

Performer/Vendor Spotlight: Shadowhawk Blades

Shadowhawk Blades blurs the line between performance and vending. They are a shop, and they do sell hand-forged knives and swords, but they are also a demonstrating blade smith shop, which means they are performers too. I would venture to say that Shadowhawk's forge is the most educational corner of the faire. The forge is manned by Charles Adams and his wife Sarah, along with a cast of apprentices. They are also sometimes joined by fellow blade master Dan Davis of Davis Steelworks.

Shadowhawk Blades has been educating and entertaining patrons at Four Winds Canterbury Faire for over 15 years. Charles (Master Shadowhawk), however, started his journey to becoming a master blade smith back in 1984, when he decided to make his first sword from a leaf spring, using nothing but his electric drill and a big stack of sanding disks. Over the years he learned the blacksmithing trade and how to apply it to the more specialized field of blade smithing.

His quest to perfect his craft ultimately led him to Daniel Watson of Angel Swords, who mentored him for over a decade, teaching him many techniques that had been all but lost in the centuries since mankind stopped fighting wars primarily with blades. If you buy a blade from Shadowhawk, you'll be buying something very special--a handmade work of art that is exquisitely functional and yet also a keepsake that you can bequeath to your descendants.

I hope, though, that you don't just walk into the forge and buy a blade, because if you don't stay to watch for a while, you are really missing out. The blade smiths at Shadowhawk Forge are all knowledgeable and informative. As they ply their trade, they talk about what they do and why they do it. Stick around for a while, and you will see every stage of blade creation, from a plain bar of steel to a high-carbon masterpiece with a keen edge and a graceful shape.

If you don't see a blade that is exactly what you want, don't worry--they can create a custom masterpiece for you, even if what you want is a Japanese katana made in the traditional way. Want to get your hands dirty? You can schedule a one-day workshop with Charles and make your own knife from start to finish

under his expert instruction. Then he can teach you how to use it. Charles is also a martial arts instructor and teaches both karate and escrima styles of fighting.

Whatever you do, don't bypass the forge on your next visit to Four Winds!

Website: www.ShadowhawkBlades.com

