

Kedrowski's "Barn Rod" combines several truck components and a 1,200 lb. 5 hp. 1908 hit and miss engine.



Truck Powered By Hit & Miss Engine

Combine a 1949 3/4-ton pickup frame, a 1950 truck bed, a 1969 truck cab and a 1908 hit and miss engine, and you've got Barney Kedrowski's Barn Rod. He described the process of building it in a detailed article in the July 2021 issue of Farm Collector magazine. The one-of-a-kind truck with its 1,200-lb., 5 hp. engine shakes up every car and tractor show it is trailered into.

"I've shown up at a show with no class for my truck, said I'm just here for a good time, made a \$10 donation and left with a trophy

for the most amazing build," says Kedrowski.

He credits a local hobbyist, who repowered a B John Deere with a 7 hp. Witte throttle-governed engine. "The guy was an absolute king on his machine," says Kedrowski. "That's where I came up with the idea to put a 5 hp. John Lauson Frost King engine on a truck frame."

The base for the project was a 1949 Chevy 3/4-ton pickup. He stripped away the engine and radiator, as well as the cab and rear bed. Challenges started with the hit and miss

engine. Smooth and soft when firing at low rpm's, the engine shook its display trailer at higher rpm's.

A friend suggested that early flywheel cavities were oversized for balancing. Using the friend's balancing jig, Kedrowski tested the engine out on the truck frame. He ended up adding 8 lb. of lead to each flywheel.

At the same time, he added four extra leaf springs to each side of the front axle to carry the weight of the engine and two transmissions.

Making a transmission to use with the engine was another big challenge. A machinist friend helped Kedrowski use a T-style angle gear transmission to get the correct direction to the 4-speed Chevy transmission. They mounted a split socket on the inside of the flywheel, plus a chain guard for safety. At the end of the angle transmission is a chain coupler that marries the two transmissions together. A custom-made stub shaft holds



At the end of the angle transmission is a chain coupler.

the Chevy flywheel in the original truck transmission.

Another challenge was the cab. Kedrowski had originally purchased a 1969 Diamond Rio dump truck cab when planning to build a pull-truck. However, it was smaller than the Chevy cab. To accommodate the steering wheel, now against the door, he cut and narrowed the frame. At the same time, he added a rear notch to the frame to level the cab with the front axle.

"I also shortened the Pitman arm, which helps provide easier steering," says Kedrowski.

A big question was whether or not the 1949 starter could turn over the big engine. "To our amazement, it worked better than expected," says Kedrowski.

To make the truck look like a hot rod, he cut the floor out of the cab and settled it over the frame. That required a subframe made of 2 by 4-in. steel tubing to hold the cab square so the doors would function.

The box from a 1950 Chevy pickup was salvaged from an area junkyard. He modified a Ford tailgate to fit the box with the truck's name in forged steel letters. It spells out BARN ROD.

"Everyone asks how fast it goes," he says. "I tell them 'I am very proud to tell you that 10 mph is too fast to drive in a tractor parade.'"

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Stock Tank Makes A Nifty Incinerator

John Mattison turned a stock tank into an inexpensive yet effective incinerator. Living in rural Wisconsin, he burns his household paper trash and he's never been a fan of burn barrels that don't last long. Instead, he purchased a galvanized stock tank at his local farm supply store for \$129 along with patio bricks to place it on.

He cut out an opening on one end, drilled holes in the other end for draft, and placed the tank upside down on the pavers.

"I added angle metal with screws to prevent the seams from coming loose and put a stone

on top to hold it down in the wind," Mattison says.

Typically, he pushes half a dozen grocery bags of garbage through the opening with a stick and sets it on fire.

"It burns very hot," he says, so there aren't many ashes left. He figures he may have to rake out ashes annually at the most.

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This stock tank incinerator placed on patio pavers is an alternative to a burn barrel.



Matt Veerkamp had to get a helicopter to move a Best 25 Cat from the top of a mountain for his collection of about 125 Cat tractors.

Mountaintop Cat Adds To Collection

Doug Veerkamp started the family collection of antique Cats with a Best 30. Matt, his son, was only 7 or 8 at the time, but he got the bug. He started adding to the family collection as a teenager, and 15 years later, he hasn't slowed down.

"I've found Cat tractors all over the country," says Matt Veerkamp. "We even helicoptered a Best 25 off a mountaintop."

Currently the Veerkamps have around 125 Cat tractors in the collection. Of those, about 40 are restored to showroom condition. Another 30 are in running condition.

"We also have some old D7s from the 1950's and 1960's that we use for work around the ranch," says Matt.

When not collecting tractors, Matt works with his dad at Doug Veerkamp General

Engineering, a leading construction company in the counties around Sacramento, Calif.

"Between the construction business and my family, I don't have much time to drive tractors in the collection," admits Matt. "However, every two years, we have a get-together at the shop where the public can come in to see the collection. The next one will be in May of 2022."

Veerkamp does have some favorites, like the Best 25, as well as his one-of-a-kind, Caterpillar 20 with serial number EXP 0000-L (Vol. 45, No. 4).

One of his favorites is also the most dangerous. "The Holt 75 is special," says Matt. "It was used in World War I and in California for farming. All the moving parts are external - the gears, differential, all of it. It is very dangerous."

When the Veerkamps restore a tractor, the job starts with research, gathering all available information. The actual restoration often involves fabricating worn parts impossible to replace, as well as those that are missing.

"We are very detail oriented and like things a certain way," he says. "We don't like shoddy work in the construction we do or in our collection."

While Matt has a story for every Cat in the collection, the mountaintop rescue is one of the best. He documented it fully in issue 114 of the Antique Caterpillar Machinery Owners Club, and it has been republished in other

magazines since.

It started with an early morning phone call from a fellow club member about a post on the club website. An old crawler tractor had been seen at an abandoned mine atop a mountain.

The tractor turned out to be a 1919 Best 25. Matt's wife found the site by searching Google Earth. He discovered who owned the site and got their permission to remove the tractor, promising he wouldn't impact the area. A Vietnam era Huey helicopter was brought in to take the crawler out, engine first and tractor second.

A 415-mile trailer ride later and the Best 25 was home in Placerville, Calif. Surprisingly, the transmission, differential and undercarriage were all in working condition. The motor was stuck, and a radiator and some other parts were missing.

"About 90 percent of the tractor was there," says Matt.

He is sharing the family passion with three young children. "When they are in the middle of it, they think it's normal," says Matt. "I do keep a close eye on them when the Holt 75 is running."

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