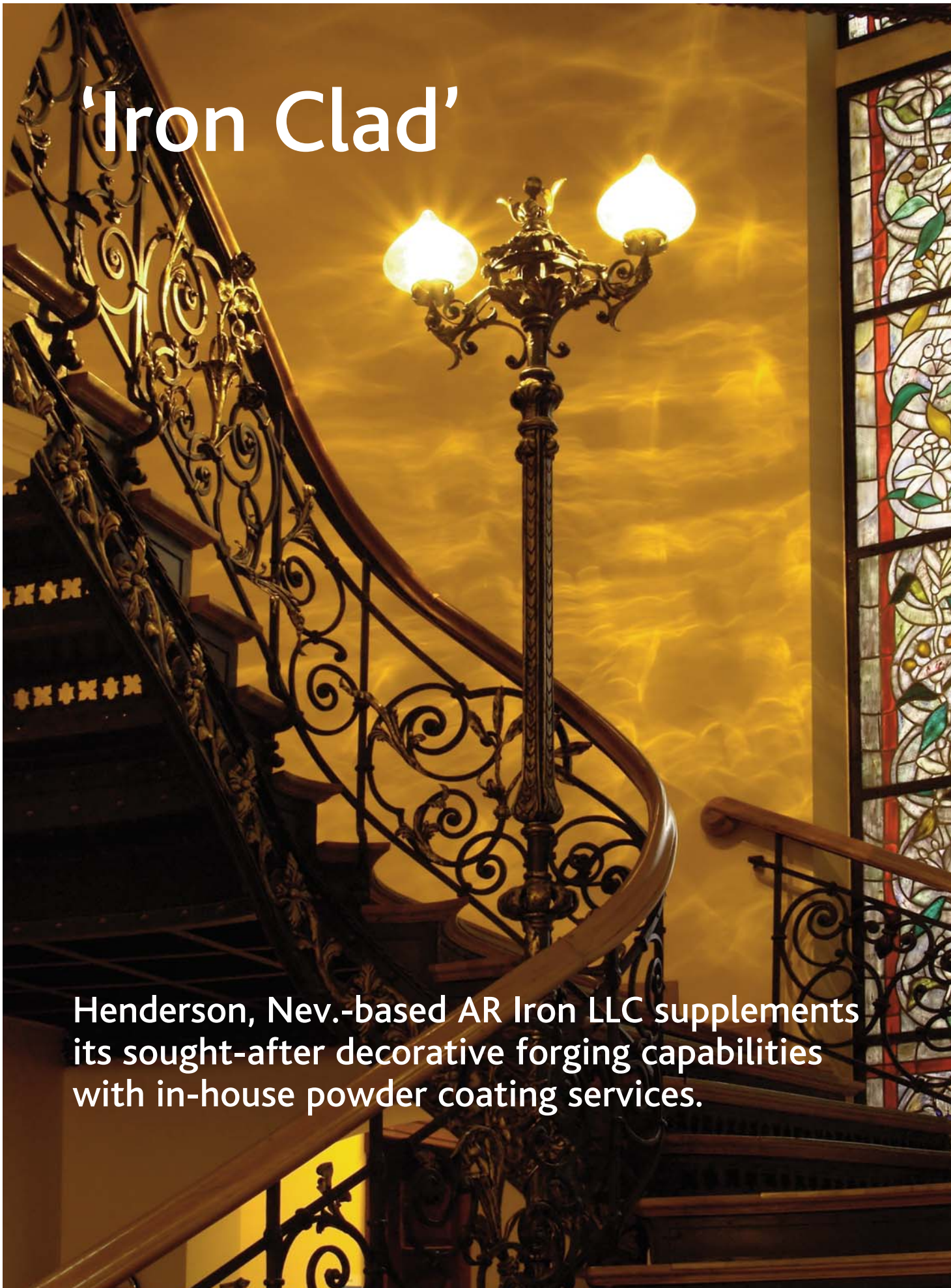


'Iron Clad'

Henderson, Nev.-based AR Iron LLC supplements its sought-after decorative forging capabilities with in-house powder coating services.



BY REGINALD TUCKER

In Henderson, Nev., in a gritty industrial park about 20 miles removed from the glitter and glitz of downtown Las Vegas, employees toil away at AR Iron LLC. There, metal workers literally grind out reams of linear feet of custom-fabricated ornamental wrought iron creations. Many of these intricately designed fabrications—iron security doors, bars, gates, fencing, to name a few—will find their way



AR Iron has the capability to deliver intricate, detailed designs in a relatively short time frame.

into high-end commercial installations on “The Strip” or in residential communities across the state of Nevada.

