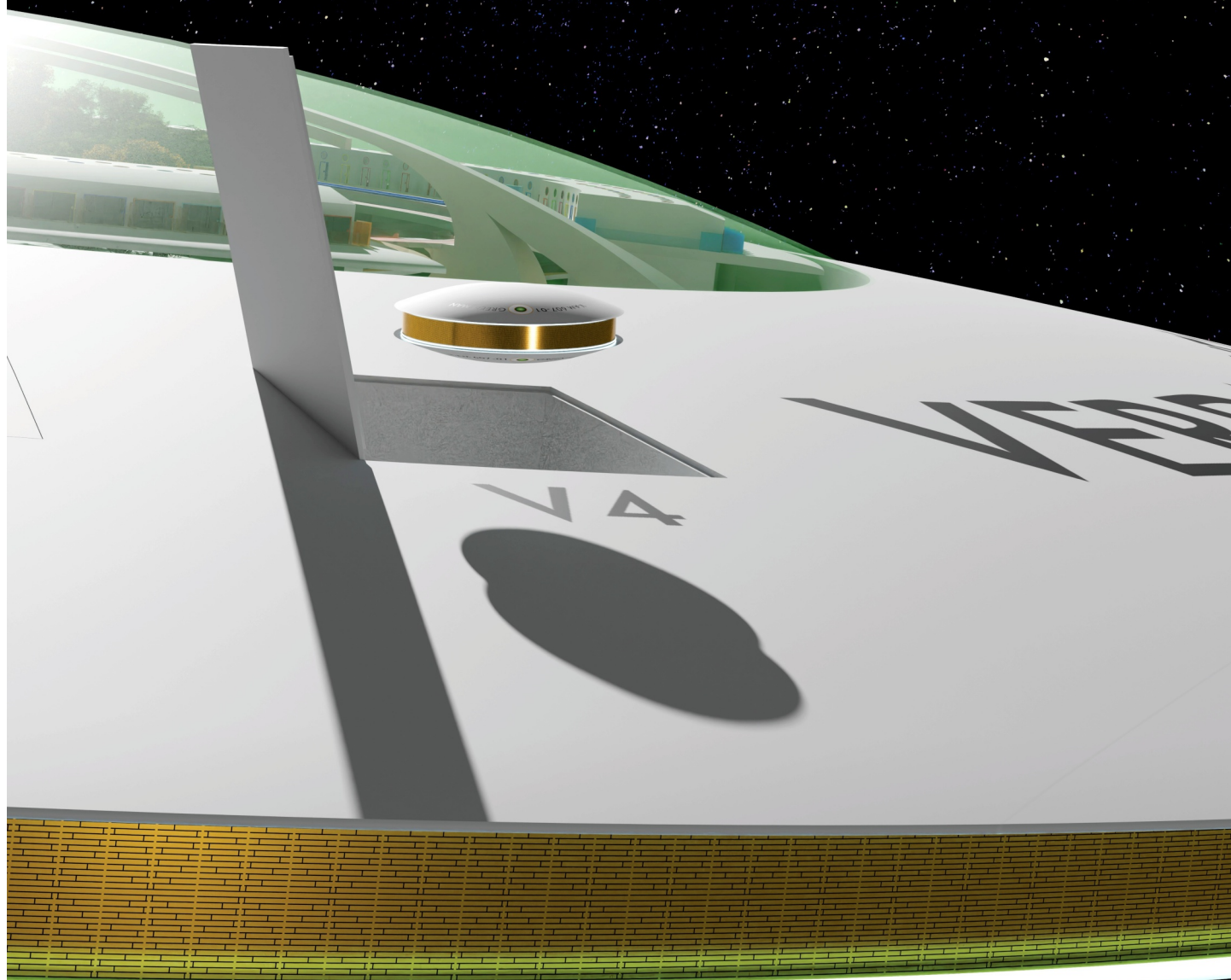
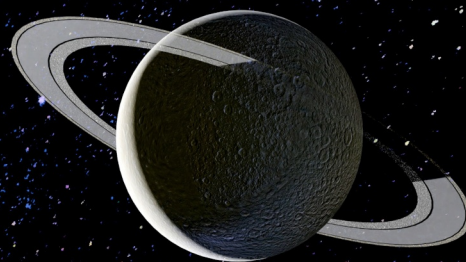


DESTINY ONE

AN AMAZING AEROSPACE SHORT
STORY BY RUPERT W BROWN



VERDAJUVEL GALAXSIA



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“Amazing Aerospace” is a project where Rupert reimagines aircraft of the past and imagines what the future holds for human space exploration. These short stories (the burning line series) are to illustrate how people interacted with and will interact with these airships, aeroplanes and space craft. This story focusses on the Verdajuel, a true Galaxsia class, research and exploration star ship, active from 2200 to 2300.

