



# GREAT Model Railroads 2020

## 8 Out and back on the Story City branch **HO**

A branch of the Minneapolis & St. Louis provides plenty of operation

By Clark Propst

## 18 Big mountains, small space **HO**

From Colorado Springs to the Rockies, this HO layout captures the D&RGW in 13 x 18 feet

By Lou Sassi

## 26 Look, Ma, no wires **O**

This 43 x 70-foot O scale empire runs on battery power, radio control

By Lee Gasparik

## 34 Pennsy's Elmira Branch in **HO** **HO**

A John Armstrong article inspired this huge layout, where PRR and NYC run joint coal trains

By Anthony Daniele

## 42 Making it mine **HO**

Details, scenery, and structures put the personal stamp on an HO layout built by professionals

By Gary Schaff

## 48 Ride the Sandy River **O<sub>n</sub>30**

An MR contributing editor unveils his Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes

By Lou Sassi

## 58 The Blue Ridge Mountain Route **HO**

Modeling a Georgia short line offers loads of operation in a small space

By Tom Klimoski

## 68 Modeling the New Haven under wire **HO**

An HO scale layout first seen in August 2004's MR reaches completion

By Richard Abramson

## 78 The winds of Cajon past **HO**

Childhood memories inspired a Wisconsin modeler to re-create Southern California

By Dave Rickaby

## 86 Working the Placerville Branch **HO**

A California prototype inspired this double-deck "nolix" SP layout

By Tom Ebert

## 99 Viewpoint

A sense of purpose

By Steven Otte

## ONLINE EXTRAS

**WATCH VIDEOS** of David Powell's Denver & Rio Grande Western, Tom Klimoski's Georgia Northeastern, and Lou Sassi's Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes.

**DOWNLOAD** 10 spectacular layout photos for computer wallpaper.

**READ THE ORIGINAL ARTICLES** about Gary Schaff's Hudson, Delaware & Lehigh and Richard Abramson's New Haven layout.

Check them out on  
[www.ModelRailroader.com](http://www.ModelRailroader.com)

