

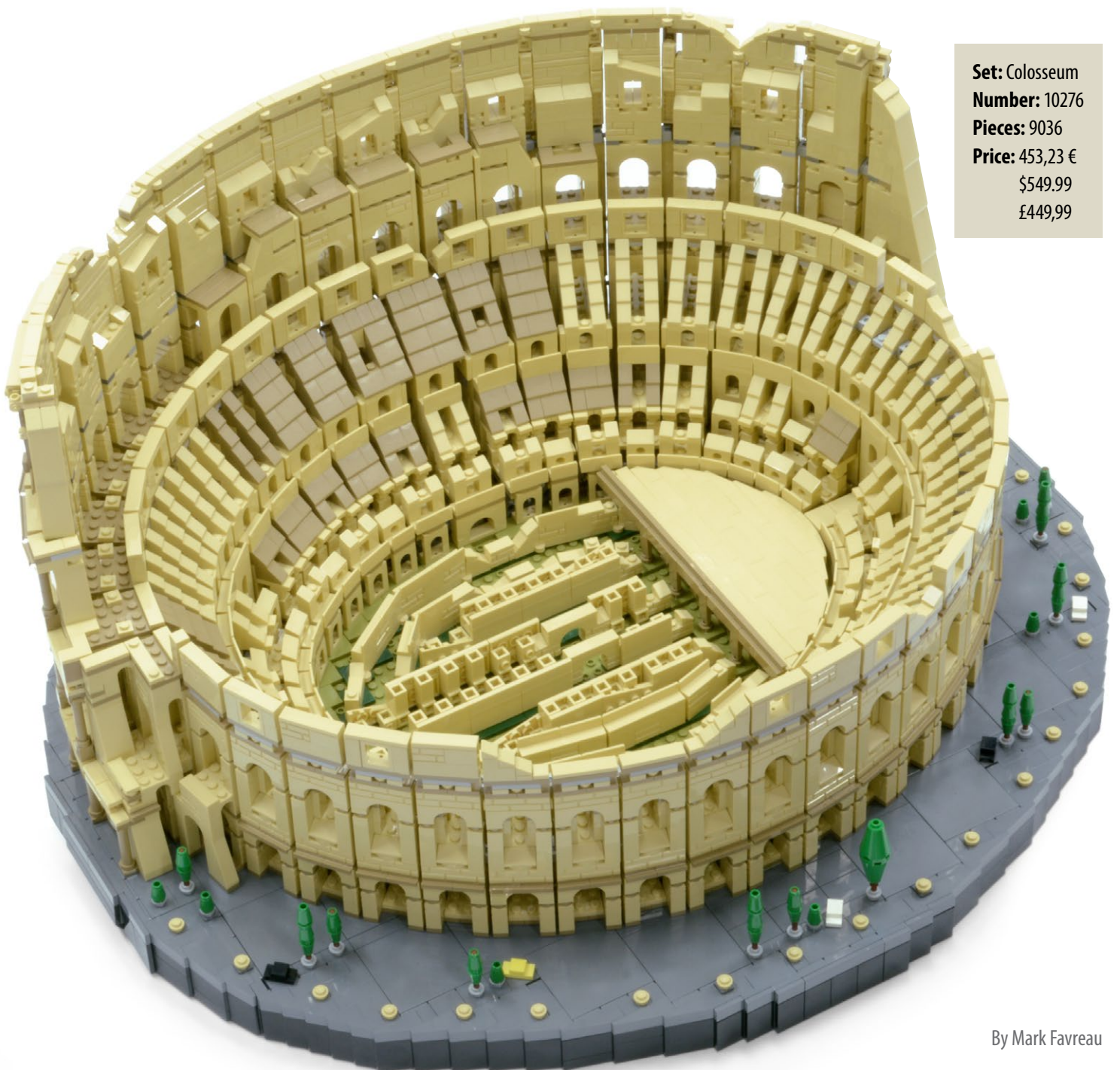
REVIEW 10276



S · P · Q · R



COLOSSEUM



Set: Colosseum
Number: 10276
Pieces: 9036
Price: 453,23 €
\$549.99
£449,99

By Mark Favreau



Clockwise from top left: The package, it's big. The admonitions, what NOT to do. Inner box stacking. Interior boxes I and II. The manuals. Yep, almost as tall as a minifig.

This review rightfully starts at the post office, where your humble author took the yellow package notification slip from his post box into the counter where Willie, the clerk, notified the author that he, Willie, didn't want to give the author the package, and he, Willie, wanted to keep it for himself. What kind of package could possibly incite such a reaction in a postal worker?

Willie disappeared into the nether reaches of the post office.

