

Where To Get That Old Windmill Fixed

Paul Behrends does it all when it comes to fixing old windmills. If you don't have a windmill, he can sell you one and set it up. For the past 26 years he has been keeping old technology alive, including 6 windmills of his own.

"I'm one of only 2 full-time windmill repair services that I know of east of the Mississippi," says Behrends, Paul's Windmill & Crane Service. "I was in Florida this spring, and I've traveled to New Jersey as well as all over the Midwest."

Behrends says he hasn't met a project he can't handle. He and one employee have installed towers as tall as 70 ft. He has serviced a couple of 80-ft. towers, one with a 14-ft. dia. head.

"Most towers are 40 ft. tall with 8 or 10-ft. dia. heads," says Behrends. "There are all different sizes, depending on how deep they have to go for water."

Behrends specializes in Aermotors, but will work on any brand. He notes that parts are often still available from Aermotor, but others have to be custom-made.

The windmill specialist was a machinist and fabricator with some engineering background when he repaired a couple of junk windmills for himself. He started getting requests from others, and his business took off.

"I work on everything from windmill pumps used to water livestock to novelty windmills set up to show grandkids how things used to be," says Behrends. "A lot of folks who buy an old farmstead want to make the old windmill a landmark again."

Although his primary business is working on steel windmill towers, he also works with wood wheel windmills from before the turn of the century. Costs vary with the job. Behrends says he can usually fix almost anything within



For the past 26 years, Paul Behrends has been keeping old windmill technology alive by operating his own windmill repair service.

100 miles of his home for a reasonable price.

"If the tower is in good shape, I can rebuild or replace whatever is needed for around \$3,500. That covers parts, travel and labor for my helper and I," says Behrends. "You can hardly buy a new head for that."

Check out the video of Behrends and his work at FARMSHOW.com. If you are in the market for windmills or parts, visit his website. He has new and factory rebuilt windmills and towers, as well as specialty items. One such item recently was a 10-ft. wooden wheel from a 1910 wooden windmill.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Paul's Windmill & Crane Service, 3413 County Road 625 E., Foosland, Ill. 61845 (ph 217 897-6699 or 217 369-4406; millfixr1@aol.com; www.paulswindmillservice.com).



Photos by Renae B. Vander Schaaf. Reprinted with permission of Farm Collector magazine, www.farmcollector.com
Terry Rodman collects vintage windmills from around the world, and also operates a business to restore and sell them. His windmill collection is within sight of a busy highway near Jasper, Minn.

Windmill Collection Includes Foreign Models

When Terry Rodman built a 43-ft. Dutch windmill for his wife, Kris, he never dreamed it would lead to collecting vintage windmills from around the world and creating a business to restore and sell windmills. And, with his standing windmills in sight of a busy highway near Jasper, Minn., he also provides tours for interested people just driving by and groups that call ahead.

Among the 44 standing windmills are nine that have been shipped from other countries: South Africa, China, Australia, Argentina, Canada, Brazil and the Netherlands.

"I don't know of any other collectors that have as many foreign windmills as we have," Rodman says. Some he purchased after seeing them during international travels; others came through leads from other collectors.

"The double fan windmill made in Hutchinson, Kan., with two 12-ft. fans is the favorite for most people. Only three are in collections so they are rare," he adds. The retired welding and manufacturing shop owner built the replica because he couldn't find one to purchase.

Most of the 100 or so windmills are original and often "basket cases" when Rodman receives them in pieces on a pallet. With books, photos, research and help from other collectors, he figures out how to put the parts back together and sometimes molds parts for others to cast.

To lift and transport windmills, he modified a 1978 International tow truck. He added 3 ft. to the frame, and created a bed to mount a boom that reaches 32 ft. high. With a hydraulic clamp he can raise the windmill and unbolt it from the legs and lay the windmill down.

Rodman's windmills vary from 20 to 60 ft. tall, but he usually installs them on towers about 40 ft. tall. People who buy them typically use them ornamentally, but they can be hooked up to pump water.

His collection includes wood and steel models from commonly known companies such as Dempster, Eclipse, Flint & Walling, Monitor and Perkins, and he also has an Iron Turbine made in Springfield, Ohio. An Aermotor with a 20-ft. dia. fan is his biggest windmill.

The 10-acre Windmill Park keeps the Rodmans busy from rebuilding the metal parts, to making and painting the Cyprus wood blades, to maintenance work to keep the windmills running.

Rodman says he has all the windmills he needs for now, and they are all for sale. For people interested in taking a tour, he suggests calling to make a reservation. Besides windmills, his collection includes windmill weights and other accessories.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Terry Rodman, P.O. 366, Jasper, Minn. 56144



Among the 44 standing windmills there are nine that were shipped to Rodman from other countries.



This rare double fan windmill is the favorite of most people.



Rodman demonstrates how the Aermotor buzz saw operates with Aermotor windmill.

(ph 507 348-9621 or 507 204-0012 cell; krodman@frontier.com).

Grain Bin Swimming Pool

"I thought your readers would like to see the swimming pool we made using rings from a 24-ft. dia. grain bin. It was built in the early 1990's and has provided years of fun," says Margaret Adams, Hoxie, Ark.

"We recommend using 2 base rings if they're new, or the 4th and 5th ring from the bottom if they're used," says Adams.

After selecting a sight free of rocks, they assembled the bottom ring. "We started by cleaning each sheet, making sure to remove all the old sealing putty and replace it with new putty. We then assembled the ring using new bin bolts," says Adams.

Next, they dug a small trench and installed a pvc drain pipe. "We used 2-in. dia. pvc pipe and placed the inside opening at the same height we wanted the concrete floor to be. We installed a ball valve outside the pool that we open to drain the water."

After covering the drain pipe, they anchored the ring down to keep it from rising as the concrete floor was poured. "We poured the concrete to a level flush with the drain pipe and smoothed it down, while leaving it rough enough for traction."

They let the floor set up for a day and then cut off the top half of the sheet metal on the second ring, as the pool would have been too deep otherwise. They ground off the rough edges at the top and then bolted the sheets to the bottom ring, making sure the seams were sealed.

"After the sheets were loose-bolted to the top of the bottom ring, we tightened them up, filled the pool, and checked for leaks," says Adams. "We also installed a floating-style chlorine dispenser that holds tablets, a drop-style adjustable skimmer, pump, and a ladder from an old pool."



Margaret Adams bolted steel grain bin panels together to make this 24-ft. dia. swimming pool.

The last steps were to paint the outside of the pool with a metal paint purchased at Walmart, and to place a protective ring around the pool's top edge using a ring from an old swimming pool. "You could use also use plastic drainage tile, cut halfway through lengthwise," notes Adams.

She explains that when assembling the ring, the bolts should be installed with the head and sealing washer inside the bin and the nut on the outside.

Adams says they built a second pool much the same way but it's no longer being used for swimming and is now used as a giant rain barrel. "We ran a pipe from a gutter on our house to the pool. That way we can collect rain water and use it to water our garden," notes Adams.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Margaret Adams, 108 S. Park Ave., Hoxie, Ark. 72433.