

ALL ABOUT KASINER O SCALE and O GAUGE

By Edward F. Bommer

Kasiner Model Hobbies was founded by Norm Kasiner and Bill Kachler in Rochester, New York in 1947. Smooth side, full length, streamlined O scale car kits made with extruded aluminum bodies having end and center skirting were initially produced. For prototype accuracy with some models, the center skirt is removed by cutting it off.

They were soon followed by extruded aluminum bodies with Pullman-design fluted siding. The fluted side bodies did not have skirting, but aluminum castings with end skirts and a coupler mounting were included in those kits. The Astradome kit included extruded aluminum side sill skirts. These also may have been available as extra parts for full length, fluted side cars.

Kits were packaged with Masonite floors, wire for hand rails, roof and some under body detail parts, as well as sheet aluminum ends. Black, sponge rubber full-width diaphragms were included. The Pullman-Standard fluting was a popular feature. These cars were easier to finish than the smooth side cars, often having multi-color, striped liveries.

Streamline four-wheel trucks included with full length kits initially had cast bronze side frames by Lobaugh, later made in zamac. All Nation continued production of these trucks until it went out of business in the 2000's. A pair of dummy cast metal Monarch couplers were included. No interior detail parts were provided, except for plastic window glazing with printed Venetian blinds where appropriate for a car.

Each kit followed a new, lightweight prototype car of the period with correctly spaced windows punched into the extruded aluminum bodies. Many original Kasiner roof detail parts are available from Scale City Designs, which has been producing the former line of Keil Line parts, which had included them.

KIT NO.	DATE	TYPE	PLAN	SMOOTH	FLUTED	BUILDER	YEARS	NOTES
1	1947	18 Roomette	Plan 4068	X		Pullman	1937, 1939	A, B
2	1947	24 Duplex Roomette	Plan 4100	X		Pullman	1942	C, D
3	1948	64 seat Coach			X	Pullman	1946	E
4	1948	85' Baggage/Mail		X		American Car and Foundry	1948	F
5	1948	Dining Car		X		American Car and Foundry	1948	G
6	1948	48 seat Coach/Baggage			X	American Car and Foundry	1946	H
7	1948	2 DBR/ 1CMPT/ 1DRM/ Lounge/Observation	Plan 4082		X	Pullman	1939-1941	I, J
8	1948	2 DBR/ 1CMPT/ 1DRM/ Lounge/Observation	Plan 4082	X		Pullman	1939-1941	I, J
9	1949	85' Baggage/Mail			X	Pullman Standard	1949	K
10	1949	"Astradome" (Dome-diner)			X	Pullman	1947	L
11	1949	" Sleeper"	Plan 4018A	X?		Pullman	1948	M, O
12	1950	"Diner"			X			G, N
13	1950	16 Dup. Rmt/4 Dbl BR	Plan 4018A		X	Pullman Standard	1950	O
KASINER 'SHORTY' 60' O GAUGE KITS FOR TINPLATE AND LIONEL MODELERS								
14	1949	60' "shorty" coach						
15	1949	60' "shorty" baggage / coach						
16	1949	60' "shorty" sleeper						
17	1949	60' "shorty" diner						
18	1949	60' "shorty" Astradome						
19	1949	60' "shorty" observation - windows punched as a parlor / observation						
20	1950	60' "shorty" full baggage			X	ACF and Pullman	1941	P

However, Kasiner kits, whether smooth or fluted side, were produced with the same window patterns. This made some kits more generic than prototypically accurate. Kasiner also produced a line of “shorty” O gauge kits with fluted 60’ bodies for most of the full-length types, including the dome car. Sold without trucks and couplers, they were popular with 3 rail /Lionel modelers. The 60’ ‘shorty’ full baggage (kit number 20) was favored by some 2 rail modelers. This was the only full baggage car in the Kasiner line. By 1949, Kasiner also produced full length and ‘dwarf’ 60’ fluted side HO kits.

