



Don and Carolyn Riedlinger moved onto a 9-acre home site and made a home out of three connected, 28-ft. dia. grain bins.



Getting everything to fit inside the bin's round walls required some imaginative planning.

## Living Is Easy “Grain Bin” Home

“I never pictured myself in a subdivision living close to other people,” says Carolyn Riedlinger, whose residence was built from three connected 28-ft. dia. grain bins. The Riedlingers live in one, their daughter and her husband live in another, and the bin in the center is a garage with a game room overhead. Bathrooms are located in the structures that connect the silos together.

Carolyn and her husband, Don, bought the bins on a local farm and moved them to a 9-acre home site near Gilbert, Ariz. A crane set them on concrete pads and the Riedlingers transformed them into a home with plenty of hard work, much of which they did themselves.

The silos were secured to the concrete foundation with anchors bolted to the tabs at the silo base. The 2 by 6's used to fur-

out the interior were wedged in place “like a puzzle” and later secured with sprayed foam insulation after all the wiring and plumbing was installed. Don notes he was concerned about the bins heating up, but the insulation with nearly an R-50 rating solved the problem.

Most of the walls were covered with sheetrock, by cutting shallow slits on the back of the 1/2-in drywall, so it could be slightly bent to fit the curved walls.

Getting everything to fit in about 550 sq. ft. on each floor took some planning. The narrow staircase follows the curvature of the wall, and a pantry is tucked underneath.

Putting flat on round was also tricky. Narrow kitchen cabinets were chosen and given narrower backs to fit snugly on the wall. The Riedlingers' son, Matt, built a round

shower.

“The biggest challenge was sealing the windows,” Don says. Though the windows were narrow, they required flashing and a lot of caulking to seal them properly.

Carolyn designed the floor plan and picked out the décor. “We left the metal exposed in some places, like in the bathroom and part of the kitchen,” she says. “I like the tin roof; it's fun to listen to when it rains.”

She used old barn doors and other junk store finds to decorate. Her favorite is an old \$50 ladder she uses as a bookcase.

While the Riedlingers love their home, and Don would build one again, climbing steps is getting more difficult. They plan to tear down a barn for the second time - move it to their property and make it into a home. The family first tore down the 1906 post and

beam barn in Iowa in the early 1990's, and had it built into a craft boutique business that the Riedlingers operated. The plan was to make it a church, but it doesn't meet certain codes, so the family will move it once again and make it into their home.

The Riedlingers also had a grain mill torn down in Virginia and shipped by three semi trailers to Arizona. They rebuilt it into Shenandoah Mill, a popular wedding and reception facility, owned and operated by the family.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Don and Carolyn Riedlinger, 1359 S. Gilbert Rd., Gilbert, Ariz. 85296 (ph 480 892-2001; www.shenandoahmill.com).

## Built-From-Scratch Railroad Replicas

Dennis Evers, the go-to guy for railroad replicas, runs his shop on a ranch in southwest Colorado. The former policeman got into the business by accident in the 1980's. Since then, he has been building exact scale replicas of signals, baggage carts and even locomotives to ship to customers all over the world.

“After I built a 440-ft. railroad in my yard with a simple crossing signal, I sent a photo in to a magazine. They ran it and I started getting customers,” says Evers.

Under the company name Scale Products, he has since built various replicas including pirate ships and even a 9-ft. gorilla. However, railroad replicas are his specialty.

“Almost every railroad company in the country uses our scaled down crossing signals for training purposes,” he says.

One of his biggest jobs was a 5/8-scale 1860's steam locomotive and coal car. It was commissioned by the Canadian Lottery for display at a casino. The 35-ft. long project stretched from one side of his 1,500 sq. ft. shop to the other.

He calls his place the Recycle Ranch because when he builds something, he uses as much recycled material as he can. For example, in building the locomotive nearly everything was built from scratch on the ranch from scrap steel or “repurposed” parts.

“The brass gauges in the cab had been trashed by a local company who makes them for the oil industry,” says Evers. “I took them apart and made new bezels so they look like they were from the 1860's.”

The boiler was an 8-ft. long, 24-in. dia. pipe made from oil well pipe. “There's a tremendous amount of waste when companies are building things. To them it's scrap; to me it's virgin stock,” says Evers, who estimates he normally buys steel for 50 percent of the

price of new.

Cylinders on the engine were recycled propane tanks. Steam lines and valves were from old plumbing. Connecting rods from the cylinders to the wheels were fabricated from lengths of pipe wrapped in bronze-plated aluminum. Evers cut the sheet to fit, rolled it and pop riveted it on the backside.

“I used a plasma torch to make components out of scrap and melted down small motors and cast parts out of the aluminum,” says Evers. “I used a door from an old ornate wood stove for the firebox door, putting Eisenglass in the holes with a flickering light behind it.”

Sometimes Evers found what he needed in unusual places. “Walmart fry pans were ideal for the back end of the cylinders where the connecting rods come out,” he says. “The whistle was originally a toilet paper holder, and the headlight was an ornamental casting from a fence company in Texas.”

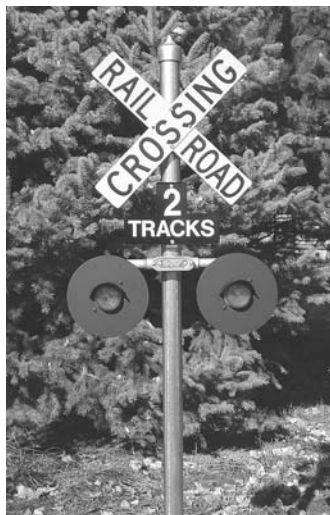
Everything was based on photos and drawings of old locomotives. Plans were drawn to scale using a \$19 CAD program. From start to finish, the project took 6 months of Evers' and his son's time. Even with their time, using the recycled parts, he was able to bid the project at 35 percent less than a British firm.

“You have to be creative in building things like this,” he says. “You can run into trouble on new projects because you have no idea how many hours or months they can take. There are no guidelines for building replica locomotives.”

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Recycle Ranch, 7054 C.R. 521, Bayfield, Colo. 81122 (ph 970 946-4180; dennis@trainsignals.com; www.therecycleranch.com or www.trainsignals.com).



Dennis Evers builds exact scale replicas of railroad items, including this 5/8-scale 1860's steam locomotive and coal car.



He uses as much recycled material as he can to build crossing signals (left) and other replicas.