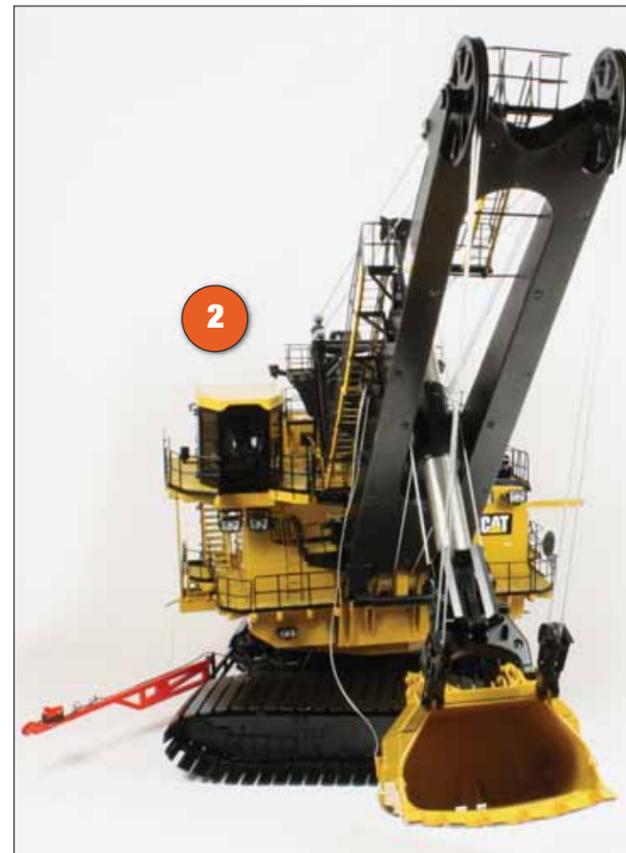


Latest Cats on the prowl

This month Steven Downes takes a look at the latest Caterpillar scale model releases from Norscot and TWH Collectibles.



2: When Caterpillar announced the acquisition of Bucyrus, it was obvious that the 7495 rope shovels would be produced in the new Cat corporate colours. Both hard rock and high floatation versions of the original model have been released in a limited production run of only 400 pieces of each.

3: The 1:50th-scale D8T bulldozer is a good addition to the model range, on which all safety features are well modelled, including the side platform with safety railings and grab rails on the blade arms. The blade can be raised and lowered, as can the single shank ripper. The tensioned, linked metal tracks rotate smoothly and include excellent detailing of the final drive casings and textured engine panels, which only add to the realistic appearance.

4: The top-of-the-range American spec 450E backhoe loader has been captured well in 1:87th scale, ideal for any HO railway scene. The model features movement of the boom, stick and bucket, and adjustable stabilisers, complete with pivoting pads and front loader arms that raise up with a tipping bucket. The cab interior is nicely replicated for a model so small and Norscot have done a good job in capturing the aesthetic looks of the 450E.

1a, 1b and 1c: There are no noticeable casting changes on the model, which is a pity as the full-size machine has been upgraded with a new cab design and body that is not reflected in the replica. This does not detract from another stunning 1:50th-scale model that has some excellent detail, including a fully functioning dipper that is adjusted by the rope winches at the heart of the upper-structure.

The cab has a fully modelled interior with everything visible, from the main operator's seat featuring all the controls and large computer display screen that has been authentically reproduced, to the opening doors and internal structure, including a second seat and work area.

The undercarriage of the HF (High Floatation) version has a set of track pads that look enormous and rotate very smoothly considering the impressive weight of the model, with all the electrical feed components and drive housings added. The various walkways are fitted with realistically scaled safety railings and photo-etched floor panels plus an extending access ladder located on both sides.



5: The Caterpillar 785D rigid truck chassis with Mega MWT30 water tank is a highly detailed 1:50th-scale replica from Norscot. Among the model's highlights are metal safety railings around the upper deck, access to the top of the tank, which can be tilted, working steering of the front axle and functional suspension of the rear axle. The paint finish is of a high standard and features crisp printing of the Caterpillar and Mega markings.