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Miniature Engineering Craftsmanship Museum

In Carlsbad, CA by author Mark C. Bach

The Joe Martin Foundation
for Exceptional Craftsmanship

MINIATURE ENGINEERING
Craftsmanship Museum

IT'S A SMALL, SMALL WORLD

BY MARK C. BACH
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

I have the utmost admiration for the skilled craftsmen who take bare metal and shape, cut and mold it into useful items. Whether it is using a CNC machine, lathes or a water jet our American ingenuity is not dead. I have more respect for those who do things on a smaller, more intricate and precise scale. And after visiting the Craftsmanship Museum in Carlsbad, CA I have even more esteem!

It's a small, small world

Founded by Joe Martin, who owned the Sherline Products Company, the museum may focus on small scale items but is a huge endeavor. You may recognize the Shurline name for offering hobbyists a home version of many metal working machines. At one time they were sold under the Craftman name by Sears. In 2006, Martin started collecting and showing these finished masterpieces, in Vista, CA at his factory; many of these masterpieces were made, in part, by his products. And in 2011, the collection outgrew its space at his manufacturing plant and moved to a separate space in nearby Carlsbad, CA. Here you can now see all sorts of scaled down versions of high tech machinery.

On a recent visit I was able to watch, during their shop tour, how science and imagination blended into a variety of demonstrations that would put our local school science fairs to shame. Docents and volunteers take the time to make science and art come alive for the visitors. Engines were run, balloons were shrunk and for the sake of science, empty beer

cans were crushed!

Nearby was a "Do Nothing" machine that does - well - nothing! It is a mechanical magic of kinetic sculpture with 764 gears rotating and moving in synchrony to do absolutely nothing. Nada. Zilch. Nothing! It took the builder over seven years to make and conjure up this machine.

But the museum largely is devoted to static displays of completed models. One of the volunteers, a worker at Sherline, built a scaled down (1/2 scale) working version of the Wild West's 1876 Gatling Gun. It was so authentic it would need a license from ATF to sell it to a gun collector. It fires 22 long rifle rounds at the rate of 600 rounds a minute.

How about an 18 cylinder, two row radial engine? Similar to many used to power World War two aircraft, this 1/4 scale engine operates on regular gas with a dual spark ignition and a pressurized oiling system. Nearby is a 1/3 scale Gnome 160 rotary airplane engine. Gnome rotary engines were used during World War I.

One of the jewels of the

collection and certainly it would catch the eye of any classic car enthusiast was a working 1/6 scale model of a 1932 Duesenberg SJ - fully functional and working. It took the creator, Louis Chenot, over 20,000 hours to make. That's ten years of a normal factory worker's shift work! Over 6,000 custom one off parts were required for this car. Please understand this is not just a model, it is fully functional car.

The museum is 16,000 square feet of marvels and includes miniature dollhouses, boats, planes, steam engines and all varieties of modern mechanical machinery. It is open Tuesday-Saturday, you can learn more at www.craftsmanshipmuseum.com or telephone them up at (760) 727-9492. Even if a trip to Carlsbad isn't in your near future, you will be amazed at what can be seen on their website. It's no small feat!

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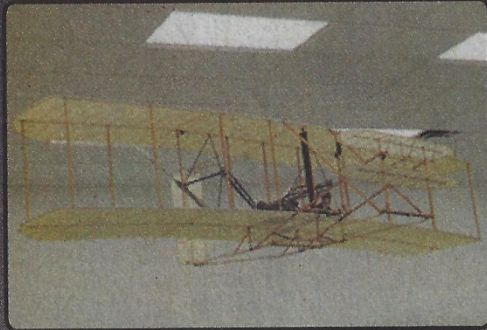


Just one of the Sherline machines available to hobbyists. This is an 8 direction mill, Model 2000.

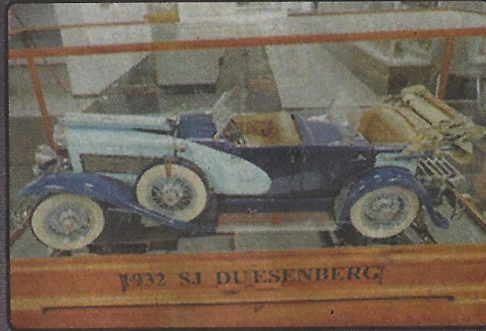


The 1/2 scale Gatling gun took 2,000 hours to build and technically is not an automatic weapon, per the ATF.

**It's a small,
small world**



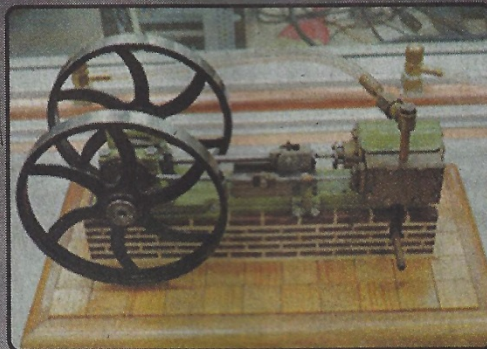
This is a 1/4 scale model of the Wright Brothers' Kitty Hawk airplane.



The 1932 Duesenberg is a fully functional scale model, kept under glass at the museum.



Many dollhouses have been built, but the attention to detail and scale on this one was awe inspiring.



This was just one of many engines on display, plumbed to run off of steam power.



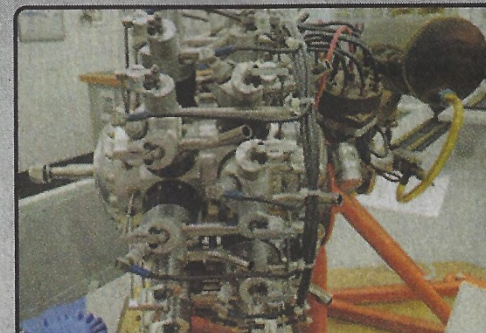
1/4 scale seems pretty popular. This one is a 4-engine twin cockpit offshore power boat.



Here is an International Harvester Stationary engine, again done in 1/4 scale.



This is a flat four model airplane engine with four independent carburetors controlled by one linkage. Would you believe the cylinder assemblies are from Honda weed eaters?



Here is a 1/4 scale fully operating, eighteen cylinder, two row radial engine. Similar full size engines powered WW II aircraft.