



LIQUID WAVES

LOCAL ARTIST TRANSFORMS PROPANE TANKS INTO FUNCTIONAL SCULPTURE

Solid sustainability and ergonomic exactitude have never been this sensuous. Colin Selig's colorful furniture resembles liquid waves, beckoning the imagination and comforting the body.

Selig's whimsical benches, loveseats, chairs and other "upcycled sculptures" are created from abandoned propane tanks. All are made from 99% recycled content. Scientifically engineered to provide unparalleled steel sturdiness and lumbar support for a wide range of bodies, his patented designs grace Walnut Creek public space at City Hall, Lindsay Wildlife Experience, Leshner Center for the Arts and Downtown Library.

Earning Selig awards from the Smithsonian Craft Show, the American Society of Landscape Architects, Eco Arts Awards, and Core77 Design Awards, Neiman Marcus invited him to craft display sculptures for their Walnut Creek store. "I made an initial set of three dozen shelf sculptures," he says, about the curlicue spheres made from five-gallon propane tanks. "They called back and ordered another, then another set. Now I'm in 14 stores around the country." Selig has added to his reper-

toire tall "totems" that resemble shells arranged in a vertical stack, tables with curvaceous legs, and 10 new chair designs. "I've made 80 unique pieces in the last three years," he says.

Turns out the Tufts University philosophy grad with a background as a machinist, race car fabricator and classically trained sculptor can think in a lot of ways. His latest endeavor is applying for a utility patent to protect his idea of converting salvaged propane tanks into furniture.

Ultimately, Selig knows his manufacturing process needs streamlining. The largest benches are 500 pounds and retail for \$8-10,000. Chairs and loveseats run \$4-8,000. Some pieces take weeks, if not months to complete. The cost of shipping is high, but by simplifying his designs and creating templates, Selig hopes to lower prices and license his designs for mass production. "I'm becoming like a clothing maker. I have patterns now, where before I worked free-form." Although individual clients have commissioned pieces for their homes, Selig says civic projects are the most gratifying. "More people can enjoy my art when it's out in public. My life is about sustainability and community." ■ — LOU FANCHER