Your humble author... and your humble author will refer to himself in the third person because it's a thing... understood Willie's reaction once he laid eyes on the box. It was a reaction that could be considered only reasonable when presented with a 12.56 kg, 30cm x 71cm x 50cm box labeled LEGO®.

Much questioning of your author by the postal clerk ensued, and with the promise of reporting back to the clerk as to the box's contents along with substantial photographic evidence (or else!), the parcel was released from custody. Your author clumsily managed to exit the establishment, deposit the parcel into his vehicle, and head for the relative safety of his domicile.

It would prove easy to heed the warning of a

sticker neatly applied to the box "DO NOT PLACE ON SHELF BEFORE NOVEMBER 27TH, 2020" as there was no available shelf of sufficient size anywhere within the house. Confident that the admonition was respected, the parcel was opened to reveal another sticker, bright yellow with bold black lettering, "NOT FOR SALE" carefully positioned across a vast landscape of brick-yellow greebling. Other than a line stating 9036 pieces, there was still no indication of what this box contained. Your author wondered if it would actually contain all the pieces shown on the greebling.

With care due a package of such size, the inner container was slid from the outer, and most handsome package was revealed.

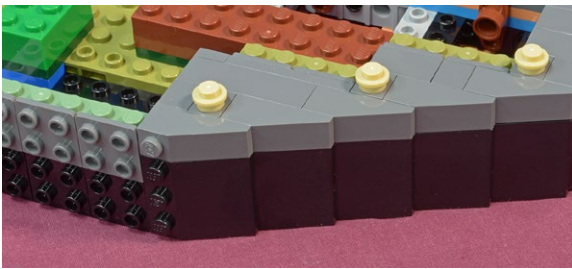
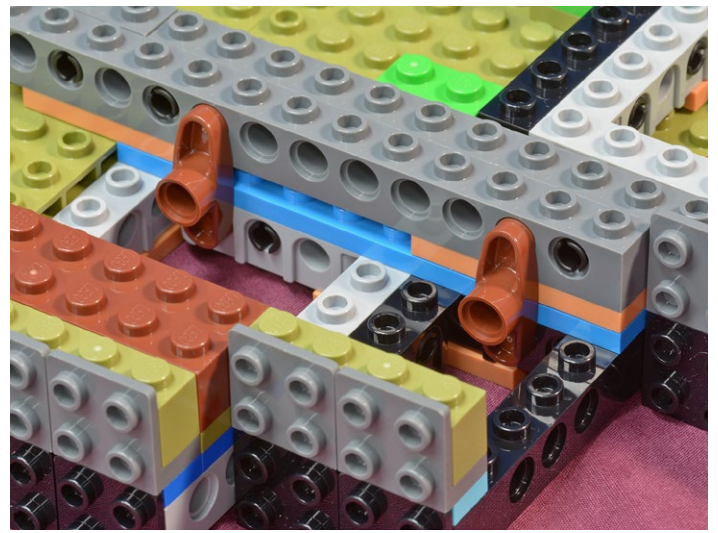
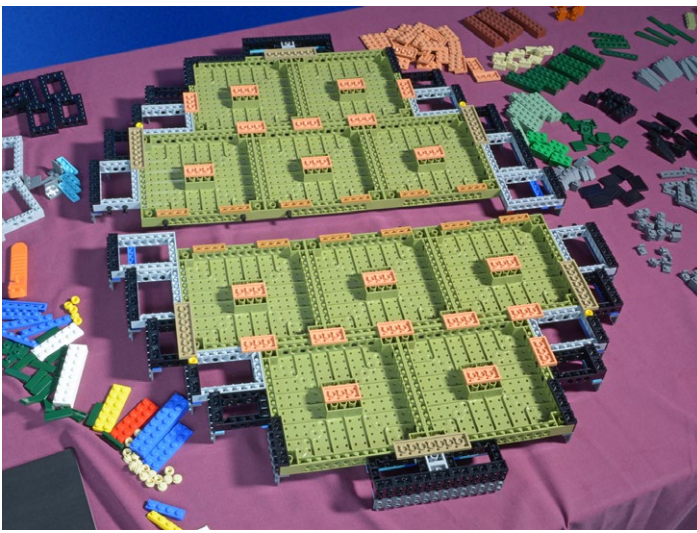
It was evident that the package designer had their act together. Against a black background was the image of the SPQR Colosseum framed along the bottom by the brick-yellow greebling. The image and title gloss varnished against the matte of the black and the greebling. Exquisite.

The recognition of the package meant one thing, your author had to assemble and review this model within two weeks. 9036 pieces. No time to waste. Your author would set up a table

specially for the task. He knew his wife would not tolerate this project consuming her dining room table for an extended period. He knew this from experience and will spare you, dear reader, those most gruesome details.

