Blue Barn Tack Room

The blue barn had had twelve stalls devoted to the previous owners' horses, and no tack storage area. When the property changed hands, the barn needed somewhere for the boarding clients' stuff, so a centrally-located ten-by-twelve stall (plus three feet of concrete, that had been hay storage, giving a final measure of thirteen-wide by twelve-deep), was voted the "tack room." On a shoestring, use some half-inch plywood, a few feet of 2x4, of 2x2, half-inch dowel rod, glue, (nails or) screws, and paint.

One sheet of four-by-eight foot half-inch plywood was cut to four by four feet, split to two-by-four feet, and these pieces were cut from corner to corner into triangles. Eventually, for practicality, but more for visual interest, I clipped the lower point and the plywood itself is 38-inches in height (illus. 1). The calculation was that a twelve-stall barn minus one stall should be able to get along with ten "tack stations," as a number of people do have two horses, and could exist with one space. Even numbers on both walls (with this caveat) made things much simpler to figure.

I glued and screwed 2x2 to two of the triangle-sides, as shown (illus. 2). I took 2x4 pieces 23-inches long, made an opening half-an-inch wide and out about thirteen inches from what would be the wall (the opening to slip over the plywood, and its sides to support shelves) (illus. 2). I glued and nailed the 2x4 pieces (I'd round-over routed the edges) eighteen inches from the top of the plywood. I see that I had slightly notched the plywood to more nicely accept the 2x4 pieces.

By measure, the first of the "bridle" dowels is three inches from the vertical plywood, and the other two are four inches from it and from each other. The dowels must have been cut six inches long (roughly sanded on the outer ends), and glued into holes an inch-and-a-half or two-inches deep.

It sounds right that I'd snapped a chalk-line for mounting these wall brackets. The tops of the brackets are seventy-three-or-four inches above the floor. I measured, divided, and hung four of the two-sided plywood brackets on each wall. I'd made two extra of the 2x4 "bridle" mounts, and split them in their middles to mount on the outer stall-walls (and 2x2 strips as cleats for the top-shelf).

The center shelf you see is nominal 1x10 (which is what I had available, but using 1x12 and refiguring the bridle dowel start is maybe better). These shelves vary in length between twenty-eight and thirty inches (I had cut them only after the brackets were up on the wall) and are glued and nailed to the 2x4 edge. The metal wall-mount saddle racks came along later, but are a perfectly appropriate touch. Its cross-piece is thirteen inches below the shelf and about forty-three inches above the floor.

So, at this point, what are you out in materials? One sheet of half-inch plywood, three eight-foot 2x4s, ten yards of half-inch dowel, six eight-foot 2x2s, glue, screws, paint. Unbelievably, the top shelf (for blankets and the like) costs two full sheets of plywood.

But, look down from above on this recycled stall: of its thirteen-foot width only two feet on each side are spoken for with this design. The center of this quite-rectangular stall was underdeveloped. I put up two 4x4 fence posts (in about the middle of the "stall") with four-foot long cross-pieces (more fence-posts, but rounded over, chamfered) to support saddles (illus. 3). The cross-pieces are parallel, their posts separated by a little over two feet. The cross-pieces and the uprights are lap-jointed (carefully nip away some of the thickness of each) and glued and clamped tight with carriage bolts. The top of the upper cross-piece is fifty-nine inches above grade, the bottom of the bottom about twenty four-inches above grade, and the middle cross-piece splits their difference. And there's room on the far side of this pair for grain cans.

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