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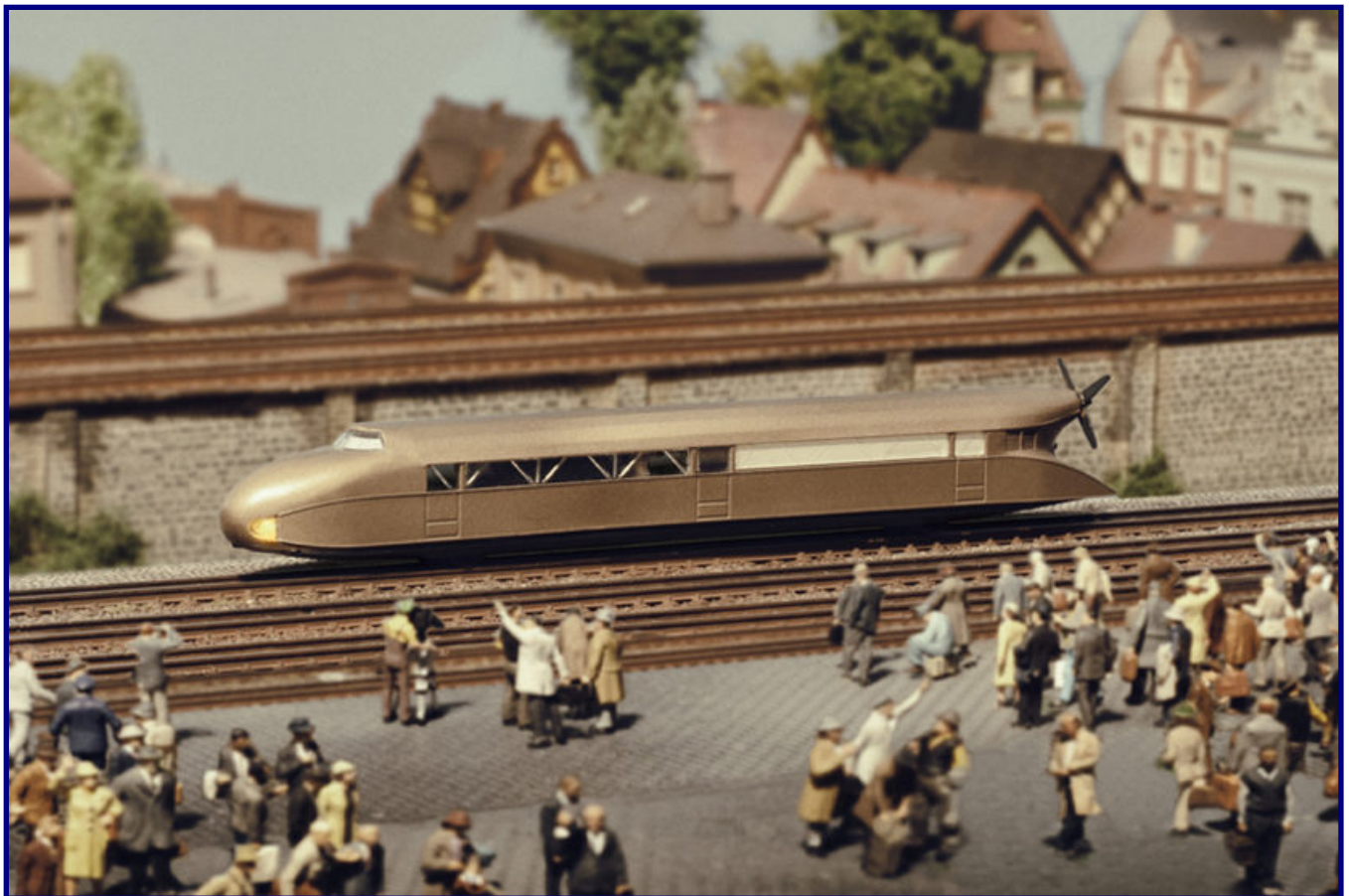
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German Magazine for Z Gauge



The Spring New Products in Z Gauge

Best New Releases of the Year 2025
Winter Wonderland Village

Introduction

Dear Readers,

I have barely welcomed you to the new year here, and now we are already able to present you a whole range of new products from a wide variety of manufacturers. Year after year, we are all surprised by the abundance of new products that are waiting for us.



Holger Späing
Editor-in-chief

I think many of our readers probably find this hard to imagine. I would feel the same way if I weren't able to follow the compilation of a huge catalogue so closely.

However, what will be much more decisive is how many players are working for us and how much diversity their ideas express. Let anyone say again that there is nothing to buy in Z gauge. This is an important point, particularly in economically uncertain times: all manufacturers depend on their sales.

No one in this industry can live on appreciative glances and applause alone. Cast your vote at the checkout so that the development and design efforts have been worthwhile. Only then can our scale continue its growth path!

Incidentally, the Nuremberg Toy Fair no longer played a noticeable role in the spring new products, as we were already familiar with the products of the only remaining exhibitors for our Z gauge, Märklin, and Noch. We assume that after Faller's departure, this will also be the end for these two at the traditional trade fair.

I have now outlined the main topic of this edition in detail, but I must not forget another report. We traditionally use the February edition to compare and evaluate the best products of the previous year that we have reviewed and to select the best new releases of 2025.

This is always an exciting task for all editors, but it is also a difficult one. However, it was more difficult than ever for the new products of 2025. We consider it a particularly important sign when the votes are spread across several candidates, and the result is as close as possible.

Unfortunately, only one can win, but they all deserve it. And so at least that much is clear. That's a good clue, because the approaching spring is also becoming apparent: the snowdrops have pushed their way through the ice and snow cover, and the days are getting longer again. This also means that the crafting season is slowly coming to an end.

We are therefore particularly happy to be able to continue working on the winter display today and give it a little seasonal finale. It should have been finished long ago, but what in Germany ever goes according to plan?

Let's keep our sense of humour – the fifth season is still going strong – and enjoy the first warm sunbeams soon. Before that, on behalf of my colleagues, I hope you enjoy reading!

Sin-Z-erely,

Holger Späing

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Cover photo:

Although the rail zeppelin proved to be a misstep in railway history, it was temporarily the fastest rail vehicle in the world. That is why it attracted people wherever it appeared. The new Märklin model embodies this in a unique way, like a yellowed black-and-white photograph. Photo: Märklin

Best new releases of the year 2025

Closer Races than ever before

There have been years when more competitors competed against each other in the individual categories. However, in none of the previous editions of our magazine have the decisions been as close as we have now experienced with three awards. This certainly speaks for the quality of what is offered, which makes the choice so difficult.

Over a period of twelve months, the editors consistently monitor market developments. New models and tools are reviewed and tested, evaluated and classified in terms of their market significance and innovative strength.



Year after year, this results in a list of nominated products in five categories that are considered for our editorial awards for "Best New Releases of the Year." We discuss our favourites and exchange arguments for and against them. At the end, there is always a vote to determine which new product will emerge as the winner.

Clear favourites often emerge, even though only the best of the best (in our opinion) end up in the vote. This does not speak against the losing articles, but rather for the process, which should take many criteria into account, including the price-performance ratio.

For the best new releases of 2025, the competition was unexpectedly close in three out of five categories, and it remained exciting until the very end to see who would emerge victorious from the vote. It could not be clearer how important the products that won votes here are to the market.

And so, we now announce the winners in the five product categories and the arguments that spoke in their favour. This will be followed by our awards for the Best Exhibit of the Year 2025 and the Prize for the Best Overall Work of the Year 2025.

Category Locomotives

In this category, the main concern was that the Wismar rail bus VT 88 902 (item no. 88820) – affordable yet with details at small-series level – and the diesel locomotive V 90 029 (88510), both from the DB inventory and produced by Märklin, could cannibalise sales.

However, discussions early on revealed that the heavy shunting locomotive was the true favourite. It had been a highly sought-after model for over 50 years, was distinctive, yet seemed unattainable. Märklin has succeeded in impressively realising it using today's technology. In particular, hardly anyone would have thought it possible to include illuminated lanterns in the panels of the shunting platforms.

And that was precisely the advantage she could exploit. The counterargument was its low weight, which limits its traction performance. The SNCF's TGV Sud-Est 16 (T01-WR), on the other hand, the third candidate and implemented by Azar Models, made a rather plastic impression on individual editors.

Nevertheless, it ultimately narrowly prevailed over the Märklin model. Its advantages included its innovative financing model, which was perhaps groundbreaking among smaller manufacturers, its technically outstanding Jakobs bogies with current collection, and above all its significance for the emerging French market.



As we see ourselves as a pan-European magazine and look beyond Germany's borders, this train is now receiving the award in the locomotive category. A multiple unit train is always a very risky project financially, but in this case, it paid off, and is also pushing boundaries.

Due to its fame, this innovation was also well received in the core market of Germany and even caused astonishment in Japan and the USA. Together with the German ICE-V and the Japanese Shinkansen Series 0, it now perfectly describes the history of high-speed transport in three countries and on two continents.

Category Cars

Here, the DB's articulated car Sggrss 733 (49.347.21) from FR Montageservice Uwe Schuster, the SNCF's G40.2 freight car with UIC ventilation flaps (W02-STA) and the four-axle G1.16 / Gahs (W04-SN) from Azar Models.

Märklin did not participate in 2025 because there were no new designs planned, apart from the 1928-1930 passenger coaches, which had been brought forward to the current calendar year. This seemed to make the decision easier at first, but it was not that simple after all.

However, there were arguments for and against all candidates: Azar Models were criticised by the editorial team for their somewhat plastic appearance, which is certainly a very personal impression. However, this reference was explicitly limited to the two-axle model.

The four-axle vehicle was a hit and was demonstrably used more frequently in Germany. Nevertheless, it was hardly ever seen on German trains, which was probably due to its space concept, which differed significantly from DB's fare classes.

The FR model designed by Atelier Barkvieren received much praise for its articulated joint solution. The fact that the wagons appear very delicate when unloaded and simply harmonious when equipped with containers was also recognised.

However, the counterargument to this model was that "one swallow does not make a spring:" this type of car is so important for modern light rail vehicles that customers actually need several of them. And given the high price, this simply does not seem possible for many. Perhaps alternative manufacturing methods for higher quantities should have been considered here?

Either way, the decision has been made, and so has ours: the award goes to Azar Models for the UIC standard freight car G40.2 with UIC ventilation flaps (W02-STA). We would like to give special praise to the fact that its appearance has developed enormously over three stages of development, from 3D printing to a mass-market injection-moulded model!





Like no other model, this one describes the incredibly rapid development of Azar Models from small beginnings to become the most important supplier for the French market, where such important impetus is provided.

In our vote, it was described as a real eye-catcher, emphasising how the versatility of a freight train is demonstrated by the wide variety of cars that have been included in it. Azar Models has made a decisive contribution here.

Category Accessories

This category always promises excitement, as it covers a particularly broad field that can include buildings, figures, cars and much more. In 2025, however, only car models competed against each other, namely: Ford Transit MK1 "Police" (FDTMK1-05) by MrZtraX, VW LT 28 Bus "DLRG" by JMC Scale Models, and the Atlas 1302 excavator (322.044) by Artitec.

Artitec has almost become a permanent fixture here, as year after year we receive top-of-the-range models that consistently make it into the final selection. And so, their excavator was also specifically highlighted as a model that is particularly rewarding for photography in terms of its operational marks.

All five editors liked it, but the same applies to the other two models. Both operational and construction site vehicles were described as "bread and butter models" that are simply part and parcel of model railways. This required a great deal of discussion, which narrowed the focus so that a winner could ultimately be determined.

The decision was then to be made between the Ford Transit and the Atlas excavator. Along the way, opinions were expressed, but a planned vote was also revised. It really couldn't have been any closer.



However, the editors agreed that all three were equally deserving of the prize. And yet a decision had to be made. The winner was the Atlas 1302 from Artitec (322.044). However, the editors agreed that all three were equally deserving of the prize. And yet a decision had to be made. The winner was the Atlas 1302 from Artitec (322.044).

In the end, what made the difference was that the same type of two-way excavator had already been so impressive, and Artitec colours its miniatures in a unique way that makes them perfect photo subjects, beyond their many fine details.

Category: Technology

Are there innovations or technical developments every year that justify an award? We once asked ourselves this question, but we have long since been proven wrong. This year, we even had to remove a new product from the list because a temporary delivery stoppage made it seem more sensible to wait until 2026 to evaluate it.

With the SFR-4000 speed controller (56-40007-01) distributed by Tams Elektronik and the "Gras-Master 4.0 Profi-Set" (60125) from Noch, there were two new products to choose from that could not be more different.

The Heißwolf speed controller, whose success story continues even after the switch to Tams Elektronik, is probably the best driving solution for analogue model railway enthusiasts in decades. It never made it into our rankings because it is older than our magazine.

And that speaks volumes for its proven practicality: anyone who owns an “SFR” doesn’t want to give it up. However, the latest revised edition failed to win over the editors because the new features were mainly seen in the control programme. The hand-held control unit, which had been adapted to the Tams standard, was not enough for us.



Here, Noch had a lot more to offer: transparent containers that are removable and can be used as storage boxes (which are also inexpensive to replace), completely adequate performance, rechargeable batteries instead of regular batteries for greater sustainability, and a fine grass solution especially for us Zetties.

The safety aspect also received explicit praise: whereas other suppliers sometimes remain silent on this issue and only emphasise higher voltages, Noch attaches great importance to WEEE certification and also prints warnings for pacemaker patients on the device.

This is not only sensible, but actually rather obligatory – it demonstrates a great sense of responsibility that we cannot emphasise enough! After all, no one wants to pay for the most wonderful hobby in the world with their life or see their health even remotely endangered.

The specialist from Wangen im Allgäu and inventor of affordable grassing is once again leading the way in this field. That is why it deserves the “New Releases of the Year 2025” award in the technology category.

Category Literature

Four candidates and five votes: it was almost bound to end in a tie. The tastes and the works competing for the title are extremely diverse. “Der Alb-Express” from Transpress publishing house fits in well with last year’s anniversary of the Geislinger Steige and is aimed at a broad reader spectrum.



The “Baureihe 01.10” from EK-Verlag continues the series of high-quality locomotive portraits at the usual high standard, but is traditionally more suited to die-hard technology enthusiasts, as the standards here are also very high. It features one of the most popular express train locomotives, and readers had to wait a long time for this volume 2, as it was not officially designated as such.

The same applies to the second volume of “Bahndienst- und Dienstgüterwagen” (Railway Service and Service Freight Wagons), written and published by Stefan Carstens. However, you don’t need to be a technical expert to understand the content, and the book is definitely useful for model railway enthusiasts.

The DVD “So war sie damals, die DB - Teil 9” (That’s how it was back then, the DB - Part 9) from Nord-Süd-Express is lighter fare: perfectly digitised, technically refined, thoroughly entertaining and full of impressions for recreating scenes and trains on model railways.

All this made it difficult for the editors to determine a winner, as personal

preferences and ideas inevitably have a major influence here. However, we deliberately look beyond our own horizons and check our impressions against what we know about our readers.

And so, although the five votes were spread very widely, Transpress ultimately came out on top with the book *Der Alb-Express* (ISBN 978-3-613-71705-3), written by Korbinian Fleischer. This book was the most relevant of the candidates and appeals to a wider audience than the other contenders

Category Exhibits

Year after year, this category focuses on our readers and members of our community. We want to honour them and recognise their special achievements. To do this, we put them in the spotlight.

We know that many model railway enthusiasts look at top-of-the-range layouts and think they could never build anything like that. But that’s not true! Every layout and every diorama we admire has a story behind it.

And that is always the story of its builder and owner. These people practised, built, discarded, tried new things and thus developed until they stood here on the winners' podium.



Although it is not a replica of this former depot, it is probably no coincidence that Theo Bornhöft's diorama is reminiscent in style of the former Hagen-Eckesey depot, which was home to the 03¹⁰ series express steam locomotives.

We would also like to focus on this so that they can speak for themselves and motivate others with their career paths, where our calls would probably not be heard. For years, we have been following such career paths in the ZFI forum and have been amazed.

What grew there was not only beautiful, well thought out and built with a lot of passion, but it literally matured into a work of art. Every idea and every new scene clearly generated personal ambition.

No other object has demonstrated so clearly how studying old images and processes can help plans mature for the typical appearance of urban scenes in times gone by. The builder also took his time with the implementation, breaking his work down into many small steps, which he probably practised many times outside of this diorama.

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There are special details to discover in every square centimetre, such as the pig in the backyard (photo above) or the fat director at his office window and the many things at the edge of the track (photo below).

There was a great desire to see this object in person, but often the stage seemed to be missing. We were delighted and grateful that we managed to convince today's honouree to celebrate the premiere at the **Trainini Anniversary Exhibition 2025**.

With that, the step into the public eye was taken – without anyone suspecting anything – and the criterion for discussing it here as a prize winner and voting for it unanimously was met: Theo Bornhöft's "Bahnbetriebswerk Rheintrup - Werkstor West" interprets the Hagen-Eckesey depot in a recognisable and harmonious way, without copying it.

This becomes clear when comparing images, yet every viewer sees the same historical scenes that they believe they recognise. This is not only model making at the highest level, but also the telling of a story that everyone understands without words.

This impressive masterpiece was perfected by a peep box, which also allows for targeted lighting and directs the viewer's gaze so that something new can be discovered from every angle. It's a shame, one of our editors remarked, that it was static and couldn't be seen in motion...

Category: Complete works

This category is intended to honour those who have contributed to the positive development of Z gauge over the years, promoting and shaping it with outstanding products without being the "shining star" that outshines all others in the product categories.

It's about the sum of all ideas, products, developments and achievements – ideally over decades. This year, we once again have such a manufacturer in our ranks. It celebrated its 25th anniversary, is familiar to everyone, and yet not everyone knows it.

Often, the name of the supplier takes a back seat and only those familiar with the range immediately recognise the originator: we are talking about Duha, which, following Küpper's closure at the end of 2024, is now probably the most traditional supplier of Z gauge loadings.

The company's portfolio is very refined and brings variety to the rails, according to our editorial team. Duha is known for its perseverance and loyalty. Always active and innovative, this manufacturer has accompanied the model railway careers of many of our editorial colleagues, whether they realise it or not.

Today is the time to honour that, to say thank you to Duha and to note that we all want many more great ideas for the future!





Two and a half decades of cargo are reason enough to honour them. But what we also like about Duha is the uniqueness of their truly special cargo ideas on the market, such as the various valves with slides and pipes shown here.

Finally

Now it is time to congratulate all the winners and share in their joy. We are confident that we have selected the right and worthy winners, especially in terms of innovative strength and the further development of our hobby and, in particular, our model size.

Of course, this is always a subjective decision, which is why the runner-up will never be the first loser in our eyes. We present many great new products throughout the year, and some of them are described in more detail and accompanied by photos.

That is why everyone should feel motivated to continue their work and constantly seek new challenges. In this way, you will inspire all your customers and at the same time ensure that we can present exciting developments to our readers here.

We have twenty years of magazine history behind us, which we have celebrated extensively. Looking back over two decades, it is clear to everyone what an incredible journey we have all been on together.

And that is precisely where we want to set our sights: the better is the enemy of the good! So, we are now looking forward to the next twelve months, which we hope will be just as exciting.

Pages of the prize winners:

- <https://azar-models.com>
- <https://artitec.nl>
- <https://www.noch.de>
- <https://www.motorbuch-versand.de>
- <https://baumann-modellspielwaren.de>

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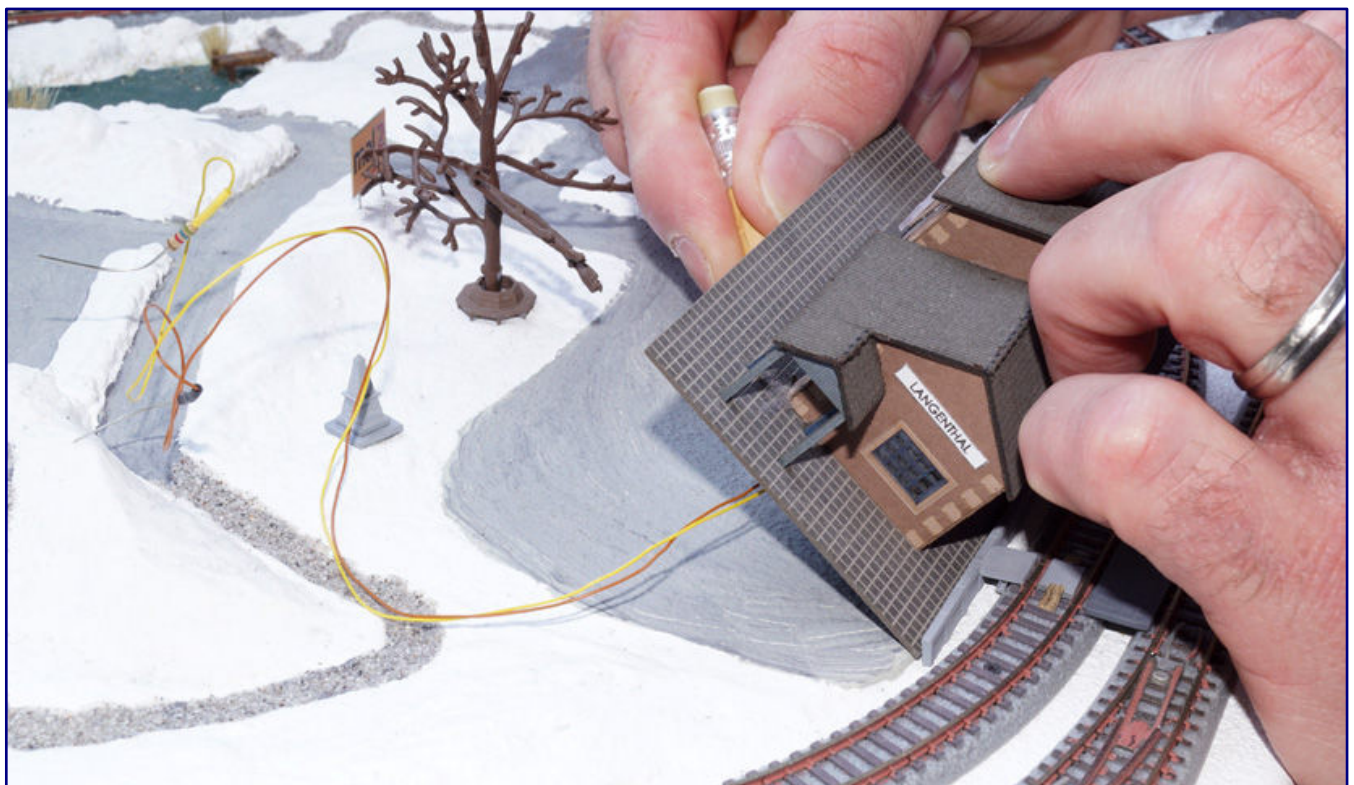
The path to the first layout (Part 10)

Work hard, build a Home...

