

# CONSTRUCTIVE MINDS

***Aim Con Steel* forges ahead to deliver quality steel fabrication and installation**

by Meredith Wargo

**L**ike grandfather, like father, like son. The Marcos family has a rich heritage of creating successful companies, which has been passed down from generation to generation. And like his predecessors, Hiram Marcos, President and Owner of *Aim Con Steel* in Opa-locka, Florida, is proud to be the third generation to carry on his family's steel fabrication and installation business.

"Our family owned and operated company has been built on integrity, intelligence and providing quality work in a timely manner," Hiram says. "I'm proud to say that my family's influence still impacts the way we do business today."

## GOOD FAMILY GENES

In 1975, Hiram's grandfather, Hiram Marcos Sr., and Hiram's godfather, Antonio Marcos, both of whom were certified welders, started A-1 Ornamental Iron Works in the backyard of Hiram Sr.'s house in Opa-locka. The company specialized in welding and iron works services for residential fences, security bars and security doors. Within a few years, A-1 Ornamental Iron Works set up shop in a new building that serves as the current location for Aim Con Steel.

Hiram's introduction to the family business began at an early age.

"I started taking Hiram to work with me in the summers when he was about 5 years old," William Marcos, Hiram's father, recalls. "Back in those days, we had to work on Saturdays and Sundays and Hiram was always right there with us."



Four generations of the Marcos family (left to right): Marcel, Hiram, Hiram Sr. and William.



A-1 Ornamental Iron Works team, circa 1974.





Aim Con Steel installed the louver and glass railing at a commercial retail building in Miami Beach, Florida.

Hiram is quick to credit his elders with instilling in him a strong work ethic. "Although I missed out on going to summer camps like a lot of other kids, I was able to learn the family business piece by piece, as I grew up," Hiram says. "My dad would often take me out in the field on some of his calls where I learned about managing client relationships. When I wasn't out with my dad, I would be in the shop working with my grandfather hammering away on something. And my godfather, who was a consummate salesman, taught me how to sell. Before I even knew how to count, he was trying to teach me the fundamentals of a 10% commission."

Antonio passed away in 1995, triggering a change in the company's ownership structure. "My father became the sole owner when I was 13 years old and changed the company name to Creative Iron Works," Hiram says. "He continued to run the company, focusing on residential projects, until I took over the helm in 2008."

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Hiram Marcos, President and Owner, Aim Con Steel

