



# SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT: BLUE TABLE PAINTING

ADEPTICON WELCOMES BLUE TABLE PAINTING TO OUR FAMILY OF ADEPTICON SPONSORS. RECENTLY, WE HAD A CHANCE TO CHAT WITH SHAWN GATELEY, FOUNDER OF BLUE TABLE PAINTING, AND ASK HIM A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS BUSINESS AND THE HOBBY.



*Q1 - How did you get into miniature painting in the first place?*

In 1996 I ran an RPG tabletop game and two of my players played 40K afterwards. One day they had a few White Dwarfs with them. I picked up the issue when the Tyranids first came out and I was hooked.

About six months later those same two friends came by with huge grins on their faces and suggested that we dabble in Warhammer Fantasy. Within a few months our gaming group met at my house twice a week. We had gaming tables in every room and on the back porch. When my wife came home one day and found a game table set up on our bed, enough was enough and we were all kicked out (with good cause!)

So, I said "Fine, we'll find another place to play." The wheels were in motion.

Thus was born Invincible Wargames. By the end of the first year, the business was

profitable, but only marginally. At the end of the second year, my first child was born and the business wasn't making enough to support a family, so I sold the business and we moved to the San Francisco Bay area where I took a job as a teacher at what could be considered a "tough" school.

All this time I was painting up a storm. It gave me great peace and pleasure to move a brush and a drill. Sometimes I would get up at 3am to get in a few hours painting before the long drive to work. I made a resolution to own one of every 40K army published....and I almost made it. I had eight armies, all at least 2000 points, when the Necrons came out. Then I had to sell them all to make ends meet. It was a sad day.

I loved teaching, but I wasn't making enough to buy a house and settle down. It was such a long commute that my kids hardly got to see me at all. One night, I came home and my two year old son recoiled from me as if I were a stranger. I decided then that I would have to find a way to be home more.

During this same time, my father was diagnosed with terminal cancer. For three months I talked with him every day and he gave me inspiration and advice on my new venture. He passed away in late December. On January 1, 2004 I officially started Blue Table Painting.

*Q2 - Tell us a bit about your staff.*

I only hire full-time enthusiasts who are dedicated in principle to what Blue Table is trying to achieve. We are dreamers who put





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in long hours week after week. There is incredibly high morale at Blue Table. Each one has left a former job to come here and join under the banner.

The staff is rich with talents and virtues: sculpting, casting, webwork, woodworking, professional contacts, oh and painting almost anything that could possibly need to be done.

Other than that, it's pretty varied. There are seven full-time staff and two part-time. I think we're going on twelve months without anyone leaving. I always joke with my staff that I hope they are around to bury me.

I am always on the lookout for good talent so I encourage anyone with administrative or artistic talent to just contact me. I usually need about three new people each year.

*Q3 - I see from your website that you've been in business since 2003. As miniature painting services go, that's a heck of a long time. What would you say have been the keys to your longevity and success?*

**We were lucky, that's part of it. Breaking in three years ago was a lot easier than**

it is now. There must be something like 600 soloist painting services out there now.

My strategy is to get clients and keep them, no matter what. I have one golden opportunity to win them over on that first order. After that, it's an ongoing thing to be consistent and give good service in all areas.

It is by the good graces of the cus-



tomers that there is bread on the table for our families. We never forget that. If it weren't for our clients we would be out of luck! So, every order, every project is a chance to prove that we deserve to exist on the open market.

*Q4 - What's the most ambitious project that you remember?*

The most ambitious project is one we're working on now. It's called the "Gate of Four Hells": four daemoniac legion armies, each themed after one of the Chaos gods,





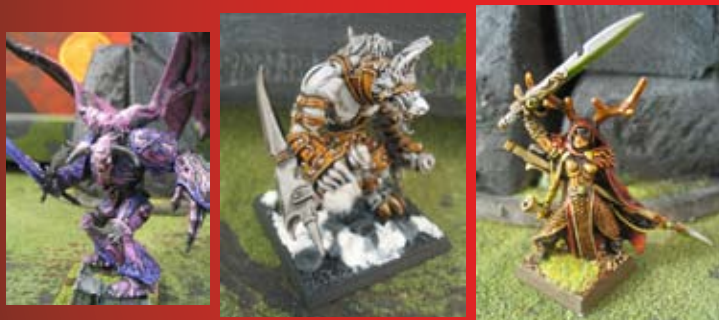
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massively converted with Tyranid parts as a base for the daemonic creatures. Look for pics of this in mid-February 2007.