NOTES ON MODELS AND PROTOTYPES

A: This models the first Pullman-built cars introducing the roomette in 1937 and 1939. With private accommodations for 18, the 1937 car was named **ROOMETTE I of Plan 4068**, painted in pre-War two-tone gray. This car was initially assigned to the Nickel Plate Road and later placed in pool service.

B: A second car, named **ROOMETTE II** also had accommodations for 18 as **Plan 4068G** built in 1939. Also painted in pre-War two-tone gray, it was introduced on the New York Central and later placed in pool service.

C: One prototype for this car was built in 1942 by Pullman as **DUPLEX ROOMETTE I, Plan 4100** in pre-War two-tone gray. It was intended to test the market for this type of accommodation as a replacement for aging, outdated, heavy-weight Pullman section sleepers. WW II intervened and this sample worked in pool service from 1942 to 1945. From 1946-47, it was assigned to the Pennsylvania in the consist of “**The General**.” Withdrawn in 1948, it was reconditioned, re-named **L. S. HUNGERFORD** and assigned to the Great Northern “**Empire Builder**,” in that train’s colors. By 1951, it was back in two-tone gray working on Santa Fe’s “**Grand Canyon**.” From 1952 to 1961, Pullman assigned it to the B&O, usually working “**The Ambassador**,” lettered for **PULLMAN** and wearing B&O blue and gray.

D: It remained Pullman owned until retired, from 1962-1964. Pullman sold it to the Pickens Railroad in 1965, which resold it to the National of Mexico in 1967. In Mexican service, it was renamed **PARICUTIN**, after a volcano. Likely, it was out of service and scrapped by the late 1970s. Twelve fluted side 24 duplex roomette cars to **Plan 4100B** were built by Pullman in 1947 for the Santa Fe as the “**INDIAN . . .**” series. To model them, thin styrene fluting could be added to the smooth Kasiner bodies, following prototype photos. Canadian Car & Foundry Co. Ltd. built twenty smooth side 24 duplex roomette sleepers to the same general design for the Canadian National in 1952. These were numbered **2000-2019** and rode on 6-wheel trucks. They were assigned to the “**Super Continental**” in the 1960’s and continued with VIA Rail into the early 1970’s. There is one error in this kit: The single window positions nearest the vestibule are reversed, left side for right.

E: The prototype for this model was Pullman built coaches for the New York Central of Lot 6721 in 1946. Car numbers were **3000-3152**. They were 64 seat long-distance coaches for pool use. A few were still in service on Metro-North in commuter service out of Grand Central Terminal as late as 1995. The fluting on the model accurately follows a Pullman design, something often not well done on later kits and imported brass models.

F: This 85’ smooth side baggage/mail models ACF built cars in the **1100** series for the 1948 Great Northern “**Empire Builder**.” It was similar to 75’ cars built by ACF for the New York Central and the 85’ ACF cars for the Union Pacific. *But in each of these cases, it’s not an exact replica. The kit is too long for NY Central, but could be shortened to suit. It has three RPO windows in place of two, for a Union Pacific car.*

G: This smooth side dining car models the ACF built “**LAKE . . .**” series diners for the 1948 Great Northern “**Empire Builder**.” One such car, “**LAKE OF THE ISLES**” No. **1250**, still exists in a restored condition. This kit body lacks kitchen service doors. On the ACF prototype, there was no service door for the kitchen on the left side. However, there was a 28” wide service door with a window at the right front end of the prototype car, opposite the kitchen. It was set 18” back from where a vestibule door would be. To model this on the smooth side kit, one would need to cut a window into the car side and score an outline for a door, as with other smooth side cars having vestibules. Or, cut out an opening in that corner to install a sheet aluminum door for it. Another option may be to use a Pullman vestibule door (Delta Models DM-223). This door opens inward, to the right toward the car end. That is opposite from a vestibule side door which opens inward to the left, on the right side of a car.

