



Two-story grain bin home has “bump outs” painted bright gold/yellow to match the original MFS logo still on the corrugated bin. A 7-ft. steel deck with bar grate flooring is just outside the living room.

Grain Bin Made Into A Fantastic Retirement Home

By Lorn Manthey, Contributing Editor

Over the years FARM SHOW has published more than 20 stories about creative homeowners converting old grain bins into living quarters, but we’ve never seen one quite as architecturally unique as the 36-ft. dia. conical home near Great Falls, Mont.

Kate Morris, a retired art teacher, says the idea of a house made from a bin tumbled around in her brain for 8 years or so. Originally she was going to do the work herself, but it wasn’t until she met with Nick Pancheau, a former student of hers for 7 years who became an architect, that the vision moved toward reality. Morris says Nick and the team at his office took her ideas and came up with an incredible design. The living space is modern, functional, stylish and captures the incredible views on the property. Pancheau says the architectural team calls the design Eastern Montana Modern, a vision that embodies landscape, materials and tradition.

The home is situated on a hill overlooking two water basins. It captures breathtaking views of surrounding knolls, hills, fields and sky. Morris’s father bought the 250-acre property when he retired and used to drive there every day after lunch with his dog. He’d plant trees, fish in the pond, improve the land and enjoy the undulating, grassy landscape. Morris says her father never built anything there and never spent a night. The view today remains unspoiled, and Morris’s home captures it all. Better yet, the living space is as outstanding as the view.

Pancheau’s design inserts a 2-story living space into the original 8-ring, 20-ft. high corrugated bin. Each floor has about 1,000 sq. ft. An iron catwalk with bar grate flooring leads from a slope into a recessed entry way on the second level. This living area has a V-shaped projection that extends 5 ft. outside the exterior bin wall. One set of living room windows look inside at the curved wall of the bin and the others are on the bump out to capture the amazing views. The bump outs are painted bright gold/yellow to match the original MFS logo still on the bin. A 7-ft. steel deck with bar grate flooring is just outside the living room, supported by steel beams. The ceiling of the living room is open to reveal the conical roof.

The lower level has a guest room, utilities, a bathroom and a large art studio. The area above the second floor could also be finished. The kitchen features 2 rolling viper green tool chests for an island, covered with a single piece of soapstone for the countertop. The floors are OSB board-treated with water-based polyurethane, which allows the original stamped lumber grade details to show through the finish. Morris designed and made the tiles for the kitchen backsplash and the bathroom shower. A window between the kitchen and living area allows light to stream through the home and provides outstanding views of the prairie from anywhere in the living space.

Morris’s home was built by contractor



An iron catwalk with bar grate flooring leads from a slope into a recessed entryway on home’s second level.



Kitchen features 2 rolling viper green tool chests for an island. A window between the kitchen and living area allows light to stream through the home.



One set of living room windows look inside at the curved wall of the bin, and the others are on the bump out to capture the outdoor views.

Tom Skovron, who she met through an acquaintance at the local lumber yard. Skovron’s company has built more than 300 grain bins for storage and 150 houses over the years, but this is the first bin/house combination that ever became a work-of-art living space. The original bin and construction cost Morris about \$20,000,

the living space build-out was just over \$163,000, and another \$30,000 went for architectural fees, appliances, furniture and finishes.

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