

LEGO® Battlestar Galactica

By Garry King

Welcome to the wonderful world of an obsessed Battlestar Galactica fan from the 1978 series through to the 2003 series. Well the models are the main reason. Sadly they only play a very small part of the story line.

For the past four years I have been back into the world of LEGO® in a big way. I started building again and followed my heart and passion for the Battlestar models. Never thinking that it could be done in the manner in which I have now achieved.

My LEGO collection began when I was 6 years old. My mother was the first to purchase me a small car set and then it grew as my appetite for the brick grew. I built and built cars, houses, and helicopters then came along the space series. That was it. Space was my niche. Mum bought me the model LL-924, it took her months to save the money to purchase it.



I was in heaven then I opened my birthday present. I still have it intact sitting on the ledge, "No not for all that time" it had become so many different builds. Mum could not afford to keep feeding my addiction so I went out to do the odd jobs around the street for pocket money to get more space LEGO. The collection still grew steadily.

In 1979 my LEGO almost became another tragedy of the rubbish bin when the family moved to another suburb... The 10th move by that time. Mum's partner deemed the LEGO block to be a waste of time that could be spent working ... I was nearly 12 by then... I saved my collection by taking it up to Nan and Pops, like I did with a lot of my favourite toys. When the dust settled, mum brought my collection back home to me. "BANG" along came Battlestar Galactica..... Yes it was slow coming to Australia 1980 for the 1978 series.... I saw it on the television for the first time and after seeing Star Wars™ which had a "WOW" factor only for the space ships. Nothing compared to seeing the Giant Battlestar (Salamander say Star Wars fans) on the tv screen gliding across the screen....."

OH BOY". I worked in a milk bar for two years filling the refrigerators and shelves in the mornings, going to school then coming back to fill the refrigerators and shelves again then doing all my homework. Late in the evening I would watch television on mum's small black and white. I saw SPACE 1999 for the first time, again spaceships..... It was the amazing vision of what a spaceship could look like that hooked me on science fiction.

My LEGO collection came to a halt for many years when I started full time work as a builder which lead to many facets of the trade and then Interior decoration, Architectural modelling, Set construction, fine furniture making. I just kept wanting to expanding my skills.

Once in a while I got a new set or bought other LEGO collections from the Trading Post. I missed out on so many marvellous space series.

I again collected space related series from 1996 onwards. When Star Wars started being produced in LEGO I did not hold back, I just bought every set that was released in Australia. Frankly it was nothing compared to what was released around the world. That is all I did. I just collected and made each kit several times over "NOTHING special". The collection expanded even more. By now I could fill four 55 litre plastic containers. That was in 1996. Come 2003 the collection had doubled to 8 containers then I lost around 35% in a split up.

When I moved to a small Town in the Bush I got the collection out for 6 months in the year and packed it up for the other 6 months during the fire season, as the threat of bush fires was rather high. I was introduced to the internet in 2004 and a whole new world opened up. WOW there was no stopping me. Battlestar Galactica, LEGO models from the past, LEGO spare parts galore and science fiction. it did not stop. Then came the best find: Brickshelf I was blown away with all the extremely incredible creations 100's, 1000's of them it was mind boggling.

I was told about a LEGO site where I could find my old LEGO plans, PEERON.COM. Boy did the memories come flooding back as I found all my old models plans. I quickly joined. I rebuilt every one of my LEGO models. "What a delight". I posted some of my Massive builds. At the time I had built a Castle style building which was 6 foot in length and there were even larger builds that I never posted. I built an attic in the house and created an entire space city with monorail stations, ships... It kept growing over time. The day came to pack it all away for the fire season to a safer less fire prone area. That ended another 6 month endeavour. The purchasing of more LEGO elements and the pursuit of Battlestar merchandise continued as well as renovating the house and work. I got tired of packing it away for so long each year after year.



In 2009 I began to build my first Battlestar but never finished it. I cannot remember why now, but it could have been lack of the right coloured elements ?????

By accident I discovered a place to purchase parts.... BRICKLINK.COM. This is now my primary purchasing place. WHAT A HEAD RUSH OF EXCITEMENT. Now my collection has grown to twenty 55 litre containers, well over 2 million parts and still growing. I may have a lot of parts but never enough of the same colour or type when building huge or repetitive sections, Bricklink to the rescue....

