



Reviews

Review: 76020 - NINJAGO CITY

By Iluisgib

Images by Iluisgib and LEGO® System A/S

Set: Ciudad de NINJAGO

Set number: 76020

Parts: 4867

Contains: 16 minifigs

Let me start by saying... I don't have enough pages to talk about this set!



I recognise that, although I am not a big NINJAGO fan, I have bought a couple of sets from this theme over the years. I started with a couple of spinners, which I bought more out of curiosity than because I liked them. Later on there were some models I bought because I liked the design, like the Fire Temple or the Temple of Airjitzu.

When discussions about the NINJAGO movie started I was sceptical about the movie sets. Honestly, I thought they would be a mix-up of previous sets or less interesting models with a couple of minifigs as "bait". And then the NINJAGO CITY was announced and everything I had imagined went up in thin air.

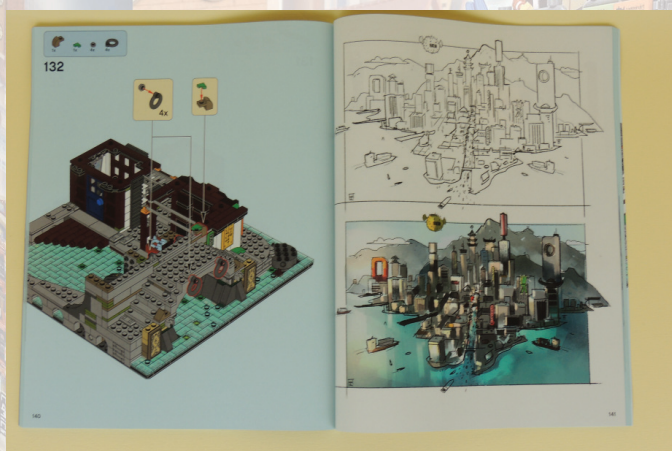
It is the largest set I have ever built. And it is so full of details that I have decided the saying "a picture is worth a thousand words" applies perfectly. That's why I will limit myself to briefly describing what you can see in the images.

In the set video, the designers tell us they have built the NINJAGO CITY vertically to make it somehow compatible with modular buildings. That's why the "building" consists of three levels, each with their own identity.

The set comes with three instruction books, one for each level of the city, two sticker sheets, 16 minifigs and a numbered bags that divide the elements into 16 sections.



The instructions books do not only contain the building steps, but also contain information about the set and about the movie.



In book 1, there are interviews with the director of the movie and with the designers of the set, a description of the alphabet that has been invented for the movie, and some additional images. In addition, each book includes a description of the level it corresponds to and a description of the minifigs for that level. To top it all off, in the centrefold of the books there are

sketches of the movie and of the set.

The 16 minifigs correspond to characters in the movie. Some are ninjas that have already appeared in other sets, since they are the main characters in the plot of NINJAGO. I don't know if the other characters have appeared in other sets, but they all appear prominently in the movie. Anyway, as usual, the quality of the designs and the printing are excellent, and so are the complements and accessories that come with them.



Level 1 - The Old World

This is the oldest part of the NINJAGO CITY. In this level you will find some buildings that are inspired on the traditional East Asian design. The first thing you build is the river on a 32x32 baseplate. A "bed" of different coloured plates is laid down and covered with trans-clear-blue tiles. The effect you get is that of water with different shades. The water surrounds the entire building. Some plants, among which the water lilies made with green minifig palettes stand out, provide some detail to this natural part of the set.



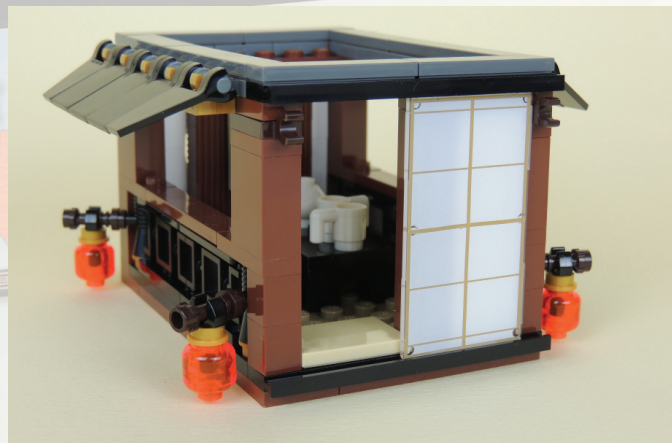
This old part centres on an old bridge that provides access to the City. The technique used simulates a stone bridge that is high enough to let a small fishing boat pass under it.



Once we are in the City, there are two two-story buildings in this old part. The first one is a fish shop that sells fresh fish which has just been brought in by boat. An interesting detail is the marquee that is made with black crowbars. The result is very realistic and it is a novel building technique.



