

Kids Love Going To Shows In This “Dressed Up Wagon”

Allen Riegle of Findlay, Ohio, pulled his two kids in this “dressed up wagon” at the recent Ohio Farm Science Review Show near London, Ohio. Allen made the sporty wagon out of aluminum diamond plate and golf cart parts. It’s complete with a roll cage, LED headlights, turn signals, a horn, and a waterproof sound system that hooks up to Riegle’s cell phone. There’s even a go-kart steering wheel on front, just for looks.

The wagon has a 4-ft. long by 2-ft. wide aluminum diamond plate box that sets about 2 ft. off the ground and rides on 12-in. high golf cart wheels. The steering spindles and wheel hubs are also off a golf cart.

The suspension system uses the shocks off small dirt bikes and steel tubing struts that ride in a ball and socket system. A waterproof motorcycle sound system with an amplifier and speakers is located under the wagon. “The kids enjoy when I plug in my iPhone so they can play their favorite songs as they ride,” says Riegle. “I mounted my cell phone on top of the handle and ran a cord down to

the speaker system. In effect, it works much like an amplified MP3 player.”

A lawn mower battery mounted inside a metal box under the wagon is used to operate the headlights and turn signals. “I used LED lights because they don’t draw as much battery current as ordinary headlights,” says Riegle. “To make the headlights and turn signals I removed the bulbs from common driving lights and replaced them with LED bulbs.”

The rear wheels are equipped with hydraulic disc brakes off an ATV. “I welded a metal ring on the golf cart’s rear wheel hubs and then mounted the disk brakes on them,” says Riegle. “In addition, the master cylinder off the handlebars of an ATV mounts on the wagon’s handlebar and serves as the hydraulic reservoir for the brakes. The hydraulic brake line then extends from the reservoir back to the calipers on the rear wheels. I mounted a nitrogen cylinder on front of the pull handle to balance the weight of the hydraulic reservoir.



Allen Riegle pulled his 2 kids in this sporty wagon at a recent show. It’s complete with a roll cage, LED headlights, turn signals, a horn, and a waterproof sound system that hooks up to Riegle’s cell phone. The go-kart steering wheel on front is just for looks.

“It was a lot of fun to build, but very time-consuming. I spent more than 250 hrs. building it,” notes Riegle.

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Classy Cordwood Flooring

We’ve done stories about resourceful folks who built cordwood buildings, but we’ve never seen a cordwood floor like the one in Steve and Sharon Lee’s Wisconsin home.

“I kind of like doing things nobody else has,” says Steve Lee, who works at J & J Lee Construction Company, a home construction, remodeling and masonry business started by his parents.

He installed the 600 sq. ft. floor a decade ago, and the only sign of wear is around the fireplace where shrinking and swelling has caused minor cracks in the finish.

Lee started with very dry hardwood—two-sided beams salvaged from a 100-year-old barn. He cut the 8-ft. beams into manageable 3-ft. lengths, clamped and braced them vertically, and sawed them in 5/8-in. thick slices “like a loaf of bread” from the top down with a band saw. The thickness made the pieces strong enough to hold together, and the saw could be calibrated easily, dropping 3/4 in. at a time.

After placing the pieces 1/2 to 3/4 in. apart on the plywood subfloor, Lee worked on small sections at a time to spread construction adhesive and glue the wood slices down. After they set, he filled in the spaces with

commercial tile grout mixed with about 20 percent sawdust he had saved.

“The fine sawdust was a good filler so I didn’t need as much grout, and it gives the grout a fibered look,” Lee says. Sawdust in the mortar is recommended for cordwood construction to slow the drying process to prevent cracking.

If Lee were to do it again, he says he would have sealed the wood first. The dry wood sucked in the grout, and Lee spent about 12 hours with an industrial sander using extra coarse to finer grit sandpapers.

“My goal was to sand it nice and smooth, but I ended up sanding just to get the grout off. If I sealed it first, the grout wouldn’t stick to the wood so badly,” Lee says.

His final step was applying several coats of a commercial varnish sealer to get the gloss he wanted. He hasn’t done anything to it since, but notes he will have to refinish it someday just like any other hardwood floor.

“I’ve had calls from people who want to put cordwood over cement. I tell them to make sure they use the proper glue to work with their surface,” Lee says.

He also advises waiting a week after the final coat of varnish is applied before moving



Steve Lee installed this cordwood floor in his Wisconsin home. “It’s a time consuming process to get the wood cut, laid, glued, sanded and varnished. But it turned out pretty neat,” he says. Lee suggests reading Richard Flatau’s book “Cordwood Construction”.

Photos courtesy Richard Flatau

in furniture, as it is soft and weight can leave indents in the floor.

“It’s a time consuming deal from when you get the wood cut, laid, sanded and varnished,” he notes. “But it turned out pretty neat.”

For information about cordwood construction, he consulted with Richard Flatau, a cordwood construction expert who puts on workshops and writes newsletters and

blogs about the topic. Lee suggests reading Flatau’s book “Cordwood Construction Best Practices” available at www.cordwoodconstruction.org or richardflatau@gmail.com.

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His Super “ATV” Is A Tractor Show Novelty

“I thought I’d seen just about every tractor configuration possible in the past 50 years until I saw an ad for a tractor mounted on rubber and metal snow tracks,” says Fred Burkhardt, a Texas farmer and tractor collector. “I bought it from a guy east of San Antonio who used it in a hunting operation.”

Burkhardt describes his unusual gem as a Super A-ATV. “The tractor is a Farmall Super A with a wide front end, built in 1954,” says Burkhardt. “It’s got the original engine, the original steering and the original transmission. The rear wheels were removed and replaced with rubber-coated sprockets to drive the twin metal tracks, which are 16 in. wide and 8 ft. long.”

Burkhardt says he’s done a lot of research to find out who built the rig, but hasn’t been able to come up with the answer. “I found out the tracks and sub-assembly were made by Bombardier, and probably came from a snow cat used to plow logging roads or groom ski slopes,” Burkhardt says. The tracks roll on 3 wheels that could accept standard 15 by 5-in.

auto tires, but these are smooth and filled with foam. They oscillate, are spring loaded and provide a smooth ride over uneven ground. Burkhardt has taken the rig to tractor shows and says people look at it and just shake their heads. “The tractor runs great and it sounds just like a normal Super A,” says Burkhardt. The transmission has 4 speeds forward plus reverse, which works just fine to move the rig over open ground or across rough terrain.

Burkhardt speaks with authority on tractors because he’s collected, restored and refurbished them for the past 50 years. “I’ve got about 100 tractors right now, and this Farmall painted camouflage green is the most unusual one in my collection.”

The platform for the Super A-ATV is 8 ft. long and 6 ft. wide. It has a sturdy metal frame with plywood flooring and 2 bench seats from an old school bus that were widened to fit the platform. Three steps on the right front allow easy access with a handrail so people don’t fall off.

“I think the rig was real practical for the



Farmall Super A’s rear wheels were removed and replaced with rubber-coated sprockets, which drive twin metal tracks that are 16 in. wide and 8 ft. long.

hunting operation,” says Burkhardt. “It could probably transport a dozen people at a time, and even had a gun rack where the muzzles pointed away from the riders.”

Burkhardt says anyone who might know where the Super A-ATV was built or who

built it should contact him.

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