At Compass Ironworks, we carry into the 21st century the Amish traditions that forged our artistic sensibilities: honesty, integrity, and dedication to family, community, and craft. We do no mass production here; every installation reflects your unique needs. We are master craftsmen who work with both traditional and 21st century tools. At the end of the day, we close the doors and leave our tools at the shop, not to be touched until the next workday begins.

For more information about Compass Ironworks, please contact us Monday through Friday at (717) 442-4500.
Over the centuries, wrought iron has been an important expressive material that reflects refined taste and character. The beauty of wrought iron is that despite its inherent rigidity and strength, it can be molded into graceful and elegant shapes. Iron possesses beauty that never dies; it is as charming today as it was a hundred years ago. And will remain so a century into the future.

The possibilities for expression in iron are unlimited. Iron can be turned and twisted into innumerable designs and textures to achieve the artist’s and client’s desired result. By working closely with designers, architects, and clients, unique expressions can be incorporated into the final design for the very essence of bespoke craftsmanship.

Using iron also makes a “green” statement. All the solid iron and aluminum bar stock we use is 97-100% post consumer recycled material. As stewards of our planet, we need to protect our earth’s resources. By recycling old appliances, cars, and buildings, we repurpose existing materials into new and exciting ornamental iron products that will maintain their beauty and value for decades.

Enduring Finish
The integrity of the protective coating (or “finish”) makes it possible to admire the work of past masters today. We treat our products with the most durable and resilient powder-coating so your iron masterpiece may be admired for ages to come.

The process starts with the materials. We use top-quality solid bars—not the thin wall hollow tubing pickets used for mass-produced fences. After the material is forged, welded, and fabricated to our client’s specifications, the all-important finishing process begins...

First, the entire project is sandblasted to remove all mill scale, dirt, and residue. This step also performs another important function: physically opening up microscopic pores in the metal in preparation for the powdercoat. The next step is a hot phosphate bath followed by two clean water rinses. Next, we apply the actual finish, starting with a zinc-rich epoxy primer. Then, the entire project is heated, melting and partially curing the primer onto the metal surface. While things are still hot, the first top coat is applied followed by a second and final finish coat. This last coat is treated to a long, slow pass through a curing oven to bake the powder to a specified hardness.

The entire spraying process is more than 99% efficient, and all leftover spray is reclaimed and reused. Our facility exceeds EPA and DEP requirements.
Dedicated Craftsmen

Our master craftsmen are all natives of the Pennsylvania Dutch heritage found in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania—an area known internationally for its impeccable craftsmanship and superb work ethic. Our craftsmen work as a team to design, measure, create, powder-coat, deliver, and install your project in an effort to make your entire Ironworks experience surpass your expectations.

We take pains to ensure that the overall design fits your taste and harmonizes with its surroundings. Another chief concern is meeting installation deadlines. As craftsmen of integrity, we do everything possible to make sure your promised installation is carried out on or ahead of schedule. Accurate measurements are taken onsite and, if needed, templates are made to ensure a perfect fit for the final installation.

Then, back at the shop we kick off the forging and fabricating. Detailed cleanup of the project requires scraping, grinding, sanding, and polishing to ensure visual cleanliness. The project is then pretreated and powder-coated right here in our facility for best quality control and ease of scheduling. For delivery, your iron is carefully wrapped for scuff-free transit to the site.

As we work, we keep in mind that our craftsmanship will be seen and evaluated for generations to come. We care about our clients’ complete satisfaction. There is no excuse for anything less.
RAILING OPTIONS

Fairweather

Cheshire Belly  
Cheshire Belly (side view)  
Cheshire Straight  
Gladwyne
Railing Options

Hampshire Belly

Hampshire Bell (side view)

Hampshire Straight

Hammered Basket

Huntingdon Belly

Huntingdon Bell
(side view)

Manchester Belly

Manchester Straight

Standard 3-Rail

Standard 4-rail

Sussex
Railing Options

Tewksbury Straight  Tewksbury Belly  Tewksbury Belly (side view)  Detail of cover shoe to add aesthetics and protection to base of post

