

# Micro-Scale Models

Don Reed will tell you he's been a model railroader since he was two. He'll also say that, until ten years ago, it was his relaxation. But now it's his work. However, if you watch his face and eyes as he tells you this you realize his current "work" is really his relaxation.

Don Reed was a businessman in the construction field primarily. Then, ten years ago, he decided he was tired of managing his multiple businesses so he sold them. In order to fill his days he joined some model railroad clubs and spent time working on his own model railroad. But, by his own admission he's: 1) a "structure freak", and; 2) he's a workaholic. That mixture of time, interests and traits led to the start of Micro-Scale Models, Inc.-- a one-person business (he doesn't want anything to do with employees these days) creating HO and a few O scale "state of the art craftsman kits."

"Micro-Scale Models are not 'Campbell' kits nor are they 'laser-craftsman' kits," says Reed. They are highly detailed "museum quality" structures that will add to the quality and appearance of a model empire of any size. Reed feels his style and quality of products are equaled by less than a handful of companies around the world and, yes, one of Reed's creations can be found in the Smithsonian Institution -- a specially commissioned model of a clothespin factory. But don't let the term "museum quality" squelch your interest. His guiding philosophy is "what's in the box people must be able to be put together. If you can read, you can build the model as well as I did," Reed says proudly. He supports his "anyone can build them" claim citing that his son at age ten (but now in college) took kits and created the finished products. If, at least in part, customer satisfaction equates to ease of construction, i. e., directions which are clear and easy to understand and follow, then Reed must have done a good job for he has sold more than 21,000 kits in ten years with only one complaint. That complaining customer was upset because the windows, which came from a well-known model parts producer, didn't open. Except for adhesive and paint, the kits contain everything needed to create a finished model.

Reed gets his ideas for new products from the world around him. He has a collection of hundreds of photographs of structures that form the basis for product development. Almost as a way of confirming that he is a workaholic he is currently starting production on his sixty-fourth kit. To date only fourteen models are no longer available. The normal "production run" for a model varies from 350 to 1,000 kits, although some have gone as high as 2,000. The most popular models have been those of early gas stations. There are three of those currently available and a fourth is on its way. At any given time, Reed has about 600-800 kits in stock to fill his customers' orders without delay. In the development and quality control process each new model is built from ten to fifteen times. Reed has no difficulty selling his factory-built structures so he's expanding the business into a line of finished, ready-to-use models.

The major part of Micro-Scale models are produced in Reed's home workshop/ warehouse, although he does subcontract for a variety of detail parts with Grandt Line and other manufacturers. The products, along with a variety of glues, paints, roofing and other detail items, are displayed at about 25 shows per year. Among those he usually attends are the scale shows at Timonium and Gettysburg, the large show in Berea, Ohio, and the Great American Train Shows

in Fort Washington, Chicago, Syracuse and Springfield, Massachusetts. Only one distributor and a dozen dealers carry his models but everything is available directly from the manufacturer himself.

If your modeling has reached the point where it's time to try a "state of the art craftsman kit" and you haven't seen Micro-Scale Models at a train show or dealer, you can contact Reed directly. The phone/FAX number is (215) 679-3838. If he doesn't answer, his recorder will and he'll then get back to you promptly -- that's how I arranged to meet him and get information for this article. You can address mail to:

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