




4 THE FU

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An outsider to our hobby might be overwhelmed by all the themes and categories. Beyond the usual Castle, Space, and Town, there are other less known genres like microscale, trains, WWII, mosaics, or mecha. Even less known subcategories include Vic Vipers, and sculptures - then there's dollhouses and Ice Planet. The rarer, more obscure the interest; the more of a



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shut-in hipster the enthusiast is (aren't we all, though?). One of those literally tiny categories, wedged in somewhere between steampunk and Bonktron, is the so-called "4-wide car" - four studs wide, as scales in car building are generally classified in stud width. The readers of Hispabrick may be unfamiliar with them.

A little history, then: technically, building cars in 4-wide has been commonplace since the production of 420 Police Car, way back in 1973. Many people in the community fondly remember this set, and rightly so. It had a minimalist look to it, a sort of honesty which one doesn't find in today's colorful selection, which permanently inducted it into the LEGO® set hall of fame, right beside 6835 Saucer Scout and 375 Castle (also mystically known as "The Yellow Castle"). 420 and its endearingly goofy Town derivatives were what most hobbyists thought of when they heard "4-wide car".



Among a small group of people, however, "4-wide" has come to resemble TLG's Tiny Turbos line, a subtheme of the once-popular Racers theme (now defunct). Introduced in 2005, the 4-wide Tiny Turbos (or TTs, as they are called) were intended to snatch away a chunk of the toy/model car market, which they did, for six years until their discontinuation in 2011. We worried our future possibilities would be limited, but TLG never lets us down in supplying new parts every year, Tiny Turbos or not. We - the 4-wide fanatics - started on MOCpages. It is largely due to the community of nine-year-olds posting slightly modified Tiny Turbos there that the general adult LEGO fan community had come to regard the theme with disdain. I was one of these junior enthusiasts before being taught, hopefully with success, by the few who knew how to do the theme justice. We migrated from MOCpages to flickr, as many were doing around 2008-ish. It is here that something must be said about my friend Adam Janusick. Not only did he come up with the fictional universe around which most in the community build their cars, he was always the most prolific 4-wide builder, and acted as a preservationist of the theme when no one else was inspired enough to build anything.

1973

Tommy Nuñez





Dylan Denton

I was requested to do a sort of guide on how to build a 4-wide car. Well, truth be told, I really don't think there is some straightforward guide on how to build them! It's really the same as building mechas, castles, or space: it's all about using your creativity, and breaking the rules, if there are any, is encouraged. Building in 4-wide is especially similar to other small scales. You have to find more complex solutions to problems that would be easier to solve in scales with more room. Though for a long time the standard "template" for a 4-wide was a pair of 2x2 axles connected by a 2x6 plate, usually with 1x4 brackets at the ends, we managed to break out of that habit and head to more creative, complex platforms that would support prettier designs.

2014

Since the possibility of building detailed engines and interiors in 4-wide is rather negligible (except perhaps to the limitlessly talented Tommy Nuñez), it's the design standpoint of the build that takes center stage. Unlike in larger scales, where the focus tends to be the entire package, 4-wides are forced to sacrifice functionality for design, and thus may not appeal to builders who like their creations to move and make sounds and do things. I've always loved design though, especially the automotive-related. Hearing and reading about how people create stunning works of art out of metal, glass and wood fascinates me. I have no clay, tools, ovens, wood, glass or metal to work with, so I try to translate my ideas "in the brick", as people say. Unorthodox and inaccurate, 4-wide LEGO® cars are hardly the perfect medium, but it's great fun seeing one's ideas come together in that form.



Adam Janusick

My favorite design to date is the Sentinel, a personal luxury coupe inspired by the Buick Riviera. The reason I like it so much is that it has some semblance of the design elements agreeing with each other - that is, to me there's no visual conflict anywhere on the car. The 1x2 curved slope is used on it a lot, spreading to the sides on the hood in an imitation of a 1920s racecar, and on the back window and trunk lid to give it a sweeping look. Cheese slopes sit on the sides and act as the headlights, which are at the same level at the opposite ends. I like the idea of a design having a visual cherry-on-the-icing, an element which stands out from the rest and acts as the figurehead. That is the grille, the two cheese graters dropping down from the tip of the front like the prow of a large boat. To me, all these parts make it look rather Art Deco, with the combination of flat planes and curves, and the bit of elegant decoration that are the rims. That's how I see this model.

