



LUGs of the world: Chile LUG

By HispaBrick Magazine®

Pictures courtesy of Christian Breinbauer

Every time we publish a new issue of the magazine we like to track the impact and downloads related to that specific issue. As our readers know, HispaBrick Magazine® is written in two different languages, we have a Spanish version and an English version. The Spanish version was downloaded almost exclusively from Spain, but in the last issues we have seen a gradual increase of the downloads from other countries, mainly from South America, where Spanish is the predominant language. We wanted to know something about those countries and the way they organize their AFOL communities. So, we contacted Christian Breinbauer, LEGO® ambassador for Chile LUG (<http://chilelug.cl/>), who kindly agreed to tell us something about the history of Chile LUG and his impressions about how they see the LEGO hobby in Chile, a country located in the southwest of South America.

HispaBrick Magazine: How did Chile LUG get started?

Christian Breinbauer: Our LUG was born due to a desire to find people with the same likes for the constructions with LEGO® bricks, this is just the same all over the world. I talked to a friend, Lucas “Legorio” Peña, that it was necessary to form a group of LEGO fans in order to gather more and more fans, so that we could make some events here in Chile, like the ones we saw in other parts of the world, mainly in the United States and Europe. Finally, when we met for the first time, there were 4 people: Lucas, Sergio Rojas, Miguel Saavedra and me. And then more people came to the group.

HBM: How many members does Chile LUG have? Which is your level of activity?

CB: We have about 500 members in our LUG, those who join in our Facebook account. But there are only 30 AFOLs who take part and prepare all the exhibitions, events and other activities of our LUG. We are mainly adults (AFOLs), but we allow minors to be part of our LUG, if they are very interested and involved in this hobby, because we have to stimulate the builders of tomorrow!

HBM: What are your main means of contact: forums, meetings, workshops ...?

CB: We have a Facebook group, that is our main way to contact other members. Facebook has been a very useful tool to know each other no matter if we don't meet in person. And, thanks to this tool, we have created a very friendly group. We also hold a monthly gathering.

HBM: Do you organize events or exhibitions?

CB: Yes, we have attended some events. Throughout the year we are able to attend some events related to Sci-Fi or Fantasy encounters, or local Comic Con, or X-fan events. Furthermore, we have organized our BrickFest, in March. The last edition was the second, and we had a very good audience.

HBM: Are there any other LUGs in your country? Do you have contact with them? And, do you have any contact with LUGs of other countries?

CB: We are the only known LUG here, in Chile. Some people in other cities of the country are beginning to organize local gatherings and events, because they can't travel to Santiago (the main city of Chile) to attend the official meetings of the LUG.

I'm in contact with the LEGO® ambassador program representatives of BrasilLUG and LUG Peru. I share our experiences with them, and they have the same circumstances and problems as we have in Chile.

HBM: Do you have contact with TLC (The LEGO Company)?

CB: We are in contact with TLC by means of the Community Managers of the Ambassadors program. Here, in Chile, there is no official TLC representation, so we have to contact SILFA, who act as authorized representative of TLC. And that is our way to let them know that we are interested in organizing or collaborate in events.

HBM: Which is your role in Chile LUG?

CB: I'm one of the founding members of Chile LUG. And now, as Chile LUG LEGO ambassador, I'm in charge of managing the events we take part in. I'm also responsible for the communication between the LUG and The LEGO Company, through the LEGO® ambassadors forum.

HBM: Chile is very far from the main distribution channels of LEGO® sets, is it difficult to get a complete catalog there?

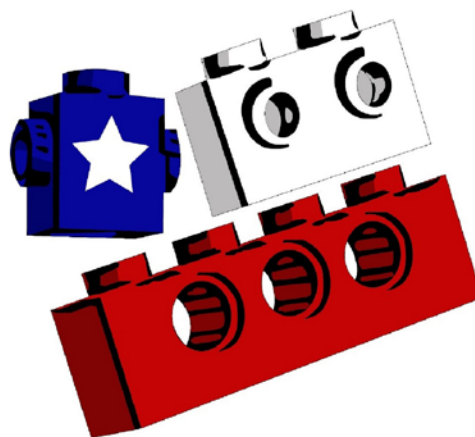
CB: Yes, we are geographically far. However, Chile is the Latin American country with the highest per capita consumption of LEGO® sets, so we have a complete catalogue with almost all lines. But we don't have special promotions, like exclusive minifigs or other special items. The main problem is not the availability of certain sets but the price of them, in many cases the same set can be twice or three times the price that it is sold for in other countries like United States.

HBM: According to the standard of living in Chile, do you think that LEGO® sets are expensive?

CB: Yes, as I said before, LEGO® sets are very expensive here, in many they are priced twice or three times more expensive than in the United States. That's a shame because LEGO® is considered an elitist toy, and many children cannot afford it. There is no denying that playing with a high quality toy like LEGO® is exceptionally beneficial for children. But many parents prefer to buy a video game instead of a LEGO® set because they think it is better to spend the same money for a game that needs a lot of hours to finish than a LEGO® set that can be built once in a very short time. Don't get me wrong, I love videogames, but people are not aware of the "Replay value" of the LEGO sets, so they prefer to buy other toys. Chile is a country with high rates of attentional deficit disorder diagnosis (30% contrary to the 10% worldwide rates), so there is a great use of methylphenidate for the treatment of

CHILE-LUG

(LEGO® Users Group)



Agrupación de AFOLS (Adult Fans Of LEGO®) de Chile.

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this disease. In many cases this is necessary, but I believe that a great percentage of children could be stimulated with specific toys instead of being treated with medication. I think that LEGO® would be very useful to have an alternative way to solve this problem. On the other hand, the high price of the LEGO sets helps the proliferation of many clone and pirate brands, which undoubtedly are lower quality toys, but cheaper than LEGO® products.

HBM: Which are the most successful LEGO themes in Chile? And, your favourite ones?

CB: The City and Star Wars themes are the best sold. Friends is being very well received on our market, furthermore other themes like Ninjago and Super Heroes are selling very well too. My favourite ones are Star Wars and Architecture. But now I'm starting to build modular Cities. I like to do City or Star Wars displays, because I can include many small stories in them.

HBM: What would you like to build individually or with other AFOLs? Why?

CB: I always have many projects in mind, but everything is limited by the availability of parts. This year we were able to take part in LUGBULK for the first time, so I hope we will be able to build things in a larger scale: dioramas, buildings and sculptures.
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