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New attraction at UFRGS' Paleontology Museum



Full-size reconstruction of the biggest carnivorous dinosaur from the South of Brazil is now open for visitation

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Those who visit UFRGS' Paleontology Museum will be able to see the *Prestosuchus Chiniquensis* on display as soon as they enter the building. The reconstruction in natural size depicts the largest animal found to this date in the South of Brazil in the layers of the Triassic Period (about 230 million years ago). Made by sculptor [Luiz Henrique Mayer](#), the reconstruction shows what the *Prestosuchus Chiniquensis*, a carnivorous dinosaur who lived in the South of Brazil, looked like: a four-legged predator that might have assumed a bipedal posture for short sprints, and reached more than 6 meters (20ft) in length. Its more than 40 knife-shaped serrated teeth are evidence of a carnivorous diet. Posters displayed next to the attraction provide more information on the *Prestosuchus Chiniquensis* and on the fossilized plants and tree-trunks that compose the scenery. QR Codes are also available on site to access other content in video format ([link 1](#) and [link 2](#)).



Prestosuchus Chiniquensis receives visitors – Photo by Gustavo Diehl

Mayer has reconstructed the dinosaur based on a nearly complete skeleton found in 2003, in the small town of Dona Francisca, in Rio Grande do Sul, with the help of paleontological research and advice from professionals working at UFRGS' Institute of Geoscience. To make the sculpture, he used marble powder, metal and resins, among other materials. Professor Cesar Leandro Schultz, from UFRGS' Department of Paleontology and Stratigraphy, presented the *Prestosuchus Chiniquensis* and pointed out that its reconstruction is an example of UFRGS' triple commitment to education, research and community outreach, for it is the result of academic research, but it is also available for educational purposes and open for visitation by the community. Schultz, excited to be able to offer a new attraction to Museum visitors—comprised of more than three thousand people every year, especially elementary-school students—said that, despite current cuts in the budget of the federal universities in Brazil, he plans to keep bringing novelties to the Museum's collection. The resources for the reconstruction of the dinosaur came from UFRGS' Office of Infrastructure, from the Institute of Geoscience, and from contributions made by professors. Mayer, the sculptor, worked for UFRGS through a third-party company and offered to make the reconstruction after seeing the skeleton. For eight months, during his work breaks, he worked on the sculpture in a garage lent for this purpose by the Center for Coastal Studies and Geology (CECO / UFRGS).

The Paleontology Museum may be visited from Monday to Friday, from 9am to 12pm, and from 2pm to 5pm. For groups of more than 10 people, it is necessary to schedule the visitation in advance through the email museupaleonto@ufrgs.br. The Museum also offers a community outreach project in which teaching assistants take items from the Museum's collection to schools and talk to students about Paleontology.

Translated into English by Caroline Winge, under the supervision and translation revision of Elizamari R. Becker (P.h.D.) – IL/UFRGS.