H: The prototype for this model was from ACF-built New York Central 48 seat coach/baggage combines in Lot 2730 of 1946. Car numbers were **280-299**. They were equipped with Pullman style fluting to match the pool service coaches above. Some were in mid-west service on the “**James Whitcomb Riley**” and other NY Central trains into the 1960s.

I: This kit models the Pullman 2 DBR/1CMPT/1DRM/Lounge/Observation of **Plan 4082**, with fluted sides. The prototype cars built from 1939 to 1941 had smooth sides. This model was often finished as a Santa Fe car. The Santa Fe “Vista. . .” series (Pullman **Plan 4115** of 1947, a 4 DRM/1 DBR/Observation Lounge) had a similar, but not exact window arrangement when compared to a **Plan 4082** car.

J: This kit models the first smooth-side Pullman built 2 DBR/1CMPT/1DRM Lounge/Observation cars of 1939 built to **Plan 4082, Lot 6567**. The first was named **AMERICAN MILEMASTER** by popular ballot while on display at the NY World’s Fair in Pullman’s pre-War, two-tone gray. Three more cars, **GENESEE RIVER, MAUMEE RIVER** and **WABASH RIVER** were built for New York Central’s “**Southwestern Limited**” for service between NY City and St. Louis. New York Central sold them to the B&O in 1956, keeping their original names and putting them in “**National Limited**” service between Washington, D.C. and St. Louis until it ended in 1965.

AMERICAN MILEMASTER in two-tone gray was used Union Pacific service until 1941 when it was reassigned to the Southern Pacific for “**Lark**” service, renumbered as **400**. A fifth car built to this design by Pullman in 1940 in Lot 6608, was done with stainless-steel sides and roof, named **MUSKINGUM RIVER**. Its first assignment was on the “**Arizona Limited**,” a Chicago – Los Angeles run over the Rock Island/Southern Pacific route. In 1942, it was re-assigned to Southern Pacific “**Lark**” service painted in early two-tone gray and renumbered **401**. SP had lost both original round end “**Lark**” observation cars **400** and **401** in rear end collisions. They were **Plan 4082A** cars built in 1941. The kit comes with a radio antenna, which the prototype cars had.

There is one error in this kit. The buffet service room window is too deep. It should be shorter and square, with a higher bottom sill. Since this is a smooth side car, it’s easy to fill in that window opening with styrene, to better match the prototype. Also, two small upper berth windows for the compartment should be cut into the letter board area on the right side.

K: This kit is the same as that discussed in **F** above, with the exception it has fluted sides. Kasiner issued its smooth side kits in fluted side form as well. Fluted side kits included simple Santa Fe and New York Central decal lettering. By using the same window punch patterns for both smooth and fluted side kits, production costs were less by not changing the window arrangements, but some prototype accuracy was lost.

L: The “**Astradome**” was a singular Kasiner kit like no other of the time. It modeled the dome-diner **SKY VIEW** of the 1946 to 1947 General Motors “**Train of Tomorrow**.” It consisted of four unique Pullman-built dome cars: coach, diner, sleeper and observation lounge. The Kasiner dome was printed in silver on a sheet of heavy, soft clear plastic. It had to be carefully flattened (it was curled to fit into the kit box) by soaking it in hot water, then letting it cool and dry with weights on top. It was cut, folded and fitted into the roof opening of the fluted, extruded aluminum body. The instruction sheet provided locations for car side screens and vents for the kitchen and air conditioning system. The full-length dome kits included bottom sill skirt extrusions. (These were not provided in 60’ ‘shorty’ dome kits).

Other than a Masonite dome floor and Venetian blind printed plastic window strips, there were no interior details. Yet, with patience, a creditable interior detail job could be done following prototype photos. Black decal name lettering for Santa Fe, New York Central and the script **SKY VIEW** name were included. While the punched window pattern and dome design were accurate, the prototype “Train of Tomorrow” fluting differed in the letter board from the usual Pullman design Kasiner followed. After its USA tour, Union Pacific purchased the train, painted it in UP colors and named it “**The City of Portland**,” keeping the original car names.

