



## Collections #3

This final – never say never – column on collections will cover cross-brands collections. It's part of my strong inclination toward Imagineering™ which I covered in the July 2022 column. That means that our imagination is larger than D56's or Lemax's business models.

How do we achieve what we want? Think "out of the box" (now an almost clichéd term) and jump into cross-brands to find what we want. I think you know a little about where this is going.

Be sure to check out all the other topnotch and timely columns on TheVillageCollector.com – the always interesting "*Just So You Know (JSYK)*" by David Spears, Thea Heyink's "*The Creation Station*," "*Phil & Sue's Village*" (from England!), "*From Italy: Villaging in Europe*" by Peppe Apuleo (fascinating!), "*A Dickens Christmas*" and "*Hauntsville*" by Larry Treadwell, "*Tips & Trix*" by Mark Frendo, and soon to be more by webmaster Bill Channell.

***Please keep visiting the Village Videos page and watch, watch, watch.*** There will be a new batch of village videos starting on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month! So many ideas, so little time... and not enough money.

I began imagineering collections – both within a brand and across brands – in 2012 with my first attempt at displaying a college campus and a modern shopping center. This has continued to this day.

I keep trying to put together a suburban shopping center, videlicet (this word is for David Spears) you can see in my videos in 2014, 2018, 2021, and the one planned for 2025.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLrtv7Ozy7LOIB1B4n8jWQII57V-HsCgTO>

Brand crossing and mixing is necessary for a display of a modern suburban shopping center. For that I needed modern brand name stores, e.g. Lowes, Home Depot, Menards, Walmart, Kohls, McDonald's (D56), Dollar Store, Cracker Barrel, Dunkin Donuts (Lemax), Krispy Kreme (D56), White Castle (D56), Denny's (Lemax), Ace Hardware, Jo-Ann's Fabrics & Crafts, Applebee's (D56), Chick-Fil-A (Santa's Best), Michaels (Lemax), Eckerd Pharmacy (Coca Cola Town Square), Rite Aid Drug Store, 7-Eleven, Bass Pro Shop Outdoor World, Napa Auto Parts Store, Long's Drugs (Lemax), Waffle House, Arby's, Aldi Grocery Store, Krogers, Red Owl Grocery (D56), Meijer's Supermarket, Wegman's (Lemax), Marsh Grocery Store, Hershey's Chocolate Shop (D56), and Mrs. Stover's Bungalow Candies (D56). You can use signage or rehabilitate to make stores like Target, Sonic, or T.J. Maxx.



In 2018 I made another attempt at creating another college, this time more of a university. That required extensive brand crossing and mixing to satisfy my imagination. I needed a main building (D56's Independence Hall), classroom buildings, "schools" e.g., business school within the college (D56's Rockingham School), library, bookstore, dormitories (D56's Kensington Palace sure resembled a large dorm!), a Chick Evans scholar house, frat/sorority houses (including D56's Greek Chapter House), university club, an auditorium or fieldhouse, football stadium (D56's Champsfield Stadium combined with 8 Hawthorne Village stadium pieces and filled with fans in the stands), an off campus inn (D56's Lowell Inn), and off campus restaurants (including



D56's Lion's Den Campus Grill, a McDonald's, and a few pizza joints). It's hard to find a large number of college student figures.



No manufacturer has yet issued a fieldhouse or basketball arena. I used Ryman Auditorium once, covering the roof with snow to hide branding. I've done as well as I could, and my "college collection" of buildings will be sold, passed along, paid forward to another collector.



Another topic or idea I've tried was a retro downtown of brand name stores – Starbucks, Walton's, Marsh grocery, Walgreens, Kroger, Ace Hardware, Publix, IGA, True Value hardware, Dollar Store, Lowes, Meijer, Rexall, Joann Fabrics, etc. This collection I displayed in 2017 and again in 2022, with a YouTube video each time. Like my college campus, time to pay it forward.

One of the most fun and satisfying display collections I've tried was to build a dammed lake (above a trailer park and retro downtown) with a couple islands and surrounded by log cabins and lodges, which are still relatively inexpensive. Published in 2017, this large corner of the display combined D56, Lemax, Heartland Valley, St. Nicholas Square, and Santa's Workbench buildings and figures. I needed lots of little people fishing, in boats and from the shore. Nearly all the buildings have been sold.



My viewing eye gravitates mightily toward Christmas in the City displays and videos, easily my favorite. I've attempted to build large cities in 2013, 2016, 2020, and my last one is planned for 2024. Again, it's time to pay it forward and look for other display challenges.

Have I run out of ideas? Tell me what you think, *mon ami (amie)*.

