



Photo: Kelli Uldall

The Fine Art of the Samurai Sword

BY MICHAEL CHATFIELD

Taum Dell'Armo is a master of several martial arts methods and collects Samurai swords. He creates custom swords for clients using antique components.

Taum Dell'Armo calls his "8 Samurai" *The Most Exclusive Art Club in the World*. And he's no doubt correct.

Dell'Armo, of Carmel Valley, a retired advertising agency executive, has mastered several martial arts disciplines, including laido-Jitsu, a form that utilizes the sword—the Samurai sword. It's a steep learning curve: "For the first 15 years, you're considered a beginner," he says. An inveterate collector, Dell'Armo began accumulating sword components.

Legend has it that the curved, razor-sharp Samurai weapon—or katana—was first forged by master swordsmith Amakuni around 700 AD. Today, Dell'Armo says, "only a handful of

master sword makers are recognized by the Japanese government. They may produce no more than two a month."

With that exclusivity in mind, Dell'Armo hit on the idea of creating a series of custom swords, limited to a run of eight.

"I work with each client to develop a theme carried out using only genuine antique—a minimum 150 years old—Samurai elements. Each owner receives a bespoke 75-page book on the piece's creation and a gold ring containing a piece of steel from the blade."

Dell'Armo is displaying some of his collection at Anne Thull Fine Arts at San Carlos and 5th in Carmel through December 31.