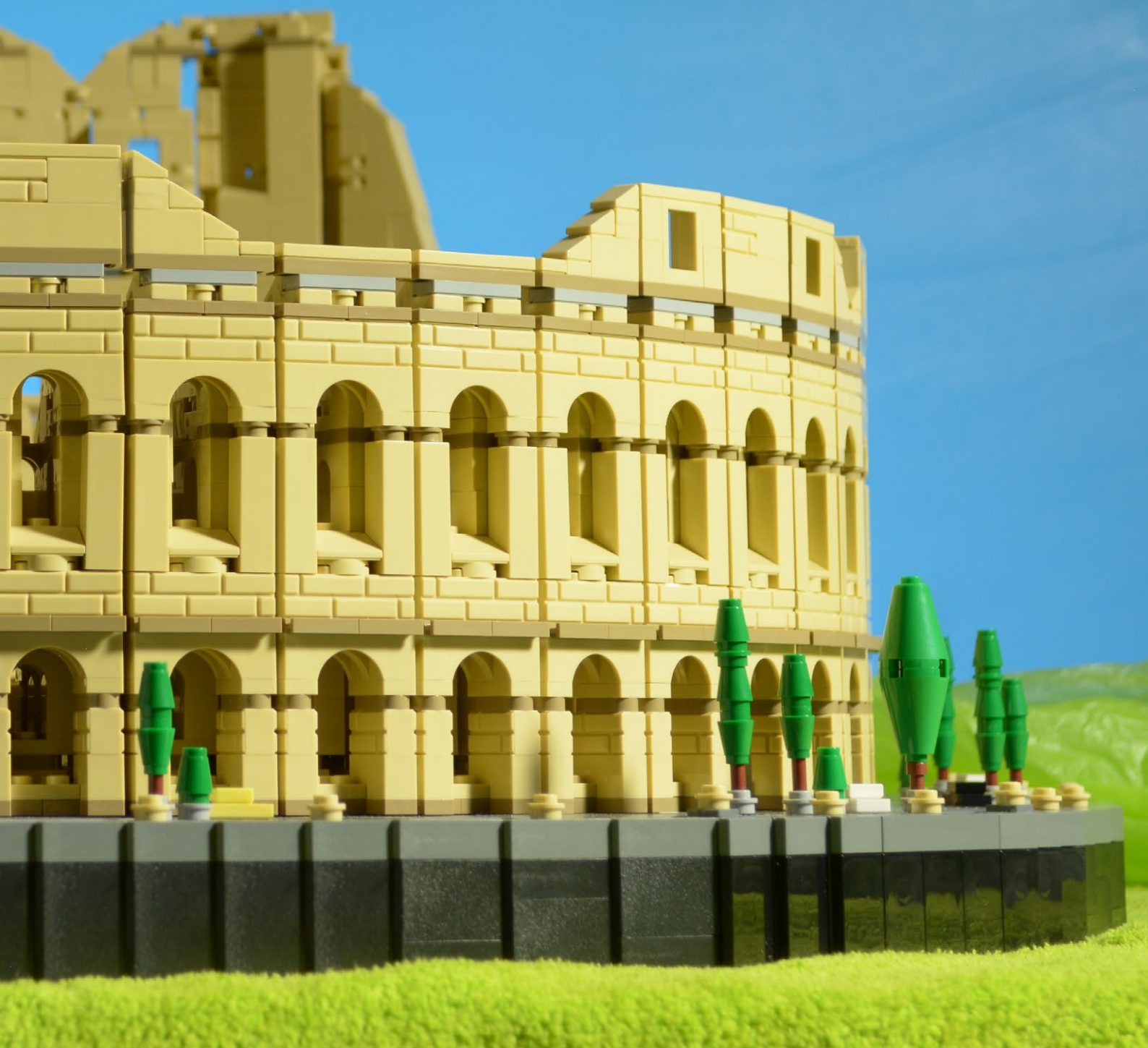




035

E N G L I S H



Welcome!

We are back with a new and free (yes, absolutely free) issue of the HispaBrick Magazine.

This launch coincides with some important changes in the Magazine's team. On the one hand, our friend and colleague Lluís Gibert, is no longer part of the team, although we hope that he will continue to collaborate with us in some way ;).

Another no less important collaborator of ours, Jesus Delgado, known as Arq medes, publishes the last of his funny and incisive cartoons in this issue... we will miss them : (We thank you for your years of dedication and wish you all the best in your new projects.

We also welcome a new collaborator, Mark Favreau, who has helped to start this new phase and what better way than with a change of image that you will surely appreciate in this new issue.

We wanted to find out how different AFOL communities around the world are living through these difficult times, so we contacted different LUGs, RLOCs and RLMFs who explained to us a little about the situation in their countries in the face of the pandemic and we got to know their communities a little better.

As always, we are grateful for the selfless collaboration of the AFOLs who help us to create a new issue of this magazine made by AFOLs for AFOLs and we want to continue encouraging you to collaborate with us so that this magazine remains a reality for a long time.



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BUILDING Spike Auto Mata

By Lee Magpili



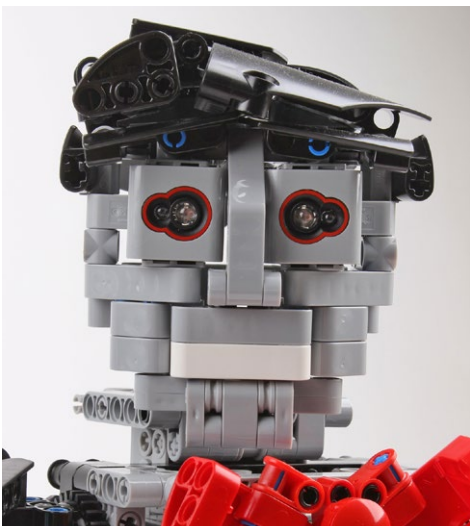
SAM's origin came from building a new robot in the vein of EV-AN¹ using the new Spike Prime platform—taking all those new parts, and seeing what I could do with them. It doesn't take much more than that, and once I had enough parts to play with and a bit of time to dump ideas out onto the building table, I went right in and got started.

Part 1: Head, Hair

I built the head and the chest area in one sitting, but that doesn't mean it wasn't complicated. Using the first EV-AN² as a template, I placed the color sensors as eyes and wanted to give them a subtle expression. The Spike sets have a 7m gear rack that can be used for creating a steering mechanism for left-right movement.

The shape of the new motor made mounting everything incredibly easy. The nose was next, with lots of ideas again coming from EV-AN, although finding the right size was a challenge. One of the biggest challenges ended up being the lips—SAM suddenly became a girl once I started working on them. I wanted to give her a feminine expression without making it overt, so I tried grey lips first, but it looked so dead. Red lips were just too much, and I finally chose yellow, hoping the parts would be available. I think the expression ended up great—playful and expressive without being too girly. To get the shape right, the 3m axles are not pressed all the way into the cross blocks, and the lips float to center. They can move around a bit, but this just adds character and expression.

I pride myself on the hair for my Edison and Einstein robots made a few years ago, so making feminine hair shouldn't have been so hard. I stumbled on using the banana gears in black, which created a perfect shape for a ponytail. Just layering them together and tilting a little made for a perfect head shape. As I finished it up with



Edison's head, left and SAM's head, right.



EV-AN 2013 runs amok in Grand Central Station.

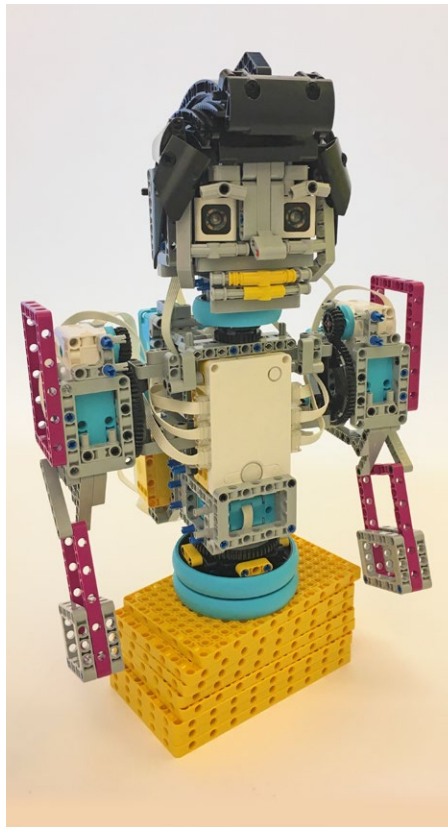
some panels to add the bangs, it almost built itself. Shaping the rest of the head was close to the first EV-AN, building around the color sensor eyes.

Mounting the head on the Spike Prime hub was simple, as this is a natural chest element. I was sure it would just be a 'temporary' mount, stuck on there with a turntable and motor behind the hub, but the mount ended up being permanent, unfortunately leaving me with difficult access to the port of the hub. Adding a couple of frames to stabilize the model brought me to the end of a good first day's building. Turning it on for the first time felt magical, although the eyes were definitely brighter than I would like them to be. Later, I would find a python command to control this.

Subconsciously, I wanted to be able to build the head using only parts from the Spike Prime set and the expansion set. It might have some funky colors, but would be buildable mechanically. The shape came out great for a first draft, though it never really got reworked anyway.

Part 2: Shoulders, Torso

At this point, building really became organic. I like to let the parts speak for themselves and this was no different. The 15M beam above the Hub naturally became a clavicle or collarbone. Attaching a turntable there was easy and provided a natural pivot point for shoulder



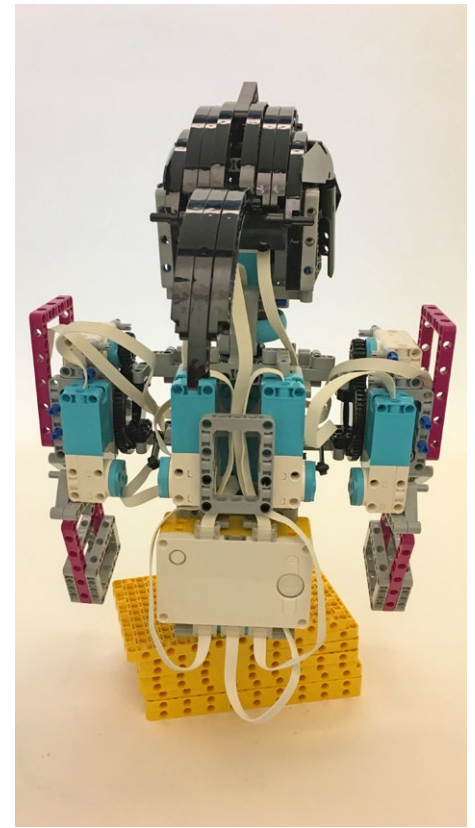
Shoulders and torso.

movement. EV-AN also had a shoulder-raising motion, which gave some strength to him, although it wasn't as expressive as I would have liked.

The new motors really make it fun to connect turntables, and there are so many ways of doing this. Here we can really appreciate the system. The final part of the build really takes advantage of frames and beams with pins. We also have great potential here for adding armor and attachments to the magenta 7 x 11 frame. Feeding the wires through the hole between the hub and arm connection was satisfying. The flexibility was not even hampered! The soft wires are fun and relatively easy to clean up.

Another motor easily fits just below the hub, making a sort of belly-button area. With Gundam-like proportions, the torso ends up being quite small. As with the shoulder joints, the torso needs to move an immense amount of weight and torsional stress. It was tempting to use a worm gear construction, but actually, the motors are less conducive to that build with the 90-degree turn needed. At this point the build already had a lot of character, and movement was quite stable with enough control.

It seemed natural to use the larger wheels at the waist, matching the neck joint. The model would still balance, as it was still quite light. This was also a great way to show off the possible connections of the wheels. The waist also seemed



Back.

a good breaking point for dismantling when traveling. The waist could be locked into the hips using the wheel, though this would take a lot of work. I chose to keep it loose for easy transport, although this would haunt me later. A lot of holes and pins were left exposed on purpose, for the later addition of armor and detail.

