



## PRESS KIT

UPDATE: FEBRUARY 2018

In this press kit, you'll find different texts about the Miniatur Wunderland, its history, the founders, as well as facts and figures about the exhibition. High-resolution photos and video footage can be downloaded at [presse.miniatur-wunderland.de](http://presse.miniatur-wunderland.de).

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## HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Everything started in July 2000: Frederik was visiting friends in Zurich and came across a model railway shop while strolling the small streets of the city one day. Childhood memories were brought back immediately and in no more than a few hours he was on fire with the notion of letting a childhood dream come true. He called his twin brother, Gerrit, on the very same day, completely throwing him off by stating: “We will build the world’s largest model railway exhibition.” Gerrit, being more the rational and analytical type, could not believe Frederik was being serious and thought he was pulling his leg. Frederik though, persevering and upbeat by nature, insisted and called another six times before Gerrit finally started to consider his plan. The possibility of turning his hobby into his profession excited him. Still, he remained more reserved and preferred to rely on facts rather than on emotions.



Friends and family also were more than a little skeptical. “Almost anyone we told about our idea thought that we were dreamers who had completely lost it”, Frederik describing the general reaction back then. His brother Gerrit adds: “They probably would have been more supportive if we had told them, that we were planning to build transport zeppelins, set up a Tamagochi exhibition or design new fax machines. For a long time, model railroading had the reputation of being old-fashioned and something for loners.”

Therefore, it was clear from the start that a successful model railway had to be something completely different and very special. An online survey consisting of 45 partly existing and partly made-up sightseeing attractions of Hamburg revealed that the “largest model railway in the world” ranked very high amongst the men, but last amongst women. These results helped form the basic strategy of the Wunderland: No distant museum like layout behind glass panes, but a lovingly modeled miniature world with trains being only one of the many highlights. “We wanted to build a world that would amaze and inspire men, women and children alike”, Gerrit Braun explains.

Together with their father, Jochen Braun, and their long-time partner, Stephan Hertz, they founded the Miniatur Wunderland. They chose the Speicherstadt, the Historic Warehouse District, as a suitable location which still lay within the boundaries of the free port at that time, thus being separated from the rest of Hamburg. Gerhard Dauscher became the creative or rather modeling director, swapping Bavaria for Hamburg.

The first draft, considered to be more than sufficient, consisted of 20 employees responsible for constructing and running the exhibition, 100,000 visitors per year and a loan of 2,000,000 Deutsch Mark. However, before the opening on August 16, 2001, the number of employees had already risen to 40 and the expenses had increased considerably, as well.

Miscalculation at its best: Within the first year, the expected number of visitors had tripled to 300,000. It really was the beginning of a fairy tale and things just keep getting better: In the past year, the world’s biggest model railway system had a record number of 1,400,664 visitors, making it one of the most successful exhibitions in Europe.

These are the most important mile stones:



13th July 2000	Birth of the idea in Zurich
September 2000	Signing of the rental agreement
1st November 2000	Move in to the warehouse at Kehrwieder 2
15th November 2000	Start of the construction of the first section with 20 employees
16th August 2001	Opening of the Miniatur Wunderland with 40 employees
27nd November 2002	Opening of the Hamburg section
3th February 2003	The 1,000,000th guest visits the Miniatur Wunderland
8th December 2003	Opening of the USA section
2004	Miniatur Wunderland's team consists of more than 100 employees
13th July 2005	Opening of the Scandinavia section
6th April 2006	Gerrit and Frederik Braun are awarded „Entrepreneurs of the Year“ in Hamburg
2007	The Miniatur Wunderland team consists of more than 150 employees
13th November 2007	Opening of the Switzerland section
Spring 2008	Official start of the construction of the Airport section
16th July 2008	Wunderland welcomes the 5,000,000th visitor
30th September 2008	Opening of the exhibition „A City Divided“
1th January 2010	Miniatur Wunderland gains 800 sqm of floorspace – expansion is secured
4th May 2011	Opening of the Airport section
16th August 2011	Celebrating the 10th birthday
26th April 2012	Opening of the special exhibition „The History of our Civilization“
17th July 2012	Opening of the new entrance and restaurant area on the 2nd floor
Summer 2012	Beginning of planning of the new Italy section
Autumn 2012	The Miniatur Wunderland wins the German Tourism Award
14th November 2012	Start of construction on the HafenCity and Elbphilharmonie
5th December 2012	Welcoming the 10,000,000th visitor
13th November 2013	Opening of the HafenCity and Elbphilharmonie
2014	The Wunderland video reaches 20 million views and the Facebook page has over 1,000,000 likes
4th December 2014	After an inaugural ceremony, the tent of the musical “The Lion King” is now part of the layout
10th September 2015	Guinness World Records officially announces the Miniatur Wunderland as world's largest model railway
11th November 2015	Helene Fischer and Miniatur Wunderland recreate a charity concert and donate more than 500,000 Euros
January 2016	Wunderland is now part of Google Street View as the smallest location on earth
28th September 2016	Opening of the Italy section
5th October 2016	The Miniatur Wunderland becomes the most popular german tourist destination, voted for by foreign guests online at the German National Tourist Bord
2nd December 2016	The 15,000,000th guest visits the Miniatur Wunderland
2nd February 2017	1,000,000 take-offs and landings at Knuffingen Airport
12th April 2017	250th circumnavigation of the earth by the model railway (10,000,000 kilometres)
17th November 2017	Publication of Frederick and Gerrit Braun's biography „Kleine Welt - großer Traum“ (Little world, big dream)





