



Dragons and Monsters: How I Created Them

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Disclaimer

- I acknowledge inspiration and instruction from various companies, Web sites, forums, and individuals
- **BUT:** I want to make it clear that I am not representing any of those forums, companies, Web sites, or individuals
- Furthermore: None of these organizations have reviewed or approved of the content of this presentation, nor have they reviewed or approved of the costumes I am presenting, or the techniques and materials I will be demonstrating

Disclaimer (part 2)

- The construction techniques and finished products have not been reviewed for quality, integrity, or suitability by any of the organizations named

Disclaimed Parties

- The Hunter's Lair
- The Monster Makers
- SparkFun Electronics
- Smooth-On Inc.
- Plastics International
- Toho Company Ltd.
- Daiei Film
- 20th Century Fox
- Stan Winston Studios
- MarsCon
- The D.O.O.M. Squad
- CONvergence Events Inc.
- Dragon*Con
- Carl and Diana Reis Daniels
- Tandy Leather Factory

Why I need a disclaimer

- “Stevie Wonder going passed on horseback, should be able to see that someone wearing a forums apparel looks like they are a official representative of that forum. Which to be honest is alittle daft/cheaky unless asked to do so. “

Dragon Seeds



- CONvergence 2010: I bought this armor at the dealer's room, then immediately went to a mask-making panel where I was one of the presenters
- The other presenter was showing off the leather masks she made for RenFest and elsewhere
- I started thinking about a dragon mask, but it was just a fleeting idea until...

Dragon Seeds



- ...I met Carl Daniels and his wife at Dragon*Con 2010
- He had the most amazing armor I've ever seen
- I talked with him for a while, found out a little bit about his techniques, and got his contact information

Carl's Amazing Work



Enter the Dragon

- For Christmas 2010, I received a leathercrafting tool set from Tandy Leather Factory, along with a leather shoulder
- I did some research on wet-molding leather, again with Carl's help
- I also figured out how to do the carving and tooling to work the impressions into the leather

Designing the Helm

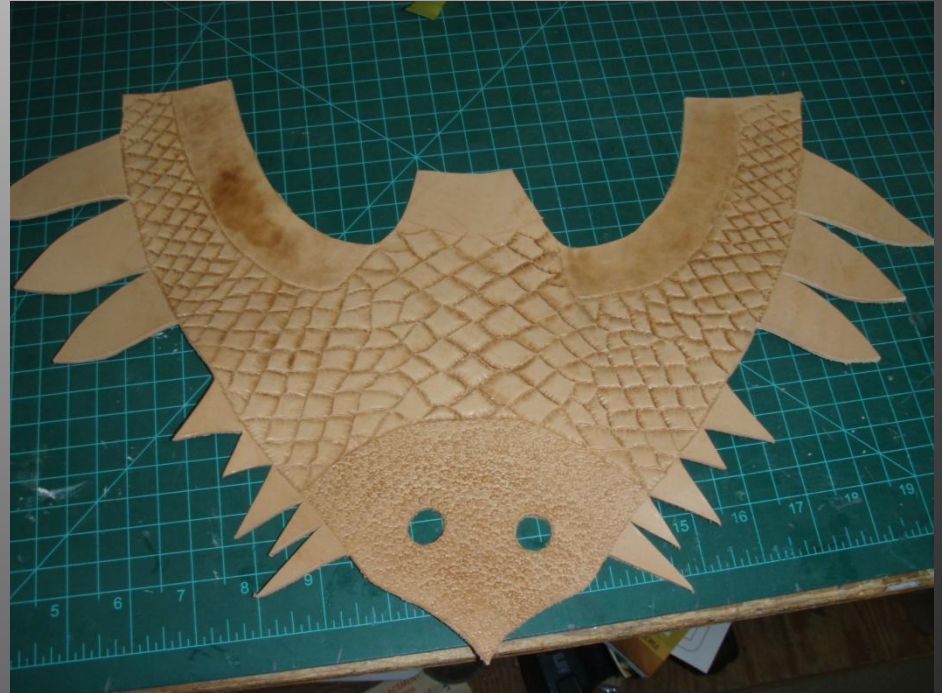
- I started off with a clay sculpture, so I could visualize the helm and so I could figure out the shape of the flat pieces of leather



Working for Scale



The first experiments I made with cutting the leather and then tooling it



I thought I could do the entire snout with one piece of leather...

Oops



It turned out that I couldn't push the leather down over the snout and keep the cheeks the same shape I wanted them



The fix: I cut the cheeks from the original tooled piece, then added the top of the snout as an overlay, along with the tip of the nose

Wet Molding

- To do the initial tooling, I'd wet the leather in a process called "casing", then carve it with a leather knife and stamp the scales into it using leatherworking tools
- To make the piece of leather conform to the sculpture, I'd wet it down in HOT water (but not long enough to wash all the stamped design out of the leather), then press it into place on the clay
- Teeth and frills are made simply by rolling the leather into a cone shape



More Pictures of the Process



Turning Uncolored Dragon into Black Dragon



I used black leather dye for the base color, and airbrushed a dark green paint onto the frills, ear tips, and a little bit on top of the scales. This green goes along with the Celtic knot on the armor. Then I applied a clear Super Shene finish to seal the leather.

Red Bull gives you wings, but not leather ones

- That's about \$100 worth of garment leather
- I built an aluminum frame to hold up the top of the wings
- I originally was thinking about an actuator to make them flap, but in the end, I never found a good way to control them



Center Spines and Tail

- Also made of tooled, wet-molded leather
- Each tail piece has a hole where the waist of the previous segment goes through



Greaves (because the medievals didn't want to call it “lower leg armor”)



- Each of them has about 90 scales, shaped roughly like the tail, riveted to a suede backing
- Thanks to Jeremy Furchner for greave counseling

- Shoe covers (sabatons) are also made of several pieces of leather, with small frills
- I used plastic “bear” claws, but they kept getting caught on floors, carpets, RenFest grounds, etc.



Running the Gauntlet

- I bought the left gauntlet at CONvergence, but I didn't have contact info for the guy who made it
- I had to reverse-engineer the left gauntlet to make the right one – and there were many pieces of leather involved

Running the Gauntlet



Dragon Meetup at Dragon*Con



It's Good to be the Dragon

