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Translated by: Hans-Joerg Mueller

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sales@easternmountainmodels.com or phone: 250-558-1867 or FAX: 250-558-6186

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Editorial

Cheer up... Page 3

...Is our recommendation following a very eventful September. For many Large Scalars it was a shock to get the News of Ernst Paul Lehmann's declaring insolvency. Were one to believe the version management presented at an employee orientation in Mid-September, then the appeal to the insolvency court was mostly a matter of self-protection from the unwelcome advances of a financial investor who apparently had the support of the lending banks.

However, is an insolvency now a vehicle to gain time in order to chose new lenders, who are more amiable to the will of EPL's management? That would be a curiously willful interpretation of the relationship between lender and borrower, which Insolvency Trustee Dr. Steffen Goede has to unravel in order to provide LGB a future - possibly even with new owners. Potential investors are already standing in the wings (see page 61).

What happened? End of August meant the end of an existing agreement, in force since Spring of 2005, by which the banks allowed EPL a repayment holiday on the outstanding loans.

At the beginning of September the banks froze - according to EPL - all accounts and obtained an injunction prohibiting all sales and deliveries of inventory items. The dealers would be left for two weeks with no deliveries of ordered goods.

Information from Nürnberg, what is

happening? Negative - telephone inquiries resulted in nothing but excuses. And then the bubble burst - for many completely unexpected - with the official insolvency proclamation, two months after the big 125th celebration. Small wonder that concern is wide spread - both with dealers and consumers. The information practice of the company during this critical phase is plainly disastrous. That is no way to treat LGB's friends, that doesn't build confidence.

The "Special Deals" at the 125th celebration and the sale of USA distributor LGBa obviously didn't relax the financial situation sufficiently to have the bankers relent and change their mind. They probably didn't see "muddling through" as a strategy for a successful future. If key suppliers first stopped delivering materials weeks prior to the insolvency and secondly reclaimed goods that had been delivered, then the situation is certainly more pressing.

Admittedly manna is currently not falling from heaven for any of the model railroad producers. Roco underwent a very drastic belt tightening following the insolvency in 2005 in order to be now back in the black. Märklin has, with Kingsbridge Capital, the backing of solid financial resources and with the start of October a new CEO: Dr. Ulrich Wlecke, a well-known restructuring expert and turn-around strategist took over from Paul Adams. Turnaround, will need to be the catch phrase at LGB.

Apart from fresh capital this will require a new strategy for the enterprise that provides LGB with a clear product philosophy and delivers the goods in such a manner to the dealers, that the customer (aka the King) doesn't get lost in the jungle of ordering procedures. What is needed are products that find ready acceptance with the consumer. Industry insiders term the decline of the formerly lucrative LGBa market as the result of a misguided product policy.

"Torun an extremely flourishin g business in such a manner into the ground, requires a special talent" is how H-Jürgen Neumann, former editor of the "Spur II Nachrichten" and for 20 years the president of LGB Club Rhein/Sieg, takes LGB to task.

Cheer up, there are also positive signs. Brawa is releasing the second generation of cars with High-Tech wheels, Piko is delivering the Taurus - full details in this issue. Following our participation at the Leipzig Messe we hope to see you again at the show in Köln. On that occasion we will present our expanded modular layout on a larger show-display.

Till then - take care

The Publishers / HJM

Fast and racy - that fits the presently most beautiful modern electric engine produced at the Munich works of Siemens: the Taurus. The Austrian Railways (ÖBB) were leading the way with this engine, the prototype for the Piko model. Since Sept 2nd Taurus holds a new world record: Series 1216, the official name of the Austrian third generation engines, managed to set the record for electric engines on the new high-speed line between Ingolstadt and Nürnberg with a speed of 357km/h. The previous record was held by the SNCF (French Railways) since 1955.

The all-purpose engines of the Series 182 are exact copies of the ÖBB 1116 series. This new engine type is mostly used for the cross-border runs from Germany to Vienna and on to the Brenner route. 25 of the engines have been in service since 2002 with the DB (German Railways) subsidiary Railion. But the relevant decisions regarding the "Bull" were taken eight years prior to that.

