



Rebirth of an Age-Old Craft

The Timeless Beauty of Wrought Iron



By Suzanne Wright

Not all architectural ironwork is created equally.

Wrought iron has been used in building from the earliest days of civilization. In Roman times, wrought iron door furniture was commonplace. As the name suggests, wrought iron means that the metal has been worked—or wrought—into shape while utilizing almost pure iron, with the lowest level of carbon of any type of iron. This purity makes it highly resistant to rusting, yet the material is highly ductile, tough and durable. Because it is so pliable it can be successfully worked into intricate curved designs and forms. Flowing lines, hammer marks and other irregularities typical of hand tooling characterize wrought iron. It can often be distinguished from cast iron by

slight variations between repeated elements such as scrolls, where each outline is slightly different from the next.

Defining the lower-end product cast iron begins when molten iron is poured into a mold rather than forged. Cast iron is strong in compression rather than tension. It can also be brittle, for it lacks the pliability of wrought iron. The molds or patterns for cast iron elements can be used repeatedly, so it is less costly and less durable than handmade wrought iron—typically half the price and significantly less durable.

Local Wrought Iron Works.

Former teacher and sales professional Jenny Sandlin never expected to be one of the few females in a traditionally male dominated

field. Born in the Dominican Republic, Sandlin has lived in Dallas for over 20 years. There's a lot of her Caribbean heritage evident in her company's products. Sandlin, you see, is the founder, sole owner and president of three-year old Elegante Iron, a Dallas-based manufacturer of wrought ironwork.

The fast-growing company has twelve employees and has placed their custom-made doors, balconies, wine cellar gates, ornamental inserts and other wrought iron elements in Collin County's most elite home communities such as Stonebriar Park, Starwood, Kings Gate and Shoal Creek, not to mention residences from New York to California.

When she started her company, Sandlin already had a reputation in the industry for