



Rowan the miniature horse is completely housebroken and as gentle as any dog, says owner M.J. Thorn.

Miniature Horse At Home In The House

Completely housebroken and as gentle as any dog, Rowan the miniature horse is a treasured member of the Thorn family in Bozeman, Mont.

"We got her when she was just a few months old, and my wife trained her, much as you would a dog," says M. J. Thorn. "We have a swinging door between the kitchen and the laundry room with a large doggie door leading outside from the laundry room. When she needs to 'go', she heads outside."

Rowan is so well trained that on a visit out of state, the Thorn family stayed in a motel with her. They did put a muzzle on her to ensure she didn't nibble on room contents.

"Rowan would nuzzle my wife when she needed to go outside," says Thorn. "When we got home, we received a letter from the motel manager. He said the room was in better shape than when people brought dogs, and Rowan was welcome back anytime."

At home, the Thorns use a lead and halter when walking Rowan. Sometimes they harness her to a miniature wagon.

Going on three years of age, Rowan is nearly 32 in. in height. Thorn expects she is nearing her full height. Like full-size horses, Rowan is expected to reach 30 years of age or more. In the meantime, they are enjoying her status as part of the family. In fact, Thorn describes her as a little sister to the family's four boys.

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Rowan goes along for rides (above) and even has access to the family bathtub (below).



Fire Pits Made From Scrap Iron Parts

Jan Anderson rearranges her fire pits like many people rearrange furniture. She starts with a large tire rim and artistically stacks implement parts from her scrap iron pile.

"I'm intrigued by iron parts and how they fit together," Anderson says. "I didn't grow up on a farm, so I don't know what all the parts are. To me they're just functional art. I like the iron because it rusts and changes color."

Thankfully, she's never short parts. Many come from her dairy farming son-in-law. Others are junked parts from the agriculture research center where her husband, Vern, works in Carrington, N. Dak.

"The guys like to come and see what I did with those parts," Anderson laughs.

The fire pit aficionado does all the work herself, from laying out a fireproof base of galvanized metal from an old swather to lining up mower section guards along the edge. No welding is involved.

"Friction holds it together," Anderson says. "It's just a matter of trial and error. I reassemble each one many times before it works."



Visitors enjoy identifying the different parts on Jan Anderson's homemade fire pits.

The one at her Carrington home has been modified often and makes a great outdoors stove for cooking meals in foil or slow cooking a beef brisket in a Dutch oven.

Visitors enjoy identifying the parts: broken digger shanks, disc blades, roller chain and a blower from a combine's chaff spreader, for example.

"People that work with these implements might be horrified to see how the parts are being used," Anderson laughs. "But it's giving them a new life. I like making something from nothing."

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"Sky bike" ride looks like a single-wheeled, upside down bicycle, with the rider pedaling around a 200-ft. long metal track.

"Sky Bike" Great Fun For Young And Old Alike

Scott Olson is an "idea guy". For example, one day he looked at a manure hauler mounted on a track inside a dairy barn and it inspired him to build a "sky bike" ride in his rural yard.

It looks somewhat like a single-wheeled, upside down bicycle, with the rider pedaling around a 200-ft. long oval-shaped metal track. The track, located about 6 ft. off the ground, is supported by a series of metal poles anchored in the ground.

"Neighbors come over with their kids and ride it all the time. It's a lot of fun because you never have to watch where you're going," says Olson. "You pedal just like you do on a regular bike, but you can't fall over. It really works great for people who can't ride a bike any more or who can't see. I have a friend in his mid 80's who says it makes a great fitness machine."

The bike rides around a track built from welded-together, 4-in. dia. conduit pipe. A chain-driven 26-in. bicycle wheel runs against the bottom of the pipe. The bike frame is supported by a pair of hangers, each of which contains four roller blade rollers that follow the track.

A 7-speed cable gear shifter mounts on one of the handlebars.

"It moves at speeds up to 15 mph, which feels like you're really flying because you're going in circles," says Olson. "It doesn't have brakes on it so you coast to a stop. However, I plan to install brakes. I also plan to double the track length to about 400 ft. I'd like to build a commercial unit for sale."

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"It's a lot of fun because you never have to watch where you're going," says inventor Scott Olson.