Mini-Trucks Built With Lawn Mower Parts

Larry Stockton has a passion for building detailed scale model trucks from parts off riding mowers.

"I use axles, motors and steering from riding lawn mowers, and the rest is largely salvage," says Stockton. "The semi was my first project."

What he created was an amazingly realistic mini-semi. The tractor is 7 ft. long, and the trailer adds 12 ft. Stockton stripped down the mower, lengthened the frame and built the tractor around it, complete with working lights, air intake, side mirrors and chrome stacks with heat shields.

"I bought the lights new, but the lower halves of the exhaust pipes are steel pipe from a driveshaft. The upper chrome parts are pieces of bed railing from an old pickup. The exhaust stack heat shields are the real thing from the scrap yard," he says.

Stockton sized everything to match the width of the lawn mower. The biggest challenge was adding the extra belts and pulleys needed to connect the 12 hp engine and drive on the stretched frame.

"I used pieces of tread plate to dress up the tractor and trailer, including the box on the trailer," says Stockton. "The trailer bed is made from plywood panels with steel trim."

The cab has an open back, giving Stockton access to the original steering, clutch and 6-gear transmission. He fabricated a hand brake for the rig. His seat rides just ahead of the trailer.

"I used the mower rear end for the lead drive axle, but all the other axles to the rear are drag axles, just lawn mower wheels on steel rod axles," says Stockton. "I give kids rides around my yard with the trailer and have had it in the local Christmas parade twice."

Stockton's 9-ft. wrecker is equally accurate in detail with air intakes on the sides and forward tipping hood. Like the semi, it contains axles, motor and steering from a riding lawn mower. The metal cab and body were fashioned from a 300-gal. fuel tank.

"I flattened it out, hammered it down, cut it apart and put it back together," says Stockton. "I do a lot of woodworking and decided to do wood trim, bumper and steps."

Stockton used steel pails for the air canisters and tread plate for trim. The exhaust stacks are made from the same driveshaft and heat shield as the semi, but without the chrome. Steering, clutch and brake are operated from the open rear of the cab. The driver side panel behind the stack opens to give him access to his seat.

The boom is made from 2 by 3-in. steel tubing with a small boat-type, hand powered cable winch. Winch saddles are made from old truck mud flaps. "I still don't have working lights, but otherwise it is about finished," says Stockton.

"People laugh when they see what I do with these things, but I enjoy it," says Stockton. "I used to work on classic cars, but they have gotten so expensive. This doesn't cost much, and it's fun."

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"I use axles, motors and steering systems from riding mowers, and salvage material," says Larry Stockton, who created this amazingly realistic mini semi tractor/trailer.

Stockton's 9-ft. wrecker has air intakes on the sides and a forward tipping hood. The metal cab and body were fashioned from a 300-gal. fuel tank.

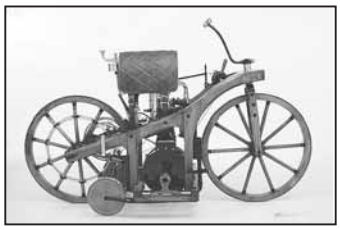
World's First Motorcyle On Display At Ohio Museum

More than 130 years ago two German engineers, Gottlieb Daimler and Wilhelm Maybach, converted an old greenhouse near a home in Stuttgart into a workshop that had family members and neighbors puzzled because no one knew what they were working on. Within a year the two geniuses had created a horizontal test engine featuring a hot-tube ignition system.

Less than two years later, in April 1885, Daimler applied for a patent on what is considered the prototype of today's modern gasoline-powered engine. The upright engine had a float-metered carburetor and an enclosed aluminum crankcase with a vertically-mounted, air-cooled cylinder. The bore was 2.3 in. and the stroke was 3.9 in. It weighed 132 lbs. and, with a cylinder displacement of just 264 cubic centimeters, it produced about 1/2 hp at 650 rpm's. The intake and exhaust operated automatically.

