

Good To Know

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Heavy Metal

ONE LOOK AT MATT CARTWRIGHT'S RECYCLED GARDEN ART
AND IT'S CLEAR THE DESIGNER'S FAVORITE WORD IS "EXPERIMENT."

THE WELDING GENE: As far back as he can remember, Matt Cartwright has built things. His grandfather, a pipe fitter, taught him metalworking basics. Now Cartwright runs a full-time fabrication business, Cartwright Design, in Portland, Oregon, and sells both speculative pieces and commissioned works.

DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH: Cartwright is attracted to unusual materials. In his shop, functional items that have reached the end of their lifecycles are reincarnated as eye-catching artwork. Bent bicycle wheel rims become stylish garden chairs or DNA-shaped plant trellises; concrete fence footings morph into fantastical creatures.

A SPOOLISH IDEA: One of Cartwright's most popular designs is a garden bench made from reclaimed cable spools. He was brainstorming for new ways to make outdoor seating when the design "miraculously popped" into his head.

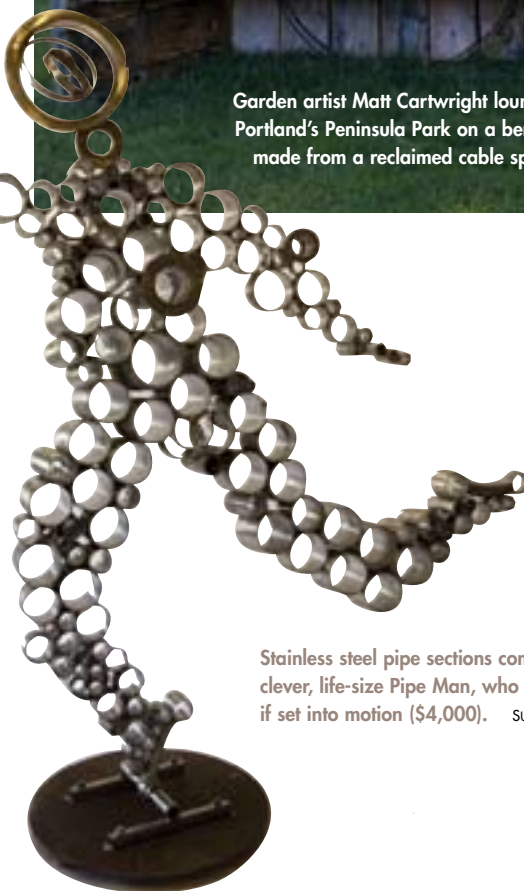


Garden artist Matt Cartwright lounges in Portland's Peninsula Park on a bench he made from a reclaimed cable spool.

SUSAN SEUBERT

“I like to experiment, to think of wacky things—just to make people think differently.”

—Matt Cartwright



Stainless steel pipe sections comprise this clever, life-size Pipe Man, who oscillates if set into motion (\$4,000). SUSAN SEUBERT



The Iron Butterfly sculpture is created from old logging chain welded link by link to create the wingspan and body (\$250).

MATT CARTWRIGHT

METAL HEAD: Though Cartwright will use any material that inspires him, his true love is working with metal—the heavier, the better. His Iron Butterfly garden sculptures came into existence because he liked the irony of a “delicate, fluffy thing” made from rusty iron chain.

FREE-ASSOCIATION ART: Cartwright is an artist first and a recycler second. He chooses whatever material—new or recycled—best suits his concept. He does, however, appreciate the sense of history that reclaimed materials bring. “Sometimes the recycled element is fun because of the individual’s interpretations,” he says. “A bicycle means something different to one person than it does to another.”

WEIGHTY WARES: View more of Cartwright’s creations at www.CartwrightDesign.com

Old concrete is re-envisioned as this “Concretist monk” (commissioned pieces: \$300 and up). “I was digging up concrete footings to put in a new fence,” Cartwright recalls. “I decided to carve the odd-shaped chunks to see what forms were trying to get out.”

MATT CARTWRIGHT



—Rebecca Ragain

A former bike mechanic, Cartwright was intrigued by old bicycle rims, and this chair was the result. The cedar plank seats usually come from reclaimed fences (\$300).

SUSAN SEUBERT



Cartwright creates figures, including this “scarecrow-bot” riding a delivery bike, from old cans and steel hardware fittings (\$400 and up).

SUSAN SEUBERT