

23

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**NEBULA
CLASS**

LAUNCHED: 2360s

MAX SPEED: WARP 9.5

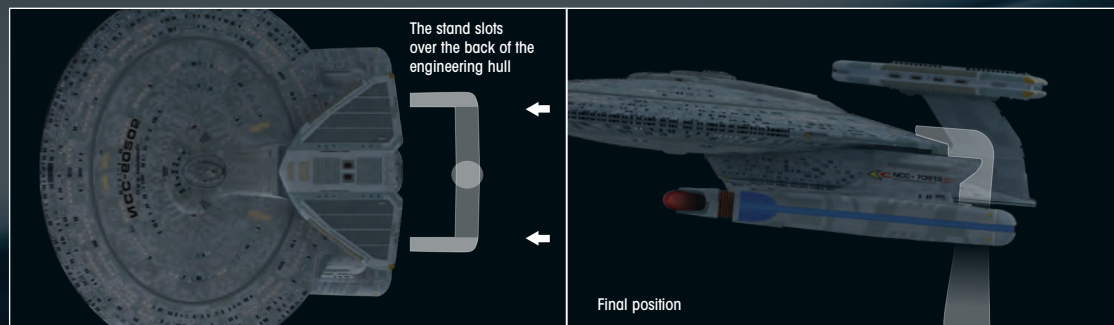
LENGTH: 442.23 METERS

CREW COMPLEMENT: 750

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Stand assembly:



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NEBULA CLASS SPECIFICATION



CLASS:	NEBULA
CONSTRUCTED:	UTOPIA PLANITIA FLEET YARDS
LAUNCHED:	2360s
LENGTH:	442.23 METERS
CREW:	750
TOP SPEED:	WARP 9.6
WEAPONRY:	8 TYPE-10 PHASER ARRAYS 2 PHOTON TORPEDO LAUNCHERS
CAPTAINS:	BENJAMIN MAXWELL, SHELBY, SILVA LA FORGE, SOLOK





◀ The *Nebula* class's most distinctive feature was an upper equipment module that could be configured for different mission profiles.

There were, however, several significant differences between them. At 442.23 meters long, the *Nebula* class was about 200 meters shorter than the *Galaxy* class, and its crew complement was normally around 750 compared to 1,000 aboard the larger vessel. The engineering hull on *Nebula*-class vessels was also slightly more curved and rounded than it was on *Galaxy*-class ships. While the two classes of ship shared a similar design of warp nacelles, they hung beside the engineering hull on the *Nebula* class, rather than being supported above the secondary hull as on the *Galaxy* class.

ADAPTABLE MODULE

The most significant difference between the two classes was that the *Nebula* class featured a large equipment module at the rear of the ship that rose up behind the saucer section. This module could be configured for different missions, but most often it carried an array of sensor equipment, although it could also be customized to carry more weapons.

Reflecting its reconfigurable role, the equipment module did not look the same on all *Nebula*-class ships. For example, on the *U.S.S. Phoenix* NCC-65420, this pod rose high above the saucer section

Nebula-class vessels were a type of starship used by Starfleet in the latter half of the 24th century. They were primarily designed to carry out scientific and exploratory roles, but they often took on patrol and transport duties as well. They could also ably perform combat assignments when required.

The *Nebula* class was a contemporary of the *Galaxy* class and they shared several design features, including a very similar saucer section.



◀ The *Nebula* class was designed and constructed in the 24th century, around the same time as the larger *Galaxy* class. As a result, they shared similar technology and components. In particular, the *Nebula* class had a saucer section that was almost identical in design and size to that found on the *Galaxy* class.

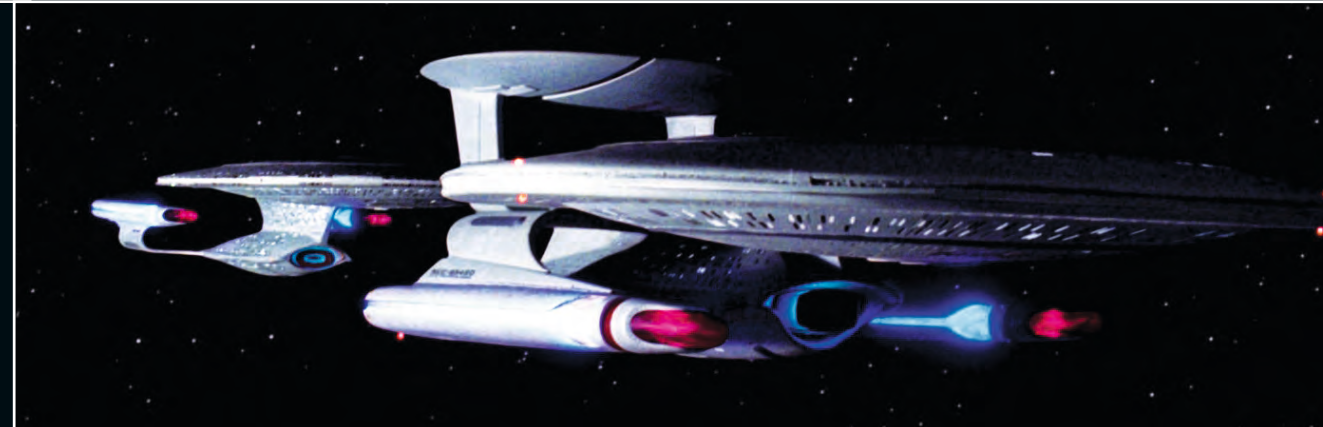
THE NEBULA CLASS

The *Nebula* class was designed for exploration, but it was also often deployed in patrol and combat duties.



