

HispaBrick Magazine® Kiosk: Design

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At the start of 2017 I started thinking about doing something special for the 10th anniversary of HispaBrick Magazine®. It is every AFOL's dream to make an exclusive commemorative set, but since it would be impossible to get LEGO® to produce this (understandably), I decided to design my own commemorative set. After presenting the idea to the staff of the magazine, and seeing their enthusiastic reaction, I got to work.

The first step was presenting the idea to the LCE team (Community & Engagement). I did so during a visit to Billund in March 2017, when I had the opportunity to discuss several ideas regarding the anniversary of HispaBrick Magazine®. I thought they would say: "You are crazy", but instead they offered to help in any way they could. The first step had been taken.

One of the marvellous things about the LEGO® community is that its tentacles reach the least expected places... A few days after my meeting in Billund, I met LCP Dirk Denoyelle and his lovely wife in Barcelona. We had an interesting chat about this and that at the Plaça Reial. I asked to interview him and we published his interview in HispaBrick Magazine® 027. I also mentioned my idea for set to celebrate the anniversary of the magazine. As a result of that conversation, Dirk put me in touch with Jaco van der Molen, an AFOL who helps Dirk generate the building instructions for the sets he creates as an LCP.

When Jaco contacted me he was enthusiastic about the idea and asked for prototypes to get started. At that moment my idea of the set I wanted to design was only half finished and I needed some time to turn it over in my head. In the meantime we published issue number 027, which required many hours of work and I had to put the project on hold temporarily. But at the start of June, Jaco got in touch to see how things were going, and that was the encouragement I needed to really start working on the design of the set.

Preliminary Design

At first the set consisted of three parts:

- A kiosk
- A public bike rental service
- A basketball court for handicapped players

The choice of a kiosk was obvious. We are a magazine, and although we are digital, the best way to represent us is with a newspaper kiosk. That was beyond dispute.

The public bike rental service is something that is very present in cities today, and LEGO® hasn't yet picked up on this idea. I was inspired by 'Bicing', the public bike rental service of Barcelona, and I wanted a touch of ecology in the set, instead of the typical delivery truck.



The basketball court would be a reflection of something we have tried to explain in HispaBrick Magazine® over the years. It isn't just about the hobby, but also about how these bricks can help underprivileged and disabled people. It is hard to represent this idea in a tangible way, but I thought this was a way to get close.

I started off with a kiosk design I had built before. It was simple, but there were some useful ideas there. It was a mix between LDD and physical bricks. LDD is obviously a powerful tool, but it took a lot of practice to create a robust design and make 'illegal' constructions fit. For this reason I often started building with physical bricks and then reflected my progress in LDD. On other occasions I built directly in LDD due to the availability of certain elements.

The part that caused me the most headaches was working out how to attach the bicycles to the rack. I had been thinking about it for some time, but I didn't realise how wrong I was until I started to actually build it. I needed a change of concept. I wanted to use a Technic brick, but that was not possible because the front wheel collides with the base of the brick. Then I thought of using a liftarm. In this case, although it was technically possible, it was hard to create the posts that would keep it up, and the empty holes between bikes were aesthetically displeasing. Finally I stumbled on the perfect element. It is the 2x2 Plate with Single Pin Hole (#2444 / #10247) that allows you to introduce the light on the front of the bike while leaving space for the wheel under it.

In the end the basketball court was removed from the design, mainly because of the cost. I would have liked to add it, and designing this part would have been by far the easiest part, but it would have made the set too big and there was little connection between the three elements.

Final Design

It was then time to turn the design into something real. As I mentioned earlier, LDD is a powerful tool, but it does not allow you to evaluate the sturdiness of a model. I started to look for all the necessary elements. In the meantime, I sent Jaco the first version in LDD so he could send me a first draft of the instructions.

Once I had gathered all the elements, I started to build the model. That first model was a collage of pieces of different colours and shapes. I did not have all the elements in the right colours, but since this was only a first concept build I didn't mind that the visual appearance of the set was far from perfect.

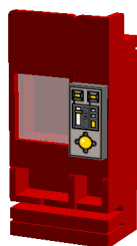
The kiosk didn't change much. Basically, I changed the shop window in the back for a door and a smaller window, as suggested by Jaco. The shop window was meant to display the magazines, but having a door made the kiosk look more realistic.



I also wanted to add some accessories to make the model more attractive. I started with a coffee machine. I wanted to create a classic design, so I decided on a somewhat large and brown coffee maker.



Then I thought of a POS. At first I used a computer with keyboard, but I changed it to a touch screen to make it more modern.



The outside of the model was a bit uneventful. A tree and a bench to read HispaBrick Magazine® were a good addition, but it needed something more. That's why I designed the vending machine. The red colour is not related to Coca-Cola. I used red to break with the sober colours of the kiosk, and because red elements are usually easy to find.

The bike rental service gave me a few more headaches. The post with the screen for the rental service turned out to be too fragile in the first design. If you picked up the model by the post it would come off. That is why I redesigned the post so the decoration would help lend some rigidity. Something similar happened with the other post. At first I used two 1x1 bricks, but those were substituted by a 1x2 slope.