Placing the beautiful black box on the special table, your author sliced six seals on one end of the box. The end flap lifted easily as there was no glue holding the end down. Opening the remaining flaps revealed four inner boxes of equal size, each as handsome as the outer box, labelled I through IIII, and arranged sequentially from the smallest number on the bottom to the largest on the top.

The detail of the packing was appreciated as removing the boxes from top to bottom concludes with Box I at the ready to be opened to begin construction. A small conceit this was for sure, this arrangement within the outer box, but truly thoughtful. Of further notice is that the graphic layout of each of the inner boxes is such that the boxes read correctly given the expected positioning of a box on a shelf. If they're stacked face up, the viewer can read Colosseum on the bottom and top. If the boxes are placed face out, Colosseum can be read on the face and top.



Clockwise from top left: The underside of the base assemblies. Double Snap pins in tight spaces. Box I complete assembly. SNOT assembly for base. SNOT assembly attached to base.



Somebody at LEGO cared about these details, although placing these inner boxes individually for display was probably not something that was ever going to happen.

Introduction

This model is LEGO's interpretation of the Colosseum in its current state. That is to say that it is representative of the current state of decay and conservation efforts. It is not an interpretation representative of the building at the time of initial use. We have missing and broken walls, a partial floor, and modern-day efforts to prevent further decline of the building. The model is not accurate to the original in terms of scale and features. The actual Colosseum boasts eighty entrances and the model delivers forty. These details and others are noted across the four instruction manuals.

BOX I

Inside Box I is a thick 92-page instruction manual and several marked plastic bags. Two bags are numbered "1", two "2", two "3", two "5", one

bag is marked "4", and four bags are unnumbered.

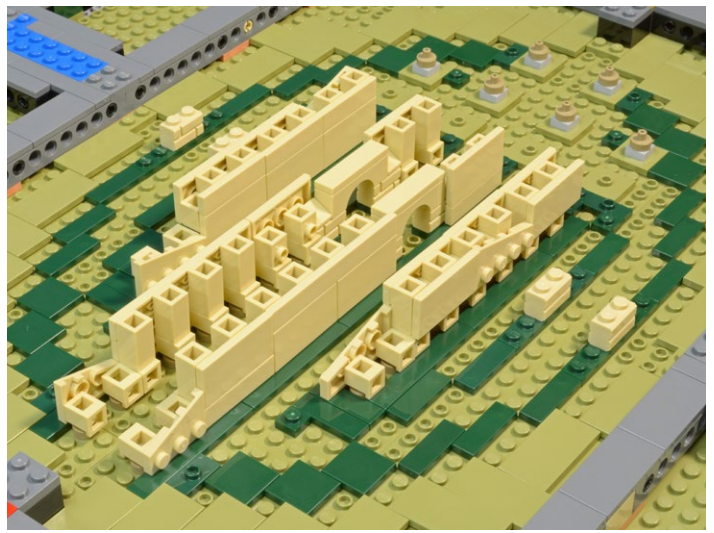
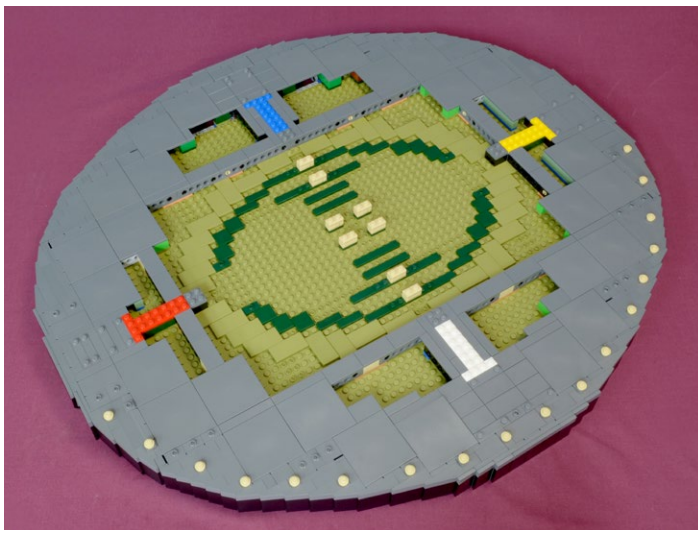
The I instruction manual starts out with a welcome message, photos, drawings, and some information about the actual colosseum. The I instruction manual also contains the parts reference for the set. Your humble author would also like to recognize LEGO's decision to include an entire page of the manual devoted to instructions covering the use of a brick separator and send a magnificent and fantabulous eye roll in the general direction of Billund for that.

The first page of building instruction shows "Bag 1" along with an indication of the need for 10x of the 16x16 olive green brick which are not included in Bag 1, but are distributed amongst the four unnumbered bags. So there's an immediate cognitive disconnect between the instructions and the provided parts, and the first thing needed. This isn't the end of the world, but if LEGO could bother to print "1" on two bags, one would think they would be able to print "1" on all the two other bags that are required for step "1".