Caprail Transition Choices

Lamb’s Tongue  Volute  Petite Lamb’s Tongue
STANDARD RAILINGS

Roanoke

Mainline

Roanoke (Railing has rivets through handrail)
INTERIOR POSTS

Hilton Style Volute in 1/2” Round Bar

Ornate Foot Bracket

Hilton Style Volute in 5/8” Square Bar

Faux Marble Column

Custom Oak Column
Interior Posts

Knightson Post

Iron Panel and Knightson Post

Wood Newel

Acanthus Termination

Custom Marbleized Column

Custom Turned Bronze Newel
An exquisite iron railing in a main foyer setting makes a statement of bespoke taste. Iron has the rigidity and composition to withstand decades—even centuries—of use and still possess grace and elegance when admired generations later.

There are many exquisite and famous homes, such as The Breakers and The Nemours mansion, that wonderfully showcase the dramatic effect of a fine iron railing. The end result takes an ordinary space and transforms it into a masterpiece.

Today’s architects, designers, and homeowners have more choices than ever before. While there are wooden and iron pickets that you can “stick and glue” for a cookie-cutter railing, the same space can be dramatized by incorporating a custom-forged piece of iron art—a piece of beauty to cherish forever.

But a word of caution... ironwork can be overdone. Well-designed railings are subtle, eye-pleasing structures that harmonize completely with their setting and surroundings. The result is an expression of your own design and taste that transcends time and will be admired for generations.
Mainline Style railing creates a visual impact

Iron railings for family room overlook

Close-up of iron with wood handrail contrast

Ornate foot bracket supports the entire railing system
Grand Staircase railing in Moorestown, NJ
Close-up of scroll detail

Note the luxurious effect of gold highlight on the edge
Iron railing for kitchen stairs

Iron railing leads to the third floor
Interior Railings

Custom interior iron railing in Mount Laurel, NJ

Oval design meets all codes but adds insightful yet subtle design flair.
Custom stairs and hallway in 1840s barn, refurbished into a house
Interior Railings

Arts & Crafts Style railing in Maryland

Detail of iron scrolls

Forged iron railing with Mahogany handrail
Interior Railings

Hand-forged designs in 1/2” rail create a subtle statement

Forged panels add elegance to the foyer

Detail of hand-forged quad scrolls with gold highlight
Contemporary iron railing in Ventnor, NJ

Solid welded construction

Interior Railings
Custom iron railing adds permanence to this beautiful foyer

Detail of hand-forged scrolls

Close-up of Hilton volute
Interior Railings

Balcony and stairs with railing between pillars

Hilton Volute and hammered material iron railing on a marble stair
Wrought iron European design elements accentuate this private residence.

Scrolls and rings compliment the European decor.

Bronze highlight on the coat of arms.
Interior Railings

Custom scrollwork and Acanthus leaf combination

Detail of double Acanthus leaf
Interior Iron railing in a custom design gives this home in Washington DC exceptional appeal.

The combination of custom oak newels and traditional Iron creates incredible contrast.

A forged Iron panel with forged bronze rosette’s make for a great room divider.
Achieving the blackened interior railing began with blasting the iron down to white metal. Immersed in a tank of chemical oxidizer, it became deep black. To stop the reaction and nullify residual oxidizing in the pores of the metal, the piece was put in another tank of neutralizing solution. The entire project was blown dry. Using an oven to dry speeds up the chemical reaction, but can cause rust. A penetrating oil was hand rubbed into the railing. Next, it was scotch-briteed down through the blackening, so the silvery metal could show through as contrast. The piece was then put into the oven and brought to 300 degrees. When cooled, Renaissance Micro-Crystalline wax was rubbed by hand onto the surface. The result was stunning. A new railing finished with traditional blacksmith methods, complete with the irregularity of metal texture. It suited the client’s level of contrast and fit perfectly into the design.
Hand-forged iron railing creates a statement that will transcend time
Bronze handrails add authentic safety to a refurbished 1934 pool house.

