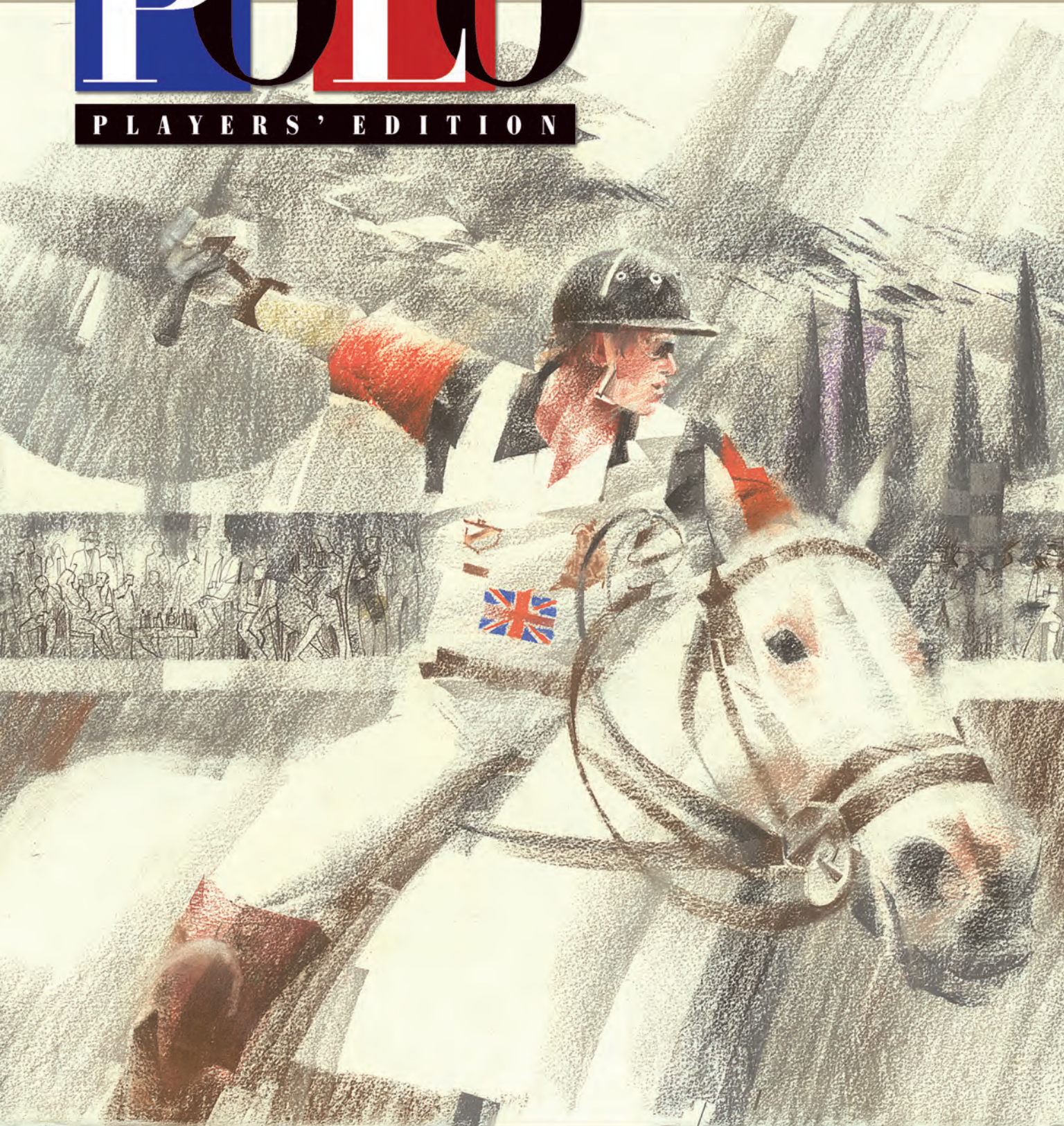


POLO

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PLAYERS' EDITION



A polo palette

\$5.00 US/\$5.50 Canada



The restored party wagon at the Sloan's Roseview Farm in Millbrook, New York.

Party wagon

Rusted hound trailer gets new lease on life

A member of the Mashomack Polo Club has taken polo tailgating to a whole new level. David Sloan rescued a 1967 U.S. Army ammunition trailer, which had been converted by a local hunt into hound trailer. After 30 years of transporting hounds, and another 10 years or so of taking up space, Sloan transformed this unique piece into a delightful tailgating trailer.

