

## Invictus Steelworks makes its debut at the 17<sup>th</sup> Architectural Digest Design Show in New York City

*Robert Simmons, Furniture Designer, brings fresh new concepts in steel design to NYC*

**FARR WEST, UTAH – March 8, 2017** – Invictus Steelworks, makers of original handmade custom steel furniture, gazebos and sculpture, will be exhibiting for the first time at the 17<sup>th</sup> Architectural Digest Design Show in New York City, March 22-25, 2018. Founded by husband and wife team Robert and Beth Simmons in 2015, Invictus Steelworks' pieces can be found in homes, offices, hotels and restaurants from coast to coast.

Invictus works closely with interior designers, architects, builders, home stagers, set designers, the hospitality industry, and individuals furnishing their home or office, in creating the perfect design to fit a client's needs. The duo named their start-up company after William Ernest Henley's 1885 Poem "*Invictus*" (excerpted below):

"It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate,  
I am the captain of my soul."

"It is clear by the quality of Robert's work, and passion with which he and Beth partner with the clients, that these words ring true and can be seen in every piece of functional art Robert creates." – *Tanglewood Conservatories, Denton, Maryland*

Simmons brings a unique vision to all his designs, drawing heavily on his own life experiences.

"The least interesting thing about me, particularly as a furniture designer, is that I don't have any formal training," Robert says. "There is beauty and inspiration all around us, everything from the Eiffel Tower to the seemingly insignificant details of turn of the century buildings on Main Street, USA. I see things every day, small details, and I catalog them in my head. I don't even realize I'm doing it, until I see reflections of them in new designs, presented in a new way."

While he always had a passion for creating beautiful things, Simmons spent almost 25 years in industrial welding before opening Invictus Steelworks. As a certified welder, Simmons worked all over the United States. Over the course of his career, Robert welded in the open mines of Nevada in the hot, desert sun, and in the bitter sub-zero temperature of the mines of Northern Wyoming in the winter. He's erected bridges and buildings, and welded pipes 200 feet below ground in Maryland. He also worked for some years as a crab fisherman on the Bering Sea, and repaired boats in the off season in Alaska.

“People always ask me how Robert went from welding in heavy industrial environments to designing luxury furniture. I guess the two are opposite ends of the spectrum, but I think Robert’s passion is being an artist and creating beautiful things, and his job happened to be welding. He’s always had phenomenal skills and a keen eye for design, but as for how we got our start in custom furniture, well, that’s kind of a funny story. Opportunity definitely didn’t knock, we had to knock the door down,” Beth said, when asked how Invictus Steelworks became a go to design studio for custom steel decor.

Invictus Steelworks was intended to be a light industrial fabrication shop, where Robert could build artistic style furniture and steel sculpture in his down time. They spent their first year in business performing grocery store remodels, but towards the end of the year, they ran out of work. With almost half a million dollars in contracts just waiting to be signed, they knew it was just a matter of time before things got busy again.

Months passed, and the contracts were still pending. The couple’s finances dwindled, and they struggled with whether to close the company and get “real jobs”, but neither Simmons was ready to give up. They had worked too hard and invested too much, not only financially, but of themselves, so instead of walking away and cutting their losses, they doubled down. They sold everything they owned, and moved into their shop. Spring came, and still the contracts hadn’t been released. To pay the bills, they sold their industrial equipment. With nothing left to sell, and no tooling to perform the work if the contracts came, things were looking bleak.

Down to their last \$200, having invested their entire life savings into the company, the Simmons were on the brink of turning off the lights of Invictus Steelworks forever. With nowhere left to turn, and no money for materials, Robert made a last-ditch effort to keep the lights on. He got out his cutting wheel and cut apart the roof supports of a gazebo he had made, and built two tables. Beth put them on Etsy, and in a very short time, they began to receive orders for some very simple, Parson style tables. As the sales increased, Robert began making other tables. Within six months, Robert was designing and selling more and more high end tables.

By the time the contracts were finally officially awarded, Robert and Beth had waited all winter and half of spring, and by then, Invictus Steelworks had already been reborn. They turned down the contracts, focusing instead on designing furniture and sculpture. Robert applied to several prestigious Arts Festivals, including the Utah Arts Festival, the Park City Kimball Arts Festival, and the Denver Arts Festival, and was accepted by all three on his first try, in both sculpture and furniture categories.

Since then, neither Simmons has looked back. They now focus on high end, luxury designs, including gazebos and sculpture. “Not a day goes by that I don’t have a new idea for a new design. I catalog the good ones, the ones I really love. I draw them in a sketch pad. I go back to them from time to time, improve them, finesse them. If I’m lucky, one day I’ll get to build them all, but I don’t think so, because I’m constantly adding to the portfolio. The sketch pads have all of my most special designs, almost like a wish list of things I want to build, all very high end,

unique pieces. Sometimes I come across a client, get to talking with them about their needs, the décor of the room, and it hits me. I know exactly which design will work perfectly for that client, and I get to pull a drawing out of my catalog and build it. Those are my favorite days. That's how most new designs are born," Robert says about his creative process. Forging ahead, Robert has more ideas than he does time to build. As of 2018, Invictus Steelworks is booked eight to twelve weeks in advance, and Robert is still hand fabricating every piece that leaves the shop.

Invictus Steelworks offers not only the finest in quality and craftsmanship, but also a highly personalized approach to customer service. "We like to call it The Invictus Experience", says Beth, who runs the business end of the company, as well as assists her husband with some of the finish work. "Our customer service approach is as unique as our designs. Its structured to be a hands on, interactive experience, where we partner with our clients to help bring what they envision to life," she says. "Through the design process, we get to know our clients pretty well, which allows us to really hone in on what the client likes and deliver exactly the right piece!"

Robert and Beth still live in their shop, with their two dogs, Stella and Rooster.

About **Architectural Digest Design Show:**

The world's leading brands along with today's top talent come together in a carefully curated presentation of design, offering inspired vignettes by respected brands, design seminars, culinary demonstrations, and special appearances. From furniture, accessories, lighting, and art to kitchen, bath, and building projects, the show offers thousands of products to source and shop—both from independent makers and established manufacturers.

**Invictus Steelworks** specializes in custom steel furniture designs, gazebos and original sculpture. All Invictus Steelworks designs are handmade by Robert Simmons, Furniture Designer and Juried Artist. For more information, visit [www.invictussteelworks.com](http://www.invictussteelworks.com) or email [Beth@invictussteelworks.com](mailto:Beth@invictussteelworks.com). Visit us in person at the Architectural Digest Design Show March 22-25, 2018 located on Pier 94, Booth M802, in the MADE section.

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**Robert and Beth Simmons**