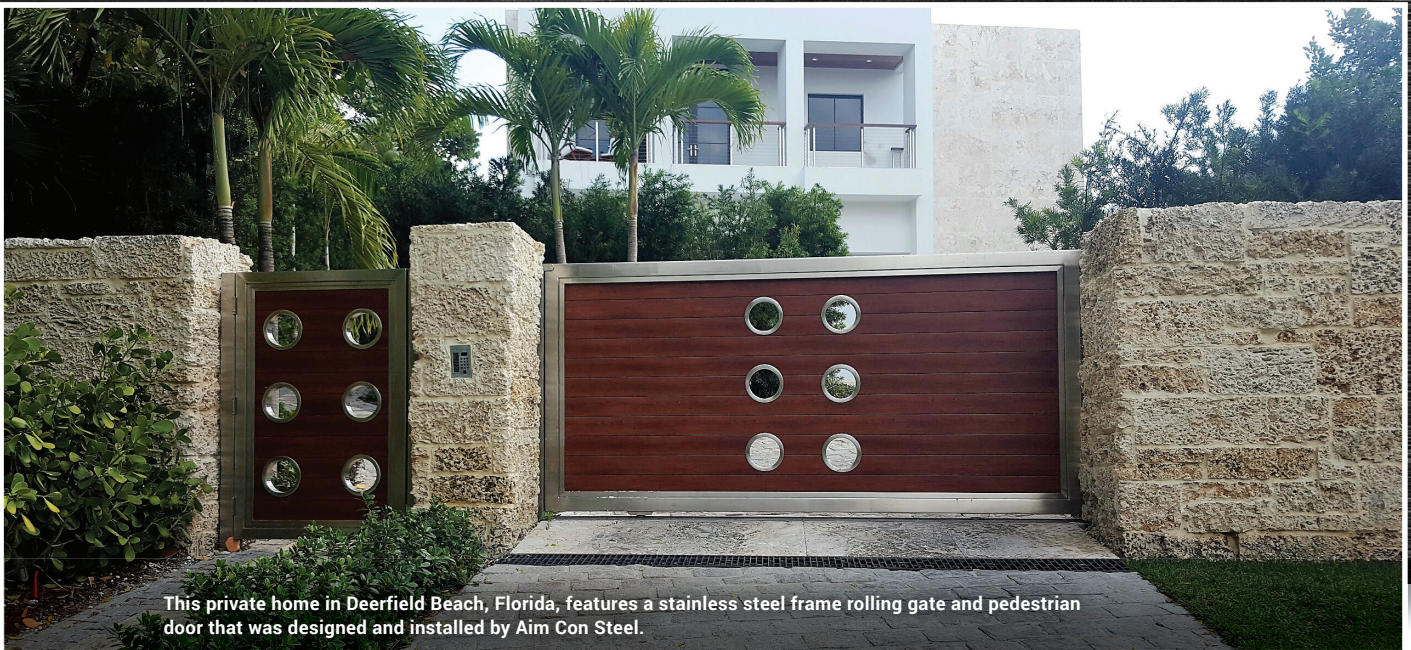
## STEELING FOR CHANGE

While the two previous family businesses had been successful in their own rights, because of changing market trends and a competitive business culture prevalent in South Florida, Hiram's vision for the company involved diversifying both its services and its client base. "At my father's urging, I got my general contractor's license so we could offer structural steel fabrication and installation services for high-profile commercial and hospitality projects," Hiram says. "I also changed

the company name to Aim Con Steel to differentiate us from my father's company."

But Hiram wasn't ready to completely abandon the ornamental steel work that he grew up with. "For many years, this work had been the bread and butter of our existence," he says. "Ideally, I wanted to keep our foot in the door while expanding into other areas. Over the past several years, the company's portfolio has slowly shifted from only doing ornamental steel work to a mix of 70% construction steel work and 30% ornamental metal work."





This private home in Deerfield Beach, Florida, features a stainless steel frame rolling gate and pedestrian door that was designed and installed by Aim Con Steel.



Brown Jordan, maker of innovative outdoor furniture, hired Aim Con Steel to install the stairs and cable staircase railing for its store in the Miami Design District.

As Aim Con Steel's services have grown, so too has its geographical territory. "Because we build everything in-house, we have to look at the economics of where a project is located," Hiram says. "I'm not so concerned about where we do a project as I am about our overall growth. I want to make sure that we don't grow too big or too fast to the point that we lose our personal touch. We take on additional workers only as our workload demands."

For most of the custom ornamental metal done on high-end residential projects, the company usually stays in a select area: Broward County, Monroe County and Miami-Dade County. For structural steel projects that involve the installation of bar joists, metal decking, beams and columns, Hiram's team ventures further throughout the state, often doing projects in Orlando and as far north as Jacksonville.

Going forward, Aim Con Steel has plans to expand its commercial experience by focusing on the retail industry. "Recently, we've erected structural steel for a variety of restaurants and retail chains, including Ross, Tires Plus, Denny's, Miu Miu and Bavaria Haus," Hiram says. "We've been fortunate that many of these clients have become repeat customers."

"Hiram is very responsible and has been improving every aspect of the business," William says. "The company is heading in the right direction, better than where it was before. I am very proud of him."



## LEVERAGING THE COMPANY'S STRENGTHS

"Things have changed a lot in our more than 40 years of doing business," Hiram says. "In the early days when there were no computers, my godfather would write every telephone number that was important to him on his office wall. Today, our client base is much bigger and more diverse. And even though we have become a 15-person firm, our goal remains the same: to develop long-term relationships with our customers by providing exceptional steel products and services at the best possible prices."

He adds, "Both my father and I believe that the quality of work and the way in which you treat your customers is everything. You'll eliminate a lot of the competition when you continuously perform with that in mind."

William credits Hiram with creating value with the employees as another tenet to the company's success. "When I ran my company, I welcomed input from my employees. Hiram has taken that concept to a different level. He meets with the entire staff on a weekly basis to see how things are going and to find out what their goals are for the upcoming week. From the installers to the fabricators to the office staff, he solicits everybody's comments because he knows that they often have great suggestions for how the company can improve. Hiram doesn't treat his staff as employees; he treats them as part of the family." 🗨️



Hiram Marcos, second from left, President and Owner of Aim Con Steel, with his wife, Raquel, and their three children (left to right) Marcel, Valentina and Kathleen.



Aim Con Steel's retail experience includes installing the glass storefront for Miu Miu, an Italian high-fashion women's clothing and accessory store located in the Miami Design District.

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Hiram Marcos

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