This short story is hosted on <https://www.rupert-writing.com>
For more information on Amazing Aerospace visit <https://www.rupert-design.com>

Destiny One

She stood on the balcony watching the light from an unfamiliar star illuminate this strange and beautiful world, so like the Earth and yet so distant, so alien. She sipped at her tea, then went back into the apartment and took a second cup into the bedroom for Fae. Fae was still asleep, her long auburn hair like a halo around that beautiful face. Perfect, they had made her perfect. Fae opened an eye and smiled. She put the tea on the bedside table then kissed her. 'We should get going. We have a full day.'

Fae nodded and took a slurp of tea, then fell back into the pillow.

'Yes, you're right. I'm looking forward to it. I want to get as close as we can to the home tree.'

They pulled on leggings and old sweatshirts, went through a stretching routine, then left their Archangel apartment for a run round the walkway. At the central plaza they chased each other down the spiral and onto the lawn. They cleared the water and ran to the flower meadow then had to sprint to avoid Wilbour the rooster as he chased them into the forest. They slowed to a jog and enjoyed the smell of the trees and the mist from the rockpool waterfall. At the netball court they sped up again, sprinting up the spiral and the walkway, trying to keep pace with the cyclists on the velodrome. They made it back to the apartment and fell through the door laughing and hugging each other. They showered together, caressing each other in the warm water. After breakfast then pulled on their coveralls and left the apartment again, heading for the Flight Operations centre and the VShip hangers.

Flight Ops was waiting for them and they went straight into the briefing room.

'OK,' said Ops, 'this will be quite a ride. Today we want you to do a full reconnaissance down on the surface of Laxfala. We want to get as close as we can to one of the home trees with minimal disruption to anything that might be living there. Lets walk through the mission profile.'

When Verdajuvell arrived at Laxfala, it had deployed the "Great Eye" space observatory as it always did. It had also deployed two "Planet Eye" planet observation satellites. Between them, these two satellites had already mapped ninety percent of Laxfala's surface in great detail. This information, combined with that from a previous mission, allowed the Plant Science team to produce a detailed map of the surface which included an indication of vegetation types. It had confirmed the existence of the home trees, giant natural structures that reached hundreds of metres in height above shallow parts of the oceans, hundreds of kilometres from the nearest shore.

They studied the injection trajectory and atmosphere descent plan. The fractal antenna drive of the VShips meant that they could move at speed directly to the surface, controlling the rate of descent at all times. Nothing would get hot, and certainly nothing would be burning up. Their target was the home tree they called “Destiny One”. It stood alone in the centre of a small sea in the equatorial region of Laxfala.

‘We chose Destiny One because, as far as we can tell, there is no activity around the tree at this time,’ explained Flight Ops. ‘The task is a simple spiral scan of the whole structure, paying close attention to the leaves – or flowers – at the top of the structure. Planet Science are really keen to figure out what those things are. But no heroics. If anything appears back off, and above all do not leave the ship at this time. We are sure the air is breathable, but we haven’t finished screening for pathogens. If something does go wrong I’ll have VShip Dragon Spirit in orbit above you ready for an emergency extraction. But lets not get to that point please. When you get back to hanger stay put till we’ve finished the decontamination process.’

Flight Ops handed her the mission sheet to check and there it was in black and white. Fae’s number – AF027/0x000-FAE and then her own – AF026/0x2D8-BEC [A]. That final [A] a constant reminder of her loss.