Part 3: Back and Biceps

This was easily the most interesting section of the robot, and one could probably spend a college semester on the elbows alone. It again began organically by finding a way to power the chest movement and attach the second Hub. The hubs run independently and they don't really need to be synced. That being said, I still want them to be synced, and I hope in the future we can achieve this and get some really fluid actions. The front hub controls the eye color sensors as well as the shoulders and elbows. Yay for six ports! The rear hub controls the eye movement left to right, and the chest, neck and waist movement. They all run pretty much randomly but look cool when it's all running together. Having a blocky, square hub with lots of holes and so many places to connect makes building such a joy.

The shape of the small motors made them easy to add to the back. Some trial and error was needed to provide enough movement for the chest. The subtle movement really gives it a lot of character. More movement would have

been possible, but three modules gave just the right range. The dot on the motor provides a zero point, which was very useful for both placement and programming.

The elbows are a mechanism that I haven't seen many people use, though I've been using them for years now since my first professionally designed mechs. Most LEGO elbow joints have a 90-degree motion, and my biggest goal was to get as much movement as possible. The mechanism is a four-bar double rocker with crossed follower beams and equal length base and top linkage. This allows the joint to completely invert in either direction thus giving a full range of movement, and you can give it the strength it needs depending on the mechanism used for powering the lead linkage.

Here, I used another four-bar mechanism leading from the 'triceps' of the model to push the arm of the crossed four bar. Without any additional load, it can bend to allow the wrist to meet the shoulder. Ultimately the design of the hands and forearm needed to be as light as possible. With everything on, the elbows get about 100 degrees, maybe 110. A worm gear would allow for the full motion, but I preferred to get better speed.

It's pretty hard to power the joint though—in my previous mech, I had to double up the mechanism and throw in a 40-tooth gear and

click hinges to stabilize the movement. You're also left with a huge gap where the joint is. I spent a lot of time studying Gundam model kits to see how they close that gap and would eventually add greebles and additional parts. The joint was only used in the elbows of SAM, but in my full-size grey mech it really allows for some interesting poses when used in the knees as well.

With so much space for adding armor and parts, SAM was now really beginning to take shape. I was able to run the first test program with upper body motion, and really loved the zero position of the motors because... However, if the motion got too fast she'd fall right over.

There's so much space for adding armor and parts.

Part 4: Leg Day

From the outset, these legs needed to be different. In many of my previous mechs, the joints were completely motorized at the joints and while that was fun, it wasn't any fun at demonstrations. Inspired by the large Gundam Unicorn in Japan, this one would have animated armor instead of motorized articulated joints. I also decided to incorporate a stand.

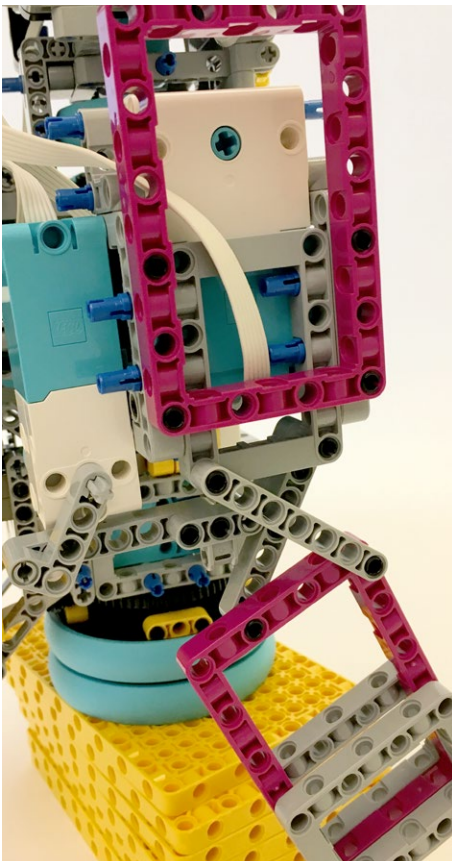
The last big robot I built took forever to pose in shows, but at least he would always hold the position. EV-AN ver. G was a big step up in size, but it wasn't as interesting since everything

moved so slowly. I wanted SAM to be able to react to her viewers nearly instantly.

The angular hip uses some clever placement of 3x5 L-beams to get the right angle, and to allow the wheel to become a belt and stand. The turntables don't have any gearing, and use just a 12t gear on a blue axle-pin to keep the position of the legs in place. She would never walk on her own anyway, and the angle gives the right kind of splay to the model when turned just slightly forward. The lateral splay and thigh rotation were fixed, as this would just end up on a stand at exhibitions.

For the shoes I wanted a shell-top, sneaker look. And again, I wanted to use only the shapes available in the Spike Prime set. The heel uses a 56m 2k molded wheel to keep the friction on lateral movement and it doubles for the style and back of the shoe itself. All the friction joints at the ankle seem a bit weak, but they hold up. I would later add some spring dampers for additional stiffness and motion-limiting—all it needs is enough motion to handle standing positions.

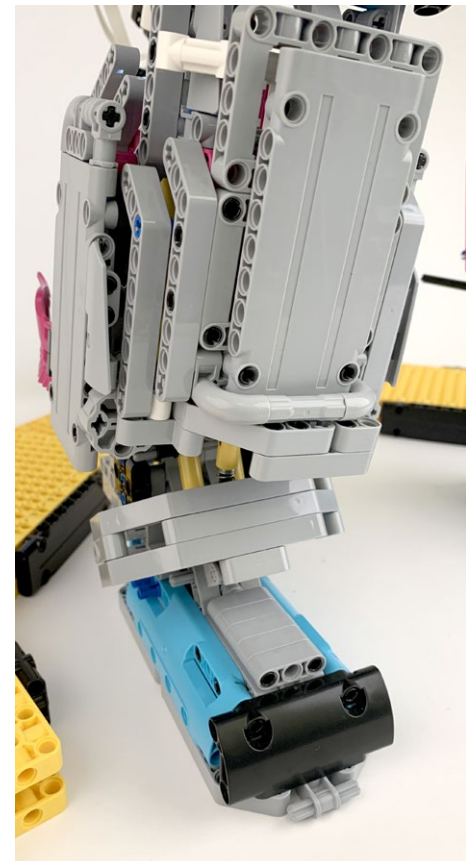
Taking inspiration again from Gundams, the knee needed a double joint with a strong and lockable position. Here I opted for worm-gearing and gear rack. Linear actuators are simpler, but they don't provide enough travel for a complete knee bend. Without any armor, the joint should be able to bend completely, heel to hip. I started



Elbow assembly.



Legs.



Lower leg and foot.

by connecting two gear racks to their respective pivot points. The upper thigh doesn't need the same travel as the calf, so they use different racks.

At the upper thigh, a 13m rack was used and it slides just adjacent to the motor. The worm gear is the 1m gear with a slightly larger diameter than the classic 2m worm. Sandwiching all the layers is a bit tricky, but it mostly all fits within the maroon frame. At the front of the knee is a double-angle beam as the main lever point which holds the leg and is connected all the way to the thigh. I didn't yet know what the armor plates would do, but having a motor there kept my options open. I dreamed of having a Robocop style gun holster, but there just wasn't enough room.

The lower leg was very similar in construction except it used the 14m gear rack with two holes. It was a bit trickier to have it slide over the motor, but I was able to work around it. Again, sandwiching everything to make it fit right was a small puzzle.

I hate stands, but they're necessary. The early version was just a simple layout of technic panels with pegs sticking out to keep the feet from moving. This worked well for me with EV-AN, but definitely wasn't the most elegant solution. The stand would also need to hold the spike prime hubs for the legs. There was potentially room on the legs for these, but it just didn't give the right look. As the stand was integral to the model,

this was the right decision in terms of design and function.

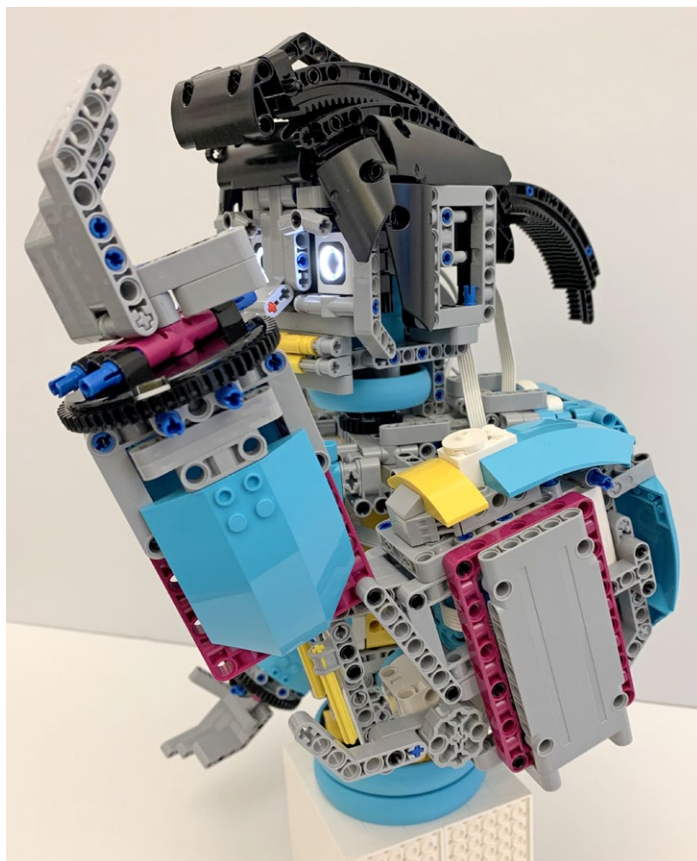
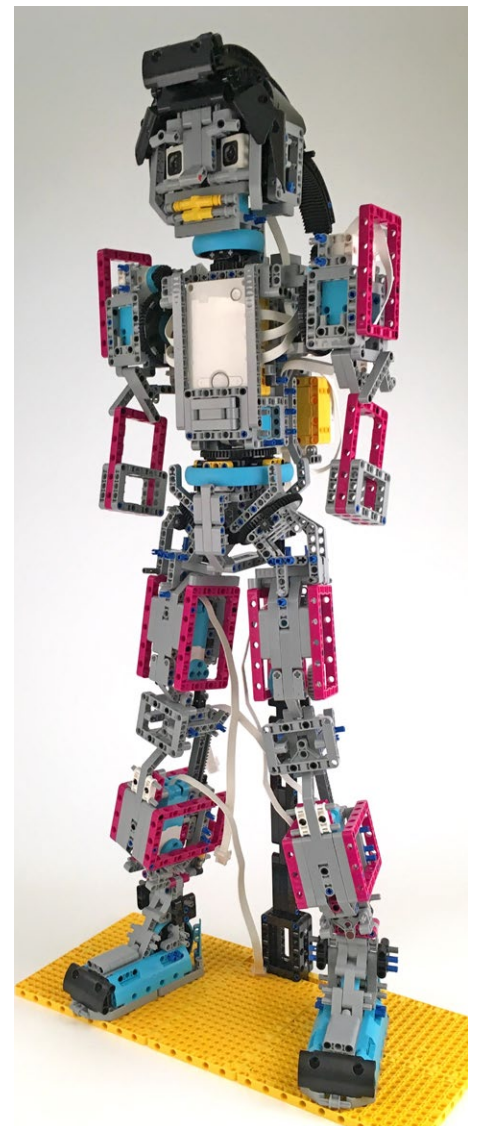
SAM balanced really well on her makeshift stand and had just the right kind of stance for demonstrations. The joints still needed extra support as they were relatively weak at this point. She would shake pretty violently with waist movement, which was a weak point I couldn't do much about, though lowering the power seemed to work. At this stage, the robot was now an open canvas for styling.