◀ In 2373, *Nebula*-class ships battled the Borg alongside the *U.S.S. Enterprise* NCC-1701-E.

▶ The *U.S.S. Phoenix*, commanded by Ben Maxwell, was fitted with an elliptically-shaped equipment module that rose high above the primary hull.



▶ *Nebula*-class ships swapped their normal exploratory duties for a combat role during the Dominion War. They fought alongside the *U.S.S. Defiant* NX-74205 in several major engagements of the war, including the final assault on Cardassia.



▲ The *Nebula* class was equipped with two torpedo launchers as standard. The equipment module could be configured to carry additional torpedo launchers, thereby increasing its firepower. The *U.S.S. Sutherland* is seen here firing a torpedo from its adaptable superstructure.

and was elliptically shaped, while on the *U.S.S. Sutherland* NCC-72015 it was positioned lower and was more triangular shaped.

Like all Starfleet ships, the *Nebula* class was constantly upgraded. For example, in 2368 its top speed was warp 9.3, but by 2370 this had risen to warp 9.5. Chief O'Brien even managed to eke out more power from the *Nebula*-class *U.S.S. Prometheus* NCC-71201's engines so that it could reach warp 9.6 for a short time.

The standard weaponry aboard *Nebula*-class vessels included eight type-10 phaser emitters and two torpedo launchers, while some versions also had extra launchers in the equipment modules.

The shields on *Nebula*-class ships were highly effective and could withstand a direct hit from a Cardassian warship's disruptor weapon, but they did have one slight weakness. Every five-and-a-half minutes a *Nebula*-class ship would perform a

high-energy sensor sweep, but between the sweep ending and another one starting, the shields would have to be realigned. This left the ship unprotected for a fiftieth of a second.

Overall *Nebula*-class vessels were designed primarily for exploration like *Galaxy*-class ships, but were smaller and slightly less powerful. Serving on board a *Nebula*-class vessel was still regarded as a plum assignment.

PRESTIGIOUS POSITION

Dr. Elizabeth Lense, the valedictorian of Dr. Bashir's Starfleet Medical School class, chose to join the crew of the *Nebula*-class *U.S.S. Lexington*, much to the envy of her classmates. She spent several years on board the *Lexington* on a deep space mission charting unexplored planets.

Ships of this class were also used for specific scientific missions. In 2370, the *U.S.S. Prometheus*

NCC-71201 was assigned to Gideon Seyetik, and aided in his experiment to find out if protomatter could be used to reignite a dead star.

Nebula-class vessels were also used in patrol duties to help protect Federation borders. For example, in the 2360s the *U.S.S. Monitor* NCC-61826 was used to safeguard the Romulan Neutral Zone, while the *U.S.S. Phoenix* performed similar duties in the demilitarized zone between Federation and Cardassian space.

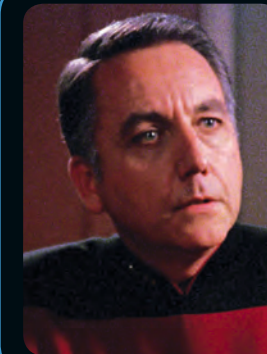
Increasingly, *Nebula*-class vessels were seconded to a combat role. At least one was involved and destroyed in the Battle of Wolf 359 against the Borg and more took part in the later Borg invasion at the Battle of Sector 001.

In 2367-68, the *U.S.S. Sutherland* NCC-72015 was under the temporary command of Lt. Commander Data when it was used as part of a blockade to stop Romulan ships supplying the

House of Duras with weapons and supplies during the Klingon Civil War.

Nebula-class ships also played a large part during hostilities with the Dominion. The *U.S.S. T'Kumbra*, which had an all-Vulcan crew, spent six months fighting on the front lines, while the *U.S.S. Sutherland* was part of the Ninth Fleet that saw action in most of the major battles of the Dominion War.

▲ The *U.S.S. Farragut* NCC-60597 was a *Nebula*-class ship that helped recover the crew of the *U.S.S. Enterprise* NCC-1701-D after its saucer section crash-landed on Veridian III.

