

REVIEW

by Lluís Gibert

10273

HAUNTED HOUSE



A new set for the theme park series has appeared this year. Under the name “Fairground Collection” and with the new box design for the adult oriented sets, this is a rather large set with a very special connection to the Adventurer sets of the late 90’s and early 2000’s.

You have probably read many reviews of the set. We are not going to analyse it as a set. We will analyse this connection with the Adventurers series through all the references that the designers have added to this set.

The instructions include small texts at certain points of the construction. Most of these texts give us the clues to the vintage connection of the set. I think it is very appropriate that they have added these little “tips” in the middle of the instructions, just when you have finished building the element in question, instead of a long text at the beginning that almost nobody would read. I have extracted all these texts from the instructions and will analyze them one by one.

Set: Haunted House

Number: 10273

Price: 229,99 €

Pieces: 3231

Minifigs: 10



Baron Von Barron

Before we begin, we must talk about the main character of this set, Baron Von Barron. He is the bad guy in the Adventurers series, and he appears in thirteen sets, trying to steal relics all over the world, whether in India, Egypt, or Mount Everest. The idea is that he has built his haunted house with everything he has stolen over the years. Let's see how.



The Catarino Organ

Von Barron had this organ made to measure in Portugal. He used it mainly to play theme songs from television programmes.

Here the story gets away from the Adventurers theme a little. Organs are an element that generates the characteristic sound of a haunted house. In this case, the designers have given a nod to a former LEGO designer, Tiago Catarino, who, among other things, designed the Ship in the Bottle for LEGO Ideas. As Tiago explains in this video, youtu.be/MeeRwjPflB8, he gave some advice to Carl Merriam about how to build a organ. It seems that Carl followed some of his advice and decided to give it Tiago's surname. Moreover, Tiago is Portuguese (and I suppose he likes songs from TV series) so it is a fitting tribute to a former colleague.



The Idol of the Everest

Taken from a temple on Mount Everest, the ringlets are said to extend into the unknown. It is also a large coat rack.

One of the locations of the Adventurers' sets was Mount Everest, with the yeti roaming around. In set 7417 Temple of Mount Everest, there is an idol (a skull with a gem on top) that the baron stole. The construction is very simple, as there are only five pieces, but it connects us with that fantastic set.



The Heads of Anubis

Taken by air from the temple of Anubis, they are supposedly "just for decoration, that's all".

These heads are a reproduction of those that appear in set 5988 The Temple of Anubis. Inside the temple is Pharaoh's burial chamber, which is flanked by two sculptures of Anubis. He is the guardian of the tomb, represented as a large black canid lying on its stomach, probably a jackal or a wild dog, or as a man with the head of a dog.

The assembly, again, consists of a few pieces, but they perfectly reflect what they intend, and are a faithful reproduction of the original model.



The Obelisk of Evil

Von Barron stole this obelisk because it had the most evil inscription he had ever seen.

In sets related to Egypt, there were several stone columns with hieroglyphs, which formed obelisks or columns of a temple. It seems that one of these obelisks was stolen by Von Barron and taken to his mansion. It is curious that the stolen obelisk does not appear in any of the Adventurers' sets, as its inscription is unpublished.



The Face of the Sphinx

The first Egyptian item the baron stole. The entire mansion was built around it.

We continue exploring the different sets on Egypt from the Adventurers series. We now come to set 5978 The Secret Surprise of the Sphinx. It could be said that it is the most important relic that Von Barron stole from Egypt. A spectacular and very well preserved sphinx, although it seems that over the years, it has become darker, as there is a change from the basic colours with which the sphinx was built in the original set, to darker colours in the set we are analysing.



The escape plan

Von Barron lined the face of the sphinx with dynamite, just in case any curse came along.

In the Adventurers sets, Von Barron usually has some dynamite sticks in case he has to blow up a wall. Although in the past it was a 1 x 2 tile with a printed dynamite cartridge, in this set they have used a detonator made with pieces. I think the reference in this case is not very strong.



The Golden Dingus

When Von Barron approached the Golden Dingus, the yeti suddenly appeared and ate his left hand! Fortunately, he already had a hook for a left hand, so he simply replaced it with another one.

The direct reference to Von Barron on Everest is curious, as none of the sets set located there feature Von Barron. But we will suppose that he travelled there to steal the Golden Dingus, which is next to the yeti's hideout. This scene can be seen in set 7412 in the only appearance of the yeti (if we don't count the collectible minifig). The construction of the dingus is very simple, as it consists of only four pieces, but again, it is a copy of the original 2003 model.