Bags 1, bags 2, and the unmarked bags

contain parts to assemble what will become the base of the build. It is primarily a Technics sort of assembly with large area bricks attached with pins. Once the pin-to-brick assembly is finished, the bottom is further tied together with plates, and some SNOT brackets are attached to the perimeter of the assembly. Bags 1 is one half the base, bags 2 the other. The assembly is straightforward.

Bags 3 assembly continues with the base halves, adding what is basically filler brick and plates which will later support the "plaza" surrounding the main structure. The design team should be commended for the decision to provide each shape brick and plate in a unique color as this facilitates finding the correct parts quickly and accurately. The filler assembly happens around the periphery of the base while the center section is ornamented with a number of tiles which will be visible in the final build. Bags 3 assembly concludes by attaching the two halves to one another with pins. The base halves are quite large and lining up the pins and holes and getting the



Clockwise from top left: Bag 7 completed. Bag 8 center section "ruins". Bag 9 center section "ruins" completed. Bag 10 east and south entrances attached to base.

two halves snapped together is a bit fussy. A few additional plates are added on the underside to secure the halves together.

Bag 4 assembly starts with Technics bricks that were included in the unmarked bags. These are pinned together to form rigid beams that are attached to the base. These beams are further coupled to the base with some 15461 Technic 3L Double Snap pins. Your author found that attaching these pins was the most difficult part of the build as their placement is required in a tight space which is difficult to see and the bottom brick to which the piece attaches has its hole nested in the interior countersink of the 32532 Technic brick. The pins did slide in easily enough once they were properly aligned, but alignment was fussy. The author ended up with the entire assembly in the air, one hand guiding the pin from below and the other from above the base. This caused some of the 3020 nougat plates holding the underside of the base to fall off and they had to be replaced. After the Double Snap pins are attached, there are various additional

bricks added to the top of the base.

Bags 5 contain black and dark stone grey parts used to create one half of the plaza edge around the building. There are five effective section builds—two times for each build, one set mirroring the other. These sections are attached SNOTtily to brackets lining the periphery of the base. The section builds are simple and only a little monotonous. An additional "endcap" section is built, attaching at center on the long side of the base. With that, Box I build is complete and time elapsed is approximately 185 minutes.

BOX II

While Box I contained an instruction manual contains 92 pages measuring 3.68 millimeters in thickness at the spine, (your humble author used calipers), Box II instructions contain 240 pages measuring 8.4 millimeters. The bag count for Box II is 21, two bags numbered 6, 16, 17, and 18, three bags numbered 15, and one bag each for numbers 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14.

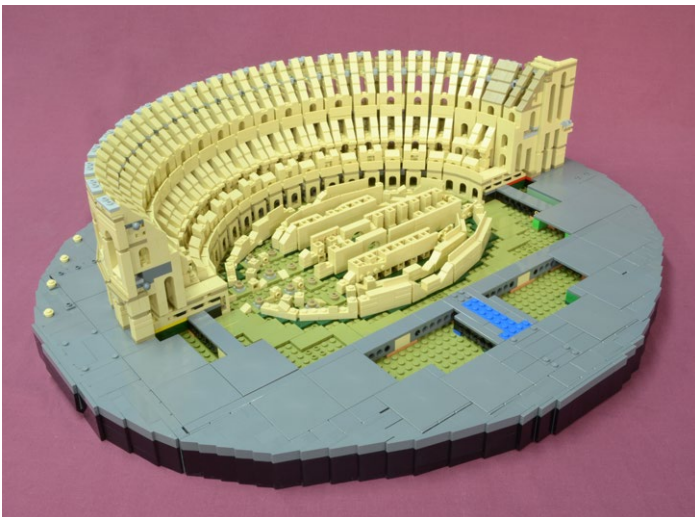
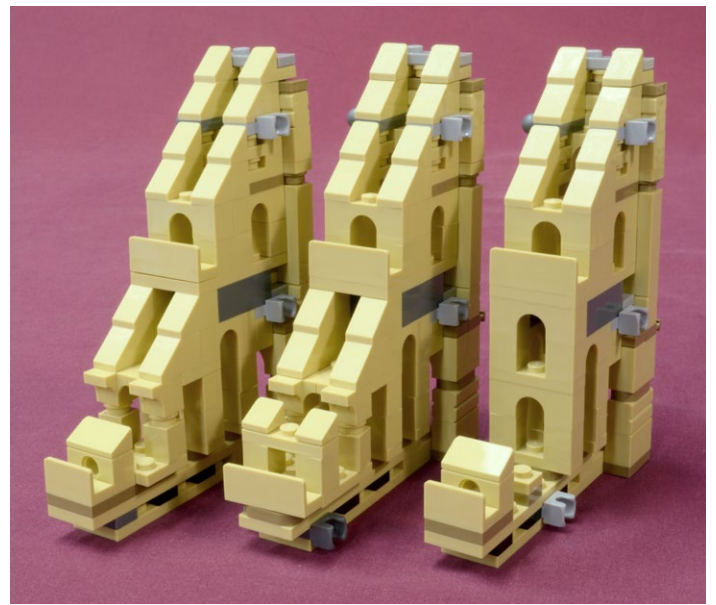
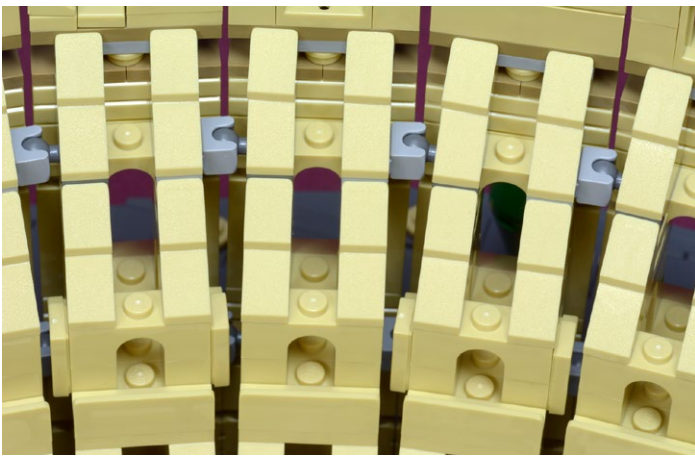
Bag 6 are effectively a repeat of Bags 5 from