After having finished the scratch-built agricultural shelter and glueing two smaller barns into place in the last part of our series, we are now setting out to add even more character to our layout by permanently installing the remaining houses and securing their access routes.

It was almost frightening to realise that the last part of our series on building a small winter layout was published back in August 2025 – a full six months ago! It was high time, therefore, to continue with the build, not least because this showpiece is intended for use as a shop window display.

There were simply too many other current issues going on, but completely missing out on the hobby season was also out of the question. So, today we are reporting on the next construction phase which is crucial for the character and final appearance of the layout.



Before attaching the houses to the layout, we put pencil marks where to drill holes for the wires of the interior lighting.

Yes, there are many steps involved in building a model railway that are not visible to outsiders. These usually include all the work done underneath the layout and, for the most part, the woodwork and landscaping done before the greenery is added.

The latter is not an issue for us, as we are building a winter layout, which is characterised by white colours, ice and snow. Nevertheless, it is not enough to just apply a quick stroke of paint with a brush, as a convincing landscape requires a little more effort. And so, the steps that will be taken today should also be understood in this context.

The remaining buildings must be installed and glued in place, and their access routes must be laid out and designed as they would be in a summer garden. Only then can winter arrive and provide a “dusting of powdered sugar” – but please do not take this term literally!



The necessary holes are drilled into the base using a 5 mm drill bit. The relatively soft PU rigid foam of the layout base allows us to guide and twist the drill by hand without any difficulty.

We had already explained this to visitors at an exhibition and started the works. For gravel paths, we had already selected the professional limestone ballast for N/Z scales from Noch (item no. 09161).

We felt that it was the most suitable in terms of both colour and grain size, as it would convey the effect of a gravel path in combination with a light dusting of snow and harmonise visually with it.

We sprinkled ballast onto a layer of Uhu wood glue during the demonstration. However, only areas that would not interfere with the future house structure were treated initially, i.e., areas that depended on the edges of the building.

This included the path around the sledding hill to the smaller barn, the two paths down to the pond, and the footpath to where the chapel is going to be placed (without its foundation). Finally, the area around the larger barn by the short railway siding could also receive a gravel surface.

Installing the buildings

We had already commented on the layout's housing stock at a very early stage. We are using a set of Noch laser-cut hardboard buildings from our inventory. We had already presented how these are assembled and fitted with interior lighting when they were first released. Therefore, there was no need to repeat this information.

Today, we will install and glue in place the remaining houses after determining their exact position through a dry fit. To do this, we first need to decide where to place the holes for feeding the wires for the lights through the layout base.

We opt for a 5 mm drill, which gives a big enough diameter to also accommodate the resistors or diodes in case we should ever need to detach the buildings again. The PU hard foam that makes up the preformed terrain allows us to drill through the material by hand.



To fix the buildings in place, we don't use all-purpose adhesive: Fixogum from Marabu is a more suitable alternative, which also allows the house to be easily removed again, if necessary, and to allow for future repairs to the lighting.

A drill bit of this diameter will not fit in a pin vice and using a cordless drill would be overkill for this task. The cutting thread of the drill cuts through this type of material like butter, and we clean the debris with a vacuum cleaner to avoid any of it reappearing on the layout.

When it comes to attaching the buildings, we opt for a slightly unconventional approach: instead of relying on a traditional all-purpose adhesive, we use Fixogum from Marabu, which makes for a non-permanent bond if applied only on the surface, thus allowing for objects to be easily detached again, if needed.



A layer of glue is also applied in the area around the farmhouse (front) before scattering "Profi Ballast" from Noch on top.

This creates an escape option for cases where an LED of the interior lighting fails, and would need to be replaced.

With a view to later continuous operation of the layout in the shop window display and a higher likelihood for repairs, this certainly seems sensible. But our approach is rewarded much earlier on. Once the station building has been glued in place, an unsightly gap at the edge of the platform catches our eye and obviously needs to be filled. So, the building must be removed again to address the problem.

But first, we need to figure out how to quickly eliminate the difference in height: a simple strip of cardstock has exactly the right thickness. It is cut to size and glued to the base and directly to the inside of the platform edge using Uhu all-purpose adhesive.

Problem identified, danger to life and limb averted! One mystery remains: why wasn't the gap noticed during the dry fitting? But we prefer to look ahead, because there are still more steps waiting for us today.

Once the Marabu adhesive has set, the wires need to be wound up and secured underneath of the layout so that they are not at risk of being torn off during any subsequent work. Work can then resume on the landscape.

Now it is time to tackle those gravel paths that have not yet been done. The gravel now covers the courtyard building next to the tractor shelter and the small chapel on all four sides.



All buildings are now permanently secured and work on edges and joints can begin. On the right-hand side, at the front edge of the farmhouse, the colour difference between the thoroughly dried and fresh gravel surfaces is still visible.

A few smaller areas are also still missing at the second farmhouse within the track oval. There is a section where the gravel surface is to merge into an asphalted section, which we had already marked with a colour gradient.

It proves challenging to reach all areas with the glue without accidentally hitting surrounding rocks or building edges. But where our bristle brush proves too coarse, even a finer and softer version with a smaller diameter does not ensure complete success.

A wooden skewer finally proves to be suitable for accurately guiding a tiny amount of wood glue at its tip past all obstacles. We can then use it to spread the glue evenly on site so that no joints are left uncovered.

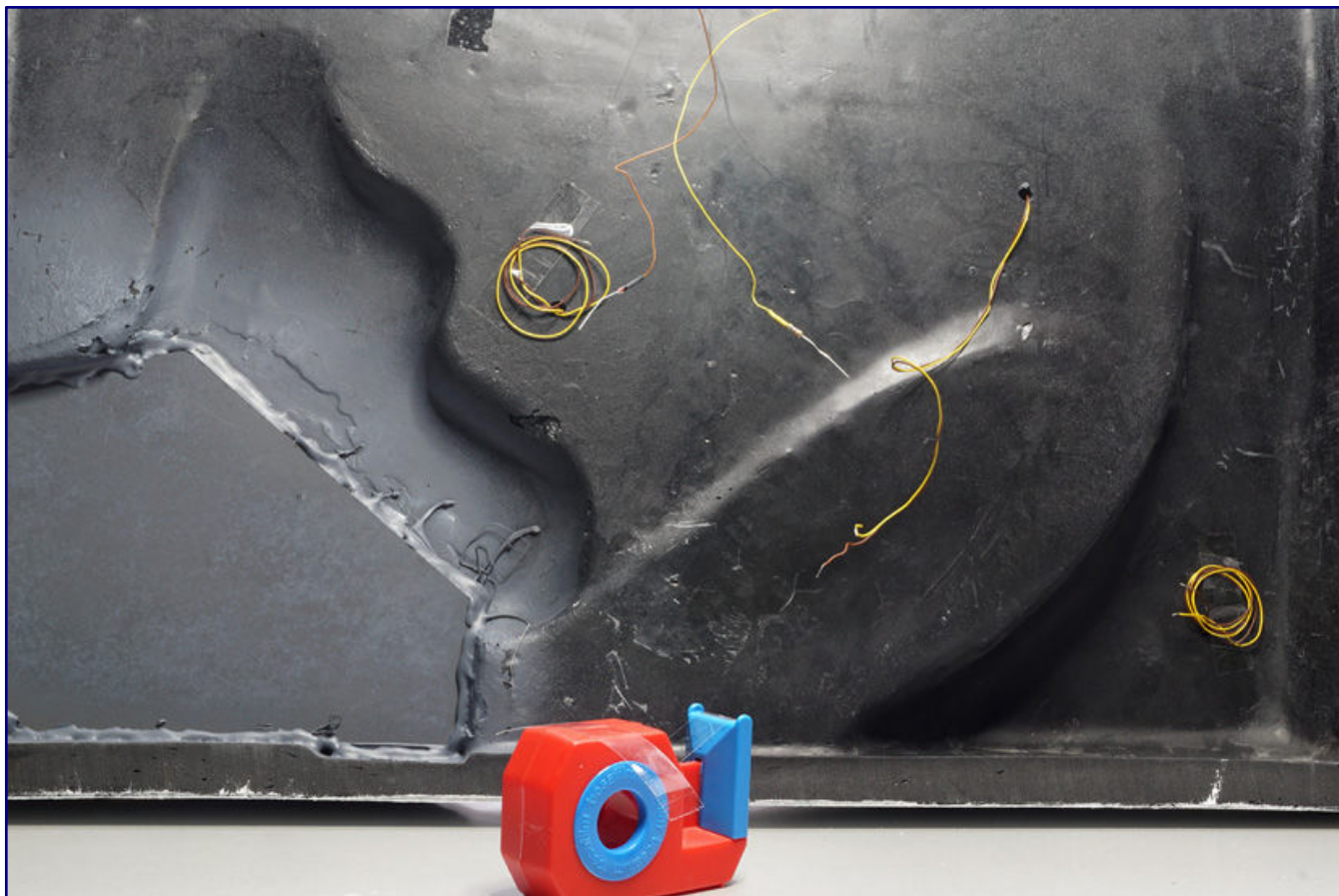
Levelling Work

After the “fortification work” on the paths, our layout deserves a break to dry out. This will be followed by the final step in this series of articles. Now it’s time to fill in any unsightly gaps and create snow drifts where they would be expected if we were in the real world.

The Molto fine wood filler, which has already proven itself in the level crossing area, is ready to go, but will not be used in this case. The tasks at hand will be handled entirely by an all-purpose filler from the same manufacturer.

We chose it because it spreads very smoothly and leaves a white surface without any yellow tinge. This creates a very realistic impression of real snow without any further treatment.

In the following parts of this series, we will have to return to the question of which commercial products are most suitable for recreating snow in the first place, or how they can be properly combined with other materials. What we already can say today is that not all whites are the same. Even this colour has many nuances that can appear particularly distracting in a winter landscape if they do not match the pure white of real snow.



Not explicitly mentioned in the article, but nevertheless essential: the loose wires of the house lighting on the underside of the layout are rolled up and secured to the base with adhesive tape so that nothing can tear off during the next phases of the build.

We are all the more grateful to use the Molto product, which delivers on its high-quality promise and reduces further work to a minimum. Another advantage is that it can be easily sanded and drilled once dry.

It is applied with fine modelling tools, which serve as spatulas and can reach the tiny spaces between the tracks and at the edge of the platform. We also apply the filler behind the buffer stop to cover a small area, as the planned track bed is slightly longer than the track stub we have built.

We also apply some all-purpose filler along the outer track curve on the right-hand side, as the track appears a little too wide to us on the inner curve. Here, too, a thicker layer of snow will look more realistic.

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Unightly gaps can still be seen at the bottom of the monument, the base plate of the station, and the platform elements (photo above). We eliminate these gaps by using modelling tools to press a filler and joint compound into the cracks (photo below) and by shaping a natural transition to the surrounding area.

To model surfaces with as few edges as possible and with smooth transitions, the spatula can be dipped in a little water at any time. The effect is similar to using plaster or Moltofill. Water is fully compatible with this type of filler and is, in fact, also used to clean up afterwards.

We have now completed another important step of the build so that we can soon let it snow in all the modified areas. These include mainly the roofs of the buildings and the roads. That will be the moment when we also plant the conifers, which will make for the only bit of green on this layout.



Molto's all-rounder Innen Champion has all the properties that are important for our adjustment and levelling work. This includes, above all, its pure white colour, which prevents larger colour variations or even colour streaks.

There is one final thing we do today: our shelter, which serves as weather protection for agricultural machinery, can be put to some actual use. We already did a first demonstration at the **Trainini Anniversary Exhibition 2025**, which we are now modifying slightly.

Since we are placing an Artitec tractor (322.030), a slurry tanker (322.031), and a bicycle (from 322.003) on the layout, we will mainly be dealing with very finely detailed accessories. So, we want to showcase them as best as possible.

That's why we place the rolling slurry tanker outside and next to the shelter, slightly towards to the viewer. The tractor is parked on the right (instead of on the left as originally planned) and positioned at a slight angle so that it can be seen better. The bicycle is now leaning against its side, inside of against the outer wall.

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A few pre-formed strips of Molto all-purpose filler material are placed around the monument in the small park (photo above) and smoothed with the modelling tools. In the agricultural shelter (photo below), positioning tests are carried out so that the Artitec models can then be firmly glued in place with Uhu Kraft. Only the Mercedes tractor is not fixed in place today, because it still needs to have a tarpaulin put on it.

Everything is fixed in place with Uhu Kraft, a versatile adhesive that is well suited for this purpose and does not leave many traces. The wheels are dipped in fresh adhesive and then provide grip on the gravel surface. For now, the left-hand area in the shelter remains free.

That is where the MB trac tractor, which Michael Hering once built for us, will be parked. Unfortunately, the model has suffered some damage and is no longer in the best condition. But we will conceal this with a tarpaulin, the construction of which we will explain in the next part.



All the work steps planned for this part have been completed. Significant progress has been made on the layout, which is generating anticipation for the upcoming winter work. But first, we treat ourselves to running some trains.

After all, the model is a vintage agricultural vehicle, which its owner wants to keep well protected from the weather. It is no longer in daily use and will only be visible to us because the wind has partially uncovered the protective tarpaulin.

Suppliers:

<https://artitec.nl>
<https://www.molto.de>
<https://www.noch.de>
<https://www.uhu.com>

Note for English readers: The literature section that follows is not translated into English because the original texts of the books involved are in the German language. The original German is left here for information purposes only.

Geschichte der DSG bis 1963

Mit dem Rücken zur Wand

Einst alltäglich und dennoch kaum beachtet war die DSG. Sie zeichnete auf Geheiß der DB für das Wohl der Fahrgäste verantwortlich und das wohl für viele diskret im Hintergrund. Mit der ISG / CIWL gelangen wegweisende Vereinbarungen zum Wohle beider Unternehmen, woraus sogar ein Gemeinschaftswerk hervorging. Wären da nicht die ständig klammen Kassen gewesen.

Armin Gärtner

Die Geschichte der Deutschen Schlafwagen- und Speisewagengesellschaft (DSG)
Band 2 - Die Ära Karl Mutz von 1950 bis Ende 1963

Eisenbahn- und Heimatmuseum Erkrath-Hochdahl e.V.
Erkrath 2025

Gebundenes Buch

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Wenn wir voranstellen, dass sich Armin Gärtner zu einem der Lieblingsautoren des Rezensenten entwickelt hat, dann klingt das erst mal etwas voreingenommen. Einzubeziehen ist aber auch, dass er sich das mit seinen Werken konsequent erarbeitet hat.

Als der Hobby-Eisenbahnhistoriker erstmals auf die Bühne trat, war er schließlich noch ein unbeschriebenes Blatt Papier. Doch das sollte sich bald ändern. Früh wandte er sich einem fast vergessenen und nicht ganzheitlich aufgearbeitetem Thema der deutschen Eisenbahngeschichte zu.

Dass er es ernst meint und höchst wissenschaftlich vorgeht, sollten wir und auch alle anderen Leser seiner Bücher bald merken. Und so gewann er schnell an Ansehen, inzwischen ist er gewiss als einer der renommiertesten Fachautoren anerkannt.

Genau darauf stützt sich auch unser Eindruck und persönliche Begegnungen blieben schließlich auch nicht aus. So profitieren wir von seinem Wissen, seinen Kontakten und verfolgen, wie es auch nach Erscheinen dieses Buches schon längst wieder weitergeht.

Oft hören wir von unseren Lesern, dass vor allem Schlafwagen in der Spurweite Z fehlen würden – so auch in den Leserbriefen dieser Ausgabe. Das ist richtig, diese Lücke aber umso verblüffender, wenn wir tief in die Geschichte der DSG eintauchen dürfen. Und damit sind wir auch bei den Inhalten dieses Werks angekommen.

Die DSG als Nachfolgerin der Mitropa im Westen war einst fester Bestandteil jeder Bahnreise. Das Speisen im rollenden Restaurant gehörte für Geschäftsreisende und Betuchte zum guten Ton. Bevor das



Flugzeug Entfernungen schwinden ließ, reisten die Menschen meistens im Schlafwagen, um morgens frisch erholt ihre Geschäftstermine wahrzunehmen.

Turnusreisen im Liegewagen gehörten zu den frühen Errungenschaften des Wirtschaftswunders. Und hinter alledem stand die DSG als Eigentümerin und Betreiberin der Wagen oder mit ihrem Personal in DB-eigenen Fahrzeugen.

Trotzdem wurde sie von den Fahrgästen wohl kaum wahrgenommen, denn wer macht sich während seiner Bahnfahrten auch Gedanken über die beteiligten Unternehmen und deren Organisation? Vielleicht deshalb wurde ihre Geschichte zuvor auch nicht systematisch dokumentiert und drohte, endgültig vergessen zu werden.

Armin Gärtner gebührt der Verdienst, dieses Stück deutscher Eisenbahngeschichte gezielt erforscht zu haben und auch weiter zu erforschen. Schon seine Quellenverzeichnisse belegen eindrucksvoll, wo er die Stücke eines großen Puzzles gefunden hat, die er nach und nach zusammenzusetzt.

Mit dem vorliegenden Band 2 beschreibt er ausführlich den Verlauf der DSG-Unternehmensgeschichte bis Ende November 1963. Zusammengetragen und bestens aufbereitet wurden das Konsolidieren von Betrieb und Geschäft sowie das Ausweiten der Unternehmenstätigkeiten ab 1950.

Ihren ersten Geschäftsführer Karl Mutz erleben wir nun als Menschen, der beharrlich und zielstrebig für „sein“ Unternehmen kämpfte, aber auch immer wieder beim Aufsichtsrat und wohl auch dem Personal aneckte. Er gehörte noch zu einem Menschenschlag, der für sein Unternehmen lebte und sich damit identifizierte, statt Hochglanzprospekte mit Unternehmenswerten zu bedrucken, die bisweilen das Papier nicht wert sind.

Dabei stand die DSG stets vor großen Herausforderungen. Schon früh gelangte sie beim Akquirieren von Personal an ihre Grenzen und griff dankbar auf Gastarbeiter, vor allem dem ehemaligen Jugoslawien, zurück. Aber auch in der Gastronomie unerfahrenes Personal musste sie zunehmend akzeptieren.

Dabei war es stets um die Finanzen der DSG schlecht bestellt und so manches Mal dürfte sie fast am Abgrund gestanden haben, wovon natürlich kein Wort nach draußen gelangen durfte. In völlig neuem Licht erscheinen plötzlich der DSG-Gliedertriebzug „Komet“, die 17 Speise- und Barwagen des deutschen TEE oder die ersten beiden Buckelspeisewagen für den Rheingold, an denen sich das Unternehmen auf Geheiß der DB endgültig ver hob.

Geld für den vollständigen Ersatz der alten Speisewagen war auch nicht da. Armin Gärtner vermag das wenige, zuvor Bekannte hier mit völlig neuen Erkenntnissen zu ergänzen, einzuordnen und endlich auch zu erklären. Die Deutsche Schlafwagen- und Speisewagen-Gesellschaft erscheint plötzlich in einem völlig neuen Licht.

Ständig geht es um einen finanziellen Spagat, unliebsame Einflüsse des ebenfalls klammen Eigentümers DB und trotzdem ein gutes Bild in der Bevölkerung, also beim Kunden, von dessen Wohl alles abhängt. Da fällt es nicht schwer zu glauben, dass die Belegschaften sich wie eine Familie fühlten, zusammenhielten und für ihr Unternehmen eintraten.

In Summe ist hier ein Werk über ein wichtiges und vielleicht auch einzigartiges Kapitel deutscher Nachkriegsgeschichte entstanden, das nicht nur informiert und verschlungen werden will, sondern auch Werte wachruft, die einmal selbstverständlich waren, bevor die Gier nach immer mehr Geld wohl jede Vernunft und viel mehr noch das Herzblut aufgefressen hat.

Garniert mit aussagekräftigen und ausreichend vielen Fotografien liegt hier das Standardwerk zur Geschichte einer einst zentralen Bahntochter vor uns.

Publisher's webpages:
<https://www.lokschuppen-hochdahl.de>

Baureihe 218 in Bildern

Unverwüstliches Erfolgsmodell

Die Baureihe 218 ist ein Erfolgsmodell. Zu diesem Schluss kommen wir anhand ihrer Stückzahl, ihrer langen Einsatzzeit, einer zeitlosen Gestaltung und auch einem bunten Erscheinungsbild, das auch für sich spricht. Das täuscht aber nicht darüber hinweg, dass ihr Stern sinkt. Deshalb war es Zeit für einen ebenso bunten Bildband, den der Eisenbahn-Kurier uns nun beschert hat.