The Orb of OGEL

A prototype of the mind control super-weapon used by the evil OGEL Empire. Von Barron always had one on hand "for a rainy day".

In this case there is an exception in the link with the Adventurers series and we move to another series from that time: Alpha Team. It appears in five sets of the theme, so Alpha Team fans will recognize this weapon without any problem.

- 6775 Alpha Team Bomb Squad
- 6776 Ogel Control Center
- 4790 Alpha Team Robot Diver
- 4793 Ogel Shark Assault Sub
- 4795 Ogel Underwater Base and AT Sub

The Orb also appeared in comics and in the video game LEGO Alpha Team. The weapon has had different uses according to the set and the period, according to Brickipedia, but it has always been associated to some kind of mind control.



The Forbidden Skeleton

Some say that Sam Sinister's car exploded as he ran from the law, leaving only his skeleton and top hat.

Others say that there was once a third twin butler. No one knows for sure.

Sam Sinister is another Adventurer character, who appears in some sets as a bad guy. Among other sets, he appears as the bad guy on Everest. There is an evolution of the story as a legend with this skeleton, linking a supposed escape from the law and the skeleton in the mansion through the top hat.

The other possible explanation for this skeleton is that a third brother of the butlers of the Von Barron mansion died and his skeleton was left there.



The Altar of Alhazred

It is not known for which dark rites this heavy looking stone table was originally designed. The baron used it for light readings on rainy days.

Here we leave the LEGO world to make a reference to Horror and Fiction literature. Alhazred (a pseudonym for H.P. Lovecraft) supposedly wrote *The Necronomicon*, a book about magical knowledge in Europe in the Middle Ages. I suppose that some designer is passionate about that kind of literature and wanted to make that homage outside the bricks, but in relation to the history that this set tells us.



The Resonator

In a failed attempt to harness the power of the Re-Gou Ruby with this device, Von Barron accidentally summoned two friendly spirits from the beyond.

According to Brickipedia, "the Re-Gou Ruby was a gem that was said to have great magical powers. It was protected by the dead Pharaoh Hotep in the Egyptian sub-theme of Adventurers. The adventurer team and the villain Baron Von Barron are trying to recover it while Hotep tries to keep it for himself".

It seems that in the end Von Barron managed to steal the ruby although the consequences were the appearance of two spirits from the beyond. I find it hard to understand why the ruby is blue, as it was originally red, like all rubies.



The Portrait of Samuel Von Barron

When the portrait was finished, a strange glow began to emanate from the ruby. Caught up in the mummy's curse, Von Barron was driven mad by the terrible jokes of Pharaoh Hotep.

After building almost the entire set, with so many references to Baron Von Barron, the character himself was still missing. Almost at the end of the construction we have a large portrait of the Baron that decorates the tower of the mansion. But the portrait has a curse. Because the baron stole the mummy of Pharaoh Hotep, it does not let him live without bothering him continuously with his jokes. And it has been captured in a very original way on the set.

The portrait is printed on a 1 x 5 x 6 trans clear panel, and on the back, there is another 1 x 3 x 4 panel with the face of the Pharaoh. When we activate the light brick, the face of the Pharaoh is projected on Von Barron's portrait.

The Pharaoh is the protagonist of several of the Adventurers sets in Egypt, and coincides with the Baron in two sets.



The Madman's Elevator

"How is my lift to nowhere coming along?? It has its ups and downs. aaaHAHAHAaHA!"

– The Crazy Baron

If you get on the lift in the tower of the mansion, you are in for a surprise: when you get to the top, some doors open and, suddenly, you have a free fall to the floor. After finishing the construction the final result is this attraction.

As an attraction it is well designed, both in the ascent, when the doors open at the top of the tower and for a moment you see the horizon. When you go down, you use the braking system of the real attractions, with a mechanical friction brake.

But I have to say that, unfortunately, it is not a spectacular attraction. As everything takes place inside the tower, you cannot enjoy it in all its splendour. It is true that if you open the set, there is a window where you can see the fall, but it is more a building than an attraction.

Conclusions.

The set leaves me with mixed feelings. On the one hand, the effort to evoke Adventurers is remarkable, and I really liked the way it was expressed throughout the set, without it being particularly garish. I also liked the handicapped access. LEGO is doing a great job in that regard.

But on the other hand, I think that the objective of the set as an attraction has not been achieved. The building on the outside is not particularly eye-catching for a haunted house. In this respect, I find the design of the old haunted house much more appropriate. Here, the interior is very decorative, and the functionality of the attraction is hidden by the building.