

Silo Observation Deck Built With Grain Bin Roof

An old concrete block silo was recently transformed into an amazing "silo observation deck" by Wayne Peterson of Thief River Falls, Minn.

The 28-ft. tall, 13-ft. dia. silo is covered by the roof and upper ring off an old grain bin, with windows all the way around it. A wooden deck located 4 ft. from the top of the silo is accessed by a wooden stairway built inside the silo.

"People come from all around to see it. They appreciate the marvelous views and say they've never seen anything like it," says Peterson. "Building it was a family project. We placed a pair of salon chairs around the deck, which can be spun completely around to provide a great view in any direction. It's fun for us to watch area farmers during planting and harvesting seasons, and we can see fireworks displays up to 15 miles away.

"The silo was built in 1950. I didn't want any holes drilled into it so the deck is completely self-supporting," notes Peterson.

The silo's roof had blown off about 15 years ago leaving it open on top. At first Peterson planned to just install a deck on top but he decided to add the roof once the deck was in place.

He started by building square 8-ft. high stud walls, 3 sections high, inside the silo. "The silo already had a cement floor, so I built a square wooden frame on top of it that supports the walls," says Peterson. "I wanted the biggest square possible and had to ask a couple of local math teachers for help in figuring out the size. They pointed me to the Pythagorean Theorem," says Peterson. "My son Steven, nephew Josh, and friend Steve and his son Cristian built the walls using a scaffold system."

The stairs up to the deck were built in a series of 5-ft. high sections by Peterson's youngest son, John. Peterson's wife suggested building large platforms that serve as rest areas at the top of each stairway. A trap door at the top of the stairs leads to the deck. Peterson's daughter, Ruth, helped transport the lumber used to build the stairs.

Once the walls and deck were built, it started raining. "I had to pump 30 to 40 gal. of water out the bottom of the silo every day, so I knew the silo needed a roof. However, I didn't know how to build a circular roof so I decided to use a grain bin roof instead," says Peterson.

He bought the 1,000-bu. bin from a neighbor and removed all the rings except for the top one. He bolted four 15-ft. long, 4 by 4 wooden posts together to make a loader bucket-mounted boom and used it to set the bin down on a trailer. Back home he bolted a series of 10-ft. vertical wooden studs onto the bin all the way around. A crane fitted with a horizontal steel beam was used to lift the bin assembly onto the silo, and the studs were then bolted to the deck.

Peterson's brother Jim then installed the 4-ft. square windows, framing them in with 2 by 10's. Two windows have metal screens to provide ventilation, and the others consist of clear polycarbonate sheeting.

"I'm 6 ft. 10 in. tall and didn't want to have to bend over to look out while standing on the deck, which is why the bin is mounted on 10-ft. posts. Also, I have big feet so John built the stairway with steps wider than normal," notes Peterson.

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Peterson mounted the roof and upper ring off an old grain bin on top of his 28-ft. tall silo. A crane fitted with a horizontal steel beam was used to lift bin assembly onto silo.



He bolted a series of 10-ft. stud walls onto silo all the way around. A deck below top of silo is accessed by a wooden stairway built inside silo.

First-Of-Its-Kind Rifle Shoots Both Bullets And Arrows

The new Crackshot XBR™ "rifle" shoots both .22 caliber bullets and arrows. Response has been incredible since it debuted at 2019 gun shows and at the NRA convention.

"We're always looking for new ways to get people out hunting and shooting targets," says Alison Hall, marketing manager for Traditions Performance Firearms. The Connecticut company is known for its muzzle loaders. It designed the 2-in-1 gun starting with a .22 caliber single shot rifle. The 16.5 in. barrel removes easily to be replaced with a 20-in. barrel arrow launcher. You push a 16-in. aluminum arrow in from the front of the barrel, load a .27 cal. Traditions XBR™ power load cartridge, and pull the trigger. The arrow travels up to 385 PFS with an effective kill range out to 70 yards. That offers more consistency compared to air bows that use compressed air.

"The gun is easy to break open, great for youth, disabled - everyone - and has very low recoil for people with shoulder injuries," Hall says. At 85 decibels it sounds like a loud clap.

"It's extremely accurate. The research and development guys have been 'Robin Hooding' arrows, which is shooting one arrow into another," she adds.

The XBR is on the market and requires filling out form 4473, so buyers must go through a dealer. Sells for \$449. Traditions

XBR Powerloads are required (\$25/100) and quivers are extra.

Traditions is working with states' game agencies to establish what the XBR can be legally used for. Some states already allow it for predator hog hunting, for example.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Traditions Firearms, 1375 Boston Post Rd., P.O. Box 776, Old Saybrook, Conn. 06475 (ph 860 388-4656; www.traditionsfirearms.com; info@traditionsfirearms.com).



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