

UP IN

## SMOKE

**EVEN IN THE FANTASY** factory that is Beverly Hills, eyes popped when San Marcos copper-smith Hans Liebscher cruised residential streets with a 6-foot-tall copper conundrum in the back of his truck. Effectively shouting “Hey, look at me!” at architects and contractors working in the neighborhood, the piece refracted sunrays into question marks and brought them running. Says Liebscher, “It created quite a stir.”

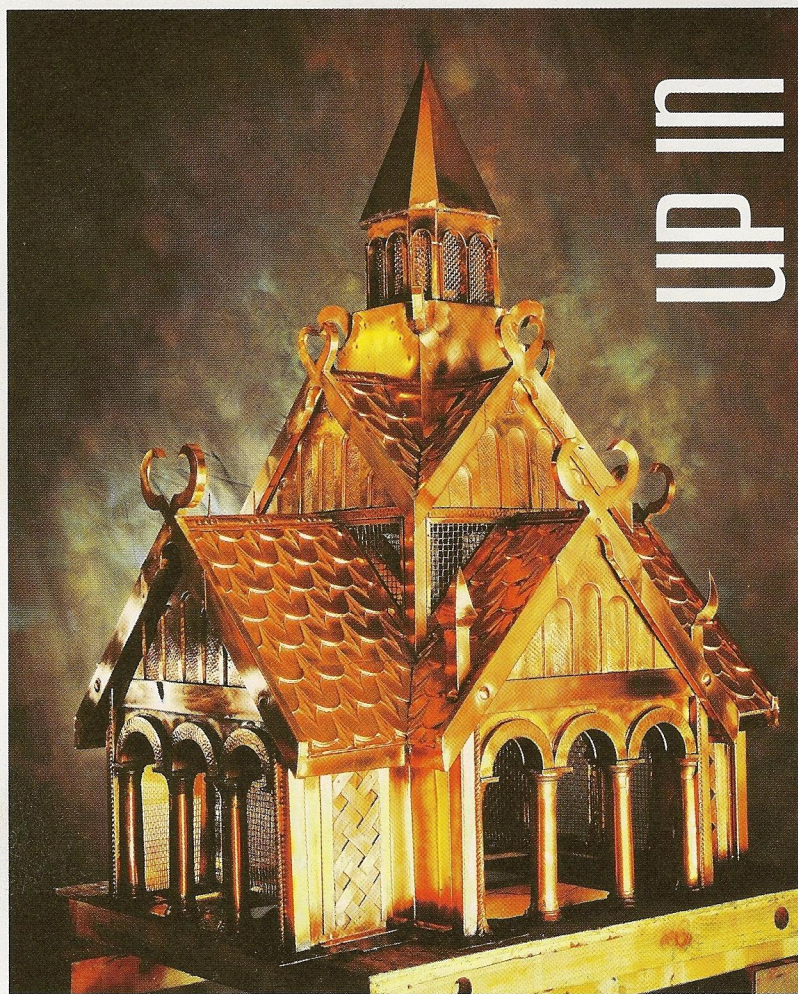
Built to the brawny beat of hammer pounding on anvil, the \$40,000 commission crosses Gothic palace with Heavy Metal dollhouse and will crown the chimney of a “storybook” mansion in Carmel. Adorned with gables, pillared porticos, strange crescent decorations and pointy-roofed gazebo, it recalls the royal residence in Rohan in the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, which possibly inspired the Berlin-born coppersmith’s clients. Their sketch inspired a sculpture he calls “the most tricked-out chimney top ever.”

“The clients sent rough measurements, and then I did what I wanted to,” says Liebscher. “It’s very complicated — just one gable has 60 parts. I sometimes had to sleep on it and scratch my head about what to do next, and every solution created two problems.” Still, Liebscher says, “This one tops everything I’ve done.”

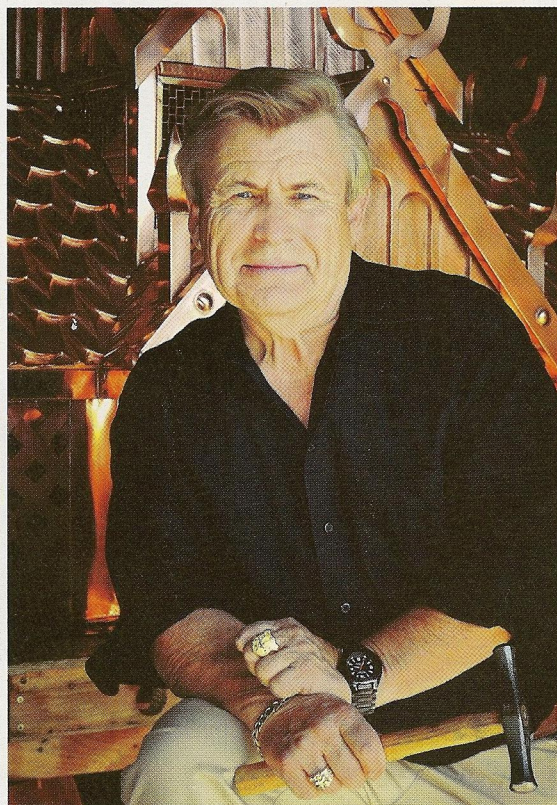
Ocean air gradually will brush a greenish patina over the metal, perfect for the finial of an elegant Hobbit hole’s chimney. But will it blow smoke rings?

— DAVID NELSON

Hans Liebscher Copper Works & Sheet Metal, Inc.;  
760/471-5114; hancopper.com.



A Carmel rooftop soon will be home to this 6-foot-tall chimney top handcrafted by local copper-smith Hans Liebscher (right).



PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARTIN MANN