The start of 1995 saw the newly reconstituted DB place orders for an array of electric engines. DB was striving to make the most of the railway reform and the resulting debt cancellations, by accelerating the replacement of old, dilapidated engines of the former DB and DR with new engines that would be more efficient and could be used for all purposes.

This was preceded by the decision of the former separate boards in the early 90s to standardize on one single type of engine.

The refined and improved version of the 120 series, which had been in service as early as 1987, utilizing modern three phase / variable frequency technology got the nod and should have been built as the 121 series.

This decision was short lived after the amalgamation of the new DB AG (Deutsche Bahn AG) in 1993. It became quickly visible that each of the different production sectors e.g. DB Regio for the short haul passenger segment, DB-Travel and Tourism for the long distance passenger segment as well as Railion DB-Logistics for the freight traffic would prefer to have motive power exactly matched to their requirements.

The orders going to the suppliers in

1994/95 were correspondingly broad based; 145 units of the 101 series (to replace the 103), 80 of the 145 series for light freight traffic (to replace the 140) and 190 of the 152 series for heavy freight hauling (to replace the six-axle units of the 150 and 155 series). Adtranz in Kassel (today part of Bombardier) and Siemens Transportation Technology, (formerly Krauss-Maffei) in Munich were chosen as suppliers.

The suppliers of railway vehicles were impatiently awaiting the orders - little surprise that deliveries were relatively short. Krauss-Maffei delivered engine 152 001 on December 10, 1996 to DB Cargo (former subsidiary of DB AG). The 152 was based on the "Europrinter" which Siemens built in 1991 as an experimental engine (DB 127 001). The four axle engine delivered 6400 kW under regular running conditions (7000kW short duration peak), had a top speed of 140km/h and weighed in at 87 metric tons. The main utilization was planned for heavy and fast freight trains, including the cross border traffic. DB Cargo ordered 190 engines to primarily replace the 150 series which dated back to the 50s.

After extensive test runs carried out by DB's commissioning arm (DB Technik) the 152 001 was accepted by DB AG in July of 1997. The 152 showed its mettle right from the start. Towards the end of the 90s it was planned to do the test in order to obtain the permits for the cross border runs into Austria. However ÖBB refused the required permits in 2000 with the reasoning that the series did not conform to the maximum right of way wear limits. To document the short coming ÖBB cited the UIC518 standard which stipulates a maximum lateral static force of 61kN. The 152 exceeded this value by a minimal amount. Since at the same time 151 series were used without any restrictions, and with ÖBB's permission despite exceeding those same standards, for the cross border traffic one could suspect that there were certain economic interests playing into the decision.

DB has no choice

DB AG found itself in a tough spot.

Siemens Transportation was simultaneously erecting a special version of the 152 at its works in Munich-Allach destined for the ÖBB. The engines - ÖBB series 1016 and 1116 (multisystem capable) - were meant to replace the complete ÖBB engine roster and had right from the start been planned as an all-round, universal engine; this in contrast to DB's 152.

While the 152, planned for freight-only service, was equipped with a drive that is not as well cushioned (restricted to 140km/h) as the more modern rubber-cushioned universal drive of the 1016/1116 which can be utilized in passenger service with speeds up to 230km/h. In addition there were various improvements on the running gear. Amongst them disc brakes for the higher speeds as well as smaller wheels (1150mm as against the 1250mm of the 152) in order to keep the lateral forces within the UIC158 standard.

The first "Bull" 1016 001 (Taurus in Latin) was delivered as early as July 1999 and in October of 1999 the engine ran extensive tests on the DB-HighSpeed line between Würzburg and Fulda to acquire the running permits for DB territory. During those tests the engine reached speeds of 253km/h (230km/h + 10% reserve capacity).

From the outside there are large differences between a 152 and a Taurus. Most obvious is the front of the ÖBB 1016 which is fabricated from glassfiber-reinforced plastics, which is considerably more racy than the 152 and gives the Taurus a dynamic appearance. In 2001 the Taurus received the "Brunel Award" - one of the most coveted international design awards.

