

HOBBIT VILLAGE

SAURON'S
BROKEN TOWER

MT.
DOOM

ATTRACTION:
ESCAPE FROM THE
GOBLIN KING'S LAIR

STATUES OF FRODO,
SAM, PIP, MERRY

CHARACTER INTERACTION POINT:
FRODO, SAM, PIP, MERRY

RIDE EXIT

GOLDEN DRAGON
DINING EXPERIENCE

RIDE ENTRANCE

RIDE EXIT

CHARACTER
INTERACTION POINT:
LEGOLAS AND TAURIEL

ATTRACTION:
THE SHADOW
OF SAURON

CHARACTER
INTERACTION
POINT: ARAGORN

MEET TREEBEARD AT ENT
COUNCIL SACRED PLACE

LEGOLAS STATUE

GANDALF STATUE

ARAGORN STATUE

GIMLI STATUE

MARBLE ELVEN COPPOLA

▲ Trees/wooded areas

▲ Granite/rock features

★ Live Character Interaction Points

● Retail (prop recreations, clothing, plushies, Elven jewelry, Dwarf smiths, open-air agora)

● Gandalf's Magic Shop

● Dining



The Lord of the Rings: Beacon of Middle Earth

Abstract

Set in the mountains of North Ithilien, on the border between Gondor and Mordor, Fornarthan (Elvish for “North Beacon”) is an ancient Elven enclave. Centuries ago, in a cooperative effort between men, elves, hobbits and dwarves, it was converted into a bulwark against the lurking evil of Mordor, garrisoned by a diverse force of warriors. Years after the War of the Ring, it has become a serene melting pot of Middle Earth’s cultures, but mystery and danger lurk just below the surface.

Clues throughout the land hint at a deeper story, one visitors will help to write in the anchor attraction: ***The Shadow of Sauron***. Fusing classic dark ride elements with state-of-the-art holography into an interactive, immersive experience, the attraction takes visitors on a rollicking adventure to protect Middle Earth alongside some of its greatest heroes.

Though this may be a new location, it feels familiar and lived-in, with translatable signs and carvings written in Elvish, Dwarvish and English. It includes themed dining experiences serving foods straight out of Tolkien’s works, an interactive Hobbit village, character encounters and an open-air, bazaar-style marketplace, where guests can purchase park-exclusive prop recreations, role playing accessories and display pieces, and investigate abandoned stalls housing darkened dwarf forges, wagons and chariots of old.

Fornarthan is designed to be timeless. Within its confines, the books are treated as dramatic adaptations of real life, not a hard-and-fast history. Here, nobody dies, which means guests can meet characters from throughout Tolkien’s oeuvre.

Journey Into Middle Earth

Visitors enter the land beneath an archway of intertwined flowering boughs. They hear birds chirping and water running through strategically-placed speakers, and feel an overwhelming sense of calm. It’s evident that this was a sacred place, a place of peace for centuries. Live pine, fir, oak, cedar and holly trees are thick on either side of a winding path of pave stones, carved with Elvish spells protecting this realm from an unseen evil.

The main pathway opens up into a circular white granite courtyard, surrounding a bare white tree (textured concrete with a metal skeleton) backed by seven peaked archways. In the stone ringing the base of the tree, an inscription in Elvish and English is engraved: “May this tree, a seedling of the White Tree of Gondor, serve as our promise to remain ever vigilant.” Looming in the distance, visitors see a smoking Mount Doom and Sauron’s broken tower through forced perspective.

The seven peaked archways and the vaulted breezeways that extend behind them appear to be stone, but closer inspection reveals them to be petrified wood (molded concrete). Most of the architecture here appears not constructed, but grown, ornamented with leaves, moss and white flowers. There are few straight, hard edges. Everything flows, blending elements of Lothlorien and Mirkwood with intricate dwarfish stonework.

The pathway through the central arch leads to a small hobbit village, where visitors can enter several homes, meet famous Hobbits and dine at themed eateries, including the Golden Dragon, a pub modeled after the Green Dragon Inn, but named after the villainous Smaug. Two

black arrows hang inside above the doorway. Branching away from the middle path, visitors find themselves in a dizzying and bustling agora, with talkative merchants hawking their wares.

Through the leftmost archway is a path leading to a barrel-riding log flume ride, Escape from the Goblin King. Through the gnarled and blackened rightmost archway is a path leading to land's anchor attraction: **The Shadow of Sauron**.