Fae, an Alpha, the top of the range in terms of IQ, aptitude and all round common sense. Female and of genome configuration 027. She was also a pure example of 027. Her Caring Parents hadn’t wanted any personalisations, thus the 0x000. FAE was her unique identifier and the basis of her name. Her own unique personal identifier revealed she was from the previous genome configuration 026. Her Caring Parents had wanted her to assume some particular characteristics. 0x2D8 meant her genome had been spliced for blond hair and blue eyes. Whereas Fae was tall, slender and lean, she had been designed to be a little shorter, a lot more curvacious and to be brutally honest, a bit chunkier. That is what her Mother had wanted. She was happy enough with it all, but the [A]. Her zygote had been created in the usual way and placed in the womb tank. But the very first division had not gone according to plan. Rather than a simple division and multiplication, the zygote split to create two individuals, two who should have been identical, but again something strange and significant happened. One zygote developed as female as planned. The other was male.

The Genetic Engineers were as bewildered as everybody else. This had never happened before, could, should not have happened. They agonised over the decision to terminate the male, but in the end were so desperate to try and understand what had happened, they left him alone. So she developed in the womb tank with her brother.

They were birthed in the usual way and both brother and sister appeared to be healthy, two perfect babies. Her Caring Parents were thrilled. Twins was a bonus. But the boy only lived for

a week. For some inexplicable reason he went to sleep in his cot and just passed away. She never really knew her brother. But for her whole life she had felt like there was something missing. She felt incomplete, and there on that page was the reminder, that [A] – she was an anomaly. Some tiny detail in the complexity of their double helix had forced a twist in the mitosis. She would carry that mark forever, and always be conscious of the brother that had left her. Those feelings matured into a desire to get away, leave the home of the lost sibling. Her parents were horrified when she announced she was applying to the Galaxy Exploration Group. They begged her not to leave. In the end, torn by conflicting emotions she stole away in the night. She hadn't been home since.

She signed the mission sheet and looked up at Fae and Flight Ops and forced a smile. They walked together to Hanger 1. Ops had allocated them VShip V-AM 607-01, the Green Man, a figure from Old English folklore, a steward of the wild green places, and a protector of the natural world with the power to bring life and renewal. An appropriate and sympathetic figure to send out to explore new worlds. Flight Ops helped them into their mission suits and followed them into the body of the VShip. When the pre-flight checks were complete, and he was satisfied they had made the mind connection with the ship's AI he left, ensured the VShip hatch was closed, then sealed the ship into its hanger. The air was pumped from the hanger and the large space side door lifted open. Bright light from Laxfala's star flooded the bay. Fae slowly guided the ship up and away from Verdajuvél. Although the VShip has no conventional windows, they got a perfect view of Verdajuvél and Laxfala, now a huge presence in the vista screens before them.

They watched in silence as the AI manoeuvred the Green Man into a perfect alignment with the planned trajectory, the fractal antenna steering them through space-time like a rudder through water. As the ship entered Laxfala's atmosphere, they lost some of the colour in their view as they passed through a cloud layer, but soon slipped into glorious sunshine, many kilometres above an azure sea of Laxfala. The ship descended quickly. Destiny One first appeared beneath them as a tiny dot, but rapidly grew in size. The purple and pink of the top crown of flowers became evident. They searched for signs of animal or bird life, but nothing was revealed by the scanner. Then they were there, right next to Destiny One and for the first time they got a sense of just how big the tree was, at least two hundred metres tall. The Green Man descended to the base of the tree and the AI initiated its scanning program. It slowly rose in a gentle spiral, circling the tree as it ascended. She noted the smooth bark, and the subtle tones of silver, jade and ochre in soft, diffuse patterns. They slowly moved between the quad-furcated branches of the tree, each division initially looking symmetrical, but with small inconsistencies and differences becoming apparent. The large trunk at the base of the tree

split into sixty four branches at the crown, each topped with its flower. The undersides of the flowers were a subtle matt silver with an edge tinged in purple.

The ship moved away from the tree and out of the branches, then rose so that they could move across the top of the crown. Each leaf was a heart shape, and at its centre a mound with an opening. Fae asked the AI to move as close as they could to an opening. With lights on they peered into the entrance but could make out no detail at all. The interior was black.

'Scan again for life,' ordered Fae.

'No visible signs of any living creatures,' came the response from the AI.