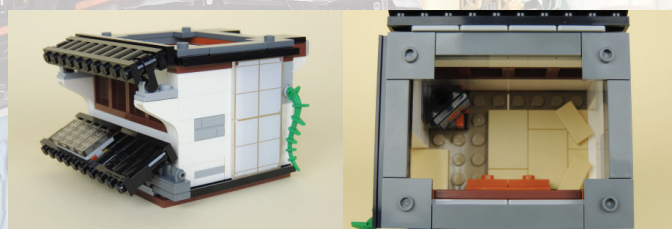
On top of the fish shop there is a small tea room. It contains a plant made with green minifig hair, a teapot, two teacups and a painting of a dragon. The entrance to the room is closed with a sliding door that looks like it is made of paper. On the outside there is a canopy that covers the window and a pair of red lanterns.



Next to the fish shop, separated by an alley, there is a small room where SWEEP, the robot in charge of cleaning the City, is being recharged.



In front of it there is another room with a sliding door made of "paper". It is a traditional room with a sofa, a small cupboard and a TV. On the side that has windows there are two roofs, one on the lower side, which protects SWEEPS room, and the other on the upper side, sheltering the people who sleep on the sofa. The roofs are also built in an oriental style, although they are different from the ones in other parts of the City.



Right in front of this room there is a wooden dock where the fisherman can store his catch of the day.



To finish the level, right behind the entrance to the City over the bridge, there is a lift which connects to the other levels after you finish all of them.



Not a single corner of this set has been left unused and there is a ladder to get to the upper rooms on the side of the room where Sweep is charging.

This first level reminds me of the images you can see of traditional neighbourhoods in China, Japan or Korea, to mention just a few countries. It is the part I like best personally, because of the level of detail in reproducing all the traditional elements.

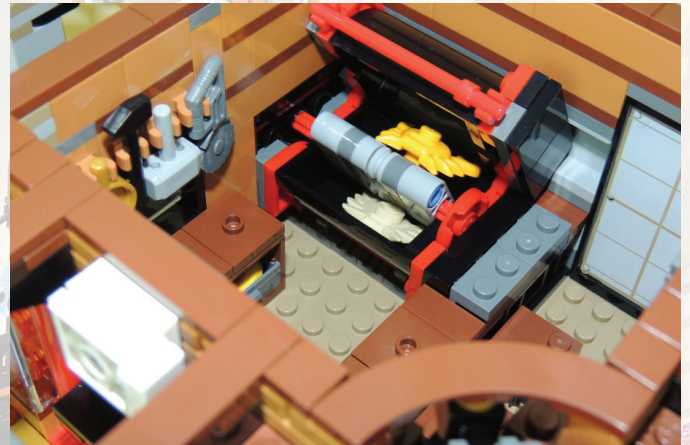


The oven is fun to use as it has a turntable that allows you to put in a raw lobster and pull out a cooked one.

Level 2 - The Street

This is the busiest part of the NINJAGO CITY. On this level there are shops, restaurants and services. This level also consists of two floors. On the bottom level there is a comic shop, a restaurant that specialises in freshly fished lobster and a cash dispenser.

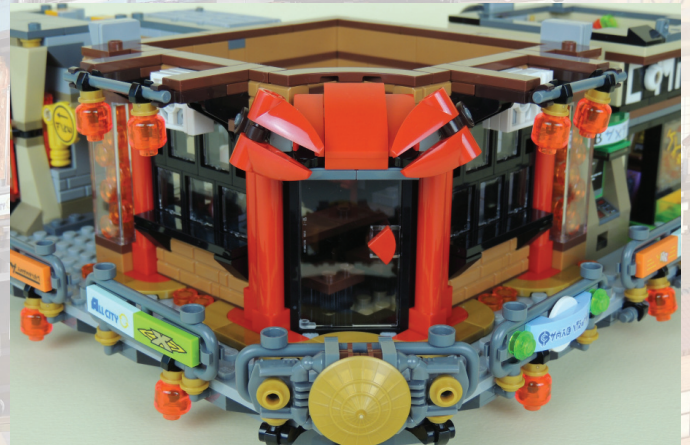
The comic store is chock full of materials. In addition to comics there are action figures, posters and collectibles. The shop is small, and the design of the façade is not especially outstanding, except for the COMICS sign and the air-conditioner on the outside.



Over the entrance door there is a giant lobster. The corners of the building are flanked by red columns. There are windows on both sides that let you look inside. On top of those there is the air conditioning and some lanterns.



The cash dispenser is right next to it. The curious thing is that it actually dispenses money. Behind the dispenser there is a drawer that holds up to 13 banknotes and a mechanism that pushes them out through the front.



