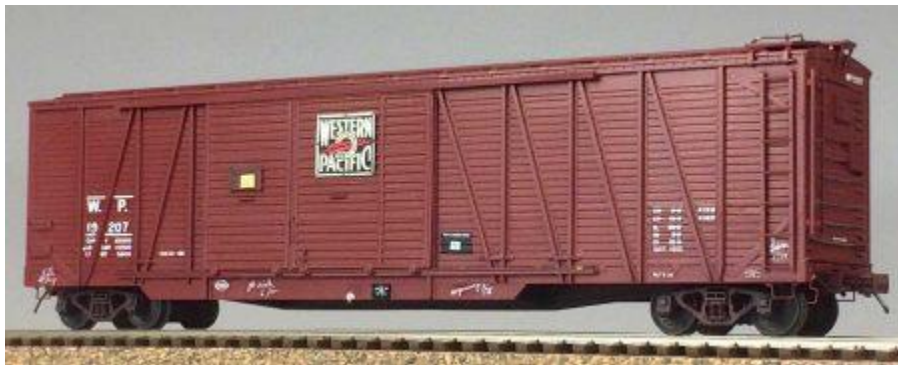


Western Pacific 50-foot Automobile Box Car

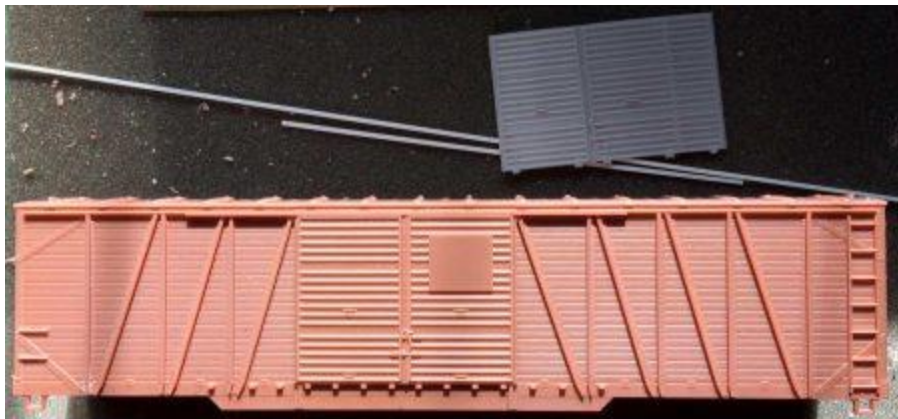
By Fred Jansz

This is a modeling article by Fred Jansz about his experience in upgrading a Western Pacific Automobile Box Car from a MDC Roundhouse kit.



Fred Jansz sent along photos and details for the recent Virtual RPM model collection, but we thought readers might want a little more info on these models. Here's Fred with details on upgrading HO scale Western Pacific automobile box cars.

Triggered by a 1995 Mainline Modeler article by Page Porter, I wondered if I could build one of the lesser known Western Pacific freight cars. Their 50-foot, single-sheathed automobile box cars were built by Pullman in 1929. The WP rebuilt several of these cars in 1937 with a 15-foot wide, two-and-a-half door cars renumbered 19201-19250. A prototype picture of such a car can be found in the WP equipment book by Jim Eager.



The project starts with a box car kit, new doors, styrene, and an assortment of detail parts.

The basis of this conversion is a \$10 plastic MDC/Roundhouse car that was based on the original Pullman-WP drawings. Roundhouse made two versions: one with steel auto doors at one end and one with a lumber door. It's the lumber door version that is needed for the 15-foot door conversion.

The model has nice proportions and is rather well detailed however, there are areas to upgrade:

- end brake casting and platform
- steps, ladders and grabs
- doors are molded below side bracing (so could never slide over it)
- corner grabs on running board laterals
- thickness of running board



The beautiful WP shield is molded into the door ribs. It should be installed on top of the door ribs.

I shaved off all those items and replaced them with various parts available on the market. Shaving off the doors is a tedious but rewarding job. The diagonal brace seen under my finger in the photo above also needs to be removed. The side sill will be elongated with some strip styrene.



The original doors were replaced with assembled **Intermountain** 6-foot Youngstown doors. These lay on top of the side bracing. The cast-in rollers were made free standing so they could 'grab' a brass L-profile rail sanded more acceptable proportions. The top rail is a piece of styrene.



Fred kept prototype images handy to guide the detail work. Note the side sill extension to the left of the doors. Brass grabs, plastic NBW's, ladders, guides for the doors, brake details at the end were all added. The original end tack boards were left in place. The running board was sanded thin and added wood-structure to top. Lateral grabs and supports, and end supports were installed.



The original MDC underframe is on the lower part of this photo. In comparing the two models, the upgraded car at the top shows the new lower door rail and doors laying on top of the bracing. The AB brake system detail parts are a mix from IM, [Tichy](#) and [Grandt Line](#).

Despite the very low side sill I chose to install a complete AB brake system and [Tahoe Model Works](#) Barber lateral motion trucks. [Kadee](#) #58 couplers, cut levers and air hoses were added.

For paint, I chose [Tru-Color](#) WP red for the car body, with the underbody and trucks painted black. Decals are a mix of [Microscale](#), [Speedwitch Media](#), and an old, thick [Walthers](#) set for dimensional data that came rather close.

After the lettering was done I found the 1950 ORER lists a few cars in series 19201-19250 that did NOT receive the wider door openings and WP 19207 is one of them. Glad I haven't dullcoated the model yet as I'll change the car number to WP 19227.

I followed the prototype to install more details. Small black rectangles with 'tack cards here' were added. Also a brake release handle and half white circle indicating its place on the side sill. Waybills and tack cards were found on the internet and reduced and printed to scale. A few small details, such as like door stops and lower door handles remain to be installed. The model needs a touch up here and there before Dullcoat is applied. It will be weathered, of course!



Here's another comparison with the stock MDC model on the left and Fred's upgraded model on the right.

I'm very pleased with the result and glad I attacked this challenge. This was my first extensive kitbashing project. It sharpened skills I thought I did not possess.

Now that I've raised the bar, I'll need to super detail the two other Roundhouse WP 50-foot cars that are in my collection too: WP 12070 with end lumber door and WP 40018 with steel auto doors. Both will keep their 12-foot doors as did the prototypes.