Peter M. Rappold
Sagenhafte Baureihe 218

EK-Medien GmbH
Freiburg 2025

Gebundenes Buch
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Kaum zu glauben, aber die Geschichte der Baureihe 218 währt nun schon fast sechzig Jahre. Und trotzdem gehört sie für uns noch zum vertrauten Bild, auch wenn sie in den meisten Regionen Deutschlands längst nicht mehr alltäglich ist.

1968 begann ihre Erfolgsgeschichte mit sechs Prototypen, denen im Folgejahr weitere sechs folgten. Im Vergleich mit der zeitgleich gelieferten Baureihe 217 wollte die Bundesbahn herausfinden, welchem Motorenkonzept bei elektrischer Zugheizung die Zukunft gehören sollte.

Von 1971 bis 1979 folgten in vier Bauserien 398 Serienmaschinen, zu denen sich die nach einem Unfall als 218 399 wiederaufgebaute, vorherige 215 112 gesellte. Diese Baureihe markierte den würdigen Abschluss der V-160-Familie, den Höhepunkt des Diesellokbaus bei der Bundesbahn und zugleich auch deren Schlusspunkt beim Beschaffen von Verbrennerlokomotiven.

Auch wegen ihrer zeitlosen und auch heute noch ansprechend, ja sogar modern wirkenden Gestaltung ist sie zugleich ein Liebling der Modellbahnfreunde. Bücher und Aufsätze dürfte es in der langen Zeit genug gegeben haben und auch, wenn sich diese immer weiter fortschreiben lassen, so hat doch ein Bildband irgendwie gefehlt.

Ohne tiefgreifende Technikbeschreibungen, Beheimatungsstatistiken und ausführlicher Wiedergabe der Beheimatungsgeschichte fokussiert sich ein solcher auf genau das, was sich viele Eisenbahnfreunde wünschen. Bilder sagen mehr als tausend Worte, lässt es sich hier anführen.

Landschaftsaufnahmen mit Lokomotiven und Zügen vermitteln Erinnerungen und Emotionen, schaffen Inspiration und sind immer auch Zeitzeugen, wenn es darum geht, auf der Modellbahn authentisch zu arbeiten. Und deshalb stellen wir heute ein solches Werk über die Baureihe 218 vor.

Wir erinnern an die ausführlichen Baureihenportraits der Lokfamilie desselben Verlags in zwei Bänden und freuen uns über das vorliegende Werk, das wir auch als sinnvolle Ergänzung für deren Käufer sehen.

Spannend bleibt dabei selbstverständlich, wie viele Jahre die Erfolgsgeschichte wohl noch fortgeschrieben wird.

Ja, die Diesellok-Baureihe 218 darf wohl in vielerlei Hinsicht als wortwörtlich „sagenhaft“ gelten. Zu ihren noch nicht beschriebenen Eigenschaften, die in diesem Bildband ebenso anschaulich werden, gehören auch eine vielseitige Einsetzbarkeit vor Zügen aller Art, die Bandbreite der verschiedenen Motorisierungen (sichtbar an den unterschiedlich angeordneten Abgashutzen) und technischen Ausstattungen.

Zusätzlich interessant macht sie das bunte Erscheinungsbild bei DB und DB AG sowie später bei den vielen privaten Bahnunternehmen, die bis heute auf diese Maschinen setzen. Neben vier Regellackierungen im Staatsbahndienst, haben wir Sonderlackierungen, Farbversuche und Werbegestaltungen erlebt.

Hinzukommen noch Gestaltungen von Bahntöchtern (ab 2006) und eben die Hausfarben privater Unternehmen, die ab 2016 Zugriff auf diese offenbar unverwüstlichen Maschinen erhielten. Ein kleiner Vergleich sei erlaubt: Bis heute gilt die V 200 vielen als die Ikone unter allen Diesellokomotiven.

Sie trug im Vergleich zur 218 nur zwei Farbkleider, davon eine bis heute mit deutlicher Mehrheit abgelehnte Lackierung. Andere Lackierungen blieben sehr überschaubar, die Dienstzeit der Serienexemplare währte rund dreißig Jahre.

Erst eine solche Gegenüberstellung macht wirklich deutlich, wie umfangreich, nachhaltig und anhaltend das Bild der Baureihe 218 ist. Sie hat das Zeug zur Ikone, wurde vielleicht noch nicht als solche erkannt oder entdeckt.

Leider wissen wir erst, was wir hatten, wenn es weg ist. Vielleicht mag es diesem Dieselloktyp auch einst so gehen. Dann spätestens hat dieses Buch das Zeug zum Klassiker, wird aber längst vergriffen sein. Zumindest die vorgestellte Maschine ist nur in Ansätzen in ihrer wahren Bedeutung erkannt.

Peter Rappold spürt genau diesem „Phänomen 218“ mit großformatigen Bildern, die bis auf eine Handvoll historischer S/W-Aufnahmen durchgehend bunt sind, gekonnt und akribisch nach. Strukturiert ist das Buch nach den Lackierungsvarianten, die alle einzeln vorgestellt werden.

Erst ab 2001 wendet sich der Autor mit dem Aufkommen von Werbelokomotiven davon ab und fasst die Erscheinungsbilder nach jenen der Staatsbahn, von Bahntöchtern und privaten Unternehmen außerhalb des Bahnkonzerns in drei getrennten Kapiteln zusammen.

Durchweg sorgfältig ausgewählte, qualitativ erstklassige und auch hervorragend wiedergegebene Aufnahmen aus allen Einsatzepochen machen das Buch zu einem rundum gelungenen Werk und einer klaren Kaufempfehlung.

Publisher's webpages:
<http://www.eisenbahn-kurier.de>
<http://www.ekshop.de>

Grenzenloser Modellbahnspaß in 1:220

10. Internationales Spur-Z-Weekend



ALTENBEKEN

16. und 17. Mai 2026

Samstag: 10.00 - 18.00 Uhr

Sonntag: 11.00 - 17.00 Uhr

Eggelandhalle, Gardeweg 8

33184 Altenbeken



Z-Freunde International e.V., Bahnhofstraße 18, 85238 Petershausen
www.z-freunde-international.de

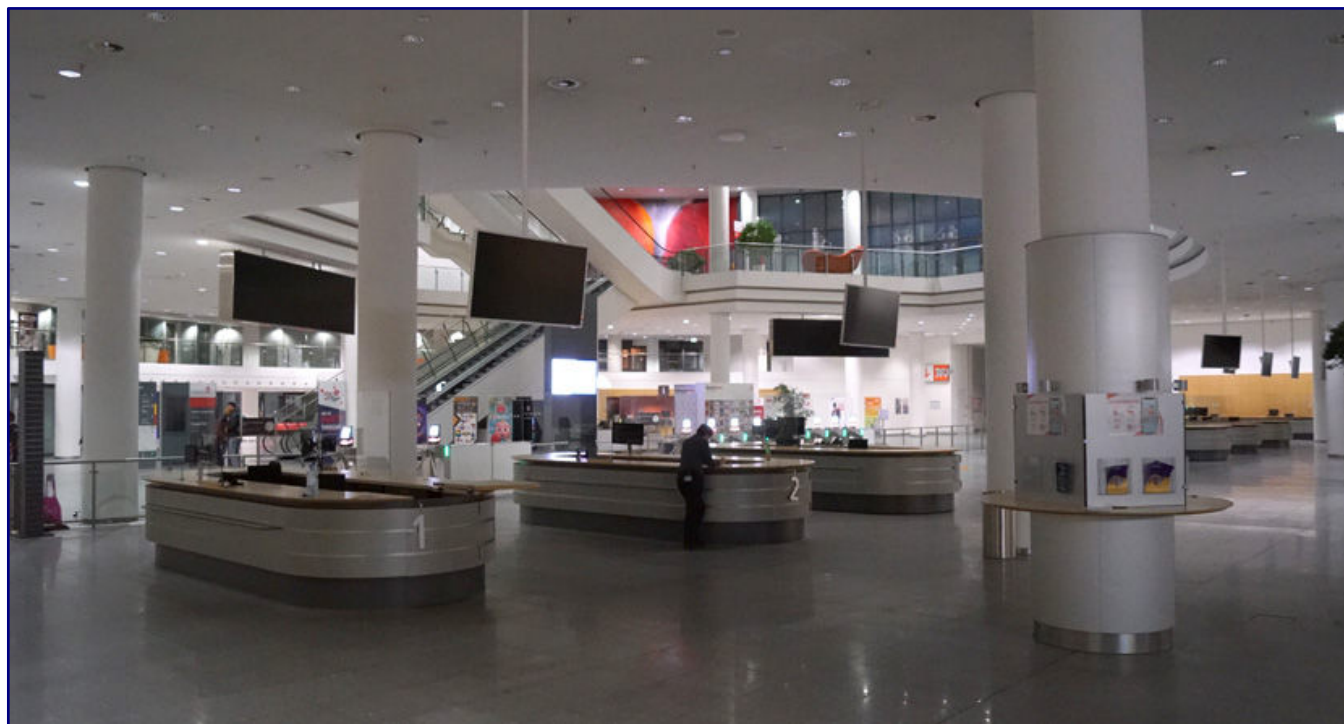
All new products for spring 2026 for Z gauge

Nuremberg – was there something once?

Year after year, the importance of the toy fair for the model railway sector declined, until this year only Hornby, Märklin and Noch exhibited there – some with even smaller stands. But that doesn't detract from the new products for 2026, even in economically difficult times. We have found some great ideas, some unexpected surprises, real fireworks, and a completely new supplier.

The fact that Märklin and Noch have once again attended the International Toy Fair this year is undoubtedly due to their decades-long association with and co-founding of this event.

But the toy fair is no longer really needed for the model railway sector: the dealer network continues to dwindle, and the remaining specialist dealers are no longer coming to the Franconian metropolis anyway.



Totally dead in Nuremberg? It could have looked similar this year during opening hours in the entrance area near the model building and model railway sections, because the hall was far from full: both exhibitors and visitors were missing.

Over two decades, the area continued to shrink, changing halls twice, and even together with the other divisions, it can no longer be filled. Partition walls to divide up unoccupied areas speak for themselves. That's probably it for good; no longer expect to see model railways in Nuremberg next year.

Fortunately, however, this does not spell the decline of model railways, as they have long since become completely detached from the toy fair. Shortly after the turn of the year, suppliers of large and, increasingly, small series present their spring innovations directly to customers. And so, we too can announce a few surprises below and hope for their market success.

+++ 1zu220-Shop +++

The 1zu220 shop is working with our editorial team to plan another surprise for readers and customers. As it has not yet been conclusively determined whether and how this project can be realised, we reserve the right to postpone any announcement until further notice.

www.1zu220-shop.de

+++ Acrylicos Vallejo +++

With “True Metallic Metal” (TMM), a new colour range has been added to the AV range. It aims to reproduce realistic metallic surfaces using genuine metal pigments, which is not the case with “non-metallic metal” (NMM) colours.

The advantage lies in natural reflections with visually impressive results, but in Z gauge, this will probably quickly reach its limits due to the size of the pigments: painting requires much more. This includes, for example, the use of light, shadow and volume – the necessary work with transitions, contrasts, and blends is also part of the repertoire.

We also discovered three sprayers at the Spanish paint specialist, which he is now using to expand his range of tools alongside his own brushes. They cover a variety of requirements and are aimed at enthusiasts taking their first steps, as well as demanding professionals.

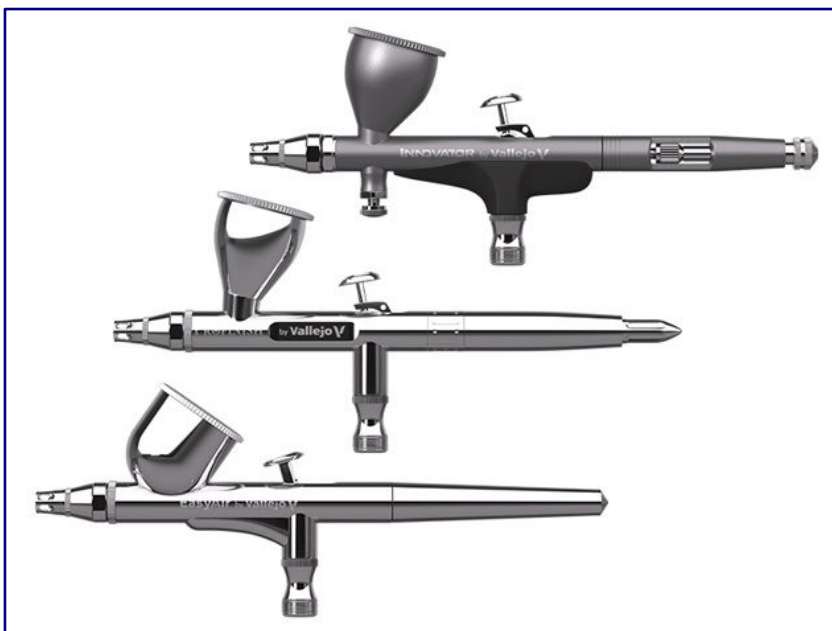


Foto: Acrylicos Vallejo

As an innovative feature, Acrylicos Vallejo highlights a “floating nozzle” that adapts precisely to different pressure levels and paint viscosities, ensuring even coverage even for complex work.

The new products are made from lightweight materials with improved ergonomics, and are promised to have a long service life. Their design ensures quick and easy cleaning and reduced maintenance time.

www.acrylicosvallejo.com

+++ Álvaro Cortes +++

The industrious Portuguese manufacturer has not been an insider tip for years and is once again setting off a veritable fireworks display of innovations. We are impressed by the following new models, which could be available soon:



The Toyota FJ40 is one of the new additions for 2026, as is the silver caravan from 1965. However, the gaps are mainly filled by German taxis based on the small Heckflosse (W110) and the Mercedes-Benz 200D/8 (W115). Photo: Álvaro Cortes

The Toyota FJ40 is a very distinctive off-road vehicle that has also found fans in Europe and is now being reproduced on a scale of 1:220 to repeat this success. The “Airstream Safari 1965” caravan embodies the North American idea of mobile travel, but is still at an earlier stage of development than the other new products.

The two Mercedes-Benz 200 D saloons from the W110 and W115 series will fill large gaps. The “small tail fin” and its successor, the “/8”, were particularly indispensable as taxis on Germany’s roads and mark the transition from classic black to light ivory – so they are painted differently accordingly.

A few modern luxury sports cars have also been added to the list of new models: McLaren Artura, 750S and 765 LT, as well as the Ferrari 296 GTS, 488 Pista, and F12. Classics include the Renault Rodeo 5 (1981–84) and the Fiat X1/9 (1972–88). The three-door VW Golf 7 is the direct predecessor of the five-door VW Golf 8.

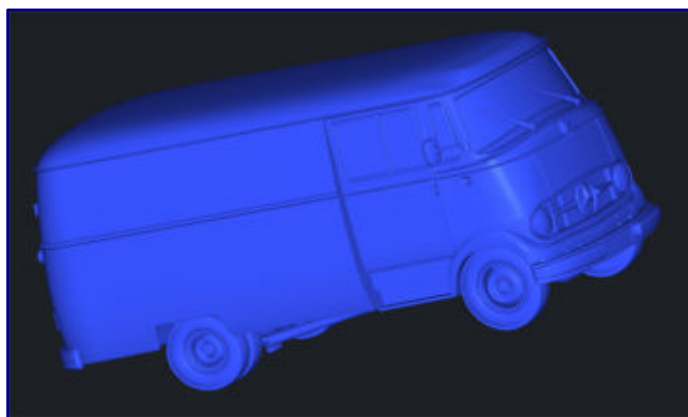


Luxury sports cars can also be found alongside current and former everyday vehicles in the new product range. Photo: Álvaro Cortes

In the modern vehicle segment, the Mercedes-Benz E-Class estate (station wagon), which has been in production since model year 2025, is still missing. The VW Passat Variant B8 was given an open boot lid. Both cars can also be combined with the new motorcycle trailers, which feature mountings for one or two motorcycles.



Trailers, construction and sweeping machines, and other commercial vehicles are also included in the new product range. Photos: Alvaro Cortes



Additional accessories for both are an open or tarpaulin-covered single-axle trailer, a Thule roof box, and, with a concrete mixer and the Bomag 120 AD and BW 65H small rollers, construction machinery, for which complementary new products happen to be appearing from other manufacturers.

Image on the left:
 The Mercedes-Benz L319 panel van with sliding doors is also currently in development. Photo: Alvaro Cortes

The Hako Citymaster 1750 and 1200 are responsible for keeping cities clean, with the latter model available in two colour schemes. Based on the Mercedes-Benz Atego, there are also new commercial vehicles: a refrigerated box truck from Coop (Switzerland) and tanker trucks for BP and Avia.

The next project planned is a classic German commercial vehicle, which is already in the design phase: the Mercedes-Benz L319 panel van was one of the defining delivery and customer service vehicles of its era. The first prototypes of the current Mercedes-Benz Sprinter with single and double cabs and as an ADAC tow truck are already a little further along.

alvaro_mcortes@hotmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/My-Z-scale-models-1648628058694887>

+++ Anlagen-Architekt +++

The Microwelten kit range has now been transferred to Daniel Mechling, who is continuing to sell it under his Anlagen-Architekt brand. As part of this integration, operating instructions and, in some cases, minor details of the kits are also being revised. For this reason, the familiar buildings will only gradually become available again.



We have learned that individual Z gauge products have been offered here before. The range is now to be expanded further. The town houses from the "Waßstraße" series with item numbers 2061 and 2062, which are already available, have been completely redesigned. It is worth taking a look at the Spur-N range, as several more buildings from its town house series are to follow in the course of the year.



The signal box extension (item no. 2912; left) can also be used as a conservatory. The building at "Waßstraße 15" is available in blue (2061; photo top right) or beige. The Ford Model A (photo right) from Marks Modellbauclassics is also being added to the range. Photos: Anlagen-Architekt

Further new developments for the 1:220 scale include the Königsberg goods shed in Franconia (2212) and the signal box extension/winter garden (2912). Fans of Era II may also be interested in the Ford Model A delivery vans.



The Königsberg goods shed in Franconia (2212) is also available in 1:220 scale. Photo: Anlagen-Architekt

Long-time Z gauge model railway enthusiasts will remember these from Marks Modellbauclassics, where they were manufactured for Hammerschmid Modellbahnschmankerl. The layout architect was able to acquire the components from the estate and produce a small batch in various colours.

www.anlagen-architekt.de

+++ Archistories +++

At the beginning of the year, Archistories did not present any new products of its own, which can be explained by commissioned work that then leads to exclusive products. After presenting two versions of North American water towers, the matching addition is currently entering the home stretch.

Client Ztrack has already announced that something big is coming with the "Redbank Coaling Tower" (item no. 104251). And that



Redbank Coaling Tower (Art.-Nr. 104251). Foto: Archistories



The material surface and details promise a magnificent model with a realistic effect. Photo: Archistories

is to be taken quite literally, because the US coal handling facility is far larger than anything we are used to seeing in Germany.

This mighty, yet bizarrely designed, coal tower marks the return of the era of powerful steam locomotives in the United States. In addition to the passageway for delivering coal, it features a conveyor system that runs diagonally upwards inside the building to the round storage container.

The container rests on a platform and has a conical roof. Chutes attached underneath and to the side of the platform filled the coal into the tenders of the locomotives. The model, built entirely of concrete, still stands today in Armstrong County, Pennsylvania, directly on the Allegheny River. However, the tracks have long since disappeared.

www.archistories.com
www.archistories-shop.de

+++ Artitec +++

It is truly remarkable how Artitec continues to impress us with exciting new products year after year. We are delighted with each new delivery, and the Amsterdam-based specialist continues to surprise us with innovations that seem to surpass everything that has come before.

This accessory supplier has currently moved away from kits somewhat, as the new kebab stand (item no. 322.051) and sausage snack bar (322.052) in classic kiosk style are available as ready-made models.



Kebab stand (item no. 322.051; photo left) and sausage snack bar (322.052; photo right) complement the range of fast food outlets in 1:220 scale. Photos: Artitec

The Unimog 404s, which is also very popular as a historic vehicle, appears in both Bundeswehr colours (322.053) and civilian yellow (322.054). The ice cream seller with mother and child (5220028) marks the transition to the new figures with his sales bicycle.



The Unimog 404s will not only find fans in its Bundeswehr colours (322.053; photo above), but also in the yellow civilian version (322.054; photo above on page 39). Photos: Artitec



Wheeled aids also accompany painters (5220031) with their ladder trolleys, street sweepers with carts (5220018), cyclists in the rain (5220011) and at traffic lights (5220012). Car mechanics (5220032), market vendors with crates (5220033) and removal men (5220041) enrich the range of figures depicting working people.

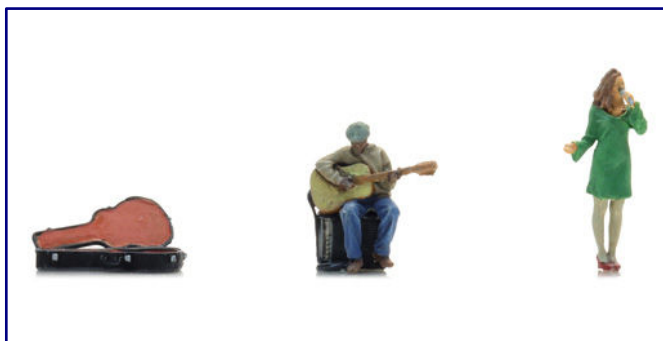


Cyclists in the rain (5220011; left image) and at traffic lights (5220012; right image) combine this manufacturer's elegant bicycles with its successful figures. Photos: Artitec

Hard work is also done in the countryside, which is reflected in the following sets of figures: haymaking with a scythe (5220024), wheat harvesting with a scythe (5220026), and haymaker (5220027). They are also allowed some rest, which is evident in the lunch break in the field (5220025). The handshake during cattle trading (5220029) then seals the sale of two black and white cows.