Part 5: Dress Up

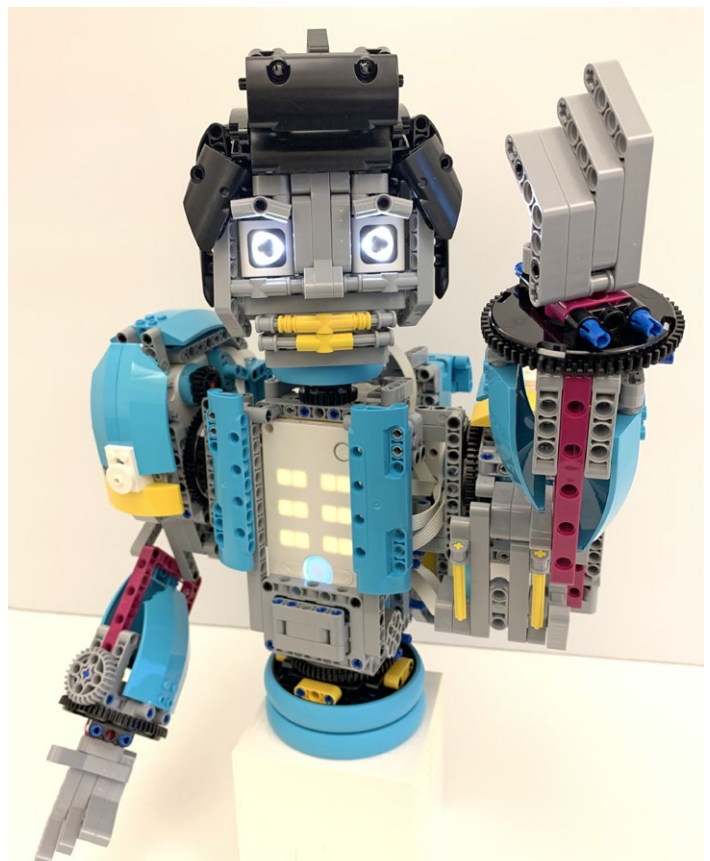
Going back to organic rather than mechanical building can be quite fun. I was definitely looking at the shapes and bricks available in the Spike Prime set once again to dictate what shapes would lend themselves to SAM.

The decision to make fixed hands came from Gundam models that had swappable hands. I thought it would be easier to change a whole hand than to make them completely poseable. An additional advantage was that the hands would be much lighter for the elbow motors to lift. Bowed bricks created the perfect shape for the shoulders and forearms. A variety of techniques were used to support the build and make sure parts wouldn't fall off when being transported or handled.

After doing the initial strength and support



Left arm.

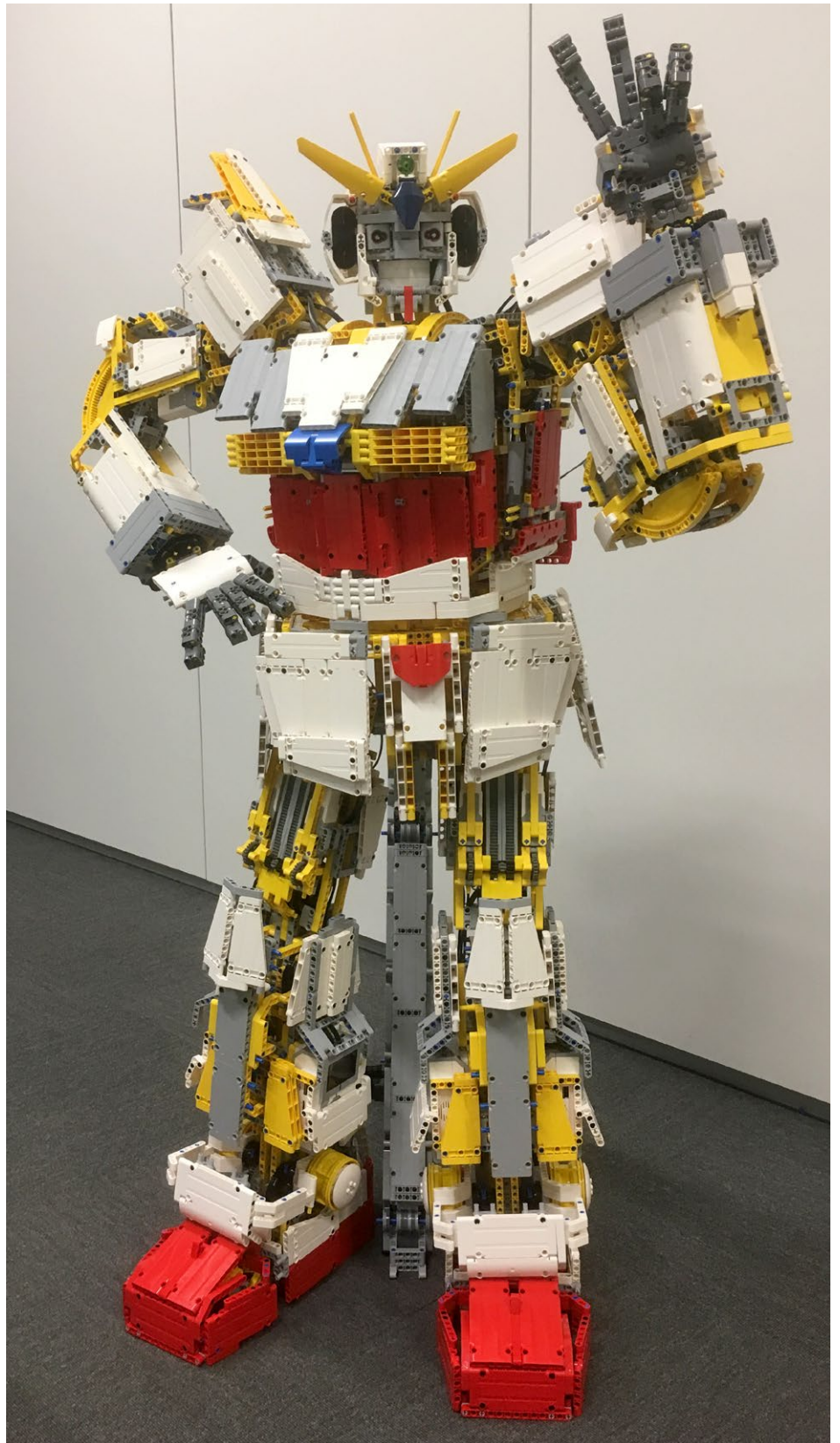




build for the legs, armoring came down to appearance. I used a sketch program on my iPad to check colors and shapes over some layers. Eventually I chose grey and the character really came through as sporty. The shoulders are a bit high, but still feminine.

The model still needed to be able to stand on its own and be structurally sound, so the opening armor panels really needed to be simple mechanisms, meaning there was no way to add a ROBOCOP-style gun in there. Even then, adding functional armor was going to add some volume to the look—she would have thicker legs. At the thigh, the armor opens out to the side and at the front. At the calf, it would expose some of the internals, dropping armor towards the ankle, and the rear leg would expose a vernier thruster or rocket of some sort, which would end up being a color sensor. Lots of shock absorbers were added for detail and metallic bling. I built one leg completely to see what needed to be fixed before duplication, and to show a before and after of the exposed functions.

It was also fun to explore some of the detailing and layering of panels. Magenta wings fit nicely in

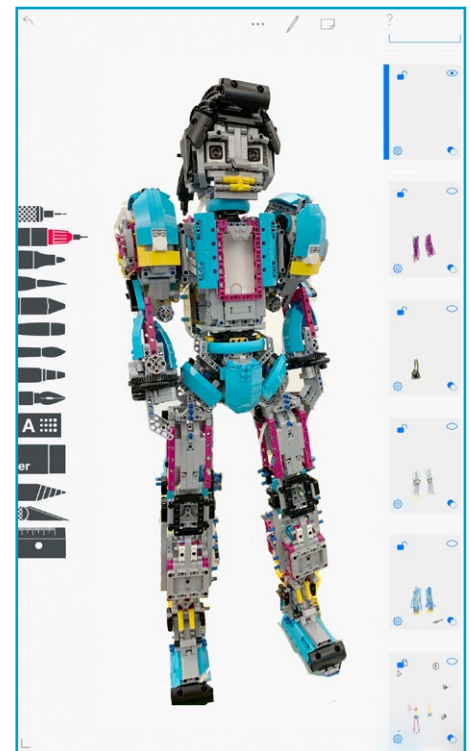


EV-AN ver. G.

the color scheme and made it onto the calves and the shoulders. A pair of white wings came to her back for an angel vibe.

The stand ended up having a shape with some inspiration of a hall of armor. Getting there would take a slightly off-measurement placement which ended up creating a nice shape. Without the locking beams, it would probably explode on the stress alone. The shaft of the stand is supported

and poseable using linear actuators. They give an industrial feel and great complimentary shape if ever exposed. There are two actuators in the base and one at the top where the stand meets the robot's hips. It wasn't completely necessary to have two, as there are only four motors, but it seemed cool and gave the right symmetry as well. Touch sensors for manual control of the armor plates fill out



The final product is incredibly expressive and the build was great practice in learning building techniques for this scale. To me she personifies the character of SPIKE Prime in terms of color and feeling. She's an 80's era workout girl. I'm incredibly happy with the lines and proportions and could definitely use this frame for more robots. But of course, the build is never finished. There is so much more that can be done!

the sensor ports as well as an additional four ultrasonic sensors for lights. I added one more hub to the bottom of the stand for more lights and effects.

She really had a lot of wires that needed managing and I had to make sure everything worked out in terms of spacing. I also had to think about how to dismantle the stand for transport. As I put this all together, she was really taking shape and a few test videos showing the armor working were much better than photos.

Part 6: Details Details

I had the incredible privilege of getting SAM to a photographer to capture all of the details and features of the robot. I rarely get to do this for any of my robots, as they are usually pretty big and don't fit in the smaller photo booths I normally have access to. The model is quite imposing in a darkly lit setting with all of its lights on.

The finishing touches included getting the robot fully symmetrical and fixing a few other things. Probably one of the biggest fixes was to get better access to the charging and programming port on the chest Hub. This meant dismantling

the whole neck assembly just to make space for a wire. The hub itself needed to be moved forward, and this affected almost the entire upper body! Additional final details were the wings, wrist cuffs, knee pads, and touches of color here and there.

Adding six additional ultrasonic sensors to the stand for lights provided for some potentially cool effects at the base, should I decide to continue programming them. With the basic SCRATCH-based coding, you can program flashing, waving, and even some fade effects. The stand ended up more complicated to dismantle for transport than I'd like. It can also be simplified by removing the lights which makes for an incredible clean picture. The stand does compliment the colors of the model though, so I think it helps to complete the model.

The programming seemed pretty simple: random movements to target positions. In EV3-G I had to create a pretty special set of commands to make this happen. The zero position of the Spike Prime motors really made this much easier, as did connecting the motors for movements nearly directly without gearing.