Sloan was looking for a vehicle in which to create the ultimate moving feast. He wrote, "Distinctive vehicles have always had a role in the field; in the U.K., shooting parties prefer ex-military vehicles as transport, in the American South, mule drawn wagons of lacquered wood are used, and in Africa, old Land Rovers are the vehicle of choice having an ideal tailgate for a makeshift bar at the end of each day."

He came across an Army ammunition trailer that had been converted into a trailer for transporting beagles. It hadn't been used since the early 1990s, and was parked

among broken farm equipment on the grounds of a kennel. With the landlord anxious to have it removed, the owner accepted Sloan's \$300 offer.

Sloan explained, "At my shop, a closer inspection of the vehicle yielded little promise. The trailer's original government issue rims and lugged tires had been replaced with mismatched wheels. The rear of the trailer had been removed with a torch and fabricated into a tailgate. Steel hoops had been placed over the top of the wagon and a now shredded piece of canvas had been stretched over the hoops to protect the hounds from the elements. The trailer bed

was corroded from years of rain, sun and hound urine.

"Originally olive drab, subsequently painted in a camouflage motif, the trailer had been subjected to additional layers of house paint. The military wiring harness for the wagon's lights had been decapitated, and a replacement socket was spliced in with duct tape; the rear lights had disappeared, replaced with an \$8 pair of hardware-store lights, themselves now rusty sockets. The brake system was intact, but like everything else, encapsulated in Benjamin Moore products."

So, what kept him from cutting his losses and bringing it to a junk yard?

"The redeeming features of my purchase were the original lines of the ammunition caisson and the hunt's addition of a kennel superstructure, both giving the vehicle a surprisingly aesthetic appeal worthy of recycling. The marriage of military utilitarian functionalism with the formality of the hunt triggered my creativity."

Sloan enlisted the help of a local auto

body expert for the metal work and an accomplished carpenter, with a passion for antiques, to do the woodwork. The pair were a perfect fit to help Sloan turn his vision into a reality.

The team got lucky with the discover of a 1920s dog crate found in the basement of a local barn. Built of thin strips of oak and trimmed with tin, the wooden box was not unlike a modern pet crate.

Sloan wrote, "Although missing a door and caked in manure, the grime did little to hide the craftsmanship of the slat roof and the curved contours of the box's frame. After a hard scrubbing, a coat of stain and several layers of oil, the crate captured the look, feel and patina we wanted for the trailer."

More wooden slats would be needed for the walls and roof, so Sloan and his carpenter found rough cut, white oak planks, which they planed and cut into narrow, thin planks with interlocking tongue and groove.

The wood was then aged to match the hues and imperfections found in the patina of the dog crate. This creative process began with five pounds of rusty, cut nails, and several pads of steel wool placed in a bucket of water. Within a week, the water turned a stagnant orange. With the now rusty steel wool, the ginger-colored water was rubbed onto the oak planks.

Sloan wrote, "Left to stand overnight, the wet wood dried into a mottled bluish-gray with pin spots of intense blue. A gentle sanding lightened the staining—a result of a chemical reaction from the rust lodging in the pores of the oak—but the intense spots remained. An oak stain and two coats of Tung oil magically created a patina similar to that seen on the dog crate. The final touch was a random beating on the new finish with a rusty chain and ball-peen hammer to simulate the haphazard dents of time."

Meanwhile, the trailer's sheet metal body was removed from the frame and all components were unbolted from each piece. Everything was blasted with a combination of crushed peach pits and fine sand to

remove layers of paint, grime and rust. A stubborn layer of latex paint on the bed yielded only to chemical paint removers.

As the paint sloughed away, the manufacturer's plates of the Stevens Manufacturing Company were revealed. The plates indicated the trailer had been built in Pennsylvania in 1967, and assigned by the Army to the Marine Corps.

Stripping the trailer also revealed an area of the floor that had succumbed to the effects of dog urine, and a portion of the wiring harnesses for the tail lights was missing.



The trailer holds rugs, tables, chairs, polo equipment, a bar and food.

Thanks to an internet search, Sloan found original military inner tubes and tires in Pennsylvania; a wiring harness for the trailer lights in New Jersey; and the missing military tail lights, still in their original boxes, in Texas. Unfortunately, the plastic lenses for the tail lights were designed for nighttime convoy duty and were not for use on public roads, but he was able to replace them with road-legal amber lenses.

The auto-body specialist reconstructed the tailgate to look like the vehicle's original. He also added a shelf at the front of the

trailer for a period water cooler; rebuilt the support hoops of the canvas top to serve as a frame for the roof; and mounted a bracket to carry tent poles.

