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"THEY LOOK AND PERFORM JUST LIKE CANNONS MADE MORE THAN 150 YEARS AGO"

Custom-Built Cannons

"They're authentic to the last detail and fire just like the real thing," says Norman Rohlfing about the cannons he builds on his farm near Fayette, Mo.

Rohlfing has been making cannons for 10 years. He's a captain in the Missouri Civil War Reenactors Association so he gets to put his cannons to use in reenactments of battles. He and his cannons also appeared in the movie "Glory".

He recently sent FARM SHOW photos of his latest cannon, an 1839 model mounted on 47-in. high wood wheels. It's a model that was used in both the Spanish American and Civil wars. The 3 1/2-in. dia., 5-ft. long steel barrel shoots a 6-lb. ball up to 1,500 yards. A "sighting gauge" is fastened to the barrel. A chart on the gauge indicates the elevation required for the ball depending on the distance it has to travel.

Rohlfing used 1/2-in. thick seamless stainless steel pipe for the barrel. After lathing the barrel out he wrapped it with barbed wire to add thickness and stability to the cannon barrel. He covered the wire with about 200 lbs. of rock-hard putty and used a lathe to shape it, then added several layers

of fiberglass and lathed it smooth. He then applied a special resin coatings and sanded and painted the barrel.

"One difference between my cannons and Civil War models is that mine are made from stainless steel. The Civil War cannons were almost all cast iron, which is fairly fragile stuff. Some of them cracked and some of them blew up," says Rohlfing. He used 1 5/8-in. cold rolled steel to make the cannon's axle and bolted together two pieces of wood to form the tongue.

A ramrod and "swab" are stored under the cannon's axle. "After a bag of powder and the cannon ball are rammed into the barrel, a 4-in. long fuse is stuck into a 'touch hole' on top of the barrel and lit. The swab (a sheepskin mounted on the end of a wooden rod) is then dipped in water and used to clean out the barrel, making it ready for the next shot. The swab cleans out any smoldering paper left over from the bag of powder and keeps the next bag from catching on fire too soon," says Rohlfing.

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NO END IN SIGHT

Horns Keep Growing On Unusual Steer

A steady stream of visitors have been heading to a hobby farm in Arkansas over the past year or so to get a look at a giant-horned steer named Lurch, a Watusi with horns that might be approaching a Guinness Book of World Records listing.

We read about Lurch in a recent issue of Rare Breeds Journal, a publication out of Nebraska that's dedicated to covering exotic animals (for a free sample copy of the magazine, contact: Rare Breeds Journal, P.O. Box 66, Crawford, Neb. 69339 ph 308 665-1431).

Watusi cattle originated in Africa but have been in this country for years (see FARM SHOW's Vol. 10, No. 6), but there's never been another one with horns like Lurch. And owner Janice Wolf, of Gassville, Ark., says

they just keep growing.

"A friend of mine was recently in Africa and inquired about the Watusi and whether there are any with big horns. She was told that big horns used to be a common attribute but that those cattle had died off years ago. So maybe Lurch is a genetic throwback to earlier days," she says.

Lurch is not even 4 years old yet but the circumference of his horns is 35 in. at the base. The length of the horns from tip to tip is 61 in. and Wolf says they're solid and heavy, "But he doesn't seem to notice. I suppose he has just gotten used to them gradually," she notes, adding that she never pushed the extra growth with special feed or anything out of the ordinary.

Lurch is actually 7/8 Watusi and 1/8 Texas

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Car has an engine, transmission, and steering wheel at each end. It can be driven in a circle, sideways, or kitty corner, depending on which way the wheels are turned.

"Two-Way" Car Turns Around In Its Tracks

"It can turn 360 degrees in its tracks or you can drive it sideways," says Richard Imhof, Ruthton, Minn., about his "two-way" car that has an engine and transmission as well as a steering wheel and controls at each end.

Imhof says it took only one day for he and his friend Mike Garrow to build the car. It's built out of two 1984 Chrysler front wheel drive "K" cars - one a station wagon and the other a sedan. Both cars are equipped with automatic transmissions. The cars were cut in half, then their front ends were welded together. The car can go sideways or kitty corner, depending on

which way the wheels are turned.

"It looks so good that even people who don't like me like it," says Imhof. "People really like to see it in parades. Whoever is going forward operates the accelerator pedal and shifts the gears. The other driver puts his transmission in neutral. He can rev up the engine to make a lot of noise and fool the driver who's going forward into thinking his engine is running too fast."

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Giant-horned Watusi steer named Lurch may set a world record for the size of its horns. They now measure 35 in. in diameter at the base and 61 in. from tip to tip.

longhorn. Wolf says he's extremely gentle and she has raised him as a pet. Lately, he's become a big attraction in local parades. Wolf used to saddle and ride him but his horns got so long they would hit her legs when he turned his head.

For now, Wolf just plans to stand back and

see how big the horns grow. She hopes he'll end up in the Guinness Book of World Records.

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