

Aluminum UTV Cabs Are Ultra Light, Yet Tough

Metal fabrication specialist Troy Katwyk says he was disappointed with the quality of the cab enclosure he bought for his Rhino UTV, so he literally took matters into his own hands. Katwyk designed, fabricated and installed his own 5-piece enclosure made entirely of aluminum. A friend was so impressed, Katwyk made one for him. As other folks inquired, a new business was born.

Katwyk started welding when he was 16 and became a certified welder for a military contractor. In the past 7 years he's gone from building just a few cabs in his spare time to having two fulltime employees that help him turn out custom-made cabs for every major UTV brand.

He programs each UTV's dimensions into a CAD system. "I build a prototype of each cab first, and make sure it fits correctly, then send those specs to a CNC plasma cutter. We bend and form the aluminum to fit the roll cage and around the body so the windshield, top, doors and rear sections fit extremely

tight. All of the components that require welding are done by a certified TIG welder and finished for a clean, nice fitting part."

Katwyk says the total weight of an Alumilite Armor cab is usually around 170 lbs., depending on the UTV it's made for. A typical OEM steel enclosure usually weighs twice that much. Katwyk uses 1/4-in. DOT-certified safety glass and finishes all the pieces with black powder coat. Components sell with all required mounting hardware.

Katwyk currently builds enclosures for 26 different UTV models from Polaris, Yamaha, Kawasaki, Can-Am and Honda. He has some dealers selling his products, but most customers order direct from his website or by calling the company. Components can be purchased individually with prices at \$450 for a roof, \$1,100 for doors and about \$790 for the windshield assembly. A complete kit that includes all components starts at \$2,660.

"My main focus is to make sure all the components are built strong, fit tight and are



Metal fabrication specialist Troy Katwyk builds all-aluminum enclosures for 26 different models of utility vehicles.

finished properly," Katwyk says.

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Alumilite (ph 435 990-1012; www.alumilitearmor.com).



Using parts from 3 old cabs, Claude Peloquin built this cab for his 2014 Kioti loader tractor. "It was a fun project to build and turned out better than I expected," he says.

Tractor Cab Built For \$650

Claude Peloquin didn't want to spend \$6,000 or more for a commercial tractor cab, so he built his own using parts from 3 old cabs. It cost just \$650 and is painted orange and black to match his 2014 Kioti CS2410 loader tractor.

"It looks factory-built but I used only hand tools, including a grinder with cutting discs and a cordless drill, to build it. Everything is bolted together with no welding at all," says Peloquin. "A local dealer had some old cabs on hand and he told me to take what I needed."

Peloquin removes snow from upwards of 20 local driveways every winter. "We needed a tractor with a loader to push wet snow so we bought the Kioti last spring and then built the cab for it. It took about 175 hrs. over a 2-mo. period to build."

He used 26 6-ft. lengths of 1 by 3-in. stainless steel channel iron to build the frame, doubling up most of them face-to-face for added strength. "I got the channel iron from a local egg producer, who had bought it from a German company to make cages."

He used treated plywood covered with a sheet of tin for the roof. It opens for access to the heater, windshield wiper motors, fuses, lights and wiring.

The windows, doors and heater are off a Hesston cab. "The radiator on this heater is actually bigger than the radiator on the tractor so the heater works really well. It doesn't seem to affect the engine operating temperature at all," says Peloquin.

The side windows and front and back windshields come from a Laurin cab made

in Montreal, Quebec that had been used on a Cockshutt tractor. "The front windshield wiper is double-armed and has 2 speeds. It works much like the wipers found on buses, with just one blade that moves back and forth across the windshield," says Peloquin.

"The cab came with sliding doors that we couldn't use, but the top windows of the doors had just the right angles to fit the rear side frame."

The doors are off a FullVision cab that had been used on a Massey-Ferguson 165 tractor and came complete with bolted hinges, door handles and latches. "The doors were just the right height, so we made a frame to fit them," says Peloquin.

A strobe light mounts on front toward the top of the cab. "I like having the lights up on top of the cab, instead of at bucket level where they can obstruct the driver's view," says Peloquin.

"It was a fun project to build and turned out better than I expected. The doors and windshields can be easily removed for summer time use. We weighed most of the components and estimate the total cab weight at about 350 lbs. That weight definitely adds traction and also results in a smoother ride.

"Our only out-of-pocket costs were for bolts, paint, extended hydraulic hoses, coolant hoses, wiring, lights, switches, flat-stock tin, and plywood."

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Walk-Behind Propane Weed Burner

Gardeners who prefer to burn weeds rather than spray or till them, may want to check out the new Pyroweeder, made by Farmer's Friend LLC in Tennessee.

"We've been working on it for a couple of years," says Jonathan Dysinger, owner of the company. "A lot of customers were asking for a unit on wheels so they wouldn't have to carry the tank."

To flame weed a garden, Dysinger recommends tilling the soil early and letting the weeds start to grow, then burning them when they are still small. If there is time for two burns, that's even better, Dysinger says. A double dose of flaming will eliminate the majority of weed pressure, and the garden bed is ready for planting.

"The Pyroweeder is designed to straddle a 30-in. bed," Dysinger says. With an offset and reversible handle, the operator walks in a path next to the row to avoid compacting the soil bed. The size of the unit makes it easy for customers to push. Typically the Pyroweeder is used by gardeners with 1 to 5 acres.

"The whole unit is aluminum and stainless steel so nothing will rust," Dysinger says.

The Pyroweeder starts at \$895 (propane tank not included) and has a dual tank option. By spring, Farmer's Friend plans to have a 48-in. wide model available. The company



Riding on 2 wheels, the Pyroweeder has burners on front and can carry either one or two propane tanks.

plans to offer other accessories that can be used on the Pyroweeder's chassis. The burners remove easily by turning a couple of knobs.

Farmer's Friend sells the Pyroweeder and other small farm products directly through its website, which includes a video of the flame weeder in action.

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