

## Semi Truck Converted To Motor Home

Roger and Doris Bobbett like to travel, but they never liked the way their motor home rocked in the wind. Plus, the gas mileage wasn't great. That's when Roger got the idea to combine the advantages of a semi truck with the comforts of a mobile home.

"Everyone thought I was crazy," says the Morgantown, Ky., man. But fortunately, the project was a success, and the couple hasn't looked back since.

"The original motor home got 4 to 5 mpg on gas. This truck gets more than twice the mileage on diesel - 11 mpg," Bobbett says. "It's heavy and doesn't wobble in the wind so it's much more comfortable to drive."

Bobbett mounted his '84 Georgia Boy Excalibre motor home on a '92 Ford LTL Aeromax 9000 semi truck. The motor home was originally 31 ft. long, but he removed the fiberglass nose cone from the front of it.

He removed the truck's sleeper compartment and extended the frame by 9 ft. On the motor home, Bobbett cut out the entire frame

and axles before setting the shell down on the newly extended truck frame. One of the truck's original rear axles serves as the rear axle of the motor home.

He opened up the back of the truck cab to make a walk-through entrance to the motor home.

"The rig is pretty well wide open from the cab into the front of the motor home," he says.

"Due to the truck chassis being 6 in. higher off the ground, I had to put an electric step on the side entry door of the motor home to make it easier to get in and out."

The whole project took about 3 months of work. Not counting the value of the vehicles themselves, Bobbett says he spent about \$10,000 on parts to join the two together.

The couple has put 18,000 miles on their conversion in the last 2 1/2 years.

"Most of the time, we pull into a campground, and here they come with a camera. Somebody told me there's a place in Houston that does this sort of thing - mounts mo-



"Everyone thought I was crazy," says Roger Bobbett who mounted a 1984 motor home on a 1992 Ford LTL Aeromax 9000 semi truck. "The original motor home got 4 to 5 mpg on gas. This truck gets more than twice the mileage on diesel," he says.

tor homes on semi trucks. I've seen a couple on the road but never talked to anyone who has one."

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## Hand-Carved Mini Machines Show Incredible Detail

"I've never seen anything like it before. The detail is incredible."

That's the kind of comment we heard from people seeing Gale Henn's hand-carved mini machines for the first time at a recent antique tractor show. The Hastings, Minn., man carves them entirely out of hard maple and basswood.

Three tractors, a sawmill, and a Bombardier tracked ski-type vehicle were on display. Also on hand was an International Harvester buzz saw complete with a wooden engine.

All mini machines are made to a 12:1 scale, and all were made using ordinary carving tools, a 36-in. lathe, and a bandsaw. Each mini machine is made from hundreds of different parts - the Bombardier alone has more than 600 parts in it. All the parts are glued together, with no nails or screws and no bolt heads or nuts showing.

"They're built with a lot of realistic looking detail," says Henn. "I get an unbelievable number of compliments. At least 80 percent of the pieces are carved before I ever put the machine together. First I go to a real machine and take photos. I also measure all the pieces that I'll have to make and write the information down, which takes up pages

and pages. Later, I refer back to the measurements to make a drawing of each piece. I don't add paint or veneer or stain of any kind to the wood. I believe you have to see the wood to really appreciate its beauty."

Henn made his first carving, a 1943 Deere LA tractor, 10 years ago. "I drove the real LA tractor in a parade one time and fell in love with it," he says. Since then he has made a 1946 Case VAC tractor, a 1954 IH Super H tractor, the 1952 Bombardier, and the 1921 IH buzz saw. "I made the buzz saw because I know a guy who owns one. The real buzz saw had a 30-in. blade while mine is less than 3 in. in diameter. I used cherry wood to make it. The belt is made from veneer birch."

Bombardier snow machines could hold up to eight people. "I often go ice fishing at the Lake of the Woods, next to Canada, where they often use the Bombardier to take us out on the lake," says Henn. "The track on my Bombardier is made from hard maple. There are 72 cleats on each track, and 144 backing plates.

"I cultivated a lot of corn with the Case tractor. And I've always been partial to the Super H tractor."

It takes a lot of time to make each carving,



Before he starts carving, Gale Henn takes photos of the original machine and carefully measures all the pieces he has to make. Some projects have taken as long as 300 hours to complete.

says Henn. For example, he spent more than 300 hours on the Bombardier. "My neighbor says I'm nuts to do this," he notes. "But it's all worth it on the last day when I finish put-

ting a machine together. It's a great feeling."

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## "Wheelbarrow" Fishing Boat

"I cut a 300-gal. oval-shaped spray tank in half to make a one-man fishing boat. I can move it around by myself just like I'd move a wheelbarrow," says Leroy Groening, Lowe Farm, Manitoba.

When he's done fishing, Groening simply attaches a wheel next to the trolling motor and rolls the boat up a plank, right into the back of his pickup.

The boat measures 4 1/2 ft. wide by 5 ft. long and is fitted with a bucket seat from an old van. A trolling motor locks onto a metal tube mounted horizontally across the front part of the boat. A pair of pipes on front hold fishing rods. Drink holders are welded into both corners on front.

After cutting the tank in half, Groening reinforced all the edges with steel tubing. He added more tubing across the center of the tank to support the seat. A small handle on each side of the boat makes it easy for two people to carry it.

To move the boat by himself, Groening moves the motor to a horizontal position and then slides the shaft on a single wheel into the tubing. Then he lifts the back of the boat up a bit and wheels it into the water. "Once I get the boat in the water, I just slide the wheel out and throw it behind the seat."



Trolling motor locks onto metal bar across back of boat.

"The bucket seats are very comfortable compared to boats that just have a board to sit on. The boat is quite stable, but it sticks out of the water only about 8 in. so I don't go out into big waves. I got the idea from a friend who cut a heating fuel tank in half to build a raft.

"If I want, I can easily add another seat. The seats still have their slider brackets on them so I can move them back and forth. They attach with two nuts which makes it easy to take them in and out of the boat."

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"Once I get the boat in the water, I just take the transport wheel off and throw it behind a seat," says Leroy Groening. Boat measures 4 1/2 ft. wide by 5 ft. long. When done fishing, Groening attaches the wheel next to the motor and rolls the boat up a plank into his pickup bed.

