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April 5 & 6, 2025: Solvang, California, Hosts Inaugural "Solvang Brick & Builds" Brick-Building Festival and Town-wide Competition

-- Solvang, the Danish-Settled Village in the Heart of Santa Barbara County Wine Country, to feature Two Days of Brick Built Displays, Master Builders Panel and Meet-and-Greets, Professional Hans Christian Andersen-themed Building Contest, and Scavenger Hunt --

February 26, 2025 – **Solvang, CA** – Solvang, California (www.SolvangUSA.com), the Danish-rooted, Santa Ynez Valley wine country town along California's Central Coast, will host its debut **Solvang Brick & Builds** event the weekend of **April 5 and 6**, **2025**. The new festival will include a two-day, public exhibition in the Solvang Veterans Memorial Building, two days of professional brick-building set against Solvang's fairy tale village backdrops, a scavenger hunt, and special Master Builders appearances during a Saturday panel and Sunday meet-and-greet opportunity.

LEGO®, the iconic Danish building block brand, serves as the inspiration behind the two-day, family-friendly expo and town-wide building competition, the latter of which will pit some of the top brick builders against each other as they construct their own takes on a handful of Hans Christian Andersen's most famous tales, all chasing one grand prize.

"Solvang's Danish roots and Europe-in-America uniqueness position the city as an ideal location for this family-oriented spring event, celebrating the birthday of one of Denmark's most famous authors. This new event literally builds on past brick events we've had in Solvang. It's a fun, immersive, Danish tribute to all things 'brick,'" said Solvang City Manager, Randy Murphy.

The kid-favorite building blocks were originally made of wood; Danish carpenter Ole Kirk Christiansen created the first version of the building blocks in the 1930s. He named his company LEGO, a mix of the Danish words "to play" and "good." Denmark is still home to the original LEGOLAND® and LEGO® House.

Sponsored in part by BrickLink® and LUGOLA - LEGO® User Group of Los Angeles, Solvang Brick & Builds events kick off Saturday, April 5, at 10:00 AM, as the town-wide builders begin their projects: a storybook with their assigned Hans Christian Andersen themes popping off the pages. Stationed throughout the walkable Southern California village brimming with Danish architecture and ambiance, Saturday's build will run through 4:00 PM in five competitor locations scattered about the town. The public is welcome to spectate and vote as the invited pros work their building block magic into their best version of a storied tale.

Simultaneous to the town-wide building contest will be a scavenger hunt, available to ticketed expo attendees. Maps will direct ticketholders to varied Solvang locations where participants will receive stamps to confirm that they have found each spot. Once scavenger hunters have visited all mapped locations, they may return to the Solvang Visitor Center (1639 Copenhagen Drive, Solvang, CA 93463) for a brick-tastic keepsake.

The ticketed expo will run Saturday, 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, in the Solvang Veterans Memorial Building (*1745 Mission Drive*). Registered displays from brick-builders will be on view for public voting, with a BrickLink® Panel at 1:00 PM, a Master Builders Panel at 3:00 PM, a vendor area, and a "VIB" Lounge with games and prizes for ticketed *Very Important Builders*.

Solvang Park (*Mission Drive and First Street*), the village's green hub, will also feature entertainment and activities including kids' brick-building and coloring tents, brick-associated vendors, and free, live music performances from 12:00 PM-2:00 PM by Unfinished Business (*Saturday*) and The Soul Cats (*Sunday*).

Sunday, April 6, will feature a second day of the Veterans Building expo, 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, as well as town-wide competition building from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. The scavenger hunt will resume on Sunday, as will scheduled activities in Solvang Park.

In the expo hall, Sunday ticketholders will have access to Master Builders meet-and-greets at 12:00 PM, followed by presentations and judging of the town-wide contest builds. The competition build winner, as well as all expo display vote winners, will be announced and prizes awarded at 4:00 PM on Sunday, April 6. VIB Members will also have access to the VIB Lounge on Sunday from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, for more games and prizes.

Assembling the Solvang Brick & Builds competition participants, co-organizing the overall event weekend, and serving as one of the festival's judges, is LEGO artist and event manager, Allyson Gail (@AllysonGailBricks), whose food-famous work has been featured on *The Kelly Clarkson Show*, *The Brothers Brick*, in *LEGO* Magazine, and more. A contestant on Season 4 of the FOX competition series *LEGO Masters*, Allyson Gail has also had her work displayed in the LEGO® House in Billund, Denmark, at the BRICKACCINO Café. Melanie Hernandez, Allyson Gail's *LEGO Masters* Season 4 team partner, is also slated to appear during the Solvang Brick & Builds event weekend, as is Zack Macasaet, returning Solvang block-building competitor featured on Season 2 of *LEGO Masters*, best known for his use of power functions and motorization.

