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Modern-Day “Medicine Show” Wagon

When Scarlet Ravin needed a vendor wagon for the medicinal products she sells, she turned to local woodworker and handyman Dave Baber. Baber had done a fair amount of work for her at her ranch. Now she tasked him with making a modern-day medicine show wagon.

“I spent about 3 mos. on it over winter, working on it part-time each week,” recalls Baber. “I started with a general plan, but Scarlet was involved in every detail. She showed me on the wall of the trailer where she wanted a vendor window and how big it should be.”

Baber prefers that kind of interaction with customers. When he makes benches and other furniture based on Spanish colonial designs from the late 1700’s and 1800’s, he often leaves them without a finish.

“I like to let the buyer tell me what they prefer,” says Baber.

He copies the general design of antiques, adding his own detail and often improving on the construction of the original. “Our woodworking tools are so much more precise,” he explains. “They often used a saw kerf design, but I can make mine much more uniform than they could.”

In the case of the medicine wagon, it was less a matter of original styling than producing a vendor wagon that worked for Ravin. Baber started with an old RV trailer. It was in its third life, having been repurposed first as a shepherd’s hut and then as a mobile chicken coop.

“I knew the owner and asked if I could buy it for the project; she gave it to me,”

says Baber. “I tore it down to its metal frame base and flipped the axle and wheel over. That lowered the frame to the desired height.”

Baber shortened the 16-ft. frame to 12 by 7 ft. and built a new body out of 2 by 4’s and Russian cedar tongue and groove for the exterior. The interior is 7 by 10 ft., allowing the roof to extend over an open bench on the front end and over the custom-designed rear door with its rounded top.

“I spent 2 days building the door and handcrafting the stained-glass window,” recalls Baber.

On the interior, Baber heavily insulated the walls before covering them with plywood. Wheel wells were covered over with benches bookended with storage cabinets.

As Ravin uses the vendor wagon as a mobile shop, the interior is filled with small shelves to store and display her infused oils, tinctures, and bath products.

“I used a lot of raw edge boards for shelving and the other furniture, as well as a thick slash cut timber for the rear bumper,” says Baber. “Shelves have copper retention bands to keep items in place when the trailer is moved.”

Baber considers the trailer a joint venture with Ravin. “She would come up with the details she wanted, and I just had to make them happen,” he says. “The biggest challenge was simply keeping up with her enthusiasm.”

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Rugs Made From Wild Animal Hides

Rugs By Nancy has been making commercial quality rugs from animal hides since 1995 in Sheridan, Mich. The company has made rugs for people from around the world out of hides from antelope to zebras, and just about everything in between, including bears, wolves, coyotes, wolverines, mountain lions and tigers.

If hunters haven’t taken trips or safaris of their own yet want a wild animal rug, her website lists more than 20 pre-made rugs for sale. A grizzly bear rug measures 82 in. tip to tip and 92 in. across the front feet. Claws are up to 3 1/2 in. long and the price is \$3,250. A mountain lion with thick fur and excellent color measure 85 in. nose to tip and sells for \$1,775. Alaskan Lynx, Bobcat, Black Bear and Alaska Wolf rugs are priced from \$950 to \$2,250.

The Rugs By Nancy website also has excellent instructions and a video on how to field dress a bear for making the hide into a rug. The company has produced professionally tanned and machine-sewn rugs for nearly 30 years and has a large selection of backings and embroidery along



Nancy the Rug Lady will turn your animal hide into a high-quality rug.

with D rings for hanging.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Rugs by Nancy, 2113 E. Sessions Rd., Sheridan, Mich. 48884 (ph 616-835-7227; www.rugsbynancy.com).



Dawson Boys started an auto detailing business and ended up specializing in farm equipment.

Teen Details Cars, Farm Equipment

A passion for cars and an FFA program led 16-year-old Dawson Boys to start DB’s Auto Detailing business in 2020. It soon evolved into detailing tractors, tillage equipment, and trucks as well.

“I began my business with money I’d saved up and expanded as funds became available,” says Boys, who works out of his dad’s 46 by 80-ft. farm shop in Mode, Ill. Some funding came from Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities at his high school, a program that includes fundraising for startup money and guidance for running a business. That was helpful as demand for his services grew and he needed a variety of chemicals and products for cleaning and waxing.

“Unlike your typical hobby detailer, I can’t get by with products designed for my personal vehicle. I have to be equipped for any type of vehicle or equipment that comes through my shop,” Boys says. “One of my most recent details was for a local family farm, detailing their show tractor.”

Depending on the job, he charges by the

job or by the hour.

Now that he’s attending college, his business hours are limited to weekends and college breaks, but the detailing business provides most of his income as he pursues a degree in finance.

Though he doesn’t plan to make a career out of detailing, it’s been a good business experience. He advises young adults planning a business to be prepared to fail as things don’t always go as planned, but also to stand out from other businesses. Boys’ perfectionist personality earned him repeat customers and positive word-of-mouth reviews attracted new customers.

“I’ve had a passion for cars from a very young age that stemmed from my dad, and I wanted to make some money while doing something I love. So now I get to make money and play with cars and tractors,” Boys says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, DB’s Auto Detailing, Mode, Ill. (dawson.boys@siu.edu; Facebook: DB’s Auto Detailing).



An old combine was gutted and converted to a living space.

Combine Turned Into Unique B&B

If you’re planning a trip to England in the near future, you should consider reserving a night’s stay in Lincolnshire farmer Will Roughton’s converted Massey Ferguson 860 combine.

He had help converting the combine into a Bed & Breakfast cabin from a British reality TV show called Unique B&B. Show host Simon Parfitt provided the design and Roughton provided the stripped-down combine. Most of the inner workings had been removed.

Parfitt’s design created a large room out of the grain tank and the area that previously held the straw walkers and sieve area. Drum and concave areas were converted for storage. Access was created by cutting a narrow door in the side of the grain tank and adding steps. A floor was installed, and the bed was placed under the rear hood with seating forward into the grain tank.

Roof windows in the grain tank hatches provide ventilation, and a skylight in the rear hood provides night sky views from the bed. Shelving was made from old potato chitting trays and yard chairs from cable drums. Kitchen and bathroom facilities are



Combine B&B was featured on a British TV reality show.

in a nearby building.

Roughton is no stranger to offering unique overnight stays. While he may not be the first to plow up an old Royal Air Force (RAF) base, he is likely the first to turn its bombing range control tower and support buildings into rooms to rent.

While in use until as recently as 2009 as a bombing range, the base dates back to the 1890’s as an artillery range. It transitioned to a bombing range in 1938.

See the bookings page on the website for information on Kaleb the Combine.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Will Roughton (www.willroughton.co.uk; https://booking.roomraccoon.co.uk/raf-wainfleet/en/).