

## An Unconventional Approach to Conventional Combo Delivery

Mickey Truck Bodies has long been an industry leader in the reconditioning of beverage bodies and trailers – turning older units into like-new units and adding many more productive years to the life of the vehicle.

A few years ago the company added another capability to its refurb repertoire by converting a conventional 16-bay side loader to a draft/package combo unit with a new twist: the keg bays are located below the dry bays to allow for safer and easier unloading by the driver.

Mickey has now retrofitted a number of trailers to the unique combo format, which was the brainchild of [Robert Badely](#), General Manager of Mickey's Southeast Reconditioning/Service Center in Ocala, FL.

"We had a customer whose drivers were complaining about pulling the kegs down from a conventional combo unit," says Badely. "At the same time we were taking one of its 16-bay side loaders in for a complete reconditioning, and that's how this baby was born. We split the full bays in half, created floors for the upper bays, and added insulation and reinforcement. The bottom of the body is one big refrigerated storage space that will hold approximately 50 – 60 kegs depending on the customer's needs. There are individual doors on the bottom so that the driver can pull a keg from any point, and aesthetically it matches the layout of the top bays."



Top: Mickey 16-bay side loader converted to a combo unit with keg bays on the bottom.  
Above: Conventional 16-bay combo trailer.

Savannah, GA-based Southern Eagle Distributing, one of the oldest continual Anheuser-Busch distributorships in the United States and one of the largest in the state of Georgia, is the latest Mickey customer to retrofit a side loader into the innovative combo unit. "Our main goal was to lower our Workers' Compensation costs and improve driver safety," explains Cory Burnam, Southern Eagle Fleet Manager. "Putting the kegs lower on the truck will help us do that." The 1990s retrofitted body has been in service for about a year now, "and as long as we take care of it, we should get at least 5 more years before we might have to recondition it again," says Burnam. "We're planning on doing this for all our draft accounts going forward. We are very happy with the Mickey workmanship."

"It gives you the best of both worlds," says [Kyle McLaughlin](#), Mickey's National Accounts Manager for the Reconditioning/Service Division. "You can deliver both packaged and keg beer off the same unit that is very driver-friendly for about half the cost of a new conventional combo unit. This service is really taking off for us in our Reconditioning/Service division, and it gives beer wholesalers another viable option for a combo delivery approach. This is uniquely different because we put the keg compartment on the bottom of the unit."

The Ocala facility turned out its first combo retrofit about 7 years ago, "and it's still going strong today," says Badely. "We can do similar retrofits on almost any body or trailer because the team here in Ocala continues to improve and upgrade the design and process. It's a great story that started with an out-of-the-box idea and the commitment to make it even better, safer and more customer-friendly. That's what we do best."