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**Autor:** Marriott, Peter  
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## Cavalata

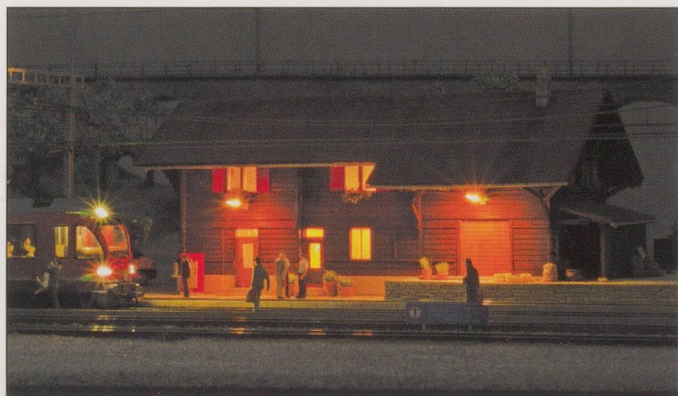
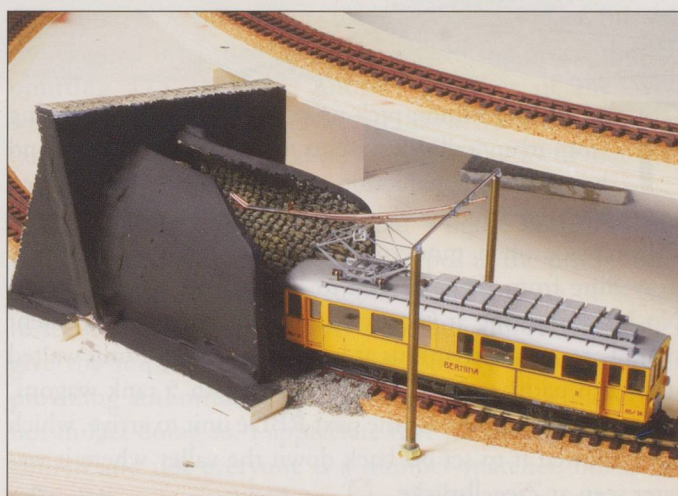


## Peter Marriott finds a professional model maker in Germany making Swiss layouts for customers across Europe


German modeller Stephan Kraus has been engaged by Bemo to produce several HOm layouts for model shows in Germany and other countries. His layouts are some of the best at the European shows because they look very realistic and the trains run very well indeed. Stephan's company, SMK Model Construction, specialises in the design and construction of high-quality, landscape-oriented model railway layouts and dioramas for commercial and private customers. SMK offers a range of services from planning a layout through to the complete implementation of "model railway dreams". In addition Stephan hosts seminars demonstrating a variety of techniques including landscape construction, making rocks, trees and weathering. The seminars are between 1 and 2.5 days in length.

Cavalata, built for a UK customer, took Stephan 11 months to build, spending 724 hours to make it in total. There are about 90 trees on the layout, which were all handmade requiring on average 20 minutes per tree to build. The layout is built on 4 baseboards and its trains are controlled by laptop. Cavalata is an L shaped layout measuring 3.25m x 2.40m. The layout was made at SMK premises in Germany, then shipped by a large van to the UK where Stephan directed the re-assembly of the layout.





A fuller description of the layout and more pictures is scheduled to appear in *Continental Modeller*. Stephan is happy to be contacted to discuss working on projects for clients in Europe or the UK. His website features other layouts and dioramas made by him.

His contact details are: Stephan Kraus, SMK modellbau, Silberstrasse, 67 74189 Weinsberg, Germany.  
[www.modellbau-smk.de](http://www.modellbau-smk.de) 

## **SwissTip** *Good ideas and information about Switzerland from travellers.*

Visiting the group of railways between Solothurn, Olten and Langenthal? At first glance these are not too easy to get to. If you are travelling into Switzerland by car via Basel there is a good, quiet, alternative (and shorter) route, though slower than the motorway. It has deeply rewarding hill and forest scenery, castle ruins and even a monastery. This is the Passwang road from Zwingen (in the Birs valley) to Balsthal. It climbs and winds over the Jura, with a short summit tunnel at 901m altitude. Just on the south side of this is the Restaurant Alpenblick (meaning Alpine view) and on about 20-days a year that's what you get along the horizon, together with a really good lunch and a cheerful welcome from Frau Halbeisen. Reaching Balsthal you can look in at the Oensingen-Balsthal-Bahn, and in Oensingen take the new ASm connection to Solothurn or Langenthal. If you are travelling on a Swiss Pass, there is a through PostAuto service from Zwingen to Balsthal but check - because they are rare! Another way, also for connoisseurs, is the SBB from Basel to Liestal, then the 750mm Waldenburger-Bahn from Liestal to Waldenburg followed by the hourly PostAuto to Balsthal. 