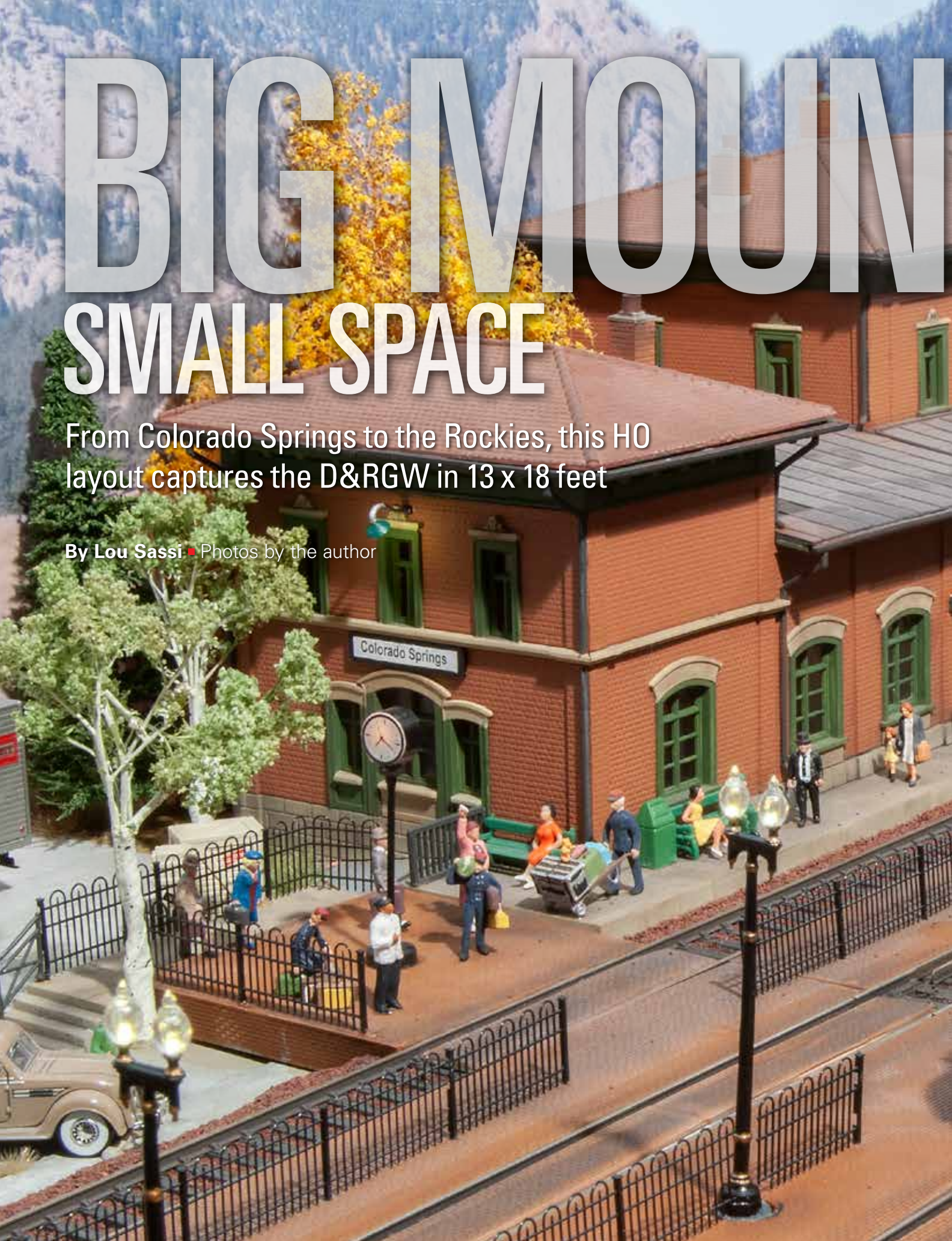


# BIG MOUNTAIN

## SMALL SPACE

From Colorado Springs to the Rockies, this HO layout captures the D&RGW in 13 x 18 feet

By Lou Sassi • Photos by the author







# TAINS

**1** The northbound *California Zephyr* makes a stop at Colorado Springs on its trip to Denver on David Powell's HO scale Denver & Rio Grande Western layout. The station is a kitbashed Kibri structure; the Electro-Motive Division F7A in the lead is a Proto 2000 model.





**DAVID POWELL DISCOVERED MODEL RAILROADING** when, at the age of 8, he found his father's HO scale Rivarossi Mallet in a basement closet of his family's home. By the time his dad returned from work that evening, Dave had wired an oval of track and was running the engine. In Dave's words, that incident "stoked fires of model railroading in me" that burn to this day.

Since that first introduction, he has built several model railroads, each of which became more and more detailed as he gained experience and knowledge from other modelers. Then, on a 2004 family vacation to Denver, he met Doug Tagsold, who was doing research for his own HO scale Denver & Rio Grande Western RR layout. Operating Doug's railroad motivated him to model his own standard gauge version of the D&RGW as it existed in the 1950s and '60s. Some of the rolling stock, locomotives, and digital backdrops on Dave's layout came from Doug's.

## BUILDING THE D&RGW

Construction on Dave's model railroad began in October 2004, following a track plan that was a collaboration

between Dave and professional layout designer Lance Mindheim. After painting the walls of a former bedroom sky blue, he added track lighting to highlight certain features of the layout along with room lighting.

Dave covered the windows on one wall with tempered hardboard backdrop panels attached to the benchwork, then painted them to match the interior walls' sky blue. Next, he had a local shop print digital photos of the Rocky Mountains in a matte finish onto self-adhesive sheets (essentially the same technique used to make auto pinstriping tape). He adhered these to the hardboard panels and walls.

