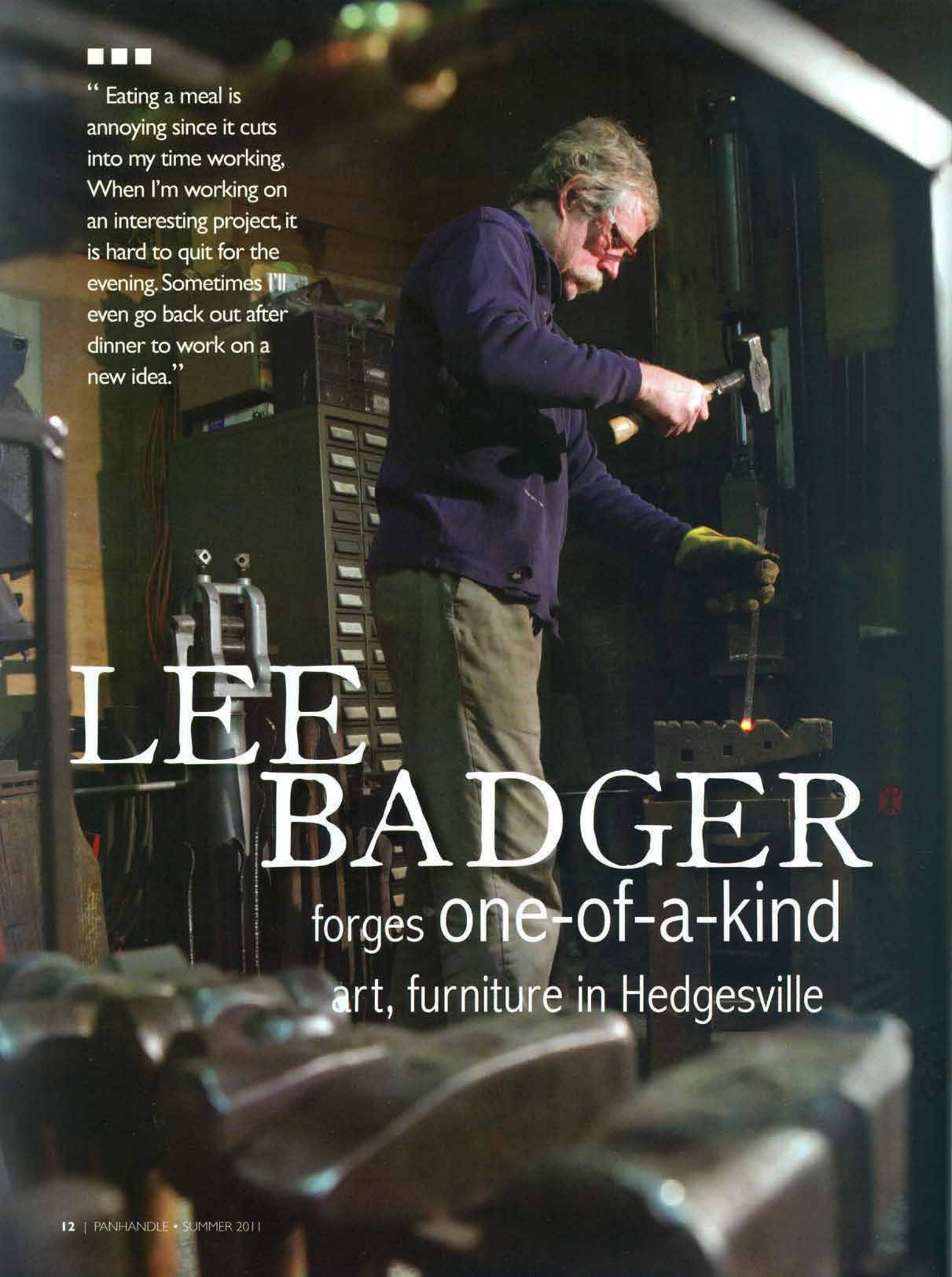


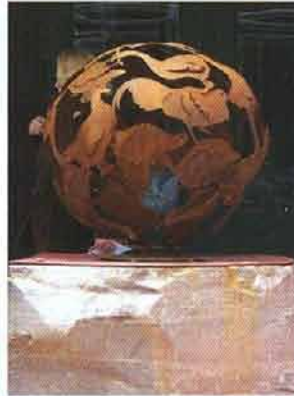


“ Eating a meal is annoying since it cuts into my time working. When I’m working on an interesting project, it is hard to quit for the evening. Sometimes I’ll even go back out after dinner to work on a new idea.”



LEE BADGER

forges one-of-a-kind
art, furniture in Hedgesville



STORY BY **CARL WRIGHT** • PHOTOS COURTESY OF **ANVIL WORKS**

Lee Badger's commute to work involves crossing his driveway to Anvil Works, the custom-built Hedgesville studio where he settled in 1997.

There, he spends his days — and many nights, too — creating strikingly beautiful furniture and sculptures that show off his unique ability to transform cold steel into pieces filled with warmth and energy.

Badger's metalworking ability stems at least in part from his father's side of the family, which included a number of blacksmiths.

Following stints studying art at the University of Colorado and Metro State College, both in Denver, the Binghamton, N.Y.-native began to employ his talents to create practical works such as metal beds, tables, doors and intricate railings.

His creations, artistic but also functional and durable, soon began to find their way into gardens and the interior of homes and businesses across the region and beyond.

Today, Badger stays busy with commissioned jobs for hand-forged works such as nature-infused garden furniture, sleek divans, glass-topped tables with muscular knotted corners, 'Esque chairs (which draws on influences from Amish to Art Nouveau to Queen Anne), even a 20-foot-tall clock tower.

Just this year, his metal sculptures have wowed art lovers in cities from Minnesota to South Dakota to Charlottesville, Va.

His passion to create means work is never a 9-to-5 affair: "Eating a meal is annoying since it cuts into my time working," he said. "When I'm working on an interesting project, it is hard to quit for the evening. Sometimes I'll even go back out after dinner to work on a new idea."

Badger, who was raised in Colorado, moved back to the East Coast in 1989, when he began four years as artist-in-residence for the National Park Service in Glen Echo, Md.

He relocated to the Panhandle in 1994, initially making his home in Charles Town.

He said the area is ideal because it's close to D.C. and the other large metro areas he depends on for supplies, raw material and many of his clients.

It also works for him in a creative sense.

"The Eastern Panhandle is a good place for inspiration," he said. "There isn't a lot of noise, it's peaceful and there's the opportunity to see lots of nature — trees, open spaces, fauna."

Badger sees other reasons to love his home here, too. "I love the uncrowded nature of the area, the great people and the good roads for motorcycling." For more about Badger and his work, go to www.anvilworks.net. ■