BONUS: The Twin

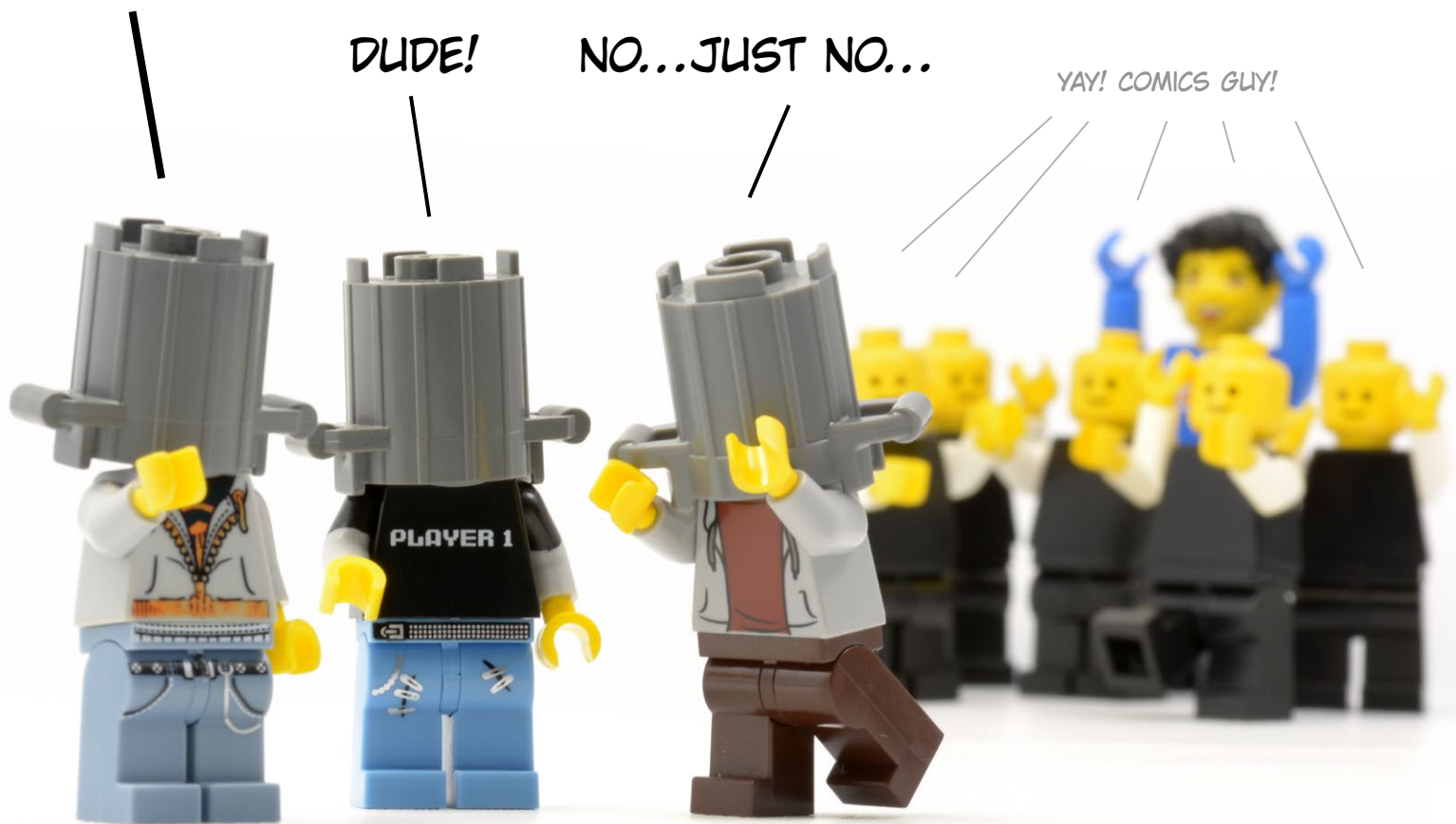
A time came when SAM needed to be in two places at once and I had to decide how that was going to happen. The result: a twin sister. She wasn't exactly the same though. The younger sister had a bit more of an edge. I gave her a bit more black in her shoes and gloves, and a yellow stripe in her hair, as well as changing a few other details.

Funny enough, I happen to know a set of 'Sam' twin girls who I met in the context of robotics. But this was just a funny coincidence, and I never intended to build two copies of the same robot. You always want to change something. Building SAM again gave me a deeper appreciation, but I wouldn't ever want to make instructions for her.

[1] you can learn more about EV-AN on his dedicated FB page facebook.com/EV3Android

[2] EV-AN 2013 built to go for some events and photo shoots (photo). EV-AN 2014 did a lot of traveling around the world and had a few aesthetic upgrades to the original, and EV-AN ver. G 2017 was a 4 foot tall 1/20 scale Gundam with EV-AN's head as a starting point.

IT'S COMICS GUY!



by Jetro de Château

One of the privileges of being an ambassador for my community is that I get to participate in the conversation on the LAN—the LEGO® Ambassador Network—where all the fan communities that are Recognised by LEGO interact with the company and each other. Anything that is big in the community is bound to also turn up in conversation there. Over the past few months BrickLink has been a hot topic for discussion. In the course of those discussions the comic strips by a specific author came up several times as a way to show how the AFOL community at large feels about things that are happening on BrickLink. Once is a coincidence (or a sign), twice makes you think, three times and you really have to go and find out who this person is and what moves them to make these comic strips. So that's what I did. You might be surprised to hear that I don't always get an answer to my emails, not even if I say I'm one of the editors of HispaBrick Magazine. After checking us out and deciding we were a legitimate entity, he consented to an interview.

The first question I ask, of course, is who are you and how did you get into LEGO?

"Who am I? That question is a little too existentialist for me at this time of the morning. It's probably a little too existentialist for me at any time of day or night, actually. How about we go with: 'I'm more inclined to Krishnamurta's philosophy than that of Sartre' and leave it at that? No? Oh! You mean what's my name. Mark Favreau. On the brickwebs I'm known as mfav. I was insufficiently clever to come up with a cool handle and succumbed to pressure and frustration when I had to come up with a user name, so mfav. You know, that and having a handle like colonel-fluffy-muff1ns-incorpor8ed is a lot to type every time you need to log in somewhere."

"How did I get into LEGO? My son, from birth practically, was interested in manipulating things with his hands. One day when he was first able to sit up, he spent literally 45 minutes swinging a door back and forth. Anyone with a baby knows that if the child can entertain themselves for 45 minutes uninterrupted, that's 45 minutes of cherished respite for a parent. So you kind of want to encourage that curiosity for a number

of reasons. As he grew, the fascination with moving and manipulating things continued. Age appropriate baby toys weren't of any interest. We had to find toys for him with moving parts and spinny bits and so on. At age four, I think, we went to a LEGO store and found Bionicles. I purchased I think two of the simpler sets, Tanma and Solek. I didn't know Bionicles from Boo. But these things looked like something the kid could manage, even if the age rating on them was something older than four. Sure enough, those worked. Then the next time it was more Bionicles. His being a little kid and the Bionicle ball-and-sockets being what they are, the sockets cracked...which led me to look for replacement parts...which led me to Peeron...which led me to BrickLink. It was all downhill from there."

Peeron was an eye-opening experience for Mark. There was a lot more going on with LEGO than he was aware of. As his son grew and developed with LEGO, so did his own interest.

"I enjoyed that it was a way that I could connect with my son. I enjoyed the nuances of the parts themselves. I enjoyed the problem-solving aspects of building. I'd see some assembly or

technique and get interested in how I might use that. For a while I was building “hidden hammer” machines where you could turn a crank and a big hammer would swing down and knock a minifig across the table. I’d get that to working, then the boy would take it and that would be about the end of my involvement with that device. Kind of how that went.”

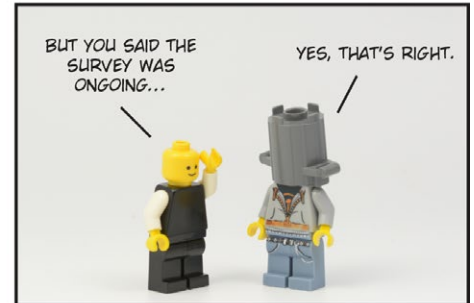
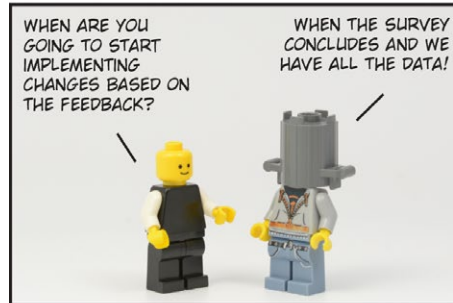
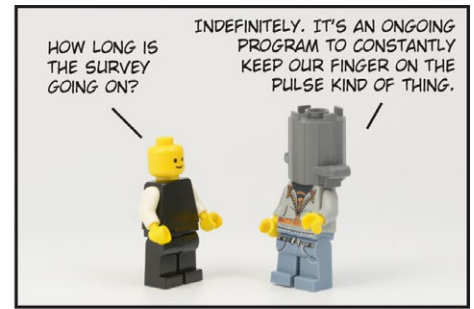
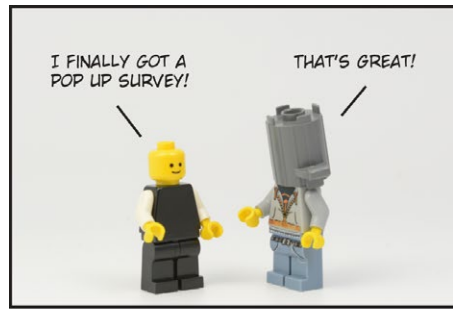
BrickLink, as most AFOLs know, is a marketplace where new and used LEGO can be bought and sold. While TLG now owns BrickLink and some aspects are changing, the catalog prior to TLG’s acquisition was crowd-sourced. This included the parts images.

“Some of the parts images there on BrickLink were, well, they sucked. Now, this is not to demean anyone who submitted images, because people do the best they can with the resources available to them. But I got sick of seeing these crappy images with poor lighting and bad camera angles and I knew I could do a better job, so I decided to submit a few images just as an experiment. BrickLink is notorious for being unnecessarily complicated and complex and rife with rules and process and personalities. . . and I’m a noob in there trying to figure stuff out. So my involvement there started out slowly. And kind of gradually I ended up to my neck in it.”

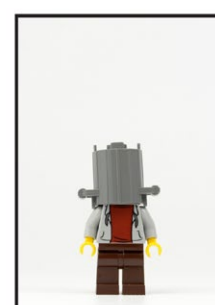
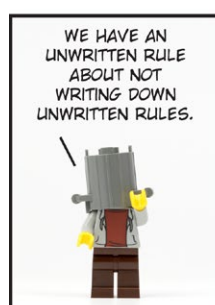
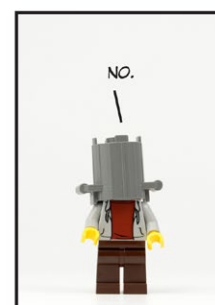
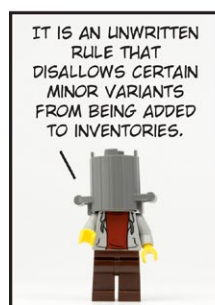
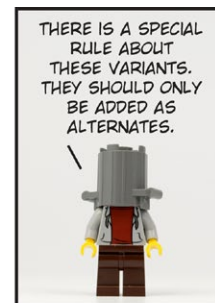
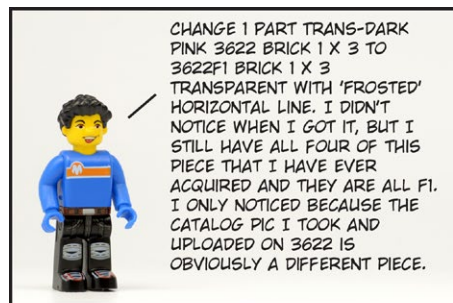
The comics came along much later, and to get the most out of the comics, one needs to be familiar with the BrickLink Forum. The inspiration for most of the strips is sourced directly from forum posts. The foundation for what would become the irreverent comics began innocently enough in April, 2019, with a MOC image posted to the BrickLink Forum entitled “Actual Forum Members” which used different minifigs as representatives for forum member’s avatars. That was shortly followed by “it’s more actual forum members” which used multiple identical minifigs representative of the forum’s default avatar and a single 1x1 black tile, and the post listed member names left to right. The joke as he saw it was that there were many different personalities represented by a single image, and a single personality represented by a square of nothingness. Later in the thread, one forum member not mentioned as being in the image, but who used the same default avatar commented that he felt “left out”.

In early June, 2019, Mark posted the first de facto strip to the BrickLink Forum. It was a commentary on BrickLink’s ongoing server problems resulting in service outages. It was also commentary on the commentary on

pulse



unwritten



BrickLink's service outages. The strip itself was untitled, and was posted in response to a thread "EVERYDAY BRICKLINK", yes, in all caps, where the original poster commented on the site's poor performance. That strip featured several members portrayed as default-avatar minifigs discussing 500 errors. . . a server error message page that appeared frequently to site visitors at that time. . . and the first appearance of two characters, ostensibly BrickLink employees, wearing garbage cans on their heads.

I asked Mark about those bucket heads.