'You know what, I'm going to take a look,' said Fae.

'Fae, no. You know what Ops said, no heroics, no leaving the ship. That's not what we're here for today.'

'But come on, there is nothing out there. There's no risk. It would be remiss to come all this way and not check it out.'

She argued that it was against their orders, that it would mean trouble. Even the AI suggested it was not a wise move, but Fae was determined. She pulled on a lightweight helmet and climbed into the hatch. The AI moved the ship to help her make an exit and Fae slowly stepped out onto the edge of a flower. The flower was quite rigid and easily supported her weight. She watched in trepidation as Fae approached the dark entrance of the flower's mound. She saw Fae crouch down and scan the inside with a sensor recorder. After a couple of minutes Fae stood up and turned. She saw Fae shrug her shoulders then start to walk back to the ship. She was checking their mission time when the AI squawked an alarm.

'Fae, behind you, unfriendly.'

From the depths of the mound a huge snake-like creature was emerging. A tongue flickered between teeth attached to jaws, half a metre wide. The creature's head was raised, ready to strike. Fae spun round, saw the snake and raised a defensive arm just as the creature struck. Fae screamed. There was a flash of white and blue. An Ocean Corsair bird threw the snake into the air, then stabbed it with its beak as it landed. The snake twisted and coiled, but the Corsair stabbed again, and again, Eventually the snake lay still and the great bird lifted it in its beak and swallowed it whole.

Fae, who had been fixed to the spot turned and ran towards the hatch of the Green Man. She dived in head first, and the AI closed it. The Ocean Corsair watched the ship move away from the Home Tree, shook itself down, then turned and strutted into the mound of the flower.

Fae strapped herself back in her seat and reconnected with the AI.

'That was too close,' the AI offered.

'Tell me about it,' said Fae.

She didn't say anything.

'Well despite violating numerous mission protocols, we did learn one thing,' offered the AI.
'What is that?' enquired Fae.

'Whatever that snake thing was, it is completely invisible to our scanners. It's like it's generating a shield of some kind.'

Fae looked at her. She didn't say anything. She knew they were in trouble, big trouble.

It started as soon as they finished the decontamination program in the hanger. Flight Ops was waiting for them. There was none of the usual small talk, just an order to follow him. He lead them to a conference room. There waiting was the Head of Space Operations and the Captain of the Verdajuel himself. They were told to sit down, Flight Ops closed the door and it started. Countermanding orders, risking their own lives, risking the lives of others, endangering alien ecosystems, the list went on and on. Fae was told, in no uncertain terms, that there was a good chance she would never fly again, and if that was the case she would end up working in waste disposal and losing her comfortable apartment till they could ship her home. A board of enquiry would convene to examine the case. They were both grounded for the time being. Eventually they were released from the meeting. They walked in silence back to their rooms. Fae threw herself on the bed and closed her eyes. She stripped off her coveralls and stood in the shower. She was overcome with emotion, sinking to the floor of the shower, all the time the water raining down on her. She curled up and wept.

After a while Fae came to check on her. Fae cried out when she saw her and rushed to lift her up. Fae pulled her upright and held her while the sobbing subsided.

'How could you do that? How could you be so stupid!'

'Come on,' said Fae, 'they'll get over it. It's not like they have VShip pilots to spare.'

'That's not the point!' she shouted, 'you, you might have been killed. You're so reckless. What if that Corsair had simply skewered you? Don't you know what that means ... you know what that does to me?'

'But ...' Fae started and then stopped. They sat together in the shower, Fae holding her tight.

Eventually Fae said 'Come on, lets get out of here. I could murder a steak and a bottle of Vino Collapso. After a day like that I think we've earned.'

