

Paredes de Coura Fan Weekend

By Legotron (A. Bellón)

Pictures by Legotron (A. Bellón)

The Paredes de Coura Fan Weekend, an event organised by the LUG Comunidade 0937 in the north of Portugal, took place on June 10, 11 and 12.

The event serves to unite fans of LEGO constructions from all over the world and this time around 174 AFOLs from 17 different countries were in attendance. The event is a perfect occasion to meet builders from different countries, as well as see their creations. Everything was very well organised, a lot of care was given to the event and the needs of each participant. We only needed to concern ourselves with enjoying all the activities that took place during the event.



One of the differences between this event and other smaller ones is that it is focused on the AFOLs who attend. While there were some hours during which the public could admire the constructions, most of the activities are exclusively for those who had registered for the event. This allows participants to enjoy the event much more, without having to be constantly alert to the questions of visitors or keep an eye on their own constructions.

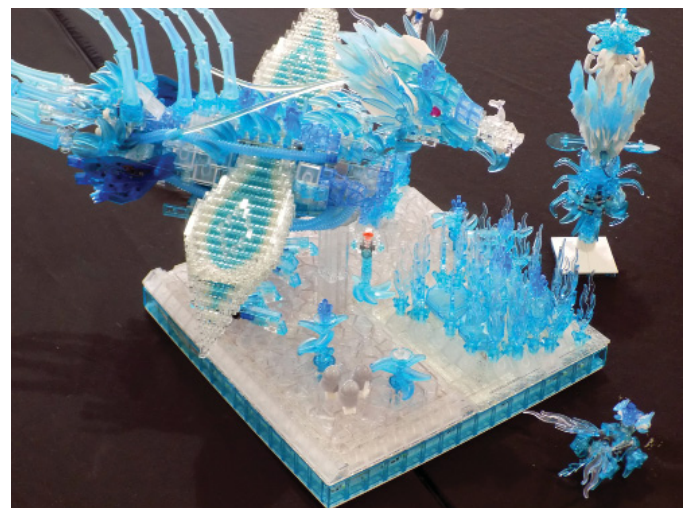
The event lasted 3 days during which multiple activities were organised. Of course the more central part of the event is seeing the fantastic constructions that were displayed in the different rooms, some of which have already been highlighted in previous issues of this magazine. But seeing a picture is not the same as seeing the actual build, allowing you to see more details and get to know the people who created them. There are many constructions worth mentioning, but it would be hard to highlight just a few, and a lot of work went into all of them. Just as noteworthy as the design of the displays and MOCs was the care with which they were displayed in the rooms, as if weeks had been spent on setting everything up. As a matter of fact, this is the type of event that has a huge GBC display because there are many participants who collaborate on it. There was a considerable number of visitors, despite the changeable weather and at times the halls were completely packed. There were also several locations where visitors and AFOLs alike could buy more LEGO parts. I have yet to come across an AFOL who says he has enough parts.



An event of these characteristics is more than just an exhibition. Over the 3 days there were numerous activities. At any time, during lunch or dinner or during any of the talks, there were games and competitions, increasing the AFOL atmosphere of the event even more. There were many moments of laughter among the participating AFOLs, who, despite the language barrier, were eager to actively participate in many of the activities the organisation had prepared for those attending.

I also want to highlight the many workshops and talks that took place during the 3 days of the event, in which designers and representatives from LEGO shared interesting ideas involving the many subjects related to the world of LEGO constructions — the design process of different themes, legal matters, relations between the LEGO company and AFOLs etc. At this point I should indicate that the way these talks are organised is more and more interesting every year, as they have gone from commercial technicalities and taglines like “we can’t tell you this” or “that’s restricted information” in favour of information that is closer to the AFOLs and more interesting. As the number of AFOLs increase and the quality of their constructions increase, so too does the quality of the speeches given during the exhibition. I don’t remember hearing any questions about the monorail this year, which is strange... It used to be a constant feature, hehehe...

Of course there was a big auction at the end which resulted in some very intense bidding wars... Although it is often one of the most interesting parts and one which gets more AFOLs together, in my opinion it can be counterproductive because on some occasions the amounts that are bid are disproportionate. Wouldn’t it be more interesting adding some lots of common and interesting parts (baseplates, tiles, etc...) so more people could have access, instead of concentrating on rare and expensive sets that are only for a lucky few?





Another of the more significant elements of this kind of event is the kindness and patience with which the different AFOLs cater to their colleagues, who are constantly asking for all kinds of details of each of the buildings that were in the exposition.

The organisation of the event was carried out really well, it was very interesting and most certainly an event I can recommend to anyone who wasn't there. 100% AFOL ;-)

On the other hand, the presence of LEGO products in the virtual world is ever more noticeable. It includes the screening of films and the possibility of playing video games, although as an old-school AFOL I dislike seeing how physical pieces are losing prominence in favour of the virtual world. I can only hope this surge in virtual LEGO products won't be to the detriment of physical sets.

Another big success of the organisers was the rest and refreshment room, because after many hours standing admiring buildings, and talking with the other participants, nothing is more welcome than being able to rest while having a refreshment in the company of other AFOLs, in a relaxed atmosphere.

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