

**The medieval**

**creations of**



**cesar**



**soares**

*By HispaBrick Magazine®  
Pictures by Cesar Soares*



*Bluewater Castle*



My name is César Soares, I'm a 37 years old Sports Teacher and I'm from Portugal. I'm married and have a 2 year old son.

**HBM:** From what I have read in one of your posts on Flickr, you came out of your dark ages in May last year. How long were those dark ages and what brought you out of them?

**CS:** I stopped playing with LEGO when I was around 17 years old. I entered college to take my degree and had to move to a different city so all my collection was left behind. Besides I was getting too old to ask my parents to buy me more sets!

For roughly 20 years I did not play with the little plastic bricks nor did I buy any sets or parts whatsoever. Then, one day, around May 2014, while I was watching one of my favorite TV series, The Big Bang Theory, one of the main characters was playing with a huge Star Wars Death Star, Ultimate Collection Series set. I was mesmerized by the size and awesomeness of what I was seeing. Immediately I stopped watching the show

and went to the internet to look up what that was! I quickly realized that there was a huge community of adults that still play and build LEGO® models. Eventually I discovered one of my country's LUGs (Comunidade 0937) and joined them. I bought my first set a few weeks later (Grand Emporium) and so my addiction started!

**HBM:** Your first constructions were of different themes and scales, but your series of medieval constructions is probably what has given you most notoriety among AFOLS. Why did you decide to focus your effort on this theme?

**CS:** When I started to buy sets and parts my intention was to build modular buildings and houses with interiors as, at the moment, that was more appealing to me. With a smaller collection and with limited building experience I made microscale MOCs and also some with interiors. They were easy and fun to build and allowed me to gain experience and learn some basic techniques.

Then, once again without expecting it, I was re-watching the Lord of The Rings movie on TV and thought that would be fun to build some medieval/fantasy buildings like houses or castles. As my collection was very small, building castles in the true sense of the word, was difficult so I built a medieval tavern. I enjoyed so much and the feedback from the community was so good that I fell in love with the theme. Also, the opportunity to build landscapes with trees, vegetation and such was very appealing as I am a Nature lover.



Besides this, the colors that I get to use, the strange angles and shapes that this theme allows me to experiment and the whimsical and fantasy allure that surrounds it is just perfect to me.

So, I devoted myself to studying, experimenting and continuing to build in this theme as, at the moment, it is the one that attracts me most. I want to try different themes of course, namely space and Sci-Fi, but until May 2015 at least I will be doing lots of Medieval/fantasy MOCs.

Far away and far above  
Rapunzel's Tower



Cesbrick 

Barrenroot  
Tree



Cesbrick 

**HBM:** Your medieval constructions stand out because of their variety, quality and level of detail. Where do you get the inspiration for these constructions?

**CS:** I study a lot! And by studying I mean that I research literally thousands of photos on various sources like Google, Pinterest and Deviantart.

Usually, I have a clear global idea of what I want to do. Be it a house, a cottage, a castle or just a big tree. Then I scout the internet for pictures that could give me ideas or concepts. I also happen to live in an area with lots of vegetation

Of course I also follow and admire some of the best builders from these theme and take lots of ideas and inspiration from their work.

I also have a huge database with pictures that I saved in all this time so I can look up later to become inspired.

**HBM:** What are the main stages you follow in the construction of your buildings?

**CS:** If I don't have already a final idea of what I want to create I look on the internet or in my database and start to collect ideas and thoughts. I take one aspect or one detail from one picture, another one from another picture and so on until I have a clear

idea of what I want to do. Of course there are lots of things I came up on my own, but I cannot overlook the help I get from various external sources.

The next step is to make a simple sketch of the final result that I want to achieve. These are nothing special or fancy, just rough drawings so I can get a clear idea in my mind.

The first thing that I always do is the base for the MOC. Usually an irregular one as it feels more organic and natural. Then I build the main structure (house, cottage, etc) and finally I do the landscape.

The roof, however, I always leave for last as it is almost always big and colorful and the color must combine with the rest of the building. Yes, most of the times I only choose the roof color after all the rest is finished.

