

A Boy Builds A Mansion-Like Habitat For His Rats

A 13-year-old builds his pet rats a rat manor.

By Charlotte Hadley

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Silence filled the room. "What did you say? You gave your grandson two rats? Don't you know they live in the filthiest, dirtiest alleys?"

"They were the culprits that caused The Plague."

"Their tails are horrible." [Click the image to enlarge](#)

The rat manor was constructed from wood, screen, staples, hinges, and more.

Photos courtesy of Charlotte Hadley

Justin bonds with Lucy and Abigail in some out-of-manor time.

"I just don't understand how they could make a movie called Ratatouille."

"You know the Pied Piper in Germany was responsible for leading the rats out of the country."

These were the initial reactions of people when I mentioned that my grandson, Justin, who's 13, has two rats as pets.

Justin has always appreciated animals, fish, snakes, turtles — any living creature. Of course, he owns a dog, a cat, some fish and some turtles, so it is not surprising that he wanted some rats.

He took it upon himself to build a cage for his future rats, but not an ordinary cage, a rat manor. He bought wood, screen, staples, hinges, and more, and went to work creating the most elaborate cage for a rat I have ever seen. It has five levels with ramps leading from one level to the other; a lid, which is connected to the cage with hinges; a bottom floor that can be separated from the cage to be cleaned; and a door on the side. He stained the wood to give the cage a more finished look. The cage measures 40 inches high, 30 inches long and 12 inches deep. He even made the ladder from scratch.

Well, after recovering from proud grandparental awe, I took him shopping for the rat manor furnishings. Thank heavens Justin had previewed all the rat products beforehand, because there are about 10,000 items to consider! So we purchased a bowl for food, a bottle for water, a cozy igloo, a hammock (all rats take siestas, you know), a bell toy and, most important, the shredded bedding for the rat manor.

Now he was ready for the inhabitants of the rat manor, so we looked over the rats in one store. He was leaning toward the tan colored ones, even though the black and white rats were quite attractive. Then we went to another store to look at its rats. The decision was to return to the first store and purchase two female tan rats, Lucy and Abigail. Justin took them to their new rat manor, and they have adjusted quite well. Who wouldn't in such a comfortable, elegant manor?

So far there has only been a sense of curiosity from his cat and dog.

I think to myself, if this 13-year-old teenager is creating such a magnificent dwelling for his rats, what lies ahead for this inventive guy?