



Train Layout Talk

It is so nice to be part of the Village Collector family. My role is to provide helpful information to those who wish to integrate model trains with their D56 Villages, or to those who already have, but are looking for ways to improve their D56 train layouts.

A good way to start is to reorganize that a model train layout (using D56 villages of course) is very similar to a Broadway Play. The trains take the part of the actors who bring the Play to life. The Villages are the scenery that makes the Play so much more interesting. Without scenery, the Play would be very boring just listening to the actors recite their lines. Not much fun. For me, scenery is always the most important part of any train layout.

So, for newcomers, where do you start? There are basically two types of model train layouts, seasonal and those that are more permanent. Add to those choices, layouts that are displayed on the floor around the Christmas Tree or sometimes over a larger area in a living room. Or, those that are displayed on tables or other methods usually called benchwork. All the choices work well, and it is simply a matter of preference.

I am a big fan of planning, no matter how simple or complex that your train layout is going to be. You don't have to be a design engineer to make a workable plan. Simple drawings work well. First, define the space for your train layout. Then make a drawing of this space. In most cases, you will need a width of at least three feet.

This will allow for the required minimum curves for the train track. For a Christmas Tree layout, a simple circle will work well. This can be expanded if more space is allocated and available. Many start out with a 4x8 ft. sheet of plywood supported by sawhorses or a simple wooden frame made from 2x4's. The more space that can be allocated, the more flexibility and interest you can create.

If this is a first-time experience with model trains, do not be intimidated. Model trains have come a long way in terms of ease of use in controlling them. It is a simple matter of installing the track, connecting a transformer (very easy), and in most cases using a hand-held controller that makes this experience a lot of fun. We can help you here with what train set may be best for your purposes. Simply e-mail your questions and I will be happy to help you.

On your plan, draw a simple diagram of where you want the track to be installed. The best advice I can give is to make the track plan simple. The trains will give your layout action and make it far more interesting to you and your visitors. It is so simple to start your train(s) in action and to sit back so to speak and enjoy your layout with family and friends. I sure practice what I preach. We have a large train layout with a very simplistic track plan. I start the trains running and have ample time to visit with our guests to the layout without worrying about having to spend time and attention to controlling the trains.

To summarize for the start of this new Village Collector Train Station, I know from experience how much a train set can add to your enjoyment of your villages. We often have visitors to the layout, and it is not unusual for them to spend a significant amount of time with us just enjoying at the scenery and trains.