

## Grain Bin Converted To “Bin Bar”

Billy and Janet Orris, Nortonville, Ill., converted an old grain bin into a beautiful “bin bar” located in their back yard on the edge of town. The bin is complete with a long, curved wooden bar outside and inside, and tractor seat barstools inside.

The family uses the 18-ft. dia. bin all year long as a family hangout, except for the coldest days of winter.

“Usually we have a local tractor pull on July 4, but because of the Covid-19 pandemic this year there was a tractor drive instead,” says Janet. “It’s a good place to hang out and barbeque with friends and family. Our yard covers 9/10 of an acre so there was plenty of room for tractor drivers to park. We have a big outdoor swimming pool near the bin, where anyone can go swimming.

The bar extends about 2/3 of the way around the bin, with a 2 1/2-ft. high opening above it. Refreshments are served on a 4-ft. wide wooden counter that extends both inside

and outside the bin. The counter is decorated with flowers in trays and pitchers, and small American flags, along with an old peanut dispenser.

The bin has a mulch-covered floor. Their son plans to place a windmill ceiling fan at the center of the bin.

There’s a double door opening into the bin and a pair of bluebird houses that set on gate posts. Bob Hayes, a friend, made the gate out of an old wooden shed door. “Last year bluebirds nested in both houses, and we enjoyed watching them fly in and out of the bin,” says Janet.

Outside the bin are a pair of Adirondack chairs, as well as barbecue pits and an American flag. A looped string of lights hangs below the bin’s roof.

They moved the bin last year from their family farm, located 2 miles down the road, to their home in town. After unbolting the bin from its original concrete base, they used



“Bin bar” serves as a year-long family hangout. It has a long, curved wooden bar outside and inside, with tractor seat barstools inside.

a loader tractor with forks to set the bin on a trailer and haul it home. Their son used a torch to cut the bolts off most of the middle section of the bin, and then removed all the panels for the bar.

Billy then installed wooden posts inside

the bin, anchoring the posts in concrete and bolting the wooden counter to them.

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## Corn Crib Gazebo Houses Firepit

“My wife Colette comes up with a lot of unusual ways to use old farm equipment, but her latest one about tops the list,” says Lance Seltun. “Last summer we saw an old wire ear corn crib on a drive in the country and she says to me ‘that sure would make a nice addition to our back yard to keep the rain off our fire pit,’” Seltun says.

A few weeks later Seltun bought the old metal crib with a rust-free galvanized metal roof that was in ‘like new’ condition. He and a couple friends dismantled the 14-ft. dia. by 18-ft. tall structure, keeping the roof intact, and hauled it home on a 16-ft. trailer. “It was tough and go in a few places because of the width, but we made it to our yard without any mishaps.”

Seltun says “the crib sat in the yard all winter as Colette came up with an elaborate plan that included a paver patio, block walkway, and assorted plantings surrounded by a white picket fence. She also had a timetable for me to complete the whole project by the time we had a graduation party in July.”

Seltun has more than 20 years experience in the landscaping business, so laying out the project and installing the pavers and walkway was right up his alley. “The circular patio has 6 in. of class five rock as a base and an inch of sand, all of it leveled and compacted before I

laid the pavers,” Seltun says. “Polymeric sand on top bonds the pavers together, creating a smooth and sturdy surface for seating and the metal burn pit in the middle.”

Seltun modified the wire portion of the crib by cutting 4 ft. off the bottom of one circular section, then re-welding the shorter piece to a circular metal frame. The 2 sections are bolted together to create 8-ft. tall sidewalls. A neighbor used an excavator to lift the roof in place and Seltun attached it with the original brackets and bolts. The crib is anchored into the ground with metal stakes.

Seltun made a brick walkway to the crib that begins just past an old metal gate at the picket fence. Colette decorated the crib with antique window frames and shutters, and planted several perennials in the ground and in an old livestock water tank, in milk pails, and in old wash tubs. Inside, the crib has comfortable chairs around the circular fire pit with a string of patio lights on the wire perimeter near the roofline for ambience around the fire. A rusty old F-12 Farmall rounds out the landscape decorating.

“It’s a really clever idea, complete with a sign that identifies the layout as Colette’s Crib and The Hen Den,” Seltun says.

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A brick walkway leads into corn crib gazebo, which has a circular paver-patio base.

## He Built A 4-Engine Garden Tractor Puller

“I like to build things that are different, so I recently built a garden tractor puller powered by four 8 hp. Harbor Freight Predator V-twin engines. It runs really well and has a lot of power,” says Earl Overbeek, Allegan, Mich.

Overbeek, who belongs to a local garden tractor pulling club, started building the tractor 3 years ago. “I built it to compete in the 1,200-lb. class and am happy with how it has performed so far,” says Overbeek.

“The rules say a tractor in this class can have up to 32 hp. but no more than 4 cylinders, so I built mine with four 8 hp., 4-cycle, single cylinder engines just to be unique. I paid \$235 apiece for them. Getting all 4 engines hooked together and synchronized was the hardest part of the job. Each engine belt-drives a center-mounted driveshaft that runs through the transmission.”

The tractor’s 4 straight pipe mufflers are made from 1 1/4-in. dia. kitchen sink drain pipe and attached to the engines with home-built, L-shaped steel brackets. “The pipes are lightweight, which is good, but they’re also very loud so I have to wear ear protection,”

says Overbeek.

The tractor sports a 6-ft. tall roll cage, made just for looks out of 1-in. dia. electrician’s pipe by Overbeek’s nephew. “The roll cage isn’t required, but I thought that if I’m going to build a garden tractor with 4 engines it might as well have a big roll cage on it,” says Overbeek.

He started with a Cub Cadet 1100 garden tractor, keeping only the frame, rear end and axles. He lengthened the frame by 18 in. to extend the wheelbase to 56 in., and installed a used 3-speed, gear-drive transmission off another Cub Cadet tractor.

The electric-start engines are attached in sets of 2 to pairs of 1-in. sq. tubing that run across the tractor’s frame.

The tractor’s starter and ring gear are off an old Farmall. “The engines aren’t electric start, so I mounted a balanced ring on the main driveshaft and added the starter off a Farmall M. The starter meshes with the ring gear in such a way that I can start all 4 engines at the same time,” says Overbeek.

Two of the engines’ air cleaners are



Garden tractor puller is powered by four 8 hp. Harbor Freight Predator V-twin engines.

mounted on one side of the tractor, and the others are located under the hood. “The 4 engines up front make the tractor a little nose heavy, so I plan to lighten up the front end and add more weight on back. The tractor has an aluminum hood that saves about 15 lbs.”

The tractor rides on 26-in. tall, 12-in. wide rear tires with 6-in. high ribbed tires on front. The rear axle is original, but Overbeek used 1 by 2-in. sq. tubing to build the front axle.

He bought the tractor’s heavy-duty clutch and wheelie bar from Midwest Super Cub (ph 563 659-5276; www.mwsc.com), and the wheels and axles from Miller Tire Co. (ph 419 335-7010; www.millertire.com).

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