On the second attempt of the Galactica nothing held me back. I had a surviving 4 foot cardboard model of the Galactica that I used as my primary reference as well as images from the internet. By this time I had bought many large LEGO® Star Wars™ Ultimate collectors series sets.

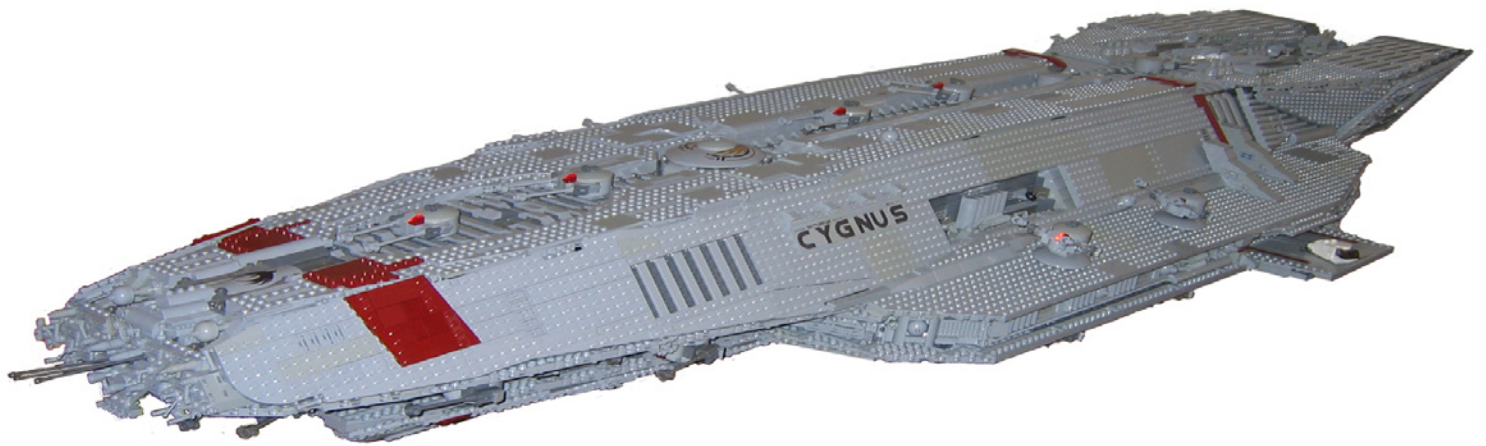
BATTLESTAR GALACTICA MADNESS.

I built the Galactica first as it was my most favourite model of all time. I made the model fixed to a stand and designed it to be totally self-supporting, no strings, no extra struts to hold it up. I used many Technic elements in the initial frame. I still built old school in areas I thought would not hold up to the strain of the weight so it got heavy, 15kg, it stayed intact I was rapped...

It didn't stop there. I then built an orbiting space platform I named the ORION so the Galactica could come into dock for repairs. This build was very flimsy but it did what I wanted for my photo shoot.

I dismantled the Orion and then built the Battlestar Cygnus. I used a small resin model as a guide for the detail and proportions. It grew to a length of over 5 feet. That was a big build and was self-supporting too. I placed a curved backbone





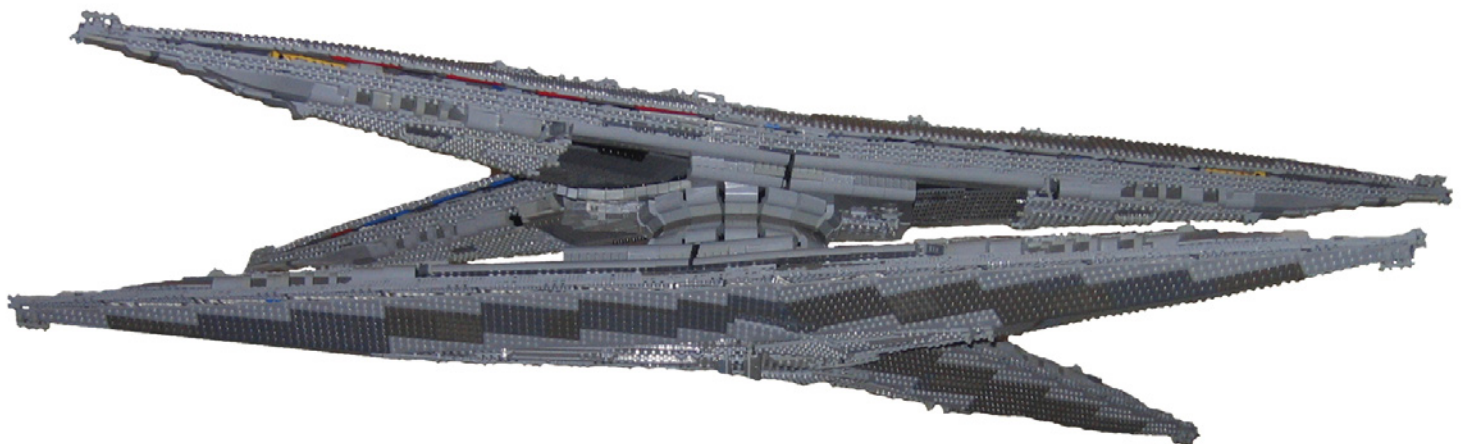
in the design which ran from the front to the back. This took the downward forces of gravity. It was heavy but I was able to carry it from room to room so I could take photos of it.

