

Fairground Amusement Sets

text by *lluisgib*

images by *lluisgib* and *LEGO® System A/S*

Although it is true that throughout the history of LEGO® there have been some sets related to amusement parks / fairs (read Fabuland, Paradisa, Creator, Factory...), in the last decade there has been an explosion of these sets, much more aimed at setting up your own amusement park, than at being a mere anecdote of one particular theme or other.

Let's go through these sets and see what possibilities they have of being incorporated into a large amusement park on a miniature scale...

CREATOR EXPERT

10196 – Grand Carousel (2009)

I remember this set with special affection. It was probably the forerunner of the sets we have today. A test bench to analyze if a set of these characteristics was possible and what acceptance it would have by the AFOL.

Both the mechanics and the set itself are fragile. When you build it, it works properly (it includes a motor) and it has the function of raising and lowering the horses and the gondolas. But with normal operation the mechanics loosen up and start to fail. It's also on a Baseplate 48x48. The set is very heavy and with this Baseplate it doesn't have enough rigidity, so parts of the set become detached during transport. In my case, I have the set on a 48x48 MILS base, which gives it much more rigidity and does not affect its operation.



10244 – Fairground mixer

We waited five years for a new attraction to appear. It wasn't until 2014 that the Fairground Mixer arrived. According to Jamie Berard, it was a dream he had, plus another proof of concept. It really has nothing to do with the 2009 Carousel, both mechanically and visually. It's an attraction on a truck trailer and some small side attractions.

It works very well. It spins very fine because, after all, the spin is based on the friction of a tire on some tiles. With the weight of the set, it does not slip and through Technic gears and axles the movement is transmitted to the arms. As a set, it is very complete and the fact that you can fold the arms and leave it as a truck trailer is a great idea perfectly implemented.

The set works manually, but it is ready to be motorized, like the other CREATOR EXPERT sets that follow.



10247 – Ferris Wheel (2015)

The following year we had another one of those mandatory attractions for any amusement park: The Ferris wheel. It's true that in 2007 there was a CREATOR Ferris Wheel. It was not a miniature scale but some of its technical solutions were replicated in the new Ferris wheel.

The Ferris wheel is impressive. It works very well, with a tire that provides traction to the outer rim of the wheel. Also all the access to the wheel is very detailed. However, once again the model is fragile, mainly in the arms of the wheel and in the supporting pillars. With a few extra parts it is improved remarkably. As in the case of the Grand Carousel, I have applied these small modifications to be able to transport it and enjoy the wheel at events.



10257 – Carousel (2017)

It seems that someone was left with a thorn in the side of the 2009 Carousel and a new version was launched in 2017, with many improvements in both design and mechanics, due in part to the availability of new parts.

The set is much nicer. Brighter colours, more detailed designs, more robust... Instead of using a Baseplate as the base of the set, the Carousel is mounted on a base of plates and bricks, which also includes the rotating mechanism. As in the previous Carousel, the movement of the gondolas/animals is on the roof protected by the decorative canvases. Although conceptually the method for generating this movement is the same as in the previous Carousel, it has been improved in sturdiness and mechanical simplicity.



10261 – Roller Coaster (2018)

And in 2018 came what for many is the crown jewel. In order for LEGO® to launch a roller coaster in good condition, it had to develop a new system of tracks and wagons. It seemed unthinkable... until at the end of 2017 the Joker Manor (70922) appeared. That gave rise to dreams, and the following June the desired set appeared.

The new system of rails and wagons works very smoothly. It is able to make the tour without the change of piece being noticed. I can't say the same for the lift. The system is complex and does not work with the finesse of the rest of the ride. As far as aesthetics are concerned, the set is majestic. It has the entrance path, the minimum height measurement, the access turnstiles to the wagons, the stand with the typical photo taken during the tour... It is an excellent set in every sense.



CREATOR

Man does not live by big attractions alone, so other themes such as CREATOR have also made their contribution to the fair. Obviously we cannot expect the same level of detail as in CREATOR EXPERT, but that does not detract from the fact that they are good designs.

31084 – Pirate Roller Coaster (2018)

Following the pull of the CREATOR EXPERT roller coaster and taking advantage of the availability of new parts, the CREATOR roller coaster was launched. It is inspired by the theme of Pirates and has a similar route to the Joker Manor. Its construction is suitable for children and it is quite affordable for early ages, with a remarkable result and performance.

