

MINIATURE WONDERLAND: A TRULY GRAND ATTRACTION



One of Germany's most bizarre tourist attractions is to be found in Hamburg. The Miniature Wonderland is only 8 years old yet already a record-breaker.

Hamburg is an extraordinary city, luring tourists from all over the globe with its long history, appealing cultural potential and friendly atmosphere. The festivals which Hamburg annually hosts are very well reputed and the number of museums and theaters is overwhelming. There is a rather recent addition to Hamburg's cultural 'arsenal'; in its 8-year history it has gained immense popularity among visitors of all ages.

The Miniature Wonderland is an extraordinary accomplishment that started as a childhood dream. When visiting Zurich in 2000, Frederik Braun strolled up and down the streets and came across a shop of railway models which brought back memories of his childhood fantasy. At that moment he decided to build a **massive railway model** - the biggest in the world. He shared his idea with his twin brother Gerrit and after lengthy consideration of the feasibility of the whole project, they decided to go ahead with their plans.

The railway consists of an impressive 11, 000 meters of track and some 900 trains. The Wonderland is divided into 7 sections, featuring detailed versions of areas of Harz, Hamburg and Knuffigen (a made-up city) and also the U.S., Scandinavia and Switzerland. By 2014, the fathers of this charming miniature world plan to expend the number of sections to ten.

Their dream turned into a success much larger than they would ever imagine even in their wildest dreams. In the summer of 2008, the Wonderland welcomed its 5,000,000th visitor.

Both Frederik and Gerrit are thrilled to see how successful and appreciated their work has become. For the future, they plan many surprises - apart from major expansion they revealed a hint of a plan to go virtual. Whatever that means, the fans are eagerly awaiting the year 2009.

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