I then had a bright idea and started building a 2003 Advanced Cylon Basestar but I did not have enough parts... BRICKLINK to the rescue Waiting 3 to 4 weeks for shipping, I continued the build. I thought it was fantastic at the time. So many angles but the ship had to be self-supporting as the arms of the craft had nothing to hold them up. A lot of this build was old school to make the arms strong and rigid. I offset the Technic frame by half a stud to take the strain locked in to place with more components to hold it in place so it did not pop out under the weight. This craft was built on to a framed stand (big mistake). When I took photos of the Basestar, it creaked and groaned under its own weight. Thankfully the model stayed intact...

At this stage I had 3 large builds taking up my lounge room. That did not stop me. Again using a small resin model, I built the shuttle GAL-356 to the best of my abilities. The shuttle had a Technic frame and bracing to hold up its mega structure which was lined with white bricks, panels and plates. Lots of steps and angles all around it made it a superior build compared to the others and I could carry it without it groaning.

I built a cockpit section and the whole model was scaled to the mini figures. It was also able to stand on the flimsy landing gear which made it even more impressive to me.

I had a brighter idea to design and build my own style of Battlestar ... I began the RUBYCON she was a very strong ship. A solid base of 5 layers of plates with sumptuous detail on the underside to a very strong and rigid curved backbone which can be seen if you look closely at the middle of the ship. It looks like a small landing bay on top. Twin engines, three





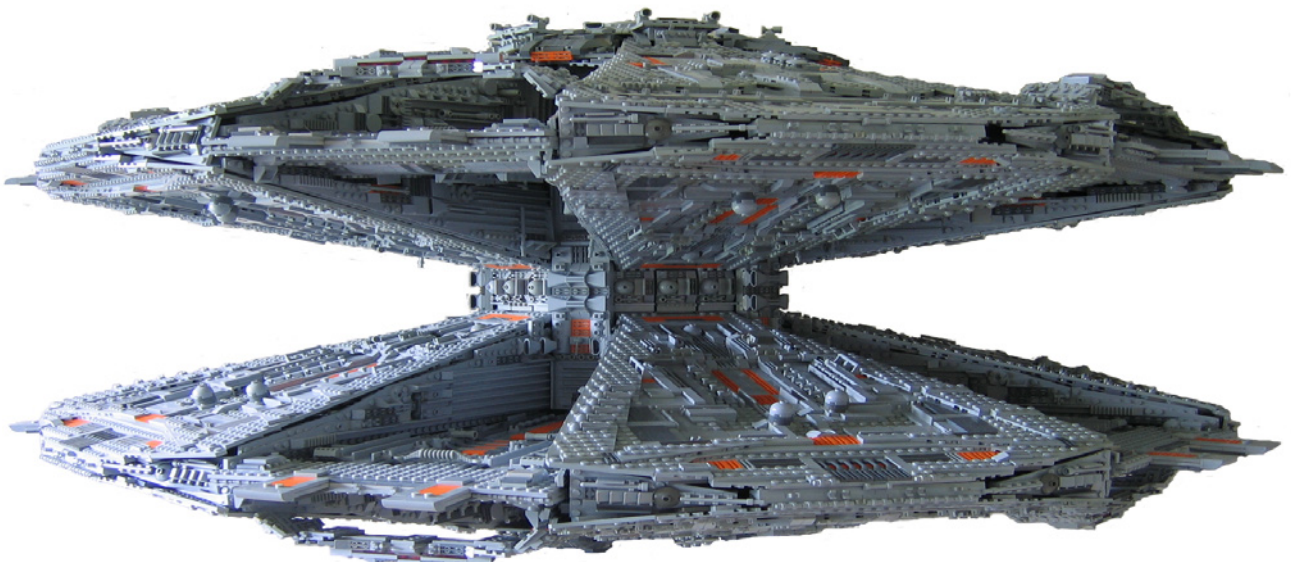
landing bays, one at the stern and two at the front in the head. Flat and sleek she was my second most favourite LEGO® build. I then built a small Viper to compliment the Rubycon.