One true collection I have is RV trailers and vehicles. No, I don't own an RV, but I wish to someday. I think I first became



interested when in 2013 I spotted D56 Lot 56, Christmas Court (#55335, issued 2003). Soon I also had Lot 57 (#799929, issued 2007). I built my first trailer park display in 2014, inspired by this picture below. I learned from the great pammyj100 to gain village display inspiration from photos.



I also found Lemax and JWM Roadside Christmas RV trailers for the 2014 trailer park. You may notice below that D56 Lot 58 and Lot 13 had been added.





It turns out that there are 8 JWM RVs (I have 7), and at least 15 Lemax and Carole Towne trailers. Over the years I waited for good prices and added D56 Lot 59 and Lot 60 to the Christmas Court Trailer Park.



In 2017 I discovered two amazing photos that I had to attempt to replicate in a village display. You can't make this stuff up!







And so, the trailer park under the dam, holding back the lake, had to be built and videoed.







After finding a fabulous song for the annual video, an even larger trailer park returned in 2021.







Somehow, from 2013 to 2017 I collected Chinatown (D56, Lemax, and Coca Cola Town Square) buildings and figures. There was one super rare figure I couldn't find – Lemax's Porcelain Vendor #63584. I built a Chinatown section in my 2018 and 2020 village displays. I even found a Chinese sounding Christmas song for the 2020 video! Satisfied that I had done all that I could with these pieces, I placed them all for bid sale on eBay. My oh my, was I surprised by the demand!



By the way, D56 is issuing a new Chinatown building in 2024!



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Okay, let's make up some possible village collections. Have you seen the lovely buildings that are made of stained glass?



I bought one building for my 2019 display where I tried to replicate my hometown's downtown area which contains a stained-glass shop. The former owner and his wife, friends of mine, thought it looked great.





While I would never collect these, my wife finds them very interesting – the Shabby Chic Pink village building rehabs. Folks take an inexpensive building and “dress them up” in an over-the-top pink foo-foo style. I saw in one YouTube village video a lady had four D56 Mulberrie Court Brownstones (a beautiful building), one of which had been made shabby chic pink!



Didn't you ever think that the little people who inhabit your village should have a place to work? I mean, aside from shops and stores, what about some industry?

One place I thought of was a Coca Cola beverage plant complex. D56 makes the Snow Village Coca Cola Bottling Plant and a CIC Coca Cola Bottling Company. There are D56 Coca Cola delivery trucks, too.



Coca Cola Town Square made the Coca Cola Bottling Company, the Atlanta Bottling Company, and the Main Street Bottling Plant.





My favorite was made by Hawthorne Village, the Coca Cola Bottling Works, complete with spinning bottles in a tall corner window.



The little people don't drink just soft drinks. Have you noticed how many pubs and bars you can purchase? I built a Budweiser brewery complex in 2018 comprised of D56 and Hawthorne Village pieces, adorned with Miller Engineering o-scale lighted signs.





It turns out that Hawthorne Village has a large list of companion Budweiser brewery complex pieces, including a train set, a roundhouse stable building, water tower, Clydesdale horses, train depot, shipping depot, beer garden, archway, and grain towers.

Where else could the little people find good-paying employment? How about at the animated Menard's Saw Mill (Lemax #05683)?



If you have a lot of trees (and you should!), Lemax has a few other sawmills – Herschel's Saw Mill (#05625), Sawyer's Sawmill (#25670), and Spruce Creek Sawmill (#55974).

There is an underground mine, too, from Lemax – the Lucky No. 7 Mine (#15576). It doesn't say what they are mining, so you can accessorize it to be whatever works for you.

You might need a power plant to provide electricity to light your village and move your animated pieces. I hear that they pay well and are unionized. Lemax has nothing, but D56 has Northern Lights Power (#6003112) and the Polar Power Company (#56749).





I have used a pair of Hawthorne Village nuclear power plants from The Simpsons collection. They use green lights which give an eerie glow.



To complete the scene, we need toxic waste in a rail car (#4042419) and someone who has to take the samples for testing (#4042420), both D56 pieces.



I displayed my nuclear power plant in 2015 when I had only one and again in 2017 when I had two plants adjacent to a river. In 2015 I made a short video:

Nuclear Decorations (2:19)

[https://youtu.be/Z5nHVS6\\_NBE](https://youtu.be/Z5nHVS6_NBE).





If you have a village collection, show your village to the world! Put it on YouTube. We want to see it!

In my next column on The Village Collector, I don't know what I'm going to write about. I'm out of words for today and I'll try to do better next time.

Questions, comments and/or suggestions are always welcome. You can contact me at: [jpetersgolfpro@gmail.com](mailto:jpetersgolfpro@gmail.com), 419 Washington Avenue, Newport, KY 41071.