

He Built His Own Hummer

By Janis Schole

Thomas Christoph of St. Albert, Alberta, wanted his own Hummer for "extreme 4-wheeling" but he couldn't justify the cost. He decided to build his own. Ten months and more than 3,000 rivets later, he now drives his eye-catching home-built vehicle to and from work.

Since he is a computer systems analyst by day, he completed the ambitious project in his spare time. Although there are Hummer replica kits available, Christoph said he wanted to build his from scratch because it would be far less expensive and he would have the freedom to make it more authentic.

"I've always liked Hummers, and they are quite a good candidate to build from scratch because they are fairly square, with few curves," he explains.

Before starting his own project, Christoph spent a lot of time familiarizing himself with Hummer replicas by reading and researching. Once he began planning his project, he was very careful not to violate or infringe on GM's copyright in any way.

He says "civilian Hummers" cost a minimum of \$190,000 (Canadian), but he was still able to build his military version, which includes far more features, for \$30,000. Civilians can buy surplus military Hummers, but they are in very limited supply.

"Mine is cheaper to maintain because I'm using standard Chevy parts which are far more affordable and easily accessible. Prices

for authentic Hummers are very high because of the prestige factor. There's a lot of resentment in the Hummer community against these replicas and it's gotten to the point where I don't bother telling anyone that I built this one myself. They say, hey, nice Hummer, and I just say thanks and leave it at that."

The exterior is dimensionally identical to a plastic toy model he has because he used a caliper to take measurements of the toy and then expanded them to scale. It worked out so well he has formed a company called Rocky Mountain Coachworks to market his do-it-yourself plans.

It only took Christoph 10 months to complete all the basic body and chassis work, making it driveable. The trim and interior took two more months to complete.

Christoph started with the frame and both axles off a '78 Chevy Suburban and shifted the whole drive train back 17 in. so he could mount the radiator at a 45 degree angle. He had a 420 hp engine built at a race shop, bought a refurbished transfer case, and had a transmission custom built to match the horsepower the engine puts out.

He did all of the sub-frame and vehicle body metal fabrication by himself in his two-car garage. The completed unit weighs 6,500 lbs.

Christoph located Military Surplus parts off the Internet to put together the hood, windshield frame, roof, doors, and slant back.



Christoph's Hummer is a nearly exact replica right down to the turret on top.

The unit has a fully operational turret (minus the artillery) and bulletproof glass.

The interior is another story, with all the bells and whistles any civilian could want. He installed a DVD entertainment system, a 2,500-watt stereo system, a GPS satellite navigation system with laptop, and a rearview color camera system with a 7-in. LCD display in the same location that a rearview mirror would be.

He has compiled a detailed set of plans that he will sell to others who wish to build their own Hummers replicas. He also sells a CD that follows the building process of his ma-

chine. It includes 2,500 photographs, 51 minutes of TV quality video clips, 18 time-lapse video clips showing the Hummer taking shape, and daily journal entries that chronicle the process from beginning to end. It sells for \$25 (U.S.) plus \$4 shipping. Detailed plans sell for \$250.

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Home-Built Tire Cutter Still in Use After 20 Years

What to do with used tires has always been a problem, says Ray Mickan, Mickan Motors, Georgetown, Texas.

The company was started by Ray's father Daniel in 1927 and used tires have always plagued the business.

In the early 1980's, landfills required tires to be quartered so they'd take up less space. To accomplish this, Ray built a hydraulic cutter that's still being used today.

It mounts on a tractor 3-pt hitch and uses a hydraulically powered knife to cut through the tires. He says the design is simple. It's shaped like an 'L', with the horizontal bottom of the L, which points back from the tractor, made from two side-by-side lengths of 2 x 3 in. heat-treated steel bar. "The bar stock is very hard, so the corners retain a sharp edge. They're spaced just far enough apart to let the knife slip between them, so it cuts something like a pair of scissors," he explains.

The top link fastens about halfway up the vertical side of the L. The knife is hinged at the back of the L, in the corner, and there's a hydraulic cylinder on top. This design lets it cut all sizes of tires, from small cars all the

way up to large ones off of tractors and construction equipment.

Mickan says there was a time during the late '80s and early '90s when his used tires were cut into smaller pieces and used for fill in septic drainfields. "An official from the county health department was buying tires here and saw workers cutting the tires into quarters for the landfill. He suggested we cut them smaller - in pieces about the width of the palm of your hand - and use them instead of gravel. We cut up some that way and tried them. It worked great and for several years, we took the time to cut them into small pieces," he says.

Changes in tire disposal fees imposed under Texas law made it uneconomical to pay a worker to spend that much time cutting up tires, so Mickan discontinued selling used tires for drainfield fill.

He says the cutter is still being used to cut tires into quarters for the landfill, though.

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Ray Mickan's home-built tire cutter mounts on a tractor 3-pt. hitch and uses a hydraulically-powered knife to cut through tires.



Unit slices easily through most sizes of tires.

One-Pass Brush Killer Mows And Sprays

Controlling brush, multiflora rose and even Canada thistle has been easy for Jack Delaney since the Missouri farmer strapped a spray tank to the top of his 20-year old Bush Hog rotary mower.

Delaney welded brackets to the top of the main mower housing to hold a 100-gal. flat bottom spray tank. He strapped the tank to the frame with a couple of V-belts.

"It is all gravity feed," says Delaney. "I put an electric shutoff on the tank and ran a hose from it to a hole in the housing over each of the three blades. When I get to a patch of brush that I want to spray, I just open up the

nozzle and let the blades do the spreading." While the rig doesn't allow Delaney to apply exact rates, he clipped 60 acres infested with multiflora rose and cedar trees last year and used only 100 gallons of the herbicide/diesel fuel mix. He had about a 90 percent kill rate.

"The brush is controlled easier after it has been clipped," reports Delaney. "It worked well, and I didn't have more than \$200 invested in the new tank and shutoff valve."

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Jack Delaney strapped a 100-gal. spray tank to the top of his Bush Hog rotary mower.