

Zvezda 1:48 Yak-3

by Stephen Tontoni

Scale: 1/48

Company: Zvezda

Price: \$26.99

Product/Stock #: 4814

Website: Dragon Models

Product Web Page: View

Product provided by:

Dragon Models USA

The first impression is the box; it's **sturdy**. The inner corrugated box has a top with securing flaps on the sides, then that's covered with a more standard box top. The box resembles the type you'd get a model in rather than a plastic kit. I'm just really impressed since so many manufacturers have been producing flimsy side-opening boxes that promote part loss. Thank you!

As for the plastic, you could not ask for better molding quality or engineering. The design is simple and the details are plentiful. It also includes a nicely detailed engine. The instruction sheet does not show a vague exploded view of the engine construction either; the nine steps in the instructions for engine assembly leave nothing in question. The bracing for the engine looks very scale-accurate. However, if you're not into showing engines, like me, the kit has a two-piece nose to use instead. There's no need to



figure out how to attach nose cowls over the engine. That never works.

The cockpit detail is passable, but it's a simple cockpit anyway. There are a couple ejector pin marks on the fuselage side that should be filled (don't know how much they'll be visible) but they are conveniently located somewhat behind the side consoles. There will be no need to rebuild the molded-in cockpit bracing or anything like that. But that raises the question: why did they not have separately molded bracing? As I recall, they did that with their Bf 109F. Maybe my memory is flawed. Had the cockpit side bracing been molded separately, it would have given the details

more depth, and those ejector pin marks would be much easier to eradicate.

Speaking of molding, I couldn't find any sink marks on this at all, even in the most notorious places. The wheel well molding is part of the upper wing, and is extraordinarily deep. The wheel well sides are molded in and I half-expected sink marks on the upper wing. There were none to be found. Underside of wing has very delicately molded flush rivet detail. It's unfortunate that will not show too much on the finished model.

Decals are thin and in good register. The markings provided are okay, but with the graffiti and artwork on

many of these planes, I wish they'd included more. The stencil assortment looks really good.

The kit incorporates a number of added features, almost like Easter Eggs. You'll find yourself saying, "they did that? How cool" while examining the unbuilt kit.

It's going to build up really nicely. It has some excellent design features, and that engine is a gem. Molding is excellent in every way. The ejector pin marks in the cockpit may be an annoyance, but are really not visible because of the cockpit side consoles. Here's a minor nit; the upper wing on the real thing is pretty barren of detail so the landing gear warning pin is very prominent. Zvezda didn't bother with it. At \$25, it's a lot of really nice plastic in the box and will build easily into an impressive model.

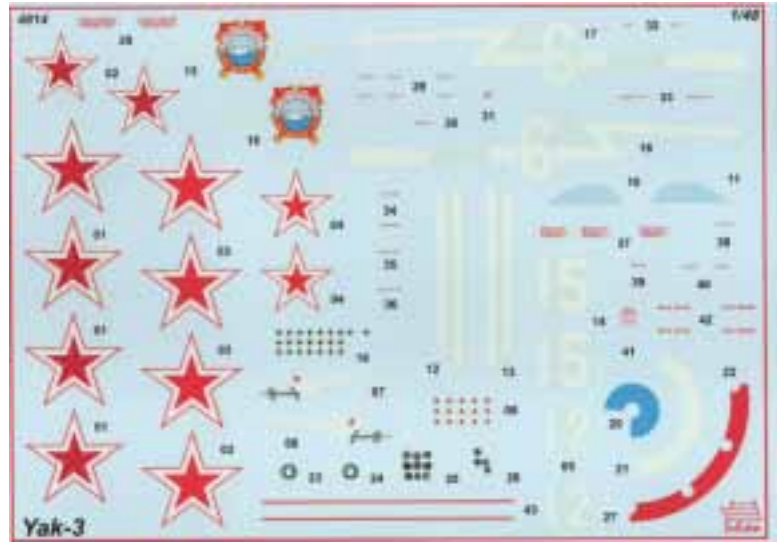


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Now, the \$64,000 question: Does it beat the Eduard kit? Good question; let's go down the line:

	Zvezda	Eduard (ProfiPACK edition)	The Leader
Number of Parts:	127	95 plus resin & PE Tie	Tie
Photoetch Parts:	None	Interior, grills, landing gear	Eduard
Cockpit Detail:	Simple, good	Simple; photoetch adds depth	Tie
General Molding:	More delicate	Very basic; no locator pins	Zvezda
Wheel well:	Deeper, crisper	Very basic	Zvezda
Engine:	Highly detailed	None	Zvezda
Decals:	Thin, crisp; better stencils	Thin, crisp; more options/art	Eduard
Canopy:	One position, okay clarity	Two positions, okay	Eduard
Canopy masks:	None	Crisp die-cut	Eduard
Wheel covers:	Down or up	Up only (must be cut)	Zvezda
Wheels:	Basic	Resin, slightly bulged	Eduard
Propeller:	Molded together	Two piece spinner, separate blades	Eduard
Control Surfaces:	Good; separate ailerons	Nice molding	Eduard
Price:	\$25	\$26	Near Tie

The Winner

Better molding of the Zvezda kit gives a better general impression. Detail in Eduard is nice but is something that can be added by the modeler, or

aftermarket. Decals...pick 'em or go aftermarket. Zvezda may have the slight edge on engineering; it's really too close to call.

Since I have both, I may bash them together!

My thanks to Dragon USA for the review sample.