This self-transforming Megatron is as badass as it is expensive

Three years later, Hasbro's self-transforming, dancing, driving, talking, and attacking Optimus Prime finally has a villain to fight. Megatron, the leader of the Decepticons, is about to arrive. For $1,200 – $899 through May 25th – its robot partner Robosen has created what could be the best auto-converting Transformer yet.

Just to make sure you're getting it: this bot *automatically transforms itself* into a badass remote-control tank with a *gigantic auto-extending cannon that can actually fire projectiles* – then *stands up and speaks* over 270 phrases from original Megatron voice actor Frank Welker while doing all sorts of tricks.

Here, bask in the glory of childhood imagination become real:

Did I mention it responds to loads of voice commands, too?

I've been playing with Megatron for half a day now, and it's mostly *awesome.* Not only do its 36 servo motors and 118 microchips let the 21-inch tall bot perform all kinds of routines, but it's also got more engaging play features than Optimus or the Dinobot Grimlock, thanks to a better set of weapons, 112 bright LEDs, and intriguing new joints for its servos to actuate.

When you fire up the Fusion Cannon, permanently attached to Megatron's arm, it doesn't just swing a black plastic prop around: three joints let the cannon shake as it's "charging,"

giving it *recoil*, while the LEDs delightfully light its innards.

The light-up sword and new flail (yes, this bot can actually swing a spiked rubber ball on a chain!) have twist-off pommels, so you can easily slide them into Megatron's hands and yet secure them as well.

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And when Megatron falls — and it *will* fall, I'm afraid — it's finally smart enough to stand up again all on its own.

Robosen has even addressed one of my biggest complaints about Optimus: it made Megatron's leg servos stiff enough that you can optionally leave the bot standing up on a shelf when it's powered down. And I love how Megatron talks about Energon production and lights up a five-LED charging indicator when you plug in the USB-C cable.

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The bot's servos are now almost all hidden behind clever spring-loaded plastic flaps now, too — and one of them even automatically rotates the Decepticon logo as Megatron emerges from tank mode.

As cool as it is, though, the toy could really use more work before it ships in Q3, and based on previous launches, I'm not completely confident it'll get all that work done.

This is the third Robosen bot I've tried with a confusing and slightly buggy app that makes it really hard to do custom programming and creates all sorts of delays even if you're

just trying to remote-control the tank around. It still doesn’t give you access to every joint when you’re creating custom moves and poses. And its voice command recognition system is still mediocre — more than half the time, the bot wouldn’t properly respond.

My test bot had some more fundamental issues, too, like a tendency to just… fall over and forget some of its settings after powering up again or keep repeating the same voice line in voice command mode without me asking. The flail actually fell apart after the first 10 smacks or so, as one of its chain-link pins was too loose. Some of these hopefully won’t make it to full mass production, but I think it’s worth telling you.

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And you should also know that, like previous bots, these are exclusively for use on smooth, hard floors: it’s constantly scraping parts of itself on the floor to walk, turn, transform and stand up, and most of it doesn’t work on carpet. While you *can* drive its very noisy rubber treads up inclines or thin carpet, I couldn’t turn on soft surfaces: I badly snagged one of its rubber treads trying to spin the tank around on a rug.

But like Optimus, which had its issues, none of this killed my enthusiasm. This is one of the coolest lines of toys ever made; I just want them to be even better.

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