## FREDERIK BRAUN

Frederik Braun, twin brother of Gerrit Braun, was born on the 21st of December 1967. From early on he and his brother Gerrit started dreaming of great projects together. Initially, he dreamt of childish things such as the world's largest Mickey Mouse comic collection or a huge collection of autograph cards of sports stars. However, his dreams changed with puberty. From then on he dreamt of his own nightclub and his own record label. Sometime in the year 2000 an entirely new dream emerged: The dream of the world's largest model railway. Frederik has never been someone to live in his dream world. He has always been someone who is set on making his dreams come true. So he began working on his dream aged just 11. That is exactly when he found his perfect partner, but also the most forceful antagonist for his ideas: His twin brother Gerrit, the person who, at the same time, is the closest and the most opposite to him. Frederik is more of an optimistic, emotional and short tempered guy, compared to Gerrit, the pessimistic, rational and analytical type. Frederik's ideas had to pass Gerrit's sharp judgement. Most of the ideas were scrapped after detailed analysis, turning out to be too unrealistic. However, whenever an idea passed Gerrit's approval Frederik the perfect partner in his twin brother. Only five ideas passed Gerrit's judgment. The first idea the brothers decided to carry out was Frederick's dream of the largest Mickey Mouse comic book collection in the world. The two went to numerous flea markets and looked for low-priced comic books, selling them on with a profit at other flea markets. They were able to compile a huge collection with their profits.

Following the Mickey Mouse collection, the autograph card collection was next, followed later on by their own nightclub and the record label. For 10 years they ran one of the most successful clubs of the 90's – the Voilà in Hamburg. With the millennium coming to an end, Frederick had many new ideas. He was sure that he didn't want to grow old working in the nightlife business, and so he tried to convince Gerrit with many ideas for fifth enterprise. For many years all of Frederik's attempts were in vain. Then, one day in the summer 2000, suddenly everything became clear to Frederik. He had found his life's dream. He knew that Gerrit would probably think he is insane when he told him about his plan to build the largest model railway in the world.

But by that time he had already had many years of experience dealing with "Judge Gerrit the Merciless". So, he prepared a strategy to convince his brother, and succeeded. The rest is documented in Miniatur Wunderland's history.





## GERRIT BRAUN

Gerrit Braun, twin brother of Frederik Braun, was born on the 21st of December 1967, a few minutes before Frederik. From early on he developed his traits of responsibility and his protective instinct. His brother Frederik always bombarded him with many, sometimes rash ideas, and so he wanted to protect his younger brother from the all too risky undertakings. However, just like his brother, Gerrit has the ability to dream and to look into the future. Being mathematically talented, it was clear to him that, due to probability calculations, he only had to bide his time and wait for Frederik to come up with a promising idea. All he had to do is be patient and convince his brother, in a rational way, that all other ideas would not be feasible.

Gerrit succeeded in refuting his brother's ideas until they were 12. Then Frederik came up with the idea of compiling a huge Mickey Mouse comic book collection financed with the profits of other comic book sales. Gerrit couldn't find any reasonable argument to oppose the project, and so he started coming up a plan. With this project Gerrit's talent and specialty became apparent at an early age. He developed the strategy and carefully analyzed every step of the way. Both would remain his responsibility tasks in the projects which ensued, such as the nightclub and the record label. In the meantime, he had developed another one of his talents – his technical skills.

