

Product Reviews and Announcements

HO Scale Bx-166 Insulated Boxcar

BLMA has announced a third run of the Bx-166 boxcar, a 62-foot double-door insulated boxcar that has been a hallmark in the logistics of beer distribution throughout North America, and particularly in its service to breweries in the western United States. The Bx-166 is unique for its double-door configuration, distinguishing it from its fellow beer-hauling cousins. The defining characteristic on these cars, instantly separating them from the pack, are the diagonal braces on either side of the doors.

Custom-built by ATSF in 1974, a total of 300 Bx-166 boxcars were built at Santa Fe's car shops in Topeka, Kansas. This icon of beer transportation has proved invaluable to Santa Fe and, later, BNSF. The Bx-166 provides a 16-foot door opening width for crews to load and unload pallets and kegs of beer. First unveiled in Santa Fe's famous "Indian Red" paint scheme, bearing a large white cross herald and "Shock Control" lettering, they were later repainted into a more minimalist scheme: plain mineral brown paint with a small Santa Fe herald affixed to the upper left corner of the car. Many cars in the fleet never received the small herald and feature only the reporting marks and necessary dimensional data. These two schemes alone account for much of what the Bx-166 fleet looks like today. Given ongoing reshipping, paint schemes became many and varied over the years. To date, the Bx-166 has been identified in 13 different paint schemes, ranging from the original "Shock Control" cars all the way to BNSF's modern "Powerbar" logo.

Roughly 40 years in service and still going strong, many Bx-166 boxcars have now been relegated to non-beer service, such as the hauling of bundled corrugated and paper recyclables. But the Bx-166 remains a major beer hauler to date and can be found at western breweries and beer distribution centers all across North America.



BLMA has three versions planned or available: As delivered in Indian Red with large circle cross herald and Shock Control, ATSF in mineral brown, and coming this summer, in three BNSF schemes—BNSF (ATSF repatch w/cross), BNSF round logo and BNSF powerbar logo. Each version comes in 24 road numbers. MSRP varies between \$39.95 and \$42.95. BLMA and Atlas Model Railroad Co. have combined forces, but for more information it is still possible to go to www.blmamodels.com.

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