Solid bronze handrail with antique tarnish.
A homeowner, contractor and architect team were renovating and adding to an original 1934 house. The original stair had this beautiful Iron railing with a golden tint, custom bronze newels and bronze handrail, complete with all bronze mounting plates. The intention was to perfectly match the original Ironwork and details.

The first step was to research the original material and methods. The original picket material had flattened corners to give it more contrast when the pickets were twisted. The picket collars had been forged from half-round bar. A bigger challenge lay in the custom bronze newel that they had used. Accurate dimensions were taken and the newel was photographed, then printed full size to show ever radius and detail so the copy lathe operator could exactly follow the 1934 handiwork.

A concern was that this newel would not meet today’s code requirements for strength and rigidity. Some testing was done and some small innovations were made to the interior structure that wouldn’t jeopardize visual harmony but amplify the structural integrity. This was then tested again and met the requirements satisfactorily.

The real challenge was in the correct finish. First, the bar was tumbled to accentuate the scale, then corners were hammered, and it was pretreated then scotch-brited by hand to have some shine come through. The residue was blown off using compressed air, then a custom gold leaf mix was sprayed onto the entire picket and finally a clear sealer was applied. This was very close, but not quite a match. The next revision was to add a chemical oxidation process to slightly corrode the surface before the application of the gold leaf. We compared to the original work and it was an absolutely perfect match!

The bronze handrail and newel were also given an antique tarnish and clear coat, all of the brackets and mounting plates underwent the same processes to ensure a perfect match.
Ironwork perfectly suits the décor for these homeowners with a love of antiques and fine craftsmanship.

Hand-forged scrolls and hand brushed highlights express love of detail and quality.
Elegant scrollwork creates a pair of beautiful terminations.

Bronze volutes create timeless appeal.
Forged iron railing sets the tone for an awesome experience in this space.

Above: Beautiful radius creates an awesome balcony effect. Right: Gold gilded leaves and rosette’s make for a stunning volute.
Interior Railings

Black iron railing provides classic contrast to wood floor and handrail

Decorative bracket adds rigidity.
Oak tree railing provides organic visual and safety for these stairs.

The entire railing has undergone the age-old process of antique blackening.
A banquet hall in New Jersey wanted to appeal to a more sophisticated client base. To achieve the goal, they went through a design process and evaluated the current trends. After their research, they determined a hand-forged iron railing would add elegance and beauty for each bride’s special wedding or each client’s important event.
The main stairway was renovated with the new iron railing. The ambiance of the space is a perfect setting for a couple’s special wedding event and a perfect photo backdrop. A gold highlight was added to the forged flower and acanthus leaves to highlight these details and as an additional benefit, the whole railing project was created with minimal environmental impact.
TERRACE POSTS

Raphael Post
8” Linden Post
Custom Roman Post
6” Hampton Post

5” Hampton Post
Cassabella Post
Knightson Post
Teaneck Post

Close-up of scroll for code compliance
A property owner in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, was building a custom swimming pool, cabana, and lounge area in his backyard. The swimming pool company overseeing the project contacted us to help with certain special needs. The railing design and color needed to match an existing railing, previously installed on the deck. There were difficult radii to match around stone columns and down curved steps, a raised and curved seating area, and additional railings on the back of the cabana. To complicate matters further, the client had planned an event that dictated when the project needed to be complete. Fortunately, we were contacted in time to meet the deadline. We researched the existing design and made custom parts that exactly matched the property. Accurate measuring and the use of templates resulted in a perfect fit on the challenging radii. The entire project was finished in a bronze baked-on powder-coating that had a stunning visual impact and matched the existing railing color.
Greek Athenaeum center with French Crest and hand-forged tulips and scrolls create a distinctive flair.

Hand gilded tulips allude to a woman's love of flowers.
Three levels of hand forged railing for a panoramic view.
Exterior Railings

This sublime pool space is transformed by the spectacular railing design.

Terrace railing overlooking the pool.
Custom forged railing provides beautiful radius to accentuate marble steps

Custom design has a pleasing effect for this front entry.
Authentic terrace railing enhances this 100 year old estate

Iron design inspired by original balcony from 1901
Marine grade railing offer beauty for this family’s shore retreat

Terrace railings and posts have a cohesive effect for this shore home
Solid aluminum railing creates spectacular contrast for this custom log home.

