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Westchester

# A Train Winds Its Way Through a Candied Land

By EMILY DeNITTO

IT'S the sounds that first draw you in to TreatStation, a year-old shop in Peekskill's newly energized downtown: the soft toot of a train whistle, the bells of vintage pinball machines, the exclamations of delighted children. But there are plenty of treats for your other senses as well.

If you find yourself doing some last-minute shopping on Christmas Eve, a visit to TreatStation may be in order. A hybrid candy shop, soda fountain and toy store, centered on a vintage train display, TreatStation is a wondrous remedy for chain store numbness.

It all started with the train display, put together by Tim Trewhella, the shop's owner, using trains from the extensive postwar Lionel collection of his friend Jim Misewich. For several years around the holidays, the two set up their 400-square-foot creation in empty spaces provided by the city. But in 2004, Peekskill couldn't find an appropriate setting and there was disagreement over how to finance the project, which was always free to the public.

"I had people coming up to me on the street or at my daughters' school asking when they might see it again and I started thinking about how it could work," Mr. Trewhella said as he rang up a customer. He liked the idea of helping a new generation start quality train sets like those in his display, which features trains from 1948 to 1965. So he rented one of the great old storefronts on Division Street and set up shop last December.

Since the opening, Mr. Trewhella has offered substantial, well-made starter sets — unlike the nearly disposable wares available at most toy stores — for \$75 to \$400.

Counters and shelves throughout the store hold sweeter brands of nostalgia: big jars of Mary Janes, Dot paper strips, candy necklaces, Atomic Fireballs, Swedish Fish and other gummy candies, bubble gum, Jolly Ranchers and much more, typically for 10 cents each.

"I love it when kids come in with 50 cents and spend 10 minutes figuring out what they want," Mr. Trewhella said.

The usual packaged chocolate and candies, from KitKat bars to Reese's Peanut Butter Cups to Pez-filled dispensers, are also available. And just last week Mr. Trewhella ordered his first case of Fizzies, the popular tablets from the 1960s that dissolve in water to make "soda."

A separate display features delicious handmade chocolates from Bayard's Chocolates in southern New Jersey (\$16.95 a pound) and truffles from Birnn Chocolates of Vermont (\$17.95 a pound). You can choose from chocolate-covered marshmallows, orange peels or pretzels, as well as almond bark, cashew crabs or apricot-filled chocolates, milk or dark. The truffles — delicate and flavorful — run the gamut, from Champagne to rum to cappuccino.

In the spring, Mr. Trewhella bought a 1940s soda fountain and brought in a plumber, an electrician and a welder to get it in place and operational. Today, it makes old-fashioned egg creams and fountain sodas, as well as ice cream sodas and milkshakes with Perry's Ice Cream from upstate New York. Across the store, a couple

of pinball machines from 1965 and 1970 give young people a taste of their parents' childhoods.

TreatStation offers all sorts of train paraphernalia, from wooden whistles to various figurines to conductors' overalls and hats. But the store isn't just for children. Part of its appeal is the quirky, sly wink given to adult sensibilities. There are post-punk adult T-shirts (\$18.95). One reads "Bipolar Day" and features a headless body choosing from among several heads with different expressions. Another sports the word "Good," which on closer examination includes the word "Evil" within it. Candy cigarettes and chocolate cigars are offered from a shelf behind the cash register. Reproductions of train posters from the 1940s sell for \$25 each.

The array of products offered at the TreatStation is a work in progress. Mr. Trewhella special-orders trains and related materials for a core of enthusiasts who come to him regularly with wish lists. The other day, a woman walked in and asked if he could bulk-order her some whole-kernel wheat. Now that he has found a good supplier, he is considering offering a range of organic grains and cereals to his customers. ("It could be a health counterpoint to the candy," he said.)

But the shop's pièce de résistance will always be the train display. It takes up nearly a third of the store and is a complex terrain of hills and tunnels, storefronts and scenes, which will showcase various train collections throughout the year. Buttons around the perimeter allow viewers to start up much of the action, from a working miniature carousel to ice skaters on a rink to an excavator truck. You can sound various whistles, horns and a steam release. There is a tiny drive-in theater with a movie playing on the screen, and a wedding taking place on a precipice.

"I love the diorama aspect of it," Mr. Trewhella said, "the idea of creating a little universe."

TreatStation  
21 South Division Street  
Peekskill  
(914) 788-4141  
[www.TreatStation.com](http://www.TreatStation.com)

VERY GOOD

THE SPACE Bright, busy and filled with nostalgia.

THE CROWD Families, teenagers and adult train aficionados.

THE BAR Egg creams, \$1.95; fountain sodas, including cola, root beer, black cherry, strawberry, vanilla and chocolate, 95 cents; ice cream sodas and root beer floats, \$3.95; milkshakes, with chocolate, vanilla or any specialty flavor the store may be carrying, \$4.25.

THE BILL Chocolate starts at \$16.95 a pound; other candy starts at \$4.50 a pound or 10 cents apiece; toys and trains range from \$1.99 for a light-up plastic dinosaur to \$400 for a Lionel train set.

WHAT WE LIKE Everything edible except the Atomic Fireballs.

IF YOU GO Open Monday to Saturday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed Christmas Day.

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