

## A review of the LionChief Plus 2-8-2 MIKADO Locomotive

Last week I had the opportunity to visit Walt's Hobby Shop in Crest Hill and test drive Lionel's new LionChief Plus 2-8-2 Mikado Locomotive (Lionel # 81295). It was the Atchinson, Topeka & Santa Fe road name with a road number of 3158, which is one of several road names that are available.

The LionChief Plus locomotive and tender can be operated in command mode with its own dedicated hand-held controller or it can be run conventionally in transformer mode. The locomotive has lots of cast-in details as well as separately applied handrails, piping, bell, and whistles. The smoke unit was very impressive, however, for those who are not fans of smoke it is easily turned off with a switch by the firebox. The tender also has lots of nice detail and it also has separately applied grab irons. In my opinion, the greatest feature of this locomotive is the sound package. The Mikado is equipped with a Railsounds RC sound system. The whistle and bell sounded very authentic and the crew talk was of the same quality as the current Legacy models. The remote was clearly marked and easy to use. You can easily fire the couplers from the remote. The locomotive performed beautifully on the store layout. According to the specifications, the locomotive will operate on an O31 radius curve.

I believe this would be a great locomotive for someone who does not want to invest in a command control system but wants many of the features included in those systems. Thank you to my friends at Walt's Hobby Store for allowing me to play!

Curt Ward

