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Showcase

Young C. Park



▲ Young C. Park says he built a 1/16 scale all-aluminum P-51D Mustang to honor "the most beautiful of all WWII fighters." With research materials at hand, he created the realistic internal structure as well as the model's awe-inspiring movable parts.

Park's practically perfect P-51D

By Kelly Shaw • Photos by Young C. Park

Master scratchbuilder Young C. Park is no stranger to *FSM*, having featured two all-aluminum Corsairs in the November 2000 and September 2005 issues. After three years of hard work, he's unveiled his latest all-aluminum aircraft – a brilliantly detailed 1/16 scale P-51D Mustang, which he calls "the most beautiful of all World War II fighters."

Born to Korean immigrants in Hawaii in 1932, Young has long been impressed by the "speed and loud noise" of WWII fighter planes. His fascination began as a teenager after discovering a WWII aircraft scrap yard, and burgeoned as a young man serving in the Korean War in 1952.

For decades, he built radio-control planes

and dabbled with plastic kits; still, he felt artistically restless – he longed to build the most realistic aluminum planes but lacked the tools and space. In 1996, with eyes on retirement, he finally started his first all-aluminum Corsair.

Young, a former dentist, says working with aluminum's not so different from the art of gold castings – both "can be annealed, work-hardened, burnished, and made malleable." Aluminum also resists corrosion – an invaluable benefit in Hawaii's tropical ocean climate.

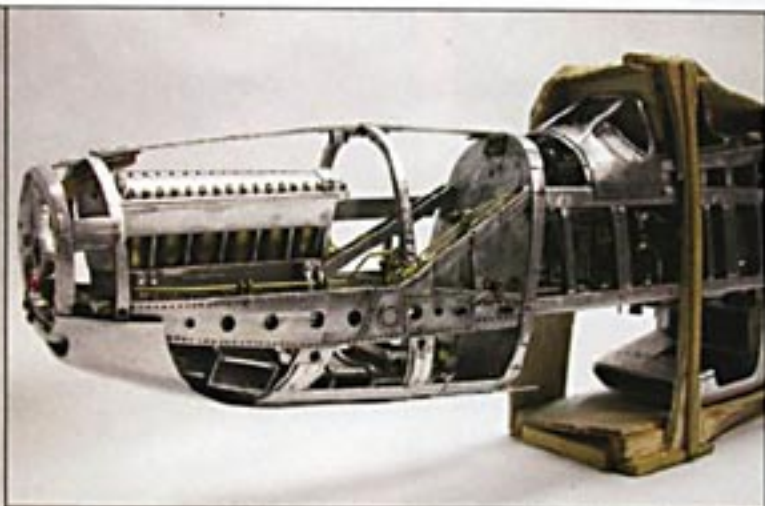
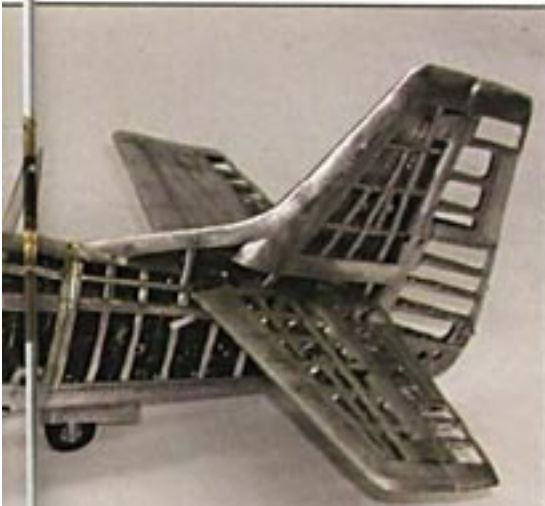
But, Young stresses, the potential of aluminum cannot be realized without rigorous research. For his cutaway P-51D, he obtained government manuals from Aero

Tech (of Broomfield, Colo.) and scale plans from a Bob Banks aircraft documentation CD (www.bobsairdoc.com). He also honed his hand-tool craft by watching Ron Covell's video "Shaping Aluminum with Hand Tools," resulting in even more precise detail on his Mustang.

Young, 75, continues to take inspiration from his favorite WWII airplanes. His sights are already set on another famous fighter, the P-38 Lightning. We can't wait to see it! **FSM**

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You can see more of Park's Mustang by going to www.FineScale.com and clicking on "How-to Articles."



◀ Using a wood buck, Young constructed the fuselage in separate pieces, beginning with the tail and moving toward the nose.



◀ To shape his Mustang, Young annealed and hammered aluminum roof flashing, utilizing techniques in Ron Covell's video "Shaping Aluminum with Hand Tools."



◀ Every detail of Young's fighter, down to the bubble-top canopy, deserves admiration. Yet this master modeler will tell you he's still fine-tuning his craft and learning how to add greater levels of detail. Lucky for us!