

Peter Doerksen built this replica of a 1901 Pierce Motorette, one of the first horseless carriages ever made.



Replica Automobile Took Years To Build

Peter Doerksen doesn't know the cost of his biggest shop project.

The Camrose, Alberta, retiree spent 2 1/2 years building a replica of the 1901 Pierce Motorette, one of the first horseless carriages.

Doerksen spent hours researching the car before he built it. "I went through hundreds of photographs, and was able to get all the dimensions from the California Horseless Carriage Club's research museum," he says. Only 12 Motorettes were built in 1901. The following year perhaps as many as 250 were built, but the only remaining original is at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

Using wood and steel, he made every part of the basic automobile except the wheels, springs, lights, horn, transmission and engine. "I started with nothing and made all the parts, from the axles to the clamps and brackets that hold it together," he says.

"The front is solid oak and the carriage body is made of marine plywood," he says. He says the most difficult part of making the car was building into it the ability to flex when one side drives over a bump or into a ditch. "A wooden body doesn't twist, so I had to come up with a design that could take the stress," he says. "I finally put it together so it has wooden panels that can move against one another."

Doerksen estimates he worked an average of eight hours a day, sometimes seven days a week over a 2 1/2-year period making the parts and assembling his car.

The top is made of a man-made leather-like material that's stretched over a frame he made of electrical conduit. The springless seat is hard foam laid over a wooden bench and covered with English leather from 1 1/2 hides

he purchased from a leather wholesaler in Calgary. He looked all over the continent for a pair of matching brass headlamps like those on the original Motorette. "I finally found a pair from an antique car parts dealer in Oklahoma City and flew down to get them. They were originally used on a 1904 Reo that had been purchased new by someone in Maine," he says. He found the horn, a reproduction, in a local antique store.

The original car featured a 2 3/4-hp. single-cylinder gasoline engine, imported from France because there were no internal combustion engine makers in North America at the time. The engine had to be hand cranked.

Doerksen decided on a 9-hp. one-cylinder Honda engine for his Motorette. "It has plenty of power and an electric starter," he notes.

He installed a rebuilt 5-speed transaxle that had been used in a garden tractor.

"The original Pierce Motorette had a top speed of 22 mph, so I used gears and a governor on the engine to give me a top speed of 22 kilometers," he says.

Doerksen built his car alone but he got a lot of advice from his three sons. To recognize their contributions, he calls the car the Doerksen Brothers Horseless Carriage.

While it's not an exact replica, Doerksen says that cosmetically, it's almost identical. It's licensed and insured, so it's legal on the road. During the spring and summer, he drives it to the coffee shop two or three times a week, accompanied by his dog Hank. And every year, he takes it to a parade or two to show it off.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Peter Doerksen, 4423-67 Street, Camrose, Alberta, Canada T4V 3B2 (ph 780 672-1688).



Car is a combination of old, new, refurbished and custom-made parts.

World's Largest Ball Of Paint

"The most important thing about creating a big ball of paint is to work at it every day as often as you can," says Mike Carmichael, who started painting a baseball 25 years ago and never stopped. The "world's largest ball of paint" now has more than 17,000 layers of paint and weighs over 900 lbs.

Carmichael began his baseball-painting career by accident back in high school. An errant baseball throw knocked over a gallon of paint and covered the ball in blue paint. The next day Mike painted it again and again and yet again. By the end of high school the ball was covered in 1,000 layers of paint and was the size of a basketball. When he graduated he donated that first ball to the local historical society. But he soon started another.

The current ball of paint has been accumulating its colorful layers since 1977. It even has its own room in the family's house. In order to easily coat the entire ball, Carmichael drilled a hole through the center and suspended it from the ceiling. Over the last 25 years, whenever he or his family had a few moments they would put on another layer of paint. "We'd also try to have every 100th layer painted by a Guest of Honor," he says. Some of the guests have included city officials or tourists who came to see the growing work of art.

Mike also gets hundreds of email requests to paint a layer in honor of someone. The name or names are written and dated on a layer. To date he has painted over 17,000 layers in over twenty colors.

Carmichael's plan is to build a store and museum to house the ever-increasing ball of paint; "We've got to do something. It will hardly get through the door, it's gotten so big. I hope everyone can see it," Carmichael says, noting that a documentary film crew is work-



Mike Carmichael started painting this baseball 25 years ago and never stopped. His unusual project will soon be documented in the movie, "Roadside Ambition."



Groups from as far away as Thailand have come to see the giant paintball, which has grown to more than 900 lbs.

ing on a film about the ball of paint and Carmichael's efforts to attract tourists called, "Roadside Ambition."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, (website: www.ballofpaint.com).



Roger Moe built this car to look like the first automobile Henry Ford ever built, in the early 1900's.

Henry Ford's First Car

We spotted this home-built antique car at the recent Farm Fest show near Redwood Falls, Minn. It was built by Roger Moe of Springfield, Minn., and is designed to look like the first car Henry Ford ever built, in the early 1900's.

"I saw a photo of the car in an encyclopedia and tried to build it as close as I could," says Moe. "The original car didn't have an awning, which I added for shade because we often drive the car in parades. My wife and I dress up in antique looking clothes to add to the old-time effect. I wear a bowler hat and she wears a garden party hat."

He started with the frame and axles off a Ford Model T car and added a plywood "body". The car rides on four motorcycle

wheels. Power is supplied by a throttle-governed antique gas engine, with a camshaft belt-driving a hydrostatic transmission off a Sears riding mower. "The engine runs on E85 (ethanol) fuel and delivers anywhere from 3 to 5 hp, depending on whether it's idling or revved up," says Moe.

The driver sits on a padded seat made for Moe by an Amish craftsman. Moe uses a tiller to steer. The car also has a horn, a small fan to cool the driver, and Model T keroseene lamps on front that serve as headlights.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Roger Moe, 36911 200th St., Springfield, Minn. 56087 (ph 507 723-5947; email: ram@tier-3.net).