AR Iron’s list of custom fabricated specialties reads like a designer’s architectural shopping list: custom hand forgings, iron balusters, baskets, scrolls, twisted pickets, belly pickets, hammered material, embossed railing—you name it, AR Iron can probably bring it to fruition. In fact, the more complex the job, the more AR Iron seems to relish in it.

“It is our goal to satisfy our customers with beauty and efficiency on every job,” says Tony Sclafani, AR Iron’s general manager. Whether it’s a one-off residential job, a high-volume home builder contract, or a sig-

nature commercial installation, AR Iron’s approach to quality is essentially the same. “We offer residential and commercial clients quality, custom fabricated ornamental wrought iron, while providing security that is beautiful, yet strong and durable.”

AR Iron’s metal working capabilities entail a blend of both the time-honored tradition of hands-on craftsmanship and state-of-the-art computer technology. While the company’s electronic database stores some 5,000-plus plasma art finial and scroll designs—it still requires the human touch of an experienced welder or metal worker to assemble the various components and forge the final design. Computer-aided plasma cutting services, which can greatly expand the design possibilities, are also available.

The depth of these capabilities, according to Sclafani, provides a competitive advantage. As an example, he said AR Iron workers can “miter-cut” the top corners of gates (as means to deter water intrusion into the railing or post). Such a service, he notes, would incur premium

up-charges by other companies specializing in custom iron work.

Attention to detail isn’t the only competitive advantage for AR Iron. The company also prides itself on rapid delivery times without compromising product quality. “Unlike most iron companies, we have a turnaround of 5-7 business days for most standard work, with custom forgings typically requiring 7-10 business days,” Sclafani notes.

It’s capabilities such as these—as well as an ingrained commitment to product quality—that’s drawing the attention of new, prospective clients while keeping existing customers coming back for more. Sclafani rattled off an impressive list of major builder partners (Lennar Homes, Pulte Homes, Ryland Homes, to name a few) as well as established general contractors that provide lucrative leads. “We proactively look for business,” said Sclafani, who

AT A GLANCE



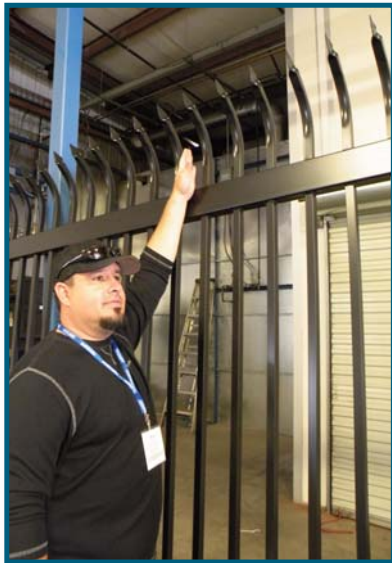
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Father & son: Fred Sclafani (left) owns AR Iron LLC with his wife, Sylvia. Their son Tony (right) serves as general manager.

FINISHER'S profile



Tony Sclafani demonstrates what's possible with through design and fabrication. Here, he inspects a set of security gates after coating and curing.



AR Powder Coating features an 8-gun automated painting station paired with a down-draft system.

always has his fingers on the pulse of the local residential/commercial real estate market. "We're also seeing a fair amount of repeat business."

And then there are those "mega," high-profile jobs that showcase the full breadth of AR Iron's capabilities. One such project entailed the parking garage structure attached to the Venetian Resort Hotel & Casino, the sprawling complex boasting 6,000 luxury suites, 200,000 sq. ft. of casino space, and 500,000 sq. ft. of retail space. The hotel's parking garage—which can accommodate space for 7,500 cars—required protective rail-

ing that was also in keeping with the Venetian's artistic flair. AR Iron stepped up to the challenge, creating railing that featured more than 8,000 hand-forged solid bar scrolls complemented by 16,000 deco rosettes attached to the finials.

Greg Bachnick, project manager, The Venetian Hotel & Casino, recalled the complex requirements of the job. "AR Iron was the only company that went through the time and expense to create a sample panel, and that was very impressive to us," he explained. "The design was critical, and delivering the product in a timely manner while maintaining the consistency in design and quality were a major concern, but AR Iron made us feel very comfortable with their ability to accomplish the job. This installation took a great deal of detail work and layout and, as you can see from the final result, AR Iron performed flawlessly."

