

Beautiful Custom Saddles Fit Riders Perfectly

Lester Yoder takes pride in creating truly customized saddles that “fit like a glove”. At age 37, Yoder already has more than 20 years experience making custom saddles. He stays busy in his Hulett, Wyo., shop filling orders for 3 saddle companies and fitting in with custom-made saddles when he can.

Yoder spent a lot of time in a saddle growing up working on a Montana ranch that had as many as 3,000 calves to brand in the spring. So he knows what makes a good saddle beyond the shape of the seat and using quality Hermann Oak leather.

“Saddles have to start with a really good tree, which is quality wood covered with rawhide. It needs to fit the horse good,” he says. “Then you have a good saddle.”

He also measures the rider’s inseam to make the fenders, the leather barriers between the horse and the rider’s legs. And he finds out what customers do when riding a horse. Team ropers need smaller swells that provide the base for the saddle’s horn. Ranchers want special seats. Others want detailed tooling.

“Everybody has an idea of how they want it. One lady was an artist and had pictures she wanted in the leather. I entered it in a show and it won first place,” Yoder says.

Other than an industrial sewing machine for some pieces, most of the work is done by hand. A fully-tooled saddle can take 250 hrs.



Lester Yoder makes beautiful custom saddles tailored to the individual purchasing the saddle.

to complete. Yoder makes 50 to 60 saddles a year and currently has a 9-month waiting list. Prices start at \$3,800.

Beyond his handcrafting skills, Yoder listens and pays attention to customers.

“I really stress that if they are going custom, they want to get all they’ve dreamed about in a saddle,” Yoder says. “And I try to give them that to make it their unique saddle.”

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Caleb Schleder used about 1,800 LEGO pieces to build this 1/32-scale replica of an AGCO IDEAL 9T combine, adding as many working details as possible.

He Built A Combine Out Of LEGOs

If there’s enough interest, LEGO® could soon offer a kit to make the most recent German-made Fendt combine.

FARM SHOW readers can help by casting online votes of support.

The combine was designed by Caleb Schleder, who has the perfect background to create a combine kit. He grew up on a farm in the 1990’s and loved putting LEGO kits together.

More recently, as the combine marketing manager for AGCO, Schleder has learned the ins and outs of modern combines. In searching for LEGO kits to buy for his nephews, he realized that the combine kits offered were older models. He decided he could come up with his own design by replicating the modern IDEAL 9T combine model introduced in Canada in 2018.

“For me, the styling, design and overall look will stop you in your tracks. It’s very different from other machines,” Schleder says.

LEGO provided help with design through its online Digital Designer CAD program and he spent about 30 hrs. working on it. Finding and fitting all the right LEGO parts to create the details was challenging.

“The points on the corn heads are from the Star Wars set. On the cab, the lights look like they have eyebrows. They are small car fenders turned sideways to make the curvature,” he explains.

He ended up using 1,800 LEGO pieces.

Schleder bought 1,000 of them directly from the Denmark LEGO factory. The rest were discontinued and often rare so he had to find third party suppliers of used and new pieces.

“One piece in the grain bin cost \$30, because it was only released in one set so they’re very hard to find,” he says. Altogether he purchased from 36 vendors and spent \$730 for all the pieces.

He began assembly in March 2019, starting with the grain bin and shielding to create the outer shell, which is close to 1/32-scale at about a foot long and a foot wide and 8 in. tall. He included as many details as possible - dual rotors with concaves, the cab seat complete with armrest and a hydro handle, main drive pulleys, and a detachable 16-row corn head. The combine isn’t motorized, but parts turn like they do on a real one. The auger swings out. The triangular tracks roll. The side doors open.

It’s featured on LEGO’s Ideas website where people can vote for it. If the combine gets 10,000 supporters it goes to the LEGO review board for consideration to be made into a kit that will be offered for sale. Designers get a small commission, Schleder says, but the big prize is getting credit for the design and bragging rights. (<https://ideas.lego.com>).

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Rotating Bird Feeder Stays “Varmint-Free”

By using a stick while standing on his deck, Charles Hunt, Hillsboro, Mo., can rotate the homemade bird feeder wheel he mounted just outside the deck to bring song birds into view.

“I really like it because it keeps varmints such as raccoons and squirrels off my bird feeders. It’s big enough to hold several different feeders and was inexpensive to build,” he says.

Hunt mounted an antique dump-style hay rake wheel on top of an 18-ft. long, 4-in. dia. steel pipe, which he set in concrete about 4 ft. from one end of his second story deck. He bought a keeper plug at a hardware store and screwed it onto one end of a small water pipe, which he then dropped into the steel pipe. Several different kinds of feeders hang from the wheel on 30-in. wires.

“I haven’t had any problems with varmints since I built it,” says Hunt. “The wheel is only about 4 ft. from the deck, so with a 6-ft. stick I can easily reach the wheel and rotate it from the deck to fill all the feeders. I use it to feed birds all year long, and at times there are 10 to 20 birds feeding at a time. Last winter I saw 14 cardinals feeding from it at the same time. During summer I add multiple hummingbird feeders.”



Charles Hunt says his rotating bird feeder allows birds to eat while preventing raccoons and squirrels from raiding the feeders.

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Image Copyright Fred Moore

Fred Moore’s anvil collection includes about 100 different brands from all over the world. Some are 200 years old or more.

Amazing Anvil Collector Buys, Sells, & Trades

With 1,400 miniature anvils and 800 full-size ones, Fred Moore claims to have the world’s largest collection of anvils. He started his collection some 60 years ago.

“My dad did blacksmithing for our own farm needs,” recalls Moore. “When I was a kid, I wanted to be a welder and tried to buy a broken anvil from an uncle. He gave it to me as long as I promised to never sell it. Later I got my dad’s, too.”

Eventually Moore added miniature anvils as well as pictures of anvils and other anvil-related materials.

Moore followed his boyhood dream and did professional welding for many years before moving to a cattle ranch. He never did take up blacksmithing, but he does many of his own repairs.

“I have about one of every anvil made, covering about 100 different brands,” says Moore. “I have anvils out of Austria, Germany, France and England, as well as Switzerland and Sweden. Some are 200 years old or more. One was used in the 16th century to make armor.”

Moore’s largest anvil weighs 1,060 lbs. His smallest weighs about an ounce and is only 1 in. long. “Lots of miniatures were given as paperweights with names and addresses on them,” he says. “Salesman samples made by

manufacturers like Peter Wright, Hay Budden or Columbian are worth a lot more. England made the most anvils, and Peter Wright anvils were shipped all over the world.”

He also has a 900, an 824, and several 456-lb. anvils. He explains that most anvils are between 75 and 150 lbs., with 100 lbs. being most common.

“The biggest anvils came out of shipyards, railroad yards or factories,” says Moore.

When evaluating an anvil, Moore advises listening to the ring of a hammer on the anvil and watching how the hammer rebounds.

“A wrought iron anvil rebounds high,” he says. “I look for the name on it and its condition. Everything is about condition. I may have 50 Hay Budden anvils. Hay Buddens and Arm & Hammers are the Cadillacs of anvils.”

The collection also includes power hammers and mandrels for ring shapes, swage or forming blocks, hardy tools and other blacksmithing tools.

“If people are interested in buying, selling or trading an anvil, let me know,” says Moore. “I’m always looking.”

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