



## The AMA History Project Presents: History of 3D HOBBY SHOP



Written by JS (09/2009); Reformatted by JS (05/2011)

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*Jay Smith wrote the following, published in the About Us section of Model Aviation magazine, September 2009 issue.*

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### About Us: 3D Hobby Shop

**“Our goal is** simple: to be the premier supplier of airframes,” said Ben Fisher—who owns 3D Hobby Shop (3DHS)—during a telephone interview I conducted with him.

Some might consider that to be a bold statement. But having known Ben since 2007, I wouldn’t expect anything less from him or the company.

Since its beginning in 2005, 3DHS has gathered a strong following of loyal customers who eagerly await each release. That enthusiasm is most evident on RCGroups, the popular RC Web site, where Ben can be found virtually around the clock. A recent poll on RCGroups asked members to vote for the best RC model manufacturer, and 3DHS took first place.

That level of customer loyalty has kept the company’s focus not only on “raising the bar,” but also on moving it into new types of aircraft.

“The most rewarding thing is when guys who have maidenized the aircraft for the first time pick up the phone, sometimes on their cell phone right from the field; that’s job satisfaction,” said Ben.

His love affair with airplanes and RC started at an early age, when his uncle taught him to fly models in Dallas, Texas. Soon, with his uncle’s support, Ben moved from constructing kits to scratch building. As do many of us, he found himself getting away from aeromodeling in his late teens to focus on life’s priorities.

Bluecor foam models and 3-D flying are what got Ben excited again about the hobby.

“The maneuvers looked impossible and that made them cool,” he said,

It gave him the opportunity to scratch-build aircraft that were inexpensive, durable, and disposable, for learning all the new maneuvers that 3-D aerobatics had to offer.

**“If I could** do anything, I would talk to people about model airplanes all day.”

Ben and his brother, Matthew, created the company as an online hobby retailing business, but before long, they decided to produce their own aircraft. With Scott Stoops' help, the 47-inch Extra SHP was born.

Two amazing things happened during the development of that model. First, 3DHS customers supported the company by preordering the Extra SHP without seeing it, which helped it become a reality.

Second, 3DHS formed a partnership with Scott Stoops, who had developed more than 12 models for the company thus far. If that weren't enough, the 47-inch Extra SHP has been the company's best seller to date.

To keep up with customer demand for new aircraft, Andrew Jesky recently joined Scott as a 3DHS designer. His first release, the AJ Slick, has been popular with pilots and is now available in five sizes.

So how does 3DHS decide on new releases while working with two designers? Both have several ideas of aircraft they would like to design. Based on market demands and diversifying the product lines, it's Ben's job to decide which models to produce first.

Customer demand recently changed the company's production priorities, when a large number of people requested the release of an electric-powered sport/3-D model with a wingspan of approximately 70 inches. Developing this size of airplane quickly became a top priority, and releases are expected this summer.

**I have always** been impressed with the covering schemes on 3DHS aircraft. Although they break from traditional designs, they do not go so far that they are considered overdone. Ben looks at each one as a blank canvas and finds creating his masterpiece one of the most enjoyable parts of the process.

He sketches several designs, upward of 80 at times, and then whittles them down with the designer's help. Even with all the shades of Oracover at his disposal, Ben would like to see the color palette extended for even more design possibilities. Each model is available in two color schemes once released.

Another one of Ben's responsibilities with new airplanes is durability testing. While the designer works on advancing flight performance, Ben puts the aircraft through hard flying and less-than-perfect landings.

At times, Ben and the designer might not be happy with the product until after several revisions. Occasionally, an airframe could even undergo a minor change after its release, to implement an improvement based on customer feedback.

**Before ending** our call, I asked Ben if there was anything else he wanted to discuss for the article. He pointed out two things that he felt were extremely important, the first of which was

the commitment of everyone involved with 3DHS, from his designers, to the factory in China, to the company itself, to turn out a quality product.

Everyone who is involved with the business has a vested interest. Even some of the factory workers fly 3DHS aircraft at their local flying fields.

Second, the company focuses on its customers. This is accomplished by keeping the business small, to allow Ben to correspond with all of them. However, “customers” might not even be the correct term; Ben looks at them more as “flying buddies.”

He enjoys being involved every step of the way, including assisting with model selections to match a person’s skill level or flying goals, answering product questions, and providing support. He also tries to attend as many flying events and trade shows as his schedule allows. Something that has taken 3DHS by surprise is the 3D Hobby Shop fly-ins that the business’s customers have coordinated. That first took place last year in Texas, and several more have been planned for 2009, with one in Florida.

**The fact that** 3D Hobby Shop is focused on being the “premier supplier of airframes” is echoed in its motto: “Flying the Best.” The customer loyalty that the company has established in the short time it has been doing business is nothing short of amazing.

This is shaping up to be a big year for 3DHS. It is in the process of releasing several models, as well as a new line of low-cost brushless motors and speed controls. A review of one of 3DH’s offerings will be feature in an upcoming issue of *MA*.

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Sources:

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