

Whole Tractor Restorations

By Mick Lane, Contributing Editor

If you've stashed an antique or collectible tractor or two in the shed for years and still haven't gotten around to starting the planned restoration, you might want to consider turning the job over to a professional.

There are only a couple handfuls of truly professional tractor restoration experts. We've compiled a list of all we could find (see sidebar). If you know of others, tell us and we'll add them to our list.

Before you turn a professional loose on your pet tractor project, though, there are a few things you should know. First, most charge an hourly rate of at least \$25, plus all parts and materials. Rates of \$35 an hour are common, and some charge different rates for different processes. For example, one full-time farm equipment restoration concern charges \$25 an hour for general labor, but gets about three times that for specialized work like sandblasting parts to remove rust and old paint.

Second, if you have a John Deere tractor, you'll likely pay less for the same degree of restoration. There are a couple of reasons for this. One is that there are a lot more aftermarket and restoration parts available for Deere tractors, and there also appears to be more full-time restorers specializing in Deere.

And it follows, too, that if you're looking for a professional job on an extremely rare machine, restoration is likely to be considerably more costly.

Dan Peterman, Rusty Acres Restorations, Webster City, Iowa, says parts availability for many older Deere tractors is so good he can usually get what he needs overnight. "I might look for weeks to find a useable part for less popular makes," he says. Peterman says 80 percent of the tractors he restores are Deere, but he collects and restores Masseys himself.

Lou Spiegelberg, Spiegelberg Restoration and Service, Birmingham, Ohio, figures 85 percent of the tractors he's restored are Deere, but says he'll work on any make or color. He suggests that people who want to try a professional restoration should shop around and ask for references. And, too, he says they need to be prepared to pay part of the cost up front, like a retainer. "I put together a rough estimate of what it will cost and if the customer agrees to that, I ask for a payment of around a third to get started. Then I bill again as I work through the amount already paid," he says. "If you're good at this kind of work and are thinking of starting a business, you need to do something like this in order to have the money to keep going." Plus, he says it keeps you from getting burned by a customer who doesn't pay.

While you might think there would be fewer and fewer tractors around to be restored, most professional restorers disagree. Most say they already have tractors lined up that will keep them busy for the next 18 to 30 months.

Ron Jungmeyer, Russellville, Missouri, says he's collected and restored his own tractors for 31 years and has been restoring full time for others for going on 10 years. He believes that not only are there plenty of tractors and other machines out there to be restored, but that the demand for high quality restoration is growing.

"When I started, most people were just doing paint and major repairs. Now, there are more people collecting who want and can afford a complete professional restoration," he says.

Most of the restorers on our list say there's room for more people who do what they do. "You just have to know where to find parts



Photo shows a 1935 John Deere A before Spiegelberg Restoration started work on it for one of its customers. The job included having the crankshaft turned, the camshaft reground, the head overhauled, a new manifold installed, the carburetor rebuilt, and new magneto and main bearings.



After restoration, the tractor looks - and runs - like new.

or who to call who can help locate them, and then be willing to do the job right," says Peterman.

Because no two tractors need the same parts, it's hard to say what a restoration might total. Peterman says that it's always twice as much as you thought. While that may sound

like he's joking, it's not meant to be funny. He says if the tractor comes in in reasonable shape, the price may be under \$2,000, but most, he adds, are in the \$2,000 to \$3,000 range at his shop. "One I did not long ago cost the owner \$12,000," he adds.

Where To Get A Tractor Restored

Lou Spiegelberg
Spiegelberg Restoration and Service
P.O. Box 63
52771 State Route 113
Birmingham, Ohio 44816
ph 440 965-7679
E-mail: sales@srstractor.com
Specializes in Deere, but does Farmalls and will tackle anything.

Dan Peterman
Rusty Acres Restorations
1057 180th St.
Webster City, IA 50595
ph 515 543-8641
E-mail: rstyrest@wccta.net

Ron Jungmeyer
Jungmeyer Tractor Restoration Service
55835 Hwy C
Russellville, Mo. 65074
ph 573 782-4602

Richard Bockwoldt
27404 60th Ave.
Dixon, Iowa 52745
ph 319 843-2270

Rob Detwiler
Detwilers Tractor Parts
S3266 Hwy. 13 S.
Spencer, Wis. 54479
ph 715 659-4252

Foster's Farm Repair
14167 Keeley Rd.
Red Creek, N.Y. 13143
ph 315 754-6612

Corwin Groth
24880-145th Ave.
Eldridge, IA 52748
ph 319 285-7009
Specializes in Deere GP tractors

Carl Beyer
Beyer's Restoration and Shop
26144 Spring Valley Road
Shannon, Ill. 61078
ph 815 864-2153

Kenny Carey
4889 Plateau Road
Crossville, Tenn. 38555
ph 931 277-5227

King's Tractor
1426 Noble Rd.
Kirkwood, PA 17536

Mark Ketron
R.R. 1, Box 424-A
Lebanon, Va. 24266
ph 540 880-1298

Tim Talbot
Tm's Original Restorations
3619 Johnson St. Rd.
Keokuk, IA 52632
ph 319 524-8383

Neal or Gary Potts
Big Boys Toys
Hwy. 13 S.
Marshfield, WI 54449
ph 715 389- 2800

Gary Schmitt
2-Cylinder Repairs and Sales
22040 190th St.
Rockwell, IA 50469
ph 641 822-4662

Gary Uken
1909 330th St.
Titonka, IA 50480
ph 515 928-2010 (shop)
515 928-2177 (home)

Lyle Schultz
Schultz Gas Engines
R.R. 1, Box 31-A
Chatfield, MN 55923
ph 507 867-3442

Mark Wood
Mark's Tractors
2636 County Rd. 2300 E.
Gifford, IL 61847
ph 217 694-4735
Restores only Farmalls

Mercer Implement
Ramon and Dallas Mercer
"Y" Highway
Excelsior Springs, Mo
ph 816 630-8300

Ron Berlage
Pilot Knob Restorations
390 S. Pilot Knob Rd.
Galena, Ill. 61036
ph 815 777-0826
fax 815 777-0912

Stanley Voorhees
P.O. Box 14
Livingston, NY 12541
ph 518 851-9165 (shop)
518 851-3612 (home)