They dried off, dressed in silence, then took the walkway to the Central Plaza. They picked a table in the Aircat Grill, and ordered Scotch Fillet and Shiraz. She didn't want to talk but Fae said it was important they focus on the good that came from the mission at least. They had a full scan of Destiny One, and Fae's actions, however at fault, had at least revealed one aspect of the Home Trees biology. At the forthcoming enquiry Fae would be professional, apologetic, demure. She would look at them all with those perfect green eyes of hers. They will rant and rave, they might even officially reprimand her, but in the end she will be flying again in no

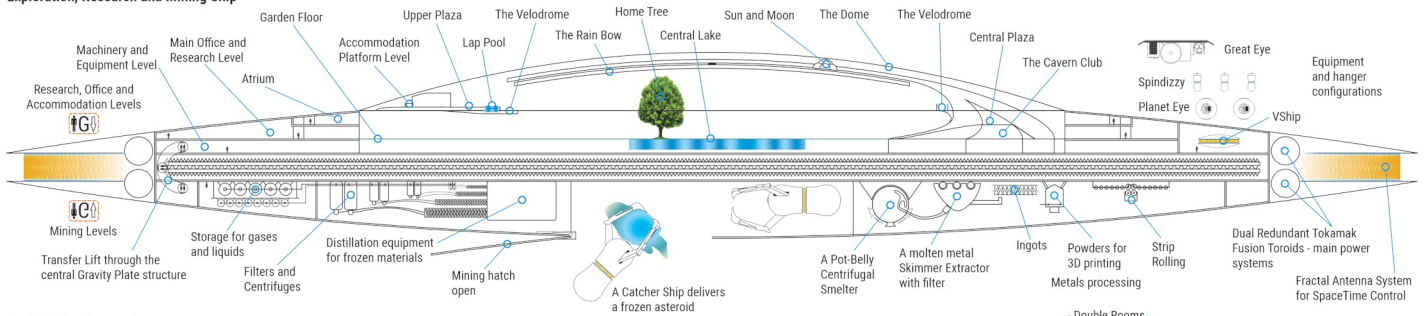
time. Just one of the benefits of having a perfect genome and knowing how to use it. The rest of them were just human after all.

After dinner they strolled back across the Central Lawn and walked slowly through the Forest. Fae promised her that when all the fuss had blown over, she would hire them a tree house for a couple of days. They would take some time out and do a bit of Shinrin-Yoku. She would like that. Later she held Fae while she slept. She struggled to drive the visions from her mind. Fae on the flower, the great snake then the attack of the Ocean Corsair, so large and raw and Fae small and defenceless by comparison. The thought of losing Fae terrified her. Every time she felt like this her old scar opened up, feelings for a brother that she never knew but was lost forever. Why was it this way? The Genetic Engineers can do so much. They can control life, fashion it, bend it to their will, but even they admit they can't create it from nothing. That craft remains a secret skill of the Universe. She felt the tension bubble up inside her and she pulled Fae closer in an attempt to be calm. But always she harboured an anger. She was on Verdajuvél because she wanted to look the Universe in the eyes and rage at the loss of her brother, rage at the way loving Fae could make her so frightened. There was now a burning line between herself and the face of the Universe, and Verdajuvél would take her there.