The craftsmanship of this log home terrace is accentuated by the iron railing.
Hampshire belly railing in Medium Bronze elevates the visual appeal of this terrace.

Solid aluminum Manchester railing provides grace and beauty while meeting building codes.
TERRACE RAILINGS

Terrace railings in Longport, NJ

Custom iron railing between columns
Terrace Railings

Terrace with French balcony railing above

Hampshire Belly railing on radiused terrace
Terrace Railings

Widow’s Walk railing in Moorestown, NJ

Custom iron railing with IPE handrail in West Chester, PA
Terrace Railings

Custom terrace railing in Ocean City, NJ

Custom railings in Longport, NJ

Radiused entry railing in Ocean City, NJ
Roman posts on custom entry railing in Moorestown, NJ

Terrace step railings in Moorestown, NJ
Terrace Railings

Iron rosette detail

Iron stair railings in Moorestown, NJ
Terrace Railings

Tewksbury stair railings in Margate, NJ

Hammered Basket railing in Longport, NJ

Tewksbury railing overlooking the beach in Margate, NJ
Terrace Railings

Fairweather railing overlooking dock in Longport, NJ

Fairweather railing detail
Terrace Railings

Hammered Basket railing creates safety and adds classic appeal without obstructing ocean views

Tewksbury railing in Margate, NJ
Patio railing with custom bronze powder-coat

Manchester railing overlooking boat slips

Hammered Basket railings in Chester Springs, PA

Custom iron design in West Chester, PA
Terrace Railings

Mainline style railing in Bryn Mawr, PA

Custom entry railing in Bryn Mawr, PA

Solid aluminum Hammered Basket railing
Custom terrace railings and gates in Newtown, PA
Terrace railings on Rumson Ave.

Sussex railing in Bellmar, NJ
Terrace Railings

Custom “Bouquet” railing in Princeton, NJ

“Bouquet” railing detail
Terrace Railings

Terrace railings overlooking Bucks County countryside

Iron filigree to enhance an entryway

Iron railing with forged iron frieze
Terrace Railings

Custom beige color to match color palette

Contemporary railing on terrace in Media, PA
Terrace Railings

Terraced railings and Romeo railings in Ventnor, NJ

Arts and crafts style railing in solid aluminum displays a taste of progressive design.
Terrace Railings

Hampshire Belly railing in Lebanon, PA

Terrace railing overlooking beautiful valley

Iron Hampshire Belly railing between the stone columns
Terrace Railings

Three stories of solid aluminum Hammered Basket railings
Roanoke railing is a solid match for this brick home

Hampshire Belly railing on bedroom terrace
Terrace Railings

Solid aluminum Mainline Style railing in Bucks County, PA

Mainline railing in statuary bronze
Terrace Railings

Custom railing to match radius wall

Mainline railing on a radiused terrace
Terrace Railings

Mainline terrace railing

Mainline style railing in the Main Line
Terrace Railings

Custom entry railing to match foyer railing

Elegant terrace railing that does not obstruct panoramic views
Terrace Railings

Statuary bronze adds a nice tone to the hewn beam setting

Custom railing to match the decor of a log home in Washington, NJ

Dual hammered texture gives this Mainline railing a rustic appeal
Terrace Railings

Custom railing for a beautiful entry on a back terrace

Forged scrollwork for elegance and panoramic views

Various levels of terrace railings in Voorhees, NJ
Terrace Railings

Hand-forged aluminum railing on a bay front property

Terrace railings provide safety and aesthetics
Custom aluminum railing withstood Hurricane Sandy

Custom spiral stair matches terrace railing

Close-up of custom forged Belly railing
Terrace Railings

Hot pierced iron arch for horse barn

Hot pierced railing with pine newels and handrail

Structural stairs and catwalk for overlook at horse farm
Iron railing accentuates the Western theme in this horse barn.

Riding trophies are silhouetted through the iron railing.

