



1. The *Mark Twain Zephyr* pulls into the station at Easton, Mo., on Dick Wolter's HO scale Brookfield Division. The Chicago, Burlington & Quincy RR during the transition era inspired Dick's 26 x 36-foot layout.

Zephyrs across the prairie

The Burlington Route's best trains run on the HO Brookfield Division

By Dick Wolter • Photos by Lou Sassi

My HO scale Brookfield Division lets me revisit some of my fondest memories. As a youngster in Quincy, Ill., in the late 1930s, I spent a lot of my free time watching Chicago, Burlington & Quincy RR passenger trains make their way across the Mississippi River and head to the depot. I vividly recall the beautiful silver streamliner, the *Mark Twain Zephyr*, and the smells of milk cans from the baggage car and diesel fumes from the idling engine.

After moving to St. Joseph, Mo., my fascination with the Burlington Route grew. On bicycle trips outside town I watched gas-electric "doodlebugs" and

steam locomotives working on a rural branch line, as well as manifest freights and CB&Q's signature varnish in town on their way to Omaha or Kansas City. An unforgettable ride on the stainless steel *Silver Streak Zephyr* when I was 12 capped off my railroad memories, and at that point I knew that I'd someday build a scale model railroad based on my favorite prototype.

During the years that followed I met the demands of the transition from youth to adulthood, including dating, college, U.S. Air Force pilot training, and starting a family. I didn't get back into the hobby until 1987. My first attempt at a layout was limited by space

constraints, but a move to a new house provided a 26 x 36-foot basement to build my dream layout.

Layout planning

The large layout room gave me the space for a 200-foot single-track main line and broad 36"-radius curves, which was important for running 85-foot passenger cars, articulated *Zephyr* streamliners, and 4-8-4 Northerns. I designed a point-to-point, once-through-a-scene track plan. At the door to the layout room, there is a liftout section that allows for continuous running.

My track plan is inspired by the Burlington Route main line that ran