

Salt Lick Sculpture Contest Serves A Good Cause

By Cindy Ladage

Last September Baker City, Oregon, hosted its 10th annual Salt Lick auction, an event where 50-lb. blocks of salt – licked by livestock into artistic shapes – are put up for bidding. The salt licks come from local ranchers who submit their most interesting “sculptures”, and most of the money from the auction proceeds goes for research into Parkinson’s disease.

The whole community, from ranchers to art lovers to the cows themselves, participate in the annual event to benefit Parkinson’s research at Oregon Health and Science University.

Local ranchers scour their pastures, sometimes with the help of other community members, looking for the most creatively licked salt blocks. The blocks are then named, have poems written about them, and are displayed for the auction.

The idea is to collect salt blocks from ranchers across the county, award cash prizes to the best one, and then auction them off to the highest bidder. Local merchants participate, and anyone who brings in an already licked block of salt get a brand new block in return.



The Salt Lick contest is an event where 50-lb. blocks of salt licked by livestock into artistic shapes are submitted by local ranchers and put up for bidding. Most of the auction proceeds go for research into Parkinson’s disease.

“Salt licks are like snowflakes – no two are alike,” says Whit Deschner.

The story began one fateful day in 2007 when Deschner was sitting on the front porch of a friend’s cabin. “We were admiring one of the salt licks that had been licked by deer in front of his cabin. It looked quite artistic. The first year I did the contest as a joke. It took two of us to organize the whole show and a week to do it. It evolved into an annual

charity fundraiser event.”

The cause is close to Deschner’s heart ever since he was diagnosed with Parkinson’s.

According to Ginger Savage, executive director of the Crossroad Art Center, the salt lick entries come in all shapes and in a variety of colors, from Cobalt blue to the usual white salt, to brown which is a mineral salt block, to red selenium blocks and even yellow sulfur.

There were 40 entries this year. The

“artists” were cattle, deer, elk and, for the first time, a rabbit. The event began with visitors making a selection for their favorite. The choice ended in a tie. Sparkle, a fainting goat, became the final judge in determining the winner.

For more information about the Salt Lick Visit (www.whitdeschner.com); ph 541 519-2736).



“Jungle gym” was built out of an old Deere 6600 combine. Two large stairways and platforms were added around the cab with a large slide on one side.

Jungle Gym Made From Deere 6600 Combine

We’ve seen other “combine jungle gyms” over the years, but this one in Indiana is unique. It’s the featured attraction at Wendel Farms’ Corn Maze and Pumpkin Patch and was built by Smith Welding using the frame of a “retired” Deere 6600 combine.

Phillip and Susann Wendel purchased it from a neighbor and brought it to their welder friend, David Smith. Smith removed the grain tank, the straw chopper and the hydraulic lines and says “other than that it could still be a functional machine.”

He added 2 large stairways and platforms around the cab, installed structural braces, and welded the windows closed for safety. A large slide was designed for one side of the machine, extending off one of the stairways, and another was added out the rear. When the manufacturing was done, Smith masked the identification decals on the machine and used 7 gal. of green and yellow paint to “make it look like a brand new combine,” he says.

The project began in the spring of 2016, and the combine was delivered to the farm by flatbed late in the summer. Smith said it took the better part of a day to attach handrails and position the tall steps in the back. Those were made with a metal frame and composite decking material and led to a grain tank tube slide. That feature was made using 2 sections

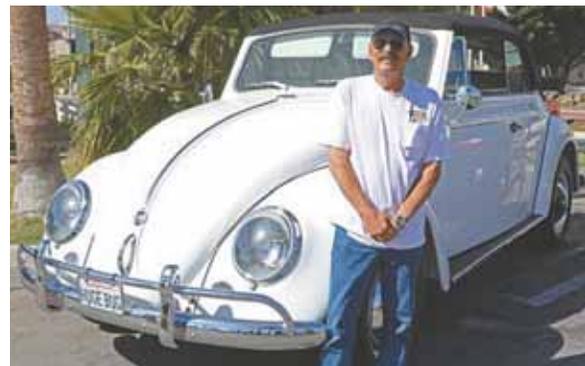


A grain tank tube slide made from culvert tubing is on back.

of culvert tubing. A second curving slide off the side came from a backyard play set. There’s a yellow bench seat between the tires and 3-in. pvc tubes for playing “telephone.” Smith says the custom work required about 250 man hours to complete.

The Wendel Farm has been operating since 1973 with ag education and other events started in 2000. From just after Labor Day through October they’re open every day.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Wendel Farms LLC, 8134 North State Line Road, Brookville Township, Ind. 47012 (ph 812 775-9051; www.wendelfarms.com).



This Volkswagen Bug built by Richard Tupper is 40 percent larger than the real thing. It’s built on the chassis of a Dodge Ram pickup.

Giant VW Built On Dodge Ram Chassis

Richard Tupper built a Volkswagen Bug that’s 40 percent larger than the real thing. “I have a sheet metal shop and one day I just decided to make a bigger VW,” says Tupper, who lives in Gardena, Calif. “It wasn’t that difficult to do because we have really good equipment at our shop.”

Tupper started with the chassis of a 2010 Dodge Ram pickup. He used 3,514 different parts to assemble the Super Bug, which is powered by a Dodge Hemi engine. To exactly size the parts for his giant bug, he used digital images from what he describes as a “very cherry” ’59 Volkswagen Beetle that he dismantled. When he made the parts all 40 percent bigger, they all bolted together really nicely, Tupper says. There’s not one original VW part on the vehicle. They’re all new and handmade.

Tupper figures building his special Bug required about 3 years from start to finish. He has a good friend who did the upholstery and his son helped with the body works and the welding, so it was a team effort.

Even though there’s a Ram engine under the front hood to power the car, Tupper built a “phony” 1200 cc motor for the trunk so it looks proper. The fake motor actually serves as a muffler for the Hemi engine.

Like the outside, the interior of the car looks amazingly like that of an original Beetle. The one major difference is that where the original had only a speedometer and a fuel gauge, Tupper’s has a drop-down digital console that includes a tachometer,

speedometer, gas, electric and coolant gauges.

Tupper says driving it is just like piloting a 2010 Dodge Ram truck, except “everyone’s taking pictures of me or filming me.” The vehicle has AC, power steering, disc brakes, cruise control, and Ipod hookup. It’s just a Texas-sized Volkswagen.” The vehicle weighs about 6,200 lbs. and the hood alone weighs 200 lbs.

Reflecting the over-sized chassis and engine, Tupper changed the Wolfsburg badge on the car to a Ramsburg logo. “I tell people it was made in Ramsburg and it’s the Super Beetle,” Tupper says.

Tupper’s Hemi-powered Bug now joins a large stable of vintage cars that he owns and stores in 2 climate-controlled warehouses. Says Tupper, when I was a kid I used to walk to school and see all those old cars and told myself if I ever have any money, I’m going to have some of them. He became successful and now owns 109 cars built in 1959 or before. His favorite car color is red and he has about 25 in that color ranging from Porsches to Corvettes to Cadillacs. He says all of the vehicles in his collection are in top running condition and he has favorites for going out to eat, driving to Las Vegas, going to the beach or going racing. Tupper says he’ll never sell them because they’re like his children.

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