

# Unexpected Treasure



*The barn's exterior.*



*And the interior.*



*Taking it apart.*

When Doug Davis salvaged wood from a century-old barn turned maintenance building slated for demolition, he discovered the perfect finishing touch for a home improvement project.

*Timber Trails Golf Course was built between 1929 and 1930 by Walter Hoyt. Construction took place on land purchased in 1833 by Joseph Vial for approximately \$1.25 per acre.*

About the same time, in 1930, an old wooden barn that stood on Mr. Vial's farm located south of Plainfield Road was torn down and rebuilt as one of the storage barns for the Timber Trails golf course. The barn had been at the Vial farm for more than 30 years before the teardown and reconstruction.

In September of 2004, Dartmoor Homes of Hoffman Estates bought Timber Trails at an auction for \$45 million. I was disappointed to see the course sold and heard many stories about the history of the property from then-course superintendent Don Hoffman.

As the sale unfolded, all the golf course equipment, supplies, etc. were for sale. I watched piece by piece get hauled away in trucks, trailers and car trunks, you name it. It was sad to see a golf facility pass away like that. I was speaking with one of the developer representatives and asked what the intentions were for the maintenance buildings. He said they would be quickly bulldozed and hauled away in large dumpsters to a landfill. I quietly looked at that 100-year-old barn and said to myself, "This can't go to a landfill."

So, after negotiations and providing proof of insurance, I acquired permission to salvage some 100-year-old barn siding to use as I wished. Tearing down the barn siding was tricky in the heat of July but with the help of two of my grounds laborers, various pry-bars and hammers, in roughly 15 hours I had about 150 boards of varying lengths and conditions stacked behind my maintenance shop.

Next came the de-nailing process. This itself was a major undertaking, but it was accomplished with no splinters or flat tires. After that, the boards were all pressure-washed one by one and set out in the midday sun to dry. After drying, the boards were rough-cut to a size within inches of the desired length and set in my garage at home.

Carpenters were already working on finishing our basement and when they saw the boards, one carpenter said, "But you can buy boards at Home Depot!"

I answered, "Yes, but you can't buy 100-year-old boards there."

Nailing the boards to the basement framing was sort of like a jigsaw puzzle, mixing and matching pieces because no two sides were quite the same. When the project was complete, the look was outstanding. For my wife and I, going downstairs into our basement is like stepping back in time with a rustic look that we love. Our two teenage boys have a great room now for homework and to have friends over for a movie or ping pong.

# COMMENTARY

Doug Davis *Flagg Creek Golf Course*



*The treasure—not very pretty with all those nails!*

Dave Loutit of the Andersons told me he thought it would look great to have a 30-inch northern pike or muskie hanging on the wall covered with the antique barn wood. I agree but will have to settle for a plasma television hanging there.

Timber Trails Golf Course may be no more, but a little piece of its history will live forever in my basement.



*And the finished product—well worth the effort!*



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