-C from 2344. Creating several uniforms from scratch was very expensive, so Blackman reused the uniforms that had been in several of the feature films starring the original cast, but he removed their large white collars.



► Blackman was not too keen on the jumpsuits that Counselor Troi wore in the first two seasons. He wanted her to wear something that made her more approachable and easy to confide in, and he came up with a flowing dress with an asymmetrical neckline.



► Other choices that Blackman experimented with for Troi included this full-skirted dress worn with matching pants and shoes.

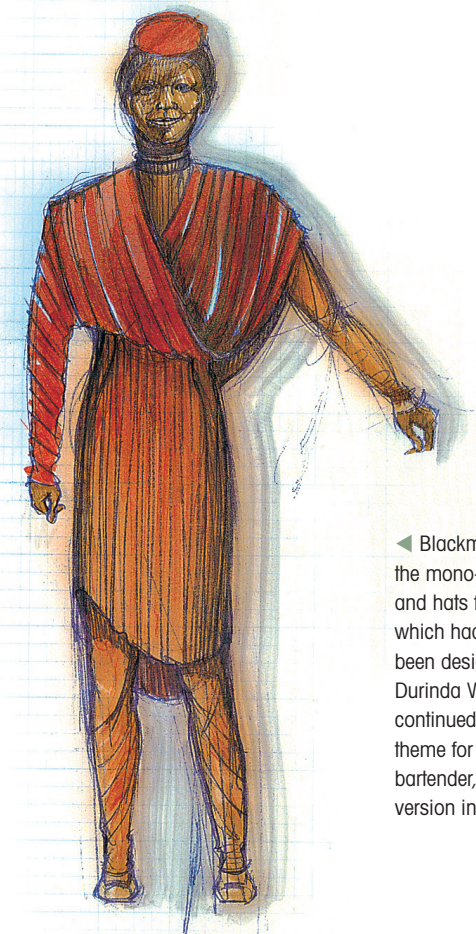


the second year with the very distinctive one-color suits and hats designed by Durinda Wood, continued to receive spectacular outfits in a similar style for her guest appearances.

NEW GROUND

That left a whole range of aliens that we'd never seen before, and, despite his depth of experience in costume design for different time periods, Blackman was new to the sci-fi genre. "That whole first year was me learning what science fiction was about!" he recalled. "Gene Roddenberry was still around, but I had very few conversations with him. It was really just Rick Berman and I finding the common ground that would allow us to venture forward, and it was the beginning of an excellent working relationship. It was all about how to support the written imagery better."

One of Rick Berman's rules was that costumes resembling those seen in the original *STAR TREK* had to be avoided. "I did some funny costumes," said Blackman. "In my early years you could see some direct references to 13th and 14th century clothes.



◀ Blackman inherited the mono-colored suits and hats for Guinan, which had originally been designed by Durinda Wood. Blackman continued a similar theme for the *Enterprise's* bartender, with a new version in most episodes.

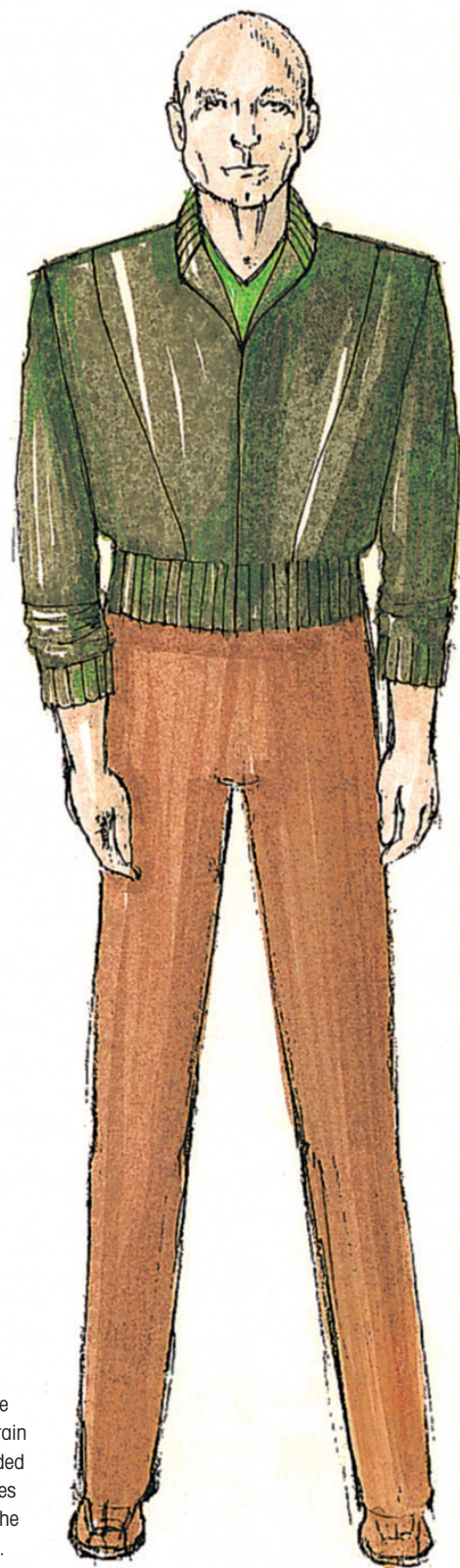
We could never go to the Greeks, Romans, or Egyptians, which were things that Bill Theiss used in *THE ORIGINAL SERIES*, and that limited me severely. They were remarkably quick and effective solutions, but anything that appeared soft and flowing was an immediate danger zone!"