Both the handshake during cattle trading (5220029; photo above) and the car mechanics (5220032; photo below) represent further original figurine ideas from Amsterdam. Photos: Artitec



Street musicians (5220030; left image) and Santa Claus with Christmas tree carriers (5220036; right image) round off the new figures. Photos: Artitec

Street musicians (5220030) create a traditional atmosphere in pedestrian zones, while Father Christmas and his Christmas tree carriers (5220036) are already looking ahead to the end of the year. But first, we want to enjoy the summer and the delivery of these fantastic new products!

www.artitec.nl

+++ Austromodell +++

This manufacturer not only offers inexpensive wire blanks for building your own realistic trees: this supplier now also offers the smallest SMD light-emitting diodes of type 0201 available on the market, ready-wired for your own projects, even for the smallest track gauges. They are already available in warm white, with red and yellow to follow.

austromodell.at



Austromodell now offers ready-wired SMD LED 0201 in warm white, with two further colours to follow. Photo: Austromodell

+++ Atelier Dietrich +++

Andreas Dietrich is now planning his retirement, as can be seen on his website. Anyone interested in distributing his model-making products in the future should contact him. For the time being, he will continue to offer his range himself.

www.atelier-dietrich.at

+++ Avantgarde Modellbau +++

Philipp Meyer envisages a thick overhead power and telephone line for telegraph, telephone, and electricity poles. Its highly flexible black thread can be laid under tension or sagging.

Structural filler A is a ready-to-use, water-soluble filler for creating complex, finely detailed surfaces and structures such as rocks or rutted dirt roads.

It can be modelled in a similar way to plaster, but its drying process can be delayed almost indefinitely by moistening it.

Extra-short fibres measuring 0.5 and 1.0 mm in length are designed for electrostatic processing on lawns and meadows. The manufacturer describes the colour as meadow green. Numerous improvements are to be made to the in-house Finescale vegetation. These include tiny, lanceolate leaves and chestnuts.

Tree and bush crowns for background trees are intended as a more cost-effective idea for concealing a transition to the background scenery. The material can be used for large bushes and shrubs, but is primarily intended to green the rear areas, especially slopes, relatively cheaply and easily.



Structural filler A is supplied ready to use and is suitable for replicating various substrates. Photo: Avantgarde Modellbau

In combination with the equally new background tree trunks, the bushes can be adapted to become background trees, whereby the height of the composite is flexible, which simplifies the depth gradation of the trees.

The following additional new products have been announced under the AVA Model Trains brand:

Much to our surprise, another electric locomotive from the DB's E 91 / 191 series is to be developed for Epochs III and IV. The plan is to base it on the third series of articulated locomotives, which was designated as the E 919 sub-series. The model is to correspond to the condition of the 1960s and 1970s.

A highly detailed model with two bell-type armature motors and flywheels, filigree SBS 9 pantographs, and a driver's cab interior has been announced. It will also be available in a digitalised version, as an option.

The SBB Class 194 is based on a Märklin model. As a German loan locomotive, it is equipped with a single-arm pantograph. Here, too, the new model is sure to impress with its many details, bell-armature motor, and flywheel.



The fine-scale vegetation, such as willow trees, is said to benefit from tiny, lanceolate leaves. Photo: Avantgarde-Modellbau

Customer-owned models from the 220 and 221 series may be sent in for conversion. They will then receive new window inserts of the correct size, a driver's cab interior, further minor detail improvements and a subtle patina.

The Fals 175 self-unloading wagon, which was announced back in 2024, will now also be available in red DB Cargo livery, also as a three-pack, for Era V. The Gs44 / Gms 211 is a short standard covered freight wagon from DB for Epochs III and IV. As a UIC standard wagon, the open wagon of the Omm 55 / E 040 type can also be produced as UIC 2 of the SBB.

With folding doors in the gangways, large swing doors at the ends of the cars and windows only 1,000 mm wide in 2nd class compartments, the first 26.4-metre cars of the German Federal Railways differed from the final UIC type X design.

This car family is also to be implemented here. We will start with the following car types: AB4üm-55 1st/2nd class in bottle green and later ABm 223 in ocean blue/ivory, and B4üm-54 2nd class in bottle green and Bm 232 in ocean blue/ivory. All will have interior fittings, true-to-scale translation windows and close couplings.

A fine catenary system was announced as early as 2024. This non-functional design is based on almost true-to-scale thin, dark-coated and highly flexible threads as contact wires and tension cables, which are wound around the mast crossbars using a special applicator.

Improvements over the original announcement are to be made to the installation, and separate masts are now planned instead of modified Märklin masts. However, these are to remain usable in conjunction with the flexible overhead line wire by means of an adapter in the form of a new crossbar.

Conversion kits for the Märklin turntable are designed to modify and refine it to the prototypical 7.5° pitch. The basis for this is conversion kit A with 24 edge segments, each of which can be fitted with up to two track connections at an angle of 7.5°. The insert from conversion kit B is designed to bring the depth of the turntable pit to a more realistic level.

The third conversion kit, C, contains a new operator's cab, filigree platform railings, and photorealistic plank flooring, a hand crank for emergency operation and other small parts. All three kits can also be used individually. The first samples are expected to be available for the meeting in Altenbeken.

www.avantgarde-modellbau.de

+++ Azar Models +++

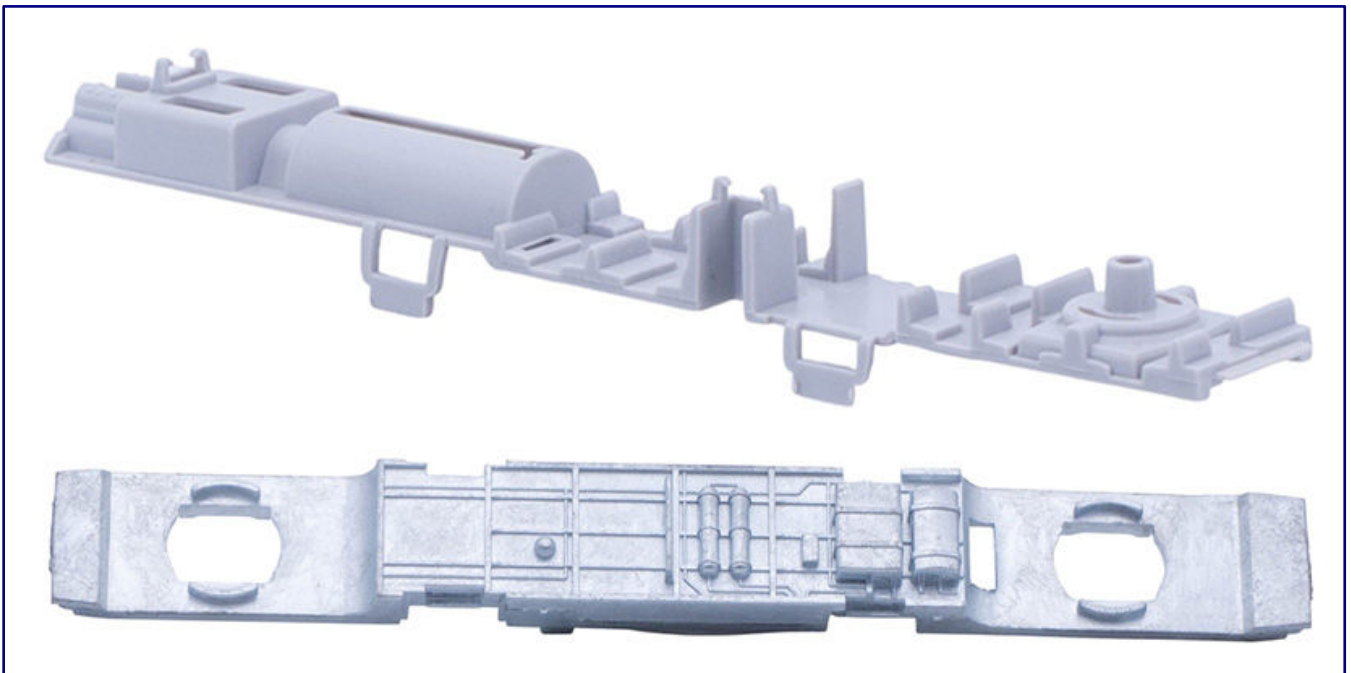
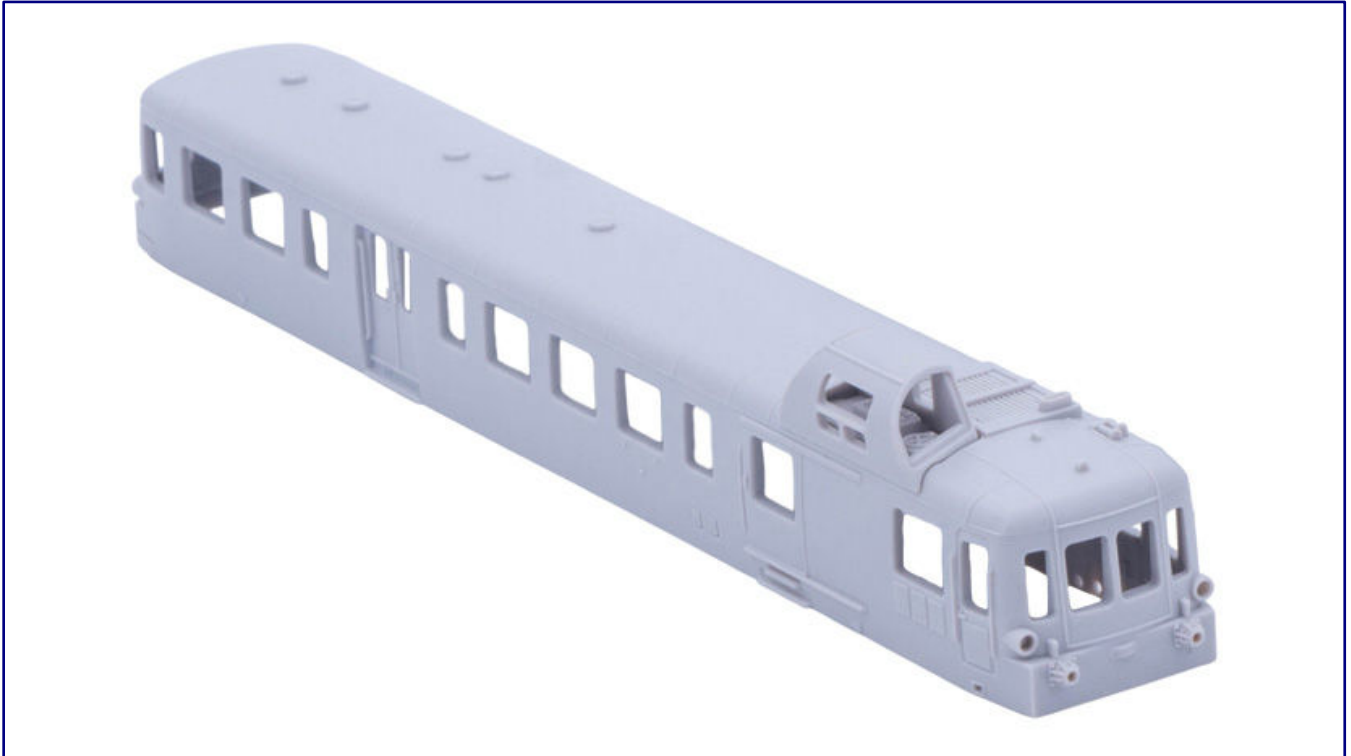
Three new sliding tarpaulin wagon packs (item nos. W03-TG1 / -TG2) are already available, each containing three models with graffiti printing. Each pack contains three different designs, with each wagon displaying the same motif on both sides. On the first pack, according to the counting method, we can read the message, "In Z scale we trust!," on one wagon, while all the others are more difficult to decipher.



A new design is the grain silo wagon with the inscription "HerforderPils" (item no. W01-HP), which also introduces the new and significantly shorter Magnetiz coupling (shown in the picture).

The new injection-moulded grain silo wagon is scheduled for delivery in the winter months of 2026. The first version will be a German model bearing the inscription "Herforder Pils" (W01-HP). It also paves the way for the innovative magnetic coupling called "Magnetiz", which was unveiled just a few weeks ago at an exhibition in France.

Since the couplings at Azar Models are plug-in and do not require pressure springs, the claw couplings can be easily replaced with these new plug-in parts. Their innovative strength lies in the fact that they can couple much more tightly, without losing holding force.



The first plastic parts of the Autorail X3800 "Picasso" were presented. It will again be financed through crowdfunding. Photos: Azar Models

This makes it possible to maintain the prototypical pivot pin and axle distances, whereas Märklin always has to deviate from the prototypical dimensions due to the construction depth and move them inwards. However, the transition to their models is always maintained thanks to the easy exchange and also allows for “transition cars”.

The Autorail X3800 “Picasso” railcar, available in three colour variants, is now taking shape and will be shown for the first time in the form of samples from 3D printing. Following the success of the TGV, its risks are to be hedged again by means of prior crowdfunding.

azar-models.com

+++ AZL (American Z Line) +++

AZL Labs is the name of a product line that is produced by the well-known large-scale manufacturer and is only available through AZL Direct. Following the conversion kit for the Märklin freight train escort car, a US-American buffer stop is currently being mentioned here.

Available in yellow (item no. 99004-1Y) and brown (99004-1B), the four copies from a printed sheet can be easily clamped between the rails of all common Z gauge track systems, as promised by the manufacturer.

Furthermore, we can only mention the regular monthly deliveries at this point, because AZL does not announce new products in the manner customary in Europe. We start with the blue, white and grey EMD GP30 from Great Northern (item nos. 62112-3 / -4), the blue EMD SD50 from Conrail (65004-1 / -2) and the GE AC4400CW from Ferromex (65204-1 / -2).



Four yellow and four brown US-American buffer stops are a new product from AZL Labs. Photo: AZL | Ztrack



EMD GP30 at Great Northern (Item No. 62112-3). Photo: AZL | Ztrack

From the F-type family, there is an EMD FP7 from Milwaukee Road (65306-1 / -2) and EMD F7A & F7B (63006-3) as well as a single B unit (63006-4) from Southern Pacific. The SP engines feature the “Bloody Nose” livery of this former railway administration.

A matching side-view freight train escort car from this company (92000-13 / -14) appears at the same time



EMD F7A & F7B (63006-3; picture left) bear a "bloody nose", Auto-Flood III bulk freight cars appear for CNW (905708-1; picture right).
Photos: AZL | Ztrack

with two different operating numbers. The modernised AAR covered cars are available for Northern Pacific individually (905406-1) and in pairs (915406-1).

The CNW Auto-Flood III bulk freight wagons (905708-1 & 915708-1 / -2) and the Western Pacific 4180 compressed air unloading wagons (916050-1 / 906050-1) are delivered in duplicate and in quadruple sets.

This list is completed by individually available 53-foot (95117) and 40-foot containers (95231) from CP and Safmarine.

www.americanzline.com

+++ Badger Air-Brush +++

This US provider is working on a new website to mark its 62nd anniversary. It has not yet announced any new developments.

www.badgerairbrush.com



In addition to this brown track ballast, other mixtures are also available for N and Z gauge track. Photo: Böttcher Modellbahntechnik

+++ Bahls Modelleisenbahnen +++

This year, Blomberg-based small-series manufacturer Bahls Modelleisenbahnen is launching the Prussian express train cars AB4ü, C4ü and C6ü with skylights, initially in DRG design. At the Z gauge weekend in Altenbeken in May, the company also plans to unveil a new steam locomotive. Also new are coal box superstructures for the 89 series in a pack of two, one in the "full" and one in the "half-full" state.

www.lokomotiven-bahls.de

+++ Böttcher Modellbahntechnik +++

In our own range, we have discovered cork sheets and various cork strips for bedding tracks, which are available in different lengths to suit virtually any requirement. The material thickness is 2 mm in each case.

In addition, anyone looking for track ballast (for N/Z gauge) will find what they are looking for here: suitable track ballast in various shades of grey, brown, and black is listed in 250 g, 500 g, and 2.5 kg containers, which should meet individual requirements.

www.boettcher-modellbahntechnik.de

+++ BuBi-Model +++

After a veritable flood of new products last year, things seem to be starting off a little more quietly this year. None of the kits announced so far are for Z gauge. Nevertheless, it is worth taking a look at the range for other gauges: if you see something you like, you can always suggest it for 1:220 scale.

www.mein-mbs.de

+++ Busch +++

The Natur-Pur series finally has some new products that can also be used in a slightly different way on a scale of 1:220. These include eight micro shrubs for spring (item no. 3601), summer (3602), late summer (3603), and autumn (3604). With a height of 20 mm each, these tiny shrubs can be used for tree-like shrubs such as hazelnuts.



As an example, we show the new micro shrubs for late summer (item no. 3603). Photo: Busch

As handcrafted trees, Busch highlights the new fir trees measuring 80 mm (2 pieces; 3801), 140 mm (3802) and 210 mm (3803). The same applies to the spruce trees of the same size and composition (3805 to 3807). The larch trees in summer (3811 to 3813) and early autumn colours (3815 to 3817) also match the Z gauge with their realistic growth heights. Real natural roots are to be used to create undergrowth (3700) in the model.

www.busch-model.com

+++ Decoderwerk +++

Here we have discovered a new reversing loop module for analogue and digital operation (item no. 00201) that is designed for 5 A power. With regard to Z gauge, it is advisable to check before purchasing whether this is appropriate in view of possible short circuits and whether it can be protected in other ways.

The modules operate independently of protocols with occupancy detection, support Railcom connections and the connection of servo decoders.

www.decoderwerk.com



A selection of spruce, fir, and larch trees demonstrate the impact of the new conifers in the Busch range. Photo: Busch

+++ Digimoba Elektronik +++

A new speed controller (item no. 2035) specifically designed for two-wire DC railways is now available. Four factors make it so special:



Its special features essentially consist of four factors: continuously selectable PWM between 100 and 25,000 Hz, pure DC operation without PWM, DC voltage of 4 to 50% that can be mixed in during PWM operation, and switching of the maximum driving voltage between 12 and 9 V.

The speed controller consists of a base unit and a hand-held control unit connected by a 1.50 m cable. Different lengths of up to five metres can also be supplied on request. Great importance was attached to ensuring that the hand-held control unit could be operated intuitively and easily with just one hand and without eye contact.

Photo on the left: Digimoba Elektronik

The control knob with a noticeable centre position is the only control element on the device; two LEDs indicate the direction of travel. Depending on the direction of rotation beyond the centre position, the direction of travel is changed and the travel speed is controlled.

The electronic overload protection activates at 1.7 A. The speed controller is powered by a 12–18 V power source with 2 A in DC or AC voltage, which is not included in the scope of delivery.

While older transformers often “jump” from 0 volts to 2 volts (or even more) and do not allow for a smooth start, the track voltage rises gently here, preventing jerky starts, especially with sensitive and fast-reacting bell-armature motors.

By individually mixing direct current and PWM frequencies, both motors with iron anchors (three- and five-pole) and modern bell-type armature drives (GAM) can be controlled gently. For GAM, a high PWM (above 10,000 Hz) or pure DC voltage is recommended.

www.digimoba.de

+++ ESU electronic solutions ulm +++

A programme update to version 5.2.17 is available for the “Lokprogrammer” product.

www.esu.eu

+++ EtchIT-Modellbau +++

This manufacturer has also become an important supplier of 1:220 scale model cars. Its latest addition is a sports car based on a German model (item no. ET044_Z), which can be assembled with open or closed headlights.



The new sports car (item no. ET044_Z) can be built with either open or closed headlights. Photo: EtchIT-Modellbau

The vehicles produced from the kits bear a striking resemblance to the original Opel GT. It may also be helpful for interested parties to note that new Z gauge models can be derived from the in-house N gauge range at any time upon request.

www.etchit.de

+++ Faller +++

Faller has named its new laser-cut model, featuring a warm wood look with half-timbered elements and stone foundations, the “Black Forest Farm” (item no. 282784) in honour of the company’s 80th anniversary. The low hipped roof and surrounding balconies on two sides make it a landmark of its region.

In fact, this architecture has been extensively covered in all scales, whereas in the early days of Z gauge, the focus was on houses in the Alpine region. In this respect, we are probably not the only ones who are curious to see what demand there is for such buildings.



The “Black Forest Farm” (item no. 282784; photo above) is declared as an anniversary model, while the sawmill and watermill (282756; photo below) are made from the same material using the same manufacturing method. Photos: Fallner

The sawmill and watermill (282756) are made of rustic wood using the same manufacturing technique. The freestanding mill and open hall differ significantly from the two previous sawmills and come with numerous tools and implements.

The polystyrene kit for the “Rathenow” town station (282701) is made from parts of the former machine factory and, logically, has nothing in common with the station of the same name in Brandenburg. It retains its typical industrial architecture, but should still find a use on many a layout.

There are several other new products in the design material range that can be used across all track gauges. This is the case, for example, with the prefabricated waterfall (171653) for installation in landscape scenes. Such scenes can be created entirely by yourself with the transparent model water (171654) and the water effect (171655).

