

He Builds Rusty Old Truck Models

Ron Crowl used rotary tools in his career carving dies to create intricate embossed greeting cards. In retirement, he uses the same tools to gouge, scratch and nick plastic models to create old, distressed trucks and vehicles. A photo of his 1/25th scale late 1950's Peterbilt dump truck caught our eye thanks to its amazing likeness to the photo of the real truck it was modeled after.

We aren't the only ones impressed.

"It's won 6 awards including first place in Seattle's International Plastic Modelers Society show's commercial truck category," Crowl says.

The 72-year-old started making military vehicle models after he retired, which led to weathering and distressing techniques when making trucks, cars and old country gas stations from the 40's and 50's.

When a friend showed him a couple photos of a Peterbilt 351 dump truck abandoned at the Koloa Sugar Mill on Hawaii's Kauai Island, Crowl knew he'd found his next project.

"I just loved the colors of the orange and rust together," Crowl says, noting he wanted to match his model as close to the original truck as possible.

It took plenty of research and 3 months of work, starting with a Revell Peterbilt 359 kit.

The model provided the base for the truck but required a great deal of modifying and scratch building. Crowl removed the sleeper, scratch-built the front bumper and the dashboard and changed the dual exhaust to a single muffler, for example.

He cut most parts from Evergreen plastic strips, sheeting and tubing, and used stainless steel screen used in model trains for the radiator screen. He used aluminum for the heat shield and hood.

Since the kit didn't have a dump box, he scratch built it - three times before he was satisfied. After modifying, building and distressing the truck to his satisfaction, Crowl painted it with Vallejo Life Color acrylic paints to achieve the realistic rust look that matched the photos.

He also knows how to pose his pieces for photos using simple materials. Scrapbooking paper for the wall and ground sets the scene for the photo of his truck.

The dump truck may be hard to top, but Crowl has begun another ambitious project, a Mack 750 Holmes wrecker. He expects it will take 6 months to complete.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ron Crowl, 2341 Southeast Kelly Ave., Gresham, Ore. 97080 (crowl2341@gmail.com).



When a friend showed Ron Crowl this photo of an abandoned 1950's Peterbilt dump truck, he decided to build a 1/25th scale model as close to the original truck as possible.



"I just loved the colors of the orange and rust together on this truck," says Crowl, who used a Revell Peterbilt 359 kit as the base for his model truck.



Photo courtesy Dave Clausen, Old Allis News

Over the last 30 years, Rick Vosika has bought and sold more than 500 Allis Chalmers crawlers. He has kept 31 for himself and all are in running condition.

AC Crawler Collector Has Had Them All

After buying and selling more than 500 Allis-Chalmers crawlers over the past 30 years, Rick Vosika thinks he has had at least one of every model. While most of his crawlers have gone on to other collectors, he keeps 31 for himself and continues to look for more.

"I bought a little CAT 22 about 30 years ago. It was the first," says Vosika.

A second-generation heavy equipment operator, Vosika has been around big steel his entire life. For most of his career he bought and sold heavy equipment as a sideline. About 8 years ago he got serious about AC crawlers.

"I restore them when needed," says Vosika. "You need to be willing to travel and look hard to find the right machine. I try to buy low hour, one owner crawlers."

He recalls purchasing an HD25 from a coal mining operation in Pennsylvania and a little HD5 track tractor in Arizona that had been used on area farms.

One of the biggest crawlers he owns is an AC HD21G shovel, which he found in a salvage yard. Weighing in at 80,000 lbs., it has a lift capacity of 40,000 lbs.

"It started out in a steel mill in Pittsburgh and ended up as the yard tractor in a salvage yard for 30 years," says Vosika. "I just cleaned it up and painted it. It was well-built."

Another AC crawler he bought was a 1956 HD6. "If you know what you are looking for and are picky, you can find some older AC crawlers that don't need much work," he says. "The HD6 had only 908 hrs. on it. All I had to do was repaint it."

His current collection runs the AC gamut from an H3 to an HD31. It includes 11 HD6 tractor shovel loaders, a Fiat-Allis 31, four HD21s, four HD11s, a pair of HD5s and an HD6. The HD6 has 790 original hours on it, and a D40 wheel dozer has its original tires. All are in running condition, and Vosika enjoys running them.

"Get on that HD31, and nothing stands in your way," he says.

Vosika is a member of the Allis Chalmers Crawler Tractors group on Facebook.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Rick Vosika, 16304 Baxter Rd., Excelsior Springs, Mo. 64024 (ph 816 615-3699; rickvsr1@yahoo.com).

The Last Tree Planted By Johnny Appleseed

You can get a graft of the last remaining tree planted by Johnny Appleseed from a Wisconsin nursery which has a deal with the Johnny Appleseed museum in Urbana, Ohio. The tree has produced apples for more than 175 years.

Johnny Appleseed, whose real name was John Chapman, lived from 1774 to 1845. He became famous for planting apple trees across several midwestern states and Ontario, Canada. Jeff Edgar of Silver Creek Nurseries, says, "We provide a certificate of authenticity with every tree. We've shipped them from Washington to Florida, and even back to Ohio."

Edgar grafts scion wood from the ancient apple tree to semi-dwarf rootstock and then grows them to 4 to 6 ft. tall. Each tree should be producing fruit within a year or two.

Apples produced by the tree are described as crunchy, sweet and tart if picked late in the season. They are good for sauce and baking.

The Johnny Appleseed tree is priced at \$55 with shipping costs based on tree size and distance. Each tree comes with planting instructions and a registration card from the museum.

Edgar grafts and sells other specialty trees, including apple trees that he has traced back to the home estate of Isaac Newton in England. Those trees are priced at \$45.

"Our First Down tree is a gold leaf tree with a graft from a Norway Maple," says Edgar. "That gives it a gold base with green leaping out it, similar to Green Bay Packer colors. We also have trees with navy blue or purple leaves with a gold leaf graft, throwback colors for the Packers, as well as the Milwaukee Brewers and the Minnesota Vikings."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Silver Creek Nurseries, Inc., 1909 Silver Creek



Silver Creek Nurseries sells apple trees grafted off the last remaining tree planted by Johnny Appleseed.



Rd., P.O. Box 1988, Manitowoc, Wis. 54221 (ph 920 684-1225 or 888 858-9927; silvercreeknurseries.com).