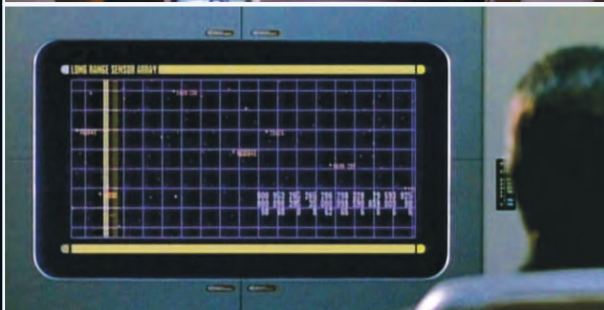


DATA FEED

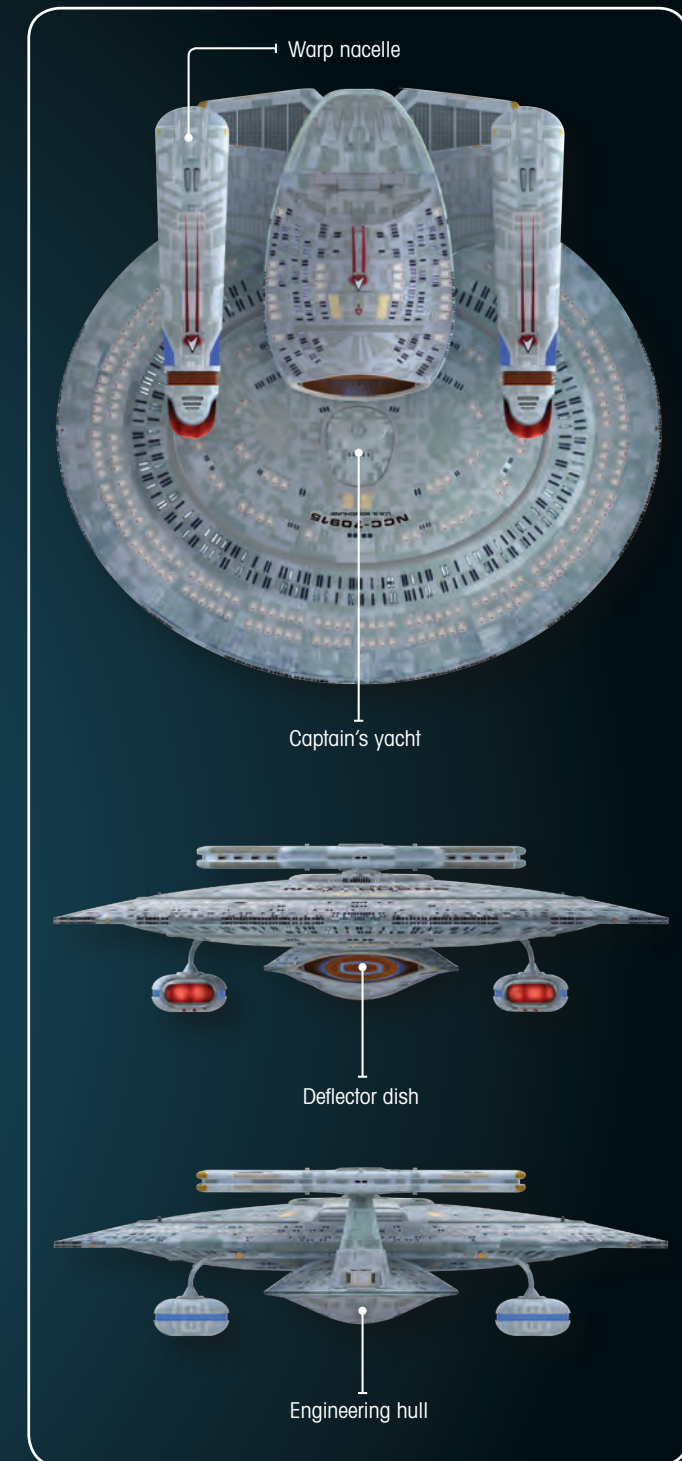
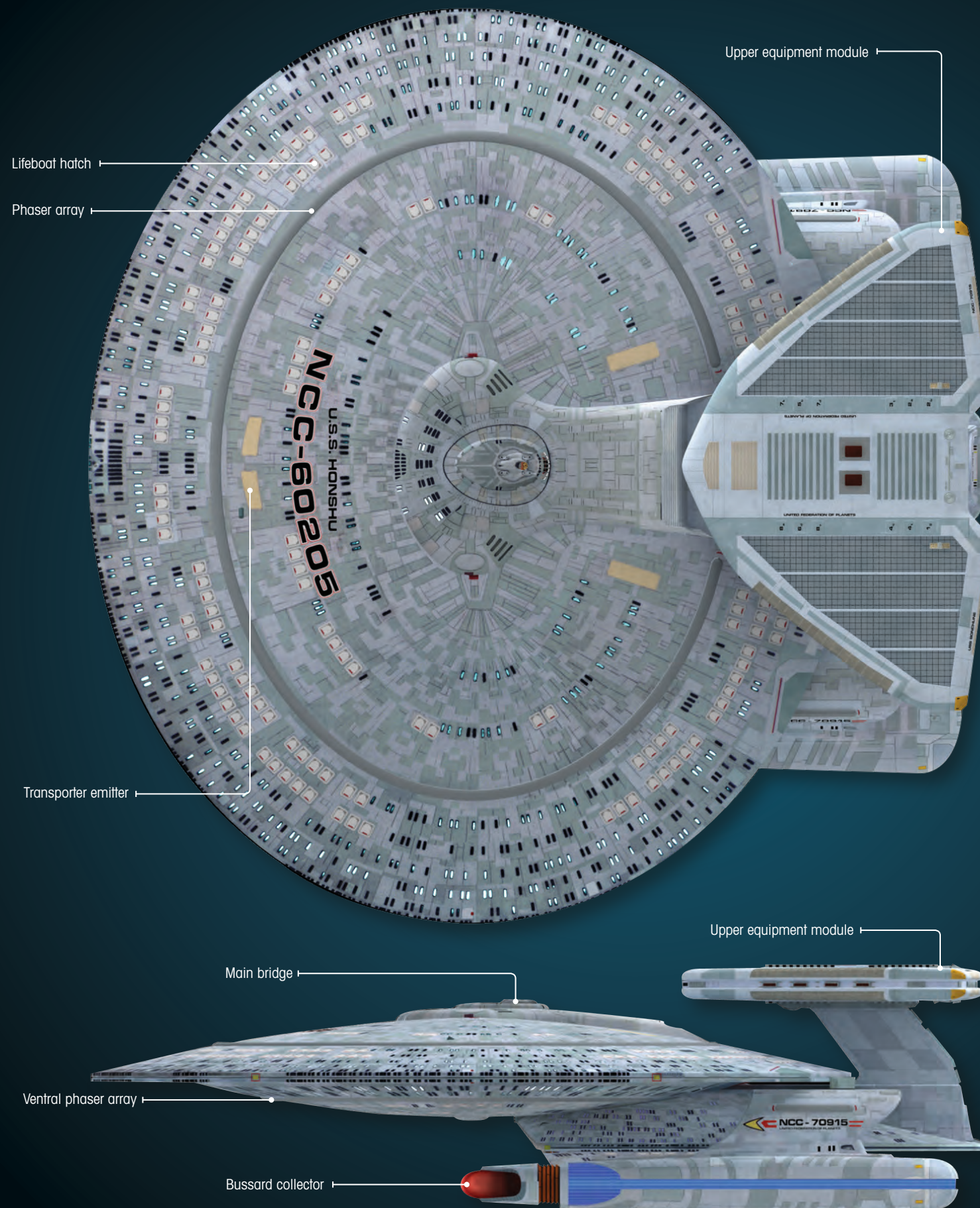
In 2367, Benjamin Maxwell, captain of the *Nebula*-class *U.S.S. Phoenix* NCC-65420, went rogue and used his ship to destroy a Cardassian outpost. When the *U.S.S. Enterprise* NCC-1701-D caught up with him, Maxwell claimed that the Cardassians were stockpiling weapons in preparation for war. Although Maxwell was brought to justice, his accusations against the Cardassians ultimately proved correct.