**HBM:** How long does it take you to finish each of these constructions?

**CS:** I have a full time job, so my time is fairly limited. But the most common scenario for me is to wait until my son falls asleep and build like 2 or 3 hours per day. A regular construction from me takes roughly 3 weeks, taking up maybe 60 hours total.

Gandalf's Retreat  
Gardens of Jorien





**HBM:** You use a number of original techniques for walls and roofs. Tell us a little about the tricks you use to get those textures on the walls. How do you get those original curves on the roofs?

**CS:** I always try to achieve a natural and organic look on my builds so in every way that I can I incorporate lots of textures and non square shapes. Especially on the roofs I try to avoid making them with straight lines to make them look whimsical and fantasy looking.

Basically, what I do is use lots of hinges and plate wedges and connect them. This is time consuming as I have to experiment various angles and various different wedges until I get the shape that I wanted. Then it's just a matter of covering the plates with tiles and plates (mostly tiles) and with the help of jumpers and curved slopes I try to fill any gaps that are showing and any hinges that are still viewable. Of course many of the tiles and plates that cover the roofs are just half attached so it can follow the curve of the roof.



*Fundo Village*





*Healer's Guild*

*Cesbrick*



*Black Hollow*



*Cesbrick*



After all these, again with the use of hinges and bricks with the stud on one side, I secure the roof on the base as you can see in the pictures. I take a final look and try to cover any gaps that are still showing.

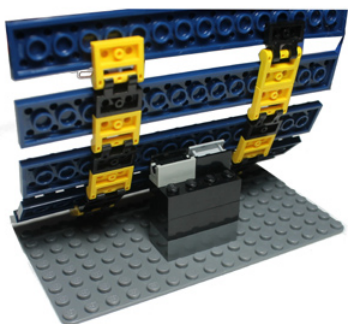
The walls are a little simpler but also time consuming as I use lots of small parts as 1x1 round plates, 1x1 plates and 1x1 tiles. I also use many headlights, 1x1 bricks with on stud on the side and 1x2 masonry bricks. Although they seem completely randomly put together, they're not. I actually spend a lot of time trying to make the wall look random and that is not as easy as it sounds. I must consider several things such as: not joining too many round plates together, putting a natural mix of 1x2 tiles and 1x2 plates so the texture is not overly chaotic, avoiding to cover the masonry bricks with some of the tiles, if using more than one color (for example dark tan masonry bricks) join them on patches and not loosely as this seems more natural in my opinion. I also like to put the walls on hinges so I can make them lean as I want and give them a crooked and whimsical look.

Below you can see some pictures of one of my roofs during construction.

First I attach the plates with plate hinges like these.



Then I secure the connected plates to the base of the roof structure with hinges.



With this method you can get the curves that you want.



Then it's a matter of covering the plates and the hinges with tiles and plates, like in these picture. Note that most of them are just semi-attached so it can accommodate the roof's curvature.



**HBM:** None of the details in your scenes is random. When you plan a building do you already have a detailed idea of the scene that will take place around it or do those details emerge as you finish the building?

**CS:** In my builds I always try to create a scene that is the most organic and realistic possible. So usually their packed with details and little things. Most of those little things are already in my mind or in my sketches, but of course that I make deviations and changes from the original plans. Also, as the build evolves, I experiment a lot with different accessories and parts (containers, vegetation, wagon wheels, etc ) in various places and positions to achieve better results.

I have a keen aesthetics sense, so I when I feel that something doesn't look right or feels awkward I change things around (be it color wise or change the all part) until I'm satisfied. For instance, I change the color and positioning of the vegetation and trees all the time. Sometimes I experiment with all the available colors until it looks harmonious. This is the final touch that I do to my constructions.

**HBM:** What plans do you have for future builds? Will you change to a different theme or will you continue building medieval scenes?

**CS:** As I said, I will continue to build in this theme at least until may 2015 as I'm working on a display to my LUGs expositions that will have that fantasy and whimsical vibe that I love. After that, I would love to build on other themes and start to expand my experience. I also love space and Sci-Fi things so I will get to build on that line eventually.

But I don't think I will ever stop building medieval MOCs as I really love the good feeling that those give to me. And I have some new and crazy ideas that I would like to implement on the next builds, with unusual colors and unusual shapes. Stay tuned!

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