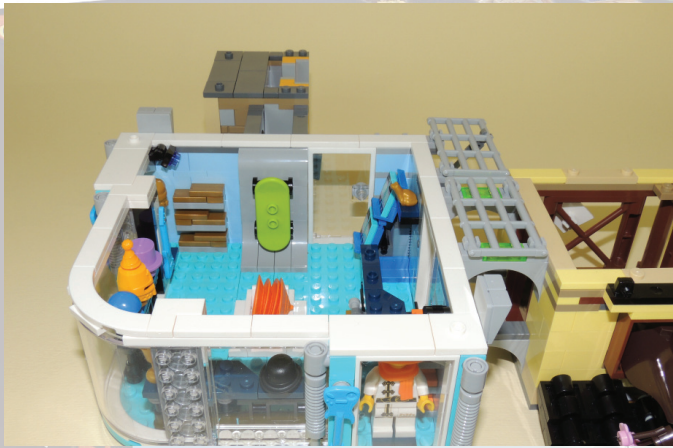
Behind the lift there is a billboard announcing the NINJAGO Movie. In the rear there is a small storage space for three more posters so you can change the movie that is announced as you like.



The star of this floor is the seafood restaurant. Both the exterior and the interior of the restaurant have a traditional design. Inside you find the board the cook prepares the lobsters on, the oven to cook them and a bar with three seats.



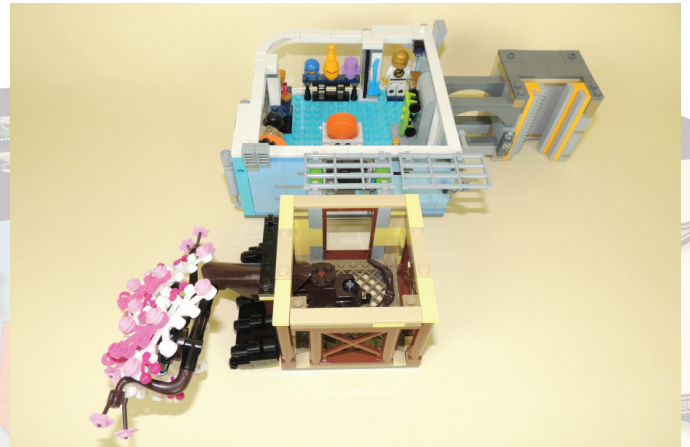
The top floor of this level has a fashion shop where you can buy clothes and complements, electronics and sports equipment. These are all displayed in sections and the shop can be accessed from the lift.



The exterior is has large shop windows providing a great view from the outside. The design is much more minimalistic and the colours are more lively. The fashion shop is right above the restaurant.



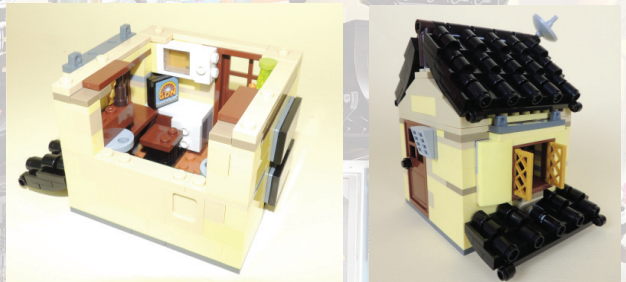
On top of the comics shop there is a small room that has a blossoming cherry tree growing out of the window. Although I love this detail, I don't quite understand what this cherry tree is doing here or how the structure of the building could support a tree this size.



On the outside there is a promenade that goes all the way around the ground floor of this level. There is lots of publicity, lanterns and decorative elements. When you put the two floors together it reminds me of places like Dotonbori or Osaka. Everything is very concentrated, colourful and full of people.

Level 3 - The High Rise

The top level is the luxury level of the building. At this level there is a sushi bar, a luxury apartment, and the communications tower of the City.



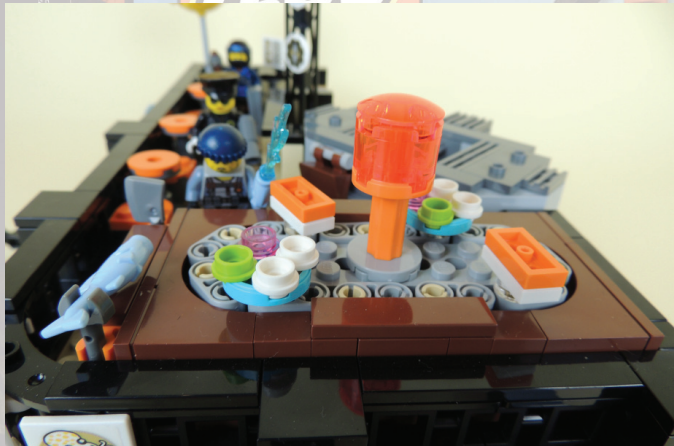
The apartment is small. Two of the main characters of the movie live here. Lloyd and his mother. It is a minuscule



