

The BLOOMSBURY REVIEW

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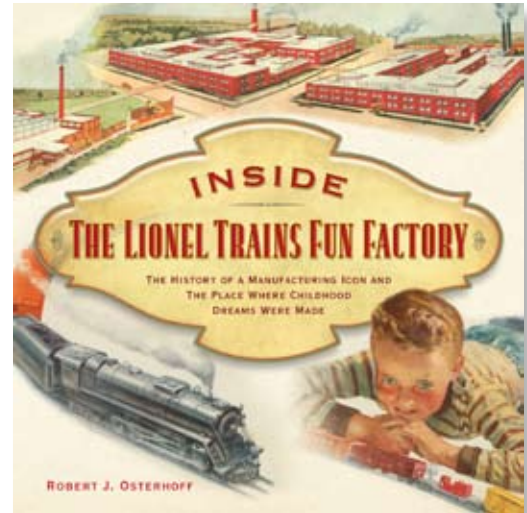
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Inside the Lionel Trains Fun Factory

ROBERT J. OSTERHOFF
Project Roar Publishing, \$34.95 cloth,
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A glance anywhere inside this jam-packed volume reveals such a mass of painstaking detail that it will attract committed train and model buffs while repelling those who might be mere dabblers. In it is more information than most books about the trains themselves; in this case, only the factory where the legendary brand was made is profiled. "Careful" seems a little light to use as a descriptive in this effort; "obsession" is closer to the truth. Covered here are floor plans, blueprints, patent applications, period catalog copy, close-ups of machinery, shop diaries, photos of the company sports teams, a parking permit from the 50th-anniversary Golden Jubilee Party, and much more. There doesn't seem to be a detail left uncovered, and anyone presumptuous enough to think of a rival book would be quickly dissuaded after seeing how much this one contains. Aside from the obvious market among train and toy fans, however, the narrative—and particularly its preoccupation with detail—provides a fascinating and informative chronology of the development of a business, the evolution of an idea and an industry, and the social and technological perspective within which that business flourished.

—Bob Eild ■



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