

Universal Select: Mummy and Creature Figures (Toy Review)

Written by Michael Koopmans
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This month, classic fright fans had reason to rejoice with the long-awaited release of Diamond Select Toys' first line of figures outside the superhero realm. The award-winning company unveiled Universal Select, offering a terrifying tag team of "Deluxe" Universal Monsters figures. What may become an annual event involved the rejuvenation of two not-so-pretty faces—although they've never looked better!



First on the chopping block is everyone's favorite crusty carcass, Imhotep, the ancient Egyptian priest portrayed by Boris Karloff in 1932's *THE MUMMY*. Standing at 7 inches tall, this little monster will loom over a good portion of your standard-sized horror figures. But along with ol' bandages, you also receive an in-scale, fully functioning sarcophagus, which will come in handy on nights when mummy dearest could use a little shuteye. The entire set weighs in at over three pounds, and aside from 180 degrees of neck movement, articulation is nowhere to be found. But with such a magnificent sculpt by creature carver extraordinaire Jean St. Jean (look him up—you probably own at least one figure sculpted by him and don't even know it!), and tomb work by Diamond Select staple Ruby Garcia, poseable joints would only mar the solid tranquility of Imhotep's big sleep.

What better fiend to pair one of Universal's Golden Age greats with than the studio's last hurrah from the genre's revival period: the title beast from 1954's *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*? Like his chilling companion, the Gill Man stands roughly 7 inches tall, but this time around, St. Jean also sculpted the sandy diorama—including a replica of actress Julie Adams' heroine/main Creature squeeze—while Garcia did the Creature justice.

Simply perfect for display, these figures sport screen-accurate, artfully painted and detailed likenesses of a quality that's rarely seen. It's a shame we have to wait another year for a new

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set—but fear not, the company doesn't plan to sit on its newly acquired license until then. A basic set, featuring new, more articulated sculpts, smaller bases and a lower pricetag, as well as Mego-style retro cloth figures and a few sets of Mini Mates, are all the works! Aside from the currently available Universal Select figures, the sets also include that lovable hairball, the Wolf Man. There goes all my hard-earned cash!



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