NEBULA-CLASS BRIDGE

As on most other classes of Starfleet vessel, the bridge on *Nebula*-class ships was located on deck 1 at the top of the saucer section. There were three entrances to the bridge: one on each side of the room and a third at the rear. The captain's chair was in the center of the room with two free-standing consoles on either side, one of which was the science station, while the other could be used to remotely control the ship's shuttlecraft. Separate conn and ops stations were on a lower level in front of the command chair, and as always on a Starfleet vessels, the main viewscreen was at the front where all the bridge crew could see it.



▲ The viewscreen on the *U.S.S. Prometheus* (middle picture) was similar to the viewscreens aboard *Galaxy*-class ships, whereas the viewscreen on the *U.S.S. Sutherland* (above) was much smaller.

**DATA FEED**

Nebula-class starships were equipped with a variety of auxiliary craft, including Type 6 and Type 7 shuttlecraft, as well as the smaller Type 15 shuttlepod.

VULCAN CREW

The *Nebula*-class *U.S.S. T'Kumbra* was commanded by Captain Solok and had an all-Vulcan crew. It spent six months fighting on the front lines during the war with the Dominion.

MISSING IN ACTION

Geordi La Forge's mother, Silva La Forge, was captain of the *Nebula*-class *U.S.S. Hera* NCC-62006. It was on a routine courier run when it went missing. Despite a massive search it was never found.

CLASSIC NAME

The *Nebula*-class *U.S.S. Sutherland* NCC-72015 was named after Horatio Hornblower's flagship in the C.S. Forester novels. These books served as one of Gene Roddenberry's original inspirations for *STAR TREK*.



DESIGNING THE NEBULA CLASS

The *Nebula*-class is one of the most frequently seen ships in Starfleet, but it has very humble beginnings and an unusual history...

