

Forging a New Life (cont.)

those who have an appreciation for beautiful craftsmanship, what you purchase should last a lifetime.

“For the most part, ninety-nine percent of the time,” says Wolfgang, “it is custom work, not fabrication. Fabrication is taking pieces off the shelf and putting them together. Custom work takes raw material to make the parts. There are lots of fabricators, but not many blacksmiths.”

“There are more and more people coming into the trade which nearly died out in the 60’s,” said Wolfgang. He attributes its survival to the back-to-nature era of the late 60’s and early 70’s. “It’s getting increasingly difficult to do an apprenticeship due to the labor laws. Since no license is required for blacksmiths in the U.S.,

the best way to get started is to attend a conference or school, then practice, read, and practice some more.”

“Conferences are being attended more and more by young people and women of all ages. The power hammer has leveled the playing field; no longer do you need to be a burly giant to be a successful blacksmith,” explained Wolfgang.

The Smith’s Wife

Wolfgang’s wife Dianne manages another part of the business. Her commute is about two seconds. She too loves the life and had always dreamed of working from home. For the last five years she has enjoyed just that. “I can work and be home with my ‘kids’” says Dianne. Dianne and Wolfgang have three stunning Rottweilers (Atilla, Rommel and Ivan).

One of Wolfgang Forge’s customers, Rejuvenation Hardware in Portland, came to him with a project some years ago. They asked if he could make their brass cabinetry hardware look old. In no time, Wolfgang developed a process to produce antique looking finishes for cabinet hardware. In no time, the business grew so much that Wolfgang could not keep up with the orders and his custom work, so Dianne took over this area.

Today Dianne is working with top-of-the-line hardware customers – Chown Hardware, Rejuvenation Hardware and The Joinery – as well as managing and processing online orders.



“To age the hardware is a five-step process, and then there’s the packaging and delivering,” says Dianne. “Orders just keep coming in...I can barely keep up with it, but I love it!”

To learn more about Wolfgang Forge, or to place an online order, go to www.wolfgangforge.com or call (503) 429-7342.

Pictured at left: One of several styles of cabinet hardware Dianne sells through local hardware stores and on their website. Quantity discounts available.

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