



Miniature in Size but Massive in Imagination

BY BELINDA HOGAN

Miniaturist and sculptor Lorraine Robinson says she lives in the real world – only some of the time. The rest of the time she is imagining and creating a mystical and mythical world, which she showcases at her business Fairy Meadow Miniatures.



Lorraine with some of her creations

Lorraine was born in the English county where tales of Robin Hood, his Merry Men and their enemies became famous for their battles in the mysterious and mystical Sherwood Forest. This backdrop seems perfectly apt for an artisan like Lorraine whose talents and imagination capture not only the miniature world but also the mythical and wrinkled.

Born in Nottingham, England, Lorraine always had a love for craft. She feels growing up in the beautiful, green and lush English countryside certainly sparked her vivid imagination. Lorraine also credits her grandmother as being the person to make sure her very creative thoughts were used practically.

“The first I can remember becoming interested in craft was when I was sitting next to my Nanna as a young girl, watching her make my summer outfits and fancy dress costumes,” Lorraine says. “I started by making my dolls’ outfits and bedding



Valentine room box



Ivor Reddit

to dress their cots. I then made a few outfits for myself as a young teenager, then I progressed to making my children’s clothes along with quilts, curtains and cushions.”

Many years later, around Christmas 1991, Lorraine together with her husband Alec and their three small children at the time, immigrated to Australia – settling in Wollongong where they have lived ever since. However, it was not until a family trip back to the United Kingdom in 1997, that Lorraine became interested in miniatures ... when her sister-in-law showed off her new dollhouse hobby.

“Instantly I looked over to my husband and gave him a sheepish smile that produced a response from him of, ‘Oh dear’,” Lorraine laughs. “A purchase from the local miniature shop, a nail biting wait of three months for the ship to arrive in Australia, and I was on my way to becoming a builder, painter, electrician and furniture maker.”

Lorraine has been creating mesmerising miniatures now for the last 12 years, which she says has kept her very busy.

“But I have enjoyed every minute of it.”

When Lorraine started to delve seriously into her hobby, she had

to travel to Sydney (and sometimes beyond) to buy her supplies. However, Lorraine’s small hobby turned into her lifelong passion. In between being a wife, and a mother, and working as an ambulance officer (a job Lorraine continues to this day), squeezing in time for her art and travelling to get supplies became tiresome. With this in mind, Lorraine floated the idea with her husband Alec about bringing the world of miniatures to the Illawarra region.

Initially a little skeptical on the concept, Alec came around eventually and the Fairy Meadows Miniatures shop was born in May 2006. It is a family run business and Alec is Lorraine’s greatest supporter. He helps her keep the books and order the stock, and he maintains the business website; while daughter Katie runs the shop, when Lorraine’s paramedic job calls her away. The shop, now online too, provides the miniaturist and the dollhouse enthusiast with everything they need, with over 2,000 products and an eclectic range of products in each category. Supplies include haberdashery, dolls, hardware, fimo, paints, glue and tools. Lorraine says that when most people walk into the shop, they never leave within under

two hours – and there is a very good reason for this!

The Fairy Meadows Miniatures shop is like walking into a universe, where humans don’t exist ... but where the weird, wonderful, weathered and minute do. Lorraine realised after years of delving into the world of miniatures that her other talents lay in sculpture.

“It was evident throughout my love of making miniatures, that my true vocation was creating ‘one of a kind’ dolls both in bigger sizes and in miniature. I just love to create characters of all types, especially the mythical and the wrinkled,” Lorraine explains. “I soon became known among my miniature friends as the one who does things run down and slightly on the tattered side. Whenever my friends and I worked on club projects, I was the one who produced the weeds, worn paint and wrinkles.”

These sculptures act as supporting characters alongside miniature creations on the Fairy Meadow Miniatures shop floor, showcasing mythical, old worldly and more contemporary scenes that come directly from Lorraine’s vivid imagination.

“Some nights I can’t sleep for all the ideas that keep running loose around



Miniature scale doll



Sculptured doll

inside my head,” Lorraine laughs. “I wanted to create something that would combine my love of ‘one of a kind’ bigger sculpted dolls, with the miniature world.”

The most prominent of such characters is Ivor Reddit, a troll-like creature that ‘helps’ the family Robinson in their shop as well as on their website.

The character of Ivor is a lover of books by Arthur Conan Doyle, Shakespeare, Byron and Keats. He wears rainbow coloured stockings, yellow oversized boots, a frilly cream blouse under a multicoloured vest, and an artisan cap. Ivor has cloud like eyebrows and hair and his long fingers turn the pages of one of his favourite books.

“Ivor Reddit has both wrinkles and a touch of the mythical; and his name is a play on words and accent, meaning ‘I’ve read it’,” Lorraine explains. “So (in the shop) Ivor is sitting in his

favourite spot perched on the top of a pile of encyclopedias reading Shakespeare’s Hamlet and enjoying it immensely. While under his very seat is a whole other world set in miniature: A one-twelfth study awaits the return of the master of the house. I just love the mythical creatures because you can step beyond the boundaries of human proportion and take liberties that will be accepted.”

One of Lorraine’s other characters is Horace Pendulum who is the owner of The Hourglass Clock Shop. This scene customised by Lorraine shows Horace working long hours fixing everyone’s clocks and watches. This scene hangs on the wall of the Fairy Meadow Miniatures shop.

“Horace’s shop is housed inside a wall clock and he just loves his window display,” Lorraine says.

Another scene and set of characters Lorraine created for her showroom is called “The Bark Men.”

The creatures are made out of paper clay, some wire and a couple of torn branches from a tree. Another scene is one of an all male theatre company who are having their get together after their last performance.

Lorraine also provides workshops for those interested in learning the art of miniatures and they cater for all levels and budgets.

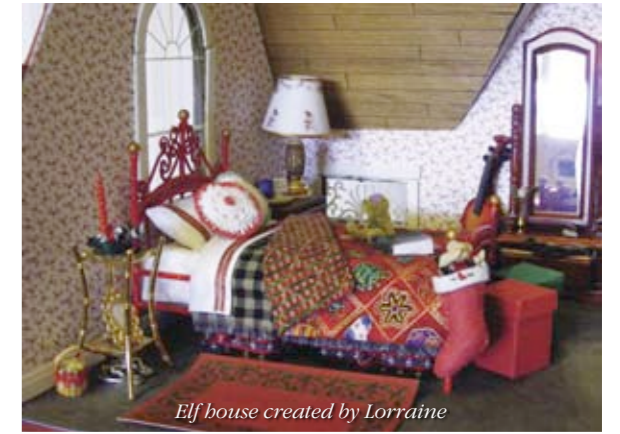
“I am creating complete room settings of furniture out of matt board or just plain cardboard, a bit of glue, fabric and braids – with the occasional need for a stair spindle,” Lorraine explains. “I am so excited about this new venture that I am at the moment sending my whole family mad as I constantly talk about my ideas ... and these

flow out of me like a cascading waterfall.”

The kettle is always on at Fairy Meadow Miniatures, with Lorraine and her supportive family loving visits by other people to their magical store. She also feels very blessed about being an artisan of miniatures and sculptures.

“I could not run my miniature business without Alec and Katie, and I have so many ideas ... I will be a lucky person if I can achieve them all in one lifetime,” Lorraine says. “But I do intend to give it a go!”

*Fairy Meadow Miniatures
129 Pioneer Road
Corrimal East, NSW, 2518.
Ph: 02 4285 7722
Opening times: 10:00 am to
4:00 pm Thursday through to
Saturday; or by appointment. 🍷*



Elf house created by Lorraine



Elf house created by Lorraine