Sadly and tragically in April 2010 my world came to a crashing end not long after I placed the Rubycon on Moc pages. Less than a month after her 65th birthday, my mother passed away suddenly. I was and still am devastated losing her to Pancreatic cancer. Her encouragement and inspiration and sacrifice will never be forgotten by me or my remaining family.

Then my landlord decided to sell the house I lived in to add salt to the gaping wound. I had to pack up everything, dismantled everything except the Rubycon: she was carefully created up intact. I moved back to live with my stepfather for a few months, then moved away to another state. I took nearly a year to begin my LEGO structures again. In the mean time I continued purchasing 10s of thousands of elements in the colours I liked - white, dark red greys, dark blue and dark greys - and still bought Battlestar merchandise and LEGO Star Wars™ series models I liked just to keep my addiction going. I bought a house, then purpose designed and built shelving storage units in one of the rooms just for LEGO.



2011 I began with the 1978 Battlestar series Cylon Baseship. It was big and heavy; too heavy when it was finished. Two very large discs on top of each other connected to a small stand in comparison. The stand was buckling under the weight. The Baseship's frame was constructed using 1000's of Technic elements then lined with plates and loads of detail. I was unable to carry it or move it from the room so all the photography was done in my LEGO room.





The Basestar was dismantled soon after to save it from collapsing and ruining bricks.

The next build was at the time massive. I built the Battlestar Defender. This was in every respect an unusually shaped vessel. Using my scale model for dimensions and images from the internet for extra detail. It was big!!! 6 foot long, huge engines, curved spearheaded bow, suspended landing bay inside of which I placed lights to give an extra special effect. I

had to weld a stand up to take the weight when I took photos of it. This baby took two of us to lift onto the stand mainly because of the split hull shape and was heavy. Storage was easy, it could rest on the engines vertically.

Not content with that build I proceeded onto another splendid Battlestar "The Berzerk"... I used a commercial resin model as a guide and what images I could find on the internet for detail and proportions. I started with the bow to begin as a platform for the overall size. As the build grew I constructed the hull



from a Technic frame, linking the bow to the body and a rigid network of cross frames to take the weight of the 6kg bow. When it came to build the main boosters I constructed them all at the same time. The lower boosters had the main engine between them making the lower section even heavier. I built a solid frame of Technic bricks from the main hull in a "Y" shape to support the engines to the hull. What a huge learning curve: during the night the booster sections sheared off destroying so many LEGO® bricks. LEGO was not designed to hold that much weight in such a small area. 6x6x6 solid interweaving section was not enough so I redesigned it by using timber in the main hull from front to back with welded steel protruding arms out and extended in to the boosters to take all the weight. It sagged a slightly but saved me another let down.



The Berzerk was coloured White with dark red highlights for an added touch. Even though the Berzerk appeared for only a few seconds on the tv screen, I thought it would have more appeal not being another monochrome build. Many have said it is so "retro". When the rear and hull was completed I returned to the front of the ship. I was not happy with the overall look. I ordered many more elements to do the job, while waiting for the parts to arrive I built a MkVII Viper, 1978 Cylon Raider, A white Strike Raptor and A white Living Raider. Why white you ask. I liked the look and the poor skin jobs seem to get a bad rap all the time, plus other builds are in dark greys to make them more menacing.

I completed the Berzerk with the new elements but still not completely happy with the bow. After the photo shoot, editing and posting the Berzerk on the internet I also placed a request for assistance if anyone was able to suggest another way to do the front.... To my amazement I got a reply with a very ingenious method. It was so well done in LDD... WOW such talent out there and so eager to assist others ... On Moc-Pages I joined two Battlestar Galactica groups. I found

them so helpful and eager to give others help for those difficult builds and photo editing tips. AWSOME!!!!

