

# HispaBrick Magazine® Staff: Lluís Gibert (a.k.a. Iluisgib)

*By HispaBrick Magazine®*

*Images by Iluisgib*



Hello readers. I was born in Barcelona, where I also live. I'm an Electronics Engineer and I work in the automotive sector.

**HBM:** How and when did you start participating in HispaBrick Magazine®?

**LLG:** I am a co-founder of HispaBrick Magazine®. Back in 2008 I was a LEGO® Ambassador and I was the first person Carlos Méndez contacted, on March 20th, to explain the idea. I was enthusiastic and accepted without hesitation. We took on the project in secret to surprise the community. Two months later, on May 23rd, we published the first HispaBrick Magazine®.

**HBM:** What are your responsibilities in the magazine?

**LLG:** During these 10 years I have worked on everything. Besides writing articles, I became the contact person with LEGO® and I tried to get interviews from employees within the company. I do translations, search for articles in the community, follow-up on articles... I currently bear the brunt of the magazine's global layout, and share the layout tasks of individual articles with Jose. Moreover, I have to be the policeman who controls the calendar, to make all the articles arrive on time. I also have part of the "public relations" role together with Jetro.

**HBM:** Had you done any of these things before?

**LLG:** Before HispaBrick Magazine®, I was responsible for the relations between the Spanish Community and LEGO®, because I was a LEGO® Ambassador since February 2007. Apart from this, I had never done layouts nor written articles.

**HBM:** Did you need to learn how to use the tools for any of those tasks?

**LLG:** I had basic notions of Photoshop, but I had to improve in this aspect. I also had to learn how to use InDesign from scratch, the program we use to do the layout. Years ago we had a problem in that we couldn't do the layouts 'in parallel', and a single person should be responsible for the entire layout task. About two years ago, checking deeper with InDesign, I was able to find a way to design the articles individually, and then put them all together to create the magazine.

**HBM:** Talking about all the tasks that are carried out in the magazine, what are the ones you like the most? And the least?

**LLG:** It will sound a bit contradictory, but what I like the most and least is to compose the final layout of the magazine. It is a long process, heavy and tedious. Now that the magazine is published in three languages, it takes me a whole weekend to do all of them. But the satisfaction of finishing the work, to have the magazine ready to publish and to start the distribution of press releases compensates for all the suffering :)



**HBM:** Are there any tasks you would like to do but haven't had a chance to work on yet?

**LLG:** I think there's nothing that I have not done yet ...:D

**HBM:** What do you think of the rest of the people who make up the staff of the magazine?

**LLG:** Do I have to be politically correct? ;) We are a group of friends that try to keep the magazine alive. I think the thing that defines us is the good vibes, companionship and our passion for the hobby. We not only do the magazine, but also get together to organize events. Since we are spread across the Spanish geography, the magazine is coordinated through the internet. The events serve to allow us to meet in person, to discuss some issues of the magazine and, above all, laugh very much.

**HBM:** Many people don't know how much work it takes to create a free fan magazine. Does it really take that much work to get each issue published?

**LLG:** Yes, there is almost no rest. When we launch a new issue, after about 2-3 weeks we start looking for articles for the new one, we consider which sets we could review... From here it's a race against the clock. We all have our lives, jobs, problems... and that is difficult to achieve. We usually close the reception of articles around 4-5 weeks before publication. From that moment the corrections, translations and layout happen... Each issue has between 20 and 30 articles, so we have to design about 60 articles in a month. We create the layout of the articles in one language, but replacing the text in another language does not directly transfer to a completed translated layout. Articles in Spanish are longer. That's why I always try to do the layout first in this language. When replacing the text with English, I must increase the size of the images so that there are no blank spaces, which would otherwise be very ugly.

**HBM:** Of all the criticism and praise you receive, what has most surprised you or drawn your attention?

**LLG:** Maybe the 'praise' that always catches my attention is when somebody tell us we must be a big team. They are always surprised when I say we are just four people bearing the brunt of the magazine.

**HBM:** It's been ten years since the first issue. How do you see the evolution of the magazine since then?

**LLG:** I think the magazine has evolved in visually, but still maintains the essence of being a magazine made by AFOLs for AFOLs. Obviously this evolution has occurred because we have learned the use of design and layout tools, we have improved in taking pictures and writing articles... but we have tried to keep the clean and simple aspect of the magazine's layout. We want the written content to be just as important as the visual presentation. That's why we don't use designs with really colorful or ornate backgrounds. That would distort the message the author wants to give through their content.

**HBM:** It all started as a local format designed to preserve and publicize MOCs by Spanish AFOLs, and now the magazine is published in three languages and read all over the world. What do you think has caused this evolution?

**LLG:** We always tried to offer a wide variety of content. Although we do not forget the hot news, we look for content that shows the richness of our hobby. For example, we are the only magazine with regular content on Technic or Mindstorms, especially with tutorials and technical articles. We always look for unique content that offers added value for our readers. We don't have advertising, although some proposals do come to us. All our work is voluntary. And I think this is also the reason why when we ask an AFOL to collaborate we always get an affirmative answer.

**HBM:** After ten years you are still going strong. Have you ever thought there wouldn't be a next issue?

**LLG:** There have been several moments of crisis, mainly when people who performed key tasks have stopped collaborating.



