

LEGO® House Pre-opening

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Possibly one of the most anticipated events of the last few years was the pre-opening of the LEGO® House on September 22 in Billund. Some 500 AFOLs were able to attend this opening.

The fans were convened in front of the building at 9:30am, by invitation only, as the capacity was limited. After getting an identifying bracelet that grants access to the exhibition and activity areas, everyone was assembled in the large interior plaza. There Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen, grandson of the founder and current owner of LEGO, and Jesper Vilstrup, General Manager of the LEGO® House, welcomed the participants and commented on some of the particularities of the project. They highlighted the involvement of AFOLs in the different stages of the project.

Then the doors were opened to the AFOLs and they started filling the different rooms of the museum. Unfortunately there was no surprise during the visit, as practically everything had already been shown during the many tests that were conducted in the preceding weeks and by the hundreds of photographs that had been published by those visitors.

Possibly the most interesting parts for the visiting AFOLs

were the 'Key Stone' and the basement. In the centre of the Key Stone, three large dinosaurs have been erected, on their individual platforms. Each one is built using one of the systems of play: DUPLO, System and Technic. Several AFOLs participated in the creation of these dinosaurs. Around the dinosaurs you could see creations from selected AFOLs. Each one showed a selection of their best known pieces. Anyone who browses the Internet for LEGO® creations will recognise most of them, but that doesn't make them any less interesting, as seeing them in person is always a pleasure and allows you to see details that are hard to distinguish in photographs. Most of the exhibiting AFOLs were there to proudly show off their creations. Congratulations!

The basement takes you on a tour through the history of LEGO. Upon entry you enter the first room, which contains a mold in the foundation of the building that can be seen through a glass panel in the floor. Next you start a chronological tour that shows some of the key models, themes and elements in the company's history. The tour is very interesting, especially the part where you see a display case with minifigs and elements that are decorated with the logos of different fan communities.



Mr. Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen and Jesper Vilstrup during the presentation

In the centre of the basement there is a room with three large circular tables, representing a 2x4 brick seen from the inside. Each of these tables contains several boxes of old sets, as well as screens that allow you to fill a virtual shelf with your favourite sets. Around the walls of this room there are shelves with milestone sets from the history of LEGO.

The rest of the LEGO® House is a combination of experiences and activities. There is a constant mix of the physical part (building bricks) and the digital part. You register for each of the experiences with your bracelet. After you finish, the content is uploaded to the cloud and you can download it at home with a special app to see everything you have done during that day. For example, you can build a fish, put it in a scanner, and the fish will appear in a virtual fish bowl. Since this pre-opening was yet another test, the scanners didn't work as well as could be expected and they were not able to recognise the designs. I am confident they will be fully operational now, though.

There was another activity using MINDSTORMS robots to rescue some explorers that are trapped in ice. The robots are controlled from a touch screen. You input a sequence of movements (forwards, turn, melt ice, etc.) and the robot executes them. The activity works really well and you could see the AFOLs were having a lot of fun with it.

Other areas that stood out were:

- The **Library**: where you can find all kinds of books and magazines about LEGO® bricks.
- **Dioramas**: minifig size, with details and fun references all over. A place to spend many hours observing brick by brick.
- The **big waterfall of bricks**: a multicolour sculpture simulating a waterfall, and built with many-coloured LEGO® bricks
- **Terraces**: you can also visit outside (no ticket necessary), where you can climb all the way to the top of the Key Stone, and take a picture on top of one of the large transparent studs where you can see the three dinosaurs beneath your feet..

During the visit you can leave the exhibition area to eat. The most successful restaurant is the Mini Chef, which lets you 'build' your own menu. When you sit down you get a bag with bricks and a menu with the meaning of each brick. You need to build your food with a brick from each group (there are four bricks per group): main (red), vegetables (green), sides (blue) and hot vegetables (black). After building the menu, you scan it and your order is sent to the kitchen. There are two robots that deliver the food, dance, joke and make the wait more interesting. The food was slow to arrive (45 minutes) while the restaurant wasn't very full, so this needs some improvement. The exclusive minifig from the restaurant compensated for the extra waiting time.



Robots from the MINDSTORMS activity



Library

At the end of the tour there is one last activity. Passing the bracelet through one last scanner, a kind of roulette is activated and each visitor is assigned one of the 915 million different combinations that can be made with six 2x4 bricks. This is a unique code for each visitor that is printed on a plastic card which is delivered together with six red 2x4 bricks which are produced on the spot by a moulding machine in the main square.

HispaBrick Magazine would like to thank LEGO® for the invitation to this pre-opening. This is the last in a series of articles we have published about the LEGO® House in the last two years and which have explained each step of the project, from conception to this pre-opening. The official opening took place on September 28, but HispaBrick Magazine was not invited so we can't tell you what happened there. From that day on the LEGO® House has been open to the general public and we wish it much success.

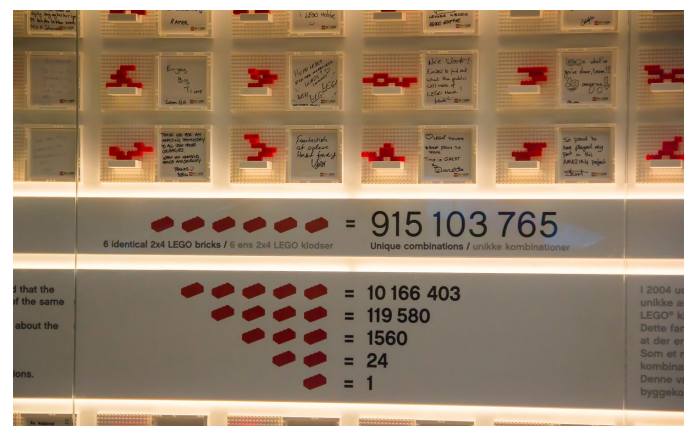
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Dinosaur SYSTEM



Signaling



Combinations of 6 bricks from relevant visitors



AFOL setting up a MOC to be exhibited



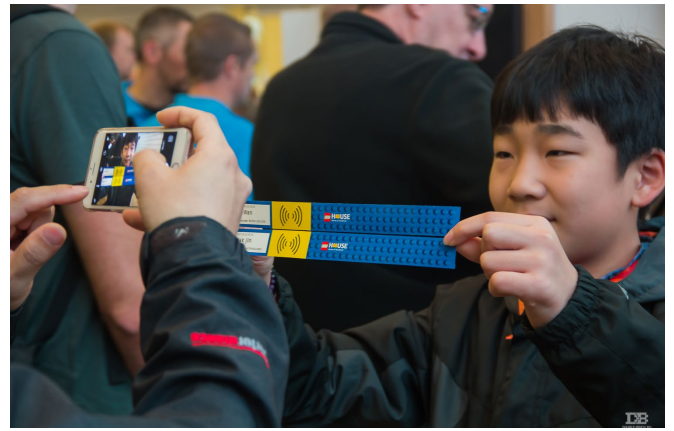
Colorful waterfall and playing area



AFOL placing his MOC in the showcase



Ready for lunch!



Look my tickets for the pre-opening!



Tatami of the MINDSTORMS activity



New LEGO® House set