

They Give New Life To Old Barn Wood

"We are passionate that if a barn can't be saved, we'd like to at least save the wood and find a second use for it," says Tadd Morris, owner of 2nd Chance Wood Company in Corunna, Mich. Since he and his father, Joe, tore down their first barns in 2010, the business has expanded from 6,000 to 22,000 sq. ft. in an old manufacturing plant.

"We started as a place to sell reclaimed wood in an area of the country that didn't have anybody doing that, yet we are surrounded by old buildings that are coming down," Morris says.

He points to the tight grain on a board cut from a barn beam and notes that the 1860 to 1910 barns his business rescues were made from virgin timber in Michigan.

"We love the old woods, and they are worth the added time and expense to get them," Morris explains. Customers love them, too, from homeowners who appreciate preserving local, old wood in their homes to architects and developers who include old wood flooring, walls and other accents in their blueprints for commercial projects.

While his father leads the barn crew, tearing down a barn about every 3 weeks, Morris designs pieces for the woodworking crew to build.

Instead of discarding spalted wood pieces or filling in insect holes, mice-chewed and cattle-rubbed boards, they enhance them with clear resin or other finishes. Original ax cuts and saw lines are preserved whenever possible.

"We aren't trying to make an antique. We want to make heirloom pieces," Morris says.

Thick beams become stair treads for a casino. Slabs cut from beams become a log wall blended with polished concrete and galvanized tin for an Internet company's office. Planks create an office desk for a minister and a Mackinac bridge-style conference table with a piece of shipwrecked wood for another business. Old barn doors are rented for wedding photos. One door, with a wood slider in place of a window built in 1863, may become part of the décor for an in-home theater designed to look like an old mine shaft.

In addition to barn wood, 2nd Chance rescues wood, doors and furniture from old homes or businesses and even polishes up old semi-trailer floors for everything from bar tops to stair treads.

There's a lot to preserve. Morris's father has a waiting list of 100 barns to check out in a 20-mile radius. Sometimes his crew does the tear down in exchange for the wood. Other times there is a nominal fee for



"If a barn can't be saved, we'd like to at least save the wood and find a second use for it," says Tadd Morris, owner of 2nd Chance Wood Co.



The company sells reclaimed wood and also designs and builds heirloom pieces.

removing shingles and other parts that can't be recycled.

When they find barns in very good condition, 2nd Chance Wood Co. works with the Michigan Barn Preservation Network, and can provide materials for repair.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Tadd Morris, 2nd Chance Wood Company, 503 Shiawassee St., Corunna, Mich. 48817 (ph 989 472-4488; 2ndchancewoodco@gmail.com; www.2ndchancewood.com).

He's Using Old Silo Wood In A New House

We recently spotted a small ad in a Wisconsin newspaper placed by Kevin Hahn, who buys old wooden silos. He says wood silos and old barns are disappearing fast from the Wisconsin countryside and he wants to save the wood, which often includes center cut fir, 24-ft. beams without a knot, and 20-ft. boards a full 12 in. wide.

"I helped a friend tear down a wooden silo several years ago and thought that wood was really something special," Hahn says.

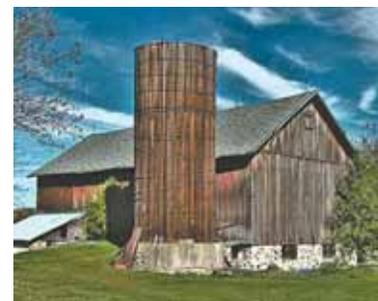
In 2013, Hahn is realizing that dream as he steadily converts an old 40 by 80-ft. dairy barn into his living quarters. He's

using wood from old silos in the construction project and also erecting a renovated 30-ft. tall wooden silo next to his barn house. The silo is supported on the inside by an old commercial propane tank 4 ft. in diameter and 30 ft. long that Hahn has mounted upright on concrete footings. He plans on assembling the wood silo and binding it tight with rings so it looks authentic when it's completed.