The *Nebula*-class is a familiar sight. It's never starred in a *STAR TREK* series but it is one of the most frequently used models in the fleet. Over the years it has featured in three different *STAR TREK* TV series and two of the movies. The model has been adapted and rebuilt at regular intervals and, as sharp-eyed fans have noticed, it has looked different almost every time it has appeared.

The initial design of the *Nebula* class has very humble origins. It was only intended to be a background ship and, as a result, it wasn't developed in the normal way. Back in the early days of *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION* before the introduction of CG, making new starships was a big deal; building new physical models was expensive so wherever they could the VFX team reused existing Starfleet models.

In *TNG*'s first three seasons, whenever we saw a starship that wasn't the *Enterprise-D* it was likely to be a reuse of the *Excelsior*, *Reliant* and *Grissom* models. That implied that Starfleet only had old ships. Senior illustrator Rick Sternbach and scenic art supervisor and technical consultant Mike Okuda put their heads together to try to find a cost effective way of producing a new ship that looked like it could be

► [Top right picture] An early kitbashed version of a *Nebula*-class ship appeared in the starship graveyard scene in 'The Best of Both Worlds, Part II.' This version did not have the superstructure above the saucer section that would appear in the episode 'The Wounded' [bottom right picture].

a contemporary of Andy Probert's *Enterprise-D*.

BUDGET CONCERNS

As Okuda said, "The challenge was that the *Enterprise-D* was built out of elegant compound curves. It was a brilliant way to show how far Starfleet technology had come in the past century, but it meant that (building) the model required a lot of hand labor. And that translates into cost. Remember, this was long before 3D printing! The expense for the *Enterprise-D* itself made sense, since the ship was seen in every episode. For

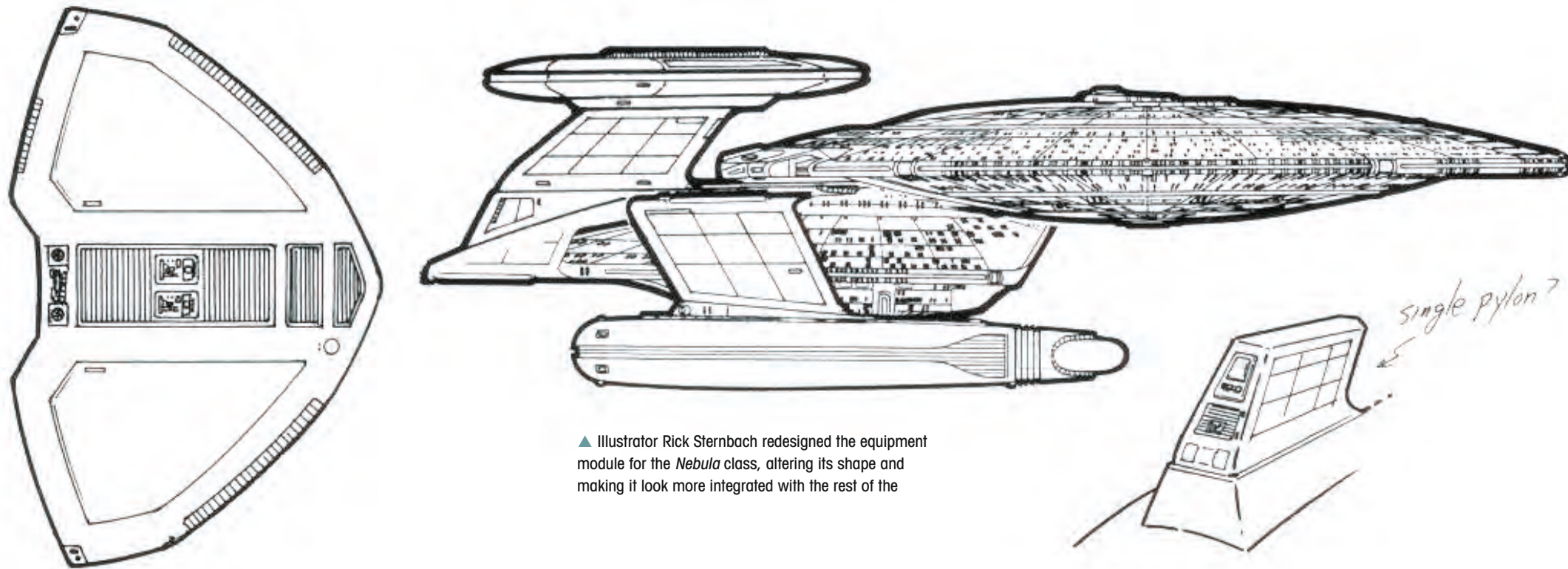


a guest ship, even one that is seen several times, the budget was much, much less.

"Our thought was that a design based on castings from the *Enterprise-D* molds could help hold down costs a lot. We discussed what such a ship would look like, but of course, the final decision would be up to our producers. I asked Ed Miarecki (model maker and artist) to

come up with some study models to make it easier to see what such a ship might look like. I specifically asked him to do 24th-century versions of the *Reliant* and the *Excelsior*. Ed also came up with a number of other variations, just for fun."

