

Oddball Tractors Add Up To A Colorful Collection

When it comes to collecting tractors, Donald Russell isn't partial to any one color. He actually specializes in oddball colors that illicit confused looks from tractor collectors who visit his private Carlisle, Iowa, museum. His collection includes models such as a white 1979 John Deere 2240 and an orange 1973 John Deere 301A with a forest green hood. The amazing thing about his collection is that all tractors are painted just the way they came from the factory.

Custom-colored tractors were often ordered for specific reasons. For example, the white John Deere cost an extra \$300 for the custom paint job for a North Carolina city with an ordinance requiring all city-owned equipment to be white. A mint green 1981 John Deere 401B was used by the U.S. Border Patrol in Arizona and matched the color of that organization's other equipment.

Besides odd colors, Russell appreciates custom accessories like the grill guard on front of his dual-colored Deere 301A and its 575-lb. belly weight. Originally owned by Sangamon County in Illinois, it apparently

pulled heavy equipment for road or parks work.

Models with low production numbers are also part of Russell's collection.

"I have a (yellow) Deere 320 utility tractor from 1958. Only 199 were made and less than 70 were painted industrial yellow," he notes.

A personal favorite - because it's reminiscent of tractors from his childhood - is a 1963 Allis Chalmers Series 2 D10 which is red instead of orange.

Russell's tractors attract a lot of attention when he takes them to shows and local parades. He also welcomes visitors (by appointment) to the museum he built in Carlisle.

"It holds about 30 tractors, and the walls are covered with signs and memorabilia," he says, including signs from former local businesses. Toys in 1/16-scale and pedal models line shelves above the full-sized tractors.

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All of Donald Russell's oddball tractors are painted just the way they came from the factory.

Mini B Powered By Big Flathead V-8

Mike Noonan's Mini B may be small at 36 in. tall, but it attracts plenty of attention when he starts it up. The loud 100 hp 1949 Ford flathead V-8 engine with its dual straight pipe exhaust creates a muscle car sound recognized by folks who were teens in the 1940's and 50's.

Another priority was to use Allis Chalmers parts, because they were the tractors used on his grandfather's farm. Named the Mini B after the A-C model B, Noonan's creation is more than an orange tractor with an oversize engine. It's a hybrid of parts Noonan managed to merge to make a working tractor.

It's also very short - on purpose. Noonan and his friend Larry Wolden were inspired to build mini tractors after meeting Chris Luebke at a Case garden tractor show.

"I was impressed with one of his project tractors. He had chopped the frame and lowered it by about 6 in., which allowed the driver to just step over the console to get

on instead of climbing over the console," Noonan says, noting that at 73 years old, he appreciates that it's easy to get on and off the tractor.

He found a 1983 Case 226 garden tractor with a hydraulic drive system and the V-8 engine on Craigslist. He cut the tractor frame down 5 in. and cut off the front end.

"I had to build a new front end to accommodate the 600-lb. engine. I made it out of 1/2-in. steel frame and bolted it onto the garden tractor frame and reinforced it," Noonan says.

Allis Chalmers B tractors provided many necessary parts for the steering spindles, hubs, tie rods and wishbone. He used the AC grill and welded together two hoods to cover the oversize engine. He fabricated fenders from the sheet metal and used the tractor seat.

Noonan says he wasn't familiar with hydraulics and was grateful for Luebke's advice. Building the wiring harness and



Mike Noonan's Allis Chalmers Mini B is only 36 in. tall, but it's powered by a 100 hp 1949 Ford flathead V-8 engine and has dual straight exhaust pipes that create a loud muscle car sound.

fixing up and adding power steering from a scrapped Yanmar compact tractor also proved to be challenging.

He also built a custom trailer with a seat for buddies to ride on - with a cooler below

the seat for refreshments.

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Mike Crutcher built this "ATV garden tractor" by combining a 1972 Allis Chalmers 410 garden tractor with a 1993 Kawasaki Bayou 220 ATV.

Tractor's 5-speed transmission is operated by a Hurst car shifter located on one side of operator platform. Shifter is connected by a long metal rod to transmission's shift linkage.



ATV-Garden Tractor Goes 50 Mph

"When you meet a car on the road and are going 50 mph on a garden tractor, you get some really weird looks," says Mike Crutcher, who built an "ATV garden tractor" by combining a 1972 Allis Chalmers 410 garden tractor with a 1993 Kawasaki Bayou 220 ATV.

The machine's frame, engine, transmission, suspension system, rear wheels, rear end and brakes are all from the ATV. The seat, steering box and body are from the tractor.

"It's pretty much a Kawasaki ATV inside

a tractor body. I modified the 4-wheeler components to fit the tractor," says Crutcher.

"Fitting the engine in was a big job. I measured the tractor's wheelbase, then cut the ATV frame in half and lengthened it to fit the tractor's body. I also had to cut the sides out of the tractor body in order to make room for the engine.

"The gauges on the dash are only for looks. I have right around 600 hrs. of labor in it. I built it because I wanted to do something

different and just use it to run around town."

The 220 cc ATV engine has a 5-speed transmission with reverse, which is operated by a Hurst car shifter located on one side of the operator platform. The shifter is connected by a long metal rod to the transmission's shift linkage.

The rear ATV wheels are fitted with sport racing dirt tires. The front wheels and tires were designed for a small trailer. Crutcher modified them to fit the ATV's wheel hubs. He made the brake pedal and throttle in his

shop.

"It was a lot of work but I enjoyed doing it," says Crutcher.

You can watch a video of the machine by going on youtube and typing in "rabbid allis". "My thanks to Mike and Ace Adams for making the video," says Crutcher.

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