Already in his days at school, Gerrit was busy constructing different gimmicks, such as an igloo made of cigarette packs, or a model railway which was technically very advanced back then. After graduating high school he began studying business informatics while managing the nightclub Voilà. In the following years his technical all-round-talent emerged more and more. Thus, he developed an innovative software system for gastronomy accounting, which is still being used today, as well as tools used for time measurement in motorsports.

When Frederik told him about his idea of building the largest model railway in the world, Gerrit concluded, after careful analysis, Frederik had found his lifetime dream as well. He quickly realized that there were many development possibilities to create a world never seen before. Gerrit agreed to join in, and in the months and years which ensued, he developed the wide range of technology (Car System, lighting control, ship navigation system, airport, etc.) that makes Miniatur Wunderland so unique.





## STEPHAN HERTZ

Stephan Hertz and Gerrit Braun have known each other since high school days. They found that they had so much in common that they didn't only work in the same company, but spent their free time together as well: For a couple of summers in a row, they took Gerrit's CJ7 Jeep and drove down from the Hanseatic City of Hamburg to the French Riviera. To this day they have many fond memories of these trips. This is why the France section of the exhibition that is going to be constructed next to Italy, is really close to the heart of France enthusiasts Stephan and Gerrit.

It was a rather small step from planning road trips to foreign countries to event and party planning in their hometown of Hamburg. Stephan quickly started taking part in Frederick's projects and found himself stuck in the middle of the two brothers, in a sort of intermediary role: Being neither as emotional as Frederick nor as skeptical as Gerrit, he just went about taking on the challenges and plans. The first highlight of their close teamwork was the acquisition of the nightclub "Voilà". But after more than ten years of nightlife, Stephan realized that he didn't want to spend the rest of his life in the dark.

Thus, Frederick's idea of building the largest model railway in the world came exactly at the right time. Stephan had to sleep on it but was quickly convinced that this enterprise couldn't be anything but a success. He loved thinking of the childhood days when the model railway was a family project: Father and son would be tend the tracks, switches and trains, while his mother would be building the houses and landscapes. Being perfectionists they didn't keep the first analogue Märklin track for long, but soon refurbished it entirely. As it was, the Miniatur Wunderland really was a childhood dream come true for the third partner, too.

Today, Stephan is mainly responsible for the optimal representation of the Miniatur Wunderland on various internet platforms as well as for the homepage [www.miniatur-wunderland.de](http://www.miniatur-wunderland.de). In case of "online emergencies", Stephan is the fire fighter (like the small Preiser figures in Knuffingen) who makes sure that the online information is available for our visitors around the clock.



## ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

## AREA

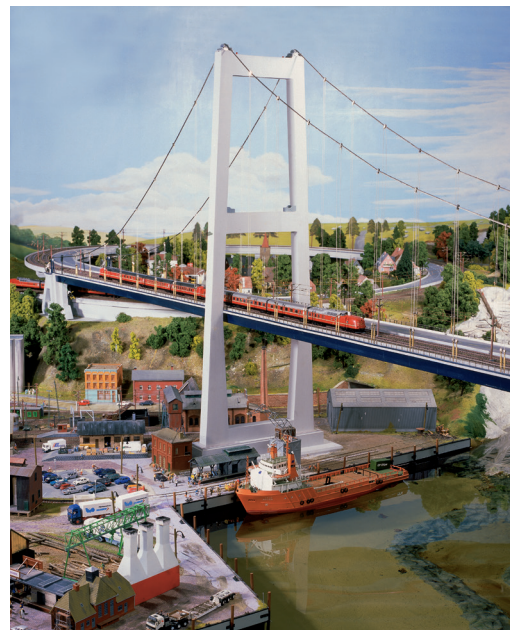
Floor space Miniatur Wunderland	7,000 m <sup>2</sup>
Model area	1.499 m <sup>2</sup>
Sections	9

## CONSTRUCTION TIME

Construction time	795,000 working hours
Construction costs	21 million euros
Staff members	360

## EXHIBITION DATA

Length of railway tracks	15,400 meters
Trains	1,040
Wagons	more than 10,000
Longest train	14,51 meters
Signals	1,380
Track switches	3,454
Computers	50
Push-button activities	210
LEDs	389,000
Houses & bridges	4,340
Figurines	260,000
- of which handmade	more than 15,000
Cars	9,250
- of which moving	280
Planes	52
- of which flying	42
Ships	767
Trees	130,000
Water	30,000 litres