Hahn has plenty of old silo wood to work with because he located 7 silos to tear down as the result of the ad he placed. "Some are fir, some are redwood, and they're all different sizes, from 16 ft. tall for the shortest

to 36 ft. for the tallest. All of them are 12 ft. in dia. and the wood is for the most part in excellent shape." One of his bathrooms is lined with silo wood, a fireplace surround looks like an old silo, and another one will be re-built as a miniature silo in a rock garden landscape feature. He also used silo wood for window trim on some of the barn windows.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Kevin Hahn, 21502 Schreiber Rd., Kiel, Wis. 53042 (ph 920 284-2821; geminiinstallations@yahoo.com).



Kevin Hahn is using wood from old silos like this to build his house on a Wisconsin farmstead.

Demand Grows For Heirloom Wheat

Rachael Hollerich and her husband Trent are finding new customers thanks to an old wheat variety. Red Fife hard red spring wheat has become a big seller along with the other grains, flour and baking mixes they sell through their business, Good Earth Mill and Grains. This is their fifth year in business and their second with the heirloom variety.

"Red Fife is known as one of the best spring wheats for baking," say Hollerich. "It has been revived in Canada. This year's harvest is our second, and we'll have a seed bank for future years and be able to sell seed to others."

The couple operates a stone mill that lets them sell fresh ground, Red Fife whole wheat flour as well as Red Fife wheat berries (for cooking and grinding).

Customers include individuals as well as wholesale. Bakers can contract for an acre of wheat, grown and milled for them and their business. The Hollerichs also market at a nearby farmer's market and through two CSA's.

"It's a new market for us, but we are getting a lot of customers just for the Red Fife," says Hollerich. "One reason it's popular is that a growing number of people have gluten sensitivity. We've found people



Red Fife hard red spring wheat is a big seller for Good Earth Mill and Grains.

that can eat Red Fife without problems."

Depending on the year, fields may contain corn, soybeans and rye in addition to the wheat. They also raise chickens and Berkshire hogs. Hollerich says they are a good combination with the grain.

"The screenings and clean-out between grinding different grains are good feed for them," says Hollerich. "They love it."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Good Earth Mill & Grains, 53762 Goose Rd., Good Thunder, Minn. 56037 (ph 507 380-5281; Rachel@GoodEarthMill.com; www.goodearthmill.com).

Top-Bar Hives Cut Beekeeping Costs

Beekeeping does not have to be expensive or require heavy lifting, says Wyatt Mangum, an experienced beekeeper, speaker and promoter of what he calls "top bar hive" beekeeping.

Mangum has worked with bees for 48 years, including owning 125 traditional frame hives at one time. He's now a passionate promoter of top-bar hives.

"Essentially they are horizontal instead of vertical," he says, noting that they were used by the Greeks in the 1600's.

With traditional hives, beekeepers need to lift supers that weigh 30 to 80 lbs. to check the bee brood at the bottom. In top-bar hives, bees enter through holes on the end and can be checked by pulling out the brood combs at the end, with no heavy lifting.

Mangum also places his hives on wooden stands about 30 in. tall so he doesn't have to bend over to lift.

The second big advantage of top-bar hives is the cost.

"I can build a top-bar hive from recycled wood for as little as \$5," Mangum says.

His website shows photos of 11-in. tall hives made of old 2 by 4's, good-quality scrap wood and even sunflower stalks or cane wired together for side walls. Inside, wood strips (top bars) securely hold strips of beeswax for bees to start their combs. The bees build the



Wyatt Mangum says his "top-bar hives" reduce beekeeping costs.

combs vertically until they look like slices of bread in a loaf.

Mangum says he rents his hives for pollination, which can net \$40 to \$60 per hive. With protective metal roofs, he says his inexpensive hives last up to 20 years. Entrepreneurs who do not have a lot of money can start a successful business inexpensively, he says. His website includes information on how to build bait hives to attract bees and eliminate the need to purchase a hive. People from all over the world adapt the information to build hives with materials they have on hand.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dr. Wyatt Mangum, P.O. Box 903, Bowling Green, Va. 22427 (tbhbookqueries@gmail.com; www.tbhbywam.com).