<http://www.mocpages.com/group.php/13658> and <http://www.mocpages.com/group.php/64>

For that extra effect you may like to try <http://www.mocpages.com/group.php/14752>

Turning 45 this year has slowed me down with arthritis in both hands, clicking and separating bricks is more painful than when I was a kid but that won't stop me yet as you will read below.

Now for the reason I have been asked to write this article

Battlestar VALKYRIE

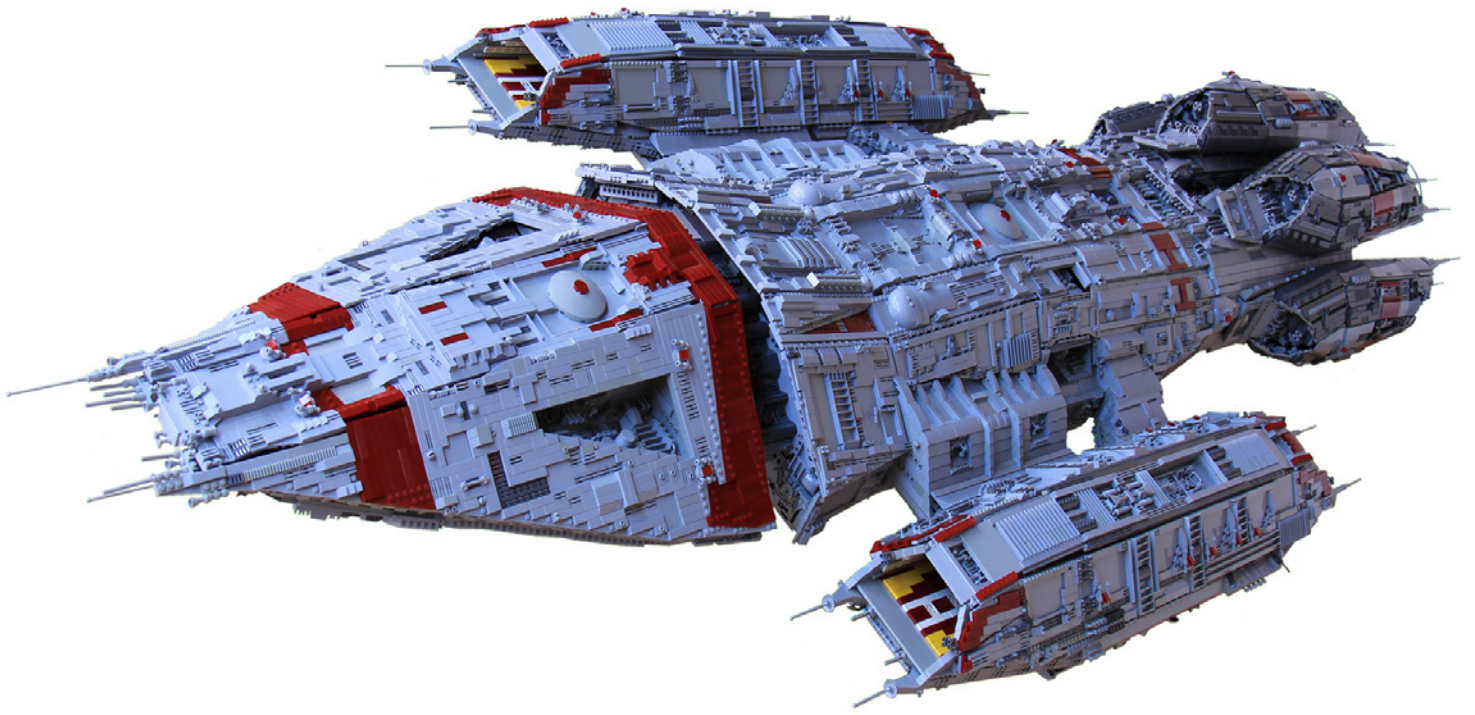
This had to be the best of the best in all ways with little reference material to work from where the movie model was concerned and so many variations from brilliant minds out there on the net. I began to build this mega beast from the front to the back. I thought of the Valkyrie while waiting for parts for the Berzerk. I thought 7 foot long is enough. MMMMMM I was wrong. It kept growing to a 2670mm from the front to the main engines. When adding the boosters the overall length was 3100mm. This mega structure posed so many problems as I built it, I was continually rebuilding sections to support all the angles. When it came to designing the underside I flipped it over to reveal more structural faults in my design. Fixing up the faults I added the detail from stem to stern. I impressed myself this time, weeks passed. The belly was finished. I flipped it over again only to find out it was offset by two plates thickness and caused it to buckle in the middle as I layered on the hull detail. I was not happy!!!!.. I had to flip it over again and rectify the problem, strip off all the details and re-build the sub frame. OH WELL!!! Another learning curve.