The Queue

This path is bordered by high granite rock faces, scarred by sword slashes and what appear to be claw marks. Rusted and cleaved Uruk-hai armor can be seen on rocky ledges as guests enter through The Dark Door, the gateway to the Dimholt.

This subterranean realm was once home to the Army of the Dead, which turned the tide of the War of the Ring at the Battle of Pelennor Fields. Though the spirits who resided here were freed from the curse that kept them bound to this place, echoes remain. Switchbacks wind through rooms carved into the black rock, illuminated by glowing yellow crystals. Throughout the queue, the air is cold and damp. Guests can hear water drip, and feel icy drafts on their necks (camouflaged air vents, sudden bursts of air). Faint, indistinct voices whisper (speakers in the queue bollards).

As visitors descend into another room, they see relics displayed in illuminated alcoves carved into the walls: A Morgul blade, several Rings of Power, Aragorn's breastplate, Gimli's axe, Shelob's fangs and an elven archer's bow. Guests then enter a reading room filled from floor to ceiling with ancient scrolls, and two open books on a worn wooden desk — "There and Back Again: A Hobbit's Tale" by Bilbo Baggins, and "The Lord of the Rings," by Frodo Baggins.

Beyond the reading room, a massive cavern opens up. Across a wide chasm, guests see a necropolis carved into the rock face, extending into the unseen depths below, and into the stalactites above (an effect achieved through a mix of forced perspective and mirrors). After moving through more switchbacks, guests (in groups of 28) reach a gathering area, a rock outcropping where they are stopped by Elven vassals and soldiers of Gondor.

The King of the Dead (using the Pepper's Ghost effect) floats across the darkness with a warning: Even though his army helped defeat Sauron, the story is not yet over, which is why he has stayed behind. He draws guests' attention to the rear of the landing, where Sauron's suit of armor is encased behind glass etched with spells. Lines of the elvish script pulse with a red glow, as if something inside is trying to find a weakness. Dormant for years, the armor has started to awaken, and the King wants to know why.

The Ride

Visitors proceed through a door on the other end of the landing, and see their ride vehicles approach. Between the visitors and the vehicles is a transparent barrier, on which are projected images of ghostly horses pulling four-wheeled, four-passenger chariots. As the vehicles turn a corner, the horses disappear, though the King assures the visitors that they are still there. The vehicles are armed with four swivel-mounted crossbows, which fire ectoplasmic arrows at threats (light pulses fired when the triggers are pulled register on photoreceptors behind screens integrated into sets where visitors battle enemies).

The vehicles wind down into the roots of the mountains, with flowing rivers of lava (practical SFX) emanating heat from below. The vehicles (on a 360 swivel with rumble motion) then travel through a pitch-black rock tunnel. On the other side, a set of screens depict a flowing lava river and caverns beyond a molded concrete lava rock foreground. Suddenly rising from the lava river is a roaring Balrog, flailing his whip. The King (through speakers mounted in the vehicle) tells riders to fire their arrows. With the Balrog staggered, the ride vehicle speeds away.

The ride stops twice more, as riders fend off a swarming band of orcs, and a seemingly endless charging horde of Uruk-hai. Just as the guests feel like they about to be overwhelmed, a blinding flash of light appears from behind them, sending the Uruk-hai into retreat. The vehicle turns, revealing Gandalf the White — an advanced audio animatronic with a holographic face — delivering his iconic line: “Fly, you fools!”