A multi-system engine

ÖBB ordered the Taurus in two versions; the 1016 series to work on the 15kV/16.7Hz network and the 1116 equipped with the additional electrical gear to also work on 25kV/50Hz. The latter version was of interest to DB Cargo. Without hesitation the order for the 152 was reduced from 190 to 170 and instead they ordered 25 of the 182 series from Siemens Transportation. The 182 is identical to the 1116 of the ÖBB

down to almost all technical details, but was supplemented with a time-multiplexing system, which DB AG uses for MUing and Push-Pull service, GSM/R radio communication, PZB 90 and Ebula (a graphic display of the employees timetable). OTOH the engines lack the train security which are used on the Hungarian rail lines.

DB AG had now achieved its goal, ordering the Taurus engines pre-empted further tests and permit application to gain access to the ÖBB. July 26th 2001 marked the day when DB Cargo accepted the first of the Taurus engines -182 001 - from Siemens. Delivery of the order was completed late in 2001 when 182 023 through 182 025 were received by DB.

The complete series was assigned to the Nürnberg marshalling yards and took over the scheduled runs of the 151. The first years gave plenty of chance to see the Taurus on the line through Frankfurt and along the Rhine to Köln. 2004 brought the switch to the originally planned routes. Henceforth the engines were mostly assigned to container unit trains running on the Hamburg - Munich - Vienna route or alternately through Innsbruck via the Brenner to Italy. The classy Taurus is only occasionally seen along the Rhine when assigned to special duties.

Piko's Taurus

Starter - Package Page 20

Piko uses a bull to start the fight for market share in the garden railways segment. The Taurus aka Siemens ES64U2, is produced in Sonneberg, Germany and comes in an analogue version. A digitizing set, complete with sound, is planned for October delivery. We discover a lot of good value during our tests.

Play value and affordability - those were the maxims for the design of the first large scale engine from Piko. Six months after the surprise announcement at the Nürnberg Fair the production started to roll at Piko's Sonneberg plant. The bargain-priced engine doesn't hail from Asia, but rather from Thuringia.

The G-model in Gauge 1.5 (a Standard Gauge item compressed to fit on Meter Gauge track) measures slightly less than 720mm - a tad longer than the LGB 101, but approximately 70mm longer than a RhB Ge 4/4" from LGB.

Colourful liveries

The five years of Cargo service in the employ of DB produced various liveries - both in different colours and different lettering. All of the Taurus were delivered in Traffic-Red with a contrasting white band on the fronts interrupted by the DB logo. The sidewalls were adorned by the "small" DB logo. In 2003 engine 182 009 was decked out with large yellow adhesive transfers on the sidewalls featuring ads for DHL (German Post AG) and the fronts sported the new Railion logo with the blue rectangular dot. This livery lasted into summer of 2006. Engines which have run through overhauls or repairs have in the meantime been fitted with the standard Railion logo (without the blue dot) on the fronts including the white band and the "DB-Logistics" logo on the sidewalls.

However there is one exception at DB AG: during the winter of 2005 engine 182 004 was completely covered with a silver transfer which is a most elegant advertisement for Porsche.

In comparison to the privately owned DLC, both of whose Taurus engines are also in silver livery, the Railion 182 004 has the contrasting band on the fronts, not in the customary white but rather in

anthracite.

In the meantime the Taurus has found a home with many of the European railway companies. Even the builder, Siemens Transportation in Munich-Allbach has added them to the "in-house" lease pool. "Dispolok" runs the engines as a "ES64U2" series and leases them to many of the European transportation providers. This pool is constantly being expanded and DB Railion is planning to lease 15 engines in order to cope with the increasing demand. At the same time DB AG is negotiating with ÖBB for the use of an equal number of 1116 engines.

In the meantime the Taurus is in the third generation, the version of the ES64U2 (ÖBB1216), which is 300mm longer, also sports two cab doors on either side. And the successful world record attempt of 357km/h puts the crown on the achievement.

Jürgen Rech / HJM

The length gives the Taurus a sleek appearance, reinforced by the slight excess height. Piko applied the yardstick of LGB's Standard Gauge items - the Taurus had to be compatible with the height of the LGB IC-Coaches.

Expressed in numbers this means: the Taurus is planned around the ca. 1:27 scale, with the running gear being in the 1:32 range. The trucks of the Sonneberg Taurus are clearly shrunk in length - and naturally in width. Moving the inner wheelsets closer to the front of the engines has a reason: it permits the engine to negotiate R1 curves without the trucks colliding on the cab ladders. All movable parts are mounted on the trucks, rather than the engine body.