Sclafani attests to the challenges of this particular installation—a project spanning eight floors. "The openings were not square, so it was difficult to pre-fit every panel," he explained. "This required measuring each individual opening on site to ensure the panels lined up." The entire job, from fabrication to installation, took 90 days.

BRANCHING OUT

AR Iron's expertise is not limited to the custom manufacture of decorative iron railings. Having added enamel painting and powder coating services to its repertoire about five years ago, AR Iron expanded its operation to offer customers a more complete array of services. To that end,

PRIMARY VENDOR PARTNERS

- AkzoNobel—www.akzonobel.com
- Carpenter Chemical—www.cc-lc.com
- Coral Chemical—www.coralchemical.com
- Sherwin-Williams—www.sherwin-williams.com
- Parker Ionics—www.parkerionics.com
- Prismatic Powders (div. of NIC Industries)—www.prismaticpowders.com

CAPABILITIES & CERTIFICATIONS

- Custom Iron Forging
- Parts Cleaning & Priming
- Powder Coating
- Enamel Painting
- CAD Part Design
- Computer-Aided Plasma Cutting

the Sclafani family added 10,000-square feet, purchased paint and powder coating equipment and supplies, and invested in training and education for its employees. Thus, AR Powder Coating was born.

With the addition of the powder coating operation, the total facility covers 20,000 square feet. The extension boasts an 8-gun automated painting station paired with a down-draft system; an energy-efficient batch oven with an enlarged opening to accommodate oversized parts; and a new batch spray booth. What's



The owners invested in an energy-efficient batch oven with an enlarged opening to accommodate oversized parts.

FINISHER'S profile



Racked and ready. AR Powder Coating has the capacity to put out 4,000 –5,000 linear feet per week.

more, all material is thoroughly cleaned and primed using advanced, environmentally friendly pretreatment chemistry¹ prior to finish application. All totaled, AR Iron/AR Powder Coating has the capacity to put out 4,000 –5,000 linear feet per week.

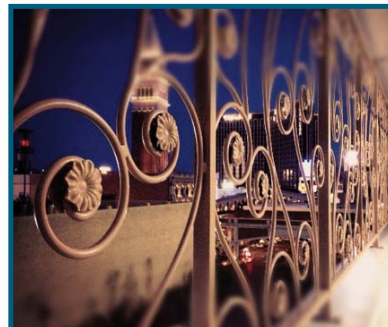
Sclafani also attributes the company's high level of production to the talents and commitment of his workforce, which now stands at about 22 employees. "These skills are hard to teach," he said, singling out a worker performing a visual inspection of a finished product. "One of the main reasons we are successful is because our employees take ownership in the business."

AR Iron's clients tend to agree. "AR Iron has an amazing facility/team and, thus, the ability to create and

deliver a product that ultimately would meet our high standards," The Venetian's Bachnick said. "I would reach out to AR Iron for any opportunity to bid that comes our way where we would need their expertise on a project. I would also recommend them to anyone who is looking for custom/quality metal fabrication."

OUTLOOK

Beyonds its technical prowess, AR Iron LLC is also hoping that factors outside its sphere will translate into even more business for the company. Namely, the tepid upturn in the economy. "The local economy is coming back slowly," Sclafani confirmed, reflecting on the 2008–09 economic downturn that essentially put a halt to the construction boom



The installation AR Iron completed for the garage structure at the Venetian Resort Hotel & Casino entailed 8,000 hand-forged solid bar scrolls complemented by 16,000 deco rosettes attached to the finials.

that had become to define Las Vegas and its surrounding counties.

Sclafani is also seeing positive signs resulting from Las Vegas Major Oscar Goodman's revitalization plan, which has fostered the development of single- and multi-family housing units as well as new, large-scale commercial development. With home ownership rates hovering around 60% (only slightly below the national average) and 2012 permits above year-ago levels, there's reason to be cautiously optimistic. "Building permits starting to come back," Sclafani notes, "and that's always a good sign."

REFERENCES

1. Carpenter Chemical's one-step pretreatment process. "The adhesion is phenomenal with the Carpenter chemistry," said Tony Sclafani, general manager, AR Iron LLC. "If you're putting on good powder, you've got to have great pretreatment."

FINISHER'S profile