"Made It Myself" Side-By-Side

Lorne Reimer can take multiple riders with him in his home-built side-by-side. He turned an abandoned Yamaha Big Bear 350 ATV into a mini-bus on 4 wheels. He even customized it to match his good ear.

"I like to hear my grandkids, and my right ear is kind of deaf," says Reimer. "I moved the steering post and other controls to the right side of the machine so I can hear them better."

Reimer started by stripping down the Yamaha to its frame. He then split it down the middle both ways. This let him keep the front suspension unaltered. When the steering post (which he took from an old garden tractor) was mounted to the right, only one steering rod had to be lengthened.

When he put the pieces back together, the chassis was 13 in. wider and 30 in. longer with the mid-mount engine now under the new rear seat. Moving the differential to the left required only one shaft for front-wheel drive.

"Widening the back was the easiest part of the job," recalls Reimer. "I just cut out the center of the rims, added a 6 1/2-in. collar to each side and reinforced them both. I used a long angle iron to keep everything aligned."

The added length and width gave him room to add a rear bench seat. Originally, it was a removable seat in a late 90's Expedition. The seventh passenger seat is a captain's seat mounted on the front center rack.

"All seven seats are equipped with seat belts," says Reimer. "For safety's sake, I also improved braking power with upgraded front discs and calipers."

Using mostly old components and salvaged items kept the price down. Reimer revamped heavy-duty hydraulic lines for roll bars. They proved ideal for mounting an LED light bar and an air horn from an antique car. The thumb throttle was remounted as a foot pedal beside the rear brake pedal, and the footgear shifting was modified with a hand-operated lever.

The stainless steel muffler came from a minivan, while the gas tank and footrests came from the same garden tractor as the steering. The bumpers were retained from the old Yamaha, but resurfaced with rubber coating Plasti Dip spray. Rubber belting fills in between the fenders to contain flying mud and water.

Reimer mounted the rear seat using specially designed attachment plates. This allows him to easily substitute a utility box equipped with similar plates for the rear seat.

"I mounted a rear hand grip behind the seat using a handle off an old washer cart," says Reimer. "Total expenditures are well under $1,000. It has worked flawlessly on numerous treks into the hills, giving rides to family and friends."

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Reimer converted a Yamaha 4-wheeler (left) into a longer and wider machine.

The new steering post came from an old lawn mower (left). He can add a cargo box on back when needed, as shown above.

Chainsaw Powers Teenager's Bike

Jared Witmer starts the chainsaw motor on his bike by moving forward. No rope pull needed.

"I start pedaling, and the compression starts the motor," he says. "When I hit the brakes, the motor stops."

Witmer is a senior in high school and built the powered bike for fun. He attached a 41cc Husky chainsaw motor to the rear frame of his bike. He used a bracket that attached to the frame at the side and above the rear wheel. The bracket is also attached to the seat post. A turnbuckle connects the bracket to the other side of the bike wheel.

The Husky had the bar and clutch removed. Witmer attached a DMX bike foot peg to the chainsaw shaft and positioned it against the rear tire.

"The motor adds a little load to one side of the bike, but it's not too bad," says Witmer. "Right now, I reach behind and hold the trigger, but I am going to move the throttle to the handlebars."

Witmer plans to use a twist throttle handgrip. In the meantime, he enjoys it as is. He hit 27 mph with his chainsaw-powered bike and is confident it could go faster.

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Jared Witmer attached a Husky chainsaw motor to the rear frame of his bike. "I start pedaling, and the compression starts the motor. When I hit the brakes, the motor stops," he says.

Rotisserie Roaster Made Out Of Fuel Oil Tank

Forrest Robinson, Westmoreland, N.H., converted a 275-gal. fuel oil tank into a wood-fired rotisserie roaster.

The 2-ft. wide by 5-ft. long roaster is used to cook everything from chickens to beef, turkey, and whole pork loins. It has a pair of small wheels at one end and big handles at the other so Robinson can move it around like a wheelbarrow.

The roaster is fitted with six 3-ft. long "spits" which consist of 1/2-in. dia. metal rods with small sprockets welded onto them. The spits ride in 4-in. deep slots cut into both sides of the tank. An electric gearhead motor drives a chain that rotates the sprockets. The chain rides over a length of square tubing welded onto one side of the tank, making a continuous loop while driving the sprockets.

The fire consists of 8 to 10 small sticks of wood that burn at the bottom of the tank.

"It works perfect," says Robinson. "I can cook several different kinds of meat at a time - turkey, pork, beef, chickens, etc. I've cooked 18 whole 8-lb. chickens in it, and it can easily handle twelve 14-lb. turkeys, too."

The spits are 3 ft. long on a 2-ft. wide roaster in order to provide a handle, and they're pointed at one end to slide the meat on. "I tie pork loins with butcher twine so they can't wiggle around on the spits and offset the balance and also cook unevenly," says Robinson. "If I want, I can remove a spit or move it to another location without having to stop the motor. And if some meat gets done before the others, I pick up the spit and move it back where there's less heat.

"I try to use split wood instead of round because it's bark-free, and too much bark can produce an unpleasant smelling smoke. A 4-hour cook time uses only a large armful of wood."

Robinson says he generally operates the motor at 3 to 5 rpm's and keeps the flame no higher than 10 to 12 in. "I'm careful to never let the ashes get wet because if that happens, the next time I build a fire there will be an unpleasant odor," he says.

He used a sawzall to cut off the top of the tank and then drained away all the oil. He then built a small fire at both ends of the tank, keeping it burning for 4 to 5 hrs. in order to remove any oil smell.

"When I cut through the tank I saved the top to serve as a lid, but I've never had to use it because I always make sure the roaster stays dry," notes Robinson.

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Roaster is fitted with six 3-ft. long "spits" which ride in 4-in. deep slots cut into both sides of tank. An electric motor drives a chain that rotates sprockets.