As FineScale Modeler approached the 20-year mark, we wondered which kits of the last two decades were most important to you, and this poll is the result. More than 800 readers took our online poll and voiced their opinions on their favorite kits of the last 20 years. There have been plenty of terrific model car kits released in the last 20 years, but aircraft and armor votes overwhelmed the reader poll.

The gone-but-not-forgotten Accurate Miniatures took the first two spots in the poll. The 1/48 scale TBF/TBM Avenger family of kits was followed closely by Accurate's 1/48 scale Allison-powered Mustang family, which was also recognized, finishing in ninth place.

Tamiya took 10 of the 20 spots, the greatest showing in the poll. The 1/350 scale supercarrier USS Enterprise came in at No. 3 in the poll. Tamiya's 1/32 scale F-14A Tomcat claimed the 11th spot; the landmark model was our first "Workbench Review" subject in the Fall 1982 FSM – our second issue.

Four Monogram kits made the list, with the 1/48 scale PBY Catalina coming in as No. 4 in the poll. During FSM's 20-year run, one of our priorities has been publishing reports on new kits. In fact, all of your choices appeared as brand-new kits in the "Workbench Review" department. The photos we've included here are from the original reviews, culled from our archives.

#1 The Accurate Miniatures 1/48 scale TBF/TBM Avenger family (first issued in 1996) topped our reader poll as best kit of the last 20 years.

#2 In second place, Accurate Miniatures' 1/48 scale B-25 Mitchell set a high mark in plastic aircraft kit detail in 2000.

#3 Tamiya's jumbo 1/350 scale USS Enterprise aircraft carrier was issued in 1985. It was the first plastic ship kit to shatter the $100 price barrier.

#4 Monogram's 1/48 scale PBY Catalina was a "most-wanted" by readers before its 1996 release. It has been issued as a flying boat (PBY-5) and an amphibian (PBY-5A).

#5 Tamiya's 1/48 scale F4U-1 Corsair was issued as the bubble-top A model in 1998.

Your 20 favorite kits

- 1/48 scale F-105 Thunderchief (single and two-seat)
- 1/48 scale F-4 Phantom family
- 1/48 scale PBY Catalina
- 1/35 scale M25 Dragon Wagon
- 1/72 scale B-17 family
- F-15 Eagle
- 1/35 scale Sherman
- 1/25 scale M1A3 Abrams
- AMT/Ertl "Star Trek: The Next Generation" Enterprise
- Tamiya 1/32 scale A-1 Skyraider
- Academy 1/72 scale B-17 family
- Tamiya 1/48 scale P-51B Mustang
- Tamiya 1/35 scale FAMO

By Matthew Usher
They don’t come much bigger than Tamiya’s 1/35 scale M25 Dragon Wagon. The tractor-trailer combo was issued in 1998, and the M26 tractor was issued separately in 2000.

Monogram’s classic 1/48 scale F-105 Thunderchief was first issued as the Wild Weasel two-seat G model in 1982. Several years later, the single-seat D model was released.

Nearly every version of the famous Phantom has been released in Hasegawa’s 1/48 scale F-4 family. The first, the F-4J, was released in 1984.

The first kit from Accurate Miniatures was the 1/48 scale Allison Mustang family from 1994. It included the cannon-armed P-51, the P-51A, the A-36A dive bomber, and the Royal Air Force Mustang Ia.

It’s big and beautiful – Monogram’s 1/48 scale B-58 Hustler was issued in 1986. The kit of the supersonic strategic bomber was released several times and is still a favorite among “modern jet” builders.

Could Tamiya’s 1/32 scale F-14A Tomcat be considered the first “super kit”? It certainly was when it was released in 1982.

Tamiya’s 1/35 scale M4A3 Sherman from 1983 is still a favorite for armor builders to convert to other versions.

The 1/350 scale WWII USS New Jersey by Tamiya was accompanied by a modern-day USS Missouri in 1985.


Tamiya’s 1/48 scale Mosquito Mk.VI was the first of the family of RAF twin-engined, wooden wonders. The plastic kit was first issued in 1998.

There have been two issues so far of Tamiya’s 1/48 scale Douglas A-1 Skyraider. The first, a U.S. Navy A-1H, was launched in 1998.

Academy’s 1/72 scale family of B-17 Flying Fortresses began appearing in 1990. Kits in the family range from the B-17B to the SB-17G. The B-17C is shown.

In a tragic coincidence, Monogram announced its 1/72 scale Space Shuttle stack on the day the Shuttle Challenger exploded in January 1986.

World War II fighter kits don’t come much better detailed than Tamiya’s 1/48 scale P-51B Mustang from 1996.

Tamiya’s 1/35 scale model of Germany’s biggest halftrack, the FAMO, came out in early 2000.