## ABOUT THE VENICE SECTION

## AREA

Model area 9 m<sup>2</sup>

## CONSTRUCTION TIME

Construction phase August 2016 to February 2018  
 Construction time 35,000 working hours  
 Construction costs 1 Million Euros  
 Staff members involved in construction 60

## LAYOUT DATA

LEDs 2,800  
 Houses 260  
 Bridges 26  
 Figurines 3,000  
 Carnival figurines 150  
 Push-button activities 18  
 Cable used 5,500 meters

Water surface 3 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Islands 14  
 Individually made street lights 160  
 Gondolas 450  
 Illuminated boats 90

## SPECIAL CONSTRUCTIONS

Components Procuratie 4,000  
 Construction time Procuratie 34 weeks  
 Components Doge's Palace 2,700  
 Construction time Doge's Palace 26 weeks  
 Components Basilica 2,500  
 Construction time Basilica 25 weeks



## THE ITALIAN SECTION AT MINIATUR WUNDERLAND IS ROUNDED OFF WITH A MINIATURE MASTERPIECE

After more than a year of construction work, the Venice section is opening on 21 February 2018.

The new sub-section Venice at Miniatur Wunderland with a size of 9 m<sup>2</sup> may not be setting any records in terms of model size, however, the exhibition's smallest section to date is dedicated to a different kind of superlatives. The model makers have been famous for their attention to detail for many years, and when building the Italian lagoon town, this was taken to a whole new level. It was not without reason that Venice was declared its own sub-section on a separate island, when it became clear that the work required could never be completed by the scheduled opening date for the Italy section. Meanwhile, more than 35,000 man hours have been dedicated to creating the Italian world heritage site with its winding alleyways, canals, gondolas and palazzi that were finished with greater precision than ever before, in an effort to recreate the original as closely as possible.

Achieving a realistic recreation of the buildings' deterioration caused by regular flooding - known as acqua alta - has proved a real challenge for our Wunderland architects. Construction time and costs were pushed up further by the intricate façade decorations. "At a record square metre price of well over 100,000 euros, Venice didn't come cheap at all. However, the spectacular result shows that the investment was worth it. Every corner of our miniature Venice is the result of so much devotion - this cannot be measured in figures," says Frederik Braun.

If you insist to try anyway, it comes down to this: Around 60 Wunderland staff members have been involved in building the new section over the past 19 months. They have made more than 280 houses and bridges by hand, have installed 2,800 LED, laid around 5,000 metres of cable and have made 160 individual street lights. The canals are kept busy with 450 Venetian gondolas, each of which was carefully hand crafted, decorated and fit out. The particular flair of Venice is highlighted by the Procuratie, made from 4,000 components as well as Doge's Palace with 2,700 components as well as the famous Piazza San Marco, on which countless Wunderland residents are engaged in the colourful hustle of Carnival.

Nevertheless, there is more to Venice in Wunderland, than just famous sights. "When planning Venice we were especially concerned with showing not only touristy Venice, but to also give an impression of Venetian everyday life and the culture of the charming North Italians, beyond the crowded tourist magnets. This is why it is worth to take a closer look at the narrow alleyways and little courtyards," say Gerrit Braun.

### CONTACT

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## THE FUTURE

There are more than 190 countries in the world, whereas the Wunderland only has nine so far. It would probably take 250 years and a lot of space to model every single country of the earth. “If it is up to us, we will continue model building forever. There are so many interesting stories and regions around the world to be displayed”, says Frederik Braun in regards to his vision of the future. He adds: “But in order to do so, we would definitively need more room.”

By now, the expansion of the available premises is almost complete. If everything goes according to plan, another 3,000 square metres on the other side of the canal, will soon be added to the Wunderland. A bridge for visitors and trains is supposed to connect the existing sections to the new building.

There are concrete plans for Venice, Monaco, Great Britain and France. Parts of Africa and Asia could follow.

## THE NEXT PROJECTS:

### MONACO

Construction Phase	2018 – Spring 2019
Feature	Formula-One race track

### GREAT BRITAIN

Construction Phase	2019 – 2021/2022
Feature	Connected by a bridge to the layout on the other side of the canal

### FRANCE / BENELUX

Construction phase	starting in 2022
Feature	The completion of Block D

## THE MINIATUR WUNDERLAND

The Miniatur Wunderland is the world's largest model railway and Hamburg's tourist attraction no. 1. More than 16 million visitors from all over the world have already visited this superlative miniature world. Spreading over 1,499 square meters, a unique and outstanding exhibition arose in 795,000 man hours and it keeps on growing. Next to sophisticated technologies, the Wunderland is known for its captivating richness of detail: 265,000 figures lovingly set in scene, moving cars and ships – even airplanes are taking off and landing at Knuffingen Airport every minute. Since February 2018 the new section, Venice, is open to the public. The Miniatur Wunderland is a breathtaking microcosm unmatched anywhere in this world.