Box I and complete the second half of the plaza edge, plus endcaps for the short sides of the oval.

Bags 7 contains plates which are used to cover the filler brick and establish the balance of the plaza and what will effectively become the platform on which the building will rest. This is the perhaps the quickest of all the steps within the entire build, requiring only about 30 minutes to complete.

Bag 8 contains pieces which are used in the center of the model, the interior portion of the ruins beneath what was the arena floor. What we have here are several essentially micro builds, some that are held together fairly tenuously by a number of single connection points. These pieces gain a little bit of stability once attached to the base. However, while attaching these elements to the base one notices some degree of flexion in the base itself. This is followed by a pretty unmistakable clink of a plate falling off the bottom of the base build. Perhaps your humble author needs a better table to build on.

Bag 9 continues what was started with Bag 8.



Clockwise from top left: Ball-and-socket attachments between arcade sections. Left-to-right: O, H, and NO sections. The southwest quarter attached. The southern half attached.

The peripheral portions of the center ruins are somewhat more stable builds than the inner portions and are built using some number of hinge plates to establish a curved appearance. These portions attach to studs on top of tiles and are reasonably stable and secure. Both bags 8 and 9 have what appear to be random placement of bricks and tiles at one end of the center area. Some of these elements are actually purposeful as bases for the arena floor which will be added at the very end of the build, so special attention should be paid that these elements get placed accurately.

Bag 10 contains parts to build the arcade sections located at the east and south wall center-fixed sections of the building. The two sections are similar in construction and get attached directly to the base when completed. Of particular interest with these and the arcade sections to come is the cleverness of the design that switches back and forth between two-stud, three-stud, four-stud, and six-stud widths along a center axis. This construction is in great part facilitated by 34103 1 x 3 plates with two knobs

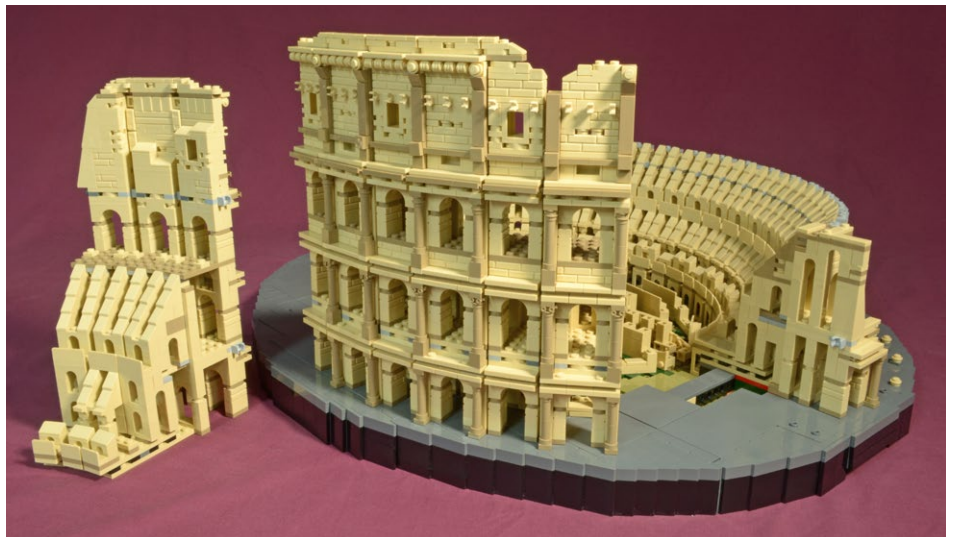
and 3794 1 x 2 jumpers. We often see angle plates and angle bricks used in builds to create "roundness" but the overall effect here is created exclusively with 90-degree corner parts. There are only six small angle plate in this entire 9036-part build, and those are used as wall fragments in the center ruins.