"Yeah. Everybody asks about the garbage cans. When I first discovered BrickLink, 2008 or 2009, it was still being run by the original developer. He had created a number of thumbnail images that he used on various places throughout the site as eye candy. One page was called 'Problem Center' and that page used a picture of a minifig

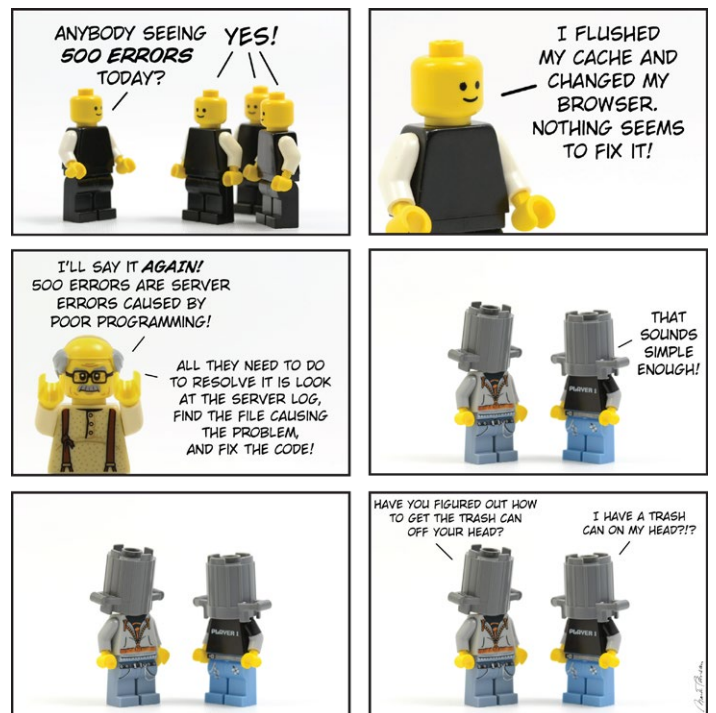
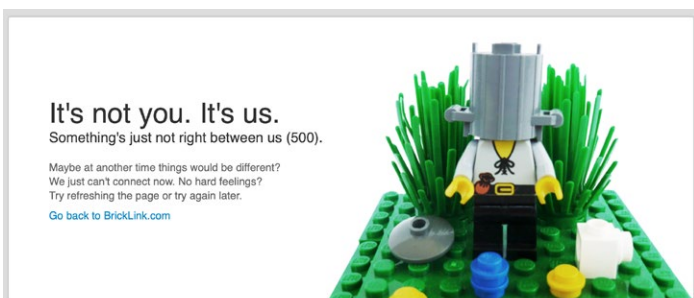
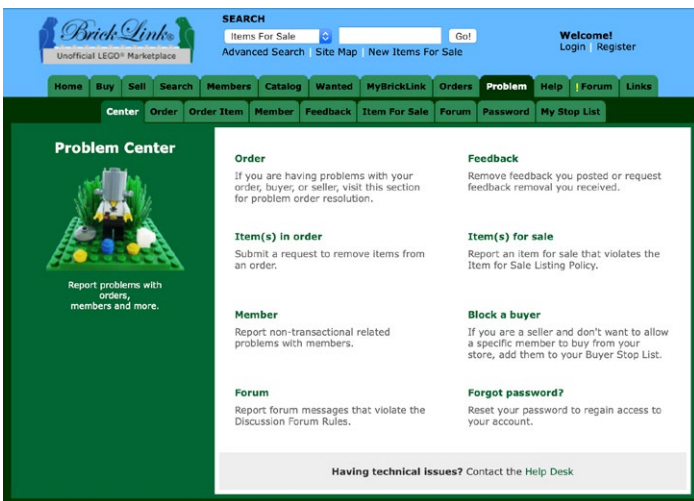
with a garbage can on his head. It was a sweet funny image for a page where you could report a problem and the problem usually was dealt with reasonably apace. If not, there would at least be communication about it. A short time later, the original developer dies and the site is sold to a new owner."

"New ownership publicly promises a whole bunch of improvements which are needed. New ownership doesn't necessarily deliver on those promises, goes and reskins the site with a substantially more modern look but doesn't improve site functionality. In some instances functionality is markedly worse. There is an uproar from the community about certain portions of the site—and after a substantive amount of typical unvarnished clamor on the forum—new management relents and agrees to keep some parts of the old site alive. These

portions are rechristened 'classic' interface."

"Time goes on. Promised improvements never happen. What is delivered is a MOC shop, which nobody in the community wanted, and which soon fails management's expectations. Management pours untold energies into site features and updates nobody in the community wants, without thorough testing, deploys them without community input (surprise!), and typically break some previously working (and not necessarily obviously related) functionality. Communication from site management is thin to nonexistent. On the forum, members complain, management ignores, and the cycle repeats over and over for a number of years."

"Late 2018, early 2019 site performance is very bad. With increasing frequency, pages load slowly or not at all, and visitors are greeted with a stock server 500 error message page. Many



Counter-clockwise from top: More Actual Forum Members, the BrickLink Problem Center page, circa 2009 © BrickLink, the BrickLink custom 500 page circa 2019 © BrickLink, 500 Errors.

people on the site who are not tech savvy flood the forum with questions on how to fix the issue, is the problem on my end, where is the problem, and so on. In what I think was an attempt to stem the deluge of repeated questions about how to deal with the problem, BrickLink creates a custom 500 page with the message: 'It's not you. It's us.' to indicate that the problem is on BrickLink's end and that the user would just have to wait until it got resolved. That custom 500 page picked up the old trashcan head guy art, now writ large, from the early Problem Center page. This effectively repositioned trashcan head in my mind from being a user with a problem to being BrickLink with a problem. I thought there was amusing irony in BrickLink's selection of that particular image for that purpose."

"Now, at this point, ten years in, if you're me, you start to see 'Problem Center' as a pun. You know? The place where you're supposed to get problems resolved is the place where problems are created. And there you have the effective genesis of those characters."

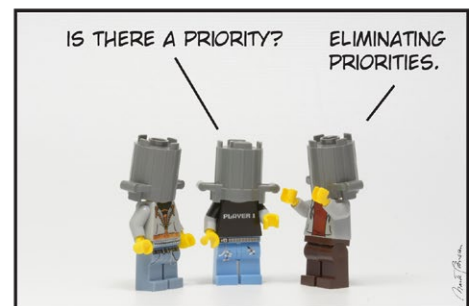
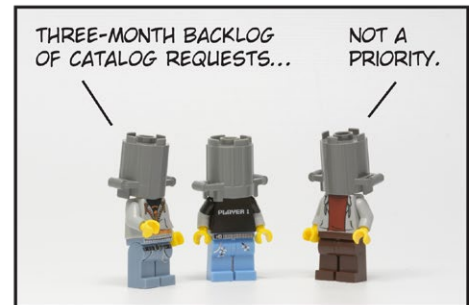
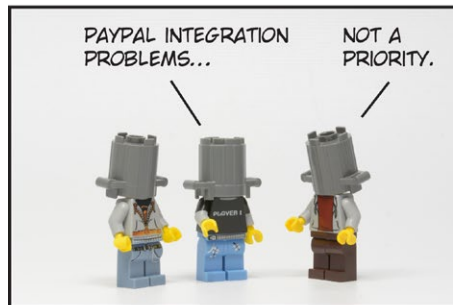
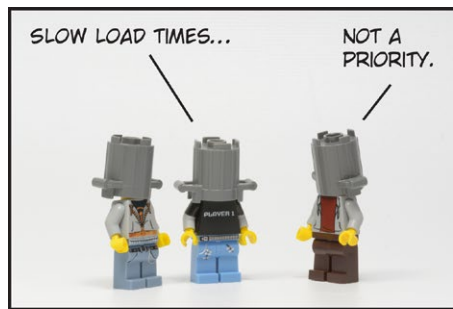
Strips appeared almost daily for the next week in the forum. At some point, subsequent to commentary by one of BrickLink's employees that they were discussing using the strips internally, Mark stopped posting strips to the site and started posting links to the strip hosted on his own site.

"I knew that anything I posted to the forum became BrickLink's property, to be used as they saw fit. I was aware of the situation being that I was a heavy contributor to the catalog's image library there. I thought to myself, eh, maybe I don't want to give them license to this particular content, having grumbled about my catalog images being lifted by people and used to sell on other sites, along with other image issues and how those issues were being addressed, or not addressed, by BrickLink. So I decided to post the strips to my own site as that would give me sole control over the content."

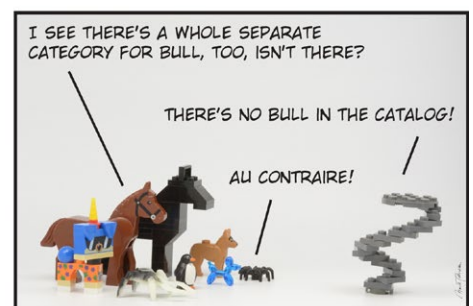
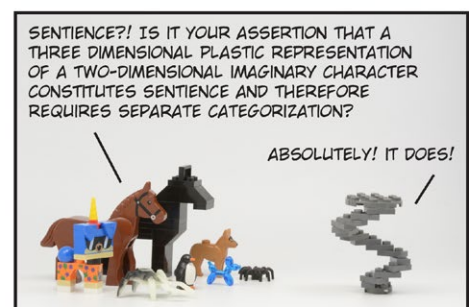
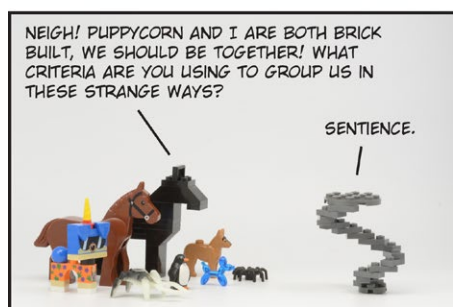
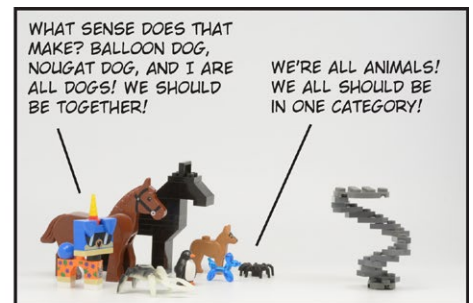
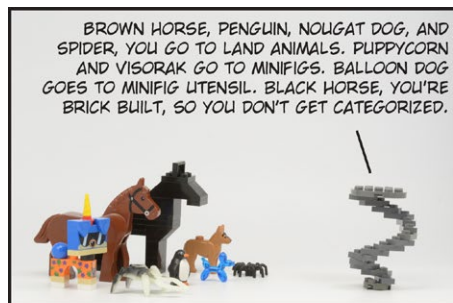
The strip as a whole has never publicly been given a title, and when questioned about that Mark says it wasn't conceived in that way. It just developed accidentally and he hadn't really given it much thought until asked about it.

"I don't know. In my mind I kind of think of it as 'The Site', and that happens to work well as a pun. In English, anyway. And it's one of those words that has multiple meanings when you say it, as aurally it can be interpreted as a location 'site' or a vision 'sight'. Writing it down as one way or the other kind of breaks the magic of what happens

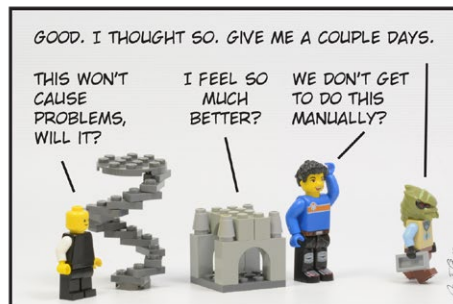
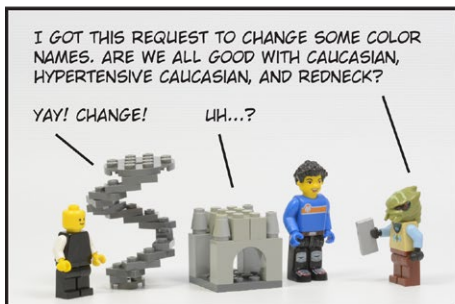
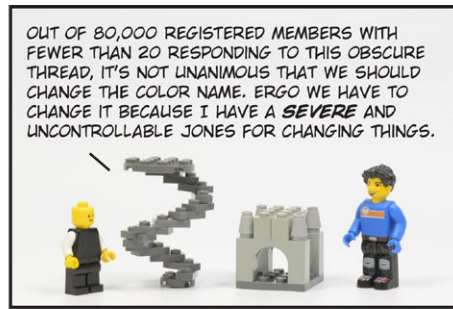
priorities



sentence



caucasian



when the word is heard. But people usually refer to it as 'comics' or 'cartoons' and I've kind of just left it at that."