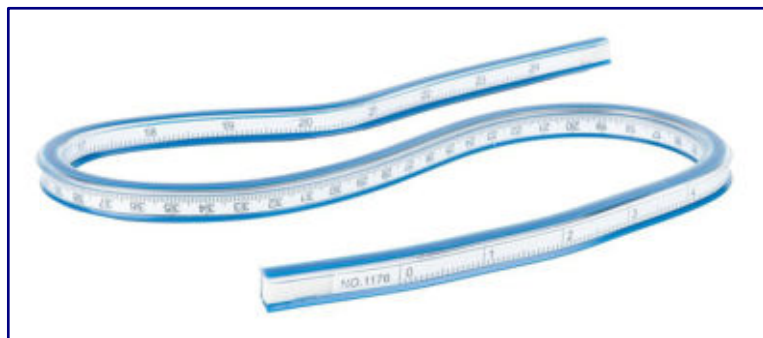


It is no coincidence that the Rathenow town railway station (282701) resembles an industrial building: it is based on the former machine factory. Photo: Faller



Flower clusters without fibre length specifications are available in dark green (171381), white (171382), yellow (171383), violet (171384), and red (171385). New tufts of grass are labelled as beige (171386), dark green (171387), and dry grass (171388). There are also larger versions with the same names (171389 to 171391).

This year, Faller is offering scattered fibres with a length of 4 mm, which in Z gauge results in unmown wild meadows. Grass (170211 / 170212) and dark green (170213 / 170214) are available in 30 gram bags or 80 gram tins.



Three fir trees with a height of 100 mm (181544; photo above) and a curved ruler (170561; photo below). Photos: Faller

Withered-looking winter grass with a fibre length of 2–3 mm and a weight of 35 grams (170200) is among the new products. The very fine-grained scatter material iron ore (170306) and lime can be used for homemade cargo (170307).

The four light green deciduous trees, 90 to 110 mm high (181579), and the three fir trees, each 100 mm high (181544), are also absolutely true to scale for trees of their type at a scale of 1:220. The vegetation is complemented by foliage in light green



The white road marking pen (170562) has a fine tip and can therefore be used across all track gauges. However, for Z gauge, additional tools may be required to achieve a prototypical line width. Photo: Falter

(181621), green (181622), dark green (181623), pine green (181624), and May green (181625). All carrier foils measure 140 x 280 mm.

This year, the range of tools has been expanded to include a flexible, bendable 40 cm long curve ruler (170561), and a white road marking pen (170562) with a fine tip and fine coverage.

www.faller.de

+++ Fohrmann-Werkzeuge +++

Unfortunately, this supplier did not respond to our enquiry about new products. However, we did find an interesting tool on their website that is often requested by Zetties: a gauge for TT, N and Z gauges (item no. 71622). It is used to set the correct gauge on car axles when models derail noticeably often.

www.fohrmann.com



+++ Franke WF +++

The supplier of the "Staubfee" is releasing a limited edition of a DB makeshift coal crane in chrome oxide green, available with either a movable shovel or fixed in an open or closed position. The shovel is supplied loose, but with wires to simulate the rope, and can then be glued by the customer at the desired height. This allows you to create your own scenes for the depot.

Since the prototype was self-propelled, the model has buffer beams with imitation couplings, but no system couplings. Another boom is also planned for this crane model for track construction scenes. In the sample shown in our photo, the shovel is still provisionally attached with uncut wires, which should be taken into account when evaluating the details.

[franke.wf\(at\)web.de](mailto:franke.wf(at)web.de)

In the model of the Franke WF makeshift coal crane, the shovel is only loosely attached for the photo.

+++ FR Montageservice Uwe Schuster +++

We have already presented the double units of carrier wagons for modern combined transport in detail. Two lime green versions are currently available as Sggrs from GATX (item no. 49.347.31 / .41). The wagons differ in their operating numbers and the containers loaded at the factory. They are sold by the 1zu220 shop.

[Duckwitz\(at\)mail.de](mailto:Duckwitz(at)mail.de)



The GATX articulated wagons Sggrs (item nos. 49.347.31 / 49.347.41) are already available loaded with different containers.

+++ Heki +++

The crumple rock foil in the range has been redesigned and now bears the addition “crumple rock.” The difference to previous versions is that it is now waterproof and is highlighted by Heki as suitable for hydraulic engineering. New additions include: granite rock 60 x 40 cm (item no. 3515) and 60 x 80 cm (3516) as well as red sandstone in the same sizes (3517 / 3518).

Seven weather spruces with heights of 10 to 14 cm (21802) and ten specimens with heights of 7 to 11 cm (21803) interpret the classic “pipe cleaners” in the best possible technical manner. A renovation and decoration set (16000) certainly promises a price advantage over individual purchases.

For reworking the landscape of a layout, it offers the following contents: 1 x Heki-Flor (1551), 1 x Decovlies wild grass (1576), 1 x Decovlies meadow grass (1594), 1 x leaf flor (1676), and a small pack of delicate natural bushes.

www.heki-kittler.de

+++ Herpa +++

Surprisingly, Herpa is starting the new year with its 1:200 scale aircraft series without any new designs. The series consists of colour variations of well-known models:

Swiss International Air Lines Airbus A350-900 "Wanderlust" (Item No. 573672),
Lufthansa Lockheed L-1649A Super Star Roll-out / Hamburg, 17. Januar 2025 (573863),
Lufthansa Airbus A321 neo "Help Alliance" (573900),
German Airways Embraer E190 (573924),
Royal Jordanian Airlines Embraer E195-E2 (573948), and
LOT Polish Airlines Bombardier Q400 (573955).



The Embraer E190 (item no. 573924) from German Airways flies for KLM Cityhopper. Image: Herpa

The Bell Boeing CMV-22B Osprey (573962) appears to be a high-flyer with rotary propeller engines for the US Navy. The American Airlines Boeing 777-300ER in nostalgic livery (574020 / Snapfit 614986) and Lufthansa Airbus A350-900 (573993 / Snapfit 614924) to mark the company's 100th anniversary are probably no longer suitable for installation due to their dimensions.

Other simplified Snapfit models in flight view are:

Swiss International Air Lines Airbus A350-900 (614627),
Condor Airbus A320 (614788),
LOT Polish Airlines Boeing 767-300 (614801), and
Lufthansa Airbus A321 neo "Help Alliance" (614832).

As a preview for the rest of the year, a special artistic design called "Yam Dreaming" on Qantas' Boeing 787-9 and Condor's special livery for Eintracht Frankfurt on an Airbus A320 are planned. The Douglas DC-7 is to be released for only the second time and will feature the South African Airways design with saddle tanks as a change in shape.

www.herpa.de

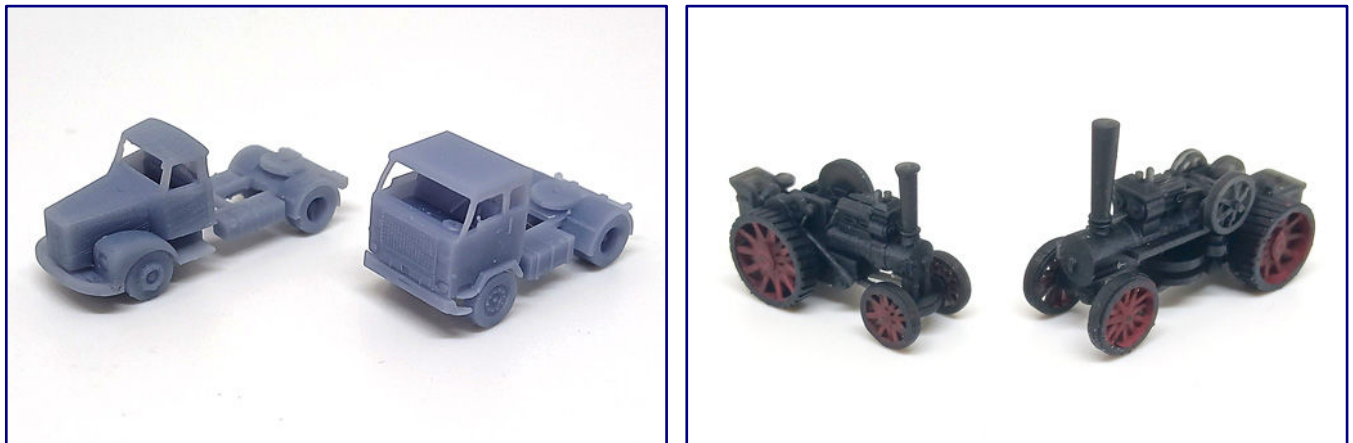
+++ High Tech Modellbahnen +++

Work on backlogs continues unchanged. Further innovations will only be announced once they are available for delivery. Another current focus is on the functionality and timeliness of the website.

www.z-hightech.de

+++ Imprintium +++

Two new tractor units are available from this 3D printing supplier: the Scania L111 (item no. D22-1004) and the classic Volvo F88 (D22-1003). Both are manufactured using the resin printing process and feature a fifth wheel for attaching semi-trailers.



Two locomotives (left image) and two steam tractors (right image) are produced using 3D printing with resin. Photos: Imprintium

Two more steam tractors will also be added to the collection. Both models are from Fowler, with the 6B (D22-6010-F) and 4B (D22-6011-F) versions being selected. Both models come in black resin with dark red painted spokes in the wheels.

From 1 March 2026, they will be available to view and order on the Imprintium website. They can also be purchased in person at Intermodellbau 2026 in Dortmund at stand 4.F36 (Hall 4). A push boat kit in the Maritim series will also be making its debut there as another new product.

imprintium.de

+++ JMC Scale Models +++

The JMC Scale Models brand has been around for an incredible 20 years, even though João Marrafa de Carvalho only became known in the core market of Z gauge much later. His car designs have developed impressively, especially since the introduction of CAD designs and the use of 3D printing technology in prototype construction.

It is kicking off its anniversary year with three new products, all of which are already available: the 1970 VW K70 is available with both round and square headlights, recreating both striking versions of this saloon car.

The Hamm 2410 road roller performs its duties on road construction sites on a scale of 1:220 and can be adapted to any situation thanks to its freely movable wheels, roller and joint in the frame.



The VW K70 in two headlight versions (left image) and the Hamm 2410 road roller (right image) are the first anniversary novelties from JMC Scale Models. Photos: JMC Scale Models

The opening ceremony will be rounded off by the Magirus-Deutz Orion 250 from 1960, which hardly anyone will be able to picture at first glance. It is an aircraft tractor, which was once widely used not only at German airports.



The Magirus-Deutz Orion 250 is a historic aircraft tractor that was used at many airports and also by Lufthansa. Photo: JMC Scale Models

The contemporary Lufthansa design with a stylised crane still marks the era of the popular parabolic livery on the aircraft, which frequently appeared in the Herpa range and will probably continue to do so.

www.facebook.com/pages/category/Games-Toys/JMC-Scale-Models-341193572911400/

+++ Klingenhöfer Miniaturen +++

A whole pride of different lions enriches this supplier's spring range. There is a selection of different poses for male (e.g., item no. TL01) and female animals, as well as young animals. This is an exciting addition to any zoo.

www.klingenhoefer.com



A total of twelve different lions are available at Klingenhöfer, half of which can be seen in this photo. Photo: Klingenhöfer Miniaturen

+++ Kreativ3.de +++

This supplier has no plans to offer any Z gauge products. However, its N gauge products are scalable on request and can be delivered. Therefore, the new finely textured coloured and quartz sandstone walls should be mentioned as a basis for DIY projects.

To give buildings the right fit and finish to window and door openings, two "Jamb Set A" combinations in the same stone colours have also been created. They each contain five door jambs and fifteen window jambs.

www.modellkreationen.de

+++ Markenburg +++

This supplier has not yet informed us of any new products for 2026, but we are working with them to prepare a construction report in which we will use one of their kits, which they have adapted for us to suit German conditions. Let yourself be surprised!

www.markenburg.nl

+++ Märklin +++

The inventor of Z gauge has once again put together a diverse programme for this year, designed to cater to a wide range of preferences. Perhaps for the last time, there will also be a trade fair car (item no. 80136) at the Toy Fair, with which we would like to begin our presentation.



The dealer gift (item no. 80136) focuses on the 100th anniversary of the 44 series this year. In keeping with this, a smoke box door can be found in the loading rack on the open wagon.

It is supplied as a dealer gift and therefore cannot be freely ordered and purchased. Dealers decide for themselves whether and how they offer these models to their customers. In 2026, an open freight wagon of the O 10 type was selected, loaded with a smoke box door from the 44 series. This type of steam locomotive is currently celebrating its 100th anniversary.

The first new addition to the official range is the MHI special series. This commemorates last year's anniversary of the standard locomotive in the form of the 01 series. It is now being released as a Federal Railway express train steam locomotive (88015) with Wagner plates, but without a central smoke box lock.

It is intended for the five-car set of the "Blauer Enzian" express train (87615), which Märklin is now releasing in an early version without Ege biscuits on the long sides. The cars still display the simple letters "DB," but for the first time they have LED tail lights on both sides. The end of the train facing away from the locomotive then displays the correct train end signal.

Also sold through MHI, but already known since November 2025, is the new Class 65 (83650) locomotive. We do not want to present this in detail here again, but would like to provide an addendum.

Its innovative features include an unobstructed view from the driver's cab, a replica interior and permanent cab lighting. However, this does not mean, as many assume, that the previous design standard for steam locomotives will now be abandoned. Unlike bogie locomotives, it will not have a longitudinally divided chassis block.



The Blauer Enzian express train is complemented by the matching class 01 steam locomotive with Wagner plates (88015). As shown in the product illustration, it also features boiler decoration rings. Photo: Märklin

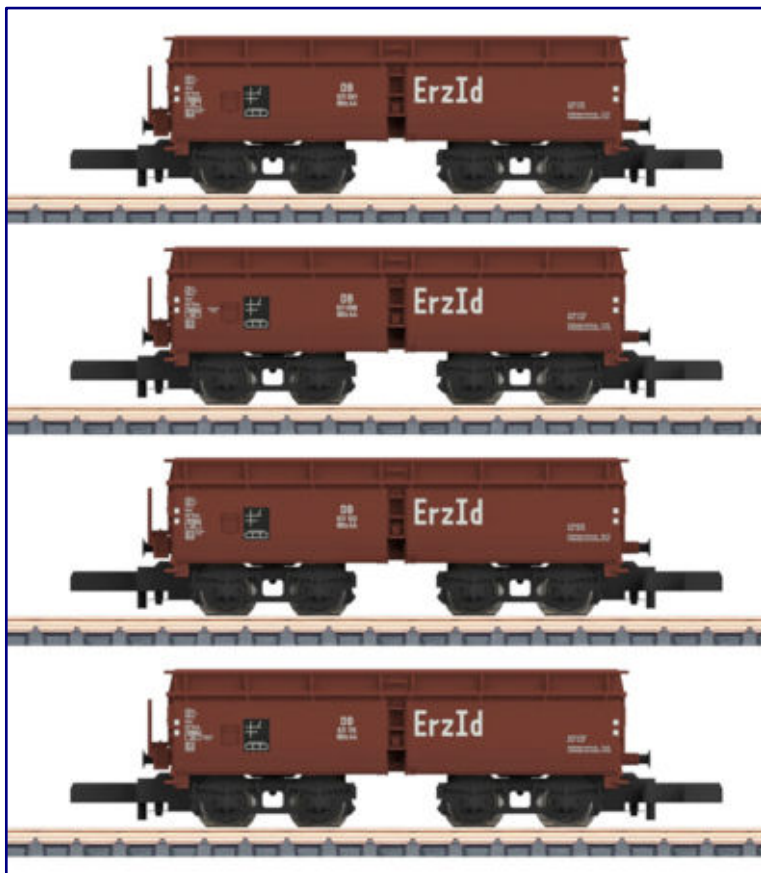
Judging by the product photos provided by the company, it was a good idea to select the propeller railcar (88762), known as the “rail zeppelin”, for the bronze precision casting series. Arranged appropriately, it looks like a yellowed black-and-white photo (see cover photo) and has a particularly nostalgic feel. In addition, this edition will be equipped with a bell-type armature motor for the first time.

There is not much to write about the Kittel-type steam railcar as CidT of the G. Bad. Sts. B. (88148). This is a missing green colour variant of the popular model, which was sold out at the factory again immediately after its announcement.



The Kittel steam railcar now follows as CidT of the G. Bad. Sts. B. (88148) and is immediately sold out at the factory. Photo: Märklin

Product maintenance in the steam locomotive programme has now also reached the 52 series. The heavy freight locomotive with a tub tender (88837) is now available as a DB locomotive from Era III with LED lighting, full detail control and a bell-core motor. The driver's cab has also been fitted with window inserts.



The 52 series (88837; top photo) is benefiting from product maintenance this year and is pulling four OOtz 44 class carriages (82710), which are being released as new designs. Photos: Märklin

The current edition comes with another new design: the OOtz 44 (82710) self-unloading wagons with the lettering “Erz Id” from the DB fleet are available in a four-piece set. They are based on the OOtz 43 from 2011 and have a lower body. This means that, true to the prototype, they can also be used together with this type in a block train.

Another surprise is the Vomag rail truck (88022), which also features a new design. Painted red, it bears large lettering reading “Deutsche Bundesbahn” on the sides of the flatbed. The vehicle is one of the few units that made it into their inventory and remained in service in the Hamburg area until around 1960.

This lorry is being built on rails using a combination of metal-filled plastic (body and chassis) and precision-cast bronze (lorry tarpaulin on the flatbed). The front lanterns are illuminated by warm white LEDs, the chassis features a gear transmission, and Märklin is also planning to reproduce the wheels in minute detail.



The first new DB diesel locomotive appears as V 80 005 with a silencer attachment (88802) as a variant. However, the product image still contains an error compared to the prototype, because instead of lettering, the Ege biscuit should be visible on the driver's cab. Photo: Märklin

We noticed another error in the product illustration of the V 80 diesel-hydraulic multi-purpose locomotive (88802), which we have pointed out. This variant with a silencer mounted on the driver's cab is labelled V 80 005. However, as with the H0 gauge model, it should feature an Ege biscuit rather than the "Deutsche Bundesbahn" lettering.

Märklin's best electric locomotive to date is being released this year as the E 41 (88356) series for Era III in chrome oxide green. In addition to the lettering from the pre-computer age, the model features vertical fan blades on the double nozzle grilles and a "face" with five lanterns. Matching reversible trains with "rabbit boxes" were already on the market.

Given that there are only two models of freight train luggage vans, including a very old Prussian one, the new makeshift luggage van Pwghs (87514) is certainly a good idea. As with the prototype, the former "Donnerbüchse" can remedy the shortage of such vans without causing a high risk of repetition on the layout.

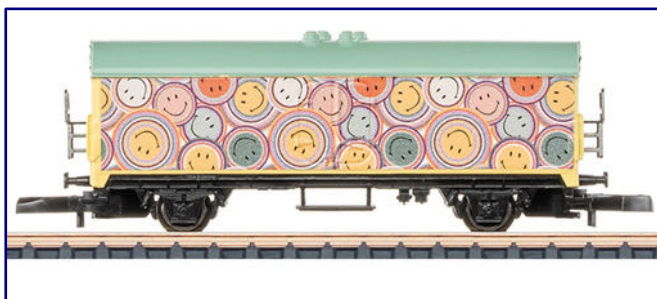
A fictional advertisement commemorates the 70th anniversary of the Rothaus beer brand "Tannenzäpfle" with a covered G1 11 type goods wagon (82260). It is labelled as if the private wagon were registered with the German Federal Railways.

The same type of car appears as Gbkl 236 (82269) in the regular reddish brown for Era IV. The Smiley car series will continue this year. The model for 2026 (86009) once again features a colourful design that continues the design line of its predecessor with new colours.



The biggest surprise among the new spring products is the newly designed Vomag rail truck (88022) in the red of the German Federal Railways. The model offers enough space for a gearbox in the usual form. Photo: Märklin

The Class 491 (88280) observation railcar has been produced many times, but never offered by Märklin. The new design is a real surprise, and the announced technical level has only become possible with today's technology.



The covered freight car "Tannenzäpfle" of the GI 11 type (82260; top left image) and the Smiley wagon 2026 (86009; top right image) are fantasy models, which is not the case for the popular "glass train" class 491 (88280; bottom image). Photos: Märklin

The Olympic blue painted model is powered by a bell-type armature motor, which leaves enough space for a visible interior. Both rest on a metal chassis, onto which a clear-view housing is attached.

It has been elaborately painted and printed to give the vehicle its typical appearance and an authentic look. Its features also include bogies with different wheelbases, modernised German Federal Rail lanterns and two different pantographs.

Fans of the Reichsbahn in the former GDR will be delighted with a class 55 steam locomotive (88987), for which a matching "VEB Deutzen" car set (82524) will also be available. The US tank wagons used here were almost identical in design to the Soviet wagons used by the DR after the war.



Due to their similarity to Soviet tank wagons, Märklin uses them for the DR wagon set "VEB Deutzen" (82524). Photo: Märklin

With a double pack of Laae 540 DB car transporters (86234), Märklin addresses the short period of use of remaining Off-52 sets (Era IV) that had not yet been dismantled while there was a shortage of suitable vehicles in a rapidly growing car market.



The "Ulmer Spatz" class 798/998 (88315) features a colour scheme that has not yet been realised on the left-hand vehicle. Photo: Märklin

The 798/998 series "Ulmer Spatz" rail bus with trailer (88315) is also a little treat, as the different designs of the motor and control cars set the duo apart from previous offerings in product colours. Technically, they are completely up to date.

We also consider the "Luxon" train set with the Class 103 (81283) for Era VI to be something special: even though we have to do without the lower height of the glass cab in the observation car, Märklin has put a lot of thought into making this duo look extraordinary.



