

LEGO Lover's Delight: Bricks By The Bay Brings LEGO Creations to Santa Clara

http://www.santaclaraweekly.com/2012/issue-12/bricks_by_the_bay_brings_lego_creations_to_santa_clara.html

March 21, 2012

Celebrating LEGO as an artistic medium, thousands of LEGO aficionados convened at the third annual Bricks by the Bay event at the Santa Clara Hyatt Regency and Santa Clara Convention Center March 16-18.

[← Back to Issue](#)

LEGO fans crowded the area on Sunday, browsing some of the most interesting LEGO creations ever concocted, ranging from nearly 3-D cartoon and movie characters, towns featuring operating railroads and wearable costumes.

The wide array of colorful and diverse characters conjured by LEGO enthusiasts included a banjo-playing Kermit the Frog, Slimer from the Ghostbusters, Spongebob SquarePants, numerous Star Wars and Harry Potter characters and more. In addition, there were realistic LEGO paintings - where the paint form is actually LEGO bricks).

After attending the BricksWest conventions in 2002 and 2003, and reading about BrickFest (Portland, OR) online, Bill Ward, President of Bricks By the Bay "wanted to have an event in the bay area and came up with the name Bricks by the Bay."

At the same time, Russell Clark, then President of the Bay Area LEGO Users Group (BayLUG) had the same idea - and, after discussions and traveling to a number of LEGO events, they decided to host an event of their own, with Ward ultimately recruiting Loren Merrell and Bruce Chamberlain, fellow BayLUG members, to start a nonprofit corporation.

The group decided to hold their first event in the spring of 2010, as BrickFest was scheduled every other year (skipping 2010) and "we were going to skip the odd numbered years."

With large spread media coverage, several LEGO lovers were standing in line for three hours trying to get in. "Although we had a great relationship with that hotel, it was clear we would need to have future events in a much larger space, and the success of that event made it possible for us to move to the Hyatt Regency Santa Clara and the Santa Clara Convention Center."

Originally, plans were running Bricks by the Bay conventions every other year, but in the fall of 2010, BrickFest announced they were canceling their 2011 event, "and as fortune would have it, the Hyatt Regency was available for the weekend that BrickFest had been planning to use."



So Ward states, "we booked that quickly and got the word out that we would be having a convention that weekend, and started the process of planning the event. We were able to get a year's worth of planning done in a couple of months and hold a very successful event," states Ward, adding over 300 registered attendees attended the convention, with about 4,000 members of the public coming on Sunday.

"With the much larger space afforded by the new hotel, we were able to easily accommodate the crowds with few delays."

The inaugural Bricks by the Bay was held at the Fremont Marriott, "it was a great place to hold the convention, but when we opened things to the public on Sunday we were overwhelmed by the response," states Ward.

Due to the growing nature of the event, this year's event required organizers to expand exhibit space to use the full Grand Ballroom, also using some of the Convention Center's space for sessions and activities.

For more information on Bricks by the Bay, visit <http://www.bricksbay.com>