Back-To-Basics Hunting With Powerful Slingshots

Perry Adkisson has taken slingshots to a whole new level. Not only are his A+ Slingshots handcrafted with quality, they are ergonomic and adaptable to whatever customers want to do, from plinking targets to hunting small game. Plus, he's modified a slingshot to shoot arrows for a sport he calls "Slingery".

Four years ago, the Bakersfield, Calif., pastor decided he needed something to supplement his income while serving his congregation. He recalled stories of how his father and uncle used slingshots to put food on the table in Texas during the Depression. And, though he's middle-aged, Adkisson still enjoys "playing" with slingshots.

When he checked out the slingshots available, he discovered that none of them fit his hands very well. "Divine inspiration" sent him to his workshop, which resulted in the design for A+ Slingshots.

"I have a pinky hole in the grip. It allows you to lock it in your hand in place. You get a good grip and leverage without a wrist brace. It feels like part of your hand," Adkisson says. "I was the first one to do that."

He makes the Y-shaped slingshots in three sizes (2 1/4, 2 1/2 and 3-in. between the forks) to fit different size hands.

"I'm a woodworker so everything we do is out of wood," Adkisson says. He offers plenty of wood choices – maple, birch, red oak, bamboo, red padauk and walnut. To prevent accidental breakage, he offers models with 1/8-in. brass rods glued through the forks for reinforcement. His birch laminate models are naturally strong and come in a variety of stains.

The type of band determines how the slingshot is used.

"We have bands for everyone. Some people enjoy target shooting with 3/8-in. steel balls. For plinking we use lighter bands," he says.

Hunters use big bands and 1/2-in. steel ball ammo for speed and power. The Ultra Power Band is a double tapered band with two pieces of rubber on each side. The taper adds speed for 1/2-in. steel or .44 caliber lead to hit hard to humanely kill squirrels, rabbits and game birds.

He also sells Megabands and straight-cut bands for hunting. His Jackalope Slingbow model includes a rotating power head to turn a slingshot into a bow with bands that shoot arrows with a 50 lb. draw weight, legal for bow hunting. They shoot full-length arrows up to 140 yards, with accuracy similar to a longbow.

Slingshots can be used to do everything from plinking targets to hunting small game. Jackalope Slingbow (below) includes a rotating power head that turns a slingshot into a deadly bow to shoot arrows.

Adkisson's line of products starts as low as $20 for an unfinished Rough and Ready slingshot with an adjustable band ($25/finished) in all three sizes. Other models range from $40 to $70 according to size and type of wood. The Jackalope Slingbow/Slingshot sells for $135.

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When Glenn Buxengard reversed his Allis Chalmers loader tractor to mount a cab on it, he could hardly get in to sit down. So he cut the tractor's steering wheel in half and added a folding mechanism.

"Fold-Down" Steering Wheel

A few years ago Glenn Buxengard reversed his Allis Chalmers loader tractor and mounted a cab on it so he could use it with a snowblower. The only problem was that he could hardly get in to sit down.

"I had to back my body into the cab and straddle my legs over the steering wheel before I could sit down. It was like getting into a skid loader," says Buxengard. "I thought that if I could fold the steering wheel down to only a couple of inches wide, it would be a lot easier to sit down."

So he cut the tractor's steering wheel in half and built a folding wheel. He welded a square block and drilled 1/2-in. bolts to it, and cut 2 notches into the steering wheel hub. He also welded a pair of 1/4-in. square pulley keys to a pair of 1/2-in. dia. metal rods, which form the inside edge of both halves of the steering wheel. The keys fit inside the notches and are held in place by a spring-loaded latch, which uses a pair of 1/2-in. collars with set screws.

"Once I sit down, I flip the wheel's 2 halves up, shove the keys into the notches, and use the latch to lock them into place," says Buxengard. "To fold the wheel down I lift up on the latch so the keys slide down out of the slots, which allows me to raise the 2 halves into a full wheel that I can then lock into place. It works quick and is foolproof."

After he cut the wheel apart he had to smash some hard rubber away from a metal rod that ran inside the wheel, allowing him to weld both rods to the wheel halves. After he welded the rods in place he used automobile body putty, mixed with a small amount of hardener, to fill in the exposed area. Once the putty hardened, he filed it down smooth to make it look like the rest of the steering wheel. Then he painted the entire wheel black. "Over the years I've found a lot of uses for body putty, and have used it to repair steering wheels and even to make shifting lever knobs," says Buxengard.

Steering wheel folds down to only a couple of inches wide.

"All the work in the middle of the wheel has to be done before the 1/2-in. rods were welded to the wheel halves," notes Buxengard.

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A Pickup Conversion Done Right

When it comes to metalworking projects, Washington handyman Alan "Hoss" Heilman has a never ending list. One of his latest jobs was converting his Dodge 3500 1-ton dually pickup into a flatbed. "I never really liked the rig as a pickup, so I was glad to turn it into something I can use more," Heilman says. His decision to make the conversion was made easier by the fact one of the rear tires on his truck blew on a road trip and damaged the wheel well and one side of the pickup box. Heilman says, "Getting that wheel well and sidewall fixed was gonna cost way more than buying an old flatbed, so that made my decision a no-brainer."

Heilman bought a used Bradford flatbed for just $600 at an auction. It was twisted, bent and rusted from being in a rollover. Still, it was exactly what he was looking for, because he really enjoys fixing things up and making them better and stronger.

"The bed sat in my shop for nearly 6 months and I'd mess with it in my spare time" Heilman says. "I used a come along, a chain and my torch to get it square and straight." He also made the bed a lot stronger by adding cross bracing underneath and additional bracing to the tool boxes. Other improvements included welding a latch on the bed to lock the side rails down over the tool boxes. The headache rack was twisted and bent, so Heilman removed it, straightened the metal supports and reinstalled it. He welded mule shoes on both sides to use for tying down loads. Brackets on each side of the headache rack hold additional shoes that he can locate around the floor and use for tie downs.

Heilman also modified the hitch on the Bradford, tying it in to the frame of the truck to make it stronger. The bed is secured to the truck on two 1-in. thick steel bars. Those run across the frame and are bolted in place with twelve 3/4-in. bolts that extend through the box frame and chassis.

Heilman capped off the project by painting the flatbed with an industrial grade glossy black paint. The floor paint is mixed with non-slip material similar to that used on spray-in bedliners for pickups. "The way I've got this set up now it's stronger, safer and has a better paint job than anything that comes from a factory. I can use it to pull straight hitch trailers or 5th wheelers, " Heilman says.

Alan Heilman fitted his Dodge 3500 1-ton dually pickup with a flatbed, that rests on two 1-in. thick steel bars.

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