

For nearly 30 years, Ruth and Skitch Henderson have had a huge Christmas Tree in the Gallery at The Silo on Hunt Hill Farm. Every year the question is asked “How do they get that tree in here?” Well this year, we are going to share the secret. The hill on the right side of Upland Rd. at Route 202 has a tree farm on it that was part of Hunt Hill Farm. This year that property will be preserved by the State of Connecticut as part of a 42 acre parcel.



Almost exclusively over the years, the tree for the gallery has come from that property. A tree would be chosen that needed to be cut down for one reason or another, not just to have it in the Gallery. One of the criteria for the tree had to be that it was not too big to get into the Gallery of course. This year there were not many trees big enough that weren't already too large.



The tree chosen for this year had to have over 6 feet cut off it between the top and bottom. Here is a picture of tree standing on the property. The owners of Custom Lawn Care & Landscaping, Drew and Doug Doerwald are deciding the best way to get the tree down, onto the flatbed trailer and to the Gallery. They have had lots of experience doing this having worked with the Henderson's Christmas trees for over 20 years.

Here they are trying to get the tree onto the flatbed without crushing all the branches. The back of this tree had



lost many of its branches and the tree was a bit front heavy so it wanted to roll as it was lowered. It took over two hours to get it safely onto the trailer.



Once there, it had to be secured and bundled enough so as to not fall off the trailer or scrape all the branches off while on its 20 minute trip down the mountain and back up Upland Rd. to the rear entrance of the Gallery.

Here we see the tree starting its journey down the hill. It is hanging off the 30 foot trailer and rising at least 15 feet into the air. Secured as it was, it made it to The Silo without any mishaps. It took up the entire road though. Fortunately there was no other traffic for those worrisome minutes.



Now, if you can believe it, came the harder part, getting the tree off the truck and into the Gallery so it could be stood up and decorated.



Ever so carefully they back the trailer with its 30 plus foot cargo into the barnyard. Getting as close as possible to the Gallery doors, they take a new



measurement and determine that at least two feet need to come off the bottom in order to have it fit inside. So out comes the saw and another cut is made to help fit the tree into its new home.

Then Doug and Drew with the help of Kevin King and Segundo, who work with them, and Darrin Benham who works for Hunt Hill Farm Trust, get the Gallery space ready for the tree. This required setting up pulleys and a come-along to hoist the tree into position once they bring it into the building.





With all hands pulling as hard as they can, the tree slides off the truck and has to be dragged into the gallery. Once it was mostly off the truck, the guys had to turn it in order to get it into a roughly centered position. Now with the tree lying flat in an area where they could do better measurement, it is checked again to make sure it will fit in this 27' high space.

Of course, the tree is still over 30 feet from base to top so the clippers come out to trim the top and about another foot is taken from the bottom.

At this point, ropes are attached to a couple of places on the tree and the task of standing it in place is begun. It took nearly 3 hours to get the tree upright, centered and secured.



The Custom Lawn Care crew all agreed that this was the toughest tree they had ever brought into the Gallery. The original size, the one heavy and one light side, and even its location on the property where it was difficult to get to all sides of the tree, all contributed to the difficulty of the job.

But here it is standing tall and erect, safely secured ready to be viewed by all the guests to The Silo.

Beginning with an opening reception November 1st from 1 to 3 p.m., you can view the 27 ft. tree that fills the historic Hay Loft Gallery, artistically decorated with ornaments made from bark, twigs and berries.



Here is a preview, but please come see the real thing. And now you already know
“How did they get that tree in here”?