As the strip developed, some characters became regulars, others became supporting cast, and there are any number of one-off characters. The main four characters are three site employee bucketheads... who Mark refers to as Hoodie, Player, and Executive Sweet... and the ubiquitous Everyperson member represented by the default avatar minifigure. In the actual strip, though, only Executive Sweet is ever named outright. Supporting cast members are comprised largely of characters based loosely and not-so-loosely on forum regulars and are represented by minifigs similar to or evocative of those forum members' avatars. Supporting cast may be named occasionally, and if named they will have made-up names, but for the most part they are not named.

"The supporting cast has been an interesting trip creatively. A number of the forum regulars will 'recognize themselves' and see it as a complement to appear in the strip. Once in a while someone will get... how should I put this... *very concerned*... that I am misrepresenting

their position on some particular topic and will let me know about it. Another person... this is a fun story... he's a forum regular who used the default avatar, but I guess decided he needed a non-default avatar or something. So he changed his avatar and wanted me to use that minifigure in the strip whenever his character appeared. I said I didn't have that figure to use—I often don't have the pieces or parts to create a completely accurate-to-the-avatar figure—so I use something close. I offered something close. That didn't fly, so he sent me the actual figure. And that led to a couple strips. A few others have changed their forum avatars. Sometimes it becomes an issue that I update their associated characters. Others, maybe they change their avatars because they no longer want to be associated with the characters."

Storylines for the strips are, for the most part, directly referential to some thread appearing in the BrickLink forum. In some instances the dialog is literally taken from a member's post and used verbatim, then followed by a punchline.

"In the instances where I quote directly, I usually try to fix the spelling and punctuation, but often not the grammar or sentence structure. I often find it funny when the language is for

one reason or another mangled or a thought is incoherent. I can't really improve the comedic factor on those. Once in a while I'll edit to make the words fit in the available space in a panel. But I try to leave the essence of the original."

If you frequent the BrickLink forum, then you probably can identify the characters and situations in the comic, and as a forum regular or even semi-regular you should have context to get "the whole joke" as Mark puts it. If you're not a forum viewer, you can still get something out of the comic as the storylines are often relatable enough to everyday situations.

"But they definitely are inside jokes. And there's the added gestalt of using LEGO to tell the story of individuals interested in LEGO," Mark says. "I originally thought I'd do it as a drawing, but then that would take longer and you'd miss out on whatever charm is inherent in the limited options for posing a minifigure."

Posing the minifigs is notable. Close inspection of the strip will yield often impossible positions for figures that are not otherwise attached to another brick.

"Posing the figures became an issue pretty early on. I use a large opaque white vinyl window shade as a backdrop. I use that because it's a one-off cost, as opposed to rolls of photographer's seamless paper, it's relatively durable and easy to clean. I use a digital SLR with a macro lens mounted on a tripod so I can get sufficiently close up on the tiny figures. I would want the characters to remain in relatively the same position for each panel of a strip, but when you get multiple minifigs and a couple pieces of furniture or other elements in the shot, it becomes hellish to contend with positioning everything because the figures tip over easily and

MAGNETS!



pieces can slide out of position. You're working in a confined space under a diffuser and lights, you can't see where things are within the camera frame without moving back and forth from in front of the camera to behind the camera, and using a macro lens means the focus is tight. If a figure moves a half an inch forward or backward it can become out of focus very easily. And heaven forbid you bump the tripod. There was a lot of fussing with things. So there were some technical hurdles to overcome."

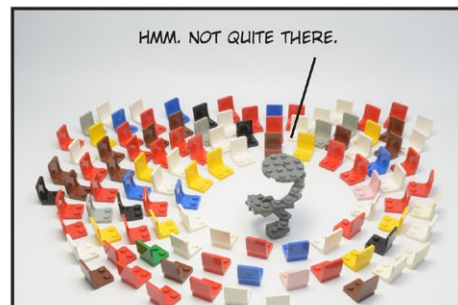
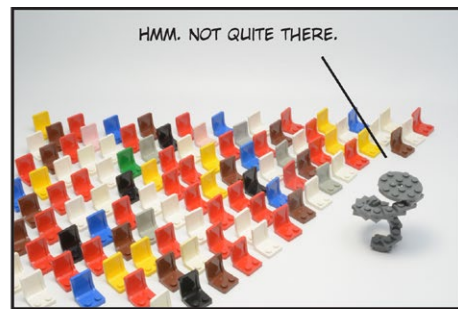
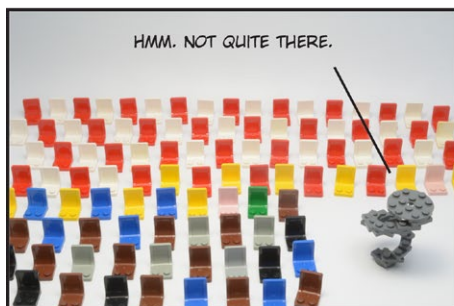
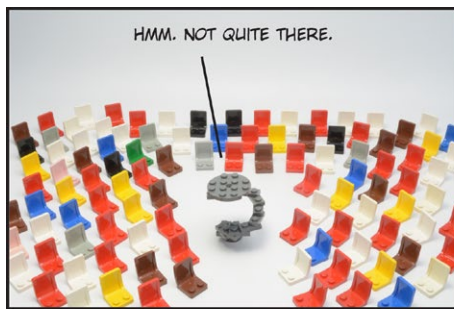
Wanting the strip to have a minimalist aesthetic meant some thinking was required. A baseplate with acres of studs would both limit the layout options and introduce a lot of visual clutter he didn't want and would further contribute to focus and perspective issues. So attaching the figures to bricks or plates was out. How could he get the figures to stand on one leg? How could he get the desks to stay fixed in place while he moved figures in chairs? He basically needed a stud to attach the parts to but couldn't use a stud. Glue would be messy and potentially melt his backdrop. The answer came in the way of magnets.

"I found some 5mm diameter 2mm tall magnets on the internet and ordered them. 5 x 2 is just a little larger than a LEGO stud. I thought: maybe close enough. I jammed a magnet into a minifig foot. It was tight, but fit. The next one I tried cracked the leg. Not wanting to crack the leg of untold minifigs meant I had to file down the magnet a little. File too much, though, and it won't clutch."

"It's an interesting thing, filing down a magnet. It's not particularly difficult, just rub it a hundred or so times back and forth on a piece of sandpaper and there you go. Thing is that it's a magnet and all that magnet you've just filed off a magnet is, of course, magnetic. So now you have this teeny tiny magnet with a small pile of magnet dust magnetically attached to the magnet by magnetism. This is really difficult to get off the magnet. Like. Really. Difficult."

With the magnets eventually in place in the bottoms of one leg of select minifigs and in whatever pieces used as table legs, he first tried a cookie sheet under the shade. It was a big enough surface to place the setup on, but the shade didn't lie flat on it and wrinkles in the shade caused problems. The bricks did stay sufficiently in position, though, so it was the right concept but the wrong piece of metal. Poking around his barn, Mark says he found some steel flashing leftover from a renovation project, just what he needed. It was perfectly flat and he cut it to a generous

not quite



size, slipped it under the shade, and problem one was solved.

Problem two was how to see what the camera was seeing without being behind the camera. Mark needed to work in front of the camera positioning the figures. This was especially critical when creating some of the more elaborate setups containing several figures and potentially dozens of other elements. This problem was solved with a piece of technology called CamRanger.

CamRanger is a professional photographer's remote device that connects to select SLRs and will wirelessly transmit a signal to an iPad so the camera's viewfinder image can be viewed in real time on the iPad screen via a dedicated app. All the camera controls are available through the app. This meant Mark could put the iPad on the table next to the setup, position elements on the stage as he wanted, know how that looked through the lens, make adjustments, set the exposure, and capture the image. The current image he was working on could be compared to any previous images from the iPad screen. This greatly reduced the time and effort involved in the setups.

"CamRanger isn't perfect. The exposure may

look good on the iPad screen, but the iPad's screen brightness may be a bit dynamic and what may appear as white on the iPad screen may in fact be a little darker once you get that shot onto the computer, so I tend to bracket the shots, maybe four different exposures per frame of comic. I may also shoot a dozen frames where I will only use six in a strip. But it sure does make it much easier when you can see that you have a bad reflection or some glare in the shot and can easily rotate a brick a degree or two and eliminate the problem."

When asked how long it takes to create a single strip from start to finish, Mark says it varies. A strip containing a single figure, or a strip that's basically two figures talking may take only 45 minutes. He says some of it depends on the story. Sometimes story takes longer than photography and sometimes the other way around. Strips containing multiple figures can take quite a while.

"I think the longest one, easily, is the one where BrickTwister is rearranging the chairs," says Mark. That strip is called "not quite." He says it's an observation on how the volunteer BrickLink catalog associates are constantly rearranging the contents of the catalog in an attempt to arrive

at a perfect solution, while being confined to a database structure totally inadequate to the task. . .one of the more inside jokes.

Then, there is one comic in particular that one of the staff is asking about: the Colors comic. I can guess, but I'm not 100% certain I get it either.

"Is this pearl gold? How often has that question been put on a forum somewhere? I have a couple pages on the web site just to deal with LEGO golds. Then there is the question of whether something is old gray or new gray and this plate with a clip is a color that's right half way between old gray and new gray, so which is it? And brittle blue. And two different dark reds. And old brown and reddish brown. You're LEGO enthusiasts, so you know the drill. And after ten or twelve years' worth of 'what color is this?' and 'you need to collect one brick of every color and make yourself a color chart and label the colors' I thought I'd help everybody out with that, so I made a chart with all the colors that you can print out and use to compare. It's just as accurate as anything else out there."

I asked him if he considered using other sources of inspiration for the comics.

"Those comics are pretty BrickLink centric, or the greater BrickLink community centric, and I'm

content to leave that there for now. It's a targeted message for a specific audience. If I wanted to expand or change the comics, I'd have to consider changing the frame of reference and the audience and so on."

When asked if there are any plans for the comic, Mark says not really. He will create a strip if he has downtime from his regular work or if he happens to read something inspiring in the forum. He has no fixed publishing schedule and there are sometimes pretty big gaps between strips due to being occupied with other things.

Taking a turn away from the comic line of inquiry, I asked him what he thinks is most positive and most negative about LEGO taking over BrickLink? Here's what he had to say:

"At this point, to be completely honest with you, I. . .I don't know.

"Early on I was of the opinion to just wait and see. And so far, I'm still waiting. From my position, I can't see any tangible influence on BrickLink by LEGO, other than to force some legal compliance stuff. . .which as implemented by BrickLink immediately broke the site, and which as corrected by BrickLink broke something else. . . So, okay, they're now presumably somewhat more in legal compliance with privacy laws, but

otherwise it's the same old mess.

"To that point, I probably think the most negative thing is that LEGO didn't remove the previous management team. You know? And I don't say that because I have an axe to grind with BrickLink, but simply because they weren't effective web site builders, they weren't effective at communication, and they weren't considerate of their sellers' legitimate needs. They still aren't.

"Management's vision for the site seems to be anything other than what the membership—some of them there for twenty years, many of whom have contributed more time and knowledge to building the catalog and who effectively bred life to the platform—want and need in return. Whoever the people are at BrickLink, I understand they're people with families and lives and they may be really nice people. What they are not is in any way effective or responsive or responsible to their own clientele at large. Whether that's because of the personalities involved or whether they're good soldiers following orders from the top, I don't know. I do know that you shouldn't treat the client as the enemy."

"We're about a year into LEGO's ownership of BrickLink and I can't in any way say that there has been any improvement in the overall situation. I'd like to say there was something positive.

Anything positive. But I just don't see anything positive. The membership is still treated unevenly. Site usability is different, but not better. At the moment it's more stable than in the beginning of the year, but search is broken, inventory is plagued with issues, and there are other problems. So net gain of zero with site usability."

