

Renaissance Man



A gorgeous bronze fountain made by Eric Laxman.

Rockland's Eric Laxman gave up a career in medicine to carve a reputation in art

Eric Laxman is a renaissance man in every sense.

Surprisingly to those who've admired his very fine sculptures and artistic furniture, he went to college hoping to be a doctor.

He went to Tufts in Boston and even graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor's degree in chemistry. But by that time he'd discovered the nearby Museum of Fine Arts and he'd fallen in love with stone carving.

"I signed up for a stone carving class," he recalls. "And it really lit my fire."

He had a studio in South Boston for a couple of years then moved to Vermont, where he started a stone carving studio.

Now he has a studio in his home in Valley Cottage and another enormous one in the Garnerville Arts & Industrial complex.

From the joys of stone carving, Eric has gone on to make a considerable name for himself with his metal work, especially his highly artistic tables, chairs and mirrors.

He recalls: "I was always trying to figure out how to make a living. Then friends started asking me to do some welding works.

"A friend asked me to weld a bed. Then I went to a furniture fair at the Javits Center. And I thought: I can do this. This is great.

"So I started designing furniture out of metal. Now it's the bread and butter of my business."

Touring his Garnerville studio, where he does all his welding and metalwork, we were astounded at the range of his talents.

In one corner he was working on the prototype of a table with the frame of a steel deer. Elsewhere he showed us some wonderful African-flavored shutters which he did for singer Nick Ashford's Sugar Bar in Manhattan.

Eric confessed: "I didn't know who

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Eric Laxman at
work in his
Garnerville studio



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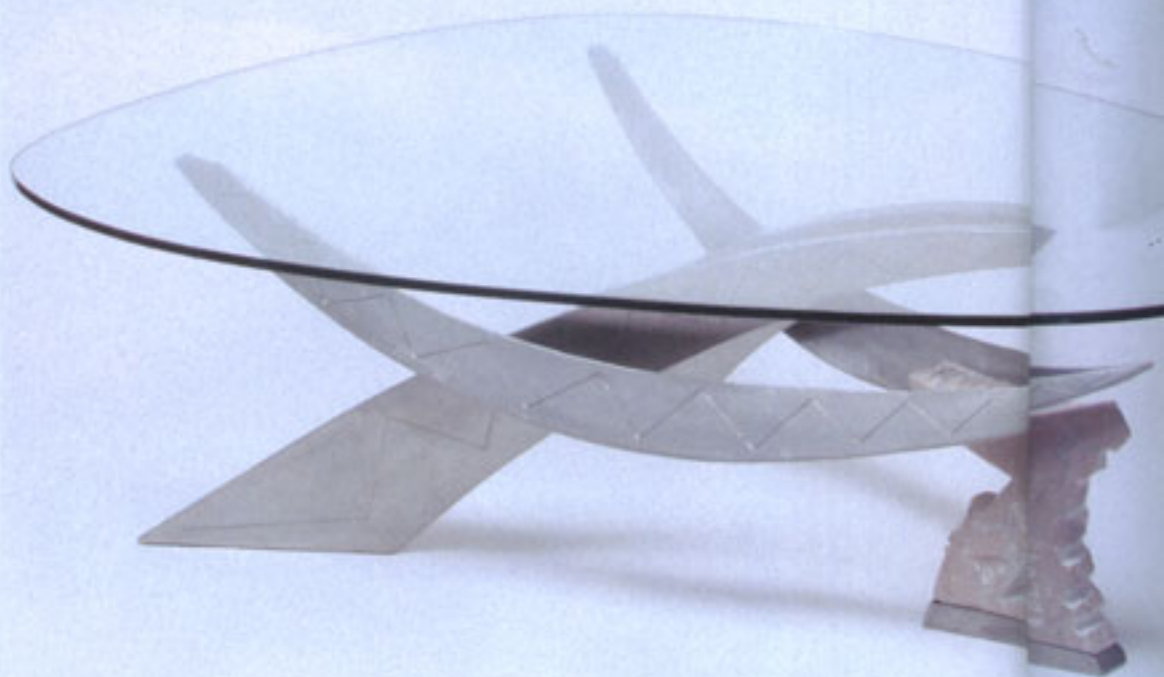
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Above: A steel sculpture Eric created in the garden of a home in Madison, Conn. Right: Triangle chair made of steel, wood and fabric. Below: Cantilever coffee table made of stainless steel, pink marble and glass.



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Laxman

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Nick Ashford was at the time.”

Then one night he turned on the TV and saw Ashford and his wife Valerie Simpson singing.

After that he's done unique work for several other Manhattan restaurants. But most of his assignments are commissions for private homes.

He commented: “I enjoy shaping steel into sensuous curves that invite the eye and have a sense of harmony and balance. My current designs are influenced by African sculpture and early modern art.

“In addition to custom tables, my recent commissions include garden sculpture, fountains, decorative wall sculpture, chairs and lighting.”

He added: “Most of the work I do is on commission. I'm currently doing a project for a Piermont couple – a wood and steel table with a glass top.”

He showed us the prototype and it looks very dramatic.

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