EDITORIAL
Toy Train Layouts for Small Spaces
Compact layouts have always been a part of the hobby. Get started on one now.

LOOKING BACK
Modest beginnings
Where so many of us got started with our toy trains

5 X 9 LAYOUT
Small workhorse: CTT’s City Transfer & Terminal
This multi-role 5 x 9-foot O gauge layout truly earns its keep

4 X 8 LAYOUT
Building the benchwork for a 4 x 8 O gauge layout
A great layout starts with a solid base

4 X 8 LAYOUT
Meet the chairman of the board – John Cunius
Amazing O gauge layout in 4 x 8 feet

4 X 8 TO 5 X 9 LAYOUT
7 proven O gauge plans for small spaces
Lionel FasTrack plans ranging from 4 x 8 to 5 x 9 feet

4 X 8 LAYOUT
A retro-style O gauge plan
Go back in time on this 4 x 8-foot layout

LAYOUT BASICS
Grades on your railroad
Grades add operating and visual interest to O and S gauge layouts

8 X 11 LAYOUT
Take the ‘A’ train
“A” as in Albee’s O gauge layout

6 X 10 LAYOUT
Flyer expands in a two-car garage
S gauge trains replace full-size autos

8 X 12 LAYOUT
Two sheets to grow on
This O gauge layout can be built in stages

5 X 9 LAYOUT
FasTrack 5 x 9 made to handle the curves ... and more
Compact O gauge plan with features more often found on large layouts
10 X 10 LAYOUT  
An O gauge layout named Eltringham Station  
Paying tribute to a good friend with a unique O gauge layout

PHOTO GALLERY  
Saluting a few great compact layouts

8 X 8 LAYOUT  
Building a postwar-style Marx display  
Showing off vintage tinplate trains on an 8 x 8-foot layout

LAYOUT BASICS  
Fundamentals of wiring your compact layout  
Know these track power basics

8 X 12 LAYOUT  
Magical tour on an 8 x 12 layout  
Trains really travel on Steve Kisver’s O gauge railroad

LAYOUT BASICS  
Transformers and track for your compact layout  
Choose traditional or high-tech, or a mix

8 X 8 LAYOUT  
The Esposito family’s newest addition  
Time to build a new layout for this growing family

4 X 8 LAYOUT  
Industrial mite  
Small motive power has plenty of room to roam on this 4 x 8-foot O gauge track plan

4 X 6 TO 4 X 8 LAYOUT  
Three Lionel displays that make terrific compact layouts  
Reviving what postwar designers built for retailers

4 X 9 TO 5 X 11 LAYOUT  
Travel in an O gauge time machine to 1932 and 1963  
Kevin Coyle’s twin layouts remind us of two interesting years for Lionel

4 X 8 LAYOUT  
Four fun-filled 4 x 8-foot track plans  
These small O gauge plans offer intriguing themes for popular Atlas, Lionel, and MTH track systems

4 X 8 LAYOUT  
Three O gauge track plans for a not-so-big bedroom  
These wall-hugging track plans leave room to live
Parked in a hallway at Kalmbach Media is one of the hardest-working layouts in O gauge railroading. Given its humble accommodations, you'd never know it's one of the stars of Classic Toy Trains and Trains.com. But when it's asked to perform, it does so without fail. It looks good doing it, too.

The City Transfer & Terminal was built as a project layout in 2017 and appeared in the magazine the following year. The four installments detailed its construction by members of the CTT and Model Railroader Video Plus staff.

Like almost all the layouts built at Kalmbach Media, it was designed with space and portability in mind. It doesn't spend its entire life in the hallway; it has work to do! Its size and the inclusion of wheels on the benchwork allow it to roll through the doorways of our workshop or photo and video studios.

On any given day, the CT&T might serve as a test track for a locomotive or rolling stock review, the background for a photo shoot, or as the source of a project for video on Trains.com. Its wiring makes it easy to run trains and accessories using a variety of control systems, from a massive Lionel ZW transformer to an app-equipped smartphone.

Thanks to its forward-looking design and robust construction, the CT&T is likely to give quite a few more years of service. That's a pretty good life for a compact layout!

This multi-role 5 x 9 layout truly earns its keep

SMALL WORKHORSE
CTT’S CITY TRANSFER & TERMINAL

STORY BY CTT STAFF

The 5 x 9 City Transfer & Terminal punches above its weight. It gets plenty of use for photos, video, and just general train running.
Bob Keller and video producer Ben Lake make an episode of Bob's Train Box for Trains.com, co-starring the CTT!
Toy train layouts for small spaces.

The inspiration for this L-shaped track plan comes from the 68-page booklet How to Operate Lionel Trains and Accessories, published by the Lionel Corp. back in 1960. The overall dimensions of this plan are 8 x 12 feet. It features basic Lionel tubular track: straights, half-straights, O-31 curves, O-31 track switches, and only four custom-cut straight sections (two in the reverse loops and two more along the backstretch of the layout).

The complete plan offers three distinct routes for operating trains. First, two trains can run at the same time on the inner ovals, both of which have short spur tracks for accessories. You'll need to separate these ovals electrically from other parts of the layout using two transformers and plastic pins in the center rails.

Second, the outer loop is designed with a long siding to allow you to alternate between two different trains traveling the perimeter of the layout in the same or opposite directions. Third, each of the inner ovals features a reverse loop. Using both reverse loops would make it possible for a train to follow a dog-bone pattern back and forth along the rear edge of the layout.