Bags 11 through 18. With the exception of the west center-fixed section built at the end of Bag 15, the next fifteen sections are identical builds, save for a handful of bricks. Your now grumbling author will haughtily label these sections as O, H, and NO sections. The O section is identified by front elements including a 4865 1 x 2 panel and a 3700 1 x 2 technic brick topped with a 85984 double cheese wedge. The H section is identified by front elements including a 23950 1 x 3 panel and two 3005 1 x 1 bricks topped with a 3623 1 x 3 plate and two 54200 cheese wedges. The NO is similar to the O section, but lacks the lower tier of slopes present on the other sections.

The O and H sections alternate around the arena. Each bag is essentially enough bricks to build one O and one H section. The NO section

appears once per quarter of arcade section offset by one O section on either side of the east and west fixed entrances. All non-fixed arcade sections have some combination of ball-and-socket parts (14417, 14418, 14419, 14704, 63082, 22890) placed uniformly on sides of each section. These ball-and-sockets are used to snap the sections to each other and to snap them to the fixed north, east, south, and west arcade sections. The O, H, NO sections sit atop the tile of the plaza section not fixed to the base. Just before attaching the OHNO arcade sections to the fixed sections, a 90195 window is attached to the bottom of each section. This piece sits unattached to olive green tiles on the base.

Another way to describe this south wall section is this: while Bag 10 was an enjoyable build with some degree of fascination for the design and assembly nuances, the next 16 sections become an increasingly monotonous build hell. Three. hours. of. the. same. damned. thing. over. and. over. Fortunately for your aching author, at some point his enthusiastic son wantonly indulged himself in the monotony and prevented the



Clockwise from left: a north wall H section. Variation in top sections of north interior walls. North side assembly through bag 29.

assembly from taking what would have been at least four-point-seven-five hours had the author worked alone.

At the end of bag 18 your crumbling author has fixed sections at the west, south, and east ends, a complete quarter of arcade at the southeast, and all but three sections in the southwest. He also has an aching back, shoulders, and a need to do something else for a while. Also of note is that periodically your author has been taking photographs to include with his review. Almost every time the model is repositioned to get a photo, there is the unmistakable clink of a plate falling off the bottom of the base. It is becoming more difficult to replace that plate, whichever one it is this time, as the build goes on.

Box II build time is approximately 460 minutes, cumulative build time is approximately 645 minutes.

BOX III

Box III's instruction book is 248 pages. It includes instructions for assembling the contents of bags 19 through 29. There is a single bag for 19, 20, and

25, three bags for 24, and two bags for the rest. Somewhat concerning to your author was the fact that Box III did not contain bag 29. Fortunately, two bags 29 would be found in Box III.

Bag 19 continues the monotony with an O and a NO section. Bag 20 is another O section, but with a few darker color slopes and some additional assembly on the exterior representative of modern conservation efforts. These three sections snap onto the southwest arcade sections assembled earlier and complete the southwest quarter of the building.

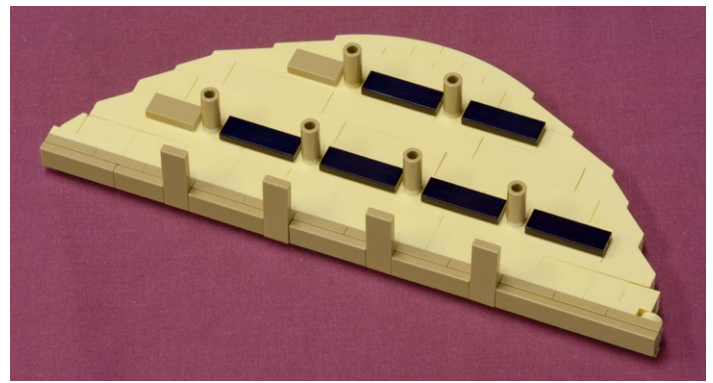
Bags 21 through 28 contain parts for the north wall sections. Bag 21 is the north center-fixed section. Bags 22 through 28 continue the section assembly counter-clockwise from the north center section.

