

Kenny Durant's home-built mini steam engine makes a great lawn ornament. "I found almost everything I needed at a junkyard or dump," he says.



## "Built From Junk" Mini Steam Engine

What makes this built-from-scratch steam engine unique is that the man who made it, Kenny Durant, Bristol, Quebec, built it entirely from "junk" parts including everything from a coffee percolator to an old patio fire pit. It's painted red, green, and black.

"I built it as a lawn ornament. It looks good, but it doesn't have power so it will never run," says Durant, who belongs to a local steam engine club. "I got the idea because I like to make use of stuff that other people throw away. Around here they call me Sanford and Sons, after the TV show about a father and son who operated a junk yard business. I didn't spend any money, not even for paint, because I found almost everything at a junkyard or dump."

"The steam engine stands alongside a road so a lot of people have seen it," says Durant. He has also displayed it at a couple of local

farm shows.

"It looks so real that many people who come by ask me when I'm going to fire it up," says Durant. "Just for fun, once in a while I remove the boiler's cleanout door on front and place an old leather coat inside and set fire to it. The coat will smolder for days, and cause smoke to come out of the exhaust stack which makes it look like the tractor is actually running."

The steam engine's 6-ft. long, 2-ft. dia. boiler came out of an apartment building. A square 100-gal. oil tank on back of the boiler serves as the firebox and has a big stove door bolted on back of it. The firebox contains a water gauge that came off a coffee percolator. The flywheel is off an IH 1 1/2 hp. hit and miss engine.

The front wheels are off an old cement mixer and the rear drive wheels from an IH binder. The front axle is off a hay loader.

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The machine's steering wheel was originally part of a hand-operated commercial bread slicer used by a bakery, and the steering rod is from a 1979 Ford pickup. "The steering rod is connected to a big roller off an "alligator boat" which was used to skid trees in from the woods up to a mile away. A pair of chains wrap around the roller and are connected to the front axle so that as I turn the steering wheel, the axle turns left or right," says Durant.

He used an old patio fire pit made by the Canadian Tire Corporation to make the machine's smoke stack, and bolted it onto a 7-in. dia. stove pipe.

Behind the smoke stack are 6 different steam engine whistles donated by neighbors. "Some of the whistles are worth \$300 to \$400, so I'm fortunate to have such generous neighbors," says Durant. "The whistles don't make noise yet, but I plan to change that by

adding an air tank and a small compressor."

The boiler's brass piston is off a Boyles Bros. water pump, and there's a brass eagle door knocker on front of the boiler. "When I see anything that's brass, my eyes glaze over with happiness," says Durant. "I found the brass eagle at a dump but didn't know what it was because it was tarnished completely green. When I got it home and started polishing it, I found that it was all brass."

On back of the machine is a pair of hand levers off an old Deering seed drill. One lever controls forward and reverse and the other is a brake. Also on back are 2 steel boxes that store wood. "I built the boxes by taking a big twine box off a Massey Ferguson baler and cutting it in half," notes Durant.

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Attractive sofa and chair were made from old timbers originally used to support guard rails. Coffee table was made with tile inlay out of snow fence boards.

## Furniture Built From Guardrail Timbers

When Patrick Kerins needed patio furniture, he got the idea of using old timbers originally used to support highway guard rails.

"Patio furniture was too expensive so I decided to build something unique on my own," recalls Kerins. "I couldn't find what I was looking for at local lumberyards, but then I ran across [www.repurposedmaterialsinc.com](http://www.repurposedmaterialsinc.com) (ph 877 282-8733), the company that "repurposes" used industrial equipment and materials. They had used guardrail timbers for sale."

Kerins, a Major in the U.S. Army and stationed at Fort Carson, Colo., made a trip to the company's Denver warehouse to pick up 6 by 8-in. timbers. He also picked up some 2 by 6-in. boards from reclaimed snow fence for seats and backs.

"They were all in pretty tough shape, so I power washed them and scrubbed them with a wire brush," says Kerins. "I sanded

them down well and put on multiple coats of Danish oil. They really soaked it up."

Once the wood was prepared, Kerins bolted the timbers together and attached the 2 by 6-in. boards with L-brackets. He ended up with a sofa that is 87 in. long, 31 in. front to back and 27 in. high. The chair is 27-in. high and 39 in. wide, and is also 31 in. front to back. Kerins also made a coffee table with tile inlay out of snow fence boards. A set of cushions was all that was needed to make the chair and sofa comfortable.

So far the Danish oil is holding up well. After a year in place, the couch looks fine, according to Kerins.

"I'm relatively new to woodworking, so I didn't want something too complex," he says.

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Olson pulls a lever to retract cement block core, then tilts the block out, picks it up with a board, and sets it aside to cure.

## Antique Cement Block Maker Attracts Crowds At Shows

"My wife and I demonstrate this antique cement block making machine at some local antique tractor shows. People enjoy watching how it works," says Bill Olson, Roosevelt, Minn.

The Block Maker was sold by Montgomery Ward, and is designed to make 8 by 8 by 16 cement blocks from a mixture of damp sand, concrete and gravel. A pair of bars on both sides of the machine are used to lock everything together.

"It was used back in the 1940's and even before that, when there were few local cement block factories. Many people had to make their own blocks," says Olson. "I remember as a young child, watching someone use this same machine to make cement blocks for friends who were building

the basement for a new house."

The operator shovels the damp sand-cement mix into the Block Maker's mold and tamps it down, then uses a lever to move the core in place. He then shovels more sand into the mold and tamps it down.

"Once the mold is full, the operator pulls back on the lever to retract the core. He tilts the block out and picks it up with a board, and sets it aside to cure," says Olson. "Then a new board is put in the Block Maker, and the process is repeated until all the blocks have been made."

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