

# Swords and Sandals

## Life is a movie for leather worker Adam Smith

By ANN KORNUA

The world of fiction comes alive in *The Art of the Sword* owned by the charismatic and talented Adam Smith located on 158 Mill Street in Milton. This store has more to offer than just swords alone. It is the studio/store front where this lover of science fiction and classic story novels sells his popular costume and leather goods.

Adam's hobby of leather craft started out when he left university and got a job in the Tandy Leather shop in Hamilton over twenty years ago. "It was a hobby for the longest time before I sat down and decided to make it a business. I set up my first booth in 1995 at the Ontario Renaissance Festival (held annually in Milton) and have been going strong ever since," Adam explains.

The studio/store only came into being after years of setting up booths for Star Trek conventions and being featured in many live action role-playing game functions. A friend of Adam's approached him with the idea of setting up his own store in Milton. "A year ago I was talking to a friend in Barrie and he asked me if there was a store like his in Milton and I said no. 10 months later I opened this store. I decided I needed to expand by having a combined studio space and storefront. This place gives me a chance to showcase and sell my creations."

Adam is known in the trade as the Go-To-Guy for leather in the GTA and

many of his finished pieces have been featured in large motion picture movies and Canadian television documentaries. Adam got his first big break into movies when a costume designer for the movie *Star Hunter* noticed one of his pieces in a store window in downtown Toronto speciality boutique. He demanded to know the craftsman behind the piece and the owner gave him Adam's name. This chance encounter landed him a spot in the *Star Hunter's* prop department and from there, job offers from major movie studios flooded in. Adam has done designs for *Resident Evil 2*, *Apocalypse*, *Land of the Dead*, *In The*

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*Footsteps of Giants* documentary and even *The First Canadians* documentary featured on Discovery Channel.

"This is the kind of business I have wanted to do for a long time," Adam says. "It's a serious word of mouth trade; many of my contacts were made from talking to people on production sets and through other people."

Along with the leather goods and costumes, people will notice the display of costume swords hanging on the wall. The display is a selection of fantasy



PHOTO BY ANN KORNUA

Adam Smith stands among a few ghoulish looking replicas from the *Lord of the Rings*. Behind him is the showcase wall displaying collector Swords and movie replicas.

swords from movies such as the popular *Lord of the Rings* to medieval replicas and Japanese blades. Most are safe for wall decoration while some are razor sharp and must be handled with the utmost care. Minors are forbidden to even purchase a blade.

Another eye-catching feature of *The Art of the Sword* is its small collection of movie props and costumes on display in the store. It includes realistic looking frogs from the set of *Magnolia* to a zombie costume from *Resident Evil 2* and even a small prop from Tim Burton's *Planet of the Apes*. "I got into collecting props from movies that interest me from working on the sets of many movies. This is a fun side hobby of mine," Adam says.

Plans are in effect for upcoming leather

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