The season contained some stunning images. One of them was the preserve of the makeup department – the golden Lal in 'The Offspring' – but makeup supervisor Michael Westmore and Blackman cooperated on the non-human 'choices' for Lal's final form. "One of them was an Andorian, and Mike and I got very excited because antennas, white hair, and blue skin were so weird and science fiction," said Blackman. "It was shot, but it was so not Rick Berman! There was a Klingon too."

The Klingons returned the following week, in 'Sins of the Father.' "None of the feature costumes were going to be usable," said Blackman. "There were 11 or 12 of them, but they were just kind of vests with bare muscle-bound arms, but for this show they wanted the Klingon Great Hall to be filled with



▲ Worf needed a ceremonial robe for the *r'uustai*, which Blackman made from a silverized fabric, and he wore the same robe in the Klingon Great Hall in 'Sins of the Father.'



► Blackman came up with a much more relaxed look for Captain Picard when he needed some vacation clothes for the show set on the pleasure planet Risa.



these guys in council robes. So for the background we started making gray vinyl costumes out of car upholstery trim that had ridges and things on them, and we had to manufacture enough additional robes so that everyone standing in the inner circle could have a reasonable facsimile. "

OCCASIONAL DISAPPOINTMENT

Klingons were well established on *STAR TREK*, but often Blackman had a clean slate to create a new alien, and admitted he wasn't always happy with his solutions. "'Captain's Holiday' was a very good example of aliens that didn't work," said Blackman. "There were two aliens that sort of morphed in at one point, and they were in a purple-lavender crunched-up metallic fabric. I thought they were pretty good, but when it was done I realized there were too many visual elements going on. Another fabric treated the same way would have been 100 times better."

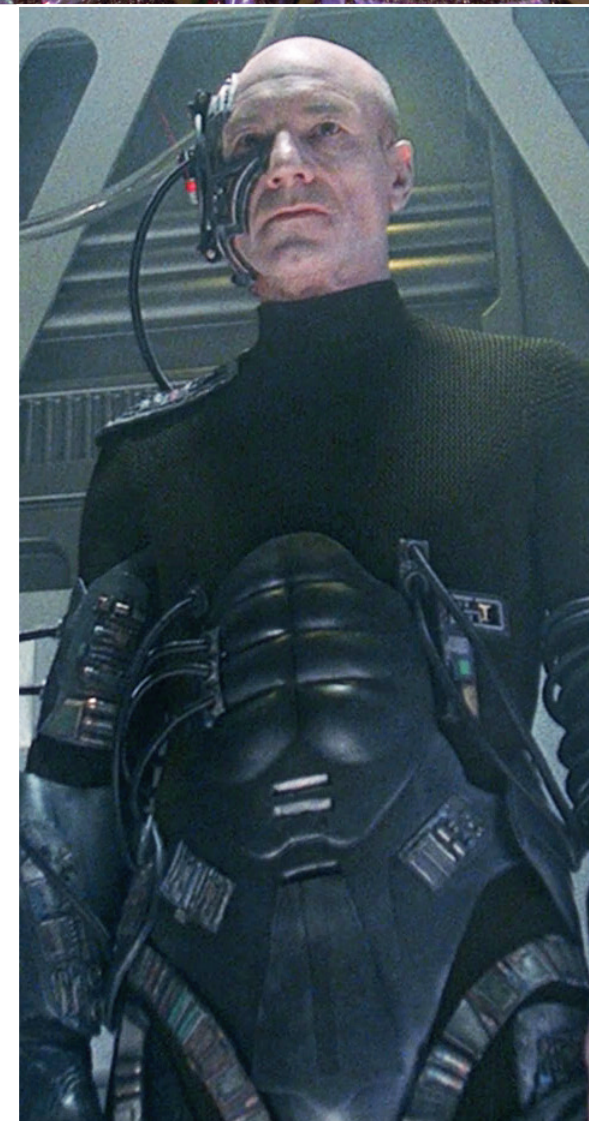
Other costumes on the show were a hit, though. "It was a huge success for me to put the Ferengi in beachwear," said Blackman. "They wanted him in a bathing suit but they didn't want to go into that whole makeup thing, so I said, 'Let's just make him a little cabana outfit!' That was wildly successful. Vash was an elegant seductress, and she looked great. The art of making swimsuits seems simple, but it really is unbelievably complicated; it took

eight or 10 fittings, instead of about three, to get that suit to fit right. The temptation was always to bring in a manufactured costume and slap it on!"

