

Walthers Vintage Santa Fe Parlor

By Brian Banks

Walthers Vintage Passenger Car Kit

7857 / 6657

Santa Fe Parlor

Contributed by Brian Banks - updated 8-23-06

Walthers vintage passenger car kit #7857/6657 is a model of the Santa Fe's 3230-3233 Parlor Bar Lounge Dorm cars rebuilt in 1935 from Pullman's 1914 lot 4255 Parlor Observation cars 3219-3221, and 3223. All were off the roster by 1967, and 3231 is preserved at the Age of Steam Museum in Dallas.



When converted, the observation platform was enclosed and vestibule installed, parlor space was enlarged, four Pullman open sections were installed in the middle of the car, lounge and bar areas were rebuilt, and dorm space was installed on one end of the car.

The kit is a decent representation of the 3230 series cars with one exception. The dorm side of the kit is correct as one small window and one large window were removed, and two small windows were installed in the dorm area. The aisle side on the dorm end of the kit is not correct as the small window and large window remained in the same place on the prototype after conversion, whereas the two sides of the kit are essentially mirror images of each other with the dorm windows on both sides of the car. Some modelers may choose to modify the car, but I decided to just run it "right" side out.

The kit is a combination of stamped metal sides, wood floor and other structural pieces, clear plastic windows, cast metal parts, decals and various other details including scale sized directions and a side drawing. Kits came with either a wood or plastic roof. It does not include trucks or couplers.

The 3230 series cars were air conditioned and the kit comes with wood duct material and spikes to simulate the hold down levers on the roof hatches. It also comes with several sizes of wood blocks and dowels to simulate the various underbody equipment, including batteries, air conditioning, and air and water tanks. The directions are surprisingly correct as to the general placement of items like steam ejector hatches, roof vents, air and water tanks, battery boxes, and the like. It is a good idea to check photos of the prototype for specific items.

The model can be enhanced by the addition of New England Rail Service air conditioning ducts, Pullman water tank, vestibule bulkheads, and battery boxes, Cal Scale UC brake system, steam

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and air lines, American Limited working diaphragms, and Kadee #8 couplers. Steam ejector equipment will have to be scratch built unless Coach yard or Pecos River parts can be obtained, although a couple of manufacturers reportedly have parts in the mill. Walthers Goo works well to attach unlike materials like metal to wood, and Super Glue can be used for much of the rest. The prototype had Pullman six wheel bolted pedestal trucks, and fortunately the modeler today has several choices for trucks.

All in all, it is a decent kit given its vintage construction methods and stampings. It is not in the league of today's state of the art passenger car offerings, but with some work and attention to detail, offers the ability to add one of these rare cars to the roster.