FIREWORKS ART



Learn about spectacular fireworks shows!

Sharon Parsons

Nelson Literacy Directions

FIREWORKS Art

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My sincere thanks to the following people for their time, information, images and enthusiasm for this book:

Fortunato Foti and his family, and the Foti team, Leppington, Australia

Dear Reader

Because everyone loves to watch a fireworks show, I decided to find out who creates fireworks "art" in the night sky. My research led me to one of the world's most-awarded fireworks companies – Foti International Fireworks.

> **FROM 1793, IN ITALY, THROUGH TO TODAY, IN AUSTRALIA, THE FOTI FAMILY HAS CREATED SPECTACULAR FIREWORKS SHOWS AROUND THE WORLD.**

I have thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated working with the Foti family on this book, and I especially loved seeing their creativity come alive during a spectacular show in Darling Harbour, Sydney, Australia.

I hope you enjoy finding out how Foti International Fireworks makes their fireworks devices and creates amazing fireworks shows for millions of people to marvel at.

Sharon Parsons

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1 Fireworks on Show

Fireworks are highly explosive pyrotechnic devices used by experienced pyrotechnicians, who set them up to create spectacular shows for entertainment at public events and competitions.

A Kaleidoscope of Fireworks

The sky is dark and all eyes are searching for the first glimpse of the long-awaited fireworks extravaganza. Suddenly, loud bangs and music are the catalysts for the night sky to ignite into a kaleidoscope of colourful fireworks of all shapes, patterns and sizes.



PYROTECHNICS

Pyrotechnics is the science of making and using explosive devices, including fireworks.

Pyrotechnicians are qualified people who know how to safely store, handle and use pyrotechnic devices. They usually work in the entertainment industry to set up and run fireworks displays.

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CHRISTMAS CRACKERS

Christmas crackers, or bon-bons, are a basic form of pyrotechnics. When two people pull a cracker apart, the snap sound is caused by friction between two chemically coated card strips.

Where Are the Pyrotechnicians?

Teams of experienced fireworks pyrotechnicians are hidden from view as their fireworks art dances to the beat of the music. Their reward is when they hear the crowd cheer with every new sequence of fireworks. When silence falls and the sky is dark once more, the fireworks pyrotechnicians relax with relief.

Read on to find out about the pyrotechnicians who created the amazing fireworks display shown here.

2 A Fireworks Family



Fortunato Foti with his father, Salvatore (Sam)

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Meet Fortunato Foti and his family, who are sixth- and seventh-generation fireworks pyrotechnicians. Fortunato's 72-year-old father, Salvatore, still works in the company and his grandfather, Celestino, worked there until he was 88 years old.

Fortunato grew up around fireworks. He remembers enjoying sparklers, rockets and bonfires, just like other children. Fortunato's nine-year-old son wants to work in the company one day, too.

The Foti family's company is based in New South Wales, Australia. It is one of only a few in the world outside China that manufactures fireworks. Fortunato says that they like to make their own fireworks because they can experiment with new and exciting fireworks designs and special effects. They always aim to surprise people.

A Foti fireworks show can last from 30 seconds through to 30 minutes.



five Foti family members who work in the business today – left to right: Angelo, Vincenzo (Vince), Giovanni, Fortunato and Salvatore (Sam)



a Foti fireworks show in Brisbane, Australia



fireworks in Sicily, Italy

Foti **Fireworks** – Italy **to** Australia

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1793: Based in Sicily, Italy, the Foti family begin manufacturing fireworks and creating public displays.

1838: The Foti family and their company move to Calabria, Italy.





In 1952, Celestino Foti left Italy and moved to Sydney, Australia.





the Foti family shortly after their arrival in Australia, including Celestino, third from left

1952: Celestino Foti (Fortunato's grandfather) moves to Sydney, Australia, and works in a fireworks factory near Sydney.

1969: Celestino Foti and his son, Salvatore, buy the fireworks factory.

Today: Foti International Fireworks is one of the most successful fireworks companies in the world.



a Foti fireworks show on New Year's Eve in Sydney





a Foti fireworks show in Shanghai, China

3 New Year's Eve Fireworks

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For many years, Foti International Fireworks has designed and created two fireworks displays around Sydney Harbour for New Year's Eve. Their aim is to create unique fireworks shows that are spectacular, safe and memorable.



Sydney Harbour Bridge



a Foti New Year's Eve fireworks show on Sydney Harbour

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The Fireworks Theme

Before the company's work can begin, representatives from the City of Sydney provide them with a new theme. In 2010, the theme was "Make Your Mark". The fireworks extravaganzas for that year certainly did make their mark!

Countdown to New Year's Eve!

June: create ideas for never-seen-before fireworks sequences and effects

September: listen to the music provided by the City of Sydney and plan the fireworks sequences and effects

October to December: manufacture the fireworks

Mid-November: show the fireworks sequences on the computer to members of the City of Sydney

December: finalise the choreography by matching the fireworks sequences with the music

Mid-End December: set up the firing locations on barges around Sydney Harbour, on the bridge and on the rooftops of buildings

31 December: do final operational and safety checks.



New Year's Eve fireworks in Sydney



one of the largest fireworks shells made by Foti International Fireworks



Foti team member Rob setting up fireworks on a barge



Fireworks crew make light work of feast

The Foti crew feature in the news on 31 December 2007.

