

Review: The LEGO Build-It Book: Amazing Vehicles

By Jetro

Pictures by No Starch Press

Review The LEGO® Build-It Book: Amazing Vehicles

Author: Nathanaël Kuipers and Mattia Zamboni

Pages: 136

Publisher: No Starch Press

Have you ever felt that you would like to get more out of a box of LEGO than the one, two or even three different models you get instructions for? Virtually any AFOL will have at some point reused parts from different sets for his/her MOCs. Large collections, built up over years of collecting, and a never ending stream of orders for individual parts from BrickLink or LEGO have resulted in MOCs of all shapes and sizes, but there is an art to building with a limited set of elements at your disposal, especially if those elements are mainly “standard” pieces.

It is exactly this challenge that Nathanael Kuipers addresses in “The LEGO Build-It Book: Amazing Vehicles”. Using a single Bill Of Materials (BOM), Nathanaël presents 10 inspiring models that look every bit as finished as the official models these parts were packaged for; possibly even better. But his book is more than just a collection of instructions for building cool models. In addition to showing how he puts these creations together, Nathanaël has prepared explanations with tips & tricks and techniques he uses to get the results you can see in these models. Concepts like building in different directions, making strong connections and building at different angles are explained and then implemented in the models so you learn how to make it work in a hands-on way. At the same time, it is a delight to build the models due to the easy to follow high quality instructions prepared by graphic artist Mattia Zamboni who has done an excellent job both at the instructions and at the renders that show the finished models.

Have you ever felt stuck when trying to work with a limited amount of parts? The LEGO Build-It Book: Amazing Vehicles is clear proof that the limitation is not so much in the parts, but rather in how you manage to use them. So whether you simply want instructions for 10 great alternative models or need a hands-on guide to improve your creative skills, this book is a valuable addition to your LEGO Library.

Still not convinced? HispaBrick Magazine® talked to Nathanaël Kuipers, author of this book, about what prompted him to write it and how it was created:

HBM: You are well known for your alternate models built with the pieces of a single set (see HispaBrick Magazine 009). What made you take things one step further and write a book about it?

NK: It seemed like there was a sudden increase of interest for my alternates; more people requested instructions and several persons contacted me with the suggestion to make a commercial book/ instruction booklets. Even though I had considered this before, now I also started to believe in this idea myself. When graphic artist Mattia Zamboni contacted me very enthusiastically showing some of his work that he had been voluntarily working on based on my alternates, I was convinced that this book concept about alternates had potential. Considering



Mattia's work and effort, I thought it was best to combine our skills to develop something of high quality. He agreed, and that's when things really took off...

HBM: Who is this book primarily aimed at?

NK: First I'd like to highlight that we've tried to make this book interesting for as many as possible. For LEGO® enthusiasts both young and old: collectors, builders, for people appreciating graphic design and CGI,... However if we have to narrow it down, this book is perhaps not so much for the highly skilled LEGO fans, but more aimed at those who like to build the LEGO products, but are looking for a bigger challenge, eager to learn more about the LEGO System, to improve their building skills and hopefully get inspired to design more MOC's.

HBM: So what differentiates this book from the rest?

NK: I think the keyword here is accessibility. The problem is that some of the other books show some very inspiring material, but often can be a bit intimidating as well, because you need loads of pieces, very specific ones, and/or mad skills to be able to replicate something similar. To me this can actually become counter productive and more frustrating than motivating.

In contrast, this book covers step-by-step how to build very unique and differentiated models, by using only a common set of pieces, not that many in quantity and quite easy to obtain (if it's not already part of the average collection). In my humble opinion this is the concept that shows how one can be truly creative, when you have only so much - or in this case little - to work with.

HBM: Why did you place all the building tips in two large blocks rather than throughout the building instructions?



About the authors

Nathanaël Kuipers
Model Designer

Nathanaël Kuipers is a Dutch design professional who worked for several years as a product developer for the LEGO Group in Denmark, where he was mainly responsible for engineering LEGO Technic models. He is the mastermind behind models like #8261, #8271, #8272, #8292, and #8674. He has also collaborated on the creation of many other models. Check out his work at <http://www.nkubate.com/>.



Mattia Zamboni
Graphic Artist

Mattia Zamboni is a fan of graphic design, photography, and LEGO, and he has a degree in electrical engineering. Based in Switzerland, he pursues his passion of graphic design, showcasing his talents within the world of 3D computer graphic arts. Check out his work at <http://www.brickpassion.com/>.



