

Creates Lasting Beauty From Pieces Of Iron



Artist With Iron Complains Modern People Too Impatient

By Wally Trabing

Battista Mortara is an artist in iron who finds time is the main rub between the modern world and his craft.

Artistic iron work had its inception thousands of years ago when people were in no hurry and reached its height during the Renaissance when people were still in no hurry.

"But today," complained Mortara over and over again, "people want things done in too much of a hurry. Patience is need in this work—patience!"

The 62-year-old Italian was born in Annone di Asti in the northern part of Italy and started his apprenticeship in ornamental iron work at about 13 years of age. His occupation alternated between this and heavier railroad work until Musso-

lini made Italy unendurable for non-Fascists. It was then he decided to make California his home in 1928.

For some 20 years he worked for the late John Otter, the lamp-maker, turning out general and fancy work in iron and other materials. Following Otter's death, Mortara opened a blacksmith shop in 1949 at 2040 North Pacific.

Mortara said the decline of popularity in fancy iron work, never used in the U.S. as in Europe, has been steady. When he opened his shop he relied mostly upon blacksmith work for his living. His patterns were put away and his special tools were set aside.

Then, during the war, American soldiers flooded France, Spain and Italy, and the decorative grill and trellis work on homes, churches and public buildings captured their imagination, according to Mortara.

Since the war, his anvil has been ringing again with his special hammers and punches against the long pieces of soft iron which he uses for the work.

In a back room he keeps a huge box containing some 200 patterns which are used to form various types of grilles, railings, and trellises, but they are not used often. "I know them all by heart now," he said. "I seldom use them because people don't want their pieces so fancy."

To maneuver and work the pieces of iron into circles, curls and twists requires some 30 different hammers, punches and bending forms. All these tools were made by Mortara.

Some of the more intricate pieces he has turned out include leaves from various species of trees, nuts, flowers, heads and lettering.

He said probably the most dif-

Battista Mortara, above brought a long tradition of iron art to Santa Cruz more than 20 years ago from his native Italy and now turns out his pieces at 2040 North Pacific avenue. However, until the end of the last war when Americans brought back the urge to decorate their homes again with fancy iron work, Mortara depended on blacksmithing for his living. Now he is kept fairly busy at this ancient trade.

ficult piece to form is an iron post with a left and right twist pattern. This involves heating the iron, giving it a twist to the right, heating another inch or so and twisting it to the left so that the lines flow evenly.

To keep up with European tradition in ornamental ironwork which Mortara feels is very important, he must use patience.

"And to do this you must realize that I must have time," he repeated again.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF TIME APPOINTED
FOR PROVING WILL, ETC.
No. 13,895

In the Superior Court of the State of California, in and for the County of Santa Cruz.

In the Matter of the Estate of JENNIE BELLE FLYNN, Deceased.

Notice is hereby given that a petition for the probate of the will of JENNIE BELLE FLYNN, deceased, and for the issuance to petitioner, EDMUND JAMES FLYNN of letters testamentary has been filed in this court, and that July 2, 1954 at Two o'clock P. M. of said day and the courtroom of said court in the courthouse, in the city of Santa Cruz, County of Santa Cruz, State of California, have been fixed as the time and place for the hearing of said petition, when and where all persons interested may appear and contest the same and show cause why said petition should not be granted.

Dated: June 18, 1954.

H. E. MILLER, Clerk.
By FLORENCE B. MUHM,
Deputy Clerk.

CARL D. DORN,
Attorney for Petitioner,
601 Foxcroft Bldg.,
68 Post St., San Francisco, Calif.
June 20 to 30