The season ended with the first half of the stunning two-parter, 'The Best of Both Worlds,' in which Captain Picard was kidnapped by the Borg. "The Borg costumes were originally designed by Durinda Wood, and brilliantly so," said Blackman. "It was a great solution to a difficult problem, which was how to get very complicated cyborg garments in a short time. I just improved on it the next season. I felt there was too much space between the planted-on pieces and that the dark green background was not harsh enough, so I went to using the black Spandex and eventually I talked them into letting me dirty them down."

COSTUMING LOCUTUS

Then they had to decide what to do with Captain Picard in his kidnapped state. "Patrick had to be half cyborg and half human, but Mike Westmore had enough to do, so we drew the line on him and did the best that we could under the circumstances," said Blackman. But, despite his reservations, the two-parter was a major audience hit. His first season at *STAR TREK* was nothing less than a triumph, and he was back next season to continue as one of the show's most influential creative forces.



◀ The episode 'Captain's Holiday' saw Blackman design a swimsuit for Vash, which required numerous fittings to get just right, and he also designed a 'cabana outfit' for the Ferengi. One of the less successful costumes was the ones worn by the Vorgons, who were from the 27th century. Blackman felt that their outfits had too many elements and did not look good on screen.

◀ Blackman introduced a black Spandex undersuit for the Borg in 'The Best of Both Worlds, Part 1,' which he felt helped closed the spaces between the mechanical pieces. Blackman wanted to do more for the outfit worn by the partially assimilated Picard, but time was against them.

ON SCREEN



TRIVIA

Harry Groener, who played Tam Elbrun in *THE NEXT GENERATION* episode 'Tin Man,' also portrayed the Nechani magistrate in the *VOYAGER* episode 'Sacred Ground,' and Minister Nathan Samuels in the *ENTERPRISE* episodes 'Demons' and 'Terra Prime.' Groener is perhaps best known as Richard Wilkins III, the mayor from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. In this show, he ate another *STAR TREK* actor when his character consumed Principle Snyder, who was played by Armin Shimerman [Quark].



The special effect of the chair forming on the bridge of Gomtuu was created by Robert Legato, who molded a wax chair and melted it, then played the footage backwards. The interior sound of Gomtuu was a recording of sound editor James Wolvington's stomach through a stethoscope.



The episode 'Tin Man' revealed that Commander Riker had formerly served on the *U.S.S. Hood* NCC-42296. It was commanded by Captain Robert DeSoto, who was also mentioned in 'Encounter at Farpoint,' 'The Pegasus' and the *DEEP SPACE NINE* episode 'Treachery, Faith, and the Great River.'

- FIRST APPEARANCE: 'TIN MAN' (TNG)
- TV APPEARANCE: STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
- DESIGNED BY: Rick Sternbach

KEY APPEARANCES

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION 'Tin Man'

A new life form, code-named 'Tin Man,' has been detected in an area of space claimed by the Romulans. The *U.S.S. Enterprise* NCC-1701-D's task is to take Tam Elbrun - a Betazoid with hyper-acute telepathic abilities - to make first contact with this space-based entity.

The *Enterprise-D*'s crew is uneasy about the mission because Elbrun is associated with a botched first contact situation in which several people died. Moreover, Elbrun's telepathic mind cannot tolerate the intrusive thoughts of the crew and he appears unhinged.

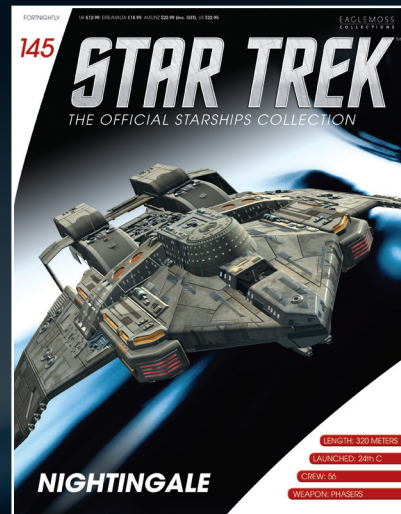
It becomes clear that Elbrun has

already been in telepathic contact with the living space ship, which calls itself Gomtuu, when a Romulan warbird turns up. Elbrun uses his psychic link to warn Gomtuu, and it unleashes a huge burst of energy, which destroys the warbird and damages the *Enterprise-D*.

Elbrun reveals that Gomtuu is thousands of years old and once had a crew, but is now so lonely that it wishes to commit suicide by orbiting a star that is about to go supernova. When a second Romulan warbird arrives, Picard has no choice but to allow Elbrun to be beamed over to the entity in the hope that he can save not only the creature, but also his ship and crew.

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- Actor *Garrett Wang* talks about his time playing *Ensign Harry Kim* on *STAR TREK: VOYAGER*

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