

Bill Bennett imported the first three Fendt tractors to the U.K. Bill and his son, Stuart, located the original Farmer 104S and restored it to "factory-new" condition.



A Unique UK Tractor Restoration

Bill Bennett had a flair for repairing farm machinery when he started a U.K. business from the back of his van in 1969. Determined to build a strong foundation beyond repairs, he began selling Zetor tractors and, in 1973, became the first U.K. distributor for Fendt. He maintained that relationship until 1991.

Bennett imported the first three Fendt tractors to the U.K., a Farmer 104S, a Farmer 106S and a Favorit 611S. To celebrate their Fendt relationship, Bill and his son Stuart,

who now runs the operation, located the original Farmer 104S and restored it to "factory-new" condition.

Bill Bennett recalls selling two of the first three Fendts to Andrew Bennett, who, along with his brother, ran a 550-acre beef-and-dairy operation. He'd taken the brothers to Fendt's German plant, where they were impressed by the engineering and manufacturing. Andrew Bennett says the 104S performed well on their farm for nearly

40 years until he sold it to a collector in 2011 who wanted to restore it. That didn't happen, and the dismantled tractor was unfortunately piled outside on pallets.

In 2023, Stuart Bennett located the 50-year-old 104S in a farmer's yard just a few miles from where it had spent its working life. Bill Bennett and Mike Jones, a mechanic who had worked with him in the early days of his dealership, said the heap of parts was like a giant jigsaw puzzle. They quickly learned that several parts were missing, others were broken, and everything was rusted and weather-worn.

Bennett and Jones worked through the project, relying on their memory of working on older Fendts and a few parts manuals the company still had on hand. They rebuilt the engine with new pistons, liners and bearings and started it for the first time in mid-December 2023.

To aid in restoration, they found a suitable 104S on a German marketplace. They reassembled the original tractor frame and used several smaller parts and bodywork from the donor tractor. The gearbox, final drives, hydraulics and brakes were all rebuilt. Bennett rebuilt the original dynamo, and Jones created a new wiring harness and electrical system. The injection pump was refurbished by an outside supplier. Once the assembly was complete, they sent the tractor



Bill Bennett's first Fendt 104S sold was a rusted pallet of parts that he restored to its original "factory-new" condition.

to a painting and refinishing specialist. An exquisitely upholstered, period-correct Grammer DS 50 leather seat was sourced from a German company.

Because of the tractor's significance to their business, the Bennetts and Mike Jones say the restoration was worth all the time and effort it took. They note that the only "original" part missing is an elusive toolbox. With this project complete, they're now working on a recently acquired Fendt Farmer 307.

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Hanson hired highly qualified specialists for most of the restoration work and built the hardwood floor and stake box himself.



Years-Long Project Restores A 1934 Chevy

"My goal when I started working on restoring a 1934 Chevrolet 1 1/2-ton flatbed was to bring it back to as good as or better than new condition from the assembly line," says Minnesotan Quint Hanson. "I didn't realize when I started it was going to take nearly 30 years!"

A neighbor offered Hanson half ownership of the flatbed in exchange for storing it at his shop. After the neighbor passed away, Hanson became the full owner and decided it was time to pursue his dream of restoring it.

"One day, a picture of the truck, completely restored, came into my mind, and I took that as a green light to get going. My first step was to rebuild the decrepit 207-cu. in. 6-cyl. engine," Hanson says.

He spoke with several backyard mechanics who were "obviously in over their heads." Eventually, he hired Clyde Wilson from a business in Brainerd, Minn., near his home.

"Finding parts for a truck built during the Depression was incredibly difficult," Hanson says. "Wilson located a used engine, and I found two heads at Bob Marx Parts in eastern Wisconsin. We also acquired items from Jim Carter Truck Parts in Independence, Mo., and I actually found parts in salvage yards. The engine was completely rebuilt with reboled cylinders, new pistons, rings, valves, springs, main bearings and other parts."

Hanson learned from his parts research that the basic engine started in 1929 at 194 cu. in. and grew to 216 cu. in. by 1953. The

trusty 6-cyl. was used in cars and light trucks in the U.S. and overseas for 24 years.

Hanson chose Larry Karpen and his crew at Hickory Lake Auto near Aitkin, another business near his home, to rebuild the chassis and body.

"They took everything apart to remove the rust and rebuilt what needed repair," Hanson says. "It took them nearly a year, including redoing all the wiring."

Quint's wife chose the restored truck's

colors, which Karpen formulated to specifications for 1934 models.

The original truck was a wooden flatbed with stake pockets. Hanson chose to build a custom wooden bed and rack himself, using specifications from the General Motors Heritage Center website. His friend, Dick Nubson, designed and blueprinted the layout. Logger John Benson supplied the white oak logs, and sawyer Jeff Avelsgard cut them to size.

"Jeff dried the wood for a year, and I took the boards to my shop and dried them for another year before cutting, fitting, drilling holes and bolting it together," Hanson says.

Satisfied with the quality, fit and tightness, he completely disassembled it, sanded each piece to a smooth finish, and applied three coats of high-quality polyurethane.

Hanson also credits the Aitkin Tire Shop and AI's Welding and Sandblasting for their assistance with his restoration.

"Throughout the project, with whoever worked on it, I emphasized that the finished work had to be as close to original specifications as possible," Hanson says. "We had two manuals to go by, and yes, it took hundreds of hours and several years, but I'm



When Hanson began the restoration, the '34 Chevy was a garden-variety rust bucket.

definitely satisfied with the outcome and all the quality work by the vendors who helped. The hardest part to find was an original horn, which took 10 years to locate."

Hanson says he enjoys driving the truck, which runs very well. He's had offers from people who want to buy it, but he hasn't yet decided when he'll sell it, to whom it will go, or at what price.

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