M: Sold as a ‘**Sleeper**’, this may have been a smooth side kit for a 16 duplex RMT/4 DBR car, modeling Pullman built **Plan 4018A** cars Great Northern had on the 1948 “**Empire Builder**.” Each end had eight duplex roomettes, with bedrooms in the center. It may be the last smooth side kit Kasiner offered. Kit 13 models this accommodation with a fluted side body.

N: This fluted side kit models the ACF built diner described in **G**, above. It also lacks the right front corner service door that the ACF smooth side prototype had. Also, there is no left side kitchen access door. To put service doors into a fluted side car, one will need to cut out openings for them in the car body. For the right corner door, a Delta Models number DM-223 could work. A left side kitchen service door could be cut in and fit the opening with a simple sheet aluminum door and a strip stock access step. Kitchen service doors in diners were recessed 3" or so into the car sides, making this alteration prototypical in appearance.

O: Kit 13 is a fluted side, 16 duplex roomette/4 double bedroom sleeper, with the same window pattern described in **M**, above. A Kasiner kit number 13 of 1950 appeared on E-Bay a few years ago. A prototype photo of a Pullman-built **Plan 4018** sleeper with fluted sides has not been located.

P: The 60' "shorty" fluted side, full baggage kit was the only car like that in the Kasiner kit line. "Shorty" kits were made in most other Kasiner car types for 3 rail/Lionel modelers. Kit 20 could be used represent shorter 70' fluted side full baggage cars used by Santa Fe and Rock Island. No full length Kasiner baggage car kit has been found. Kasiner also sold blank full-length bodies into which one could cut in windows and doors to build whatever type car they wished.

The Kasiner line of scale length and short 'dwarf' extruded aluminum HO passenger car kits were introduced late in 1949. That, along with the O scale, O gauge 'shorty' inventory and tooling, was purchased by OK Engines of Herkimer, NY in the 1950's, when Kasiner went out of business. OK Engines continued producing the HO kits. O scale/O gauge sales ended when the inventory of kit parts sold out.

In the early 2000's, OK Engines began offering custom-punched smooth side and Budd extrusion body kits in O scale on special order. Kasiner tooling was used to make smooth side kits. Kasiner fluted body extrusions were no longer available, due to worn out dies. OK Engines also had Budd extrusion dies and made O scale Budd body kits on special order. They have a library of Budd and other builder's drawings. OK Engines O scale body kits came with extruded and punched bodies, sheet aluminum car ends and doors, a phenolic sheet plastic floor and some details. No trucks or couplers were provided. Assembly was like that of earlier Kasiner kits.

SOME BUILT O SCALE KASINER AND OK ENGINES MODELS

Following are photos of some O scale Kasiners and an OK Engines car, with descriptions. All the models shown (excepting the two 60' baggage cars) have fully detailed interiors with passengers and interior lighting. These were built between 1978 and 2012 from kits, built models with modified bodies and poor condition 'junkers' found at train shows and E-Bay.



***KASINER Kit Number 2**, a 24 duplex roomette sleeper built as the **L. S. Hungerford** when in B&O service. The blind end was forward, with all roomettes facing in that direction. This model was built in 2012 from a "junk" car found on E-Bay for \$10, including original bronze Lobaugh trucks. Scale Coat paint and Micro Scale decals were used to finish this model.*



***KASINER Kit 3 (coach) and Kit 6 (baggage / coach)**, in late 1950's New York Central pool service livery. These two kits were modified by shortening them to a scale 75' length in 1978, for operation on a small O scale layout. The under bodies have scratch-built Carrier air conditioning units, per their prototypes. The trucks and under body were painted Floquil Grimy Black. The roof was done with satin finish black Rustoleum spray paint. Champion decals were used for the lettering.*



Kasiner Kit 5, the 1948 diner. This model is based on the ACF built diners for the Great Northern "**Empire Builder**". The prototype "**LAKE...**" series cars were unique in having one large kitchen vent rather than the four or more usually seen on other light weight diners. They also were equipped with mechanical refrigeration and capable of carrying sufficient stocks of food for two to three days without re-stocking en-route on a Chicago - Seattle run. Scale Coat paint, Micro Scale decal striping and Champion P-45 "**Empire Builder**" decal lettering was applied. Venetian blinds were computer printed on an overhead transparency sheet.