We had to redistribute tasks, learn to do things we didn't do... Over the years we have learned that knowledge of how things are done must be distributed among all, and I think our team is stronger now.

**HBM:** What do you believe are the best qualities of the magazine?

**LLG:** As I said before, I think that being a free magazine without advertising gives us an advantage. AFOLs, in general, are happy to collaborate with us and know that even if they make an effort, we will not take advantage of it. All the effort reverts back to the community. I have seen people at events proudly displaying the magazine with their model on the cover. I think that says a lot about what we have achieved...

**HBM:** What would you like to improve in the magazine?

**LLG:** Well, there are always things to improve. But I think that for a project of this kind we have a quality that is more than acceptable in many aspects. Step by step we are incorporating small features such as indexes and links in the pdf, which make life easier for our readers. In general, I'm satisfied.

**HBM:** You always mention in the magazine that its continuity is possible thanks to the collaboration of those who send in articles. Is that really such an important factor?

**LLG:** It's fundamental! Without all those people who we contacted because their work has attracted our attention, those who offer us or suggest to us articles, the magazine would not have any traction. If we had to write all the content, it would be a very boring magazine, and its periodicity would be... null. Thank you to all our contributors!

**HBM:** Of course there are also regular collaborators. What can you say about them?

**LLG:** The great work from our regular collaborators allows us to have a link between one magazine and the next. With all the tutorials and series of articles that they write, we are able to build loyalty with readers who wait for each issue to continue reading about their favorite topic.

Special mention to our cartoonist Jesús Delgado (Arqu medes). He started his comic strip at issue number one, and since then he has never failed, although it has sometimes been difficult for him to reconcile our calendar with his daily life. I thank him especially for his fidelity, dedication and, above all, his caustic sense of humor that has always been able to reflect the feeling of the community at every moment.

I also want to thank the 'invisible' collaborator – those who do not write articles or show large MOCs. But without them we would not be able to exist either. They are people who act as translators, proofreaders and perform content management. Two examples are Adrian Barbour (English proofreader) and Oton Ribic (link with the Croatian team).

**HBM:** You have also written articles and done interviews with people from the LEGO® company. How do you see your relationship with the company?

**LLG:** From this point I'm feeling a little responsible. I started as LEGO® Ambassador in 2007 and when we started the magazine, I immediately contacted LEGO® to let them know our intentions and ask for their collaboration. I guess they had a bad day at LEGO®, since they showed their immediate enthusiasm and we started working with them to get content. During these ten years I have met and interviewed many LEGO® employees, and that has helped LEGO® to recognize our work, and when they are asked about HispaBrick Magazine®, it doesn't sound like Chinese.



**HBM:** As the motto of the magazine says, it is a magazine made by fans. So in addition to making the magazine you also like to build with LEGO®. What are your favourite LEGO® themes?

**LLG:** I have always said that my beginnings with the LEGO® were not common. As a child I had a lack of mobility in my hands. We could say that my hands were 'clumsy'. My parents bought me my first LEGO® set (no. 6610) to make my hands work. I think that small set, and especially its minifigure, created a feeling that has lasted for 38 years. I guess that's why the Town / City line is my favorite. It's what I played with as a child and it's the theme for which I build dioramas now. I also like other more modern lines like Speed Champions or Star Wars, but never with the same passion I have for the City theme.

**HBM:** Is there any theme or set you would like LEGO® to make?

**LLG:** Yeah, of course. For example, I would like to see the Sagrada Familia of Barcelona in Architecture scale. I made my own interpretation of the building since I doubt LEGO® will launch that model due to it being a church, although I believe that today it is better known for its architecture than for its religious character. Continuing with buildings in my city, I would like to see some modernist modular buildings – either La Pedrera or Casa Batlló, both of which are icons of Barcelona. On a more generic level I would like to see a large modular airport.

**HBM:** Is there life beyond the magazine and building with LEGO®?

**LLG:** Yes, there is life! If I dedicated all my time to LEGO®, I think my wife would have packed her bags :). We love to travel, whether on the other side of the world or more local tourism. We love to immerse ourselves in the culture of the country we

visit. We try to combine the best-known tourist attractions with the daily life of the people who live there. Also for many years I have been linked to the world of motor sport, collaborating with the organization of races of all kinds, from Formula 1 and MotoGP to local championships.

**HBM:** Do you think you will still be making the magazine in another ten years?

**LLG:** Ten years ago I would never have said that today we would be here, so I prefer to keep thinking the same about the future. It has not worked out badly at all!

**HBM:** Throughout these ten years there must have been many anecdotes. Could you share some?

**LLG:** There are many, from people who write to us thinking that we are the LEGO® company, or people who address us as if we were employees. But I probably think that the most exciting moment of the last ten years was when I asked five questions of Mr. Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen, owner of LEGO®. It was crazy, but I sent the five questions. The answer shocked me – not only I was going to have my questions answered, but it was going to happen over the phone. He gave me an appointment and we had an interesting call of about 30 minutes.

**HBM:** Finally, what would you like to see in the magazine?

**LLG:** Call me daring, but the fortune of being able to ask five questions of Mr. Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen made me a little ambitious. After a couple of years I prepared a full interview with the hope of one day being able to do it. So far I've been trying for five years and I've received three denials. But I will not give up. When there's a will there's a way!

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