After exchanging various files with Jaco (who applied the changes with incredible speed), we arrived at a final version of the set.

We still needed to take another big hurdle: the availability of the elements. Kim of the LCE Team offered me the opportunity of using project support to order the elements. At that point we needed to make more changes: torsos, hair, heads, a few colours... not all the elements we had used were available, so I needed to make some quick changes to the model to adapt it to the available stock.

Finally the set was finished! I really enjoyed the process, but there was still much to do...

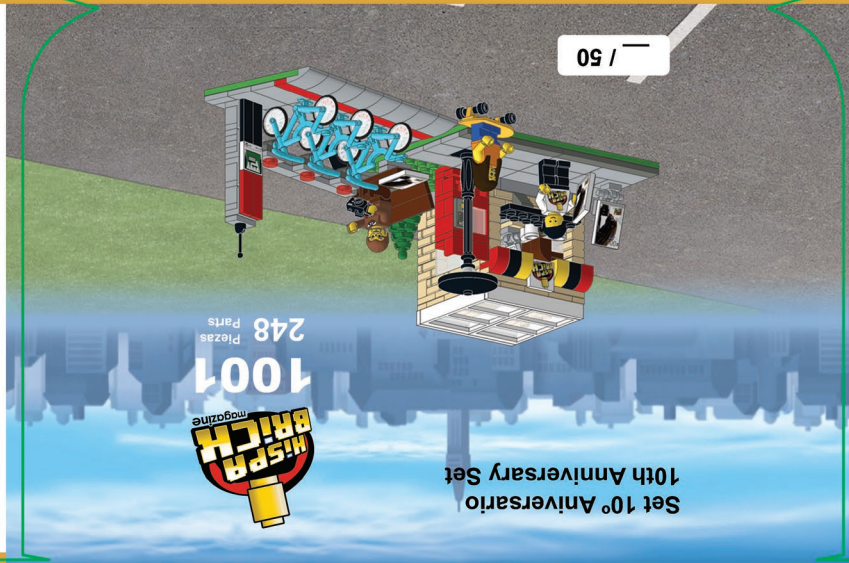
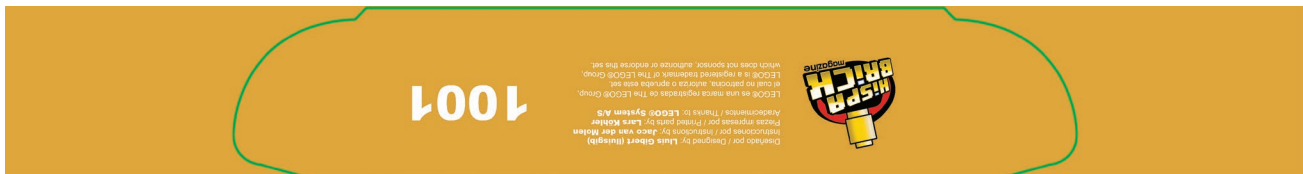
The Box

In order to make a set you need more than just the parts and the instructions. The box of a set is its calling card. It is not the same to get a set in a paper bag compared to getting a white box with a sticker or getting a fully printed box.

In this case the difficulty lay in finding a box that was the right size, and which could be printed in a small quantity at a low price. The cost of the set is covered by the small budget we have for HispaBrick Magazine® and which we use to pay for our hosting, our domain and incidentals. Since there is no advertising in the magazine, our budget is very limited and every Euro counts.

This is where the internet came to the rescue. I spent several days looking for a printer that offered everything we were looking for: in Barcelona, in Spain... until I located an online service that had some boxes fitting my criteria.

I designed the set using a downloaded Photoshop template. At first it was too similar to a CITY box. Then I thought we needed it to be more personal. I changed colours, distribution... and added a small easter egg that you will find when you open the front lid. Thanks to Jaco's renders and the bill of materials, I believe the result is worthy of a commemorative set. After uploading the file to the vendor's website, in less than a week I had the boxes. It all started to take shape.





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10th Anniversary

HispaBrick Magazine® nació en 2008 como una iniciativa de algunos AFCEAs españoles con la idea de preservar para el futuro los mejores MOCs y artículos publicados en su comunidad. Lo que empezó como una pequeña revista de carácter "local" se ha transformado en una realidad, son proyección internacional, apoyo de la cual ha ido creciendo una comunidad.

HispaBrick Magazine® está disponible en Español, inglés (desde el número 003) y Croata (desde el número 028). Para celebrar la primera década de vida de esta revista abierta y gratuita para los entusiastas de LEGO®, hemos diseñado este set conmemorativo.

HispaBrick Magazine® was born in 2008 as the initiative of a few Spanish AFCEAs aimed at preserving the best MOCs and articles in their community for posterity. What started as a small project aimed at a local market has now become an internationally recognized magazine around which a community has grown.

HispaBrick Magazine® is available in Spanish, English (from issue 003) and Croatian (from issue 028). To celebrate the first decade of this free and open magazine for LEGO® fans, we have designed this commemorative set.

