

the of the Beaten Track

PPG Finishes Make Mini Train Maker's Creations Colorful

DURING HIS DAYS IN CANADA'S DEFENSE AND AEROSPACE INDUSTRY, RENAUD LAROUCHE WOULD NOT LIKELY HAVE PREDICTED A FUTURE IN TRAINS—ESPECIALLY NOT THE CUTE LITTLE ONES THAT CARRY KIDS AROUND IN ZOOS AND AMUSEMENT PARKS.

But after selling his successful business and spending just six months in retirement, he decided he wanted to utilize his experience in manufacturing and management. He discovered an opportunity to invest in a fledgling company that he felt had big potential: Wattman Trains and Trams.

Wattman itself had auspicious beginnings. In 1995, the producer

of a children's show, Gilles Richard, was asked to produce a show featuring a small train. The train was built, and soon thereafter, Mr. Richard was receiving requests to produce more of these "mini express" trains to operate during special events. Mr. Larouche acquired the company and as CEO, contributed both the capital and the business acumen to take the company to the next level.

Today, the novel concept of a trackless train or tram is spreading throughout the world, as more developers and event planners recognize its appeal. The company sells between 75 to 100 units per year, and has units in operation in 30 countries throughout the world.

Environmentally-friendly and quiet, these trackless electric vehicles are designed to operate indoors and outdoors, making them ideal

for malls, zoos, and festivals. The design is colorful and realistic, which makes the train a magnet for families with young children. They require very little maintenance and last for many years. There's even a "smoke" machine, a sound system to simulate the train whistle, and wheels that look like they're moving.

Although Larouche knew about PPG from his days in defense and aerospace, the Wattman requirements were far different. He was not surprised to learn, though, that PPG had products that suited Wattman's needs perfectly.

The bright, bold colors of the trains are supplied by AUE 360 High Solids Polyurethane topcoat from PPG's *Commercial Performance Coatings* line. ESC 600 Urethane Clear from the *Delfleet Essential* line

delivers added durability and gloss.

Since switching to PPG coatings, the company has enjoyed reduced VOC emissions and lower overall paint use. "The product is very easy to use, performs very well, and has the high gloss that our customers love," says Larouche. "In addition, we chose PPG for their worldwide service and support, and their ability to provide training and troubleshooting whenever and wherever we might need it."

What's the next stop for Wattman? That's the beauty of these trackless trains. With an endless array of PPG colors and finishes to choose from and Larouche's knack for maximizing opportunities, there's literally no limit to how far this company can go. ■

WHERE TO SEE 'EM

ZOOS

- The Apple Works (Indiana)
- Buttonwood Park Zoo (Massachusetts)
- Calgary Zoo (Alberta)
- Emerald Acres (Ontario)
- Edmonton Valley Zoo (Alberta)
- Lake Superior Zoo (Minnesota)
- Philadelphia Zoo (Pennsylvania)
- Royal Oak Farm Orchard (Illinois)
- Sacramento Zoo (California)
- Xochitla, A.C (Mexico)
- Fjölskyldu-og húsdýragarðurinn (Iceland)



MALLS

- Destin Commons (Florida)
- Dulles Town Center (Virginia)
- Short Pump Town Center (Virginia)
- Station Square (Pennsylvania)
- Victoria Gardens (California)
- White Flint Mall (Maryland)
- Intersect (Japan)
- Boobaloo (Europe)
- Val d'Europe (France)

