



Tim Parks (left) and his statue of Arnold Schwarzenegger, along with the real thing (right). Schwarzenegger visited TW Bronze to check on progress of the project. Parks will personally deliver the statue once its patina is applied.

T.W. Bronze casts Schwarzenegger

By Steve Tool
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If you happen to take a visit to the T.W. Bronze foundry and gallery, owned and operated by Tim Parks, at 202 Golf Course Rd. in Enterprise, be prepared. On walking into the foundry's roll-up door, the entrant is accosted by actor and former California governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger — all eight feet and three inches of a bronze sculpture in the making. This one, the fourth taken from the same mold, is going to the actor's place in Los Angeles.

Schwarzenegger visited the foundry for the second time on Aug. 9. The actor's first time at the foundry was in 2011. Someone bought Schwarzenegger's boyhood home in Thal, Austria, and decided to turn it into a museum. The owner engaged sculptor Ralph Crawford to sculpt a bronze of the actor in his Mr. Olympia heyday, he also wanted Schwarzenegger's blessing on the art.

"He flew in to La Grande, and I picked him up and brought him here," Parks said. "When he saw it, he said, 'This is fantastic; I'm telling you!'" That was in 2011. As the actor had the copyright, and owned the mold, he originally thought of taking it with him, possibly to engage a bigger foundry than T.W., but Parks told the actor that a different foundry with multiple people working on the bronze wouldn't give the personal touch that he could guarantee.

"I've got responsibility for it because I'll be the one building it," Parks told Schwarzenegger.

The actor agreed and even posed for photos with a few local fans who caught glimpses of him from the Safeway parking lot.

Parks said that it took him about seven weeks to complete the first bronze, which included two weeks making the silicon mold, about two weeks of wax work, a week in the slurry room with metal pouring and sand blast cleanup taking another week. It took another two weeks to weld and tool the 35 parts that make up the bronze and a few days to patina the work.

Although the bronze is obviously three-dimensional, what most would think of as the front of the bronze is actually the back. The bronze is intended to depict Schwarzenegger's famous "back pose," which was his meat and potatoes pose back in the day.

Crawford engaged Parks to apply the patina to the sculpture. Schwarzenegger was so impressed with the work as a whole that he bought the copyright to the bronze. He also must have been impressed with Parks' patina work as he engaged Parks' services for the other bronzes ordered as well.

"He continues to do business with me," Parks said. When the actor's representatives called about 18 months ago to see if Parks was interested in producing another bronze, Parks replied that he already had one finished that

the actor had ordered several years before and never picked up.

"It had been here for years," Parks said. "I haven't rattled their cage because I didn't care."

Other bronzes from the same mold include one placed at the "Arnold Classic" bodybuilding competition in Columbus, Ohio, who also wanted a piece of the action. So far, the foundry has completed three bronzes of the actor with a fourth ready to receive a patina. In addition to the actor's hometown and the Arnold Classic in Ohio, the artist received a copy as well.

Schwarzenegger stayed for about two hours on his Aug. 9 trip. Parks gave the actor and his retinue a tour of the foundry and explained the process of creating a bronze. They also went through Parks' gallery, which impressed the woman who is the actor's personal assistant. "She said, 'Wow! This looks great. It could go right down in Beverly Hills. Nice presentation,' I was thinking I'd make it a little more elaborate, but really, it's all about the art work," Parks said.

While the other bronzes were crated and shipped, this latest bronze is going to the actor's place in LA; Parks is delivering it himself.

"It's going bye-bye after I get the patina on it," Parks said.

Has it led to more work? Not yet, but Parks remains hopeful.

"It's cool that it was done here," he said. "It'll put us a little more on the map."



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