

10th Anniversary of LEGO® Star Wars™

A fan's point of view

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With the coming of the 10th anniversary of LEGO® Star Wars™, it seemed fitting to write an article about the importance this line has had and is currently having in the LEGO universe. For that, we would like to share with all of you some of the thoughts and feelings this mythical series has inspired.

The origins.

From its début in 1977, Star Wars became a social phenomenon present in the lives of millions of people, and of course, it keeps taking us to 'a galaxy far far away'.

The LEGO community has been making MOCs of vehicles, scenes and ships inspired and based on the Star Wars universe since many years ago, even before internet became widely available for us to easily admire all the fan creations.

The many Star Wars and LEGO followers really wanted LEGO to put out a line dedicated to this incredible universe. Not only because we thought it would be a total success (as it proves to be), but also because they would make a perfect union, since imagination is one of the key points for its enjoyment.

And finally, in 1999 it happened. Taking advantage of the release of Episode I - The Phantom Menace, the LEGO Star Wars™ line was born. Now we are here, 10 years later, after many years of building, anticipation, and a great amount of emblematic

models that have passed through our hands.

A really successful line.

The launch of the line was a success for LEGO, and it created a rather curious phenomenon: it made many AFOLs come out of their Dark Ages. It was to be expected, because within the LEGO community there are many fans of the saga, who of course were impatiently waiting for some of the models based on it to come out.

And the thing is that these models have something really special: they give us the chance to reproduce those ships we've piloted many times in our dreams, with our own hands (and pieces). Who hasn't imagined piloting an X-Wing™, or even imitated Darth Vader™'s breathing?

But the sets aren't successful just because they are based on Star Wars. They are usually really faithful to the original design, something that is not always easy to achieve, and gives them a plastic model feel that attracts the adult fans.

Other lines have more creative freedom, but for this line they have to stick to some already existing designs, and at the same time, they have to be playable and commercially viable. This takes us to another strong point of the line: its playability. In general the sets are "swooshable" and full of gadgets and movable parts.

Apart from that, the Star Wars sets are the ones that



have the most Technic pieces within the "non-Technic" lines. They give it a more sturdy build overall, and allow different building techniques rarely seen in other lines.

There is even a motorized set: The 10178 AT-AT™! And of course we have to talk about the UCS, which have earned their own section within this article.

The Star Wars™ sets excellently combine a well planned design that is faithful to the original designs, high playability and a huge selection of minifigs, all in a commercially attractive arrange of models. This makes the LEGO® Star Wars™ line one of the most sold in the history of LEGO, and one with the most followers, regardless of age.

According to the official figures, they have released more than 180 different products, and have sold more than 106 millions sets. In 2009, they approximately sold 28 sets per minute, 1683 per hour, 40402 daily. The most selling line after LEGO City.

And just for a little trivia, the X-Wing™ is the star of the line. Since 1999 it has been the most selling set. We should also mention that so far, the line has 275 different minifigs, and some of them are collector material.

Evolution and reissues.

In these 10 years, LEGO has evolved overall. Not only by making new pieces, but also design and building technique wise. This has particularly happened in the LEGO Star Wars line. We've seen

the sets evolve from the early blocky designs, to the elegant and best reproduced ones from these past few years. This is all thanks to the use of the more modern pieces like the wedges (though some already existing pieces have been smoothed out) and the more extensive use of tiles, SNOT techniques, and better and more faithful color combinations (like in the TIE Fighters™).

The evolution of the sets doesn't simply end design wise. The playability has also changed. The missile shooting, for example, has evolved overall. Same goes for all the details, movable bits, and gadgets, that seem to be increasing in the later sets. Of course we shouldn't forget about the minifigs. They haven't only changed "skin-wise" (from yellow to flesh colored), but also in variety and diversity. Even the Stormtroopers™ are closer to the original design now.

The changes seem more obvious in the reissues of some of the sets that appeared in the early years of the line. They came back with many improvements in most of the cases. Some of the examples worth mentioning are the reissues of the MTT™, Y-Wing™, Slave I™, N1 StarFighter™ or Darth Vader's TIE™ (Celebrating the 10th anniversary of the line), along with many others.

10030 and 10179, the before and after of the UCS - Two models that changed history.

LEGO Star Wars started a very important class of sets: The UCS (Ultimate Collector's Series). Unlike the smaller and more playable commercial sets, the



UCS were made with the philosophy of being big, proportioned and as faithful as possible to the real movie models. And of course directed to the AFOL public. With the launch of the 10030, the mythical UCS Star Destroyer™, it was made clear that LEGO® also cared about the AFOL community. It was the biggest set ever released at that moment, the most detailed one, and it included uncommon building techniques. It became a hit within the history of LEGO.

After a few excellent models like the UCS X-Wing™ or the UCS Blockade Runner™, in 2007 LEGO created another hit: The Legendary 10179 - UCS Millennium Falcon™, with almost 5200 pieces (way more than the 10030), a bigger palette of colors, a fantastic attention to detail, and made in minifig scale.

The UCS were the push for LEGO to make more AFOL directed sets like the Green Grocer, Café Corner, UCS Batmobile and Taj Mahal, which are bigger and more detailed than the usual sets.

Where are we headed?

During these 10 years of LEGO Star Wars™ we've seen many sets from the Original Trilogy as well as from the new one, and during the last 2 years quite a

few from the Clone Wars.

This year, LEGO is giving us a bit more of a mix putting out sets from both trilogies as well as the Clone Wars, which will probably leave us satisfied.

It seems that there will be many sets to enjoy during this year, and of course whatever is awaiting us in the future, but it is rather curious how some of the most popular ships from Star Wars don't have a LEGO version yet.

One of the most demanded ships within the AFOL community is the Calamari Cruiser, though a playset is coming out this year instead of the ship itself. Other vehicles that could be made are the Naboo Royal Cruiser™, the ship QuiGonJinn™, ObiWan™ and Amidala™ use to travel to Tatooine, the Nebulon-B frigates™ or the Rebel Cruisers from the Hoth escape... The Star Wars universe is huge, and still has a lot to offer.

May the Bricks be with you!■

