

Tabletop Adventures Presents:

DESTINATIONS: SPACEPORT TRIDENT VESPA

By Martin Ralya

Introduction

Trident Vespa is the first spaceport in the “Destinations” line from Tabletop Adventures. This mini-PDF presents a fully described spaceport that can be dropped into any sci-fi campaign that features space travel. It needs little or no prep – just read the overview, and you are good to go. *Trident Vespa* is 100% description (no rules material or crunchy bits), making it entirely system-neutral.

Throughout this PDF you will find sections of text that are designed to be read aloud to your players. They follow this format:

Scene Name

Read-aloud text. [Notes for the GM, not to be read aloud.] *Additional read-aloud text.*

Where Can I Use This Spaceport?

Trident Vespa is written with the following conditions in mind: the spaceport is situated on a world with a breathable atmosphere and Earthlike gravity, and in an area with a lot of atmospheric and trans-atmospheric (space) traffic.

If you want to use the Trident on an airless world, or one with non-Earthlike gravity, all you will need to do is tweak the descriptions slightly. For example, on a planet without a breathable atmosphere, everyone walking around the spaceport would be in a spacesuit.

Overview

A sprawling spaceport built to accommodate cargo ships, smaller vessels and atmospheric craft, all in

one spot, the *Trident Vespa*, was a commercial venture established by a progressive collection of owners with space commerce in mind. Little did they know what they were getting themselves into.

Trident Vespa from the Air

Seen from above, Trident Vespa lives up to its name – it looks like a vast pitchfork, with permacrete and ferrocrete lanes forming the tines, and buildings around all the edges. The outer two lanes are longer than the one in the center, and dozens of spaceships of all shapes and sizes gleam and flash in the sunlight [starlight]. After a few seconds of taking in the main shape of the spaceport, you start noticing the details: ground cars moving between ships, rotating gun turrets atop the largest buildings and small atmospheric craft landing and taking off on the far lane. Even from the air, though, you can tell what you are getting into – the ships may gleam brightly, but the station itself does not. This is no glittering commercial hub, clean, safe and corporate – it feels a bit more like the frontier.

About the Author

Martin Ralya has been a freelance writer since 2004, and has worked on several other projects for Tabletop Adventures, including *Bits of the Boulevard* and *Bits of the Wilderness: Into the Wildwood*. Martin also writes *Treasure Tables*, a daily weblog for GMs, and runs the GMing Q&A Forum (<http://www.treasuretables.org>). Martin is writing a series of space stations and spaceports for TTA, and would like to dedicate it to *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Firefly*, *Outlands* and of course, *Deep Space 9*, which did it best.

Apart from supporting the day-to-day activities of the spaceport, the Hub has a secondary – and arguably more important – function, too: obfuscating the customs process as much as possible. While *Trident Vespa* is widely known to be a smugglers' paradise, proving this is much more difficult – and that is where the Hub comes in. The Trident employs a whole layer of staff solely for bribing inspectors, misdirecting government officials and otherwise keeping the wheels of the spaceport's illicit commerce well greased.

The Hub is also home to the spaceport's defense system: eight large gun batteries, each capable of accurately striking targets up to three miles away. These are mounted on the roofs of several of the Hub buildings, and they are manned around the clock by port personnel. At least four batteries can be brought to bear against any part of *Trident Vespa*, including the furthest sections of any lane; all eight can be fired at any airborne target. A small fleet of spotter drones hovers around the port at all times, relaying images to the Hub's gunners.

Cast of Characters

Roughly 250 Trident employees are onsite at any given time, broken down as follows: 50 bureaucrats and officials, 50 repair technicians, 100 service staff (loaders, drivers, etc.) and 50 guards. About 20% of the staff will be at the Hub, with another 20% on Lane Two and 30% each on Lanes One and Three.

On an average day, 500-1,000 visitors pass through *Trident Vespa*, with about one-half of that number present at any particular moment.

All of the guards are well armored, and each one carries a light, hull-safe rifle (a weapon that will not penetrate an average ship's hull, but has no trouble against soft targets – like people). In addition, 10 of the 50 guards also carry a hull-penetrating heavy weapon as a last-ditch measure, just in case a hostile inbound or outbound ship makes it past the spaceport's defenses.

Bringing Trident Vespa to Life

The Trident can feel like a pretty lawless place to first-time visitors, and there is a sense of barely controlled chaos about the place. Lanes One and Three are always buzzing with activity, and you can emphasize this by focusing on motion and colors as you describe them to your players. Observant PCs will also notice shady dealings going on everywhere (except right in front of the Hub), almost – but not quite – out of sight.

Trident Vespa also looks and feels very lived-in. It has been a long time since anything here was new, and countless crews have personalized their favorite landing areas with graffiti, additions, murals and other touches. The only exception is Lane Two, which feels like a different world – sterile, clean and somehow lifeless. It stands out from Lanes One and Three in every way.

Interestingly, almost no one takes the short way between lanes – simply turning left or right and cutting across the open ground that separates the landing areas. Some spacers will say that this is superstition, that on the Trident it is bad luck to cross between the lanes, but more pragmatic folk will make the point that all of the really good stuff happens along the lanes – and why would you want to miss that?

There are *lots* of superstitions on the Trident, most (but not all) of them involving the number three. They are part of the spaceport's culture, and they serve as a good way to tell new visitors from old hands. Bored spaceship crews often use this to their advantage, playing jokes on new arrivals who they do not recognize – either by passing on fake superstitions, or by tricking spacers into breaking some of the Trident's unwritten rules.