



Charlie Bauer built a complete village of 1/12th scale mini buildings that fill two sheds on his Wisconsin property.



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## Self-Taught Miniature Builder Recreated His County

Charlie Bauer got started making miniature buildings by building a replica of his family's dairy barn the way he remembered it as a kid. Now, 23 years later, he has built a complete village that fills two sheds on his Newton, Wis., property.

At 1/12<sup>th</sup>-scale, the mini buildings are impressive in size, built out of rough-sawn cedar. Bauer appreciates the natural aged look - and the smell - of cedar. Cutaways reveal the tiny pieces he uses to create details such as 42 tiny desks with hinged seats.

The Queen Ann-style school with its arches, roof peaks and valleys has been the most challenging project so far, Bauer says. But each of the replicas in his collection requires him to learn about different building styles.

"There are 220 pins in the Dutch gambrel barn," Bauer points out. He knows because he hand-carved every one of them out of oak, based on his careful study of a barn just a mile away. His buildings are assembled with wood joinery, lots of glue and occasionally small brad nails.

For most of his replicas, a neighbor

videotapes the real buildings while Bauer takes measurements and points out specific details. That is in addition to photos and doing research at the library and Manitowoc County Historical Society. Just as he recreated the details of his first barn, he is committed to being as accurate as possible.

The quest began when he drove the backroads of Manitowoc County for 30 years as a mailman.

"I've been doing buildings that are disappearing from the landscape," he says. They capture parts of history that might be lost: an eight-sided dance pavilion with poplar wood floor, a general store, a summer kitchen, a water-powered grist mill, a circus wagon, a stump extractor, and a silo, for example.

He builds them big for a couple of reasons. "The math is easy to handle (1 in. for 1 ft.), and the pieces are big enough, so I don't cut my fingers off," Bauer laughs. Even at 1/12<sup>th</sup>-scale some of the details get pretty small, such as the 9,000 plus shingles on the St. James United Church of Christ he recently completed after more than 2 years of work.

It includes stained glass windows with 110 pieces, each made by a local artist.

"I never give myself a deadline," Bauer says. "When I'm stumped, I go for a walk. Without a challenge it wouldn't be any fun."

The only replica not from Manitowoc County is a covered bridge located in Cedarburg that is the last of its kind in Wisconsin. At one time it was the link for dairy farmers to the cheese factory.

There is room for visitors to wander through Bauer's miniature world. Call him to set up a tour.

Bauer isn't interested in making replicas for sale or making money from showing them. But he is happy to share history that sparks memories for himself, his wife and their visitors.

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Photos show details inside church (above) and general store.



Chicken tractor's body is made from wood and metal. Eggs are gathered from nesting boxes by opening tractor side panels.

## Now That's A Chicken Tractor!

Mobile chicken coops are often called chicken tractors. The name might not make sense for most coops but in the case of Dixie Escalante's coop, there isn't anything else you could call it. Escalante's son, Rob Young, built the tractor body from wood and metal, then fitted it with tractor tires.

Eggs can be gathered from nesting boxes by opening the side of the tractor, while hens have two levels to choose from in the cab portion of the coop.

"I can crawl in there to clean it out," says Escalante, who at 78 raises a variety of animals on her 18-acre Urich, Mo., farm.

The tractor coop is fitted with a lawn mower grill and solar lights, and he painted it John Deere green and yellow. Plexiglas windows let in light, and there is plenty of ventilation. Bicycle tires inside the tractor tire rims spin and add color.

It didn't take long for the chickens to figure out how to use the ladder to get out of the coop into a chain-link pen. Escalante started with about 20 hens, but lost some to hawks, so she plans to put something over the top to protect them. The coop would also work for guinea hens, she adds.



Hens have two levels to choose from inside the cab.

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Frank King mounted an old Cub Cadet on a steel post at the end of his driveway, slipping a mailbox inside the front end.

## He Raised An Old Cub To New Heights

Frank King makes it easy for visitors to find his Waynesburg, Penn., home. He tells them to watch for the Cub Cadet mounted on a steel post at the end of his driveway.

"I have five Cub Cadets that run. The mailbox was made with a carcass I'd taken parts from," explains the Cub Cadet collector and restorer.

Since he had removed the engine, transmission and other parts, there was plenty of room to slip a mailbox into the front and cut out a muffler-shaped piece of metal for a flag.

He found the center of gravity and made an angle iron bracket for the bottom of the tractor to bolt to the metal post. He set the Cub in place with a front-end loader.

Other than adding a propane cylinder to

replicate a starter/generator and giving the model 105 Cub a fresh coat of paint, there wasn't much to the project, King says.

"Compared to restoring Cub Cadets it was easy," King says. "I take them entirely apart and paint and put them back together again. I have a 1963 Model 70 - that was the first year International made them - and I keep it pristine."

For many folks however, the Cub on the post is also impressive. It's caught the attention of passersby and has been photographed for local papers.

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