

Blacksmith Forges Iron into Works of Beauty

by Charles Sutton

Imagine you have been hand forging wrought iron crafts and accessories for the home for 20 years and out of all these products, a simple long-handled cooking fork is what everyone wants!

When we visited Kevin Mulholland at his newly located forge on Route 7 in Wallingford, VT, he and his wife Michelle were stunned over the latest wholesale order for 4,100 cooking forks for Virginia-based retailer Plow and Hearth.

Having just seen Kevin firing, bending and hammering an iron rod in his forge, we wondered how long that order would take to fill.

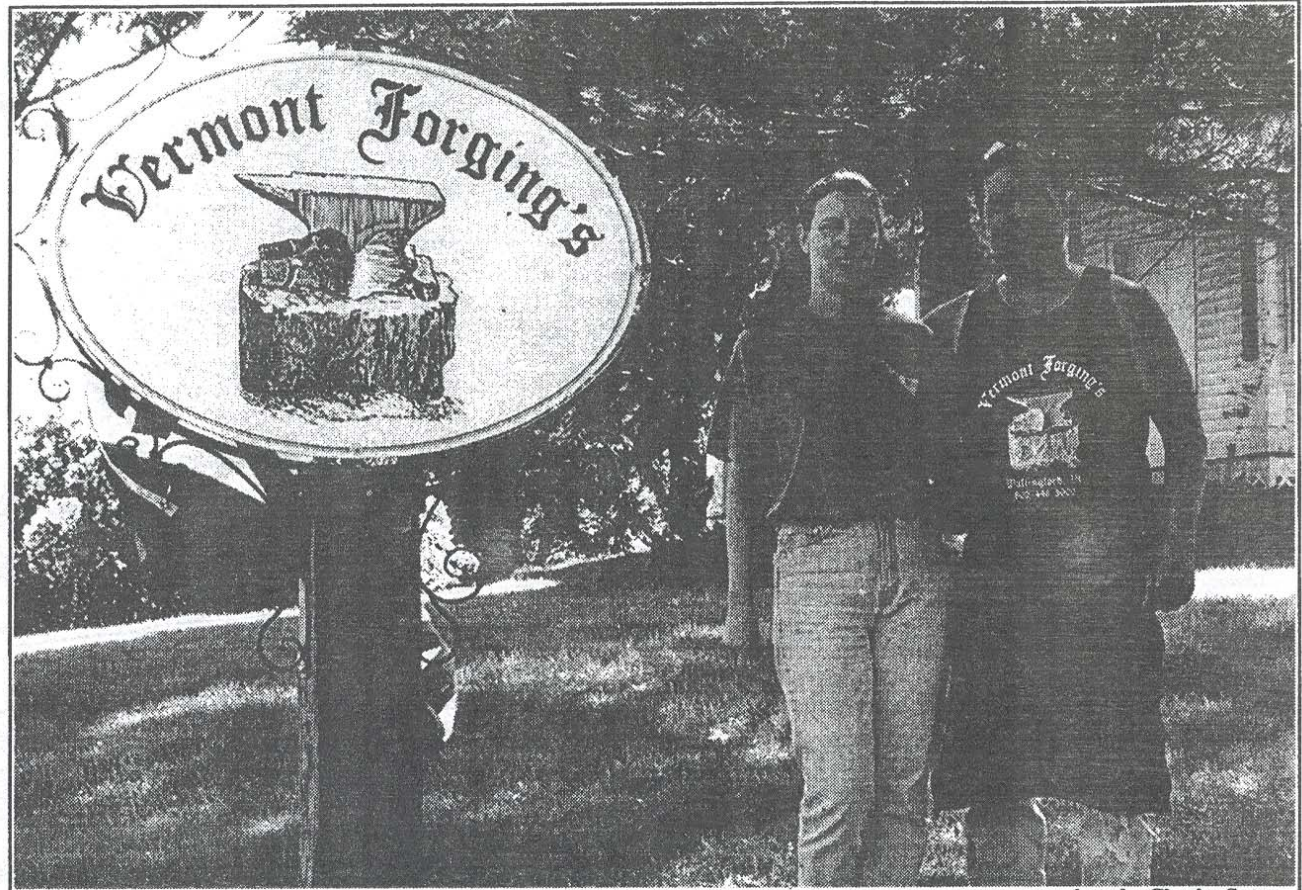
"If I do nothing else, 150 a day," he said.

The decorative handled two or four prong fork is ideal for roasting hot dogs, sausages and marshmallows. It is designed with a hook at the top so it can be hung on the wall, hearth or tool stand.

Kevin began making creative works with wrought iron 22 years ago when he worked as a welder for a Walpole, NH firm. He said the owner there encouraged his creative efforts and let him use the equipment during lunch and after hours.

He operated his own forge in Chester, VT for several years before deciding to move to this new location last December. He said he really liked being 'over here' on Route 7, which is so beautiful with the Green Mountains running along one side and hills on the other. The couple relocated their home and forge to the Frank Bruce property with the purchase of Bruce's homestead and a few acres of land. During the move, a big snowstorm prevented specially hired riggers from coming on schedule to move all the heavy equipment; but some riggers came on their own 'after hours' and somehow all the forges and iron got moved.

Once the forge was fired up, Kevin started making his product line again which includes a wide variety of items for the fireplace, kitchen and bath. He also forges bookends and doorstops, coat racks, lamps, hooks and hangers, chandeliers and candelabras. His forged art has nature scenes—fish jumping out of the water to snag a fly or a loon floating among the water plants. There are also pieces with a moose, bear, cowboy and horse, cat, pig, and deer. They are all beautifully designed, some elegant, some rustic, all authentic and well-crafted.



Michelle and Kevin Mulholland of Vermont Forging's in Wallingford, VT.

photo by Charles Sutton

Kevin has three forges—two gas-fired and one-coal fired. He prefers the coal-fired one, which he said, gets up to 2800 degrees. Does it take awhile to get started and up to 'heat', we wondered? "No, some newspapers, a match and 'air'," we were told.

Kevin does custom work, mostly fireplaces, where he will design and fit the frame and screens. He offers floral, trout and fly, bear, and elk screens. Amazingly he also welds special pine cone handles, made out of dozens of little pieces.

This is also a family business, with his son, Tucker, 15, welding and forging and helping with the items that need brushing by hand. Daughter Molly, 12, helps with the packaging for the mail order business. "I cut steel and drill holes," wife Michelle adds.

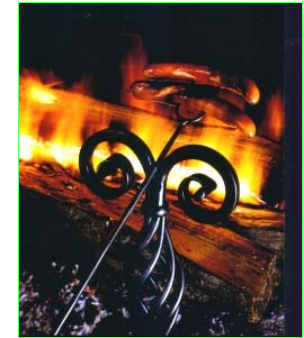
Kevin has several outlets for Vermont Forging's products, including Sturbridge Yankee Workshops in Portland, Maine; Harvest Homes (five stores) in the San Francisco, CA area; Stone House Antiques and Crafts in Chester, VT, and the Vermont Gift Barn in Burlington, VT.

Vermont Forging's is located at 41 Cook Drive, just south Wallingford, VT, on Rte 7. The shop and forge are open daily. Call (802) 446-3900 or e-mail vforge@sover.net for a catalog. Visit their website at www.vermontforgings.com.

Vermont Forging's



photo by Charles Sutton
Kevin Mulholland working at his forge.



The Famous Fork

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