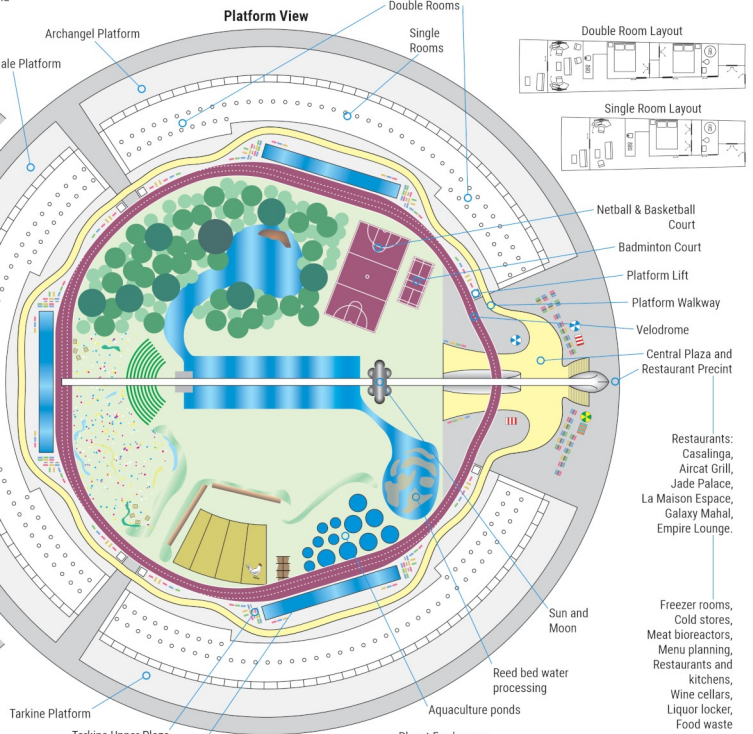
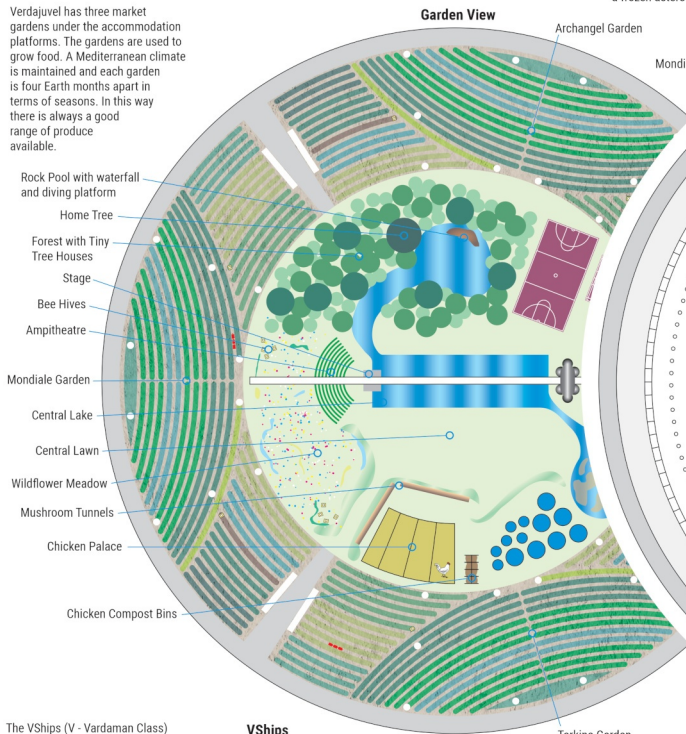
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VERDAJUVEL GALAXSIA

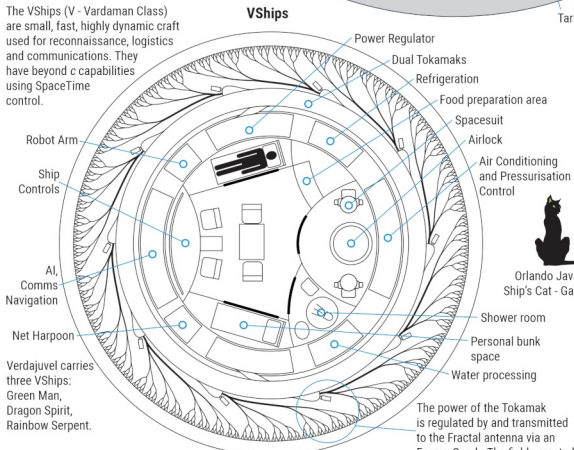
Exploration, Research and Mining Ship



Verdajuvvel has three market gardens under the accommodation platforms. The gardens are used to grow food. A Mediterranean climate is maintained and each garden is four Earth months apart in terms of seasons. In this way there is always a good range of produce available.

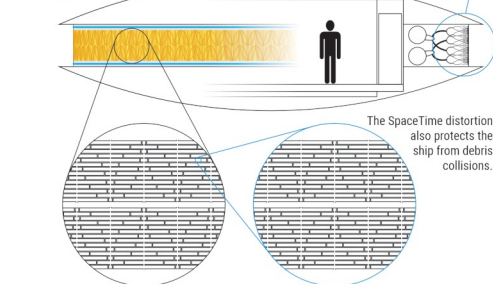


The VShips (V - Vardaman Class) are small, fast, highly dynamic craft used for reconnaissance, logistics and communications. They have beyond c capabilities using SpaceTime control.



Verdajuvvel carries three VShips: Green Man, Dragon Spirit, Rainbow Serpent.

The Fractal Antenna looks the same at just about any level of magnification.



