

# THE LITTLE AVIATION MUSEUM

## *Workbench notes*

### BOEING 747-400 IN 1/144 BY REVELL

(September 2014)

There can't be too many people who have not flown in a Boeing 747. I've flown in them halfway around the world and on the short Melbourne-Sydney hop during the peak holiday season. If you've ever had the experience of flying cattle car in one of these you'll know it's not great fun - especially on the long flight from London to Singapore, but if you've travelled business class, that's another thing again. Valma and I got bumped up to business class on a BA flight across the Atlantic which was when we swore a blood oath that we'd never fly overseas in cattle car again, which may be why our passports have long since expired.

Qantas has flown all the early versions of the 747 and have had 65 of them at one time or another, and currently have 13 of the -400 version remaining.

The second -400 Qantas flew was VH-OJB which flew for the airline from September 1989 to April 2012. From September 1994 to March 2003 it flew in the special *Wunala Dreaming* paint scheme, one of four Qantas airliners (two 747s and two 737s) painted in Aboriginal schemes. The *Wunala Dreaming* was the most popular and when VH-OJB returned to standard Qantas livery



another 747-400, VH-OEJ flew with that scheme until the end of 2012. It is not identical to OJB because it had General Electric engines and the engine pods are white rather than red.

*Wunala Dreaming* was very popular on the world's airways but the only decal sheet that allows a scale model to be built was produced by Brazil Decals in 2001 and has become as scarce as rocking horse poo. I picked up the sheets (two of them) off ebay for a reasonable sum, but you'd be lucky to find a set for sale now. It was that company's first decals and, to be frank about it, it is not one of the best decal sheets you're likely to see. Several people who have the sheets have complained that the decals are too thick to be useable and I've never seen any reviews of the sheets or models made using them. That wasn't going to stop me, you know the saying about fools and wise men ...

Apart from a frivolous lack of care over one's sanity, the other thing you will need to make a model of *Wunala Dreaming* is a Revell 747-400 kit. You won't find one in your local hobby shop, but they are available on ebay. (Current prices range from \$15 to \$65 but you have to be careful and get the kit with Rolls Royce engines to make this model.) It isn't a difficult kit to make apart from the wing trailing edges which are thicker than on the real thing, and the undercarriage which is quite fragile.

Let's skip over the process up to the point where you have an all-red fuselage ready for the decals. But wait, you have to do more before you can start with them. It turns out that the fuselage isn't entirely red, there are areas lightly oversprayed with what appears to be a light ochre colour. After you've spent hours peering at as many photos of *Wunala Dreaming* as you can find to see where these patches are and their density, then you have to hone up your airbrush technique and apply the ochre to the model to duplicate the original effect. Good luck with that, that's all I've got to say.

Then you can start applying the decals once you've figured out where they are supposed to go - the instruction sheet is next to useless. You will soon discover that there are some significant variations between what appears on the real airliner and what is on the decal sheet. Having got over that you discover that some of the decals do not adhere very well and there is a lot of silvering to deal with.

There are solutions to all these problems, but they ain't pretty. By the time it was all over it was enough to make me wish I'd been wise and made a standard Qantas 747-400 instead. Aren't you glad that you don't have one of those rare Brazil Decals decal sets that you'd feel obliged to use one of these days?





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