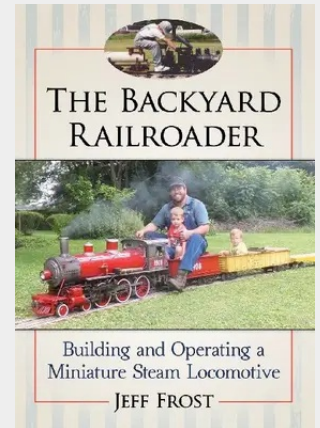


The Backyard Railroader

Building and Operating a Miniature Steam Locomotive

Steam locomotives dominated the landscapes across the world from the 1820's through the 1960's. Out of this came a new hobby, building and running miniature steam locomotives. These miniature steam locomotives operated under the same principles as their full size brethren as well make the same noises and smells. The steam locomotives are alive and "talks" to the engineer as the engine runs down the track through the sound of the exhaust/chuffing, look/sound of the fire and how the engine "feels". Unfortunately since we are so far removed from when steam locomotives ran, the knowledge of the how and why things were done can be hard to find. Through personal experience, trial and error, finding old steam locomotive books and talking with those who work with steam locomotives I have compiled a lot of the hows and whys and have related them to the miniature steam locomotive as well as explaining the basics of how a steam locomotive works. When someone (child or adult) is asked to make the noise of a train, they will typically mimic the chuffing noise of a steam locomotive. This is a unique hobby where people can learn new skills (machining, welding, fabricating, building and running a steam locomotive, making track, making cars, etc.) outside of their every day life/job. People in the hobby come from a large variety of background ranging from auto mechanics, teachers, pharmaceutical reps, doctors, construction workers, lawyers, clergymen to railroaders. What I have written can be used by those who are interested in learning about steam locomotives and the hobby to those who are in the hobby and are wanting to learn more and continue to critique their locomotives.

Steam locomotives dominated the railways from the 1820s through the 1960s. Today almost all of them have been replaced with electric and diesel engines, yet the fascination surrounding steam-powered trains has not dwindled. A diverse community of enthusiasts--from mechanics to teachers to lawyers--have taken up the hobby of building and running steam locomotives in their own backyards. Drawing on the author's extensive experience and research, this guide covers the materials, tools, skills and technical information needed to get started or to improve an existing design.



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