There was a major advantage to this approach – because the idea was to reuse existing components, Miarecki



▲ Illustrator Rick Sternbach redesigned the equipment module for the *Nebula* class, altering its shape and making it look more integrated with the rest of the

could make his study models entirely out of parts from commercially available Starfleet model kits. The *Nebula* class was one of a handful of designs he came up with. It made a brief – blink and you will miss it – appearance in the starship graveyard scene as the *U.S.S. Melbourne* NCC-62043 in 'The Best of Both Worlds, Part II.'

Miarecki actually built two near-identical examples of this version of the

Nebula class, though at this point it didn't have a class name. These models didn't have the superstructure that rose up behind the saucer section that was featured on later versions. Instead, they featured two small warp nacelles above the saucer section as well as two larger nacelles that hung below.

Mike Okuda took one of the examples built by Miarecki and added battle damage to it for its appearance in the

starship graveyard scene. As he remembers it, this led to an amusing and slightly surreal encounter with actor Patrick Stewart. "I was in the art department one evening," said Okuda, "cutting up this ship, while Patrick Stewart, in Borg costume, came up the stairs to use the Xerox machine. He asked me what I was doing. I showed him the model and said something like, 'See what you did!'"

The second *Nebula* class study model met with a happier fate, becoming part of the decor in Ben Sisko's office on *Deep Space 9*.

SEIZING THE MOMENT

The *Nebula* class made its proper debut in the fourth season *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION* episode 'The Wounded'. The script specifically called for a "*Nebula*-class ship" that was a smaller contemporary of the *Enterprise-D*. Okuda and Sternbach realized this was the perfect opportunity to fully develop the ship that they had been working on with Miarecki.

"We presented Ed Miarecki's study models to our producers," said Okuda. "They liked the model that was based on the *Reliant*, but felt it didn't look properly balanced. I suggested adding an 'AWACS pod' like those found on military aircraft of today to match the *Reliant*'s weapons pod."

This pod was elliptical in shape and mirrored the shape of the *Nebula*'s saucer section. This design was

accepted by the producers, and Greg Jein started construction of a studio model that would stand up to the rigors of filming. Jein had worked on the original 6-foot *Enterprise-D* model when he was at Industrial Light & Magic, and had recently built the new 4-foot version, so was able to cast pieces for the new ship from existing molds.

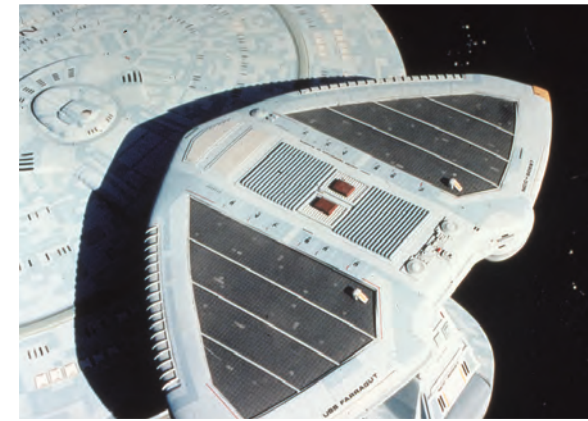
SAUCER SIZE

"One thing I suggested to Greg (Jein) was for him to make the windows bigger and more widely spaced than on the *Enterprise-D*," said Okuda. "This was intended to suggest that the *Nebula* ship was smaller than the *Enterprise-D*. Unfortunately, a tight schedule didn't permit this, so the *Nebula*'s saucer ended up the same apparent size as the *Enterprise-D*'s."

After the *Nebula* class's appearance as the *U.S.S. Phoenix* in 'The Wounded,' it was felt that its 'AWACS pod' above the saucer did not look as integrated with the rest of the ship as they had hoped. As Okuda explained, "After 'The Wounded,' our producers decided that while they liked the *Nebula*-class ship, they thought the 'AWACS dome' didn't quite fit with the ship, so they asked Rick Sternbach to design a cool-looking equipment pod."

This new pod was more triangular in shape, giving it a more elegant appearance. Greg Jein carried out the necessary modifications to the studio model to match Sternbach's updated designs and the revised model made its debut as the *U.S.S. Sutherland* NCC-72015, the ship that Data commands in 'Redemption, Part II.'

This model of the *Nebula* class made several more appearances in *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION* and *STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE*, most notably in the episode 'Second Sight' where it appeared as the *U.S.S. Prometheus* NCC-71201. The model was then



▲ These pictures show detailed shots of the *Nebula*-class model after it had undergone extensive refurbishment at the Industrial Light & Magic workshop for its big screen debut as the *U.S.S. Farragut*.



▲ After its screen debut in 'The Wounded,' the *Nebula*-class model was retrofitted with the new triangular-shaped equipment module for its appearance as the *U.S.S. Sutherland* in the episode 'Redemption, Part II.'