"Anyway, that's probably way more than you wanted for an answer."

There was one final sizzling question we had for Mark. Why is there a hamburger on your web site?

"Oh, that's a visual pun. You know those three stacked lines you see for menus on mobile web sites? That's often colloquially referred to by site authors as 'the hamburger'. When I built the site, I used a hamburger for navigation. It's the thing all the cool kids are doing nowadays. You guys ought to know this, your site uses a hamburger."

Head on over to v4ei.com for a hamburger, a free-to-download color chart, and maybe a laugh or two.

OFFICIAL COLOR REFERENCE CHART



LESSON 5: STOP AT OBJECT

by Ahmad Sahar

Hi! It's Shah again. For those who don't know, I'm a professional trainer specialising in MacOS and iOS software and hardware, and I also conduct classes on iOS App Development and LEGO Mindstorms.

In the last lesson, we made our robot interact with an object. In this lesson, we're going to make our robot stop when it senses something in front of it.

What you need:

- An iPad with Swift Playgrounds installed
- LEGO Mindstorms EV3 Education (set no. 45544) or Home (set no. 31313)



Before you begin

For this lesson you need to build either the Educator robot from the 45544 set or the DrivingBas3 from the 31313 set.

The instructions for the Educator robot can be found in the Education version of the LEGO Mindstorms software, or can be downloaded here: robotsquare.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/45544_educator.pdf

The instructions for DrivingBas3 can be found here: ev3lessons.com/RobotDesigns/instructions/DrivingBas3.pdf

Make sure you have fresh batteries in your robot and your iPad is fully charged, and your iPad is paired to your robot.

You'll also need to attach a sensor to your robot. If you have the 45544 set, connect the ultrasonic sensor using the instructions in the PDF shown above. If you have the 31313 set, connect the infrared sensor to your robot. You can use the Educator robot PDF as a guide, but note that some of the parts shown are not included in the 31313 set; you'll have to substitute with other parts to attach the sensor.

Ultrasonic or Infrared Sensor

You can use the template you used in the last lesson, or you can download a fresh copy. Remove

all the code from the template, and connect to the EV3 brick.

If you have a 45544 set, enter the following code:
`ev3.move(leftPort: .b, rightPort: .c,
leftPower: 50, rightPower: 50)
ev3.waitForUltrasonicCentimeters(on:
.four, lessThanOrEqualTo: 20)
ev3.stopMove(leftPort: .b, rightPort: .c,
withBrake: true)`

If you have a 31313 set, enter the following code:
`ev3.move(leftPort: .b, rightPort: .c,
leftPower: 50, rightPower: 50)
ev3.waitForIRProximity(on: .four,
lessThanOrEqualTo: 20)
ev3.stopMove(leftPort: .b, rightPort: .c,
withBrake: true)`

The first line is a Swift function which is similar to the EV3-G Move Tank block. It is designed to work with the Driving Base robot. It has four parameters:

- **leftPort:** The port the motor driving the left wheel is connected to.
- **rightPort:** The port the motor driving the right wheel is connected to.
- **leftPower:** The power level specified for leftPort.
- **rightPower:** The power level specified for rightPort.

This line will start the robot moving forward with the power set to 50% for both left and right motors.

The second line is a Swift function which

is similar to the EV3-G Wait block. It has two parameters:

- **on:** The port the ultrasonic or infrared sensor is connected to. Usually this will be port four.
- **lessThanOrEqualTo:** The sensor will measure the distance between itself and anything in front of it. This line will execute when the threshold has been reached (20 in this case).

The third line is a Swift function which is similar to the EV3-G Move Tank Block. It has three parameters:

- **leftPort:** The port the motor driving the left wheel is connected to.
- **rightPort:** The port the motor driving the right wheel is connected to.
- **withBrake:** Stops the motors connected to leftPort: or rightPort: and brakes them instead of letting them coast.

Point the robot towards a wall. Run the program. The robot should move forward and stop just before it hits the wall.

Great job! We've come to the end of the lesson. In the next lesson, we'll program the touch sensor to stop the robot when pressed.

If you wish to know more about me and what I do, feel free to visit my company website, tomafuwi.tumblr.com, like my Facebook page at facebook.com/tomafuwi, follow me on Twitter at twitter.com/shah_apple and subscribe to my YouTube channel at youtube.com/c/CoderShah.

All the best and take care.

The screenshot shows the Swift Playgrounds app interface. On the left, there is a code editor with the following Swift code:

```
ev3.move(leftPort: .b, rightPort: .c,  

leftPower: 50, rightPower: 50)  

ev3.waitForIRProximity(on: .four,  

lessThanOrEqualTo: 20)  

ev3.stopMove(leftPort: .b, rightPort: .c,  

withBrake: true)
```

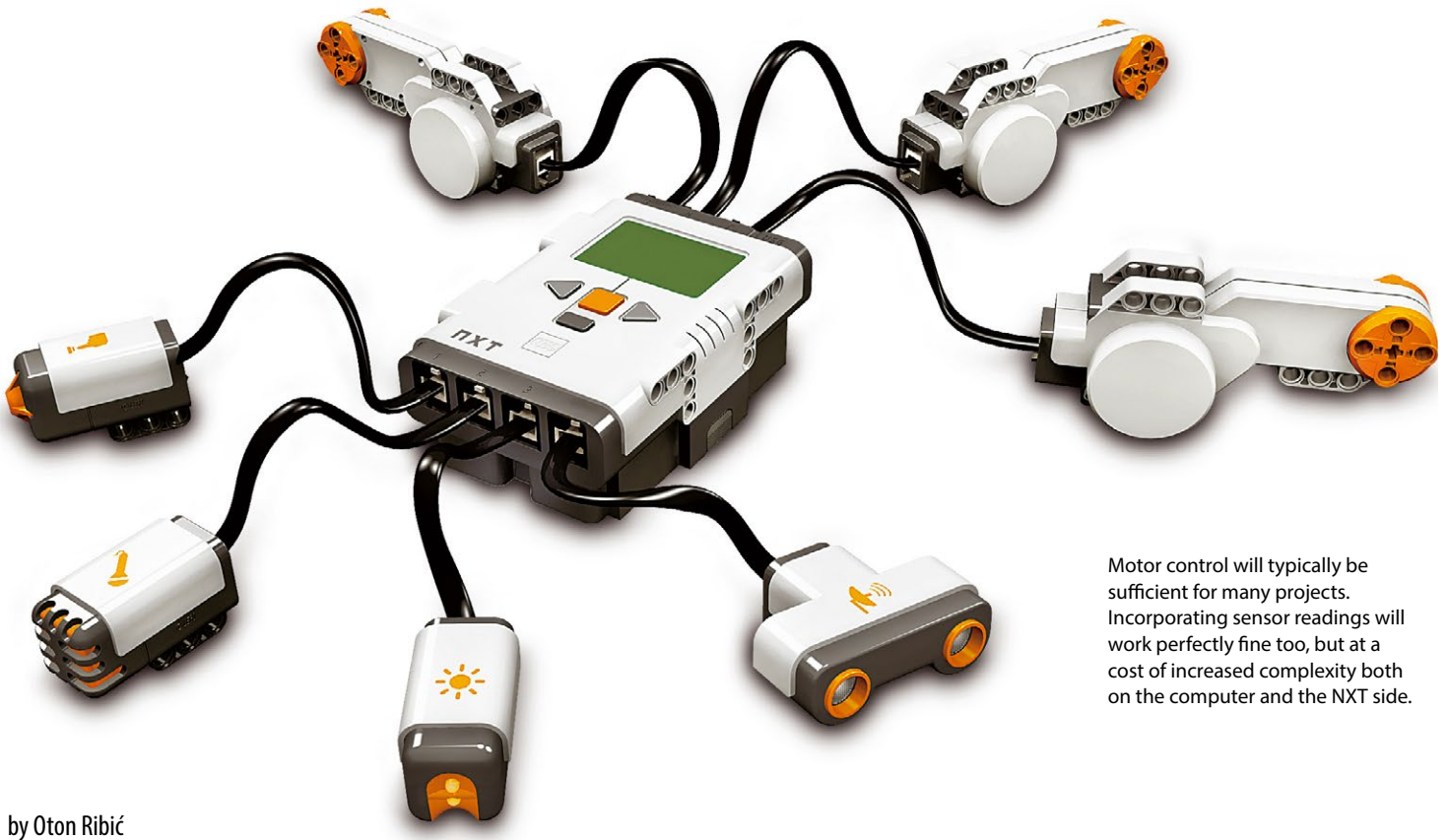
Below the code, there is an "Analyze" section with the text: "Once you are connected, tap Run my Code and observe what happens. You should see that pressing the Touch Sensor powers the Large Motor on. It will be powered off when you release the Touch Sensor. If you're having trouble, refer to How do I connect? for help."

On the right, there is a sensor data panel with four sensors:

- LARGE MOTOR:** 160 Degrees
- LARGE MOTOR:** 157 Degrees
- MEDIUM MOTOR:** 0 Degrees
- INFRARED:** 11 Proximity
- TOUCH:** 0 Touched
- LIGHT:** 61 Reflect

At the bottom, there is a "Run My Code" button and a status bar with various system settings like "true", "DBL_TRUE_MIN", "FLT_TRUE_MIN", "LDBL_TRUE_MIN", "SM_TRUESHARED", and "SecTrustEvali".

Back to the good ol' NXT



Motor control will typically be sufficient for many projects. Incorporating sensor readings will work perfectly fine too, but at a cost of increased complexity both on the computer and the NXT side.

by Oton Ribić

Having navigated through the tricky waters of the EV3 control via Bluetooth in previous articles, in this final episode of the already lengthy Mindstorms Control series we will get back to the somewhat aged, yet still very much vital, NXT. It supports Bluetooth communication as well, and if your hardware allows for it, there is no difficulty in combining NXT and EV3 Smart Bricks at once, or even multiples of each type simultaneously.

First of all, we should emphasize that the NXT is a somewhat different ball game than the EV3 when it comes to wireless control. Whereas the EV3 allowed us to compile messages to make it directly "obey orders", in the case of NXT it is simpler to communicate with a dedicated program running on it, which listens to the incoming data and executes the commands accordingly. This makes things more complex, as the program has to be running on the brick, but it makes the communication itself a little easier. Of course, one may decide to forgo the entire idea and flash the NXT with firmware to allow direct control—but that is a rather complex approach. As said before, in these series we will be focusing only on the stock firmware.

Program listening and executing on the device-side

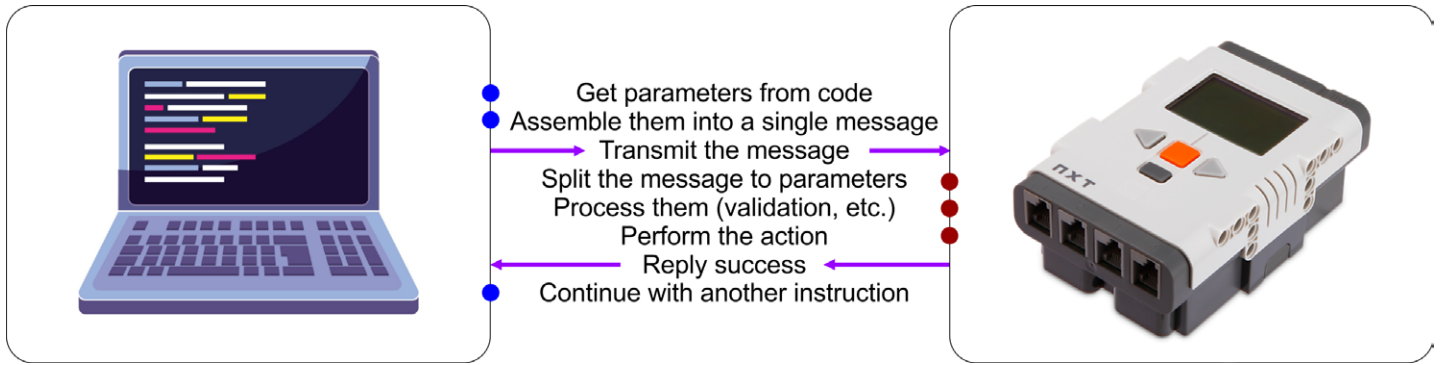
Therefore, the first step will be to set up a program aboard the device. You may opt for a general-purpose one, or for one that specifically does what you require for the build in question. Here we will go for the general-purpose version, and you can easily adapt it further for different needs based on these principles.