Six months later, Daimler threw open the doors of their shop and rolled out a wood-framed contraption held together with bolts, brackets and angled braces. His gasoline engine sat on a pallet-like box between angled side supports with a curved leather saddle on top. Two spring-mounted outrigger wheels provided balance to what became known as the world's first motor-powered riding cycle. It was called the Daimler Reitwagen. In November, 1885 Daimler's 17-year-old son had the thrill of his life when he drove the vehicle on an 8-mile round trip over roads made for horses and buggies. It was the first ever official road trip for a motorcycle, with a top speed of 7 mph. Later the young man described it as a "hot ride", which undoubtedly referred to the fact that the top of the engine heated the leather seat and started his pants on fire as he returned home.

In the next 15 years Daimler and Maybach improved their engines and installed them in boats, buggies and even flying airships. They never pursued the motorcycle design. Daimler Motor Company became a prominent engine manufacturer and eventually merged with a company started by Karl Benz in 1926 to form Daimler-Benz AG, best known today for Mercedes automobiles.



A replica of the first motorcycle ever built is on display at the Motorcycle Hall of Fame Museum in Ohio. The original wood-powered cycle was destroyed in a factory fire in the early 1900's.

Unfortunately, the original Daimler Reitwagen vehicle was lost in a factory fire in 1903. Several reproductions have been made in the past 100 years, and one of the most exacting replicas is located in Ohio's Motorcycle Hall of Fame Museum. It was built by William Eggers, a woodworker from New York City who started William Eggers Motorcycles after he retired. Eggers builds custom motorcycles, bicycles, trucks, tractors and specialty products.

His Daimler replica and thousands of other motorcycle artifacts are on display at the Motorcyle Hall of Fame Museum in suburban Columbus, Ohio. The facility celebrates heroes of the track, road, trails and halls of government who have helped elevate motorcycling through the past 100 years. The Museum continues to develop educational exhibits and programs for motorcycle enthusiasts from around the world.

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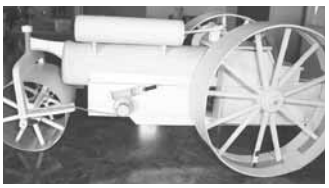
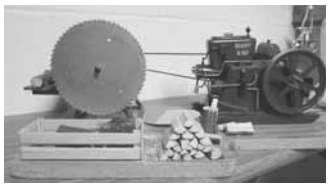
Beryl Buffington likes to add motors to his carved toys, including a combine, dozer, tractor, and sawmill. He starts with photos he finds on the internet and in Farm Collector magazines.





He Adds Motors To His Carved Toys

"This is my baby. It even sounds like a real Model T," says Beryl Buffington about his amazing motorized toy pickup. He reaches behind the front bumper, flips a switch, and the toy he built sputters to life and starts to move.

A little larger than 1/32-scale, it's one of 3 motorized toys Buffington carved out of 1/8-in. thick cellular vinyl from old advertising signs. It's flexible to cut, shape, sand and glue together – right down to details such as oil filters, throttles and brakes.

Finished with genuine implement paints, the pieces look like metal, but their feather-light weight gives them away.

As a retired lumberyard owner, the Woden, Iowa, man has more hoarded material to work with these days. His stash includes hundreds of battery-operated motors from handheld sprayers, remote toy motors and gears from old computer printers.

The battery-powered sound and motion for the pickup come from the gears from an old printer and a worm gear he extended with heavy copper wiring that goes to a belt-driven motor to make the differential in the back.

A 1905 Kelly Springfield steamroller has a toy remote racecar motor that Buffington geared down to 14 rpm's with pencil sharpener gears. A 1954 Deere M Crawler runs off a lawn sprinkler motor.

"The challenge with a motorized model is to get it laid out so it moves and yet looks like it's supposed to," Buffington says. He puts together the mechanical parts first, and then builds the toy around it.

All his models – motorized and non-motorized – represent many hours of work and attention to detail.

"The most challenging of the non-motorized models is a 1650 Oliver tractor with a front-mounted, 4-row cultivator," Buffington says.

He starts with photos he finds on the internet and in Farm Collector magazines to design his models. Some take 80 to 90 hrs. to complete.

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