

Chris Barela

There are many artists who sculpt animals, and several who specialize in dolphins and whales, but Chris Barela (born September 6, 1960, in Southern California) sculpts lifelike game fish. Chris is also one of the world's best patina artists.

Barela was raised in and around the water, as he comes from an avid fishing family, who traveled lakes and streams throughout the country. At home in Hermosa Beach, California, Chris surfed every day and began a deep appreciation for the world's waters.

Barela began his career at age 14. By 16, he was traveling the world on a pro tour, and with extreme determination and perseverance, reached number one ranking in the United States. As he toured the exotic waters far from home, Barela not only surfed, but seized the opportunity to fish on the days when the surf was flat.

Barela later retired from surfing at 26, but could not end his vision, so he decided to give back to the ocean what it had given him. Chris met artist Terri Bennet and under Terri's tutelage, began learning sculpture and mold making. Barela's last and most important task was learning the delicate art of patina, the coloring of bronze. Chris felt this would make him different and distinctive from other artists in his field. He then studied with Michael Edge of Oregon, a master of the patina medium. With this new knowledge, Barela began creating new innovative designs of magical, lifelike bronze statues. Chris' extreme determination and perseverance, soon paid off again, and his work quickly distinguished itself from that of other artists.

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