The “Luxon” train set with the 103 series (81283) for Era VI is modelled on Railadventure for the first time and adds a splash of colour to modern layouts. Photo: Märklin

The transparent windows and glass canopy of the car are sprayed in a delicate light blue. The interior of the viewing area remains unchanged. The fact that the locomotive belongs to the “Long 103” series and is therefore about 2 mm too short as a model, should not be a problem this time either. After all, long-missed Railadventure models are finally being added to the range!

The spring new products are rounded off by the Museum Car 2026 (80037), which was presented in detail in the December issue, and the Insider Annual Car 2026 (80336).

This is a museum-quality baggage car from the Donnerbüchsen family in a red and beige colour scheme. It complements last year’s model, but in our opinion still lacks imagination.

www.maerklin.de



On the other hand, we find the Insider Annual Car 2026 (80336) in a fictional design of a museum railway to be uninspired. Photo: Märklin

+++ MBR Model +++

This Polish supplier has not yet released any new products. It is expected that it will do so at public exhibitions directly to consumers (model railway enthusiasts).

mbrmodel.eu

+++ MBZ Modellbahnzubehör +++

It is not easy to identify Thomas Oswald's latest innovations. Although there is now a section for this on the homepage, the sheer number of products makes it difficult to see when they were added to the range. In this respect, our compilation below is almost an annual update.



The railway workers' house (item no. 16341) is modelled on a building in Nordhalben, Thuringia. Photo: MBZ Modellbahnzubehör

Many products have a local connection to each other, and we try to maintain this connection.

That's why we're starting with the "Thurnau" locomotive shed (item no. 16676), which is also complemented by a toilet block (16681) and two residential buildings (16679 / 16685).

The Unterwaldmichelbach railway station (16665), on the other hand, competes on its own, as does the Memmingen signal box (16686).

We would also like to add the Bondorf L16 signman's house (16647), the Bayreuth-Röhrensee customs house (16644), and the "Rauenstein" (16609), "Tregast" (16631) and

Meckenbeuren (16630) railway stations. The "Hausach" locomotive shed is designated as a standard version (16621).

Another series of buildings is dedicated to Nordhalben in Thuringia. Here you will find the station restaurant (16643), a railway worker's residence (16341) and an adjoining building (16367). Last but not least, the pump room (16580) from 1955 is a must-have.

We continue with components that can be used individually on the layout: Baroque staircase (86167), mesh fence with concrete foundation (86139) and mesh grating (86233). For the railway environment, there is also the double-track portal of the Esslingen Tunnel (16326), a fire pit (86304), a brick coal bunker (16232) and the double platform exit (86184).

Other useful products include 500 mm long burnished brass chains (86307), microprocessor-controlled house lighting, a wired SMD LED 0402 with series resistor, adjusting lever for servo with 4.8 mm axle, a track voltage regulator for Z gauge (73040), and 40 grams of "Paraloid B72 primer" granulate for dissolving in acetone.

www.mbz-modellbahnzubehoer.de

+++ Michael Boost +++

The digital light board (for interior lighting) has been slightly modified and has therefore undergone product maintenance. New features are not planned until autumn 2026.

michas-moba.de

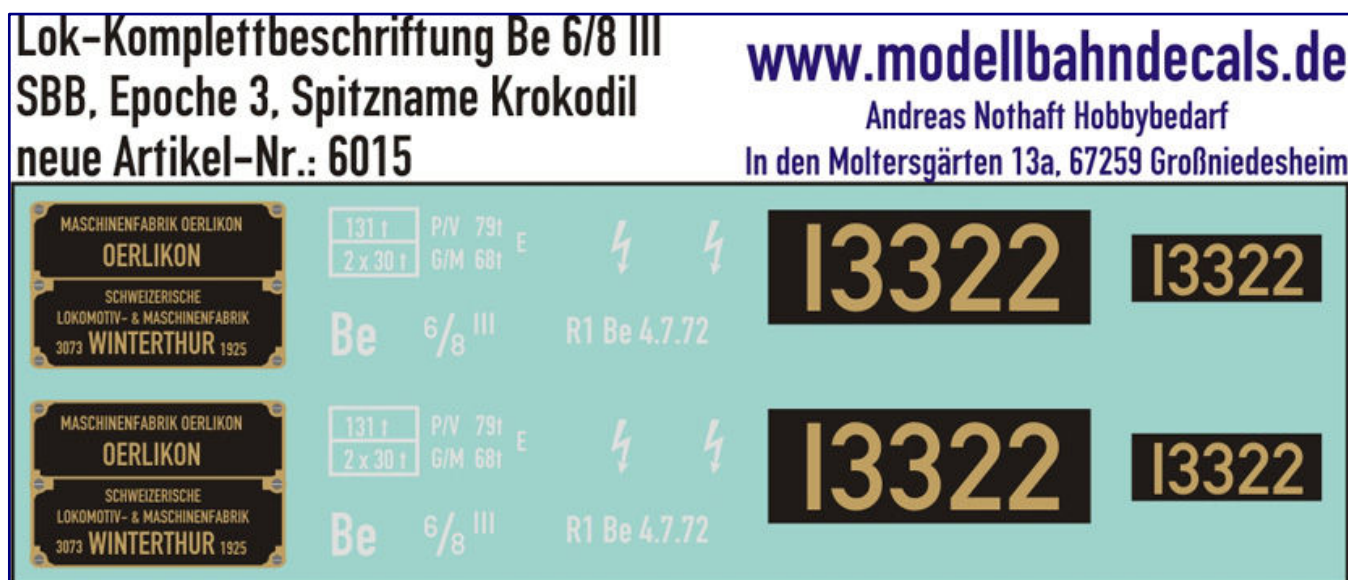
+++ Microwelten +++

As announced a year ago, Thomas Heuser has retired and closed Microwelten. His previous offerings have been transferred to the new provider Anlagen-Architekt (see there).

microwelten.de

+++ Modellbahn-Decals Andreas Nothaft +++

Decals for the Swiss Be 6/8III or Ce 6/8III crocodile locomotives (item no. 6015) allow for small-scale re-lettering for greater individuality. Vehicles from the 1110 and 111 series from Train Rental (Epoch VI) can be created with additional lettering sets (6116 / 6117).



A Swiss Be 6/8III or Ce 6/8III crocodile locomotive is given a different operating number with a new lettering set (item no. 6015). Photo: Modellbahn-Decals Andreas Nothaft

Complete lettering sets for Wascosa sliding tarpaulin wagons (6118) will probably be used less frequently, as such wagons are currently also available new for Z gauge. Special lettering sets are also available in the new size for DB used trains (3933), here with the destination display “Ersatzzug” (replacement train).

www.modellbahndecals.de

+++ Modellbahn Digital Peter Stärz +++

The Bus Interface 3 was introduced back in November 2025 as a module for generating the Selectrix bus with an integrated interface. It is the component required for switching and signalling a model railway layout via the SX bus in conjunction with a computer.

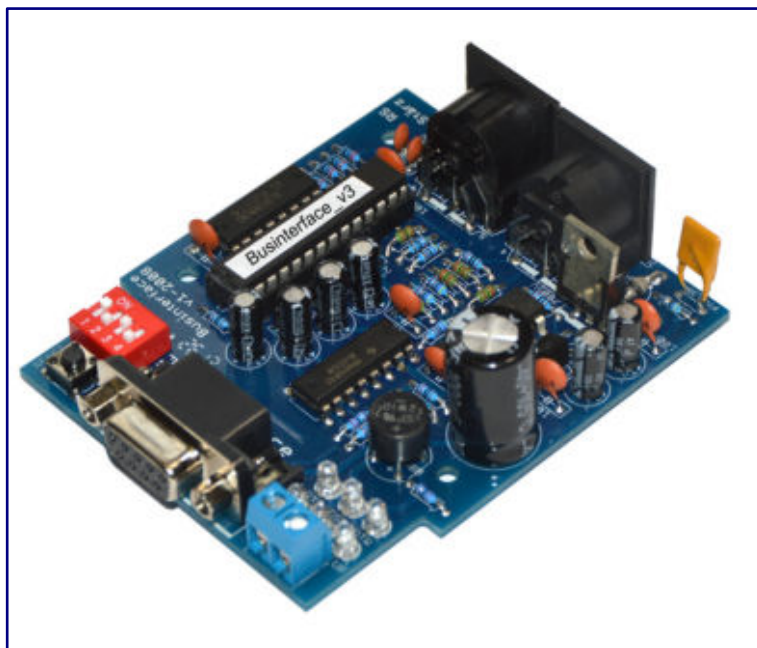
To automatically report every change on the SX bus to it in monitoring mode, the ZS1 protocol can now be selected in the control programme. This includes not only the SX0 bus, but also the SX1 bus.

www.firma-staerz.de

+++ Modellbahn Innovationen +++

Stefan Schrieber presents a new level crossing St. Andrew's cross module. This control unit for an unguarded level crossing provides alternating flashing functions on two or four St. Andrew's crosses. The control module supplied is operated with 5 V voltage. It can be activated by light barriers, contact or switch tracks.

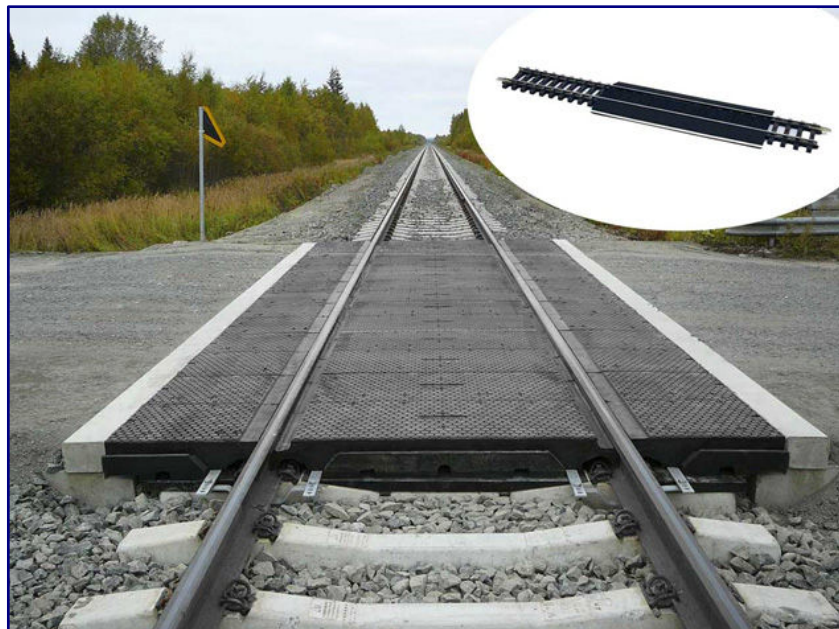
modbahninno.de



Businterface 3. Foto: Modellbahn Digital Peter Stärz

+++ Modellbahn Union +++

A modern Teknicross level crossing (item no. MU-Z-L00534) is a detailed kit made of laser-cut hard cardboard for its hard rubber crossing elements. The clearly laid out kit can be assembled in just four steps.



The Teknicross level crossing (item no. MU-Z-L00534) is a modern design. Photo: Modellbahn Union

The template stands for modern, durable and safe road crossings in international railway construction. In the model, the transition elements connect neatly to the rail profiles and enable a level, prototypical transition between road and track – ideal for both static scenes and operational layouts.

www.modellbahnunion.com

+++ Modellbau Klingenberg +++

A specialist in larger-scale vehicle models produced using 3D printing is now venturing into Z gauge this year. However, Oke Klingenberg's range includes many more sophisticated products, which we can now look forward to seeing on the smallest scale.

Tiefbett 3achsrig

Auflieger 6achsrig

Spur N 1:160 9,50€

Spur Z 1:220 7€

Ohne Zugmaschine!

MODELLBAU
KLINGENBERG
3D gedruckte Bauesetze
und mehr

With two semi-trailers, a new supplier is entering the Z gauge market, which, incidentally, is compatible with Imprintium's tractor units.
Photo: Modellbau Klingenberg

The range starts with the unpainted Volvo F88 tractor unit, for which a three-axle low-bed trailer and a six-axle heavy-duty trailer are also available. The range is set to be expanded further in the near future.

www.modellbau-klingenberg.de

+++ Modellbau Laffont +++

Nine new products covering a wide range of themes are set to be delivered here soon. First up is the detached house with extension and plaster façade (item no. Z8701), which features exquisite roof tile engravings. The same applies to its counterpart with brick façade (Z8711).



Detached house with extension and plaster façade (item no. Z8701; left-hand image) and with brick façade (Z8711; right-hand image).
Photos: Modellbau Laffont

Those who use them in a housing estate have further options when using two detached houses under construction (Z8721). Here, stacks of boards, three ladders and highly intricate rafters are among the other distinctive features that reflect ongoing work.



Photo above:

The two detached houses under construction (Z8721) complement a modern housing estate and open up new possibilities for construction machinery and figures.

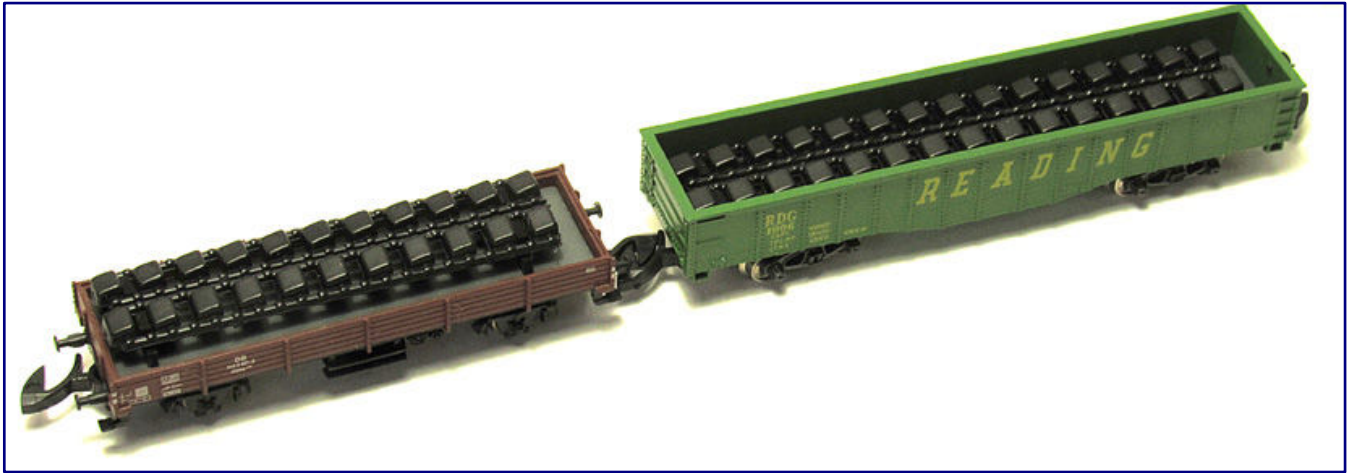
Image on the left:

The six construction containers (Z13701) can also be used there, but nowadays they can also be found away from construction sites. Photos: Modellbau Laffont

Only a small portion of the six construction containers (Z13701) will be used here; otherwise, a larger construction site would be required, as might be conceivable for the infrastructure of a new city district being built at the same time. The new courtyard building with extension (Z9001) can also be used as a workshop or maintenance building. The roof engravings here show the finest plain tiles.

If our community gets a railway connection, then perhaps Heppenheim station with its goods shed and plaster façade (T13401) would be suitable, as it also offers those waiting a bench outside. Its version with a brick façade (Z13501) is similar, but can also be used as a school, town hall or police station, thus complementing the townscape.

Modellbau Laffont then whisks us away to the land of the Swiss Confederates with the Swiss Goods Shed (Z130101), modelled on the original in Zermatt. This is also the inspiration for the Swiss Customs Building (Z13201).



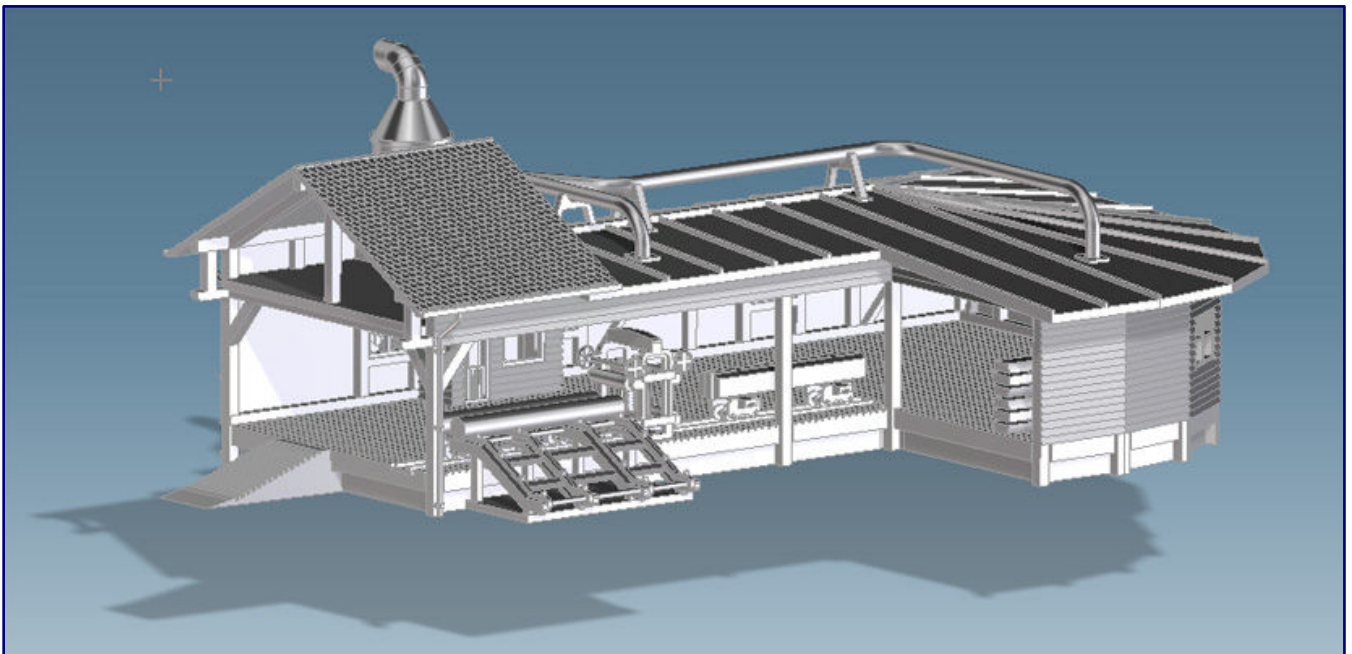
The bucket chains (Z13301) can be separated as desired and then used on different wagons as unusual cargo. Photo: Modellbau Laffont

The latest innovation is derived from the large coal loading facility in the range and meets the demand for unusual cargo. Two to four flat wagons can be equipped with bucket chains (Z13301), each 80 mm long. They can also be separated as required and ideally attached in pairs next to each other. Eight retaining brackets are included in the kit for this purpose.

www.modellbau-laffont.de

+++ NoBa-Modelle +++

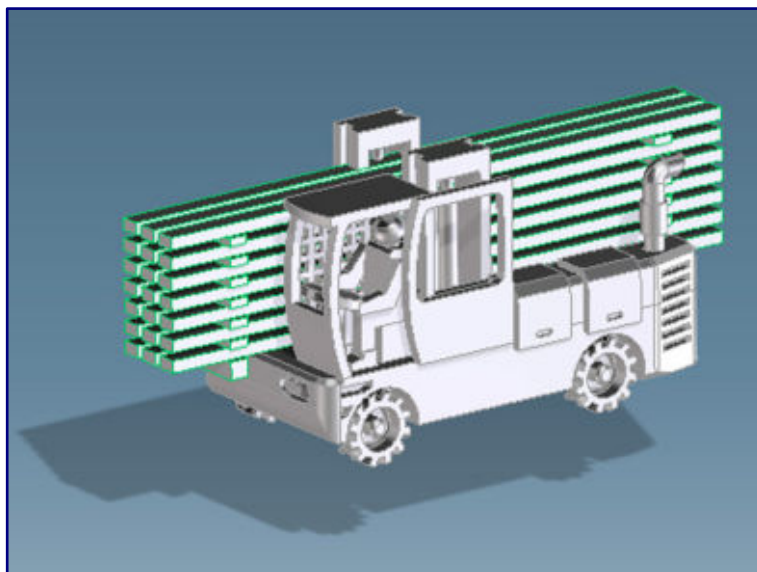
We already showed you the first new products from this supplier last month with the silo trucks and a single construction site silo. For health reasons, progress is currently a little slower, but we can already show you what is planned for the coming months.



One of the highlights of this year's new products is likely to be the sawmill (item no. 4139), which, in addition to the frame saw, features many other characteristics required for such an operation. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to find these features in models.