01 OFF-ROADER

Complexity
Functions
Pieces

OFF-ROADER

Design notes: wide wheel base, high clearance, exposed shock absorbers, front bumper, winch, spotlights

Technical specifications:
Dimensions (l x w x h): 20 x 10 x 10 studs
Wheel base: 11 studs
Axle width (front/rear): 10/10 studs

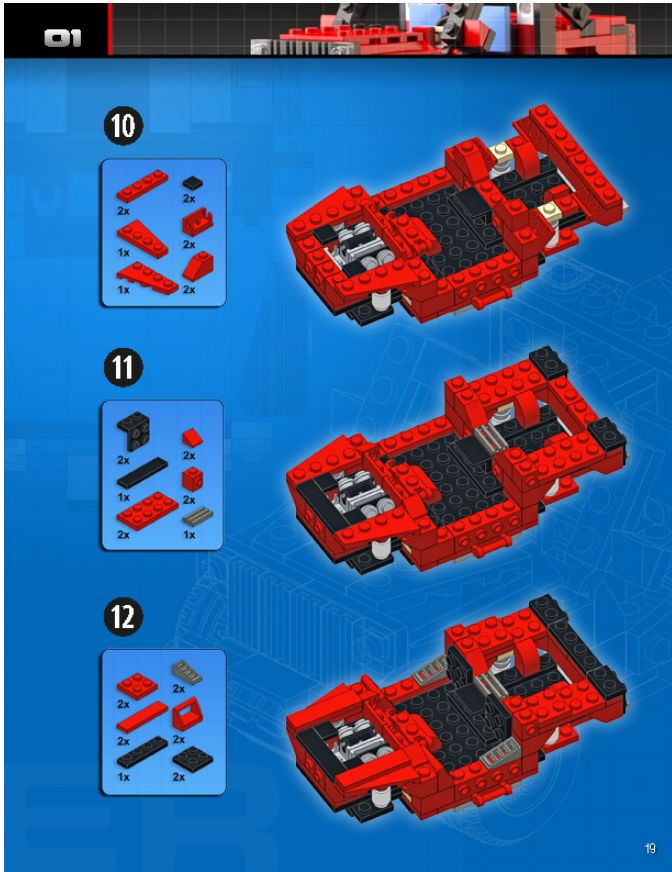
Features: hinged hood, V4 engine, rear accessory clips

NK: We actually thought about that option, but concluded that it wouldn't be beneficial in our case. I had a chance to build through the first series of the Master Builder Academy (MBA) sets that are normally exclusive to the US market. While the books that accompany the sets are very thorough and have a high quality finish, I felt that the tips at the bottom of virtually every page somehow took the pace out of the building experience. Furthermore, by keeping the building tips in 2 large blocks we avoid repeating perhaps similar explanations throughout the instructions. In addition, our goal was to make the book as appealing as possible to an international public, and therefore we decided to keep the text simple and short.

HBM: Was there a special reason why you chose the #5867 Super Speeder as your starting point?

NK: To be honest, not every set provides the proper materials to get easily creative with. Some offer way more possibilities for rebuilds than others. Creator in general seems to be a good line, but even here some sets are much better suited than others. In that respect #5867 is a real gem; even though the main models are perhaps not the greatest, the parts inventory is just excellent. Once I started to get the hang of it, this combination of elements offers an incredible amount of potential, giving you the possibility to build pretty much any type of wheeled vehicle that you can imagine. I'm aware that this model is not officially available anymore, which is a pity, but this book's focus is not so much on #5867, but more about stimulating creativity in general by using a limited amount of pieces. And once again, the elements in question should not be that difficult to obtain.

HBM: The models that are used in this book were all published on Brickshelf / MOCPages / Flickr. Did you make them with the book in mind or was that just a happy coincidence? And to what degree do you believe the book adds to the models that you published?



NK: It's just a happy coincidence, really, although admittedly I never presented the internal structures publically for a reason. On one side it offers a nice creative challenge for those who want to try to replicate the models, and on the other I do not give all my secrets away for free. However, some people didn't really understand this concept and have at some point published their own versions of my models, including the internals, and presented them as my solution. So with this book I also hope to show and prove that my models are actually quite sturdy and to a certain extent playable, despite the unusual building solutions. But what this book should mainly add is getting my work known to a larger audience, outside the LEGO® community.

HBM: Can you tell us anything about the second volume?

NK: It's pretty much more of the same, covering how to build another 10 completely different models from the same pieces, with some additional tips and tricks. However, the biggest news is that there will be 2 new models, which have not been published before, and were specifically designed for this book! For those with a keen eye, some teasers can already be found with the information available. So stay tuned, because more details should follow on those models, when we get closer to launch...

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