

# HOUSE OF LORDS

BY BEN LEACH

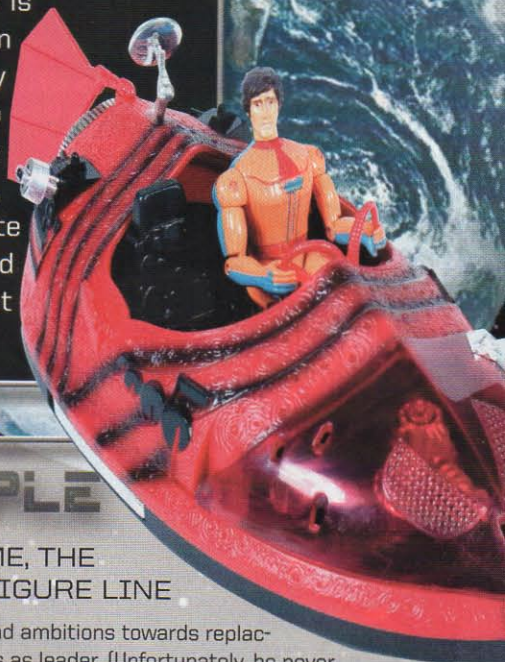
**'TOYFARE' INVESTIGATES HOW A MODEL-MAKING COMPANY AND A SCI-FI ARTIST BROUGHT ONE OF THE MOST UNIQUE TOY LINES EVER DEvised TO LIFE**







asters of the Universe. ThunderCats. Power Lords? When the toy titans of the 1980s are mentioned (often in reverent tones), Power Lords is rarely among them. After all, it had no cartoon tie-in, only three comic issues and it was the only action figure line ever put out by Revell, who normally made model kits. But Power Lords was not just an unusual toy line—it was ground-breaking, and would have been more at home in the late 1990s than in 1983. So grab your Power Jewel and get ready learn about some of the strangest action figures ever made!



## POWER TO THE PEOPLE

FROM MODEL CARS TO SYDOT THE SUPREME, THE STRANGE TALE OF REVELL'S ONLY ACTION FIGURE LINE



In 1981, Mattel's Masters of the Universe toy line proved that action figures could be made out of the wildest fantasy concepts imaginable. Revell, a company well-known for its model kits, decided to try their luck on a toy line that delved even deeper into the fantasy realm than He-Man and his comrades did. The resulting toy line was Power Lords, a toy line that was way ahead of its time.

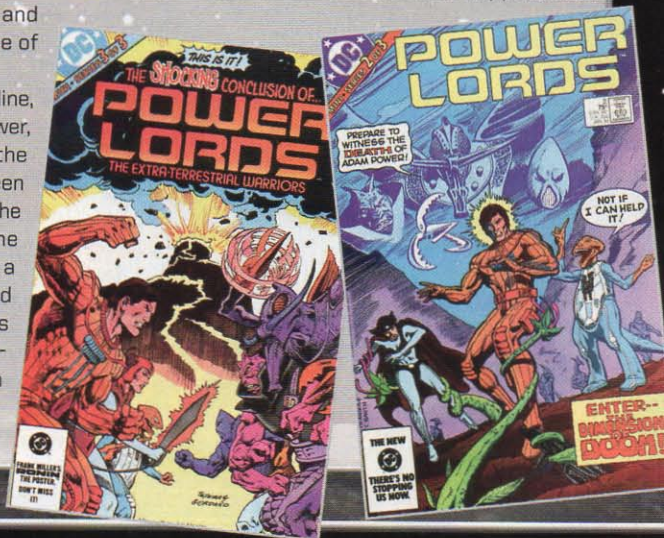
For their first action figure brand ever, Revell rolled the dice on a line of toys based on the fluid and organic alien designs of fantasy artist Wayne Barlowe. The line consisted mostly of strange, intricate aliens, and each toy had a unique action feature based on their bizarre alien physiognomy—even the humanoid characters could twist around and become bizarre, alien supermen, and the living vehicles they drove were some of the freakiest creatures of all.

Revell came up with the storyline, which involved a human, Adam Power, granted immense power by the Power Jewel. Along with his Queen of Power and scientist Sydot the Supreme, he battled the galaxy's greatest threat, a purple insectoid alien named Arkus. Arkus wanted Adam's Power Jewel and weapons-laden headquarters (Volcan Rock, the line's big playset), and led an army of warrior aliens, some of

whom had ambitions towards replacing Arkus as leader. (Unfortunately, he never slept.)

Although it didn't have the same marketing strength that He-Man had, the line was supported by a three-issue comic series from DC, a video game for the short-lived Odyssey system, a board game and a coloring book. That helped it last through a second series of Barlowe-designed figures and a few tacked-on "Beast Machines" (basically He-Man torsos on tank treads). Today, the toys are not easy to find, especially in good condition—the plastic was comparable to Revell's model kits, and some of the action features made the toys extremely fragile. But many collectors still appreciate the Barlowe-designed pieces, all of which were as weird and far-out as anything created by McFarlane Toys in their Spawn line.

Wow—we just imagined a McFarlane/Barlowe team-up, and our brains melted. Make it happen, Todd!





## SCARY MONSTERS AND SUPER CREEPS

THE POWER LORDS WERE SOME STRANGE-LOOKING CHARACTERS—HERE ARE FIVE OF THE STRANGEST!