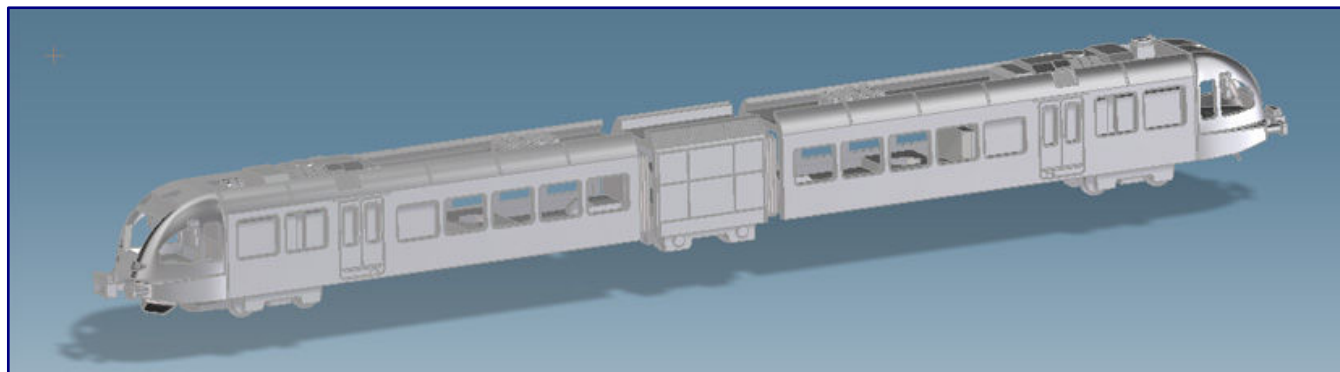
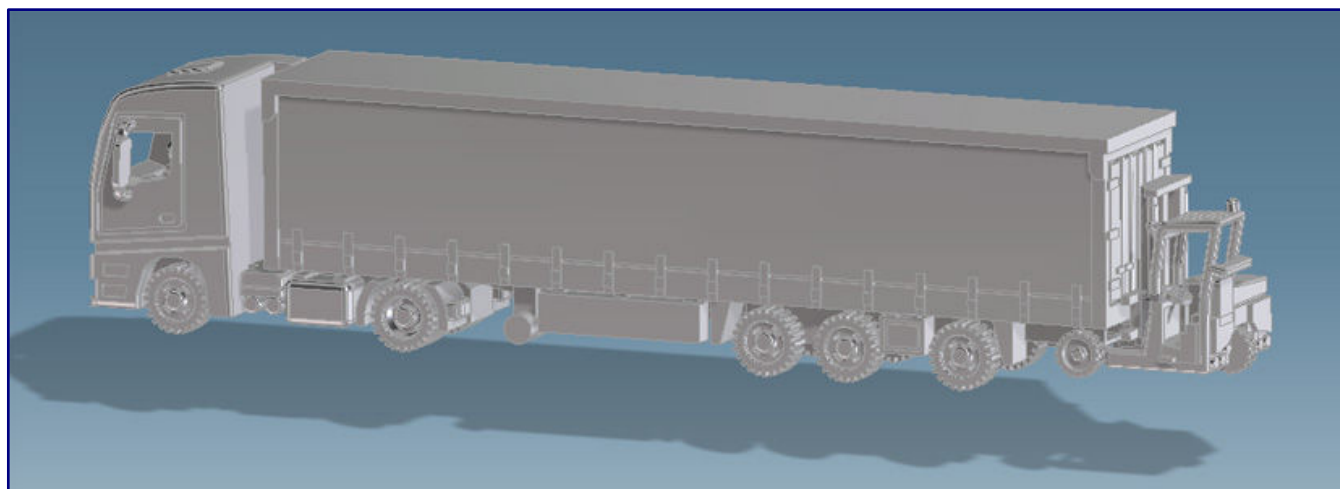
A side loader (6513) for transporting freshly sawn boards is also available as a suitable vehicle for a modern operation. The Mercedes-Benz Actros with tarpaulin trailer and portable forklift (6401) can then be used for subsequent transport.

In the rolling stock sector, a classic is planned in the form of the single-piece Stuttgart bogie tram (5727). The railway lines are enhanced by two modern vehicles, the Stadler GTW 2-6 (5239) and Stadler GTW 2-8 electric multiple units.



The side loader (item no. 6513) comes into its own in the sawmill (4139; photo on page 71 below). CAD volume representations: NoBa-Modelle

www.noba-modelle.de



Mercedes-Benz Actros with curtain-sided trailer and portable forklift (6401; image above) and the Stadler GTW 2-6 multiple unit train (5239; image below). CAD volume representations: NoBa-Modelle

+++ Noch +++

The announced focus topic "Dreams for the Future" largely bypasses gauge Z, but that doesn't mean that the Wangen-based accessory supplier has forgotten us. We can look forward to several new figure sets from the 3D Master Figures series.



Road workers (item no. 44040; photo above) and mountaineers (44822; photo below) complete the range of 3D Master figures. Photos: Noch

These include road workers (item no. 44040) on a construction site and mountaineers (44822). Recreational sports are also catered for with racing cyclists (44833), and mountain bikers (44834). However, the three motorcycles have to manage without riders (44838).



Mountain bikers (44834; left image) and the three motorcycles (44838; right image) bridge the gap between figures and vehicles. Not included here are the racing cyclists (44833). Photos: Noch

New road vehicles await us with two Porsche P133 (44608), former tractors rather than sports cars, two VW Golf 1 Cabriolets (44612) and the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter for the fire brigade (44630), whose final appearance we are very excited about. The construction site figures are complemented by two Bobcat E10z mini excavators (44650).

There will also be a new figurine advent calendar with 3D master figures again this year (44999). Incidentally, the product description on the internet initially contained an error here.



The VW Golf 1 Cabriolets (44612; photo above), the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter for the fire brigade (44630; photo below left) and the two Bobcat E10z mini excavators (44650; photo below right) are also examples of unusual product ideas for colour 3D printing. Photos: Noch



With a height of 17 cm, this autumnal larch (20167) is also suitable for a scale of 1:220. Photo: Noch

The vegetation has yet to discover the bright colours of autumn. Oak (20 cm; 20114), maple (15 cm; 20155) and two larch trees (17/19 cm; 20167/20168) are colourful and can also be used for our scale.

A size chart on the packaging helps you choose the right size. Based on wire blanks, each piece is unique and can be bent to shape as required. The Ammo Rail Set range is expanding to include brush markers, washes, and thinners in small containers for ageing purposes.

www.noch.de

+++ Nordmodell +++

The small Sinstorf fire station, with its distinctive brick construction, is also planned for gauge Z, although no fixed schedule has yet been set (item no. LC-220-241).

www.modellbausatz-nord.de

+++ Pánits László +++

This year, the passionate model car manufacturer from Hungary has discovered motor racing from the second era in particular: the 1934 Aston Martin is the first in the series. The 1937 Auto Union team consists of two racing cars and an accompanying lorry.



The Ferrari (left) and Lotus (right) teams date back to 1961 and 1962. Photos: Pánits László

The 1961 Ferrari team, on the other hand, dates back to the economic boom after the Second World War. Team Lotus was formed the following year. We cannot say for certain what the Ford V3000 is carrying on its flatbed, but together with its trailer, it could also be one of the support vehicles used in earlier rally and racing events.

Other motorsport icons include the Alfa Romeo 75, Alfa Romeo 1750 GTA, BRM P154, Jaguar XJ9 LeMans, Lotus 72, Mazda 787B Lemans, and the McLaren M8A. Civilian vehicles from different decades include the Fiat Uno, Fiat X1/9, Horch 853, Jeep Renegade, Mazda B Pickup, and the Mitsubishi L300 minibus.



Fiat Uno (top left), Jeep Renegade (top right), Ikarus 557 (bottom left) and Mercedes-Benz O 302 (bottom right). Photos: Pánits László

The Cadillac 75 and Chevrolet Silverado pickup truck expand the range of North American vehicles, while the Bugatti Veyron Cabrio offers a modern road racing car. For the commercial vehicle sector, the Csepel

D700 milk tanker and tipper truck, the GAZ-51, a Mercedes-Benz refuse collection truck and a Mercedes-Benz Unimog winter service vehicle with snow plough are added.



We identify this bus as a Krupp Titan 080 (left image) from Südwerke. The Ford V3000 with single-axle trailer (right image) is also an older model. Photos: Pánits László

The new buses are based on designs by Hungarian manufacturer Ikarus and German models: Henschel 100, Magirus-Deutz Saturn, Mercedes-Benz LOP 3500, Mercedes O 302, and Ikarus 557. We were somewhat confused by the bus labelled Krupp Titan with the words "Deutsche Reichsbahn" written on it.



The Mercedes-Benz Unimog as a winter service vehicle with snow plough is a highlight for us in Simon Artz's range of new products. (Pánits László).

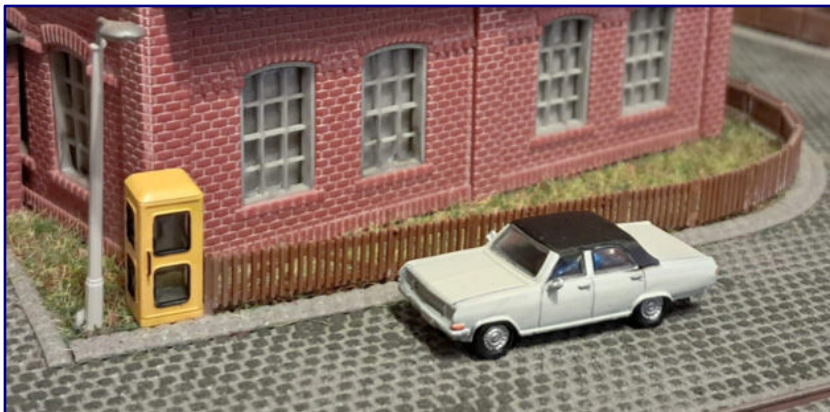
We identify it as a Krupp Titan 080, as built from 1951 onwards by Südwerke, and then by Krupp. It was a post-war design from the West and came onto the market when the state railway had already been operating under the name Bundesbahn for two years. Its striking design is certainly unique and easily recognisable.

[Panitslaszlo\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:Panitslaszlo(at)gmail.com)

+++ Panzer-Shop.nl +++

This supplier keeps us informed about its new developments, which are presented several times a year. The latest addition to the range is the Opel Diplomat. With its classic lines, this elegant luxury saloon is reminiscent of times gone by and is also the perfect historical vehicle for the layout.

www.panzer-shop.nl



The Opel Diplomat is the latest addition to the Dutch range. Photo: Panzer-Shop.nl

+++ Roco +++

In its new products section, Roco mentions a new control centre called "Z21 Start newGen" in connection with a starter set for H0 gauge. Unfortunately, further information on this is scarce and not yet included on the special Z21 pages.

However, product descriptions on retailer websites highlight an integrated Wi-Fi feature as a new innovation, which allows other mouse generations from the same manufacturer to be connected, meaning that customers are not solely reliant on control via mobile phone.

www.roco.cc
www.z21.eu

+++ Roggemann Modellwerk +++

At this point, we would like to announce a manufacturer premiere that was originally planned for the **Trainini Anniversary Exhibition 2025**. However, as the supplier is based in Norway and therefore outside the EU single market, suitable solutions for sales to EU customers first had to be found.

This has now been successfully achieved, and so 45 new products are gradually being launched. The first of these is the Stadler Euro 4000 diesel locomotive, which is also a highlight. It had been frequently requested by Zetties and can be motorised with a V 320 chassis from Märklin.

It is delivered to the buyer as an unpainted 3D-printed kit, which also includes non-yellowing window inserts that are secured against falling through to the other side of the housing. In terms of quality, this supplier aims to establish itself among the top 3D printing suppliers.



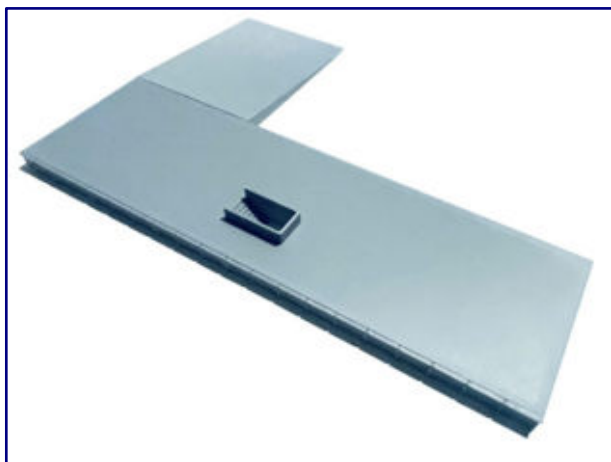
The Roggemann Modellwerk launch programme includes the Stadler Euro 4000 (photo above), which may be just the start of this manufacturer's Euro family. The Di6 version of the NSB (photo below) did not prove itself in Norway and later made a career in Germany as the MaK DE 2700 / ME 26. It is also available in this version. Photos: Roggemann Modellwerk

Additional locomotive bodies are planned for the MaK DE 2700 / ME 26, which is still in service in Germany today, as well as for the previous Di6 version of the NSB, which was unable to prove itself in the harsh conditions of Norway. We are also considering and currently testing the possibility of offering fully painted and printed models in the future, including the chassis if possible.

The engineering structures in the opening programme are also appealing, among which the famous and striking Bietschtal Bridge probably needs no special explanation. A concrete arch bridge showcases today's construction methods and is ideal for new lines with ICE traffic. The two-part railway viaduct, which has served throughout the ages, is a classic example.



In the first few weeks, this model, which is inspired by the Bietschtal Bridge but has no curved track to make it suitable for model railways, has become the most popular product. Photo: Roggemann Modellwerk



Platform elements in various widths, with or without access ramps, are also part of the range. Photo: Roggemann Modellwerk

Snow ploughs for locomotives, brick arcades, platforms of varying widths (some with stairways) and matching platform roofs, various tools for track construction and a Norwegian detached house complete the ever-growing starter range.

This manufacturer will present its product range to the public for the first time at Intermodellbau Dortmund in mid-April, for which we are once again the media partner this year.

roggemannmodellwerk.com

+++ Rokuhan +++

The Japanese C11 tender steam locomotive is being introduced in a new print variant as C11 123 (item no. T019-10). Its prototype was once used on the Kojak Railway in Shiga Prefecture and was transferred to the Hokkaido line in 1957.

A railway enthusiast ensured its preservation in 1975, which ultimately led it to Tobu Railway in 2018, where, after four years of refurbishment, it has been in service since July 2022 with its current operating number, commemorating the 123rd anniversary of this railway in the same year. It is used in front of the SL "Taiju", whose nameplate (in two versions) can also be mounted on the front.

There are also additions to the Shorty models. The greatly shortened and simplified entry-level models feature the "Dr. Yellow" maintenance and inspection train in a new edition.



The museum steam locomotive C11 123 (item no. T019-10) is available from Rokuhan with two different train signs that can be attached. Photo: Rokuhan

The 923 “T4” series tested tracks, overhead lines and signals along the Tokaido and Sanyo Shinkansen lines during high-speed night-time operations until January 2025. The prototype was then taken out of service.

The three-part train is available individually without operational running gear (ST004-2) or including one powered and two rolling running gear sets in a starter pack (SG002-2) with a tiny oval track and RC-004 single speed controller. It is distributed in Europe by Noch.



The shop (S303-1) with its open entrance area exudes a special charm. Photo: Rokuhan

Just before going to press, we received four more announcements from Japan: Rokuhan is expanding its range with four paper kits and adds that more are currently in development. All four new products are based on the architectural style of the Shōwa period.

The parts are made of sturdy paper, which usually means they are about as thick as a postcard, and are cut with a laser. The printed parts do not require any reworking with paint and are ready for installation after gluing. Despite the material chosen, Rokuhan promises not only careful workmanship but also elaborate details.

On offer are a medium-sized (S301-1), a small (S302-1), and a large Japanese house (S304-1) as well as a shop (S303-1) from this period. The architectural style can be classified as belonging to periods III and IV. However, the buildings depicted can still be found unchanged in the Japanese landscape today, especially outside the major city centres or in tourist areas.

In Europe, these kits are available through Rokuhan's direct online sales and the Rokuhan Base Shop. They can be shipped to all countries that offer EMS services.

www.rokuhan.de



The large house (S304-1) significantly exceeds the other three buildings in size. Photo: Rokuhan

+++ Schreiber-Bogen Kartonmodellbau (Aue-Verlag) +++

The Church of St. Michael (item no. 828) in Hildesheim, built on a scale of 1:250, is characterised by its pre-Romanesque architecture and is sure to awaken a sense of nostalgia in some Zetties. Its level of difficulty remains manageable, while the removable roof allows a view of the interior.



The model of St. Michael's Church (item no. 828) is located in Hildesheim. It is reproduced on a scale of 1:250. Photo: Schreiber-Bogen | Aue-Verlag

The assembly of the renovated Ronneburg (829) with all its buildings, towers, and walls is more difficult. Its appearance meets significantly higher standards than many of the polystyrene kits we are familiar with, which tend to focus on smaller castle complexes.



The renovated Ronneburg (829), which has been relocated with all its buildings, towers, and walls, is also likely to prove popular.
Photo: Schreiber-Bogen | Aue-Verlag

The Dome of the Rock (825) from Jerusalem with a removable dome can be used as a single model or for a diorama. This is because there are no railway tracks in the vicinity of its prototype.

www.schreiber-bogen.de

+++ Schrumpfmich +++

Select the size (including Z gauge), upload a photo, and this provider will produce a 3D-printed miniature of your desired figure. Of course, intricate textile patterns cannot be transferred to every scale without compromises, but the temptation seems great.

We are therefore unable to assess how skilled they are at creating a recognisable figure based on a personal template, even on our scale. However, we believe it is definitely worth mentioning the offer at this point.

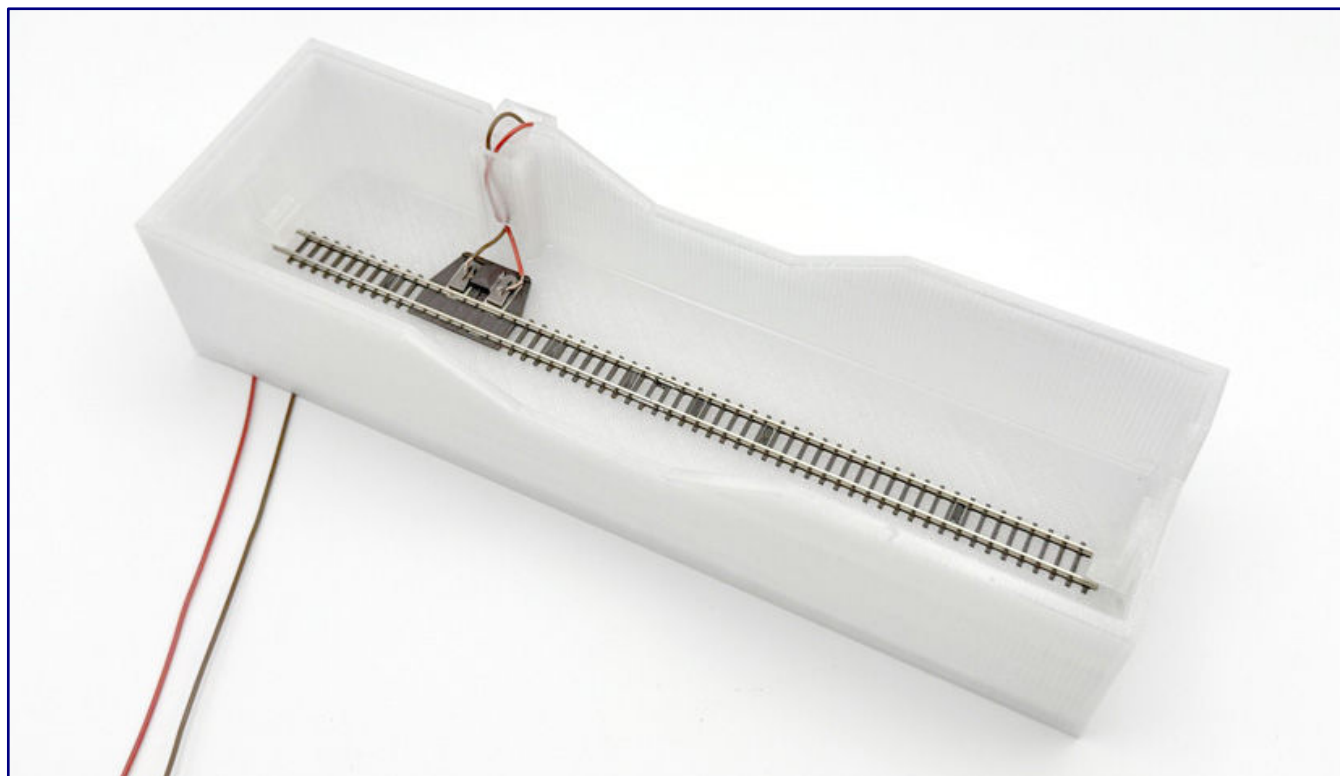
schrumpfmich.de

+++ Seuthe +++

Shortly before going to press, it was announced that the future of Seuthe's steam generators had been secured. Accordingly, references to the closure of the business at the end of 2025 have disappeared from the company's website.

Meanwhile, Sommerfeldt, a manufacturer known for its overhead lines (catenary) and pantographs, has announced that it will take over the entire order processing and distribution of steam generators as of 1 March 2026. In future, customers will also be able to order directly. Production will continue in Eschenbach at Seuthe GmbH.

seuthe-dampf.de



The locomotive trough is a well-designed and inexpensive tool that saves you from having to build your own. Photo: Simateck Modellbauhilfe

+++ Silhouette Modellbau +++

This provider's website now advertises adhesives from the manufacturer Kittifix, whose origins date back to the GDR era, before it made a fresh start in the private sector. It is now increasingly exploring the model-making market and has apparently found its first distribution partner here.

New ground cover mats on a thin paper backing are appearing in our own range as floodplain meadows, meadows, natural meadows and wild growth. Turf and litter in twelve different designs as forest floor, forest path and in various shades of brown and green are also being added to the range.

www.mininatur.de

+++ Simateck Modellbauhilfe +++

In addition to the modular maintenance stations for various Märklin models, a well-designed locomotive cleaning trough was presented as a new product (see photo on page 83), which eliminates the need for DIY construction and has been designed for functionality.

