

“High Value” Mini Trucks Imported From Japan

“Off-road” mini trucks from Japan have caught on fast since they were first imported about 15 years ago. New dealers and importers continue to spring up in many areas.

Kevin Gaumitz of Motorcycle Warehouse in Portland, Oregon, recently contacted FARM SHOW to say the company he does marketing for specializes in lightly used mini trucks and camper vans imported from Japan.

“We import several different brands of used mini trucks for off-road use. They’re really nice trucks and are a great value,” says Gaumitz. “These trucks are great for farm use as they sell for a fraction of the cost of a side-by-side utility vehicle, and are made to last a lot longer. They have much more to offer at a fraction of the cost.”

He says Motorcycle Warehouse was founded by Harris Katz in 2007, who began selling motorcycles and accessories while focusing on great customer service and low prices. Gaumitz joined the business a short while ago. “We want farmers to know about

these low-priced, awesome machines. We think they’re more reliable than a UTV and fun to drive,” he says.

Transparency is important to the company. “Many companies advertise their trucks at a low price, but when you visit their website you find the trucks are different than the ones advertised and usually sell for a lot more money. The price listed on our website is truly the price you pay. We update our inventory every week to make sure our website has the most up-to-date content.”

Prices for their trucks start at about \$4,000 for models that have seen more use, while really nice ones sell for as little as \$6,000, says Gaumitz.

Their mini trucks can be ordered with 2 or 4-WD and with an automatic or manual transmission. They come with a 3-cyl., 660 cc gas engine, cab, heater, and bed.

Some models are available with an electric/hydraulic-operated dump bed. Examples include the 4-WD Subaru Sambar 550 cc and the Suzuki Carry 660 cc, which sell for



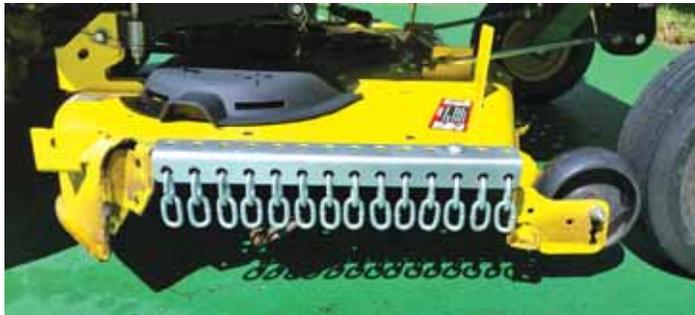
Motorcycle Warehouse carries several brands of mini trucks and camper vans imported from Japan.

\$4,750 and \$5,500, respectively.

Gaumitz says they can customize the trucks with offroad tires or lift kits.

The company also sells Pajero mini sports utility vehicles, Japanese loader tractors, and camper vans.

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Redesigned chain guard is short enough to avoid dragging or hitting mower blades.

“Chain Guard” Kit Upgraded

“I’ve made a design change to my ‘chain guard’ that replaces the mower discharge chute on my riding mower (Vol. 42, No. 2). This is my third design, and I find it much simpler and easier to put together,” says Al Robbins, Friendswood, Texas.

“I came up with the idea because I got tired of the grass discharge chute on my Deere ZTrak zero-turn riding mower getting in the way all the time. I replaced it with a ‘chain guard’ that results in easier trimming and parking in tight areas,” he says. “I started selling a kit and now have 75 happy customers from all over the U.S. and Canada.”

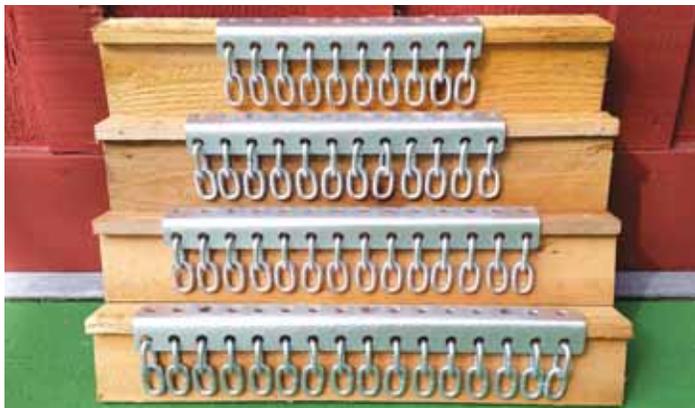
“I now use a metal cut-off saw to cut one side of each chain link at a 30 to 45 degree angle, and then use a wrench to open the

link up. I insert the link into a hole in a piece of pre-punched angle iron that matches the mower deck opening, and then bend it back together to close the link up.”

The chains have to be short enough to avoid dragging and or hitting the mower’s blade tips. “I studied the discharge chutes on a variety of mowers and found that most mowers only need 2 links per chain,” says Robbins.

“I’m making and selling these for \$5 per inch of guard, plus S&H. So a 12-in. guard would be \$60 and a 16-in. guard \$80,” says Robbins.

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Chain guard is available in 12 to 20-in. lengths.



Tabs on steel plate are held in place by mower’s spring-loaded discharge chute.



Add-On Plate Lets Mower Deck Mulch

Adding a simple plate over the discharge chute turned Vaughn Werning’s riding mower into a mulching machine.

“I had a push mower before with mulching capability and I liked how it worked. Then I bought a riding mower that didn’t have it,” recalls Werning. “I like to be able to mulch leaves in the fall. It beats raking.”

Werning wondered if he couldn’t simply close up the grass chute, so he did. He went to his scrap pile and found a piece of fairly heavy gauge tin.

“I cut out a shape with tabs to fit in the

discharge chute,” says Werning. “It’s held in place by the spring-loaded chute. No wires, screws or fasteners were needed.”

The biggest challenge in the fabrication was getting the right curve in the plate, notes Werning. He also had to close up a hole on the back side of the chute.

“I plugged the hole with a block of wood,” says Werning. “The mulching plate works fine, and there was no real cost involved.”

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Mud Flaps Keep Mower Deck Clean

Steve Tomson bolted a pair of rubber mud flaps ahead of the rear wheels on his Kubota zero-turn riding mower equipped with a 60-in. deck.

“They keep the tires from throwing mud and other debris onto the deck,” says Tomson. “Zero-turn mowers can move pretty fast, and the tires can throw stuff all over the place. I used existing holes in the back side of the deck to bolt the flaps on.”

The flaps measure 12 in. high by 10 in. wide and were made by cutting up hard plastic to the proper size. The bottom of each flap matches the bottom of the deck.

“It’s important to use hard plastic and not soft rubber to make the flaps, because soft rubber will just flop around,” says Tomson.

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Rubber mud flaps bolt on ahead of mower’s rear wheels to keep deck clean.