The set has a very elegant visual appearance. From the design of the wagons, to the decoration of the tour and even the operator of the attraction is dedicated to a pirate fortress.

It is difficult to motorize this set, as you have to add quite a lot of mechanics and you would probably lose the clean aesthetics it has.

Being a CREATOR 3 in 1, there are two other attractions that can be built with the same set, which gives more possibilities for our fair.



31095 – Fairground Carousel (2019)

This year a new set of CREATOR has been released dedicated to the fair. It is a Carousel in which the gondolas move laterally by the centrifugal force of the turn of the attraction. The assembly of the set is not complex, which means that with little effort we have a functional attraction. The gondolas are very fun, including 3 rockets and a cow. The attraction is crowned by a large flying saucer with an alien inside and the letters UFO.

To make the attraction as real as possible, it has a control panel and an access platform to the gondolas. A fence separates the passengers to avoid accidents. Of course, there is also a ticket kiosk. To complete the set, an ice cream cart and a bench to relax after ending up dizzy at the attraction.

The set is prepared for motorization. By removing the handle and only turning a technic part (see pictures) you can attach a PF M motor and have the attraction running automatically. It is advisable to use an IR receiver or a 9V speed regulator as otherwise it turns too fast.



FRIENDS

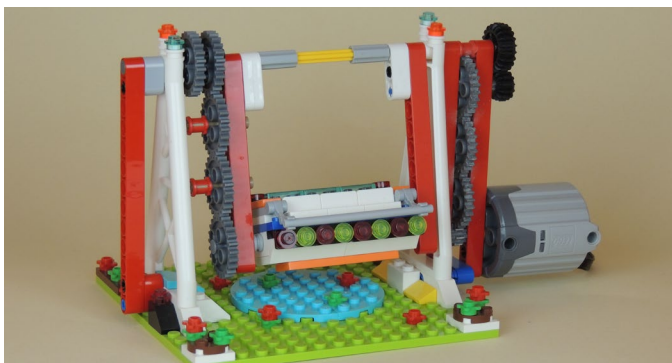
Interestingly enough, in the year that CREATOR EXPERT “took a break” from fairground sets, LEGO® FRIENDS was the big surprise in this respect. One might think that FRIENDS is a far cry from the CREATOR theme, but you can choose to make a section in the amusement park for this type of set, modify it to give it a less “girlie” look, or simply mix it up. Why not?

41133 – Amusement Park Bumper Cars (2016)

Although this set is called “Bumper cars”, for the interest of this article I will focus on the other attraction. The “Shaker Ride” is a wagon that has a double twist. It has one turn by the circular turn of the beam it is attached to, and another turn on its axis.

This was the set that really got me thinking about the motorization of the FRIENDS sets. In this case I had to modify the design of the attachment of the ride a little. It was necessary to make it more robust and to give it the possibility of coupling a motor. In this case it is an XL motor since more torque is needed.

In addition, another set of gears had to be added and a firm grounding so that the attraction does not move when it operates. You can see that I changed the colours of the liftarms for more standard colours but the essence of the attraction is the same. It's perhaps the MOD that I'm happiest about, and since I did it, it's been accompanying me to events.



41128 – Amusement Park Space Ride (2016)

It was the smallest set that year (considering attractions that may have some movement). The set has 3 rockets hanging from the top of the attraction that due to the centrifugal force of the spin, swing out of the attraction and give an interesting sensation of movement.

The set has an element at the top that allows you to turn the rockets with your fingers. With some modifications, the set can be motorized and rotated by a PF motor, preferably with a speed regulator. The base of the attraction has to be modified to be able to attach a motor and some gears. By means of a technic shaft the movement is raised to the top, where the rockets are fixed. You can see in the photo how much the base has had to be raised to couple the mechanics.



41130 – Amusement Park Roller Coaster (2016)

Before CREATOR EXPERT's roller coaster madness, FRIENDS gave us a hint of what the future would hold. The 2016 roller coaster was based on 4 stud wide tracks. In addition to the roller coaster, the set included a small Ferris wheel and a frefall type attraction.

The roller coaster in this set could be said to have been a compromise. It pretends to be a roller coaster but it's more like a train with some slope that allows you to launch the wagons. The set's operation is manual and I see it as difficult to motorize, unless many wheels were added to make the wagons go up the slope. Anyway, it's too much modification to have an acceptable result.

