



BEYOND FABRICATION

ADVENTURES IN METAL:

You Never Know Where Welding Might Take You



By Tamara Gorman

Sharing the stories of our local merchants.

Mike Robertson spends a lot of his time designing and building. If ever a custom metal fabricator embodied the term “Renaissance man,” it’s him. As an accomplished welder, fabricator, designer, builder and artist, Mike possesses the exacting standards and communications skills necessary for challenging projects that require excellent craftsmanship and the ability to provide metalworking solutions. Recently, the custom metal works have been flying out of his shop almost as fast as the arcs and sparks. I had a chance to visit with him at his hilltop workshop, Beyond Fabrication, in Cameron Park.

In its most basic sense, fabrication is the process of creating or inventing something. “When it comes to metalwork, welding can be a singular operation during that process.” There is a lot of design, sourcing of materials, cutting, grinding, layout and fit-up that is involved before the first weld bead is ever applied. “When that stage finally arrives, one can see his or her own private volcano through the welding hood that is completely under their control... that is what got me hooked. It is a skill

that anyone can learn yet takes years of education and practice to get it right”. We have invested in the tools, the shop and knowledge to provide solutions for contractors and homeowners alike.” Welding, of course fuses two pieces of metal together and, most often, the weld is stronger than the metals that are joined.

At Beyond Fabrication, they are all about the art, science and craft of



Owner Mike Robertson and his assistant, Alexis.
Right: Alexis at work

metal and helping you bring your ideas into reality. They do custom design, repair and restoration on a wide variety of projects from driveway gates, trellises, planter boxes, wine racks, furniture and art, to truck racks, trailer modifications, fire pits, railings and repairs.

As a leading custom design and fabrication shop, Beyond Fabrication, inspires, educates and collaborates with all clients as well as with those clients who may

have a creative spirit or a do-it-yourself attitude but may not necessarily have welding skills or tools. “If you have your own design and plan with all the specifications, then we’ll just build it for you. If not, then we will collaborate with you on a plan, create the design and build it,” says Mike. “I love when people come to us with a vision for something new. If we can make it happen it is very satisfying, if not, I’ll let them know right away.”

Today you can find a lot of cheap metal “kits” online or at a big box store. It’s usually mass-produced, made of thin steel and not exactly to specifications. “We have the specialized tools and the knowledge to build a custom, quality product. We take pride in bringing an idea from concept to reality, whether it’s a prototype or a modification”.

One project which exemplifies these

traits was his restoration of The Stamper House, which was built as a movie set on the Siletz River in Oregon by Universal Studios for the 1970 Oscar-nominated film ‘Sometimes a Great Notion’ starring Paul Newman and Henry Fonda.

In 2004, Mike ventured to Oregon when he purchased this 4700 square foot “Movie House”.

“Because the home was built as a movie set, it had no foundation, not to mention, all of the dry rot and thin walls one would expect. In fact, the entire house was drifting back into the river.

We put together a team to not only preserve this iconic structure but make it livable with modern amenities. Now it stands strong, is a real home and a tourist attraction.”

Mike now has a welding Technology degree from Sierra College. Along with



his expert MIG welder and fabricator Alexis, Beyond Fabrication takes ownership and pride in every job. My father always taught us how to figure things out and when something broke or we needed something built, we fixed it or made it ourselves. Mike and Alexis look at the big picture and have the skills and tools to “figure it out” for their clients. “We will over-engineer and strengthen things to last.”

One design that Beyond is doing right now is a metal gate frame for do-it-yourself wood gates. Wooden gates are beautiful, but they rot, twist and sag over time. Our custom metal frame is a great solution and a way to have a solid gate at a very good price. The design of this metal frame is simple yet strong. Pre-drilled tabs and cross supports easily accommodate any dimension or geometry of lumber. The hinges are rated at 1500lbs. per set and are adjustable. The frame will not sag and will outlast any wood you put on it, as long as you protect the steel by either paint or powder coat. When those boards eventually split or deteriorate, you just tear it off and replace it! The steel will still be there. “All we need in most cases is the width in between the posts. The customer can easily install it themselves and mount whatever wood or vinyl fence boards they like either vertically or horizontally.

This winter we can look forward to seeing more metal work from Beyond Fabrication, as Mike and his team will be exploring additional public and private art displays as well as a few new production items. “Here innovative ideas drive the focus. When a customer calls you back for the next project... that is the reward. As demand for our services continues to grow, we will further expand the shop and crew. One can imagine the dozens of sculptures, gates and artwork we’ve built lasting decades into the future.” In this “throw away” economy we live in, Beyond Fabrication is a part of an increasingly small community of makers that still builds things to last. Give them a call!

For further information call 530-957-0424 and to see more of Mike Robertson’s work, go to his website at www.beyondfabrication.com.



Top photo: One of their custom gate frames. Middle photos: An Iron trellis and a custom dragon metal cutout. Bottom photo: A custom iron gate

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