

Business Is Booming For Tractor Restoration Shop

Prospective customers at Stan Heinze's restoration shop can see how talented he is simply by viewing his personal collection which includes a set of styled and unstyled B John Deere tractors. The tractors showcase his mechanical skills and the painting talent of his partner, Chris Letourneau, as well as the skills of three other employees at Classic Farm Tractors, LLC. Heinze is also a third generation farmer who raises corn, sugar beets and wheat on his Colorado farm.

"Everyone on staff believes in attention to detail and getting restorations right by listening to the needs of clients," Heinze says.

He understands what collectors want. Heinze, 51, started collecting tractors when he was in high school and bought two of his grandfather's tractors. He has owned as many as 45 tractors, but recently "thinned the herd down" for ease of maintenance, keeping the most valuable for his retirement nest egg.

He fabricates many replacement parts and is an expert at magnetos, carburetors and building custom brass fuel lines.

"Restorations can be as elaborate as an all-bolt restoration where the entire tractor is taken apart and rebuilt from the ground up, or it can be as minimal as a quick paint job," Heinze says. "We work with our clients to determine a budget and how they intend on using the tractor after the restoration is completed."

For painting, he charges for the cost of parts

plus labor based on local paint shop rates and discounts the mechanical rate to about 60 percent of local tractor dealership rates.

Clients include collectors from Colorado, Pennsylvania, Indiana and Nebraska. Heinze was encouraged to start his business when people saw his tractors at shows and asked him to do work for them.

Restorations have included everything from a 1919 Waterloo Boy to more modern Deere 3020's and 4020's. Some offer more challenges than others.

The most challenging was a 730 All Fuel Standard that had been in South Africa and was brought back to the U.S. The client wanted it restored in time to be auctioned at a national exposition.

"The tractor would test both the mechanics and painters from the start to the finish," Heinze says. "The joke would be that it had been cursed with a voodoo doll while in South Africa because every process would be one step forward and two steps back."

Mechanics had to tear down parts sometimes more than once - to make them leak-free and mechanically sound. It had to be painted twice and decals had to be ordered and corrected three times. It rained on photo day. A tornado delayed transportation to the auction.

"The good news is the tractor was beautiful and brought the client good value at the national exposition auction so it was



Before and after photos of a restored 1938 Deere BWH-40, one of only 15 produced.

worth all the trials and tribulations," Heinze says.

Another personal restoration gave him satisfaction, as he was able to purchase a rare tractor for his John Deere B collection. After years of searching, in 2009, he found a California owner of an unstyled BWH-40 John Deere.

"The tractor was a basket case and had to be completely torn down and rebuilt, but all the rare pieces were intact," Heinze says.

The tractor required all-bolt restoration, and received Exposition Quality Certification in Waterloo, Iowa, in 2010. Only 15 models of the tractor were made.

"It is by far one of the most beautiful restorations to come out of the shop," Heinze says.

Classic Farm Tractors operates year-round. While Heinze is partial to Deere tractors, he



also owns and restores other makes including Farmall, Case, Minneapolis Moline, Massey Harris and many others. He also has many tractors and parts for sale.

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Edward and Eugene Kaban built this 4-WD articulated tractor using the front end of a Deere 300 garden tractor and the back end of a 316 model.

4-WD Articulated Deere Garden Tractor

"People tell us it looks more factory than a factory-made tractor," says Edward and Eugene Kaban, Brandon, Man., about the 4-WD articulated tractor they made out of two old Deere garden tractors.

They used most of a Deere 300 model equipped with a 16 hp engine on front, removing the front axle. The rear end off a 316 model mounts behind it. Both tractors are about 30 years old. The tractor's 4 wheels are off the original garden tractors, and all of them drive.

After cutting the front axle and wheels out from under the 300 model, they moved its rear end and transmission forward 16 in., which left the tractor's front end hanging out about 2 ft. They cut 38 in. off the front of the 316 model.

The 300 model's driveshaft connects the transmission in front to the 316 transmission in back, with a pair of universal joints in between.

To connect the two drive axles together they welded a triangle-shaped angle iron plate between them and then added the articulation point. They used swivel ball sockets off a Cat. II 3-pt. hitch to make the articulation point. "The tractor has a total of 3 swivel ball sockets, which allow the back tractor to follow the ground contour separate from the

front tractor," says Eugene.

Both transmissions are hydrostatically controlled by a lever that mounts next to the steering wheel. A throttle cable extends to the back transmission and is synchronized so that both transmissions pull or are in neutral at the same time.

Steering is controlled by a 6 by 1 1/2-in., double-acting hydraulic cylinder, which swivels on a steel pin that's welded to the tractor's articulation point. "The front tractor's original steering valve control is hooked up to the hydraulic cylinder and is used to control the steering," says Eugene.

"It makes a nice looking tractor with a lot of traction. If we want, we can mount a snow blade on front and add suitcase weights off a Belarus tractor on back to offset its weight. We painted the unit this summer, adding lights on the fenders. We plan to make a 3-pt. hitch and hook up double-acting control valves under the seat in order to operate it. The 3-pt. could be used to operate a rototiller, mower or snowblower.

"We chose these particular tractor models because both are equipped with the same hydrostatic transmission and have horizontal shafts between the engine and transmission that lined up correctly. It took a long time to find the tractors. All the bolt holes were

Taking advantage of a sale on treated landscape timbers, Kenneth Gustafson built this 8 by 8-ft. shed. He uses it to store firewood.



Wood Shed Made From Landscape Timbers

Landscape timbers can be used to make low-cost wood sheds, says Kenneth Gustafson, Carney, Mich., who built an 8 by 8-ft. shed with a sloping metal roof.

"When I retired and moved back to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan where I grew up, I needed a small wood shed to store firewood. A local lumberyard had a sale on treated landscape timbers at \$3 each. I spent a total of about \$325 to build it. I could hardly have bought a small tin shed for that price," says Gustafson.

The shed has no floor but stands on a bed of gravel so water drains away. Gustafson simply stacked the timbers on top of each other, cutting them to size to make room for a wooden door. The bottom timbers nest on 2 by 6 treated lumber all the way around.

"I didn't use any splines between the

timbers because I figured the air flow would help dry out the firewood," says Gustafson. "I used two nails and two screws in every timber. I used screws in the ends of the timbers or near the ends, and nails in the middle. The nails go about two thirds of the way through the timber below them. All they do is keep the timbers in position.

"It took exactly 100 timbers to build the shed. The nice thing is that they were already treated so I didn't have to do any staining at all."

He used exterior grade plywood to make the door. The metal roof was left over from when he built his log home.

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the same so we were able to join the tractors together without cutting the hood or side panels.

"We used two universal joints at the articulation point in order to reduce the angle on the driveline and minimize driveline 'chatter,'" notes Eugene.

The front axles removed from the 300 tractor model were used to build a trailer. "We can tow the trailer by hand or, by removing half the hitch, hook it up to the

tractor," he says.

The Kabans paid \$500 for the 300 model and \$550 for the 316. "We spent about \$100 to overhaul the 300 model's engine. However, we got some of that money back because we sold the 316's engine for \$200," notes Eugene.

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