



Insiders through and through: The Märklin fans at round table MIST72 have an enduring passion for the model railroad and layout construction in common.

Portrait of Märklin Insider round table 72

Exchanges between experts

Portrait of MIST72

- Catchment area: region Reutlingen-Tübingen
- Date established: 20 July 2007
- Membership: about 20
- Technology subjects: gauges H0, 1 and Z as well as DC-Car
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Fiddling is part of the heritage of Märklin Insider round table 72 (MIST72). The model railroad enthusiasts in the Reutlingen-Tübingen region don't just venture into new engineering horizons: they also make pilgrimages to far-off railroad attractions.

The door to the round table meeting place opens in the basement of an office block accommodating high-tech companies. The logo "Märklin Insider", which completely covers one wall, immediately captures the attention in the enormous room, and it then wanders off to the tables covered with track, locomotives and cars from all eras – the railroad traffic even occupies all the wall-space. The mixture of club and workshop ambience is uncontrived, and there is no trace of a "closed shop". "Every model builder who needs tips is most welcome here", says MIST72 founder Horst Bossler. "We don't turn anyone away, and we haven't tied anyone to the rails yet either." Respectful interest and democratic equality have an integrating effect, as Walter-Addo Müller avers: "I am the newest member and I have been conscious of a very friendly welcome."

The idea of the organization came to Bossler three years ago at a new products presentation. "The model railroad station at Reutlingen was chock-a-block with Märklin fans." There was therefore potential in the region between the Stuttgart and Ulm round-tables. In the conception, the colleagues from MIST55 in Mainz were helpful with suggestions – and on 20 July 2007, the round table met for the first time. The homepage www.mist72.de had already gone on line in April: the informative Internet presence with forums, notice of forthcoming events, dealer information, tips and a links collection is attractive to non-members as well – not least due to the scanned-in Insider Club title pages dating from 1993. "In 2007, we had 7,000 hits" relates Bossler. "Then in 2009, we had 26,000 visitors, and in January 2010, we have already had 7,500."

To start with, the round table met once a month in a pub. "We had to drag along cases and cases of material, it cost money to hire the room and to eat – there was no atmosphere and we just weren't left undisturbed", Bossler recalls. When the chance offered, the model railroaders rented a training room by the hour in a modern office block in the small town of Eningen, just to the east of Reutlingen. When in November 2009, the block managers offered a heated basement, things happened fast: appointment to view, decision-making, renovation. Having a secure home, flexible dates are now possible, everything can be left as it is and plans are being made for a club layout. Naturally, everyone has their own at home; preferences are between H0, gauge 1 and Z. "Setting up and rebuilding gives you the most fun", as Müller assures us, and answers the question on the layout's status with a wink and "in planning".

But these Märklin fans don't just bury themselves in the basement. They also appear in strength at exhibitions and trade fairs like "Faszination Modellbau" in Friedrichshafen. "In 2008 we went to the Miniature Wonderland in Hamburg and visited Europe's largest gauge 1 layout; in 2009 we visited the Faller company in Güterbach and then looked at the Schwarzwaldbahn in Hausach, Europe's biggest model railroad constructed around an actual prototype", as Hofmann tells. In April, the South German Railway Museum in Heilbronn is on the agenda and in the fall possibly the Train Wonderland and Museum of Technology in Berlin. "We have already been in touch with MIST 1 in connection with Insider tips."



Teamwork: the members exchange technical tricks and trends within the group, and are happy to pass on their experience.



Contact for MIST72: founder of the round table Horst Bossler.



On the road together: the round table visits the Miniature Wonderland Hamburg.



The MIST72 members don't only concentrate on railroads: twice a year, they put on DC-car workshops in their rooms.

At the round table, the gauge preference is clearly for H0 gauge. There are still a number who run gauge 1 and Z.



Apart from the numerous tips and tricks to do with Märklin, the round table runs DC cars workshops twice a year with external speakers. Two intensive days, as Bossler stresses: "On the last occasion, we went home at four o'clock in the morning, to start again at eight o'clock". The commitment is worth while. It means that a Faller bus equipped with decoder and lights runs along a wire concealed under the road surface around the layout and a transmitter registers its address and the software programming gives it authentic behavior. "The spacing control of the bus recognizes vehicles in front, and when the brakes go on, the brakes lights go on, and when it blinks left to continue on its way, the following vehicles stop." Nothing is impossible: In the dark, even the speed lights up, and the driver's cigarette glows.



The smart homepage www.mist72.de with its tips and forthcoming events news also attracts non-members.

Already a regular date in the calendar are the Märklin Days every two years. "A brilliant idea would be a countrywide MIST convention in alternate years", suggests Hofmann. The round tablers would still like best to go to Göppingen to an "Open day", such as in 2009. "It was impressive to see how Development and Production manage to realize Märklin's quality criteria", Hofmann enthuses. What is particularly impressive in this peep behind the scenes? "The modern assembly lines, the delicate detailing in the zinc die-casting and the effort involved in registering the original running noises." Astonishment over the painting too: "there are so many process steps carried out even on curved workpieces, and later there are no traces of any joins".

It's not only facts which feed the enthusiasm of MIST72, but also an emotional tie with Märklin. Almost all of them were bitten by the "model railroad bug", as they call it, in their childhood. "In 1956, I was given an 01 class, and the V200, and the layout was always extended at Christmas," as Walter-Addo Müller relates the typical Märklin enthusiast biography. Another Insider was fascinated even as an eight-year-old by the degree of freedom in designing a layout. He had a break for 20 years, then digitalization gave him fresh impetus: "The locos could be individually controlled, and that made the whole thing more realistic." The old passion broke through again with Müller too: "Now my son has inherited the analog locomotives and he's already infected my grandson, so now there are three generations running Märklin."

**Text: Rochus Rademacher
Photos: MIST72/PW**