With that fixed I rebuilt the main hull again from stem to stern. This time I added a 2400mm X 8studs wide X 6 plates high strap (backbone) with an upward curve at the ends to stop the sagging. A lattice of Technic blocks formed the inner skeleton which all the hull plating was attached to. That was some effort getting to that stage. The Landing bays were fixed to the main hull during the initial build and after two attempts to get it to look right I was Happy WOOOHOOO !!!!!. The boosters were sleek, round, curved, angled and it seemed impossible when looking at them to fix them to the body. I had four attempts at the design. Instead of just building one at a time, I built all four at the same time, to save time. HA. "I was wrong". It took time to build and dismantle over and over again. Yes it was definitely worth the effort, the end product was AWSOME. A spaceship on its own.

All along during the build I was thinking how I was going to get it out of the room and into the Garage to take photos as the house was too small for getting the ship in full frame.

The BIG move

I placed the Valkyrie on a 2400mm x 1200mm sheet of chipboard padded with pillows and screwed a length of board 90degrees to the chipboard long edge so one of the landing bays could rest on it. I strapped it down to reduce any movement. Then the whole thing was tipped on the side so that I could get it through the narrow doors in the house. I made a rolling platform trolley to roll the lot easily to the garage. I called upon my neighbour for assisting in the move and to keep it stable as we rolled it to the garage.



When we finally got it into the garage we lifted it onto a table so I could attach the model to a frame which will allow me to hoist it up and lower it onto a stand which I welded up. After it was lowered on the stand and I was happy that it would not fall off, I rolled the model into position and added the boosters and all the extra detail that set the model off. I took 2500 images over 3 days.

I wanted to photograph the underside without any interference from the stand or the straps used in the lifting of the model. I got some great images of the belly with the straps but not good enough for my liking. The model was getting weaker and weaker each time I placed it on the hoist. When I flipped it over for the final shoot the beggar just crumbled due to gravity. It was in slow motion as it broke up. I wish I'd had the video camera rolling when it did. I threw my arms up in the air and said "OH WELL!!!! At least I don't have to decide if I wanted to keep it for a while". The choice was made for me. I was laughing as I picked up all the parts. I went inside the house and made coffee and left the rest of the mess for another day. I spent many nights selecting the best images and edited out the background to place the Valkyrie on more suitable starry sky.

I liked the Valkyrie because of its Gothic appeal; it was just so different from the rest.

After the Valkyrie's destruction, I pulled the rest apart, counted the elements, colour sorted then sorted all the parts in to their individual components " Boy did that take some time" 42,341 elements.

The next build was another Cylon Advanced Basestar inspired from a LDD build designed by Curtis Black. It was Awesome the way it was designed but I did not think it would be strong enough to hold up to gravity and in LEGO®. Regardless I built it and modified it as I worked on the weaknesses and sleeked it up even more as I could not build it exactly, compromise was in order. It is a very nice looking model.

Now I am working on a special build as a tribute to Ralph McQuarrie and his vision for Battlestar Galactica. I am using his very limited drawings to build the Basestar he designed. I have not seen or found any models on the internet, so it is open season on detail but the shape will be his. After this build I will be creating his Battlestar Galactica. 3 images found. All a tribute to his genius.... Rest In Peace...

I hope to build for as long as I can. When the day comes the entire collection will be passed to my Nephew and Nieces. I will say I am still "OLD SCHOOL" in my building skills. Still willing to use the new modern techniques unless they or I fail me then back to the old way.

For more information on my builds or if you want more detailed images please go to :-

<http://www.mocpages.com/mocs.php?id=39677>

<http://www.brickshelf.com/cgi-bin/gallery.cgi>

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