

DAD Ironworks – www.dadironworks.com

6341 Ontario Center Road, Ontario, NY 14519

Smithy crafts iron

by Ryan Whirty, Wayne County Mail Reporter (11/4/2010 issue)

ONTARIO – Demetrius Dilulio believes in fine craftsmanship and providing a customer with a personal, hand-made product. Sure, says the owner of DAD Ironworks in Ontario, you might pay a little more coming to him for custom-made iron railings, sculptures and other products. But, he says, it's worth it. "Quality work and presentation is the thing," says Dilulio. "I'm not the cheapest out there, and I'm not the most expensive. But I do quality work. I go above and beyond."

Dilulio launched his business out of his home in Williamson as a hobby, but eventually he decided to make what he calls contemporary blacksmithing a full-time endeavor. As a result, he relocated to a warehouse space in Ontario off Ontario Center Road just north of Route 104 in August. Since then, business has gradually been picking up, and he's beginning to get referrals from satisfied clients. So far, DAD Ironworks is a one-man operation, but Dilulio hopes to hire one or possibly two employees by next spring. "We had a good year this year." He says. "It's been nice and steady, and we've gotten a good mix of jobs."

While DAD does occasionally do custom ironwork for larger commercial or public clients – for example, Dilulio recently completed a major project for a local bank – at this point, he wants to focus on smaller, more intimate clients, especially residential ones. Dilulio creates handmade railings, complete with scrolls and other ornate ironwork, for stairways or steps at residential homes. He enjoys working for clients who have recently remodeled their home, or for senior citizens who need a sturdy railing to help them get up porch steps. He says some ironworks companies can provide railings and other projects for lower costs, but they do it by simply ordering pre-made products from other companies and then just welding the parts together.

DAD is different, says Dilulio, because he creates all of his art work with his own hands in his Ontario shop.

"Some guys can buy the materials and then just put them together," he says. "I try to do it all myself." Dilulio is gregarious and outgoing, quick with a smile and friendly conversation. While being interviewed by the Mail on Tuesday, Dilulio lit his cigar with one of blowtorches, reflecting his easygoing manner. However, blacksmithing wasn't his first career path. He originally worked at and then owned his own fresh fruit processing plant. But Dilulio soon found he needed to learn welding and other metalworking skills to operate and repair the fruit processing equipment at the facility. At that point, he decided to use his educational background – he studied art in college – to segue into his current occupation.

Dilulio now has 10 years of welding experience and he's a member of the Blacksmith Design Association. In addition, he's constantly attending blacksmith schools and programs to continue his education and refine his ironworking abilities.

"This job is just skill-building," he says. "It's one big learning experience." Now that he's decided to continue his artistic and entrepreneurial growth in Ontario – he chose the town because of its central location between his home in Williamson and the City of Rochester – Dilulio says he loves his new digs. "I've had a great response from my neighbors." He said. "This is a great community. You don't have to worry about people breaking in to your shop." In the city, he says, everyone in a neighborhood keeps to themselves. It's the exact opposite in Ontario. "(In Rochester) you don't get the camaraderie you have out here in Wayne County," Dilulio says. "Ontario is a great place, and the area is fantastic. You can build a nice business out here, maybe employ some people and keep growing." For more information, contact Dilulio at (585) 721-0694.