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County Sculptor Completing Giant Task

Bronze Statuary To Grace Hotel

By Stan Mandel

In the sun-drenched Santa Rosa Valley, six miles east of Camarillo, a youthful artist this week will complete a decorative sculpture piece in metal which will adorn the entranceway to a plush Beverly Hills hotel scheduled to open this summer.

To William Rotsler it will be the "biggest thing" he's done in his five years of sculpture work, and he's "proud of it."

The sculpture piece, consisting of three "ancient-type" towers constructed of bronze, will be placed in an eight-inch deep circular pool near the entrance of the Beverly Hilton Hotel at Wilshire and Santa Monica boulevards.

The hostelry, another addition to the world-wide Conrad Hilton chain, was originally scheduled to open June 1. Delays are expected to postpone the gala opening until later in the summer.

Big Project

One tower will be 25 feet high, a second will reach skyward for 21 feet. Both will be composed of four giant "balls" of stripped bronze pieces. A third tower of one such "ball" will be 14 feet high.

The three towers will be placed close together within the 32-foot pool to form a colorful fountain.

Six-inch pipe will run up the center of the towers carrying water to the top of each, allowing it to flow down the brass-plated sides. A pumping system installed beneath the pool will circulate the water.

Colored tiles will cover the



YOUTHFUL ARTIST, William Rotsler, holds model for his sculptured bronze fountain piece which will adorn the entranceway to the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills. The three towers will be placed in a circular pool. One tower will be 25 feet high, second 21 feet high, and the third 14 feet high.

bottom of the pool and colored lights, operated by electronic dimmers, will be placed inside of the towers to present a continuously changing lighting effect through the flowing water.

\$15,000 Job

Construction of the pool and fountain will cost the hotel owners \$45,000 including the pumping system, lighting and finishing touches. Rotsler will receive \$8,500 for his part of the display.

The 28-year-old artist began work on the project some six months ago at his father's 200-acre walnut and citrus Rancho Santa Rosa in the valley.

The youth's workshop is a large corrugated building which is used by his father, Charles Rotsler, as a storage shed during harvest season. When not busily engaged in sculpturing, young Rotsler doubles as foreman on the ranch.

Rotsler's art background dates back to 1950 when he completed 3½ years of study at the Los Angeles County Art Institute. Before that he had attended Ventura College for a year studying some art. He graduated from Oxnard Union High School in 1944.

Little Sculpturing

"The funny thing about my art education," Rotsler commented, "is that I never studied any sculpturing. It was always some other phase of art."

"I started doing sculpture work five years ago," he said, "but it's been only during the past three years that I've been earning most of my income from it."

Beginning with sculptures in both wire and metal, Rotsler now specializes solely in metal work.

Most of his past work has been metal wall murals. Only a few have been in wire. He also has several smaller foun-



SURROUNDED by Giant Bronze "Balls" to be used in the construction of a sculptured fountain, is William Rotsler, artist of Santa Rosa Valley. Behind him is a storage shed used as his workshop on his father's walnut and citrus ranch. —Press-Courier Photo

tains to his credit. His work adorns facades in Chicago, New York, Florida and in the Los Angeles area.

His work was all done at the Ventura County ranch. He will ship the parts to the site with full instructions for assembly.

How They're Made

In constructing the giant "balls" for the towers Rotsler began with smooth sheets of one-eighth-inch thick bronze. The sheets were then cut into strips about six inches wide and tapered at the ends where they were welded together to form the "balls."

Rotsler then used hot torches to "puddle" the bronze to build up the surface to form an illusion of depth. Heat applied to the top side of the strips melted the bronze and splattered the metal to produce a rough surface pattern.

He expected to complete the project this week and send it down to Los Angeles by truck. It will take a week to assemble it there.

Rotsler noted that he spends an average of seven hours a day at his sculpture work. Assisting him with the project is a friend, John Irving of Los Angeles.

Living with Rotsler at the ranch is his wife, Abney, who is an artist in her own right. Using the professional name of Abney Stevenson, she has done acting and singing in the movies. They have a six-month-old daughter, Lisa.

Also preparing artwork for the hotel is Bernard Rosenthal, creator of the recently completed controversial statue at the Los Angeles Police Building. He is preparing a sculptured 14-foot wide star-type piece for the hotel's lobby. He has visited Rotsler at the ranch on numerous occasions to confer with him on the fountain.