

# Fanweekend 2011

## *The LEGO® Fan Weekend keeps growing*

*Text and pictures by Otum*



Like every year, the LEGO® Fan Weekend was celebrated in Skaerbaek, Denmark, in the last weekend of September. This edition was special for HispaBrick Magazine, as it was the official presentation of our new community and therefore our first event. Two collaborators of this magazine were able to attend the event, Lluís, one of our editors, and myself.

The LEGO Fan Weekend has always been considered one of the most important events in Europe, mainly because it is organised in the land of LEGO, but in this year's edition, one of the things that has pleasantly surprised me was the international atmosphere: some twenty members of the Brazilian LUG turned up, compared to five in the last event, but the biggest surprise was the attendance of members of an Australian LUG!

Like in previous editions, it all starts on the Friday evening,

when the exhibitors start to insinuate what they are going to show, but not yet revealing the little secrets that will delight all the AFOLs that are present.

One of the first things you sense during build-up is that in this edition there were fewer shops than in previous editions, which, in my opinion, is perfect. It is true that the LEGO Fan Weekend is always a good opportunity of finding a discontinued set at a good price, or rare and curious pieces, but the more surface is taken up by exhibitors, the more you can enjoy, I think.

Like in most events, in Skærbaek there are several activities that are part of the event and without them something would be missing. The first of these occurs during the whirl of build-up: a Pick-a-Brick. This year it was very well organised and pieces were put organised by theme and in large wooden boxes,

which made it easier to find something although at the same time showing people more directly where the interesting stuff was so they could take up strategic positions to get what they were looking for. The star attraction of this edition was the double bag with ostriches. Of course there is always someone who doesn't look at what they take and carries off handfuls of bags.

Before finishing the day, one of the best things you can do is have a first look at the shops at the event; as I said before, better in small numbers, but allowing you the opportunity of finding interesting stuff. There were two shops that attracted special attention, one that in addition to having pieces and sets presented a nice diorama of Fabuland sets that it also sold and the other Bricklink shop that specialises in selling train railway material MOCs and which presented a diorama with a station and part of the sets it also sold.

Another one of the acts which, as I mentioned before, have become a custom is the barbecue and party at Tiobias' bungalow which grows every year and which, naturally, ended up absorbing us just to the party, but let's be honest: who could turn down a drink and a chat about bricks, right?

The morning of the Saturday, after breakfast and before the official inauguration of the event, is a great moment to have a look at the exhibition. This year there was an interesting diorama which was the result of a collaboration between several LUGs and that incorporated mainly City elements. As a connecting point to the rest of the exhibition it contained a spectacular hanging bridge that had already been presented at the previous LEGO® Fan Weekend.

The first part of the diorama was a mountainous region that contained more rural scenes and included a cable lift to the top



of the mountain which was crowned by an impressive castle. As a special outstanding detail, there was a cut in the mountain which showed a mine of the Power Miners which were being attacked by some rocky dwarfs lighted by leds.

The diorama turned gradually into an urban scene in which a reproduction of the Turning Torso of Malmö stood out. Connected by the bridge there was a second part to the diorama which also had an urban atmosphere, with a zoo and a reproduction of the Berlin cathedral and some typical scenes from the outskirts.

The official opening of the event was presided by Jørgen Vig Knudstorp, CEO of LEGO®, showing the importance of the AFOL movement for the company, and commenting on the novelties that have appeared in 2011.

After the opening the general public was allowed entrance to the exhibition and activities. The first hall contained the official LEGO shop for the public and exhibitors and in the second hall there was a building competition for the visitors with white and blue 2x4 bricks. I keep thinking it must be something in the air of Denmark, but some of the things Danish kids are capable of doing are frankly scary: just imagine them at thirty... But let's get on with the really interesting stuff: the exhibition.

Taking things in order, I'll start with the first hall about which I've already mentioned the main City diorama, but there were several more. The Brazilian LUG had a beautiful diorama that showed part of a city next to a river with some boats, small walks that connected the riverside with gardens and modular buildings, topped off with a small train layout.

After that, contrary to the previous edition, there were several dioramas of different themes, in this case one with Technic vehicles, next to a medieval scene showing a small walled city with a battle on the outside, dragon attack included, and an area for farming. Then there was a small display of space ships, but all eyes inevitably turned to a Western diorama with a little town, a prairie with a train and, of course, Indians. A small diorama, compared to others, but attractive and a good display of what can be done with the Western theme

Before moving on to the next hall, there was a small Belville exhibit, the already mentioned Fabuland set-up, and space centre that with the use of MINDSTORMS allowed you to control the Space Shuttle it contained. On another table a Portuguese LUG member showed several of his constructions, from a museum to a train station. Another Portuguese LUG member showed a number of specific buildings, a bumper car attraction, the submarine from the Beatles song "The Yellow Submarine," a futuristic platform with spacecraft, and several vignettes. To top it off he showed the inside of a perfectly recreated house with furniture, electrical appliances and even children's toys. Finally there was an amazing island-spa diorama, with a gym, pools, tennis court and even furniture inside.

