

Review: Showcase Miniatures

Class B Climax & Logging Tank Car

by Thomas Knapp, MMR 101



Photo 1: The assembled and weathered Climax. I added a wood load made from cut-up round toothpicks. The MTL 902 couplers come pre-installed in the cast metal pilot beams.



Photo 2: Completed tank car kit, heavily weathered. I added the tie-down rods which loop over each end of the tank, and the diagonal rods which prevent the tank from shifting fore-or-aft, which show in the historic photos of tank car No. 2.

The Showcase Miniatures Class B Climax kit (No. 5009) consists of cast white metal parts, etched brass, laser-cut board, 3D-printed plastic front truck, brass wire, a pair of Fox Valley wheel sets, and a pair of Micro-Trains Line Nn3 couplers. To power the locomotive, you will need a 6.5mm gauge PowerMAX power truck (not included, but available from Searails at www.Searails.com). The kit includes a couple of features new to the Showcase line of Nn3 locomotive kits: the MTL 902 couplers come pre-installed in the cast metal end beams, with Showcase's own innovative springing; and the smoke-box front and headlight are a separate metal casting, which includes a slot or wire-way cast into the back of the smoke box front for those that wish to install operating headlights. (Use an 0402 SMD LED for this purpose, available from N'Gineering or Richmond Controls.) The kit assembles using CA adhesive and the screws included (for attaching the PowerMAX power truck and the front, un-powered truck). As with the other Showcase Miniatures' locomotive kits, I pre-blackened the parts using JAX chemical blackener for pewter castings. (This is optional.) The kit then went together easily over two evenings while watching SF Giants baseball games. Before installing the PowerMAX and front truck, I air-brushed the locomotive Vallejo NATO Black, followed by a light misting of

Modelflex Weathered Black. (An important note: check the ride height when the front truck and PowerMAX are installed, as if too low, the brass end steps can short on the tracks; I ended up adding one additional washer to each to avoid this.) After assembly, I added decals from Republic's logging set (Oregon Lumber Company), then lightly weathered the locomotive with light dry-brushing and Rustall. I fabricated a wood load from cut up bits of wood toothpick glued together as a separate assembly. It fits snugly on top of the water tank not needing to be glued in place. The completed locomotive runs well, and will pull several empty log cars despite its small size. Filling the can space with lead would improve the tractive effort. The Climax is Showcase No. 5009 and is priced at \$143.95

24-FOOT TANK CAR KIT

This Showcase kit utilizes the one-piece cast resin tank which is also used in their kit for their Branch Line Fuel Tank kit (no. 546) which was reviewed in the May/June 2017 issue. At the time of that review, I mentioned how the tank was identical to that of a West Side Lumber Company tank car. Well... here is that tank car. Although not specifically mentioned in the kit instructions, the car is very close to West Side tank car No. 2, now being restored by the Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad Museum. (I would say "identical" but

some rabid West Side fan will no doubt find a difference.) The kit consists of the aforementioned resin tank, a cast white-metal car frame, laser-cut wood deck, walkway, and bunks to support the tank, etched handrail stanchions, elastic thread (for truss rods), and brass wire. Not included are trucks, couplers, and brake wheel (MTL part numbers 004 02 001 and 499 05 910). Before assembly, I air-brushed the tank and frame. I used the Vallejo paint re-labeled by Micro-Mark "Box Car Red" but found the color looks more like a slice of baloney than a box car, so stripped everything and re-painted with Tamiya XF64 ("Red-Brown"), which Micro Scale recommends as a close match to my old favorite, Floquil Box Car Red. I then assembled per the instructions, but added two details not covered there: the tie-down rods which loop over each end of the tank, and the diagonal rods which prevent the tank from shifting fore-or-aft. The fittings for these rods are already cast into the resin tank, so I only needed to drill No. 80 holes at each fitting to fit these rods. I weathered it using Rustall to represent a tank car pretty much covered with surface rust. This is a great little kit to model an iconic piece of logging railroad equipment. The kit is No. 5012 and sells for \$17.95

Both of these models can be purchased at hobby retailers or direct from Showcase at: www.showcaseminatures.net