## MINIATUR WUNDERLAND – A DREAM COME TRUE

In some social classes model railways are looked at as the embodiment of German philistinism, model landscapes as a run into a parallel universe, and model makers as weird dreamers. That's why it wasn't surprising fifteen years ago, that the idea to construct the largest model railway in the world was frequently sneered at. At that time, if the brothers had voiced that their Miniatur Wunderland would become one of the most famous exhibitions in Germany, will bring hundreds of thousands of overnight stays for the city of Hamburg, and would prompt a boom of model making, doubtful smirks would have turned into loud laughter.

The orchestra of laughter died down more and more after the Grand Opening in 2001, and has completely disappeared. Instead the laughter has turned into songs of praises. "Many people who've not taken us seriously in the beginning, are ardent Wunderland fans and supporters by now", says Frederik Braun regarding this development. This change of mind doesn't come as a surprise when taking a plain survey of the figures.

The Miniatur Wunderland achieved record attendance for the 16th year in a row: Around 1.4 million visitors saw the exhibition in 2017. The 16,000,000th visitor was welcomed to the Wunderland in August 2017. The installation's overall size grew to just over 1,499 square metres, when the sub-section 'Venice' was completed in 2018. The attraction currently has more than 360 staff members. Thus, Miniatur Wunderland, next to the Alster, musicals, and the harbour, has not only become one of the most important tourist attractions in Hamburg, but also an important employer. From technicians to art student - the whole team is striving to create new dream worlds. The most contrasting characters contribute fragments of their world views to this complex work of art.

„We think that this development is a result of several factors interacting. The exhibit invites its visitors to dream and observe, it reflects a diversity of opinions, and enables the spectator to look at parts of our world from a totally different perspective. It's controversial, yet rarely judges“, Frederik Braun explains. 265,000 Miniatur Wunderland 'citizens' have been deliberately staged by many employees. Each one of the model makers is free to develop scenes, and to let personal observations and dreams flow into his work. And thus, in more than 795,000 working hours, a world has been created where socio-critical scenes take place in romantic landscapes, permissiveness exists next to tradition, and reality blends with dreams.

However, not only the creation of a world of its own makes Miniatur Wunderland so unique. Innovative high-technology, which has never been installed in model layouts before, is hidden within and beneath the impressive landscapes. "One of our principals has always been to meet every challenge, no matter how hopeless it seems to be in the beginning. With this attitude we managed to create technology which astounds our visitors", Gerit Braun adds. For example: 389,000 LED lights, which are dynamically controlled by a self-developed light control system, provide an almost perfect simulation of day and night; 280 computer-controlled cars don't cease to amaze the visitors, and thanks to over 200 push-button actions guests can interact with the tiny Wunderlanders.

In short – Miniatur Wunderland is not only a normal model railway, but a world which invites the visitors in many ways to marvel, dream, and discover.



## CONTACT

## YOUR CONTACTS

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## PRESS PORTAL

[presse.miniatur-wunderland.de](http://presse.miniatur-wunderland.de)

## GENERAL INFORMATION

## INTERNET



[www.miniatur-wunderland.com](http://www.miniatur-wunderland.com)



[www.facebook.com/MiniaturWunderlandHamburg](https://www.facebook.com/MiniaturWunderlandHamburg)



[plus.google.com/+miniaturwunderlandhamburg](https://plus.google.com/+miniaturwunderlandhamburg)



[@miniaturwunderland](https://www.instagram.com/miniaturwunderland)

## OPENING HOURS

Monday 9.30 – 18.00 Uhr

Tuesday 9.30 – 21.00 Uhr

Wednesday 9.30 – 18.00 Uhr

Thursday 9.30 – 18.00 Uhr

Friday 9.30 – 19.00 Uhr

Saturday 8.00 – 21.00 Uhr

Sunday 8.30 – 20.00 Uhr

Special opening hours on public holidays and during nationwide school holidays.

## ADMISSION

Adults: 15 Euros

Children (under 16 years): 7,50 Euros

Seniors: 13 Euros

Students: 11 Euros

## TICKETS

Bookable on [www.miniatur-wunderland.com/tickets](http://www.miniatur-wunderland.com/tickets)

