

Labour of love results in beautiful equine creation

By Mark Pavilons

A King man's two-year labour of love has resulted in a beautiful equine showpiece.

Kendall McCulloch didn't set out to create a masterpiece. The self-taught artist took on the challenging task as a personal project. Thousands of hours and feet of steel rebar (reinforcing bar) went into his life-size horse sculpture, which stands 16.2 hands high on its stand, it's just less than eight feet to the tips of the ears. The majestic beast weighs in at an estimated 3,000 pounds. He put the finishing touches on the piece recently, gearing up for a busy equestrian season, and the fanfare associated with this summer's Pan Am Games.

The horse caught the attention of the Town of Caledon, host to equestrian competitions during the Pan Am Games. Their parks and recreation staff fell in love with the piece and Kendall has committed to lend it to them for some upcoming events. It will appear at the Caledon Home Show, which runs April 24 to 26 at the Albion-Bolton Community Centre. It will also be on display at a huge celebration and torch relay, June 13 during Caledon Day.

"The spirit of the Toronto 2015 Games is resonating through the arts community," commented Heather Savage, manager of recreation and Caledon lead for the Pan/Parapan Am Games. "Mr. McCulloch's art piece will travel to local events and draw attention to the equestrian competitions taking place in Caledon."

Caledon and Kendall would really like to have the statue in Palgrave during the Games, but they have not heard whether that will happen.

"I'm really looking forward to it," McCulloch said. He admitted he's "tickled pink" at the positive reception and kind words from people and other artists who've seen the sculpture.

"For me, it's (feedback) overwhelming."

He's quite modest and is really pleased that people find his creation beautiful and an accurate depiction of this animal.

This is his baby, something he's grown quite fond of over the past two years. Currently, it's not for sale. "Once it's gone, it's gone," he observed.

Every piece of rebar was formed and bent by hand. Normally, a sculpture of this size would use tin over a skeleton of sorts. For McCulloch, once he began the meticulous process of laying the rebar, he just kept going, continuing those natural, flowing lines that emerged. The half-inch rebar was laid tight, held together by solid and random welds.

The result is an accurate reproduction of a real animal. McCulloch took thousands of photographs and took measurements of real specimens to get the dimensions just right.

"It's as exact as I could get it," he said.

The imperfections actually look like muscle lines. He admitted not everything was "planned," but it all worked out well. His few pounds of "mistakes" are in a small box in his workshop.

McCulloch has worked with the Beasley family, who opened their doors recently during the Schomberg Agricultural Society's annual farm tour. The Beasleys own and operate the rides at Centreville on Toronto Island and McCulloch has worked with metal and machinery for years. He also spent time around the Beasleys' horses, acquiring a fondness for the animal.

Every piece of rebar was cleaned and polished and he's sprayed it for a nice, tarnished look. Left on its own, rebar rusts very quickly. If the statue spends much time outside and it rains, it will take on a whole new look. McCulloch is actually anxious to see just what that will be.

He is looking forward to doing more projects and will consider commission work. For more, visit kendallmcculloch.com or send him an email at kendallmcculloch23@gmail.com



King Township's Kendall McCulloch shows off his unique metal horse sculpture that has caught the eye of the Town of Caledon. Photo by Mark Pavilons