The trailer's frame was then painted a semi-gloss black, and the metal body a flat English racing green to highlight the patina of the oak superstructure. Lastly, the trailer's manufactured plates were reinstalled on the tailgate adjacent to various antique award medallions.

It was now time to merge the wood and metal pieces. Steam was used to form the planks to the curve of the steel support hoops. The planks were then bolted to the hoops and a thin sheet of flexible plywood was screwed to the now molded planks. The exposed wood was coated in a spar varnish, and a seamless rubber sheet was added to make it water-tight.

The interlocking oak strips were installed on top of the rubber sheet and held in place with rows of period brass screws. The front end of the trailer was closed off with oak strips perpendicular to the frame. The frame was fitted with glass containing chicken wire originally from doors on a long-closed local monastery.

The rear doors were fashioned with hinges and hardware from an old ice box, highlighting the salvaged metal. Nickel-plated wire from screening used on Victorian bookcases was mounted over the antique glass of the wagon's windows. The combination of old glass and nickel screening captured the feel of the old dog crate, making it seem as if hounds might still travel in the old wagon.

Door knockers, resembling stirrups, were welded shut to use as door handles. They, along with the hardware from the ice box, were sent out to be nickel plated before being installed.

As the trailer exterior came together, the woodwork seemed to overwhelm other portions of the vehicle. As work began on the interior, concern grew. The solution was to visually break up the expanse of wood

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The Sloan's party wagon spread, complete with tent and oriental rugs, won the tailgate contest at the Mashomack Polo Club in Millbrook, New York on June 18.



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with chrome and nickel exhaust vents, originally intended for wooden power boats, mounted geometrically on the roof of the wagon.

Now it was time to work on the inside. Between the interior roof supports, a shelf was added, running the full length and width of the space, to maximize storage area. The shelf, made of the last of the oak planks, was placed on cleats allowing for easy removal. Drop-down legs were also added to the underside of the shelf so it could do double duty as a table. The interior was lined with one-inch thick rubber pads to protect cargo.

Sloan says he started his cargo collection with a steamer trunk he purchased for \$1. He uses it to hold a cut-down 1930s sewing table and four collapsible wicker chairs. A 1923 wicker suitcase holds a large folded canvas officer's tent. "As luck would have it, the wicker container matched the dimensions of our first trunk, allowing each to fit neatly in the wagon," Sloan explains.

Milk creamer crates are used to transport bottles and glass for the bar. Sloan writes, "Lest anyone think we took this project too seriously, we also converted a camp lavatory to a wine cooler for the last niche in the trailer's lower level."

The second level holds three oriental rugs, a camp bed, a wooden extension table, folding chairs, a bourbon barrel, two

PEDRO'S MASHOMACK GUACAMOLE

Ingredients

- 6 avocados, ripened
- 3 limes, juiced
- 1 teaspoon of salt
- ½ teaspoon fresh ground pepper
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½ onion, diced
- 3 Roma tomatoes, diced
- 3 tablespoons chopped cilantro
- 2 to 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- ½ jalapeno, diced
- (this will make it mild hot, so add to taste)
- ¼ green bell pepper, diced

Instructions

In a large bowl, place the halved, seeded and peeled avocados. Add the salt, pepper, and cayenne pepper and mash using a potato masher. Add onions, tomatoes, cilantro, garlic, bell pepper, jalapeno and lime juice, then mix together. Let sit at room temperature for one hour before serving.

Tip: Use fresh, crispy, and preferably organic ingredients to get the full flavor experience.



topiaries, a flag pole, and a number of folding stands for the trunks, basket and coolers already stored in the wagon. Polo equipment completes the picture.

Drawers from a wooden case meant for a cast iron sewing machine are shelves for the bar. French cleats are mounted on the back of each drawer and are hung as removable shelves on the interior of the rear doors. When the doors are open, the shelves hold bottles and glasses.

The trailer is pulled by Sloan's 1995 Land Rover Defender. Once the trailer is parked and unloaded, the tent is up, the rugs unrolled, bar stocked and food spread out, it is time to enjoy some polo. It is no surprise,

Sloan and his wife Judy recently won a tailgating event at the Mashomack Polo Club. They also won it two years ago, the same year they won the tailgate contest at the Millbrook Hunt's Hunter Trials.

Sloan says sandwiches, finger food, wine, beer and champagne are the most popular items when polo tailgating. When the temperature drops in the fall and they head to hunt breakfasts and beagle teas, stew and hot mulled cider with rum are more popular. One dish they offer year-round, and is always the first to go is guacamole (see recipe inset).

Sloan's party wagon takes the top prize in this magazine's polo picnic contest. ♦