Following criticism and references to homemade products, it appears to have disappeared from the manufacturer's website again. If you are interested, we recommend contacting the supplier directly or using a well-known auction platform.

modellbauhilfe.de

+++ Spoor-Z.nl +++

Gonard Oude Wansink also sells special small-series models of the Dutch State Railways (NS) in 1:220 scale via his website, at his stand in Altenbeken, and in his shop. We would like to draw your attention to the Belgian diesel locomotive, which we were able to photograph at Pieter Willems' layout at our anniversary exhibition last year.

The following models are currently available in limited editions: the 1100, 1200, 1700 and 2200 series, and the Hondenkop ('dog head'). The NS 6400 series and the Koploper ('front runner') multiple unit are planned for the second half of 2026.

spoor-z.nl

+++ tams elektronik +++

Kersten Tams surprised us just a few months ago with the new SFR speed controller. New LEDs manufactured to Tams' specifications with lamp bases for a voltage range of 10 to 24 V thanks to an integrated series resistor are the modern alternative to the incandescent lamps still remaining on the layout.

With a wide beam angle of 120 to 150°, the light colours warm white and cool white are available. The lamp bases E5.5 (screw base), Ba5S (bayonet base) and MS4 (plug-in base) are offered.

www.tams-online.de



Modern LEDs are manufactured with four different lamp bases for replacement in model railway applications. Photo: Tams Elektronik

+++ TCS Train Control System +++

The product range now includes new holders for the company's own digital speed controllers, which are mounted on the layout side and hold the devices when not in use. The new Block-8-RCS electronic module for DCC operation has also been announced. It detects occupied blocks and also communicates via Railcom.

The Wow Sound Box is designed for analogue model railway enthusiasts and can play the following sounds from US railway operations in addition to others near the track: 64 bells, 54 horns, 75 whistles, 13 steam trains, and 32 diesel engines.

www.tcsdcc.com

+++ Trafofuchs +++

This supplier, which has also recently entered the 0 gauge market, spoils us with the innovative idea of stair-climbing figures (male / female; item no. BA13) and Heidschnucken sheep (T14) with their distinctive spiral horns. Police officers will ensure safety in Era I (EP06), while one of the indigenous peoples of North America paddles a canoe (US13).

www.trafofuchs.de



Heidschnucken sheep (item no. T14; photo above), stair-climbing figures (BA13; photo below left) and police officers for Era I (EP06; photo below right) are the most important new figures for spring. Photos: Trafofuchs

+++ Trainsetter +++

We remain in contact to develop T-Trak-Z modules that are not based solely on US modules. The focus is on attractive landscape cross-sections, useful curve modules and assembly aids. It also needs to be tested whether a 1 mm deduction from the grid on each side is appropriate.

trainsetter.de

+++ Uhlenbrock Elektronik +++

This digital pioneer still has to test the latest Intellibox 3 control centre. In this respect, no further innovations were to be expected at short notice. In fact, the provider is currently struggling with another problem: since December, its service provider has been unable to guarantee the availability of its websites, let alone restore it.

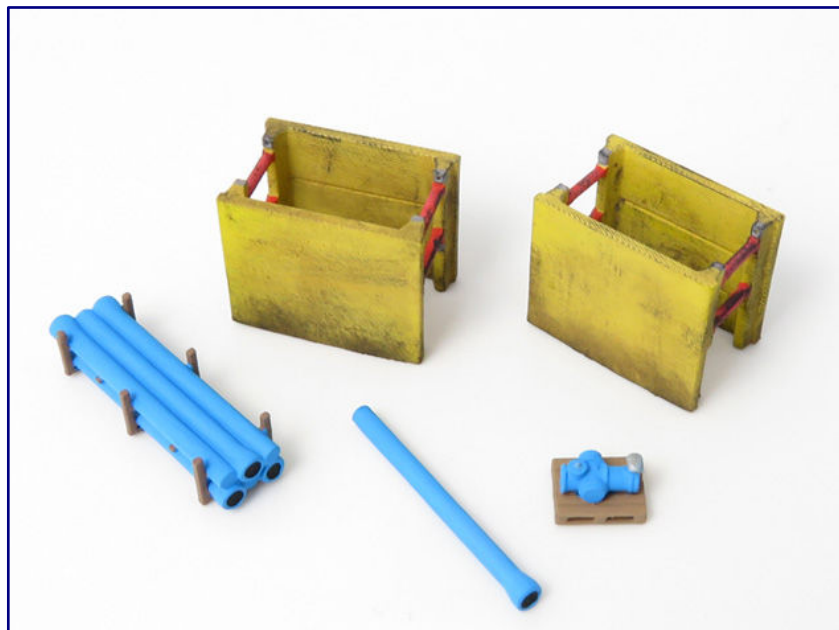
A temporary page has therefore been set up to highlight this problem and, at the same time, make at least the most important information and files accessible. We will provide further information as soon as we have reliable data.

www.uhlenbrock.de

+++ Unique Scenery Products +++

The Dutch supplier, with its many brands including the popular Minitec range, will be offering its customers another airbrush seminar in spring 2026 to learn and consolidate this painting technique.

www.sceneryproducts.eu



Depicting the repair of underground pipes (item no. 60230) will no longer be a problem on your home layout. Photo: Yellow Dwarf

+++ Velmo +++

A new decoder for Märklin locomotives with bell-type armature motors is currently under development. However, an official announcement and further information will only be available once this new product has entered the production cycle.

www.velmo.de

+++ Werkzeuge Peter Post +++

This supplier is currently undergoing some organisational changes, which is why no new products have been presented yet. There are still tentative plans to present new products to its own customers at Intermodellbau.

www.peter-post-werkzeuge.de

+++ Yellow Dwarf +++

There are new products to discover from this supplier almost every month. Therefore, the following is only a brief overview, which is likely to be outdated again soon. The new "Repairing underground pipes" product (item no. 60230), which comes with a stack of pipes, allows for manageable construction sites, for example on pavements.

In the design proposal, they are painted blue, but yellow would also be conceivable if the work involves natural gas supply. The small footbridges (60511) help pedestrians cross small streams or ditches and are best suited to an alpine environment.



The small footbridges (60511; photo above) and the beer/wine sales stand (60492; photo below) serve other themes of the model railway. Photos: Yellow Dwarf

The serving figure from the beer/wine sales stand (60492) has brought along ample supplies, making this new product ideal for decorating a larger folk festival.

www.yellowdwarf.eu

+++ ZDC Z Dream Collection +++

Michael Koppensteiner sees himself as a project partner working alongside his customers: he tries to turn their wishes that they cannot realise themselves, but which are technically feasible, into something tangible.

Of course, such work should then be open to all interested parties as far as possible. Nevertheless, we do not want to simply describe his company and brand as a small-series manufacturer, but rather as a project partner.

He has more surprises in store for this year, but they will only be announced once they are ready and presentable as samples and can be sent to customers in a timely manner.

z-dream-collection.jimdosite.com

+++ ZettZeit Special +++

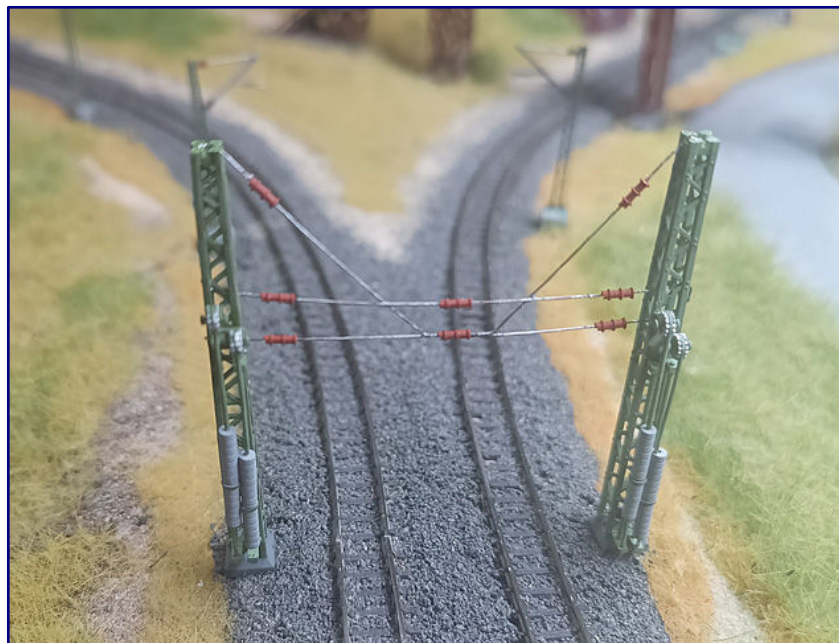
Jens Wimmel announced that SZL (Swiss brand of AZL) will offer its RABe multiple unit train "Graue Maus" exclusively through him. The train represents the later colour variant after the end of TEE operations, for which a model has been announced by Märklin. This train ran as a Eurocity and also as a feeder service to the TGV trains starting in Switzerland, which allows for interesting encounters with Azar Models.

www.zettzeit.ch

+++ Z Norm (Stefan Schmid) +++

This supplier is currently taking an unplanned break. Stefan Schmid will let us know when production of his popular lantern models will resume.

[z-norm\(at\)t-online.de](mailto:z-norm(at)t-online.de)



The new insulators are designed to be attached to the crossbars of Z gauge layouts. All the customer has to do is paint them, cut them to size and position them with tweezers. Photo: Z-Otti

+++ Z-Otti +++

Small but mighty is the motto at Z-Otti at the start of the year: this supplier has announced insulators to refine the cross-bars on the overhead line masts. They significantly enhance the appearance of the mass-produced stamped parts, as these are striking elements of the prototype that are completely missing.

The carrier is designed so that the insulators can be broken off with tweezers in the correct orientation and placed on the supporting structure. The product is delivered unpainted.

The BLS Ae 4/4 electric locomotive is also in the starting blocks and is scheduled to be delivered as a kit from late spring onwards. The finely crafted nickel silver sheets are designed to

impress with their high level of detail, which is why they are etched by an experienced industrial specialist. The characteristic appearance of the model can be further enhanced with high-quality brass parts.



The BLS Ae 4/4 electric locomotive is one of Switzerland's best-known models and can now be added to 1:220 scale layouts as a kit. This requires a Märklin chassis from the 110/140 series. Photo: Z-Otti

Great importance was attached to ensuring that assembly was straightforward and enjoyable. Experience gained from previous projects was incorporated into the design. Customers must organise the appropriate Märklin chassis from the Märklin 110/140 family (e.g., item nos. 8839 or 8841) themselves. Please note: The photo shows a prototype model with a roof section that has not yet been finalised.

shop.z-otti.de



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www.intermodellbau.com

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Readers' letters and messages

Zetties and Trainini in Dialogue

Thank you for each letter to the editor and all the feedback that reaches us. Write us (contact details are in imprint) - Trainini® lives from dialogue with you! Of course, this also applies to all suppliers in Z gauge, who would like to introduce innovations here. A representative sample is our goal. Likewise, here we note any events or meetings with significance to Z gauge reference, if we are informed in time.

About the 290 series in ocean blue/ivory livery:

When Märklin announced the release of the BR 290 as a Z model in early 2025, I was very excited and ordered one. I was even more upset when, after delivery of the purple version as V 90, the locomotive was severely criticised on the web for its low tractive force. (...)

Yesterday, my locomotive arrived and I immediately sent it onto the test track, a 'circle' with a diameter of 55 cm. As it is equipped with a bell-type armature motor, the more refined running characteristics compared to older locomotives are immediately noticeable. But what about the tractive force?

First, I coupled Tds potash wagons, as in my experience locomotives have the most difficulty with these; even the HEG Lollo cannot handle all my Tds. Six wagons worked fine, but the 290 struggled with seven, and it skidded to a halt with eight wagons. What a shame.



Our reader is thrilled with this newly delivered version of the 290 series (item no. 88511), which we also briefly present a few pages further on.

As a second attempt, I coupled my 10 Talbot gravel wagons (with self-made loads), which the 290 pulled and pushed without any problems, even at walking pace, so to speak.

For my third attempt, I coupled even more bogie freight wagons to the locomotive. Here, 16 wagons proved to be the maximum, which is approximately 1.30 m in train length. I am quite satisfied with this result, as I am planning for track lengths of 1.00 m in the stations and the locomotive can easily handle 10 four-axle wagons.

Conclusion: It is obvious that the characteristics of the hauled wagons have a significant influence on the tractive force; 2-axle wagons with a long wheelbase demand more from a locomotive than bogie wagons, especially on curves, as in my case. The locomotive may not be able to handle trains with 80 axles, as in the prototype, but its running characteristics promise enjoyment when shunting.

A little extra for me as a Bremen resident: according to the labelling, the locomotive is stationed in Delmenhorst; the Delmenhorst depot was responsible for providing locomotives to the seaports of Bremen (unfortunately, I can't find the source).

Jörg Endreß, Bremen

Topic desired models:

Now that the new Märklin products have been announced, perhaps this is a good time to ask my question. I would say that I read the Trainini issues very carefully. When new products are announced, I often read regular survey asking Z gauge modellers which models they would like to see. Wouldn't that be a good idea? You have a lot of readers and could pass on their wishes to the manufacturers.

At the top of my wish list are classic, authentic sleeping cars that were used for many years by several railway administrations in Europe on TEN routes. In blue or red and with different roof designs, there are many possible variations, resulting in interesting international trains.

Rainer Hecker, Düsseldorf



Our second letter to the editor deals with the wide range of desired models. For many of our readers, this also includes the new Class 66 locomotive (39665).

Editor's response: We derive the desired models of large customer groups from a large amount of information that we receive. This includes conversations and other correspondence with readers, but also with manufacturers and retailers. This allows us to reliably identify and cross-check which models are genuinely desired and will subsequently become sales successes. Experience from other gauges is also of limited help, as many factors apply to more than one scale.

Conducting regular surveys on desired models may sound like a good idea, but even in the electronic age, it still involves a great deal of effort, which would have to be undertaken by the editorial team and assistants of our magazine in their spare time. Despite all this, we consider the significance to be limited, because it cannot be representative and can also be manipulated by organized groups in their own interests.

Sleeper cars, the colours presented suggest DSG, are also considered by us to be a real gap in the range, which is why they are often mentioned to us. As an 'appetiser', we would like to refer you to the books by Armin Gärtner, who meticulously researches and documents the history of the DSG (and subsequently also its sleeping cars). We present his current work in this edition.

Shortly before the fascination of model railways:

As every year, the Miba private owner's layout competition will once again be held at the Faszination Modellbahn exhibition in the Maimarkthalle Mannheim. However, there is no mention of a single Z gauge layout in the organiser's press release.

Our gauge will once again be represented by Z-Freunde International. A floor plan has now been published on their forum, showing the same exhibitors and exhibits as in previous years. Unfortunately, we have not been able to identify any differences.

Märklin deliveries in February 2026:

A DB service tank wagon for oil transport (item no. 82303) has reached retailers. The model is set in the late 1950s and is based in Kassel. It can also be included with construction trains, as these often require oils and fuels (such as diesel) for their machines or compressors.



This service tank car (item no. 82303) for Era III is one of the current deliveries for February 2026.

The first of two coach sets (87306) with two DB Gebrauchtzug (pre-owned trains) double-deck cars is also available. These cars feature a design based on the 1995 tourist train. The matching Class 111 locomotive was delivered earlier.



The first of two double-deck carriage sets for DB Gebrauchtzug (87306) is now also available from retailers.

The Class 290 diesel locomotive in ocean blue and ivory livery (88511) in its 1980s condition has also arrived in stores. True to the prototype, the model features a different design for the shunting antenna compared to its predecessor, which is located at the end of the locomotive's short bonnet instead of on the cab roof.

Obituary for Detlev Stahl:

It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to Detlev Stahl. At the end of January 2026, he passed away at the age of 76 after a long and serious illness. So, the news did not come as a complete surprise, but it was still taken with shock.

As Detlev, like me, was at home at the Z-Stammtisch in Wuppertal, I would very much like to say goodbye to him from here. At the end of last year, Detlev wanted to come to our club meetin in Wuppertal once again, but was unable to do so for health reasons.

With Detlev's passing, we have lost a person who lived his passion for model railway construction, especially in 1:220 scale, with impressive dedication. For him, Z gauge model railways were much more than a hobby. It was his creative space, his place where he brought ideas to life and infected others with his passion.

I had the privilege of spending many years at his side at the club meetings. There I got to know him as he was: direct, lively, full of energy and with an unmistakable character. He could be blunt; he could rub people up the wrong way – but it was precisely this openness that made conversations with him honest and genuine. Behind his sometimes-rough manner was a person who cherished community and sharing a common hobby.

He was deeply committed to Gauge Z. He contributed his knowledge, asked questions, provided inspiration and was always willing to try new things. Many of us learned from him to look more closely, build more boldly and tinker with more passion. His ideas and dedication have left a lasting mark. For me personally, Detlev was an important part of our time spent together at club meetings. We discussed, planned and built. These memories will remain.

His commitment to the Z-Freunde International forum, which he set up and later handed over to the supporting association, of which he was also a founding member, was also particularly influential. His services to the community were ultimately recognised with an honorary membership.

What began as a meeting place for like-minded people developed into one of the most important contact points for Spur Z fanatics, not only in German-speaking countries. Detlev created a place where people could exchange ideas, learn from each other and grow together.

Today, we say goodbye to Detlev with gratitude. For his passion, his qualities, his creativity and for all the moments he shared with us. Gauge Z has lost an enthusiast. We have lost a companion – and I have lost someone who made my model railway world a little richer.

Ralf Junius for the editorial team

Obituary for Heribert Baier:

On 7 February 2026, another Zettie departed this world. Heribert Baier passed away on that day in the Philippines at the age of 75. He was a co-founder of Z-Freunde International e.V. and served as its first treasurer for several years.

Even during the association's founding phase, he collected and managed the donations made to finance the association's intended activities and also defended them against attacks from outside. He became known to many model railway fans through the model railway cases he designed and prepared himself, as well as through his membership of the Stammtisch Bayern. Upon reaching retirement age, he emigrated to the Philippines, where he also found his final resting place.

Rhein-Neckar Club Car 2026:

The Z-Stammtisch Rhein Neckar has once again teamed up with FR Montageservice Uwe Schuster this year to produce a new club car in a limited edition of 40 pieces. A DB freight train luggage car Pwghs 54 with labelling for express freight trains (Era III) was selected.

Its distinctive feature is the white field with a red E and border, which identified it accordingly. The model is assembled from etched sheets and printed using pad and digital printing. All cars are numbered consecutively in the packaging.

At the time of the editorial deadline, exactly one copy was still available. If you are interested in purchasing the wagon you can contact the project initiator, Volker Töpfer, at [info\[at\]kurpfalz220.de](mailto:info[at]kurpfalz220.de).



Many years ago, FR had already manufactured a Pwghs 54, whose prototype with the same operating number also carried the express freight train label. Here, it was attached by the company itself and now serves as an illustration.

On traXS in Utrecht 2026:

The second half of March is the time of year when On traXS returns to the Spoorwegmuseum in Utrecht, welcoming visitors from all over the world. From 20 to 22 March 2026, selected layouts of various scales will be on display at the highest level.

For the first time, two Z gauge exhibits have been selected for this top event: Karl Sinn's 'Southern River Crossing' is incorrectly listed in the exhibitor directory as an H0 gauge exhibit.

Evidently discovered at the **Trainini Anniversary Exhibition 2025**, and celebrating its exhibition premiere in Wasserkurl, Pieter Willems' "Z-Theater" will be performing "Kapel in den Bos 2.0" on its stage. We are delighted for Pieter on this great recognition, as it also speaks impressively for the quality of our concept last year.



"Kapel in den Bos 2.0" by Pieter Willems can also be seen at On traXS 2026. This installation will be presented in the showcase known as the "Z-Theatre".

A visit to Utrecht is also worthwhile because of the model exhibits on display and the unique museum concept with its interactive elements. In addition, many suppliers, especially smaller companies, attend the event as exhibitors.

This provides opportunities to discover new products and perhaps take home a bargain or two. At the Mitropa model-making collective's booth, several model-making demonstrations take place simultaneously throughout the day, during which visitors are also welcome to ask questions about the exhibits.

Z gauge at Intermodellbau Dortmund:

Another highlight and, at the same time, the conclusion of the spring trade fairs is Intermodellbau in Dortmund. Once again, a visit in April will be particularly worthwhile this year. Roggemann Modellwerk, a new supplier that is developing rapidly and has already attracted a great deal of attention, will be there.

At the same time, Z-Freunde International will also be represented in exhibition hall 4 with a booth measuring 10 x 3 metres. For the last time – and, as far as we can remember, for the first time in Dortmund – Harald Hieber's Drachenstein layout will be on display there.



Harald Hieber's "Drachenstein" will probably be on display for the last time, but is nonetheless celebrating its Intermodellbau premiere.

Dietmar Allekotte, one of the three previous On-traXS participants, will be presenting his latest work, "Zuckerfabrik" (Sugar Factory). After many years, there will also be a reunion with Götz Guddas' "Edelweiss Railroad". And this list is not even yet complete.

A visit to the Westphalian metropolis is definitely worthwhile. Editors from our magazine will also be there to chat and listen to your ideas.

25 years of Miniatur Wunderland:

Miniatur Wunderland, the world's largest model railway exhibition, will celebrate its 25th anniversary on 16 August 2026. While the operators are already giving a lot of thought to future construction phases, the rainforest for the South America section has been shipped from Argentina and is on its way to Hamburg.

You can get an overview of the ideas and plans to date by visiting the following page: <https://www.miniatur-wunderland.de/news/jahresausblick-2026/>.

Another success was the fact that the well-known football club Hamburger SV joined the 'I can't afford it' campaign. The northern derby between the HSV women's team and Werder Bremen at the Volksparkstadion offered recipients of this campaign free admission to purchase tickets until 21 February.

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