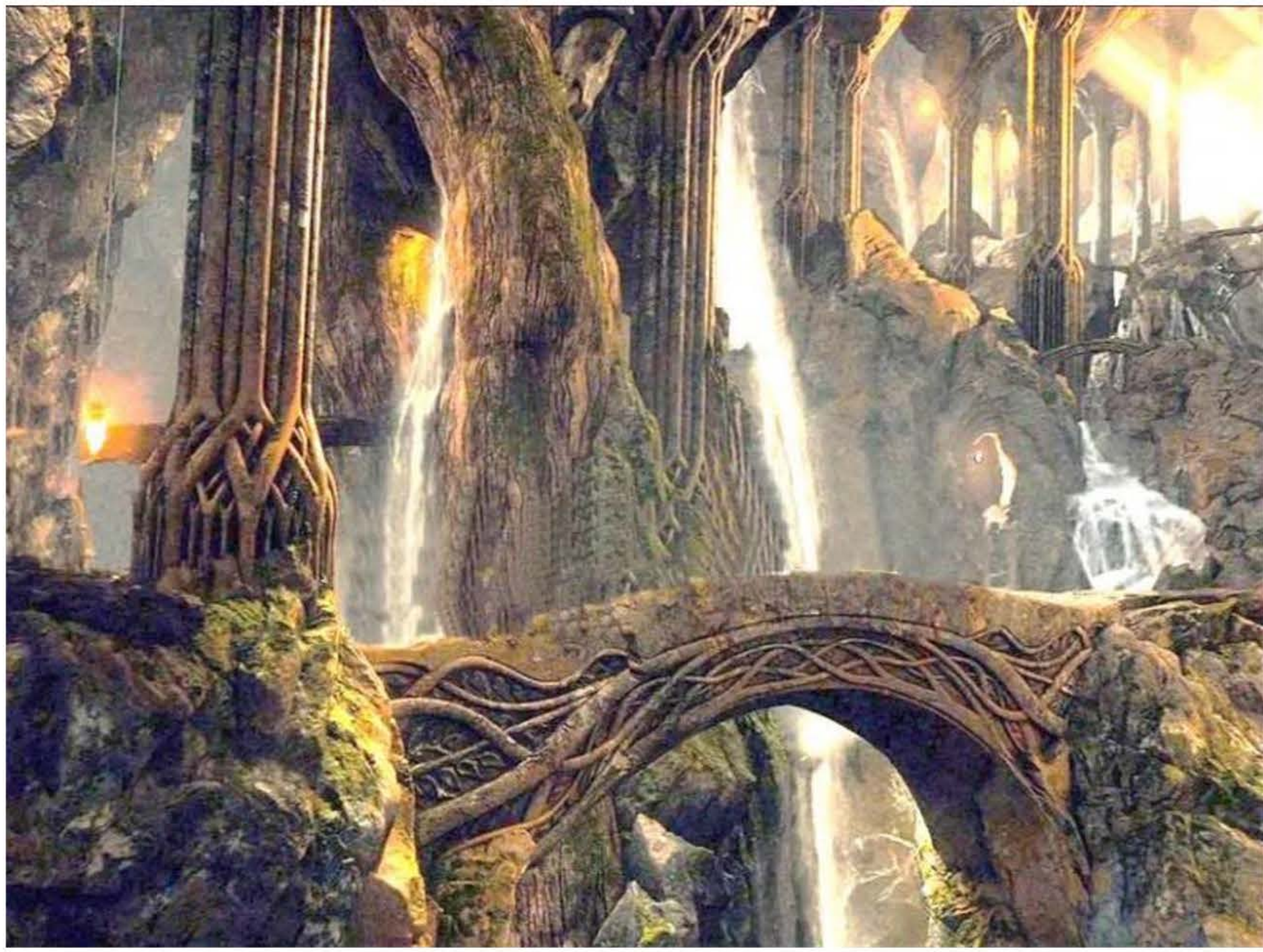
The guests are sent careening through the caverns, swerving to avoid tumbling rocks (a la Disney’s Indiana Jones) and an animatronic Balrog until they reach the shores of a massive lava lake — a set with a practical foreground, a full wraparound interactive screen and holographic projectors. On the shores, riders see a (holographic) gleaming white, ethereal figure with a familiar-shaped three-pronged crown. Introducing himself as Mairon, he pleads for the riders’ help in finding his lost treasure. Without it, he says, he cannot escape this awful place, where he’s been imprisoned for centuries.

From an outcropping above — the Crack of Doom — an arrow zips down and grazes the figure’s cheek. Visitors look up to see none other than Legolas. “The enemy takes a pleasing shape, but do not be deceived! Fire!” he yells. The figure staggers back and recedes into the screen, transforming into a Sauron-shaped shadow. Orcs and Uruk-hai pour out of the caverns as the ride vehicle swivels back and forth, guests firing away.

From across the lake, a green horde appears: the Army of the Dead, led by the King and Gandalf. They wipe out the orcs and Uruk-hai, and team with the riders to deliver the final blows to Sauron, scattering his essence to the winds. The chariots speed away from a rising lava flow at top speed as Mount Doom erupts.

The chariots then slow as guests see sunlight again. From the disembarkation platform, they exit into the green fields of the Hobbit village for some well-earned mead and a roast turkey leg from the Golden Dragon.

BEACON OF MIDDLE EARTH: LOCATION AND ATMOSPHERIC PHOTO REFERENCES



BEACON OF MIDDLE EARTH: SHADOW OF SAURON

PHOTO REFERENCES



MAIRON, AN EARTH SPIRIT OF ARDA, BEFORE HE WAS CORRUPTED TO BECOME SAURON