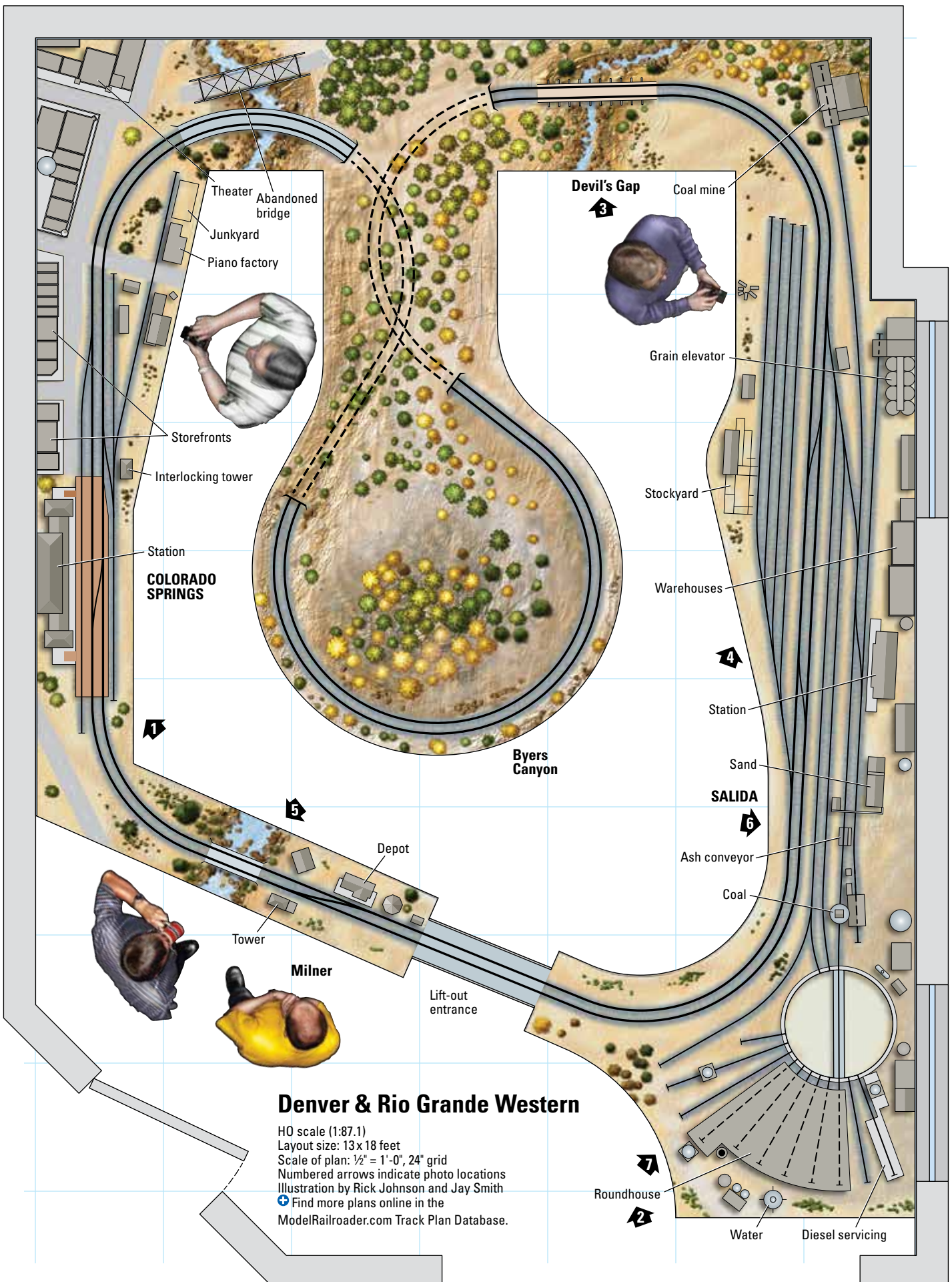
The benchwork modules were built by Lance's The Shelf Layouts Co. from cabinet-grade pine with a frame design of open-grid and L-girder construction. The subroadbed is 3/4" birch plywood. Track was laid using Peco code 100 flex-track and Peco Insulfrog turnouts.

Basic landforms were constructed with either Hydrocal or plaster cloth over screening. Mountains were made from a 50:50 mix of play sand and plaster of paris, which was either covered with additional ground cover or carved

**2** This overall view of the layout shows the Salida roundhouse in the foreground and Byers Canyon at center, behind the lift-out bridge.

## THE LAYOUT AT A GLANCE

**NAME:** Denver & Rio Grande Western  
**SCALE:** HO scale (1:87.1)  
**SIZE:** 13'-0" x 18'-6"  
**PROTOTYPE:** Denver & Rio Grande Western  
**LOCALE:** Colorado  
**ERA:** late 1950s to early 1960s  
**STYLE:** walk-in  
**MAINLINE RUN:** 65 feet  
**MINIMUM RADIUS:** 27<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>"  
**MINIMUM TURNOUT:** Peco large radius  
**MAXIMUM GRADE:** 2.5 percent  
**BENCHWORK:** open grid and L-girder  
**HEIGHT:** 40-43"  
**ROADBED:** Cork  
**TRACK:** Peco code 100 flextrack  
**SCENERY:** Hydrocal or plaster cloth on screen  
**BACKDROP:** photos mounted on wall or tempered hardboard  
**CONTROL:** CVP Products Digital Command Control



## Denver & Rio Grande Western

HO scale (1:87.1)  
 Layout size: 13 x 18 feet  
 Scale of plan: 1/2" = 1'-0", 24" grid  
 Numbered arrows indicate photo locations  
 Illustration by Rick Johnson and Jay Smith  
 + Find more plans online in the  
 ModelRailroader.com Track Plan Database.