

Review: Hilton Paris Opera

By *Iluisgib*

Pictures by Iluisgib

Set: Hilton Paris Opera

Set Number: Set designed by LCP Dirk Denoyelle

Parts: 2503



In addition to the interview with Dirk Denoyelle included in this issue, the LEGO® Certified Professional (LCP) has also been so kind as to offer us his most iconic set for review.

In the interview, Dirk explains a little about how this project came about:

The Hilton project – summer of 2015 – was an amazing experience for us. We had our art exhibit in the hotel all summer, we built a large scale model of the hotel (picture AmazingsLEGOArchitectureDirk&HiltonParis) , we did some team building workshops there for companies, we built a small scale model of the hotel concierge and we built an exclusive set, a miniscale impression of the hotel.

The model was only on display at the Hilton Opera Hotel in Paris and, from what I know, was only displayed to the people who were staying in the hotel. A LCP can produce sets, provided they are for special events with specific characteristics, and they are always to a maximum of 500 copies. Over the last few years sets produced by LCPs have gained a lot of popularity in the AFOL community due to their quality and limited access.

This is the first time HispaBrick Magazine® has analysed a set created by an LCP. And it is the first time I have built a set of this type, which makes it quite the experience.

I received a cardboard box with the set inside. It was very well packed for protection during shipping. Together with the set there was also a small card from Amazings (Dirks company) that read: "with compliments". After removing the protective material I see a luxury box – very glossy! On the front is a picture of the model and the corporate logo of the hotel. On the back there is a short description of the history of the hotel with some historical images. I'm almost afraid to touch it as I don't want to spoil anything. It's also a pity to break the seal, but there is a fantastic model inside waiting to be built. I open the seal with a pen knife and carefully take out the bags with parts and the building instructions.



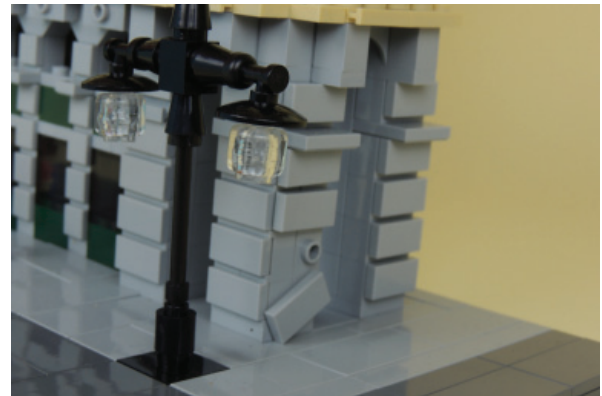
The parts are inside zip bags. I have to admit I was a little taken aback. There are 2503 parts, but no numbered bags and no logical order inside each bag. I don't even want to imagine the work the employees of Amazings must have put into preparing almost 500 sets with 2503 parts each. Of course there is some fear that parts may be missing since manual packaging can cause some errors. But at the end of the build there were parts were left over.

The spiral bound instruction manual is also different to what we are used to seeing in LEGO® sets. The front and back have a gloss finish and the interior pages are printed on glossy paper that must be 120gr or more.