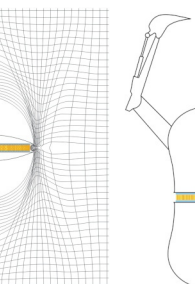
CERULEAN GAIA SHIPS

The SerCanto Mission
Wayfinding and seeking another Earth



The power of the Tokamak is regulated by and transmitted to the Fractal antenna via an Energy Comb. The fields created by the antenna allow the ship to "grab" and move through SpaceTime.

Catcher Ship



VERDAJUVEL
A Cerulean Gaia Ship

Spaceframe and systems integration
aero
Diamond Spinners
Tabanac

Power systems
TOKAMAK SPACE
Gravity and inertia systems
GRAVEX

Space-Time Control
fraktl
Flora and Fauna

AI and Quantum computing
big cool blue
Life support and biodynamics
bionet

Energy control systems
Hunter POWER SYSTEMS
In cabin ergonomics and luxury
Imberteloni COMFORTATA

DRAWN BY *Ruyt*
CHIEF ENGINEER
CERULEAN GAIA SHIPS

NAME: VERDAJUVEL GALAXSIA V-AM 607
CLASS: VERDAJUVEL TYPE: GAIA SHIP

CERTIFICATION: GALAXSIA WHOLE OF GALAXY - MILKY WAY
CERTIFIED FOR MULTI-DIMENSIONAL BEYOND OPERATIONS WITH SPACE-TIME CONTROL

CREW: WORKING COMPLEMENT 180
SCIENCE TEAM, MINING & GEOLOGY, SHIP OPERATIONS SERVICE TEAM, SPACE MEDICINE, SELF-FUNDED GUESTS

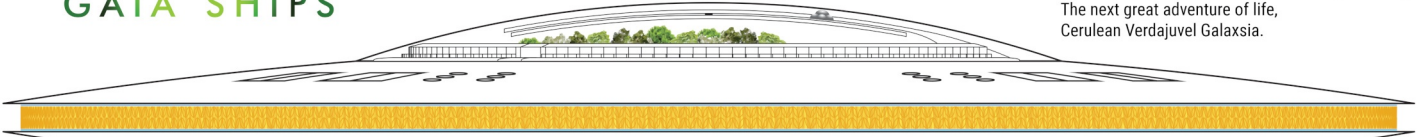
DIAMETER: 400M | HEIGHT: 52.7M

VERDAJUVEL

GALAXSIA



A new ship to navigate,
A new adventure begins,
We of the Never Never, old as Earth,
Green Man, Dragon Spirit, Rainbow Serpent,
Bearers of the life force of Gaia,
Transcend the tyranny of distance,
To bear witness to the beauty of a Galaxy revealed,
The next great adventure of life,
Cerulean Verdajuvvel Galaxsia.