Many people think that there's not that much to it, that it takes a relatively short time to build a 4-wide. It's not always the case. The Snöwfox, for example, was steadily perfected over three months. That is, they sat on my desk and occasionally I'd look at them knowing that they were almost there but they needed that something which I would inevitably stumble upon later. As much time as I waste on them, my works still aren't as good as the ones from the community (included on the opposite page). The red car in the grimy garage was very heavily inspired by 1980s sports cars, with its Ford RS2000-esque spoiler, Pontiac Fiero-esque roofline, and the clever nod to '80s LEGO sets with the front fenders. The murder of crows below it depicts the dynamic, athletic shapes of modern track cars and their derivatives. Last but not least is the stunning gray car, whose knife-y edges are inspired by Cadillac's recent Art & Science design language.

These creations represent what can be created in this scale. Four years ago or so Dylan Denton fit a miniature engine in a 4-wide, a little red off-roader. Three years later he was wondering how to make minute details such as mirrors or velocity stacks. Building in 4-wide improves one's skills faster than Barney Oldfield, and I've dabbled in many other themes. And some practice building small makes one's larger-scale creations infinitely better than otherwise. Having the philosophy of cramming things into tiny spaces is valuable no matter what you build, and yet, many people think building small is limiting. Actually, it's true! - but when you do build something good, it's much more rewarding.

And isn't that what it's all about?

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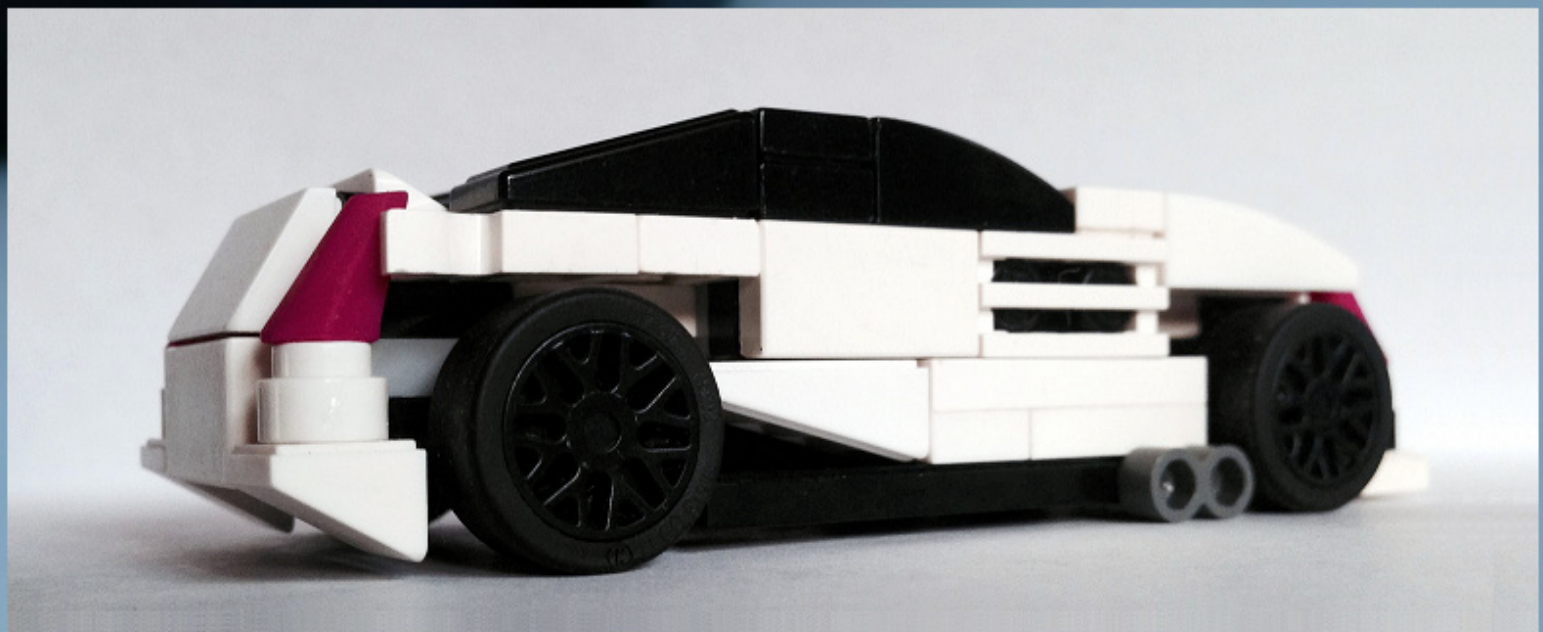




ADAM JANUSICK



DYLAN DENTON



TOMMY NUÑEZ