**SYDOT THE SUPREME** Sydot was the good guys' scientist, and as you can see, he's incredibly happy about the work that he's doing. Or it might be because he's one of the few dinosaurs we've ever seen who wears pants. Pants will make anyone happy.



**ARKUS** If insects didn't already creep you out, Arkus will certainly do the job of haunting your nightmares. Best described as a giant purple mosquito with bull horns, it's no wonder that even the other villainous aliens bowed before this "Evil Dictator."



**RAYGOTH** The "Goon of Doom" isn't the freakiest of Arkus' henchmen, but he does have a very pointy head and a disturbingly shaped mouth. Hailing from Flozar VIII, the Frozen Planet, Raygoth probably catches whatever warmth he can get in his reflective tanning chestplate.



**GGRIPTOGG** Ggriptogg has two of everything: two "Ps," two double "Gs" and two pairs of fists! Dubbed "The Four Fisted Brute," Griptogg ruled the galaxy before Arkus showed up, and looks kind of confused about how he ended up working for the guy. *Four hands, people!*

**DRRENCH** This tri-pod-like bad guy was no friend of Adam Power or Arkus! Yep, the "Savage Soaker" from the planet Frigidor once froze Arkus' wings with his icy cold water blast (the figure shot water, too!) and the two have been enemies ever since. That's a heck of a grudge...where did that water come from, exactly? ■ BL



## WAYNE'S WORLD

WAYNE BRARLOWE WAS THE "ALIEN GUY" OF SCIENCE FICTION ARTISTS WHEN HE CREATED THE CREATURES THAT WOULD BECOME THE POWER LORDS

**ToyFare: Where did the idea for the Power Lords line come from?**

Wayne Barlowe: Revell was not involved, initially. I had done a book called *Barlowe's Guide to Extraterrestrials*—a field guide to aliens created by other authors—and I was contacted by a couple of toy developers by the name of Ned Strongen and Len Mahem. I explained to them that because none of those characters were mine, it would be a rights nightmare, but I told them I could come up with more characters—my goal was to create a line of rather original-looking aliens.

**How did Revell get involved?**

Strongen and Mahem went ahead with maquettes, and I believe at that point, as packagers, they had to find a company. Revell had been exclusively a model company, and this was their first venture into that area—their hierarchy was not structured to understand toys. In the translation from my drawings to the sculpting, the sculpting left a lot to be desired in my head: I felt that they were lightweight, that the detail was nowhere near as good as it could have been...I never felt they had the qualities that I was looking for. Having said that, there were a lot of mechanisms that were groundbreaking. There was a sense that we had to go head-to-head with Mattel.

**Did you have a favorite character or design?**

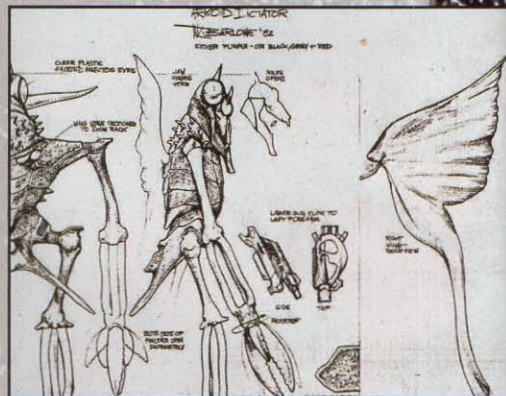
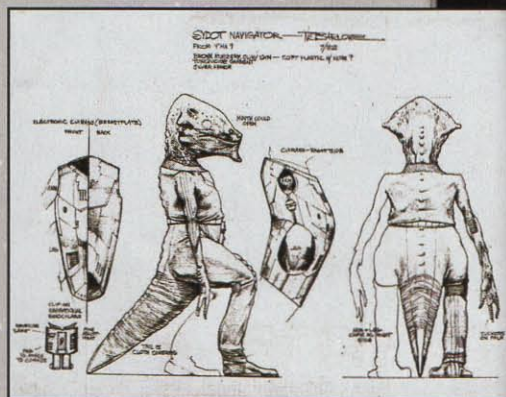
I like the vehicles more than the figures—it was one of the underlying notions to make everything in the line organic. I favored Arkus and Sydot, but the sculpts were a little deficient. I was responsible for their names—Sydot was a combination of my parents' names. Those were the only names I did. I did not come up with Adam Power, certainly. They market tested that until blood came out of kids' ears!

**Aside from the figure designs, did you do any other work on the line?**

I remember doing a painting for promotional purposes that was kind of a splashy, "let's show six of the characters" kind of thing. But I was not involved in any of the ancillary things. I did a ton of design work. There was a potential for a third series, but that never happened.

**Are you a toy fan?**

I have some toys from when I was a kid. I think toys were a lot more imaginative, and there was a lot more of a



danger element. It was a big dream of mine to own all of the Zeroids as a kid; when eBay started, I got interested in finding all of them in good shape. As for stuff nowadays, I am a big hobby guy. Right now, I'm into Hot Toys and *D&D*. I make tank models, and boy, the difference in quality between what I had as a kid and now is night and day. I've watched that hobby transform.

**Which of your design projects for Hollywood are you most proud of?**

*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* is one of the strongest portfolios of work I've done for Hollywood. The hippogriff is mostly mine, the werewolf is completely mine. And *Hellboy*—the Sammael was mine, and I retooled Abe Sapien into a more realistic and streamlined look, but that was at the director's request. But it's time to veer off and do something that's closer to what my roots were.

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For a complete Power Lords checklist, check out our price guide on page 95!



ARKUS