We'll leave the other hall for later. I only will say that in this pavilion the sets for the micro-building contest the exhibitors participated in were displayed, including our editor's reproduction of the Sagrada Familia.

After enjoying a couple of hours without visitors around, everybody starts to prepare for another one of those traditional moments of the event, the fellowship dinner and its subsequent auction. Each person received a minifig from series 5 and a Jack Sparrow polybag. During dinner the awards for the micro-structures competition were given to the finalists and winner,



and games were played between dishes, but the highlight of the meal was the official presentation by Jamie Berard, senior designer, of his latest creation, the 10230, the Mini Modulars.

As expected, the subsequent auction was a great opportunity to get those goodies all AFOLs dreams of. There were several lots of polybags with the golden Games dice, or stickers sets of various airline companies to customize airplanes. But the main sets that were auctioned were the Camper Van, days before it was official available and the Mini Modulars set that had been presented, signed by Jamie. And with this the day was over.

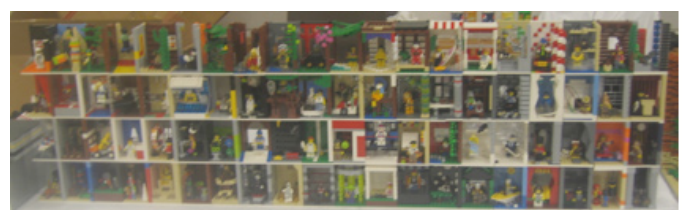
The third day, Sunday, is perhaps a weird day, a lot of people start to say goodbye, including us, but since our flight was late afternoon we could still enjoy the event.

As I promised, let's go with the second hall. As I mentioned at the beginning of this article, this is where where the main activities were for the visitors. Focusing on the exhibition, the first thing we find is the Legoland scale diorama that shows a collection of movie cars, Herbie, KITT, the Ecto-1, the DeLorean from "Back to the Future" ... as well as some sculptures.

The display that took up most space (it really couldn't be any other way) was the GBC, with such interesting modules as the two bridges that allowed the builders access to the interior

or a spectacular pirate ship module that shot the balls over a distance. We were located next to this display, with two car MOCs, a small but cute slot track for the cars created by Lluís and with our magazine in order to give it some publicity and to announce our new web page with a QR-code mosaic built on a 32x32 baseplate.

Next to the GBC there was another Western diorama created by a Croatian LUG. It showed a prairie with some typical elevations, Indians making smoke signals, a small village, a ranch and a mine with a little river and a section of the mountain that allowed you to see the inside of the mine. There was also a spectacular reproduction of the Weasley house from Harry Potter, some Architecture scale buildings and some vignettes.



There were also several City exhibitions, most of them combined with Train. Two stood out especially. One had two levels: street level and metro, including a station. The other a mountain landscape with a very well constructed bridge, maybe more industrial, but Train in any case. Another scene showed a futuristic monorail in a world with a Western look about it, like in "Cowboys & Aliens". But if there is anything that really stood out it was a display showing what can be done with the collectible minifig that have been released; a series of stackable vignettes with a scene for each minifig.

The Italian LUG presented several race cars and a scene of a sloping street with a tramway. Next to it there was an original idea, a series of vignettes, minisets of about 50 pieces that recreated different scenes, from a beach to a dinosaur hunt, all connected together. Then there was one of the most colourful sets, a recreation of a circus, with trailers, public and a circus act with elephants as well as another table with several buildings, including the façade of a zoo and a restaurant with an open interior.

On the other side of the hall there was a Jurassic display, full of dinosaurs and and cavemen What an enormous contrast with the futuristic base full of space ships that was opposite it. Talking of futuristic displays, there was a small MOC of a mothership from the series Alien Conquest that was twice the size of the original ship together with a Blacktron style monorail.

Here we find another diorama presented by the Brazilians, a beautiful City display that showed a Brazilian beach with bathers, refreshment stand and apartment buildings. Next to it several things were displayed together, from boxes made out of bricks with vignettes in their interiors to mechas, fantasy animals, and a futuristic scene.

A special mention for the Brickish Association which brought a very complete pirate display, with a naval scene and a fort full of troops. And also an enormous reproduction of Westminster Abbey.

To conclude with hall I'd like to mention some individual displays, like a container ship or a frigate on a scale larger than the UCS. Also the fantastic maxifigs that were automated using MINDSTORMS that moved around the event and were created by a German AFOL. Or a beautiful fish tank.

Much to our regret we had to leave shortly before the official closing to get to the airport in time, losing out on another fixed activity, the dinner offered by the Italian LUG. I can only say that it was a great weekend, and the more so because this time we did have the opportunity of enjoying Mr Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen's attendance.

#

