



These photos show Calin magnetos before and after they're rebuilt.

## Magneto Rebuilder Trades For Cores

If you need a magneto rebuilt, you could get it done free if you have enough extra magneto cores to trade. Rudy Calin has worked on practically every type of magneto from big horseshoe antiques to Fairbanks Morse and Waco units. He has rebuilt magnetos for old cars, trucks, tractors and even small, single cylinder gas engines with external magnetos. He always needs old cores.

"I've been rebuilding magnetos for 20 years," says Calin. "I can test, diagnose, fix or completely rebuild most any magneto. I have most parts on hand, and in rare cases where the parts are not available, I may be able to repair the damaged parts."

Calin got interested in magnetos while rebuilding his first tractor. He rebuilt the head, carburetor, magneto and other components. Before long he had accumulated and restored more than 20 tractors, most with Waco magnetos. When he hit a Minneapolis Moline with a Fairbanks Morse magneto, he needed help. He met and was mentored by the late Neil Yerigan, author of *How to Restore Tractor Magnetos*, a classic on the subject.

"He was working on the book when I met him, as he was afraid all his knowledge would be lost when he died," says Calin. "I still refer to it when I have questions. He

knew most of the quirks about different magnetos."

He charges \$45 for a basic rebuild. A complete tear down costs an added \$20 with parts and paint extra. He only replaces undamaged parts if a customer wants all new condenser points and rotor.

Calin says his stock of parts and equipment sets him apart from other magneto repair services.

"I have a magneto test bench that can spin the magneto at various speeds to see the sparks on a spark rack," says Calin. "I also have a magnet charger so I can recharge the magnets in a magneto, as well as a core rewinder."

In addition to magnetos, Calin also works on carburetors. He sandblasts and repaints them, replacing any damaged parts.

"I've worked on all makes and models," he says. "The most unique one ever was a TD16 International diesel crawler. It has a unique motor with a carburetor that starts it on gas and then switches the engine to diesel once it warms up."

Calin charges \$95 plus parts to repair full size carburetors and \$75 for smaller ones.

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Eugene Taylor uses a Skil saw to cut birdbaths and bathroom sinks out of solid rock.

## He Turns Rocks Into Money

Eugene Taylor cuts birdbaths and bathroom sinks out of solid rock. They sell like crazy.

"I made my first birdbath two years ago and gave it to my sister for her garden center. Because the rocks are dark in color, the sun heats the water in the birdbath and the birds love it," says Eugene. "Since then I've made several other rock birdbaths and sold nearly every one I can make."

"I get the rocks from my small acreage. They're either shale or slate. The rocks that I use to make the sinks have a close grain without any seams, so water can't leak out."

To make a rock birdbath, Eugene uses a Skil saw fitted with a diamond blade, and a small 4 1/2-in. grinder fitted with a diamond blade. "I use an older, heavy duty worm gear-driven Skil saw because it has a lot of torque. I buy the diamond blades at Lowes for about \$16 apiece."

First he uses chalk to outline the bowl area, then cuts all the way around. Then he cuts crossways in a checkerboard style, like you would cut a cake. He then uses a chisel

and hammer to knock out the sawed pieces of rock.

After he made several birdbaths, a man from Tennessee asked Eugene if he could cut a bathroom sink out of rock for his log cabin. "I cut three sinks out of solid rock, and he bought all three of them," says Eugene.

To make a birdbath, Eugene cuts only about 2 in. deep and removes one layer of rock. However, the sinks are much deeper and require cutting out three or four layers of rock. "When I've finished making the hole, I use a 4-1/2 in. grinder fitted with a diamond blade to polish the sides and bottom. Then I replace the blade with a small grinding wheel and go over the bowl again to make it as smooth as possible. Later I use a diamond bit to drill the drain hole."

He says his small birdbaths start at \$200; bathroom sinks start at \$500.

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## Farm Family Turns Milk Cans Into Art

There's something about a milk can that has universal appeal to anyone who appreciates rural heritage. That's why Lavon Rapelje and her family in Placerville, Calif., have been turning rusty old milk cans into pieces of functional art for the past 30 years.

It started 36 years ago, when Lavon's sister in Kansas offered her 100 rusty milk cans. Lavon and her husband, Denis, started experimenting with painting and marketing the old cans.

"When we started we could still find cans that looked like new," Lavon says. "Now they are almost all rusted inside and out and have to be sandblasted."

After that they're painted with a metal primer, and then the insides are painted with silver paint.

The cans are personalized with a wide range of farm scenes or scenes from photos clients send them that are then enlarged. The prints are moistened and glued to the cans. When dry, Denis carefully paints on a sealer. Finally a resin finish is applied.

The Rapeljes top most of their cans with tractor seats.

"The Amish make the best tractor seats," Lavon says. "They are new cast aluminum seats. We used to use old tractor seats, but these have a better shape."

The majority of customers are men, who use the milk cans in their workshops, garages, patios or around countertop bars.

The couple's son, Paul, sells the cans at big events such as the International Ag Expo in Tulare, Calif., bull riding events, and other big shows.



Lavon Rapelje's milk cans are personalized with a wide range of farm scenes, and often fitted with a tractor seat on top.

They also take orders on their 10-acre hobby farm where they sell U-pick blueberries, raspberries and apples.

Cost for a finished can with seat is \$375. Without a seat they're \$250. Postage on the 35 to 40-lb. cans is additional.

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## Fresh Milled Corn Finds A Market

Erin Sweet has bagged the fresh ground corn market in northern California. Armed with a gristmill and a steady supply of #1 non-GMO yellow corn, she's producing corn meal, cracked corn and a number of quick mixes. Everything's packaged in bags under her Ridgecut Gristmill label.

"I went through 600 lbs. the first year, three tons the second and about 6 tons this past year," says Sweet. "A local farmer raises the corn and sells it to me in small batches."

Sweet sells her corn and other products at food coops, farmer's markets and to local restaurants. She also has a website, though it represents the smallest segment of her sales. Her straight cormmeal is priced at \$4 with mixes at \$7. Most are 16 oz. packages, though cracked corn is 24 oz.

"The website pays for itself and makes my products accessible to tourists who pick up my products at a farmers market," says Sweet. "When they go home, they order from my website. Others just find it and order."

Once people try her products, they're hooked, Sweet says. The freshness of the milled corn is what makes the difference.

When a friend told her about the instant pancake mix she grew up with, Sweet saw opportunity. She began mixing and packing cornbread and pancake mixes that only require water. Eggs and other ingredients are already in the mix.

"I'm the only one in this region who makes mixes that only require water," says Sweet. "Once you taste it, you're sold. It's the fact that they're fresh and stone ground, and you can taste the corn."

She assigns credit for her success to the



Erin Sweet sells corn meal, cracked corn, and quick mixes in bags.

"story" she tells. The local, fresh milled corn is part of the story. Another part is the packaging, which promotes what's inside. For example, she uses sea salt in all mixes.

"My ingredient list on the back is laid out like a recipe," says Sweet. "All you see is food in the ingredients - dry eggs, dry butter, sea salt, corn and others. No artificial ingredients."

Sweet would be eager to consult with those in other areas who want to start their own corn milling business. Meanwhile she's looking at other grains and products to add to her mix, such as masa for tortillas and heritage grains.

"I had a local farmer bring in some heritage wheat, an older variety, and it made the most beautiful flour I've ever seen," she says. "I also hope to get to the point where I can have someone grow five to six acres of heirloom corn."

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