

## Mower Converted Into Mini Backhoe

Aretired British Columbia welder-fabricator and his friend turned a Jacobsen riding mower into a nimble, self-propelled backhoe.

"It's a strong little machine that can fit into areas where bigger commercial machines can't go. It's also economical to operate," says Ross Deal of Grand Forks, B.C.

The riding mower was originally equipped with a single castor wheel on back and a hydraulic-driven, detachable 72-in. wide deck on front. The two men replaced the single wheel with a pair of Chevy Chevette car wheels, which are steered by the Chevette's steering system, which is chain-driven off a hydraulic cylinder. The cylinder is controlled by the machine's original side-mounted steering wheel.

Deal used salvaged steel to make the backhoe, which is equipped with a 14-in. wide, 22-in. long bucket. It attaches to the front of the mower.

The backhoe has a reach of just over 10 ft. and can dig up to 8 ft. deep.

"It works as well as any commercial

backhoe. The only difference is that it's smaller," says Deal. "My friend's name is Ivan, so we named it the 'Ivanhoe'. We spent less than \$1,000 to build it. It works so well we started a business digging pipelines and septic systems for neighbors and people in town. Ivan used it to put in an underground sprinkling system on his four acres.

"The body of the machine is only 40 in. wide, and it stands only 5 ft. 6 in. high so it'll fit in under the branches of big trees and between houses in town that are spaced close together. The machine turns within its own length. We mounted 180 lbs. of weights on back to compensate for the backhoe's reach and to keep the rig from tipping forward. We left the mower deck attachment arms in place so we can still use the machine to mow lawns. It takes only about 20 minutes to switch attachments.

"The machine is powered by the original Kubota 3-cyl liquid-cooled diesel engine, which is very fuel efficient. We can run the machine all day long on one tank of fuel."



Ross Deal and his friend turned a Jacobsen riding mower into a self-propelled backhoe. "It can fit into areas where bigger commercial machines can't go," he says.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ross L. Deal, 4755 Canning Rd., Grand Forks, B.C., Canada V0H 1H5 (ph 250 442-2884).



Camper attaches to gooseneck flatbed trailer with just four bolts.

## Removable Camper Mounts On Flatbed Trailer

"We built this camper to mount on a gooseneck flatbed trailer that we already owned. It saved us a lot of money and we can quickly remove the camper and use the trailer for other jobs when needed," says Kennan Adams, Lake Creek, Texas.

"People are amazed at how much room we have. It's 6 in. wider than most RV's so it almost feels like we're living in a home," says Adams, who used to be in the construction business.

The camper measures 12 ft., 8 in. tall; 8 ft., 6 in. wide; and 40 ft. long. There's a large bedroom up front (with a queen-size bed), a roomy kitchen area in the middle, a full-size bathroom, and two bunk beds in back. The kitchen has solid oak cabinets and tile countertops and also has a large table with a tile top. The bathroom has a 30-in. shower and a 30-in. vanity. A cedar wood ceiling runs the entire length of the camper, which is equipped with a 30-gal. hot water heater. The camper attaches to the trailer with just four bolts. A waste water tank and propane tank attach permanently to the bottom of the trailer.

To build the camper, Adams first built a steel frame and then covered it with a layer of heavy aluminum. Then he sprayed foam insulation inside the walls, floor and ceiling and covered the inside of the structure with a layer of aluminum. He used polished stainless steel as trim for the corners. The aluminum walls are covered by wallpaper and cedar.

"My original idea was to have a big RV-

sized camper that we could store when it's not being used and still have the trailer available. I spent a total of about \$15,000 to build it including the \$6,000 cost of the trailer. The big advantage is that I don't have all that money tied up in a camper that I use only three or four times a year. And I only need one set of tires, lights, and license plates, instead of one set for each rig," says Adams. "I had the trailer built with an extra high gooseneck, which is why I had to build the camper so high. But my camper is no taller than today's models which are often up to 13 ft. high. The next time I might also build the camper with a slide-out wall, which would provide even more living room area."

According to Adams, the trailer alone weighs about 6,000 lbs., which is much heavier than necessary, so he built the camper as light as possible. It weighs only about 9,500 lbs.

"I use my 1996 Ford F-250 3/4-ton pickup, equipped with a Power Stroke diesel engine, to pull the camper. Even though it's almost 13 ft. high, the pickup has plenty of power to pull it.

Adams says he would be willing to custom build campers or sell plans complete with drawings telling how he built the camper and where to find materials.

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## Seat Belts Make Cheap Tie-Down Straps

Old car or pickup seat belts can be equipped with "S" hooks on each end and used as cheap tie-down straps, says Ralph Bertram, Winslow, Ind.

"You can buy commercial straps, but why spend the money?" asks Bertram.

He unbolts seat belts from the floorboards, then attaches S hooks to each end of the belt. Using a hammer and anvil, he beats one end of each hook closed. The other end is left open.

"I use these straps whenever I haul my motorcycle in my pickup bed, but they could be used for anything," says Bertram. "I use two straps, one leading to each corner of my pickup bed. I attach one end of the belt to the motorcycle's handlebars and the other end to the front corner of the pickup bed. Then I pull on the strap to tighten it down. The straps hold the motorcycle solid and in an upright position.

"The seat belts I used came out of a 1966 Ford Fairlane car and didn't have a shoulder strap attachment. Any type of shoulder harness attached would have to come off."

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Bertram uses two seat belt straps to secure his motorcycle in the back of a pickup.



"S" hooks attach to each end of belt.

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](http://www.farmshow.com).

Mark Newhall, Editor

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