



1924 Model T 4-door built over 6 years.



Krug has restored around 20 various Model Ts and has an extensive parts collection.

## He Collects Everything Model T

With around 20 Model T cars, trucks and tractors, and parts to build another 30, John Krug is a self-described Model T nut. He even has a website by that name. He has 13 that are licensed and can be taken on the road.

Krug's passion started in 2002. He saw a Model T driving around the Midwest Old Threshers Reunion, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. "I loved the wood spoke wheels and the sound of the engine," recalls Krug.

He bought one and then another and another, some at auction, others from neighbors. Pretty soon he had a reputation for Model Ts and Model T parts.

"People will call and ask if I want some parts they have," says Krug. "I've been collecting for years and have a 64 by 64-ft. barn full of parts, as well as other buildings with parts. I have parts all over the place."

He holds onto most of the parts for his own use. Sometimes he trades one with another enthusiast.

"Trading is a good way to get what you

need," says Krug.

Pretty soon he was restoring parts, and then he started building cars from them. In one case, he built a 1924 4-door all from parts.

"It was completely disassembled with all the wooden parts missing or in bits and pieces," says Krug. "I worked on it for 6 years, building it and getting tired of it and then building some more."

He had no patterns for the missing wood pieces. He looked at restored versions, took pictures and studied them. Sometimes there was one piece, and he had to make its mirror image.

"I had to reproduce some entirely, such as where a bottom joint had rotted away," says Krug. "There were lots of compound angles, and it was hard to get them right."

That car was his biggest challenge, but not the only one he built. He has several WWI military vehicles. He started with an ambulance chassis and after seeing a picture of WWI nurses and soldiers by one, built the

body. He later built a scout car body, complete with a machine gun fashioned from plastic.

He also has several Model T tractors, including a Montgomery Ward conversion tractor that used a Model T engine and parts. It had large wheels in the back with cleats and a low gear.

"I have put an extra seat on mine, so I can carry a passenger," says Krug.

Krug has a fire truck and several other trucks, as well as an Ottawa car. It was a body built on a Model T chassis in Krug's hometown of Ottawa, Ill.

"My favorite, and the one I drive into town, is a natural oak pickup," says Krug.

He notes that most chassis were the same. Just the bodies differed. "There were only small variations in fenders from 1909 through 1925," says Krug. "In 1926 and 1927, they changed styles quite a bit. However, if you look at the ambulance and the scout car, you can see small differences in the radiators and fenders."

Finding some parts is harder than others, advises Krug. "Original parts, including fenders and running boards, can be hard to find," he says. "You have to buy more than one to make one good one. For some reason, the front fenders seem to rust out more than others."

Like a growing number of collectors, Krug does not restore most of his Model Ts to showroom gloss. He likes to share their history through the wear and tear. "I like the ones that look old and rusty, but can run and be enjoyed," says Krug.

As he collected cars and parts, he needed more places to keep them. Eventually, they took on a life of their own as Lost Creek, Ill. (see companion story). His Model Ts are also popular with historical reenactors, from Prohibition bootleggers to WWI soldiers and nurses.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, John Krug, 3277 E 18th Rd., Ottawa, Ill. 61350 (ph 815-228-5898; modeltnut@hotmail.com; www.modeltnut.com).



Model Ts fixing Lost Creek Street.



Street scene with Model T dealership.

## These Model Ts Have Their Own Town

John Krug needed a building to store his model T, so he built one to match the era. As he bought parts and built more model Ts, he also built buildings. Today he has a 1920's era town of around 20 buildings, filled with a similar number of Model Ts and uncounted Model T parts.

"My first building was Ole's General Store, which is filled with parts," says Krug. "I have a grain truck in a grain elevator and a car in the hotel, and the firehouse has two cars and the fire truck. The blacksmith shop has two Model T tractors."

Some buildings, like the church, have been decorated and furnished accordingly. Others, like the post office, stand empty. The town even has an outhouse that once stood at the local fairgrounds.

The print shop is a dedicated print shop, complete with a full set of turn-of-the-century printing equipment. "A visitor who came to see my model Ts was looking through the town and told me if I built a print shop, he would give me the equipment he had collected," says Krug.

Unfortunately, Krug has no one to run the equipment. The same is true of the fully equipped blacksmith shop.

"I'd love it if someone would use it," says Krug.

One of the most appropriate buildings for a Model T collector is the 26 by 35-ft. Danielson Motors, a Model T-era garage and Ford dealership. It is complete with Model T parts and the tools used on them.

"The Danielson family had seven car

dealerships in the area at one time, so I named the garage for them," explains Krug. "The family has had reunions here."

The Danielson family isn't alone. The town and the Model Ts are popular with reenactors, car clubs and individuals.

"People come here all the time, and I give tours," says Krug. "One couple had a Roaring 20's style wedding and had their pictures taken here. All the men had shotguns. Something is going on here pretty regularly."

The only time the town is not filled with old cars and parts is the three weekends a year when John's wife Diana takes it over.

"I have to empty all the buildings for the weekend as she uses them for a vendor's market," says John. "People come to see the town, and then shop while they're here."



Krug has built around 20 buildings to go with his Model T collection.

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