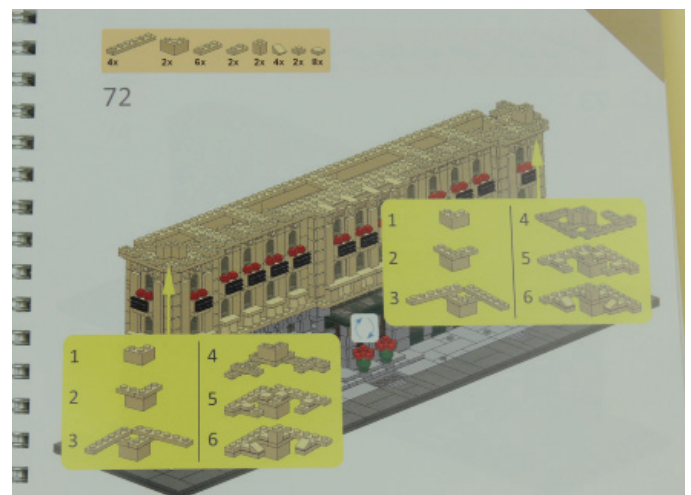
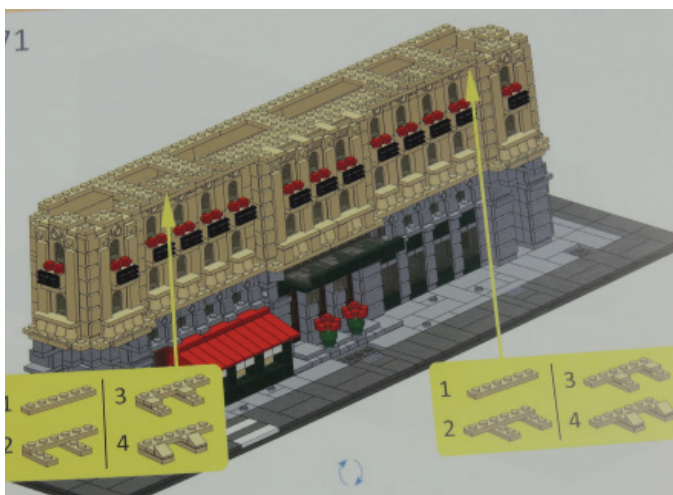
The build is very interesting. The base of the model is predictably quite standard, as you need a robust base to build the model on. But once I start with the actual building things get more interesting. Since this is an 'unofficial' set – meaning it is not oriented at children – it incorporates building techniques, some of which are explained below, which would be forbidden in sets for little ones. The ground floor is Light Bluish Gray and represents the entrance to the hotel with its steps, flowerpots and marquee. To the right there are some glass windows. To the left, in Dark Green with a Red roof, there is a restaurant which stands out a little from the façade of the building. On either side of the building there is a lamp post with a classic design. Finally, right in front of the main entrance there is a printed tile with the logo of the Hilton Paris Opera.

On the side of this ground floor you can see the first of the concessions Dirk has made. Since the Brick, Modified 1 x 1 with Studs on 2 Sides, Adjacent which has come out this year wasn't then available, he has connected the tiles on this side with a single stud, which means you need to align them very carefully.

In the construction of the upper floors there are many interesting design techniques. For example, some parts are placed on a tile and are only connected by the stud at the top. This allows the creation of certain shapes that would not be possible otherwise. The first and second floors are similar, with the main difference being that the first floor has railings on the balconies while on the second floor there are flower pots with red flowers.



Between the second and third floor there is another curious detail – a cornice with studs facing down. In order to achieve this effect, an interesting technique is used that you can see in the picture. The third floor is again similar to the floors below. The difference is in the central module which has decorative elements instead of rooms, and small roofs between the rooms by way of decoration.



There are attic rooms in the roof, each with their own canopy. I really liked this stage of the building process because of the shapes built with cheese slopes and slopes on the sides in order to better simulate edges that are not perfectly linear. There are six vertical wall sections breaking the continuity of the roof. The central part roof section is higher than on either side and it is finished with a decorative trophy element.



Building this set has been both a challenge and a pleasure. I had my doubts at first as to what it would be like to assemble an unofficial set. Even though it was visually appealing, would it be a mediocre set in terms of techniques? Not at all! The model is fantastic. A luxury model in every aspect. It took me 5-6 hours to build, and once finished it is a delight to the senses. The similarity to the original building, the size, the building techniques, the details... it is one of those sets I feel fortunate to have built and which shows what can be achieved if you don't need to adhere to the strict (though understandable) design rules of the LEGO® company for regular sets.

NOTE: I would like to thank LCP Dirk Denoyelle (and Amazings) for providing the set for review. All the opinions in this review are entirely our own and may not coincide with those of the author of the set.

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