

Mini 1650 Diesel Oliver

Matt Frank turned a Simplicity garden tractor into a diesel-powered, mini 1650 Oliver with a narrow front end. Even though it has a hydrostatic transmission, it holds its own in the 1,050-lb. class at tractor pulls.

"I pulled with it all this past summer," says Frank. "People say you can't pull with hydrostatics, but this one will power out or spin-out before the hydrostatic fails."

Frank started out with 2 Simplicity lawn tractors he picked up for \$50. The previous owner said one worked, though it had been at least 5 years since it had run.

He cleaned the carburetor, got the motor running, and started on the narrow front end. He stripped away the existing wide front end and used a salvaged deck spindle from a Cub Cadet mower to mount tricycle wheels.

"I used the spindle for the front end bearings and switched the steering rod to the other side," says Frank. "I bought 6-in. wheels on eBay and mounted them with 6 by 12-rib tires."

As he finished, another change came to mind. "I got a wild hair for a small diesel," says Frank. "I found one only 15 miles away."

It was a 22 1/2 hp, liquid cooled Kubota on an old, industrial Jacobson mower. It hadn't run since running out of fuel a few years prior.

Frank replaced the starter, and it fired right up.

"It ran good," he says. "I pulled the motor and started figuring how to put it in the Simplicity. The biggest problem was the liquid cooling."

Frank found a radiator from a salvaged Deere lawn tractor and added an 11-in. electric fan from a small Ford car. He trimmed away factory side panels on the Simplicity and removed the battery box and fuel tank to make room for the diesel.

"I added an extension to the frame to mount an old pony beer keg for a diesel fuel tank," says Frank. "I mounted the old battery box on the right hand side of the frame and moved the hood forward about 2 in."

With the aide of motor mounts made from angle iron, Frank installed the engine and cooling system. He shortened the driveshaft from the old motor on the Simplicity and bolted it to the Kubota to drive the hydrostatic.

"I added rear wheels with custom built wheel spacers so I can run duals," says Frank. "I have wheel weights I can take off and put the spacers on in their place."

Frank added a 3-in. stainless steel exhaust pipe he cut down to size. He welded it to the



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plate under the hood so it lifts when he lifts the hood. When he sets it back down, it slides over the pipe from the manifolds.

"The steering wheel, seat and frame are about all that was on the original Simplicity," says Frank. "I replaced the gauges and most everything else and gave it an Oliver 1650

paint job and decals. It took a lot of time and thought, but it was worth it."

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"Tractorcycle" Inspires Imaginative Tales

Larry Medwig's Tractorcycle is rusty, covered with oddities such as an IH fire extinguisher, vintage tractor seat, and iron water pipe handlebars.

"I wanted it to look like something International Harvester prototyped 50 or 60 years ago that was found in a barn," explains the Ohio motorcycle restorer. "It's the opposite of what I do when painting expensive vintage motorcycles."

Having grown up with IH tractors, he used a Farmall Cub tractor hood. An IH throttle-governed engine that once ran a cement mixer now powers the bike with a Crosley automobile transmission. The wheels came from a David Bradley tractor and the hood ornament is a turtle from a Snapper lawnmower. Medwig cut out the fenders from an antique car's tire covers.

Many of the details were gifts from friends – lights found in a barn and the cast iron tractor seat shaped similar to a vintage

motorcycle seat, for example.

"There's no suspension; it's a rough ride," Medwig admits. "It's not street legal, but I take it to antique motorcycle meets and tractor shows. We have a blast with it."

One of his favorite things to do at events is park it, then walk away to get something to eat. When he returns, there's usually a crowd around it inspecting the details. And on several occasions one person in the group is bragging about how he helped build it – making up crazy details that never happened. Medwig responds by getting on the bike, starting up the relatively quiet engine, and speeding off (a little faster than a golf cart) for a ride around the grounds.

Motorcycle enthusiasts often ask when he plans to restore it. While he tweaks the design occasionally when he finds the perfect rusted accessories, he has no intention of making it look shiny and new.

Another benefit of having an "antique" bike



"It doesn't look shiny or new, because I wanted it to look like something IH might have prototyped 60 years ago," says Larry Medwig about his home-built "Tractorcycle".

is that during the winter he doesn't have any problem finding a place to park it. This winter it is parked inside, next to the front window of Eastside Relics, a Willoughby, Ohio, antique store.

It's likely attracting customers curious

about when the "vintage bike" was made and where it was found.

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One-Wheeled Trailer Provides Lots Of Fun

"I built this one-wheeled trailer to pull behind a variety of antique tractors. It's a great conversation piece when I'm in tractor parades," says Reed Schaeffer, Ford City, Penn.

The trailer measures 3 ft. square and rides on a swivel wheel assembly off an old semi-mount sicklebar mower. The trailer frame is 2 by 5/16-in. thick angle iron. A metal railing surrounds 3 sides of the trailer and is made from 1-in. sq. tubing off the frame of an old porch glider.

The hitch assembly uses a pair of brackets that attach to a 3/4-in. dia. metal rod that can be hooked up to most tractor drawbars, and also to any Cat. I 3-pt. hitch.

"I came up with the idea because I remember as a child that our neighbor hauled feed for his livestock on a one-wheeled trailer," says Schaeffer.

He says building the trailer turned out to

be more fun than expected. "I often use the trailer to haul children in parades, and every spring I take it with me on a 100-mile tractor ride. I fasten a plastic storage box to the trailer floor to haul gas cans, rain gear, a tool kit, jumper cables, lawn chairs and other odds and ends."

A one-wheeled trailer pushes straight behind the tractor, which he says makes it easy to steer and to back up, especially when loading and unloading from a flatbed trailer.

He has also made brackets to fit his Allis Chalmers G and Deere B tractors, as well as his Farmall Cub. "The trailer looks really nice hooked up to the Cub because it's proportionately sized," notes Schaeffer.

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Reed Schaeffer's home-built, one-wheeled trailer is shown attached to the drawbar of his 1941 Farmall BN tractor.