This is a great starter plan because you can operate trains throughout any phase of construction. Start with one sheet of plywood and one of the inner ovals. Then add a second sheet of plywood and the outer oval.

As time and resources allow, add the second inner oval, the passing siding, the two reverse loops, and the two spur tracks for accessories. The fun never ends!

This O gauge track layout can be built in stages

BY NEIL BESOUGLOFF

Toy train layouts and plywood often go hand in hand. This O gauge plan is specifically designed to fit on two 4 x 8-foot sheets of commercial plywood. Even better, it also can be in operation as you build.

The inspiration for this L-shaped track plan comes from the 68-page booklet How to Operate Lionel Trains and Accessories, published by the Lionel Corp. back in 1960. The overall dimensions of this plan are 8 x 12 feet. It features basic Lionel tubular track: straights, half-straights, O-31 curves, O-31 track switches, and only four custom-cut straight sections (two in the reverse loops and two more along the backstretch of the layout).

The complete plan offers three distinct routes for operating trains. First, two trains can run at the same time on the inner ovals, both of which have short spur tracks for accessories. You'll need to separate these ovals electrically from other parts of the layout using two transformers and plastic pins in the center rails.

Second, the outer loop is designed with a long siding to allow you to alternate between two different trains traveling the perimeter of the layout in the same or opposite directions. Third, each of the inner ovals features a reverse loop. Using both reverse loops would make it possible for a train to follow a dog-bone pattern back and forth along the rear edge of the layout.

This is a great starter plan because you can operate trains throughout any phase of construction. Start with one sheet of plywood and one of the inner ovals. Then add a second sheet of plywood and the outer oval.

As time and resources allow, add the second inner oval, the passing siding, the two reverse loops, and the two spur tracks for accessories. The fun never ends!
Start construction with this inner oval and one sheet of plywood. The reverse loop and the accessory spur can be added at a later date. After that, use a second sheet of plywood for the outer loop. Then save up for additional O-31 track switches to build a second inner oval and finally the passing siding and reverse loops.

Putting this layout in a corner, while it seems natural, will make access to this back corner difficult.

Lionel no. 62709 Rico station

Lionel no. 2324 operating tower monitors track switches on both sides of the layout

Plasticville no. 1500 diner

Both reverse loops require straight sections cut down to 8¼” to connect diagonal track

Long passing siding allows two trains to alternate on the outer loop

A train using a reverse loop can also run 180 degrees through an inner oval before returning to the outer loop in the opposite direction

The direction of both spur tracks can be revised to branch off from the inner ovals on the front of the layout

SUGGESTED ACCESSORIES

**LIONEL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2324</td>
<td>operating switch tower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4158</td>
<td>no. 352 icing station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9220</td>
<td>milk car platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12713</td>
<td>gate man and shed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12916</td>
<td>no. 138 water tower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12943</td>
<td>illuminated station platform (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24102</td>
<td>no. 193 water tower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22997</td>
<td>no. 2300 oil drum loader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62709</td>
<td>Rico station</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MTH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30-9018</td>
<td>hardware store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-9106</td>
<td>operating Esso service station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-9110</td>
<td>operating transfer dock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-90046</td>
<td>granary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PLASTICVILLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1500</td>
<td>diner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SALUTING A FEW GREAT COMPACT LAYOUTS

FROM THE EARLIEST ISSUES OF CLASSIC TOY TRAINS

and especially over the past 15 years, smartly designed and beautifully landscaped compact O and S gauge railroads have been regularly showcased. The proliferation of digital cameras and smartphones has invited readers to provide great photos of their work, and we’ve been happy to share their outstanding and inspiring modeling. Here are eight of the finest compact layouts presented, each of which has something to offer anyone thinking about building a display, regardless of hobby experience or age.

Robert Fisch’s 8½ x 11-foot O gauge layout

In less than 100 square feet, modeler Robert Fisch brought back memories of Lionel trains and accessories from the years right before World War II curtailed toy production. He wired some of the best operating accessories available in 1940 by combining plastic structures and details from the modern era to create an exciting and colorful display in which to operate original and reissued Lionel streamlined outfits.
Some of the most pleasing compact layouts to look at and then operate are those developed with more than a single level of activity. O gauge enthusiast Mario DiFede wisely added an elevated line to his home railroad so his roster of newly built steam engines could punch their way to the top after navigating along the primary level. He made great use of Lionel's FasTrack sections with their plastic roadbed. Of course, what else make Mario's little world come alive are the many neat details, notably the human figures, he thoughtfully arranged.

Challenged to find space at home for an O gauge layout, Scott Smith chose to modify his office to accommodate a spiraling display. Then he made certain not to overlook any of the detailing, so every scene contained visual elements guaranteed to grab the attention of viewers and inject more entertainment into his railroad. An impressive structure, trees with fruit, and a grazing rabbit enhance this area.

Two of the stalwarts of Milwaukee's O gauge community wonderfully combined ideas and talents in 2009 to develop a compact layout with roots in the postwar era. What John Grams and his friend Terry Thompson nicknamed the Retro Railroad definitely hearkened back to the action-packed operating displays Lionel once built for retail accounts. Their model railroad featured several classic accessories and vintage sets.

Scott Smith's 9 x 9-foot O gauge layout

Mario DiFede's 5 x 9-foot O gauge layout

John Grams and Terry Thompson's 4 x 8-foot O gauge layout