

Tiny Texas Houses Built With Vintage Materials

Tiny Texas Houses combine vintage wood and small floor plans to create custom buildings which are used for everything from a house for cats to guest houses or even full-time homes.

The business sold its first home in June 2007. It was a natural career development for Brad Kittel. He and his wife, Suzanne, worked for years as real estate brokers, specializing in selling and rehabbing old homes. They bought many homes, revitalizing them for resale, and salvaging vintage lumber, doors, windows and other accessories. With their stockpile, plus materials they buy from other remodelers, the Kittels started a new business, Discovery Architectural Antiques in Gonzales, Texas. They currently have 150,000 sq. ft. of inventory. Though some wood is more than 100 years old, Kittel says that it's harder and better than wood on the market today. Some of the doors and windows need to be refinished, but others were taken from expensive houses that were torn down to be replaced by even more expensive houses.

Kittel says he "got bored" and decided to take the business a step further and make houses out of some of the material.

"These buildings are one-of-a-kind works of art," he says. "The tiny house movement

seems to be a growing movement."

Keeping the buildings small means they can be built quickly and transported with less hassle than large buildings. Because of regulations, Tiny Texas Houses are only available to Texas customers, but Kittel hopes to brand Tiny Texas Houses and franchise in other states. There's also the option of sending the building materials to customers in other states.

Customers for do-it-yourself construction pick one of five models and then select doors, windows and woods from the Discovery warehouse.

"The fact that we don't do anything the same, makes it a lot of fun," Kittel notes about the uniqueness of each building. Uses are as varied as designs - art studios, offices, exercise rooms, garden house, horse tack rooms, pool houses and minimalist homes. For example, a recent customer had a 10 by 16-ft. gambrel roof cottage with a feed room and porch built for her nine cats. When the cats are gone, it will become a guesthouse for people.

"They're really cute and small, yet functional," Kittel says. The buildings maximize space with efficient floor plans and lofts that can hold king-size beds.

While the buildings are 95 percent re-



"They're really cute and small, yet functional," says Brad Kittel about his Tiny Texas Houses. They're built from salvaged vintage lumber and other materials.

cycled, they are built to code with new wiring, plumbing and insulation. They are also completely portable, so that the owner can also move the building at a later time if they choose.

Tiny Texas Houses start at about \$25,000 for 10 by 16-ft. buildings to \$60,000 for 12 by 28-ft. buildings.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Brad Kittel, Tiny Texas Homes, 20501 East I 10, Luling, Texas 78648 (ph 830 875-2500; bwk@discoverys.net; www.tinytexashouses.com).



Buildings can be used for everything from guest houses to chapels.

Bright orange "vests" keep horses safe during hunting season.



How To Keep A Horse From Being Shot

To keep horses safe during hunting season, Protectavest makes bright orange "vests" using material with an open weave so it breathes and won't hold in heat. Orange tail bags are made of the same material. The company also sells bright orange halters, saddle sheets, and a horse collar. They're held on

with Velcro so if they get caught on something they'll tear loose.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mac MountainTack, 61 Falmouth Rd., Windham, Maine 04062 (ph 207 892-0161; www.protectavest.com).

Some of the best new ideas we hear about are "made it myself" inventions born in farmers' workshops. If you've got a new idea or favorite gadget you're proud of, we'd like to hear about it. Send along a photo or two, and a description of what it is and how it works. Is it being manufactured commercially? If so where can interested farmers buy it? Are you looking for manufacturers, dealers or distributors? Send to FARM SHOW, P.O. Box 1029, Lakeville, Minn. 55044 or call toll-free 800 834-9665. Or you can submit an idea at our website at www.farmshow.com.

Mark Newhall, Editor

FARM SHOW

"Made It Myself"

Homemade stall groomer operates off skid loader hydraulics.



Groomer Rakes Sand In Stalls

A homemade stall groomer greatly reduces the time it takes to do the weekly job of raking sand in 250 stalls at a 1,100-cow dairy near Elba, New York.

"We can do the job in a half hour or less, and it looks like a freshly plowed field after you're done," says Chuck Norton, who owns the dairy with two brothers. "It fluffs the sand, which is much more comfortable for the cows."

Norton and employee Matt Geissler built the groomer out of old farm parts and about \$200 in new parts, including two quick couplers and hydraulic hoses.

"We started with an old tire scraper frame and built everything off of that," Norton says. A hydraulic cylinder from an old Deere skidloader operates the 6 1/2-ft. groomer, which is made out of 4-in. channel with cultivator teeth bolted on every 6 in. A screw jack allows the pitch of the rake to be adjusted.

"You just have to make sure the rake clears under the stalls," says Geissler, a high school

student, who Norton calls an enterprising, right-hand man.

"We are really impressed how it makes the stalls look, and we didn't have to spend a lot of money," Norton says. Stall groomers can cost \$3,000 to \$4,000 so Geissler, who is a Farm Show subscriber, wanted to share their inexpensive version with FARM SHOW readers.

They add fresh sand every other week and groom it once a week to level out the humps and make it more comfortable for cows. Prior to building the groomer, each stall had to be hand-raked.

With quick couplers, the groomer detaches easily so the skidloader can be used for other chores.

"The groomer is pretty maintenance-free," Norton says, noting that it has become an indispensable implement at the dairy.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Chuck Norton, 6258 Oak Orchard Rd., Elba, N.Y. 14058 (ph 585 757-9399; norton farms32@yahoo.com).

Groomer is made out of 4-in. channel iron with cultivator teeth bolted on every 6 in.