▲ The *Nebula*-class model was substantially renovated at ILM for its appearance in *STAR TREK*



refurbished by John Goodson at the Industrial Light & Magic workshop for its big screen debut in *STAR TREK GENERATIONS*.

COLOR CHANGE

During its overhaul, its original white-blue color scheme, which matched the *Galaxy*-class model, was changed to a blue-gray, and more detail was also painted on. In this new livery, the *Nebula*-class model appeared as the *U.S.S. Farragut* NCC-60597 in the closing scenes of *STAR TREK GENERATIONS*, where it rescues the crew from the surface of Veridian III. It made its final appearance as an unnamed *Nebula*-class ship in the battle sequence with the Borg at the beginning of *STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT*.

In 1997, a new CG version of the *Nebula* class was built for the *STAR TREK: VOYAGER* episode 'Message in a Bottle.' This show was to feature the *U.S.S. Prometheus*, a prototype vessel with state-of-the-art weaponry. The *Prometheus* was only going to be built in CG, but the script called for it to destroy a *Nebula*-class vessel. The logistics of filming a battle sequence featuring one CG ship and one studio miniature were far too complex, not to mention expensive and time consuming.

REBUILT IN CG

It therefore made sense to build a CG version of the *Nebula* class. The task was undertaken at the digital effects house Foundation Imaging by CG supervisor and artist Rob Bonchune.



◀ [Top right picture] The studio model of the *Nebula* class was shipped to the visual effects house Foundation Imaging. It was placed on the desk of CG supervisor and artist Rob Bonchune for reference while he built the digital version of it.

"I had wanted to build a classic starship for a while," said Bonchune, "so I was thrilled. This was also the beginning of adding some of the classic *STAR TREK* ships to the ever growing CG inventory. It was going to happen eventually and the producers felt this was the episode to move ahead with it. To my amazement, Paramount delivered the actual full size filming miniature to our facility for me to reference. Since our facility was not huge, they just set it up right in front of my desk."

FAMILIAR PIECES

The model dwarfed Bonchune's workstation, but he couldn't have asked for better reference as he set about making a highly detailed digital rendering of it, but time was against him. To meet deadlines he had to use elements of the CG *Galaxy* class that had already been built in the 3D software. As a result the CG version of the *Nebula* class differed from the studio model slightly, and reverted to its original white-blue color scheme. Bonchune points out that when the *Nebula* class is fitted with a weapons pod at the back it becomes one of the most heavily-armed ships we've ever seen in Starfleet.

Given its humble beginnings and the changes it went through, the *Nebula* class has stood the test of time. In fact, it has achieved the remarkable feat of appearing in more incarnations of *STAR TREK* than any other class of Starfleet ship.

◀ [Main picture] The CGI version of the *Nebula* class first appeared in the *STAR TREK: VOYAGER* episode 'Message in a Bottle.' It went onto feature in several more episodes of both *STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE* and *STAR TREK: VOYAGER*.

◀ [Bottom picture] The CGI version of the *Nebula* class allowed for spectacular battle scenes like this one in the episode 'Message in a Bottle' that simply would not have been possible using a physical studio model.



INTRODUCING THE II

CARDASSIANS

▲ The Cardassians were introduced in *TNG*'s fourth season to add a new villainous race to the show. The design of their makeup played a significant role in bringing them back and helped define them.

The Cardassians made their debut alongside the *Nebula* class as the villainous aliens Captain Maxwell was so convinced posed a threat.

By the fourth season of *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION*, the writers knew that they wanted to add a new recurring race to the show that could act as villains.

As writer and executive producer Michael Piller explained, it was time to introduce a new threat. "We did feel that we needed to dot the map with more alien races," said Piller. "I don't think there was any disagreement about it; we did not see the Borg being

a continuing factor, even after 'The Best of Both Worlds.' By that time, we had done a lot of Romulan stories, we had done a lot of Klingon stories, and we were worried that we were mining those races over and over again and that the audiences were going to want to see something new.

"There are two kinds of aliens on *STAR TREK*; the ones who are passing through, and the kind we are going to keep around. I think by season four we all felt

that we needed another race that were going to provide new and continuing threats. That's how the Cardassians were developed."

INSPIRATIONAL LOOKS

The writers may have decided that the Cardassians were going to be a new threat, but their characteristics were far from fully formed. In many ways it was their reptilian appearance, developed by make-up designer Michael

Westmore, which determined their mendacious and ruthless nature.

"This was a species that we were probably going to bring back again," said Westmore, "so we wanted to design something neat. I did a plaster cast of Marc Alaimo's (Gul Macet) head, and I was sitting there looking at it; he has this very long neck, and the producers had said this was going to be a sneaky character, so all the adjectives indicated that this would be a snaky, lizardy personality, and for inspiration I went to reptile!"

REPTILIAN CHARACTERISTICS

The connection Westmore had made between Cardassians and reptiles helped to further establish their look and characteristics. For example, while their skin is closer to that of humans than reptiles, their neck ridges bear a resemblance to scales. Additionally, they prefer relatively dark rooms, enjoy the heat, are intolerant to cold (reptiles are cold-blooded), and are frequently portrayed as aggressors, an attribute often associated with reptiles.