The wheel could be motorized. A similar strategy should be followed as with set 41133. I have my doubts that I could have a continuous operation without modifying the fastening of the wagons, but because the CREATOR EXPERT wheel already existed, I decided not to make any effort in this task.



41375 – Heartlake City Amusement Pier (2019)

We could say that this set is a revision of the roller coaster of 2016, but with improvements. A lot of improvements.

The wagon circuit is more of a “witch’s train” than a roller coaster. And maybe this should have been the name of set 41130. It is a circuit with roller coaster tracks that is set in a pirate theme (from friends... :D).

The setting is very nice and detailed. The pirate ship is a model by itself. Apart from the “facade” that can be seen, it has a detailed interior with different cameras with animals, skeletons, etc...

There is the mast with the sails and the bridge. Not only is the pirate ship very well reproduced. All the decorations, including algae, oysters, seahorses, jellyfish... are very well reproduced and integrated in the attraction.



In addition to this pirate train, there's a rotating swing. The subset is similar to 41128, but in this case the wagons are linked with chains, instead of using technic axles. It is quite high and if you turn the swing it creates a very nice effect. This subset is easily motorized. As in the 2016 set, the base has to be raised to be able to insert a technic axle to which a motor and some internal connection can be connected.

Finally there are some interesting accessories like a roulette wheel or an ice cream shop. They are complements that allow you to decorate the atmosphere of the fair and that we are given little by little in each set.



41337 – Underwater Loop (2019)

Once again we are faced with a sort of reissue of a 2016 set. In this case we are talking about the “Shaker ride” from set 41133. Again we have an attraction that turns on two axes: The beam axis and the axis of the wagon itself.

However, unlike the 2016 set, in this case we have 2 advantages: there are 2 wagons, so the set is weight compensated, and therefore a smaller motor can be used. On the other hand the wagons only rotate on their axis to maintain verticality, so mechanically it is simpler.

We find a set that is set at the bottom of the sea. The two cars are a turtle and a clown fish. Above the box office is a crab. The rest of the attraction is decorated with seaweed, fish and an oyster with a large pearl. A big little set.

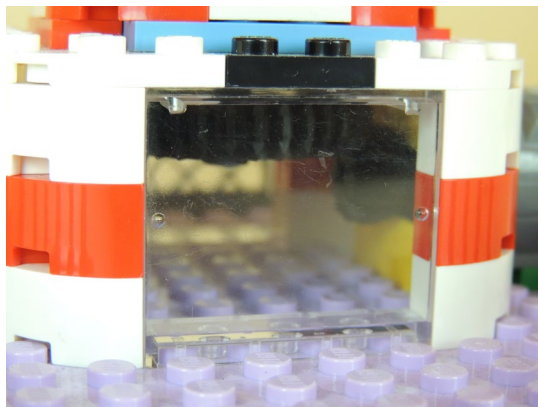


41373 – Funny Octopus Ride (2019)

Perhaps the funniest set of the three in 2019. It's a jumping octopus, which spins around and the wagons go up and down. The octopus wears a hat that acts as a spinner. The 4 gondolas are different: a turtle, a whale, a crab and an oyster. They are all made of pieces and they are very funny. On top of the box office there is an octopus.

Functionally there are some tubes that make the wave that the gondolas must follow. The tubes are rough and that's something that somehow makes it difficult to roll the gondolas. It's true that there are some wheels that turn on top of the tubes, but that roughness makes the movement not as smooth as expected.

This attraction is more difficult to motorize. It is necessary to remodel the base so that it does not interfere with the tubes, and that it does not break the aesthetics of the attraction. It's a bit difficult because there are 4 curved plates. A hole is needed in the center to add the turning axle, so the base has to grow by 1 stud per side.



Conclusions

More sets are available in the LEGO® catalogue. There are polybags with complementary elements, sets of some licenses that include some attraction as an accessory... but they are not the object of this article.

In recent years there has been an explosion of fairground sets. Many of them have motorization included. Others allow you to more or less easily add that movement and create a fairly decent amusement park.

The fact that there is a whole series of sets that are from FRIENDS should not be an obstacle to their integration into a diorama. The designers at FRIENDS have made a considerable effort to give us beautiful, functional and fun sets.

I hope that this does not stop here, and that the future will bring more attractions, more new pieces that will give us more play and more fan MOCs that will not cease to amaze us.

Thank you to LEGO® System AS for providing some of the sets in this article. The opinions expressed in this article are solely mine.

#

