

Craft Revival



A builder by trade, Arts and Crafts collector on the side, Gerald Rucks finally let his hobby become an obsession. From a modest shop off his house in Warren, Mich., Rucks started Arts and Crafts Hardware (810-772-7279), where he makes everything from upholstery tacks to mailboxes. And he works metal using the same methods and tools used 100 years ago. The bails are sand-casted, and the plates are hand-hammered. Rucks said it takes a new employee two months to master his hammering technique. "You have to get into a rhythm," Rucks said. "As soon as you hit it a little too hard, you've ruined all the softer blows and have to start over." The hand-patinating process involves heat and natural extracts, but perfecting it took too long, Rucks said, to give any more information than that.



Hammering the bail. After fitting a nipple to the hand-hammered plate, a few taps with a mallet set the sand-casted bail in place.



A fast patina. To give the pieces a seasoned look, hardware is dipped in a mixture of natural extracts, then heated with a blowtorch.