



# An Idea *Blooms* into The Shed



**The Shed Dream** Rich Dvorak has been building and creating with his hands since he was a child. He watched and learned from his father and grandfather, but honed in on his carpentry skills when he sought out to build a home with wife, Tammy, 25-plus years ago. Their joint venture took over a year to complete, but the end result was a beautiful country home, custom made for their lifestyle.

Rich filled the rooms with hand-built or repurposed furniture because “we didn’t have the money at the time to buy new.” Little by little, he’d build a piece or buy an older item to redo. The impressive list of completed furniture now includes a TV cabinet, bedroom set, chairs, tables, and headboards, most leaning towards the mission furniture style, Dvorak’s preference. His skills, expertise, and ideas grew over the years, as did his penchant for giving old furniture new life.

Rich’s passion for repurposing reclaimed, salvaged materials turned from a hobby into something more in just a blink of two ladies’ eyes.

**The Shed Breaks Ground** Kathy Von Haden and Tammy Dvorak struck up a friendship over their common interest in gardening. The two spent hours together getting their hands dirty at Hillview Farm, Kathy and husband, Gary’s, family farm in rural Tomah. The gardens expanded, and it was just a

matter of time before these two go-getter gals got an idea and ran full steam ahead with it. They devised a plan to build a garden shed to house and sell their farm-fresh veggies, right from Kathy’s farm yard.

*“We have an idea!”*

Words Rich would eventually learn to wince at because it usually meant a new honey-do item.

Always the supportive husband, Rich’s carpentry skills were put to use as he brought this vision to life, with Kathy and Tammy’s help. A discarded ramp, leftover building materials, and even broken poles from Oakdale Electric Cooperative were collected. Everything but the hardware was salvaged but still in great condition, just needing a little elbow grease. With a little creativity and a lot of sweat equity, The Shed construction was completed in August 2014.

**The Shed Blooms** Kathy always had an eye for antiques, including a large collection in her farmhouse basement. She relishes in the fact there is a person with a story behind every antique.

“So many items get thrown away because people don’t see the value in them,” stated Kathy, “but we do!”

It was a natural progression for them to add home décor to The Shed’s inventory. And before long, the walls, floors, and



grounds filled in with a collection of rustic, repurposed pieces sure to appeal to any shopper.

With wheels that never stop turning, and ideas that keep on coming, Kathy and Tammy have made The Shed bloom into a quintessential country shopping experience for adults and children to enjoy. Not only can guests purchase home and lawn décor, plants, flowers, or pick up their CSA (community supported agriculture) garden share, but they can also get a taste of farm life. Kathy and Gary allow and encourage guests to explore the farm, barns, and countryside. It's also perfectly acceptable for visitors to kick back and relax in the newly built corn crib gazebo, while taking in the beautiful rolling hills landscape. They can also take a turn swinging on the hoop with tractor seat, or even let their kids wear themselves out in the farm-fresh air.

Kathy Von Haden (left in the photo below) and Tammy Dvorak (right) keep The Shed stocked with one-of-a-kind items. Many are custom-built from repurposed materials, such as the lamp made by Rich Dvorak (right).

**The Shed Fulfills** Kathy finds it rewarding to watch the kids who visit. “I love seeing them view the animals, play with the kittens and dogs, chase the chickens, or pet Jellybean the potbellied pig,” she said.

Tammy finds great joy in exposing people to new vegetables, as they prefer to sell the more unique and heirloom produce not always found in a grocery store. She said, “It’s pretty cool when someone tells me they have never tried

this vegetable before, and now they love it!”

While Tammy and Kathy are the faces of The Shed, and the sales team, Rich prefers to stay behind the scenes, designing and building in his home shop. He enjoys the special time spent with his wife visiting auctions, estate sales, and rummages.

“It’s fun and something we can do together,” he said. “You meet some interesting people along the way.”



Although, when it comes to wheeling and dealing at auctions, Rich leaves that to Tammy.

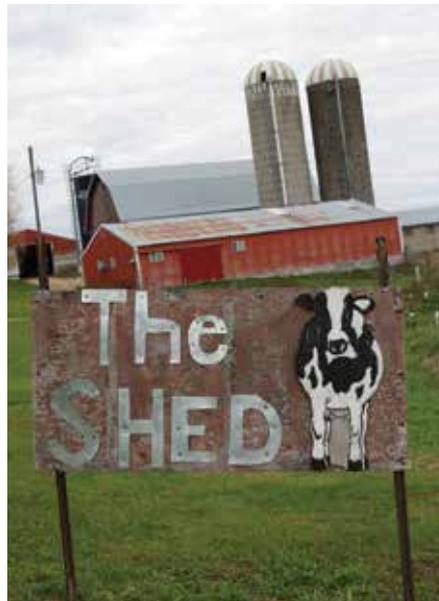
All three agree that time devoted to The Shed is not work. It's fun.

**The Shed Welcomes Visitors** A funky, metal cow sign, held upright with piping, greets visitors at the driveway, instantly making them feel welcome and at home. Tammy agreed, "Everyone that stops by is in a great mood!" Over the course of The Shed's three operating years, visitors have come from all over La Crosse, Monroe, and Vernon counties. Cran Fest weekend usually brings a healthy dose of foot traffic, with folks on the hunt for that one-of-a-kind piece. And that's what you'll find at The Shed, along with reasonable prices. The inventory changes weekly. "We're always shifting things around," stated Tammy.

Guests can visit The Shed's Facebook page to learn the weekly hours. There is no direct heat source in the building, but as long as weather cooperates, The Shed will be open for holiday shopping. Take a scenic drive out to rural Tomah to look for that special gift, or to snag one of Kathy's famous wreaths. There is no other way to describe them than gorgeous.

Gift cards are available for purchase. Or ask for assistance in assembling that perfect gift box sure to light up anyone's holiday.

If you're on the hunt for something



Guests are also welcome to explore the farm, and even take a turn on the unique hoop swing fitted with a tractor seat.

more customized, bring ideas or pictures and talk with Kathy, Tammy, and Rich in person. Speaking from personal experience, they'll take an idea and deliver a product far succeeding expectations. (See below.)

**The Shed's Future** When winter inevitably shuts The Shed's door for the season, the trio won't be relaxing in front of the fireplace. They'll be getting a head start on the New Year by visiting auctions, stocking supply sheds, ordering garden seeds, scouring Pinterest for ideas, and finishing up projects.

While they await the snow piles to melt, Kathy and Tammy will be dreaming of what's to come next, and waiting for the moment to say, "Rich, we have an idea!" —*Deana Protz*

## The Shed

Located on Hillview Family Farm  
9998 Elk Road, Tomah, WI 54660

Owner: Kathy Von Haden

Contributing Sellers: Rich and  
Tammy Dvorak  
608-343-6298



Oakdale Electric Cooperative debuted two giant game tables, tic-tac-toe and checkers, at this year's Member Appreciation Day, built by member Rich Dvorak, Tomah. In an effort to keep the event exciting and ever-changing, we came up with the idea for giant game tables because, let's face it: games aren't just for kids anymore.

Rich was the ideal member to help bring this vision to life. On a day off from his normal 9-to-5 job in maintenance at Coveris, Dvorak skillfully constructed two beautiful, one-of-a-kind pieces to be enjoyed by members for years to come. The smiles, laughter, and friendly competition on October 7 confirmed that games are fun for all ages and abilities!



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