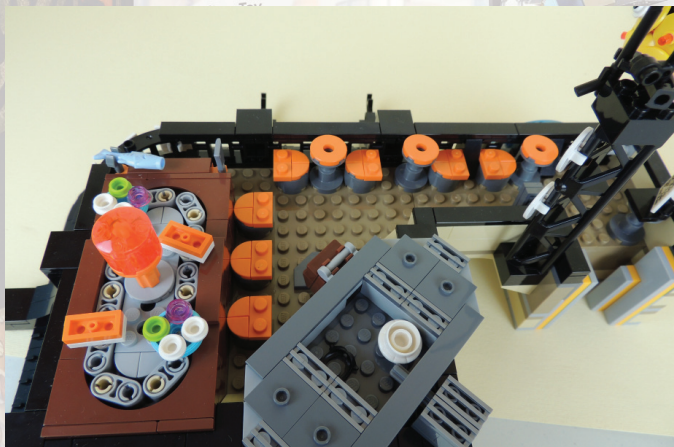
room, but it is fully equipped, with two bunk beds, a kitchen, wardrobes, bookcases and a TV. The shelves are full of objects and things from the comic shop.

The outside is austere and modern. Again, a different construction technique provides another black oriental style roof.

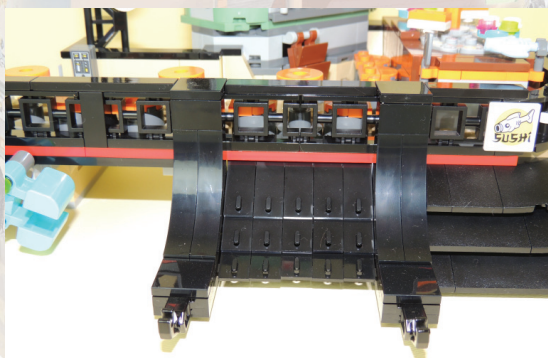
The sushi bar has one of the mobile elements I like best in all of the set. The Kaiten Sushi (a Sushi train). Some time ago I saw an AFOL model that included a Kaiten Sushi and I loved the idea and how it had been executed. I believe the designers have been inspired by that idea to add a small Kaiten Sushi bar in the restaurant. There are four plates on the Sushi train, waiting to be picked up.



The restaurant also has an area where the cook can prepare his Sushi, cut the Fugu (pufferfish) and serve it on the tables on the terrace.



On one side of the façade there are several billboards announcing the restaurant. Special elements include a fish made of pieces and a giant yellow pufferfish.



The TV tower, in sand green, includes antennas for communications and a bathroom for the restaurant.



The bathroom has paper sliding doors and the windows in the back are also made of "paper" to let some light in. The toilet itself is traditionally Asian, so you have to squat. The toilet paper is pink. On the opposite side there is a wash basin with two taps.



The façade serves as a roof for the lower floor. Again the design is different, this time using car doors..



Overall Impression

Once you connect the different levels, the model is spectacular. And very heavy. Of course that's to be expected with nearly 5000 pieces. As I mentioned at the beginning, the level of detail is exceptional. I could write 20 pages and it wouldn't be enough. Each building, each corner, every accessory has a purpose. What I'm trying to say is they are not just there to fill a gap.



The completed model is really big. And it can be connected to modular buildings. Here you can see it together with the Assembly Square. That's the reason why the set is made up of vertical levels, instead of creating a lower and more horizontal set.



The building process is very entertaining and there are no repetitive elements. You come across all sorts of surprises as you build; things you don't appreciate at first glance. Also many different building techniques have been used in this set.

The movie will surely give more visibility to some of the elements of the set. Anyway, the set is worth having even without taking into account the movie. As for the price, I was pleasantly surprised that a set of almost 5000 pieces costs around €300. I was expecting a much higher price since the set is marketed as a licensed set, just like the LEGO® Movie and LEGO® Batman Movie sets.

There are some new elements, among which I'd like to point out the oriental style fence which is used extensively all through the set, and that helps to give the set an "oriental" feel.

To sum up, any LEGO® fan, no matter their preferences, will enjoy building this set. I believe it is a must-have, especially for fans of modular buildings, oriental culture or even Friends, because of the level of detail it has. It's been some time since I last enjoyed building a set this much, and I find it hard to find anything I don't like as everything is exactly where it should be.

Find a large table, take a seat, open the box and ... enjoy!

NOTE: All opinions expressed in this review are entirely my own.

#