VERDAJUVEL

A Cerulean Gaia Ship



Spaceframe and systems integration



Structures



Energy control systems



Power systems



Gravity and inertia systems



Space-Time Control



AI and Quantum computing



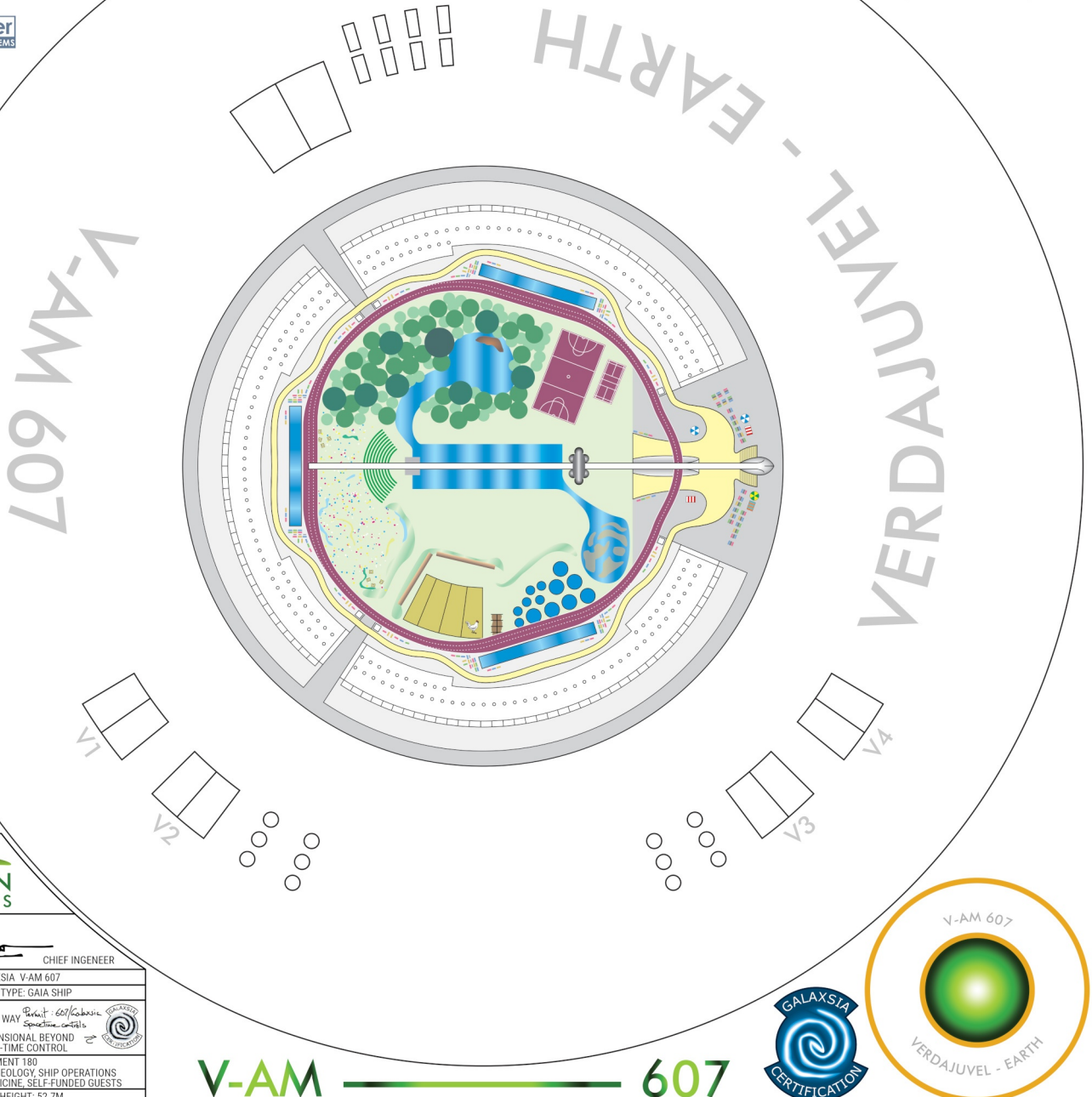
Flora and Fauna




Life support and biodynamics

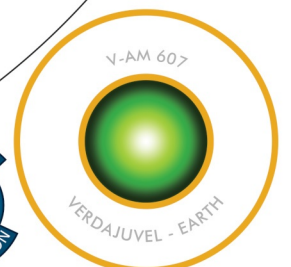


In cabin ergonomics and luxury



DRAWN BY 	
CHIEF ENGINEER	
NAME: VERDAJUVEL GALAXSIA V-AM 607	
CLASS: VERDAJUVEL	TYPE: GAIA SHIP
CERTIFICATION: GALAXSIA WHOLE OF GALAXY - MILKY WAY <i>Perit: 607Kabinas</i> <i>Space-time control</i>	
CERTIFIED FOR MULTI-DIMENSIONAL BEYOND c OPERATIONS WITH SPACE-TIME CONTROL	
CREW: WORKING COMPLEMENT 180 SCIENCE TEAM, MINING & GEOLOGY, SHIP OPERATIONS SERVICE TEAM, SPACE MEDICINE, SELF-FUNDED GUESTS	
DIAMETER: 400M	HEIGHT: 52.7M

V-AM 607



HOME TREE




CERULEAN
NEW WORLDS

— VISIT —
LAXFALA

The V Ship Green Man explores one of Laxfala's Home Trees. This tree "Destiny One" is over 200 m tall. Home Trees grow in shallow seas and are a home to the giant Ocean Corsair birds.

VERDAJUVEL

G A L A X S I A



CERULEAN
NEW WORLDS