

# Observations on Santa Fe Heavyweight cars

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From studies of the Society passenger car books, I offer the following “spotting features” on the Pullman built cars. Differences in the details allow one to tell at a glance to which generation of equipment a particular car belongs. The underframe, height of the vestibule doors, placement of the restroom windows, shape of or lack of gusset window allows the observer to accurately determine when a car was originally built. Many changes took place through the life of these cars, but these features had a lasting presence through most, if not all of the modifications. Presence of a chair rail strip indicates an unplated wood sheathed car. A common feature on most, if not all cars built prior to 1930 was a dual battery box centered on one side of the car. On the 1930 deliveries two split battery boxes flanked a water tank centered on the car.

Cars built from 1901-1907:

- Truss Rod Underframe
- Wood sheathing (later plated on many, but not all)
- Gothic gusset windows as built (squared off on most in later service)
- High oval restroom windows (squared off on most in later service)
- Low vestibule doors (even with the top of the restroom and gusset windows)
- Continuous “chair rail” strip at base of windows on original wood sheathing, removed when cars plated.

Cars Built from 1909-1912:

- I-beam “Channel” side sill with fishbelly underframe
- Wood sheathing (later plated on many, but not all)
- Gothic gusset windows as built (squared off on most in later service)
- High gothic restroom windows (squared off on most in later service)
- Low vestibule doors (even with the top of the restroom and gusset windows)
- Continuous “chair rail” strip at base of windows on original wood sheathing, removed when cars plated.

Cars Built from 1913-1917:

- I-beam “Channel” side sill with fishbelly underframe
- Steel sheathing
- Rectangular gusset windows as built (often plated over in later years)
- High rectangular restroom windows
- Low vestibule doors (even with the top of the restroom and gusset windows)

Cars Built from 1924-1928:

- I-beam “Channel” side sill with fishbelly underframe
- Steel sheathing
- Rectangular gusset windows as built (often plated over in later years)

- High rectangular restroom windows
- High vestibule doors (even with the bottom of the roof line)

Cars Built from 1929-1930:

- I-beam “Channel” side sill with fishbelly underframe
- Steel sheathing
- Rectangular “Picture” windows (same height as restroom windows, taller than previous classes)
- Low rectangular restroom windows (base even with other windows)
- High vestibule doors (even with the bottom of the roof line)

The trucks also differed but were sometimes changed to an earlier or later version during shopping. Others who have spent a lot more time looking at them have published authoritative accounts, I defer to their experience and refer you to Dr. McCall’s books.