



"We have the biggest TV stand in the world," jokes Jim Briden, who keeps a restored 110 hp Case steam engine in his home. Note child on wheel at lower right.

Steam Engine Tractor Makes Living Room Unique

Jim Briden can gaze at his prize 110 hp Case steam engine while watching TV. That's because the behemoth 20-ton machine is in his Sabin, Minn., living room. "We have the biggest TV stand in the world," Jim jokes.

The strangest thing about his unusual household "furniture" is that it was actually his wife's idea.

After Jim restored the 1913 80 hp Case in 1976 his wife, Lynette, said, "Wouldn't it be nice if we could have a room where we could look at our steam engine every day?"

Years later, on Nov. 29, 2001, Jim took her up on the suggestion. By then he had restored an even bigger steam engine. With the help of a neighbor with a 4-WD Deere tractor, the 110 hp Case was pushed into a new addition on the Bridens' home.

The 7-ft. dia. back wheels weigh 5,500 lbs. apiece and are supported by two 3 by 5-ft. support pillars under the 6-in. concrete floor. The 32 by 40-ft. addition has 13-ft. tall walls with a 16-ft. vaulted ceiling to accommodate the 12-ft., 6-in. tall Case.

"It's the largest steam engine Case ever made," Jim says. "The tractor was designed to pull a 12-bottom plow and to power the largest threshing machines."

Jim has been a fan of steam engines since he was 10 and worked with his dad on the family farm. He later bought a welding and machine business from a man who restored

steam engines and has been working on new and old equipment ever since at his business, Larson Welding & Machine Co., in Fargo, N. Dak.

"Right now, we have five steam engines to work on for others," Jim says. "But as far as I know, nobody else has a steam engine in their living room."

Behind the steam engine there is enough space for a bookcase and pathway, and the rest of the living room is "normal", Jim says, with old tractor photos, a few collectibles, stained glass windows from Lynette's grandparents' home, and light fixtures from a church.

With double, barn-style doors at one end of the room, the engine can be taken outside, Jim says. Eventually he'll probably do that to please a grandson who wants to see the steam engine run. Taking it out isn't as difficult as cleaning it up and moving it back in.

For others considering "extreme" decorating, Jim offers a couple suggestions. "The main ingredient is that you have to have a very understanding wife. I tell people there are 25 steam engines like that one, but my wife is one of a kind." The Bridens welcome visitors. Call for an appointment.

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Gene Boehler built this 15-ft. high swing for his granddaughter, using 2 1/2-in. steel pipe for the top rail and 1 1/2-in. galvanized sq. tubing for the legs.

15-Ft. Tall Backyard Swing

Two years ago, Gene Boehler's oldest granddaughter asked him to build her a swing. "She told me, 'I want a swing that's bigger than yours,'" says Boehler, who owned a conventional playset.

So he went to work building a 15-ft. high swing. He used 2 1/2-in. steel pipe for the top rail and 1 1/2-in. galvanized sq. tubing for the

legs, which are anchored in concrete. Each pair of legs is reinforced by corner braces made from 4-in. galvanized steel angle iron.

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Back in 1936 Allegheny Ludlum Steel worked with Ford Motor Co. to build the world's first stainless steel car.

1936 Stainless Steel Car Still Looks Like New

Stainless steel was not widely used in 1936 when Allegheny Ludlum Steel worked with Ford Motor Company to build the world's first and only stainless steel car. Besides raising awareness of stainless steel's "miracle metal" quality, the resulting half dozen Ford Coupes created excitement in the auto industry. Four of the six stainless steel cars still exist today.

The cars were used as rewards by the steel company. Their top salesmen earned the right to drive them for a year. Besides their intriguing appearance, the stainless steel V-8 engine coups were said to "run like a sewing machine" - smooth and quiet. Each car logged more than 200,000 miles, before retiring to private ownership in 1946. One, in excellent condition, is on display at the Heinz Regional

History Center in Pittsburgh, Penn.

According to reports, the cars lasted much longer than the dies to make them - they were ruined by stamping the stainless car parts. The original six were the only coupes made, but Allegheny Ludlum and Ford collaborated on two more stainless models later, a 1960 Thunderbird and a 1967 Lincoln Continental Convertible. Nine of the 11 built are reportedly still in use.

A full set of the stainless steel automobiles (1936 Deluxe, T-Bird, and Continental) are on permanent display at the Crawford Auto Museum in Cleveland, Ohio.

Here's a website with more information: www.allegheny-ludlum.com/pages/companyinfo/stainlesscars.asp.



Allegheny and Ford later worked together to make two more stainless steel models - a 1967 Lincoln Continental Convertible and a 1960 Thunderbird.