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A step back in time: The history of LEGO® Castle and our new LEGO Ideas Medieval Blacksmith set

If you're a fan of LEGO Castle, then you're probably just as excited as us about the new and insanely cool LEGO Ideas Medieval Blacksmith set.

This set was originally designed by superfan Clemens Fiedler, whose passion for medieval architecture shone through in his intricate design, gaining enough votes to be adapted into a real-life set.

Our awesome LEGO designers took on the challenge and saw an opportunity to add a few special nods to past Castle sets with the hope of reconnecting you to your childhood. The result is a charming and rather nostalgic blacksmith's workshop and home set over three wonderfully thought-out floors.

Marking ten whole years since the last blacksmith set came out, we're celebrating its release by looking back through LEGO Castle's history to see how our humble blacksmith and his brick-built world has evolved over time. It's time to taketh interest...

When we think of the Middle Ages, we automatically think of battles between good and evil, ravaging kings and relentless sword fights. The first medieval Blacksmith Shop (1984) may have been small, but it marks the first time in LEGO Castle history that designers shifted their focus from castles and brave knights to tell the stories of the civilians at the heart of medieval society.

Other sets in the eighties followed suit, like 'The Guarded Inn' where locals could stop for a drink, as well as a well-stocked armor shop.



Where the blacksmith's story all began, 1984

The civilianization of the franchise was taken to the next level in 2009 when the 'Medieval Market Village' came out, one of the biggest Castle sets ever made - and the designers really went to town (get it?).



The LEGO® Medieval Market Village, 2009. Can you spot the blacksmith?

Jonathon Petrongari, a Castle fan and member of the RomaBrick fan group says, "I think that the civilians are a very important part of the Castle theme. The Medieval Market Village had...civilian minifigures, soldiers, a tree, cows...a blacksmith. It was probably one of the best LEGO sets released."

We raided the photo archives to check out the blacksmith's evolution throughout the years.

A second Blacksmith Shop was released in 2002 and then a third in 2011 (both very different and awesome in their own way).



The 'Blacksmith Attack' set from 2011

Sharing many visual similarities with the latest set, the 2002 Blacksmith Shop was also originally designed by a fan outside of the business. In fact, this was one of the first official fan-created sets, showing that we've been crowdsourcing and collaborating with fans for many years, even before LEGO Ideas came about.



The enchanting Blacksmith Shop of 2002 marks the first time we incorporated his house above the workshop, just like the new set. Slide across to compare them...

Fun fact: The neon orange fire elements in the 2002 model were initially created for a fire-breathing dragon set in the nineties. These little fires may not feature in the new set, but instead there's a super nifty interactive light brick in the blacksmith's coal forge which glows orange when you pump the bellows.



The new blacksmith feeling the heat at his forge, 2021

Paying homage to the much-loved LEGO Castle franchise, the new Medieval Blacksmith set also brings back old Castle elements – most notably, the return of two Black Falcon Knight minifigures. These tough little guys made their debut in 1984 and they seriously transformed role-play forever.

Still proudly holding their swords and shields, these knights haven't strayed too far from their roots other than a slight refresh to their coats of arms and an upgrade to their armory to better reflect the wardrobe of medieval times.



Two Black Falcon Knights making their way through town in our newest Medieval Blacksmith set. Credit: Four Bricks Tall

Jeff Johnson, a passionate Castle fan and RochLUG member, recalls his first memory of them, "Me and a friend of mine...we combined all of our LEGO bricks into one massive collection, and we did a ginormous battle in his living room which took the whole summer to put together. We built fortresses and catapults...and he had a bunch of Black Falcons. Now sets are coming out [with Black Falcons] so I can get them myself, so that's pretty fun."

We realize this wouldn't be an article on LEGO Castle history if we didn't acknowledge the OG of all things medieval – the iconic yellow Castle of 1978. This was the first toy to come out of the LEGO Castle franchise and you can still view it today on the Tree of Creativity exhibit at LEGO House in Billund, Denmark.



The very first Castle set. Fun fact: The horses in the original yellow Castle set were entirely brick-built. Today, they are molded figures.



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The original castle was yellow simply because our bricks weren't made in many colors back then. The second-generation owner at the time, Godtfred Kirk Christiansen wasn't keen on creating grey bricks, conscious that children might make military tanks or violent creations. But as we know, that soon changed.

Krista Simpson from the MILUG fan group recalls, "The very first set I remember...building with my dad...was the yellow castle. It was my brother's set. I think I was about four or five years old, playing in the family room on the floor, putting those yellow pieces together."

She continues, "Adult fans...love things that connect them to their past. For me [in the new Medieval Blacksmith set], it's the minifigures that have that connection. One of them [a knight] is a female figure and I thought, that's pretty darn cool. I definitely appreciate that...especially having been that young girl...playing with her brothers sets. I think it's incredibly important that children see themselves in the toys they're playing with. Hopefully if there's that little girl like I was...building this set with her dad, that will be like a 'wow dad look, it's me' moment."



Now you know, there's more than meets the eye with the new LEGO Ideas Medieval Blacksmith set, and it's come a long way since the very first model of 1984. And while history is important, the real beauty behind the bricks is in the moment. What will you create next?

With that, we bid you farewell...

The history of the iconic Vespa 125 scooter

In honor of our latest LEGO® set, we delve into the past of an Italian style icon

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