The north arcade sections are similar to the earlier arcade sections, but more. The OHNO alternating sequence continues as it did on the south wall, but each section on the north includes an additional exterior facade wall, something not extant on the south sections. While the south sections have an 11-stud depth to their

assemblies, the north sections add an additional six studs to their depth. O sections retain their 4-studs width while H sections expand to 6-studs width.

The lower section of the north assemblies is essentially identical to that of the south assemblies, however there are some slight differences with some of the slope bricks. The added facade sections rise higher than the arcade sections and while they do to a degree have essentially identical exterior side appearance, the interior side build varies from one section to another mimicking the varying degrees of decay found on the actual building. So while there is still quite a bit of monotony in the builds of these sections, at least there is some small degree of difference from one section to another. The southern sections, after a point, can be assembled completely from memory and no need to knoll parts. The northern sections do require attention to the instructions.

The facade sections rising the highest ultimately finish in what is effectively a one-stud-thick wall, and this portion of the assembly is



Clockwise from left: View down the arcade. Underside of partial floor showing pillars. Base showing attachment points. Partial floor set in place.

relatively fragile. If, dear reader, you need to make some adjustment after the section assemblies are joined via the balls-and-sockets, expect to have to reassemble perhaps a substantial portion of three or more sections. Where sections are tied together these sections may crumble together. Or crumble apart. Depending on one's semantics. The column assemblies are also somewhat unstable. The candlestick pieces don't snug well into the 1x1 round plates with open studs, and the columns that use the rollerskate as a decorative crown are especially loose. Those columns are effectively "pinched together" by the plates above and the bricks below as opposed to the usual stud clutch.

Box III, plus bag 29 from box III, build time approximately 365 minutes, cumulative build time is approximately 1010 minutes.

BOX III

Box III contains bags 29 through 40. There are two bags for each number except 36 and

40, for which there are one each. Book four has 260 pages.

Bag 30 contains the final section for the northwest corner of the building. That assembled it can be attached to the remaining section by ball-an-socket and hinged into place completing three-quarters of the building.

Bags 31 through 38 are used to assemble the sections for the northeast quarter of the building. Before snapping the final sections into place, your author suggests you take a moment to peer down the interior of the arcade. There is some wonderful detail here that won't be visible once the building assembly is completed.

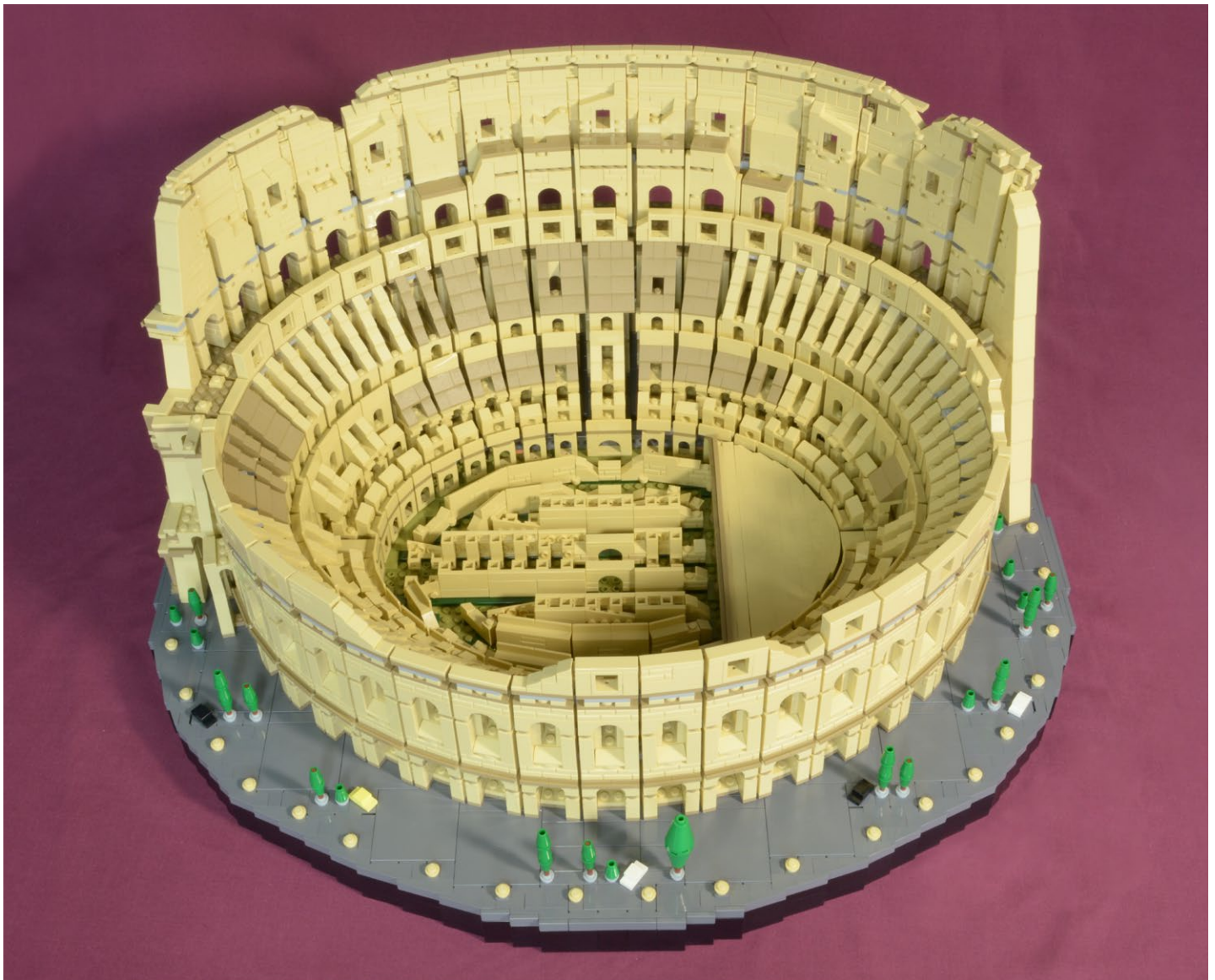
Bag 39 contains "final touch" pieces, window sections that crown the lower oval section. **Bag 40** contains pieces to build the partial arena floor and decorative elements that adorn the plaza. The arena floor is a little tricky to align and set in place as one has to perfectly align the holes of the candlestick pieces used as lolly columns onto tiny pins on the base.

