

Mimico

*Toronto Profile #19:
The People who Make the City*



MICHAEL STUPARYK/TORONTO STAR

Mark Selkirk, owner of Merlinworks in Mimico shows off some of his latest polymer plastic creations — an ox and a giant strawberry pie destined for Markham, with tulips in the background.

Welcome to the moose factory

Mark Selkirk's creations took over Toronto

Boat-repair business turns to animals, giant pies

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Mark Selkirk has a lot to answer for.

It was former mayor Mel Lastman who stampeded a herd of 326 moose all over Toronto four years ago, a few of which still haven't been rounded up. But it was Selkirk who made them.

were in the boat repair business and listed in Yellow Pages under fibreglass fabricators. In 1997, we got a call to help an artist do the dragon sculptures that are up on pedestals in Chinatown at Spadina and Dundas.

Then the city called and at first wanted to do hogs. I worked with them on pricing, and then the story goes that Mel Lastman said absolutely no way was he having hogs, pigs, swine representing Toronto. He suggested moose. One thing led to another, and now all we do are these crazy creations. I'm never going to lie under a boat scraping off anti-fouling paint again!

"I've always been self-employed... In business just to be

into a downtown Buffalo..."

It's still something he feels strongly about.

"I was born and raised in Toronto. I cut my teeth as a 16-year-old driving in downtown traffic. Moving here was like coming to the sticks. Of course, now it's all the GTA we can't say that. But I live here and I look around and yea, we do have issues. The place needs work. Look at what they've done with Bloor West Village. Or Port Credit. Ten years ago, it was very similar to what this place looks like. They worked wonders. And so could we. We could be the Beaches West."

Depending on business, he has between eight and a couple of

dozen sculptures working