The Cardassians were meant to be nasty and untrustworthy and distinctly different from the 24th-century humans, but they were also highly intelligent. Introducing these elements made them a great new villain and one that would add conflict and drama to the show in a different way. As Chip Chalmers, the director of 'The Wounded,' told *Cinefantastique*, "We introduced a new enemy that's finally able to speak on the level of Picard. They're not grunting, they're not giggling, they're not mutes or all-knowing entities. Here are the Cardassians who also graduated first in their class and they're able to carry on highly intelligent conversations with Picard, but they're sinister as hell."

It was these dramatic attributes that made the Cardassians such an intriguing new race, and they put in



▲ Make-up designer Michael Westmore (above left) came up with the reptilian look of the Cardassians. He was partly inspired by actor Marc Alaimo's long neck. Alaimo was cast as Gul Macet and later played Gul Dukat.

their second appearance in the episode 'Ensign Ro.' In the original outline for this episode, it was the Romulans who were occupying Bajor, but executive producer Rick Berman felt the Romulans had been seen too much and had the story changed to include the Cardassians instead.

This decision proved vital to the continuing presence of the Cardassians. As the Bajorans were to be a major race in *STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE*, it meant that their chief enemy and tormentors, the Cardassians, would feature heavily too, firmly cementing their place in the *STAR TREK* universe.



▲ The Cardassians could be cruel and ruthlessly cold-blooded. They were as clever as their Starfleet counterparts, but extremely untrustworthy, all attributes that made for great intrigue, conflict and drama on the show.

ON SCREEN



TRIVIA

Some of the crew from the *Nebula*-class *U.S.S. Sutherland* were seen at a party in Jadzia Dax's quarters on board *Deep Space 9* the night before her wedding to Worf. These included Lieutenant Manuele Atoa and several other crew members who were also from the Pacific Islands. Writer Ronald D. Moore has revealed that it was intended to make these crew members a more regular element of the show, and they would have appeared when the script called for "wacky party guys."



Benjamin Maxwell, the captain of the *Nebula*-class *U.S.S. Phoenix*, served with Chief Miles O'Brien on the *U.S.S. Rutledge*. Maxwell described O'Brien as being the best tactical officer he'd ever had.



The *Nebula*-class *U.S.S. Bonchune* NCC-70915 that appeared in the *STAR TREK: VOYAGER* episode 'Message in a Bottle' was named after Rob Bonchune, the visual effects supervisor who created the CG version of the ship. The registry numbers of the ship were taken from his birthday: 15th September, 1970 (09/15/1970).

- FIRST APPEARANCE:** 'THE WOUNDED' (TNG)
- TV APPEARANCES:** STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION; STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE; STAR TREK: VOYAGER
- MOVIE APPEARANCES:** GENERATIONS; FIRST CONTACT
- DESIGNED BY:** Ed Miarecki, Rick Sternbach, Mike Okuda

KEY APPEARANCES

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
'The Wounded'
Captain Maxwell of the *Nebula*-class *U.S.S. Phoenix* threatens the recent peace between the Federation and the Cardassians after he destroys an apparently unarmed Cardassian space station. Captain Picard is ordered to stop the renegade Starfleet ship, but cannot believe Maxwell would attack without reason. The threat of war looms as Picard treads a fine line between doing his duty and discovering the truth.

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE
'Second Sight'
Noted scientist Professor Gideon Seyerik arrives on *Deep Space 9* to rendezvous with the *Nebula*-class *U.S.S. Prometheus*. It is being prepared by Chief O'Brien for use in Seyerik's ambitious project to use protomatter to reignite a dead star called Epsilon 119. Later, en route to the star, a mystery unfolds with tragic consequences as an apparently identical woman to Seyerik's wife develops a strong attraction to Sisko.

COMING IN ISSUE 24

XINDI-INSECTOID STARSHIP

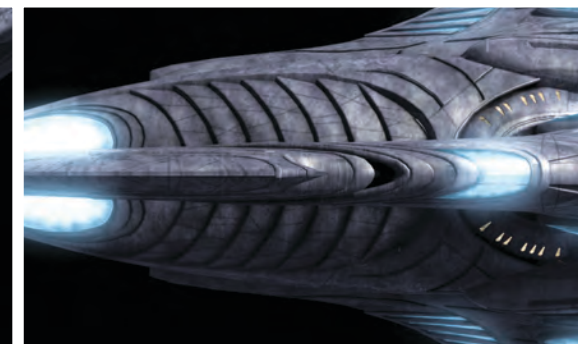


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Inside your magazine

- In-depth profile of the *Xindi-Insectoid starship*, a 22nd-century ship used by an aggressive insect-like species
- A look at production illustrator John Eaves' designs for the ship
- The origins of the *Xindi* race



STAR TREK™