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Contenido / Content*



Edición Limitada
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Printed Elements

To make this set more personal it had to contain a few unique elements. In this case I considered printing three elements: a 2x2 tile with the HispaBrick Magazine® logo, a 2x3 tile with the cover of our first magazine, and a torso with the logo of the 10th anniversary.

I have a little more experience in these matters, so it didn't take much effort to design them and get some prototypes.

The impact printed elements would have on the final cost of the set was, once again, a problem. Enter Lars Köhler. In the past he had printed several pieces for me and I was very happy with the result. When I explained the project to him, he liked it a lot and we reached a mutually beneficial agreement.

I sent him the pieces that needed to be printed, and about three weeks later I received my order. Everything was perfect. Another step completed!



Sticker sheet

During all these years I have been quite critical of the sticker sheets that come in LEGO® sets. But once you start to design a set you start to understand they are way to contain costs.

In an ideal world each set would contain all 29 issues of HispaBrick Magazine® printed on a tile. But that was of course not realistic, mainly because of the cost. Those 29 front pages would have cost more than the entire set, including the box and the sticker sheet.

I designed a sticker sheet with all the front pages. Since they fit in a grid there was one space left empty (which would correspond to issue 030). That front page had not been designed yet, so I decided to add an image of the front of the box.

I sent the design to a printer I know. We ran some tests and after some adjustments to the printing machine the result was very good. When you print large vinyls, small imperfections are hardly noticeable, but printing the cover of HispaBrick Magazine® on a 10x15mm area is a challenge that required technical expertise.

Before printing the whole series of sticker sheets I noticed a serious mistake. The sheet would not fit in the box! Fortunately I noticed in time to change the distribution of the stickers so the sheet would fit in the box.

After a few days I received the sticker sheets: 30 stickers on a sheet, cut out with a plotter so you can separate them easily. I couldn't resist trying one on a 2x3 tile. This is the result.



Sorting of elements

Almost four months after placing the order I received the elements. Despite the wait I was really excited. Finally I could build the set. The first thing I did was to separate out the elements for two sets: one to test the model and the other to send to Jaco so he could check the instructions against the build. A few days after I sent him the elements he sent me the final version of the instructions. Not only had he adjusted the instructions to the model, but he had also recreated the three new printed elements and added them in the instructions, to make them as true to the real set as possible. A great job!

One of the stages I dreaded most, because of the inherent risk of mistakes, was sorting the elements for the 50 sets. Keep in mind that there are 248 elements in each set, so we are talking about sorting almost 12,500 elements by hand. The obvious risk: missing a piece in one of the sets.

How did I do it? I put 52 tupperware boxes on the table and sofa in my living room. I started with the elements that only appear once in the set, putting one in each box. Then I moved on to the ones that appear twice, three times, four times... at some point it became hard and tedious to count and distribute 10, 22 or 27 elements, so I asked my saintly wife for help. I would count and she would put the elements in each box. When I finished counting the elements I put the contents of each tupperware box into a ziplock bag.

After we had finished, how could we know we hadn't made any mistakes? Well, I don't know :D. But just to be on the safe side, I had sorted out two more sets. I took the elements of one of those two and built the set. No elements were missing. That doesn't mean none of the bags could be missing a piece. Errare humanum est... but at least I'm sure I put in all the pieces necessary to build the set.



The set

After almost a year the set was ready to be boxed. I put the elements for each set in a ziplock bag. I built the boxes. I had the sticker sheets.

Now I could put the boxes on the table and start: stickers, a 16x16 plate (not included inside the bag) and the bag with all the other elements. 50 times.

Once all the boxes were filled they needed to be closed. I found round transparent stickers with a slit in the centre, that keep the lid well closed and still allow it to be opened with ease. Et voilà! The set was finished.

The instructions for the set will be published in this issue of HispaBrick Magazine® so that our readers can reproduce the set.

The 50 sets will be distributed amongst those who have supported us during the years. You, our readers, are among those supporters. Pay close attention to our social networks and you will have a chance of getting one.



Conclusion

I imagined 'producing' a set would not be an easy task. Although it only contains 248 elements, and involved a production run of only 50 units, the job was still titanic. There are so many variables and any small deviation from the plans is potentially catastrophic.

However, it was a fascinating experience. The excitement, the pride, and above all the disinterested help from many people, have made contributed to making my first set a reality.

This set is a small tribute to ten years of HispaBrick Magazine®. When we brought out the first issue, back in 2008, we never thought we would still be here today. We could never have imagined how the LEGO® community would help us get to this anniversary with its help and willingness to participate in the magazine through countless interesting articles, allowing us to publish every four months with around 100 pages of content that is 100% LEGO® and free of advertising.

Acknowledgements

To **equipo de HispaBrick Magazine®** for believing in this project.

To **Jaco van der Molen** for his untiring determination that the instructions should be precise.

To **Lars Köhler** for his collaboration in printing the pieces.

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To **Kim E. Thomsen** and **Jan Beyer**, of the LCE Team, for their help in getting the elements.

And finally, to **Delia**, my wife, for her eternal patience in the 'LEGO® occupation' of our house and her help during the production process.

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