***Kasiner kit 7** is made the same as kit 8. It was often modeled as Santa Fe or New York Central car and looks similar to a Pullman plan 4115 car. This model had been shortened earlier and still has the original folded car end vestibule doors. It has original Kasiner printed Venetian blinds and is lettered for a model railroad name.*



***KASINER Kit 8**, Pullman plan 4082 smooth side, 2 DBR/1 CPT/1 DRM/Observation Lounge built as B&O **GENESEE RIVER**. This model was built in 2006 from a \$10 'junker' car found on E-Bay. The vestibule doors of smooth side kits only had punched windows. The door openings on this model were marked off by scribing their outlines on the car sides and adding thin black stripe decals to better show the doors after the body was painted. Scale Coat paint and Micro Scale decals were used to finish this model.*



***KASINER Kit 10 the "Astradome,"** finished as a Santa Fe car in 1981 using the kit's original Kasiner decals. The dome interior is detailed as a diner and is lit with battery powered fiber optics in the stair risers and along the dome floor seat risers, like its prototype. The dropped floor under the car is an add on. It was scratch built in wood and sheathed with aluminum roofer's flashing. Kasiner sill skirts overlay it on each side. Hard to see, the car ends have the original foam rubber Kasiner full width diaphragms glued to Kasiner sheet aluminum car ends. The model is in natural aluminum. Floquil platinum mist paint was used on the trucks and applied details to match the car. A black Sharpie pen was used to darken roof ventilator openings.*





KASINER Kit 20 "shorty" 60' fluted side baggage car being lettered for New York Central, which did not have such a car. It was for a fellow model railroader who wanted it finished this way. The car end skirting on these two baggage cars was added, made from wood with thin aluminum sheet from a soda pop can cemented over it, to which the corner steps were attached. Satin finish black Rustoleum spray paint and Champion decals were used to finish this model. MHP neoprene diaphragms were applied.

This kit builds into a rather light-weight car. A large piece of wood was added to each car, filling the space in the middle, between the doors and painting it black. This adds more weight for better tracking at the head end of a train of heavier passenger cars.

The Santa Fe baggage car below was made from a pre-built Number 20 Kasiner 60' 'shorty' modeled to resemble a Santa Fe 70' streamlined baggage car. Rock Island also ran similar short, streamlined, full baggage cars on some trains. Unique to Santa Fe was removal of the fluting at the car ends and at each side of the doors, where it could be subjected to damage from baggage carts and vehicles when loading and unloading the car. The roof, underbody and trucks were finished with Floquil platinum mist. A topping of Gloss Coat was applied to the roof. Champion decals were used for lettering. MHP diaphragms from this model's original build in 1956 were re-used.





*An OK Engines custom punched kit made in 2002 built into this model of the B&O Class D-30 baggage / dormitory / coffee shop car, named “**SILVER SPRING.**” Two light weight, streamlined, eight car train sets were built by Pullman Standard in 1948 for the B&O post War “**Columbian**” in Washington DC – Chicago service. The sister Class D-30 car was named “**HARPERS FERRY.**”*

In place of the kit’s Kasiner style folded sheet metal vestibule doors, detailed plastic doors from Delta Models (DM-223) were installed. They also make a nice upgrade over the folded sheet metal vestibule doors for Kasiner’s fluted side cars where the vestibule door opening had been cut into the body for them. The model is finished with Scale Coat paint and Micro Scale decals.



*A train of four Kasiner cars (all seen above) in service on an O scale 2 rail model railroad in New Hampshire, 2018. The streamlined 4-6-4 on the point is a two-rail MTH “**Empire State Express**” locomotive.*