Our dream is the "Tau Invasion" project: a 12' scale wing of a Tau battlecruiser with 10,000 points of Tau ready to launch. It will feature every ForgeWorld Tau model. We will bring this to a convention in the next 24 months... sooner if we find a patron to commission the work to the tune of nearly \$10,000.

Q5 - What was the biggest, um, "learning experience" in terms of miniature painting that you remember?

In Oct. 2005 I had a staff of mostly part-time non-enthusiasts: almost all quit at

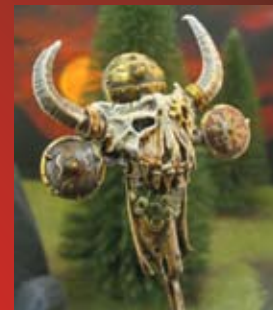


the same time. The three months after The Exodus were absolutely miserable. I was going out of business. It looked like we were going to lose our house. But like a Phoenix, the company emerged stronger, better and smarter.

Now, I am very selective and only hire full-time hobbyists who want to make this the focus of their professional lives. Also, I have a detailed and clear fifty page Artist's Manual that explains how we operate the studio.

Q6 - What's the biggest challenge you face in running a miniature painting studio?

Quality control is a huge deal. The artist has to make dozens of decisions on how to effect a project. I've codified all that as



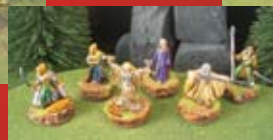
much as possible and hired an Art Director to mentor and direct painters.

Studio culture is everything. And it applies all the way to the top—I say only positive things about my people, both in public and in behind closed doors.

I now have required reading for new artists: Leadership and Self-Deception, and Pride and Performance. This puts everyone on the same page for inter-personal relations inside the studio.

Q7 - Do you play miniature wargames yourself? If so, which ones?

Do I ever! I love wargames. I play Warhammer and 40K regularly. I'm also a big fan of Hordes and Warmachine—I really believe in those two games. I mostly love to make terrain and that's practically all I would do if I had the time.



Q8 - What's your personal favorite Workshop miniature?

Ooooooh! So many great choices. Hm... mmm... I'd have to say the Eldar Fire Prism or Vyper for 40K. The Carnifex kit is a close runner up. For Warhammer Fantasy I'd have to say Kroq-Gar.

OK, so that was four, but come on.



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Q10 - If AdeptiCon 2007 attendees want to use your services, how much lead time does your team need?

For whole armies, we do a three week rotation for any given project: a week to acquire materials, a week to assemble them, and a week for painting. Smaller projects take less time to turn around. If a project comes assembled then the turnaround time is less, obviously. Sometimes a project can bleed into a fourth week.

If someone commissioned a project as late as February 28 we could still get it back to them, with due attention and process, by AdeptiCon in late March. If they send models and/or send assembled models I'd push that up to as late as March 10.

Blue Table's service is designed so that you can send your army list and we'll get that ordered, assembled, converted, painted up to par, shipped and on your doorstep in 30 days.

Q9 - Any story behind the "Blue Table Painting" name?

I wanted a business name that would evoke a clear image but not be fantasy-based. It should have a color and an object.

Blue is the color of trust, and also my favorite color. Table hearkens to Gately's Painting Table, a newsgroup for my clients when I did commissions as a soloist in 2003.

TO CHECK OUT MORE OF BLUE TABLE PAINTING'S WORK OR TO COMMISSION A PROJECT FOR YOURSELF, VISIT THEIR WEBSITE AT:

[WWW.BLUETABLEPAINTING.COM](http://WWW.BLUETABLEPAINTING.COM)



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