

HOME SWEET HOME

Living Is Easy In A Boeing 727

It seems strange at first glance, but the Mississippi hairdresser who converted a 727 airliner into a house says it has a lot of built-in advantages.

"I'll never have to re-roof. I'll never have to repaint. I'll never have to worry about the water pipes freezing because everything's so well insulated. Termites won't eat it. I didn't have to put up blinds because every window had curtains already," says Jo Ann Ussery, 52, who bought a 1971 Boeing 727 - minus the wings - from a Greenwood, Miss., airliner salvage company in 1994 for \$2,000. She moved it onto a lake lot near Benoit, Miss., in 1995 at a cost of \$4,000.

The salvaged Continental airliner is 12 ft. wide by 127 ft. long and contains 1,300 sq. ft. of living space.

Entering the house through the tail section, you'll find the original bathroom on one side of the plane. The other bathroom houses a water heater. Forward from them is a storage area and utility room for her washer and dryer.

The kitchen is complete with side-by-side refrigerator and freezer, dishwasher, double sink, cabinets, stove and counters.

Next to the kitchen is a 24-ft. long living

room with entertainment center, sofa, recliners, loveseat, dining table and chairs, coffee table and four end tables.

Beyond the living room are three bedrooms. Two are furnished with king size beds and one has a queen size bed. In addition, there's a master bathroom located in what used to be the cockpit.

The airplane house is heated and cooled with a 4-ton LP-fired furnace and air conditioner.

Ussery also added a big patio and carport to the sides of the house where the wings used to be.

A spiral staircase salvaged out of a 747 leads down from the aft bathroom onto a big deck overlooking Lake Whittington.

"I saw another airliner used like this," Ussery says. "It was used as a hunting shack and was only about half the length of my 727."

Converting the jet into a home took about a year and cost approximately \$40,000, she says.

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Ussery says her 727 "house" has a lot of advantages over a conventional house or mobile home, including the no-maintenance exterior and roof.



One of the three bedrooms in the plane. Two are furnished with king size beds and the third is furnished with a queen size bed. All three have dressers.



The master bedroom. Note the master bath in the background. It's located in what used to be the cockpit.



Wythe's collection includes 71 of the 77 McCormick-Deering models built by IH.

ONLY 6 TRACTORS SHY OF FULL SET

Largest McCormick-Deering Collection In North America

"As far as I know, it's the largest collection of McCormick-Deering tractors in North America and possibly the world," says John Wythe about his antique tractor collection which includes 71 of the 77 McCormick-Deering models, which were built by International Harvester between 1921 and 1962.

The 67-year-old Miniota, Manitoba, farmer began collecting antique tractors in the mid 1970's. He decided to specialize in the gray and red tractors in the mid 1980's, in part to preserve the history of the machines which were named after William Deering and Fowler McCormick, who formed International Harvester in 1902.

Wythe and his wife, Joyce, travel across North America to find the prized tractors. Early-on they were plentiful and could be found rusting in groves and woods, and were easily bought. Now they're harder to come by and Wythe watches auction bills and advertises in newspapers to find them.

All but four of the tractors in his collection are in running order and he uses many in his 1,000-acre farming operation.

One of the most unique tractors in his collection is a 1924 Farmall "Regular". It was the first general purpose farm tractor ever built by IH.

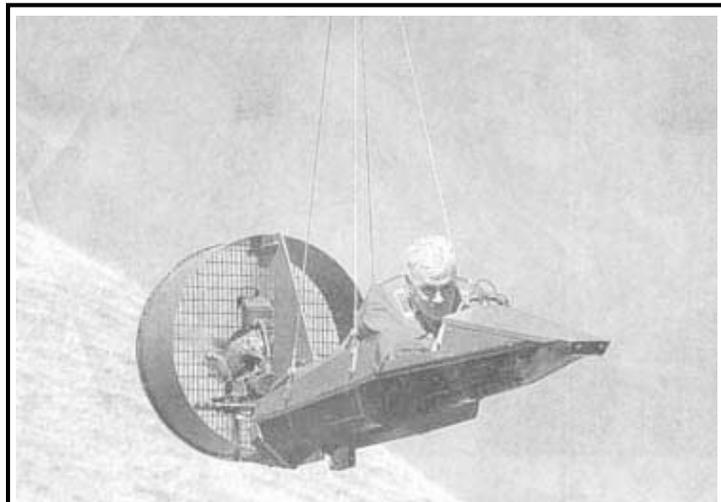
One of the rarest is his 1938 W-14. The smallest of the tractors built by McCormick-Deering in the 1930's, only 1,162 were produced between 1938 and '39.

Another rare bird is a steel wheeled 1935 WD-40, the first wheeled diesel tractor ever built by a North American company. Wythe's tractor was among the first 100 of only 3,370 such tractors built.

Perhaps one of the most nostalgic for Wythe is a 1930 that's like the one he drove as a boy. Built between 1921 and '31, the tractor featured the industry's first enclosed chassis. Three different models were built, and Wythe has one of each, built in 1925, '27, and '31.

About 30 of Wythe's 71 tractors have been completely restored, including paint and body work.

Restoring the tractors often includes interchanging parts from several of the same



It's A Bird? It's A Plane? Well, Sort Of

Eat your hearts out bungee jumpers!

The latest "craze" to hit New Zealand is this swing-style aircraft that shoots through the air at speeds of up to 75 mph.

The "Fly By Wire", created by Neil Harrap, Wellington, is a plane equipped with a motor and steering wheel that runs across a big suspension cable stretched between two hills on either side of the Paikakariki Valley.

The ride begins by winching the plane up the hillside. Then the rider, lying stomach down and face first, releases the plane from the winch cable. The right steering handle is the throttle for the engine which helps the rider gather speed in his or her "swinging" airplane ride.

Rides last 7 1/2 minutes and are available only to those over age 15. Costs \$99 and includes a video tape of the "flight".

model tractors, Wythe says. The work can easily take 1,000 to 1,200 hours, he adds.

The six smaller model tractors he has yet to acquire were used in eastern Canada, mostly in tobacco fields. One is a Farmall 140 and another is a Farmall 340 diesel manufactured between 1959 and '62, near the end of the era.

However, "I won't lose any sleep over not having them," he says.

Wythe and his wife have produced 10 machinery videos at their on-farm studio, including one about their collection called the

"McCormick-Deering Saga".

Many of Wythe's tractors will be on display at the Austin Thrasher's Reunion, July 22-26, at Austin, Manitoba.

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