Nonetheless we treated the Taurus to running on R3 curves, firstly because of the optics and secondly because the end sill extends, even on that radius, by 90mm to the outside (measured from

center of track). The overhang to the outside is not negligible.

And now the question: does the Taurus perform well enough to get the enjoyment that Piko promised?

Our test sample was the basic analogue model without any extras. A digital set including extra lights is planned for October delivery, as is a digital sound module complete with speaker. Both units are wired ready for installation. The model railroader needs to only remove the analogue units and replace them with the digital ones - no additional small parts required. This is quite exemplary. Those used to the LGB routine of wiring need to note that the trucks are wired in the opposite fashion - feeders to motor and feeders from the track. The digitized Taurus will be the subject of a later article, since the required parts weren't available prior to our deadline.

Piko kept the electrics of the analogue version to the bare minimum in order to keep the price low: each power brick is individually wired and connected to a single light bulb. The two power bricks are not connected. This can lead to some hesitation on dirty track or substandard power supply to sections of track - the same applies if the Taurus is run at high speeds through tight R1 curves and the inner wheels lose contact with the track (same effect as on the LCE). However: give the Taurus clean track and it will perform faultlessly, the running quality is quite close to similar LGB engines, especially since the track sliders and the absence of traction tires provide for good current collection. The engine responds very proportionally to the voltage applied, provides a smooth start and good speed regulation. Braking on the other hand is rather abrupt on account of the worm-gear drive which also blocks the wheels from turning if attempts of pushing by hand are made.

Die-cast wheels

The Taurus has die-cast wheels with a dark nickel plated finish and finely engraved detail. The treads are at first a bit rough, but a few 100 meters of running smoothes them out. The wheels have a rather "flat" appearance, some HO wheels have more depth in the third dimension. On the other hand this lack of depth also prevents accumulation of dirt. The flanges are approximately 3mm high and noticeably sharper than LGB wheels. But the Taurus had no problems negotiating turnouts, provided the points were snug against the stock rail. Slightly stray points can lead derailments if the flanges insert themselves between the points and the stock rail.. However we noticed no such problems on our test track equipped with THIEL turnouts.

Speaking of test runs: the Taurus holds the track very well. High speed runs through R1 S-curves (they shouldn't be used in the first place) and twisted track, as well as traversing double slip switches managed to get the 4.1kg engine (1.1kg less than the LGB 101) to tilt left and right but it stayed on track - even if the trucks tilted sufficiently to interrupt the power supply.

The 101 hauls more

The power bricks contain a standard motor (Made in Asia) and no surprises for people used to LGB products. The construction is similar to that of the Ge 4/4" from LGB, but is Piko's own product also made in Sonneberg. The side frames of the trucks are part of the assembly and form a U shape around the drive and continue in one piece to the coupler draw bar. The draft forces are absorbed by the head ends of the trucks. The axles of the units are neither sprung nor equalized. The power bricks have a small convex surface which rides on the engine frame. The side frames show the coil suspension, power lines, journals, shock absorbers and Indusi magnet in relief, but the relief is a bit shallow. That is all which is required, more would be hard to see since the narrow gauge trimmed trucks are practically hidden under the engine.

The drawbar power of the lighter Taurus, lacking traction tires, is less than the LGB 101. The Piko engine will haul 10.5N on brass track, the heavier LGB 101 managed 12.25N in our tests (GBp2/2005).

The engine superstructure consists of three separate parts: the dark gray frame, the red body and the dark gray roof. The three parts are injection molded in the appropriate colours, followed by a fully automatic spray paint procedure which results in a very nice, semi-matte finish. The paint job as well as the lettering leaves no room for quibbles. Piko brings plenty of experience and know-how from specialty productions in their HO scale line to full fruition. The gray wind deflectors at the front of the side windows - prototypically slightly inset - as well as the perfect print job on the convex windshield demand respect - not the slightest indication that this is a bargain model. The box between the trucks - on the prototype the location of the transformer - provides the room for a retrofit speaker. This part isn't detailed, which is acceptable in view of the low price.

