



Interview: Carlos Méndez

By HispaBrick Magazine®

Pictures by car_mp

Carlos Méndez (car_mp) is partly responsible for the existence of this magazine called HispaBrick Magazine®. With his idea of preserving the magnificent creations that we find in the network, he believed that the best way to immortalize them was through a free magazine, made by and for the AFOLs. And with this starting point, we come to the celebration of our 10th anniversary.

HispaBrick Magazine®: How did you get started with LEGO®?

Carlos Méndez: My aunt bought the first sets for my brother and me from France. In Asturias (Spain) they were expensive and hard to get, and to be honest, I was so little I don't remember what we played with before getting these LEGO® sets. The first one I remember clearly is number 40, a universal set from 1976. If you put together my somewhat solitary character, my overflowing imagination and the classic bad weather in Asturias, you can imagine why LEGO® bricks were my perfect toy. Later on I loved City and Classic Space equally – well, maybe I loved Space a little more. During my teenage years my studies and, why not say it, a certain disenchantment with the sets from that time period took me into my dark ages. Fortunately, my collection was safely stored away.

HBM: What brought you out of your 'dark ages'?

CM: I suppose it was what happened for many people in my generation: LEGO® Star Wars. My first skirmish was with the Naboo Fighter 7141 from 1999. I had just moved out and was living in a city I hardly knew, so I had a lot of free time. It was just a matter of time before I felt the calling. I was content with just that set for some time, until I bought the 7140 X-Wing... though it would be unjust to say that was what restarted it all. Part of the reason why I started building again was that I discovered LDD and the online AFOL community. The former allowed me to build away from my collection of parts, and the second made me feel comfortable with my hobby.

HBM: What is your favourite LEGO® element?

CM: That's a tough question. I remember asking the same one in my interviews for the magazine. I think any modified 1x1 brick with studs on the side. They have become the basis for the way I build. I feel comfortable with small elements – I believe I still have a problem with space and parts when I build.

HBM: What is your favourite LEGO® theme?

CM: Of all time... Classic Space. It was a very important part of my childhood play, and the modern creations with which AFOLs keep the theme alive are incredible. Of those that are available now, Star Wars, but only the UCS range.

HBM: What element would you like LEGO® to make?

CM: I would say a plate with studs on both sides. But part of the challenge is building with what is available.

HBM: What do you like best: building LEGO® sets or creating your own MOCs?



CM: Building MOCs of course. I always build the official set and some of them stay built for one reason or another, usually sentimental (like the Mini Cooper or the Slave 1 UCS), but after a while I take them apart and build my own silly little things.



HBM: What MOC are you most proud of and which one has given you the most headaches?

CM: The answer to both may be the same: Minion Yoda. It took a long time to design it due to the availability of parts in that colour, but when I look at it I'm still happy with it. I think it will stay on my shelf for many more years. I also like the rest of the Star Wars minions a lot. And of course Totoro. As a fan of Ghibli Studio movies it had to be in my collection. The difficulty in this case was finding a way to combine two spheres of different size without a transition.



HBM: When, how and why HispaBrick Magazine®?

CM: When? Ten years ago. How? Almost without wanting to, and with the disinterested help of many people. Why? Both fame and the internet tend to be passing things, unless you are capable of keeping the spotlight on your work continuously. I thought it was sad that the fantastic creations I saw on the internet got buried under layers and layers of other creations in a short time. I thought the best way to give them a measure of immortality was to showcase them in a magazine, something I felt then was more durable than a blog post. So I decided to say it out loud, and with the help of some very committed people from the Spanish AFOL community and The LEGO® Group we got started. Later on it all started to grow beyond our wildest expectations and became what it is now.

HBM: There must have been many anecdotes during your time with the magazine. Could you share some?

CM: Honestly there aren't too many, at least not of the type you can tell without offending anyone. A sad anecdote that has always worried me concerns our first layout artist, Iñigo. One day he stopped answering our emails and I had to take on the lion's share of the layout work with only the little experience I had gained in first few issues. Fortunately, there are tutorials for everything online. I have never heard from him again and I hope he is well. Of the funny anecdotes, maybe the best one is my first trip to BrickWorld Chicago, where some already knew our magazine, or my visit to LEGO® Dinamarca, where I was very well received. But what is really fun is working with the Arvo brothers...

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

CM: I suppose the most important changes are related to the internationalisation of the magazine. More and more people know it and there are more and more international collaborations... I suppose that is the main change. In the end the product depends on the customer, and so it must evolve towards what the readers demand. As long as the magazine stays faithful to its principles and away from commercial interests all will be well. There are less and less free things, and the effort the magazine makes to stay free should be the pride of the community.

HBM: Issue 022 was your last magazine. What have you done since then? Have you started any new projects?



CM: Truth be told I have done many things. I have finished my book of stories, which I self published a few months ago, I have started building regularly again, and I have started a new LEGO® blog in Spanish and English – <https://www.bricksonthefloor.com> – where I post building instructions for some of my models. The future is yet to be decided...
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