Close-up of antique rust finish.
Balconies have been the salt and pepper of architecture for centuries. Just as a chef uses spices to enhance the flavor of a dish, architects use balconies to enhance their work. Balconies are a reminder of relaxing and stress-free times, and they have inspired intimate conversation since Romeo and Juliet!

Balconies can still accommodate modern-day Romeos and Juliets—or the head of the house in search of a relaxing spot to unwind. They remain as relevant in today’s architecture as they have ever been.

Current architectural vernacular uses “French” and “Juliet” balconies interchangeably, so we will attempt to explain the differences.

A French balcony is a railing mounted on an upper-story wall, usually in front of a window. The railing extends two to ten inches from the wall and has no floor to step onto. A French balcony simply gives the illusion of a small balcony as an extra architectural feature.

A Juliet balcony is a complete balcony attached to a structure. It has a floor and railing in a single package. Very careful consideration must go into engineering and mounting one of these because they are load-bearing structures. There are two main types of flooring available for these: an expanded metal “mesh” flooring, and a more old-world slatted floor.

A Romeo is a type of balcony that is naturally part of the main structure. It has the addition of a wrought iron railing along its outside edges—both to prevent falls and to aesthetically complete the architecture.
At the initial design meeting, the client desired a balcony railing that was more “feminine” in profile than standard balcony railings. She selected this design and we incorporated and executed the client’s vision. However, there were some serious code issues and metallurgy hurdles to overcome. Notice that the panels on the corners had to have the “feminine” profile vertically and be radiused horizontally to be fluid with the rest of the design. While one of our craftsmen grew his first grey hairs working on the project, the final product was revealed to our client’s thrilled surprise.
Porte-cochere balcony portrays transcending taste and style.
Balcony Railings

Mainline style French balcony in Villanova, PA

Solid aluminum railing on Juliet balcony in Chester County, PA
Balcony Railings

Custom railing with Roman Posts in Moorestown, NJ

Juliet balcony with Olde World Style floor in statuary bronze has timeless appeal
Hampshire Belly railing on Romeo balcony in the Main Line Area
Balcony Railings

Custom iron railing for Romeo balcony in Wilmington, DE

Solid aluminum railing on Romeo balcony, Rumson Ave.
Balcony Railings

Close-up of hand-forged scrolls and rivets

Custom style railing from an old wrought iron bridge in Philadelphia, PA

Shoulder detail on Romeo railing in Paoli, PA
Tewksbury railing with rosette on Juliet balcony in Downingtown, PA

Custom iron mounting scroll
Balcony Railings

Manchester railing on Romeo balcony in Longport, NJ

Manchester railing creating a French balcony, Longport, NJ

Mesh Style Floor

Olde World Style Floor
Balcony Railings

Custom Romeo balcony railing matches window design

Initial “B” adds a personal touch to this Romeo balcony railing
Balcony Railings

Juliet balcony in Delaware

Solid aluminum Juliet balcony in Ocean City, NJ
Balcony Railings

Master bedroom terrace accentuated by forged aluminum railing.

Belly pickets provide visual dimension.
1901 Balcony was refurbished to share beauty for the next hundred years.

Refurbished railing intricacies show awesome attention to detail.
Quality service and creativity is not limited to the high-end residential market. For the commercial or institutional project that insists on quality, Compass Ironworks can deliver. Be it a restaurant that needs a custom theme built into its railings, a conference center that needs custom gates for crowd control, or a golf course that wants golf balls at the top of each picket, Compass Ironworks will make your project flow as smoothly as possible. We also count schools, churches, and shopping malls among our delighted clientele.
Mesh railing provides safety and ease of navigating stairs

Left: Craftsmen fabricated a beautiful railing to last for decades.

Right: Fire tower railing that is contemporary and beautiful
Commercial Railings

Top: Forged aluminum railing creates safety and ambiance for patrons of this upscale restaurant.

Left: Rigid railing surrounds the stage of this lively bistro.
Commercial Railings

Multiple levels of forged railing create an intriguing backdrop

Fire pit railing provides safety and beauty