Nicely finished body

The engraved detail on the body is clean and following the prototype in different reliefs. Piko produced the tell-tale joint from the parallel body portion

containing the machinery to the tapered cab fronts in an excellent fashion, just as the aero-dynamic fronts leave an excellent impression: clear indications that Piko has plenty of experience with this engine type in the smaller HO and TT scales. The solid body shows no signs of cavity dishing or mold parting lines. Excellent job!

The good impression is heightened by the flush inserted, convex windshield, to which the wipers conform as if they were clinging. The handrail below the windshield is a plain, black molding - on the DB engine it should be red and on the ÖBB engine anthracite. The slanted handrails on the side of the front are silver coloured injection molded parts - many a large scaler would have been happier with formed wire parts. The cab handrails, which on the prototype are extremely close to the body, are molded with the body of the model. However the outside of the molded rails are printed in silver. That as well as the non-opening doors are certainly acceptable in a model of this price.

Forgoing the expensive exercise - there would have been very little to see - of rattling little doors was a good choice, this isn't a steam engine with an interesting cab. Oh yes, the cab. Hard to glance in there on account of the narrow windows, the unadorned operating console is sufficient. More so since the real eye catcher is found in cab1: the engineer at the controls is the Piko boss, glasses and all. The only detail that's missing is the mustache.

Another item the consumer needs to do without is the cab illumination. The three point headlights are operated directionally, but unlike the prototypes where only the lower of the twin beams is lit, both are lit on the model. The upper beam acts as the high beam on the prototype. The missing gasket imitation around the beam units is hardly noticeable. On the other hand Piko went to the trouble of printing the builders plate on the frame above the left buffer - in this case it reads Siemens-Kraus Maffei. On the newest Taurus it is simply Siemens.

And finally the roof: two silver coloured molded parts simulate air intake louvers without accentuating the depth of the louvers with a different colour, various sizes of insulators are separately added, the prototypical and

accurately formed electrical bus lines are made of red plastic. The simplified and shortened pantographs are also made of plastic, have a chrome coating, but are non-functioning. They are easy to dislodge from their lowered position and extend approx. 50 mm in the vertical, but one can easily adjust them to extend less. The rest of the roof area is nicely engraved, the walkways are slightly raised, the radio antenna is also modeled but not painted.

Fazit: Piko managed to produce a fine engine for the list price of just under 220 €. Many aspects of the finish and the quality fit into the upper class, there is no impression of "cheap" - not even on account of the unobtrusive simplifications of certain parts - amongst them unpainted buffers and truck side frames, the only exceptions are perhaps the pantographs. To make up for those there is a crafty engineer figure as an eye catcher. The Taurus delivers better running qualities than are to be expected

for the price, provides sufficient drawbar power and even the simple electrics don't detract from good speed regulation. Added weight (the LGB 101 weighs in at 5.2kg) should increase the hauling capacity.

Piko managed to do the splits; to produce a pleasing, well built and properly performing engine despite a tightly controlled investment. The question remains: where are the inexpensive cars?

Hans-Joachim Gilbert/HJM

Piko DB AG 182

T e c h n i c a l **Pluses and Minuses Specifications**

Length :	718mm
Largest width:	115mm
Max height above railhead:	189mm
Minimum radius:	600 mm
GBp recommended radius	1000mm
Weight Engine:	4.1 kg
Draw Bar Pull	11.5N

Very good value
 Very good workmanship
 Replicates all important and visible parts
 Complete DCC retro-fit set is available

No electrical connection between power units.
 Engine body tilts in tight curves
 Wheel treads are die-cast

Ratings

Piko Spielwaren GmbH, Sonneberg
 Taurus Series 182DBAG
 Item # 37410
 Gauge 1.5 (approx. 1:25 to 1:29)
 Trackgauge: 45mm
 Scale: *

Detailing:
Paint and Lettering:
Running Gear:
Current collection:
Production Quality:
Operation Reliability:
Instruction Manual:
Value (Benefit:Price):

Our ratings: is excellent
 is poor

G 1.5

Models in the G 1.5 group are of standard gauge (4ft 8.5inch track) items which have been "adapted" to fit the Meter gauge 45mm track. The scales are in those cases - mostly different for length, width and height, but also including distortions of various separate components - somewhere between 1:25 and 1:32.