Box III, bags 30 through 40 take approximately 315 minutes to assemble, cumulative build time is approximately 1325 minutes. That is about 22 hours. Your mileage may vary, dear reader, but that should be a reasonable guide as to time involvement with this build.

Summary

Once completed there is no doubt that this model is quite the marvel to behold. It is sincerely a wonderful aesthetic achievement. Your author does believe that during the process of the build that one does contemplate the complexity, art, and engineering of the original building as is suggested by designer comments in the instructions. There is a definite wow factor to it.

There are some downsides, though. First is that the model is quite delicate, fragile even, much like the actual building. It is quite easy to knock pieces off unintentionally. Attempting to move the model is likely to cause something to go amiss somewhere.



As your author repositioned the model to take photographs throughout the build, the 2 x 4 nougat plates on the bottom of the base insisted on coming off repeatedly. The author humbly suggests that 2 x 8 plates which would stretch across the corner intersections would provide a more secure hold. The base remains flexible to some degree at completion because there isn't much to add rigidity to the 60 x 52 centimeter (approximately 20 x 24 inch) oval. The bulk of the building is not attached to the base, and this lack of base attachment, of course, is what allows for the building's oval shape to be formed. Consequently, the absence of rigid attachment provides nothing in the way of additional stability for the model. Transporting the completed model would definitely present challenges. Transporting a partially disassembled model will also present challenges. Reassembling this model if it comes apart will present different challenges. There is so much of the build that is alike and so much that is slightly different that memory alone will be

insufficient to faithfully reassemble the model if into parts it does fall.

The build is monotonous, especially the southern wall. We really can't fault the designers for this because the building is what it is. But four or five hours of assembling the same bricks over and over is not particularly enjoyable in the author's opinion.

Beyond the model, AFOLs are likely to love, yes love, this set for the parts. Castle builders, anyone wanting to create their own modulars for cityscapes, and anyone who simply wants a load of small bricks and arches will be excited to get them in bulk. There are 28 6 x 6 dark stone grey tiles, 239 sand yellow 1 x 2 plates rounded with open studs, 96 sand yellow 31561 1 x 1 plates with shaft, simply a ton...okay, dear reader, a ton is very slight hyperbole...over 11 kilos of really useful MOC parts here. Most of them are brick yellow, but brick yellow is sure more useful than magenta or blue.

What will become of this model, the author

is not sure. It is certain without a doubt that attempting to return pieces to bags and bags to boxes in such a way as to recreate the first experience of assembly of this model is, in the language of the author's people, just ain't happenin'. And this model is going to collect dust and spiders of a magnitude previously unknown to collectors of dust and spiders. It has near infinite nooks and crannies and wiggle holes just ripe for the accrual of fufkas and dust bunnies.

That said, and his review complete, our author will first provide you, dear reader, with the standard disclaimers: 1. thanks to LEGO for providing the kit, 2. thoughts and opinions expressed are solely those of the author, at least until somebody else has the same opinion, at which point it becomes a shared opinion. 3. And so on. With that, your author will bid you a humble adieu as he must now report to a certain clerk at a certain post office.

Or else.