



Review: 42030 Remote-Controlled VOLVO L350F Wheel Loader

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Pictures: LEGO® System A/S courtesy of TechnicBRICKS

Review: 42030 – Remote Controlled Volvo

This year's technic Flagship brings another licensed collaboration, this time with Volvo. There are opinions in favour and against licensed sets – the licence adds to the cost, but also allows the representation of certain themes that many love and collect. And there is no lack of licensed themes in LEGO®. But what about a licence for technic set? If there is one word that describes what many Technic fans want it is "authenticity" – mechanisms that are as close as possible to their real-life counterpart. Take that one step further and you are looking for vehicles (and machinery) that are as close to their originals as possible. In this sense the Volvo license is an intelligent step for both companies and a good way of providing the much sought after authenticity to the fans.

A licensed set cannot be "just " a cool vehicle. It has to look just right, imitating shapes and mimicking functions as faithfully as possible. Add to that the fact that there is a stronger and stronger demand for fully motorised and remote controllable models. Enter the Remote Controlled Volvo.

Volvo what? I have left the second part of the name out on purpose, because that is where this set goes the extra mile. The 42030 isn't "just " a licensed set, representing an existing vehicle. A technic set is supposed to come with a B-model, an alternative that can be built with the same parts. This set actually represents two authentic vehicles that can be built with the same inventory: the L350F Wheel Loader and the A25F Articulated Hauler.

L350F Wheel Loader

The main model is the L350F Wheel Loader. While this is not the first time LEGO® markets a wheel loader this one is by far the largest to date, and fully motorised to boot. Authenticity is a complicated concept: steering a vehicle like this with a remote control requires a steering system that will auto centre, something that can only be achieved with a servo motor, while the traditional way of steering these vehicles is by means of a hydraulic system. Authenticity has its limits. It needs to be balanced with playability and so the servo solution is an acceptable one. A curious fact about this set is that it includes four motors, one of each of the current Power Functions line-up (excepting the e-motor which has only been used in an Education set), M, L, XL and Servo, which are connected to two IR-Receivers (V1 if anyone is wondering) and controlled with two remote controls.

But authenticity can be ensured in different ways. The general line of the model is so close to its big brother that when you place one next to the other (in the appropriate scale, as shown in the back of the single(!) instruction booklet) they really look alike. Another way to make a set authentic is by including special parts or colours. The 42030 uses only pre-existing parts, but the engine blocks come in green, making the engine stand out inside the model. The IR-Receivers have been placed very skilfully and go virtually unnoticed, despite the colour coding used to identify which motor needs to be connected to which port.

A model of this size is hard to describe in only words and pictures and it isn't until you have it in your hands and play with it for a while that you fully appreciate every little detail. Even so, I hope the pictures in this review will whet your appetite.

A25F Articulated Hauler

While the Wheel Loader is a great model by itself, we are only half done. There is still a second model that can be made with the same parts. Rather than using the same chassis with a different upper structure or with a new add-on, this time the B-model is a completely different vehicle that needs to be built starting from scratch.

Building instructions need to be downloaded from LEGO.com (in three parts) and I keep wondering why the quality of these downloadable instructions is so poor. They were never meant to be available as print copies and still all the warnings and information on pages 2 and 3 is completely illegible and the rendering quality of the building steps poor (though workable).

The model features a number of similarities with the main model – something that can only be expected as some of the important elements (like the portal axles and tyres) and techniques (servo motor) are common to both models. The Articulated Hauler is a “B” model though, since it “only” uses 3 of the four available motors (Driving, Steering and Dumping the load), in accordance with the type of vehicle it represents. Some outstanding details include the placement of the battery box in the front of the vehicle, under the engine and the XL drive motor. Overall, calling the model simply “satisfactory” would not give it the credit it deserves. If it wasn't for the price-tag, I would seriously consider getting a second copy of the set to let the two models work together – because that is how they were conceived.

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