



Bill Swets made a big motor home out of a 50-passenger Denver city bus.

"RIDES LIKE A DREAM"

City Bus Makes Nifty Motor Home

"It's twice as big as most motor homes and rides so smooth it's like sitting on a cloud," says Bill Swets, Fort Collins, Colo., who recently sent FARM SHOW this photo of his one-of-a-kind motor home that he built out of an old city bus.

The 50-seat bus had been used by the city of Denver to haul passengers between Denver, Boulder, and Golden. Swets paid \$7,600 for it. He removed the seats and lined the walls with 3/8 in. plywood. He used 14 ga. sheet metal to close up half the windows on one side and one third of the windows on the other side. The bus has a full-size kitchen with a 110-volt microwave oven, propane gas stove, and a refrigerator that runs on either propane or electricity. The living room has a couch and two chairs. A complete dinette seats four and also converts to a bed. There's a TV and VCR. The full-sized bathroom has a 32-in. shower, stool, and sink. A queen bed at the back of the bus lifts up for storage.

The bus has four different electrical systems - an Onan water-cooled generator, an extension cord that can be pulled out of the bus and plugged into an outside power source, and two 12-volt electrical systems - one for the headlights and the other for the inside lights. There are three separate heating systems - a forced air furnace in front (salvaged from a wrecked camper), the bus's original heater, and a catalytic heater at the back.

A 110-gal. fresh water stainless steel tank supplies drinking and washing water. A 12-volt pump that develops 40 lbs. pressure delivers water at 3 gpm's. The "gray and black water" tanks are also stainless steel. The hot water heater uses either propane or 110-volt electricity.

"I'm real pleased with it," says Swets, who built the motor home over an 18-month period on his farm. "We have a 3-acre sculpture park on our farm that's visited by about 25,000 people every year. Many of them watched me build it. We recently had an 'open bus' so people could see the finished product. I did some wrought iron work on the door, as well as on the side of the bus and around the license plate in front so it really looks nice. I built it because my wife retires this year and we plan to do some traveling. I spent a total of about \$14,000 which is less than

the price for a used motorhome. New comparable commercial motorhomes sell for \$60,000 to \$75,000.

"I don't know how many miles it has, but I'd guess 250,000 to 300,000. Even so, it'll last a lot longer than a motorhome because buses are built to run seven days a week all year long and at 300,000 miles are just getting broken in good. The running gear is still in remarkably good condition. The ceiling is 7 ft. high compared to 6 ft. for most motorhomes. It has his-and-hers closets that are almost as big as the closets in a house and nice big windows and mirrors everywhere that give the bus a very open feel. It's set up to sleep seven people or carry eleven.

"There's a big desk behind the driver's seat with a chair that swings out beside the driver so that when I'm on the road my wife can sit next to me. The chair can be swung back into the desk whenever the bus is parked to make more room.

The bus rides on 12.5 by 22.5, 16-ply tires and has two air springs at each corner. I use leveling valves to keep the entire bus level no matter how many people are in it. Gauges show how much pressure is in each spring. I usually keep 40 lbs. on the front springs and 60 lbs. on back.

"It doesn't have any air conditioning but it's set up so that I can add it later if I want. Each window is 6 ft. long and 3 ft. high and can be opened half way to allow a lot of fresh air inside.

"The bus is really a hybrid between a transit bus and a city bus. It has only one door and a top speed of 65 mph like a transit bus, but there's no storage room under the seats. It was made by A.M. General, the same company that makes the Hummer. It weighs 27,000 lbs. I paid \$97 to license it which I consider cheap. I also had to change the title from a bus to a motor home and prove that it has a sewer system, fresh water, bed, and kitchen facilities.

"The seller claims the bus's Detroit 8V71 V-8 diesel engine gets at least 8 gal. per hour."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, William D. Swets, 4801 East Harmony Road, Fort Collins, Colo. 80525 (ph 303 484-9509).

Ag World



These llama caddies have gained national attention for a new rural golf course.

CADDY "GIMMICK" CREATES INTEREST IN NEW RURAL COURSE

Farmer's Golf Course Offers "Llama Caddies"

When Bruce and Diane Brage converted part of their farm into a golf course, they decided to try something different to persuade golfers to give the new course a try. They provide "llama caddies" to tote golf clubs.

"We've received a tremendous amount of publicity about our llama caddies, including newspapers and TV stations. NBC even aired a report on one of their evening news shows," says Diane. "We have two llamas available for caddying on Mondays and Tuesdays which are traditionally slow days. The 9-year old llamas, Pueblo and Jack, can each carry two golf bags. We charge \$25 per llama in addition to the normal \$10 fee on our 9-hole course. Normally two people share one llama. The customer can lead the llama himself or we can provide a handler.

"The llamas will slow up play a little but

not enough to be a problem. We have hitching posts next to the greens and fairways. The llamas are very calm and walk right with you. We got them used to the course by walking them on it for a few weeks before opening for business. Llamas are odorless and have splayed feet so they don't leave deep tracks. However, we do ask that the animals be kept off the greens. We also 'potty trained' them to go in a couple of selected places off the course. Some people have raised concerns about llamas spitting but we've found that the llamas normally don't spit at people.

"We got the idea when we read a story about llamas being used on a North Carolina golf course."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Bruce and Diane Brage, 26161 Nicolai Ave., Cannon Falls, Minn. 55009 (ph 507 263-2507).