Additional Master Builders scheduled for the weekend include Bryan Firks, a writer, director, and Southern California-based builder known for his appearance on Season 2 of *LEGO Masters* alongside his sister, Lauren. Firks is currently a writer on the HBO Series

Dune: Prophecy, and his screenplays have earned recognition in multiple competitions including the Academy Nicholl Fellowships. As a LEGO artist, Firks has designed custom sculptures for brands like Netflix, Adobe, and Johnson & Johnson, and he is also a former Solvang Danish Days brick building competitor. Also joining the Solvang event is Samuel Hatmaker, artist, brick builder, and finalist during the very first season of *LEGO Masters*, whose art and brick-built creations have been displayed in museums and galleries around the world including The Comic-Con Museum in San Diego, during Art Basel in Miami, and in Circus of Books in Los Angeles. Hatmaker's two-decade career in New York City designing toys for the likes of Disney, Marvel, Nickelodeon, and other leading brands, continues to influence his newer creations such as custom action figures, costumes, dolls, props, set pieces, and sculptures.

Jonathan B. Perez will serve as the Saturday Master Builders panel host. Perez is a commercial storyboard artist, collector of all things plastic, and brick-based content creator known for his movie-inspired videos and community activism for local businesses such as Bricks & Minifigs. His work has been recognized and shared by philanthropic organizations and townships across Southern California.

The Hans Christian Andersen-themed competition builders to be placed throughout Solvang's downtown core are aerospace engineer, Tyler Strampp; "Brickrad" (Conrad Scoley); John Cooper, SANDLUG - San Diego LEGO User Group Community Ambassador; first-time build competitor, Riley Blissmer; and Tim Heiderich, custom mini-builds designer whose creations have been seen at brick-based fan conventions, and have included exclusives for video games and for the BrickLink Designer Program. Heiderich's work has also been sold to collectors and displayed in stores.

More details about the weekend event will be released via social media over the next month (@SolvangUSA), including further information about the five pro-builders who will be participating in the town-wide competition.

Solvang, known for its Danish-American vibe, architecture and design details, pastries and bakeries, and array of wine tasting options, also boasts dozens of unique boutiques, restaurants and gourmet food purveyors. Carefully curated indie booksellers and high-end home goods suppliers mingle with fairy tale-like children's stores and museum gift shops. Solvang's foodie destinations offer everything from elevated street cuisine – like locally-sourced fish tacos on hand-made tortillas, and comforting ramen noodles – to European-style pretzels and sausages, to Italian standbys or iconic Danish dishes, to elevated new-Californian fare in the form of MICHELIN-honored menus. Solvang visitors sip small-batch, locally roasted coffee, shop for exotic, hand-bottled spice blends, or enjoy Tiki cocktails and craft beer, all part of a playful, indulgent, and one-of-a-kind, year 'round shopping and playing escape.

About the City of Solvang:
Referred to as "The Danish Capital of America," the City of Solvang is located in the Santa Ynez Valley in Santa Barbara County, California. Founded by a group of Danish-Americans in 1911 and incorporated in 1985, Solvang offers a taste of Denmark in Southern California. Danish design and Old World charm fill Solvang's numerous interior courtyards, cozy communal spaces, and open-air venues, where vacation itineraries for all unfold. The walkable town features plentiful free parking options for locals and visitors, and more than 20 lodging options for staycation-ers, weekenders and midweek travelers, from classic comfort to luxury-level. The Solvang Visitor Center, located at 1639 Copenhagen Drive, is open daily, 9:30 AM-5:30 PM (*closed briefly for lunch*). For more

information, including travel itinerary ideas and inspiration for things to do, where to eat and drink, and places to stay, follow our adventures on Instagram and Facebook: @SolvangUSA and facebook.com/VisitSolvangUSA.

For more information about Solvang Brick & Builds, or to book a Solvang stay, visit www.SolvangUSA.com. Questions, media requests for interviews, visits, and/or photos, may be directed to Anna Ferguson-Sparks, Stiletto Marketing, at 1.877.327.2656 or solvang@stilettomarketing.com.

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