When controlling motors, there are three essential values we need to convey to the NXT Smart Brick for each movement: the motor to be used, the amount to turn, and the power to apply while turning. In theory, one could argue that direction is the fourth parameter, but we can embed this into the number specifying the amount to turn, by using either a negative or a positive number.

Assuming we load these values in the mentioned order, a program outline would look something like the following:

- Listen to the Bluetooth until messages are available
- Load a "triplet" of values from Bluetooth—Motor, Amount and Power

- Assign the Motor value to the corresponding parameter of the Motor instruction in the NXT-G
 - Check if the Amount is below zero, and assign the result to the NXT-G Motor instruction's direction parameter
 - Take the absolute value of Amount and assign it to the angle parameter of the instruction in NXT-G
 - Assign the Power value which is a percentage to the corresponding parameter of the NXT-G instruction
 - Perform the rotation itself and wait until finished (or not—if you want to use a special parameter for that!)
 - If you want to be able to wait for the instruction to finish, send a message back via Bluetooth
 - Repeat from the start unless an instruction for termination is received, which is optional
- To give it a more understandable shape, this is an NXT program that listens to the Bluetooth, and when it receives values, e.g. 2,-720,50, it rotates the second (B) motor two turns in the reverse direction at half the power. Then it continues listening for a new triplet of numbers, specifying the new instruction.



A simplified sequence between the computer and the NXT, communicating via Bluetooth

This is all that's necessary for the remote control to work from the device side; just connect your computer to the NXT Smart Brick via Bluetooth as described in the first articles in this series, and start the newly-made program.

Control from the computer

Now we need to switch over to the computer side and set up a program that will transmit the three values required to perform a motor instruction to the NXT, and optionally wait for the acknowledgement.

This time, the assembly of the messages is much more straightforward than was the case with the EV3. Essentially, we will need to encode each of the input number parameters to a 4-byte code, representing a floating-point number. Check the same technique discussed previously in the case of the EV3, but as a quick reminder, for Python language for example, you can use `struct.pack('f', number)`, which returns the necessary 4 bytes. Then, attach a zero-byte at the end, and the following byte sequence to the start: 5, 0, 0, 19, 10, 0, 1. This is a header telling the NXT Brick what is actually being communicated.

You should end up with a 12-byte sequence for each encoded number. E.g. encoding the number 720 should yield 5, 0, 0, 19, 10, 0, 1, 0, 0, 52, 68, 0. Finally, just assemble the final message by putting the three 12-byte codes one after the other (concatenate them) in the required order. The 36-byte message specifying the motor, the turning amount and the power can then be sent off to the NXT.

How to tackle synchronization

The procedure described above should make your NXT turn as instructed. However, the next step on the computer side is to get notified once the NXT has actually completed its task, so the next one can proceed. Previously in the NXT program you may have created a reply message

for the computer—and now the computer is the one that has to react to it.

Regardless of what computer language you have decided to use, keep firing away the byte sequence 5, 0, 0, 19, 10, 0, 1 towards the NXT, which checks the device's "inbox" for any awaiting messages and transmits them if found. Repeat the process, and fetch any messages when they arrive. Typically just a simple reply by the device could be enough, but you can go a step further and have the NXT send a specific value, e.g. a string "DONE" or "Acknowledged", to be doubly sure. Then, on the computer side, you should disassemble the message received from the NXT, and check whether the specified string is contained therein. If yes, all is well; if not, you know that something on the NXT side went awry.



Nothing speaks against connecting to, and controlling multiple NXT and EV3 bricks simultaneously. But keep in mind you will have to configure serial ports for each such Smart Brick individually

Expanding further

This example as such should give you a general idea of how the communication works, how the NXT interprets the message, acts upon it, and reports back when finished. For basic projects where you require controlled motion, this should be more than enough. But if you need more, let's dive into several further points that may be useful or uncover some shortcuts for you.

It may be sensible to take care of at least minimal data validation on the NXT side. If the given motor power parameter is too low to even

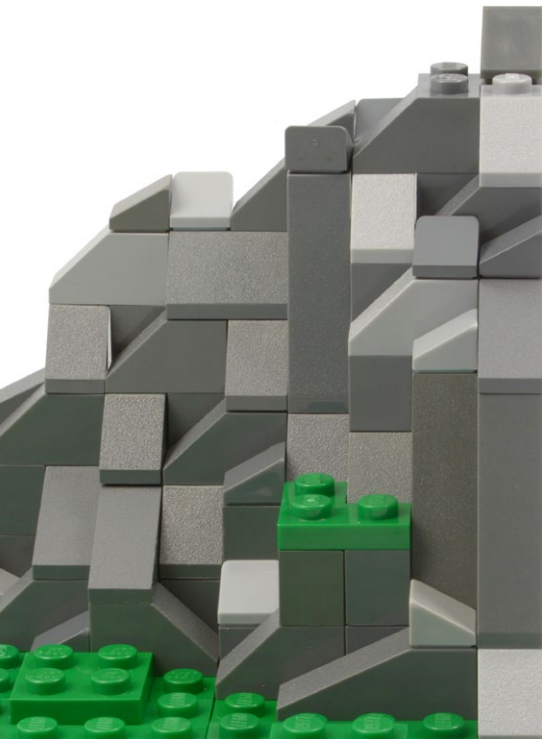
turn a motor, or if it is blocked from turning to the required extent, the instruction will essentially never finish, and your entire fine-tuned system will get stuck. Therefore you may want to add a threshold, or expand your NXT program to report back a special message (read by the computer) if a given timeout period has been exceeded, and the instruction aborted.

If your motors' motions seem to be correct but you think wrong ones are being turned, keep in mind that the motor A is really identified under number 1, whereas in many languages you may specify it as zero, which will not work.

This communication scheme reveals how the further expansion of functionality should work. You can expand both sides to communicate four parameters, among which the first one would be the type of instruction (motor, read sensor, or anything else), and the remaining three would serve as parameters for that very type of instruction. This requires a much more complex program on the NXT side, but it is doable.

Or you can try a middle line, and for your specific project set a rule, e.g. if the specified motor number is 10, instead of turning the non-existent tenth motor, the NXT will actually interpret it as reading the distance sensor and sending it back in the reply value—which of course should be equally prepared and parsed on the computer side.

In any case, regardless of whether you opted for the EV3, NXT or both after all, we will not even try to fool you into thinking you will not need to experiment a bit. But it will be fun, and we can testify from our own experiences that it is not really that difficult once you get the grasp of the basic concepts. At that point, the feeling of being able to control multiple motors and sensors via a program running on your computer will reveal an entire new horizon of possibilities. We're looking forward to checking out your advanced robotics stuff!



Building an MILS Mountain Module



by Legotron (A. Bellón) abellon.net/MILS/



This article was born as part of a challenge: to describe and document the process of building a MILS mountain module for the magazine. To do this I had to use the parts I had on hand at the time, mainly bricks, plates and slopes.

Among the available pieces I had a good amount of dark bluish gray 1 x 1 x 2/3 slopes, 3 x 1 slopes, 2 x 1 slopes, 2 x 1 x 3 slopes, 1x bricks, 2x bricks, and one 4 x 10 plate.

I also had plates of different sizes and some green 2 x 4 bricks.

Before starting with the construction process of the module, it is useful to clarify a number of points:

- I already had the MILS base on which to build the mountain, so I will only comment on the construction process of the mountain itself.
- Since I was going to use my available parts, I was not going to optimize it to be as cheap as possible, nor save on the use of parts, I was simply going to try to use the parts I had available.
- In terms of aesthetics, I like the contours of my modules to have the same colours, so that they can be placed on the edges of the dioramas without them being too out of place. That's why the bricks I selected are dark bluish gray, since that's the colour I've used for the contours of my other MILS modules.
- I like to use as little variety of pieces as possible, so I have limited it to a few different references.

1 Taking into account the available parts, I chose to make a Null-Long-Short-Null profile module as defined in the MILS standards (<http://www.abellon.net/MILS/>), which I could use as a corner if I only had that mountain module. At first glance, it may seem that slopes are enough to make a larger module, but it is the bricks that determine the size of the mountain that can be built.

This was the starting point, a MILS module with a completely smooth half, where I could carry out the construction of the mountain.

2 First, I started building the contour of the mountain part that bordered the edge of the module, forming a wall of a couple of bricks in height.

3 Then, I began to build the lower part of the mountain, starting at one end, with green plates, from the edge, to match it with the height of the brick wall.

4 In this initial phase, it is important that the step takes on the shape of the mountain and that in the area where it joins the brick wall, it has a height that allows the pieces, generally slopes, to be placed, which will shape the appearance of the mountain, since the first pieces that give shape to the mountain are added almost immediately.

5 When I added more staggered elements I increased the height of the brick wall, so that

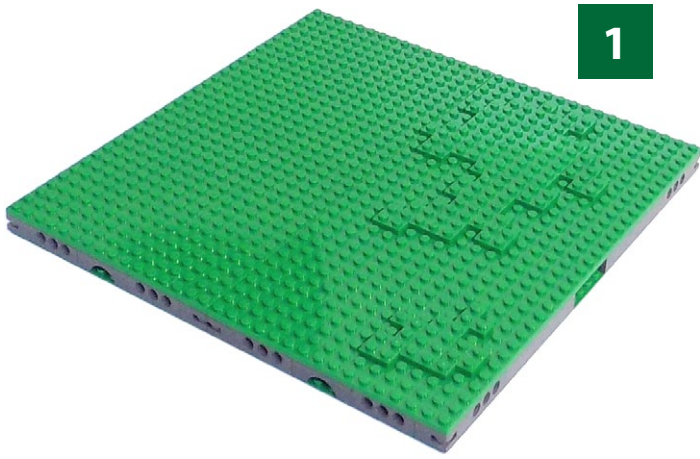
I could see if the height of the staggered element rose just enough to coincide with the height that a mountain module with a "long" slope must have on its contour.

6 As we shape the mountain with the small plates and slopes, we have to try not to leave gaps, or areas with very large vertical jumps, or an excessive distance from the height that the edge should have at each point. This is a process of trial and error, and it is always better to change it when you are at the beginning as opposed to when you are already at a very advanced stage of construction.

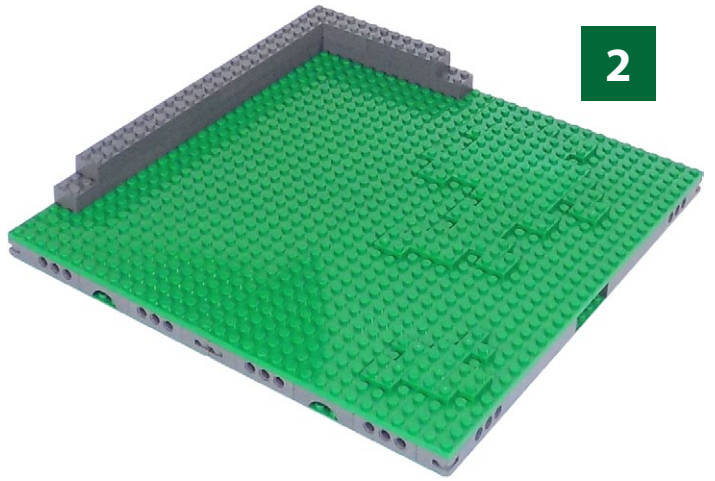
I also took advantage of this stage to start the construction of the mountain from the other end. This other end, being a shorter edge has to have a steeper slope.

7 As the mountain grew in height, I began to see the need to form a small terrace with which to support the supporting pieces that give firmness to the mountain. In this way it is not necessary for the interior to be solid and many pieces are saved. It is also advantageous to check the firmness of the slope in case it is necessary to add support pieces to prevent the sides from collapsing as the construction continues to climb.

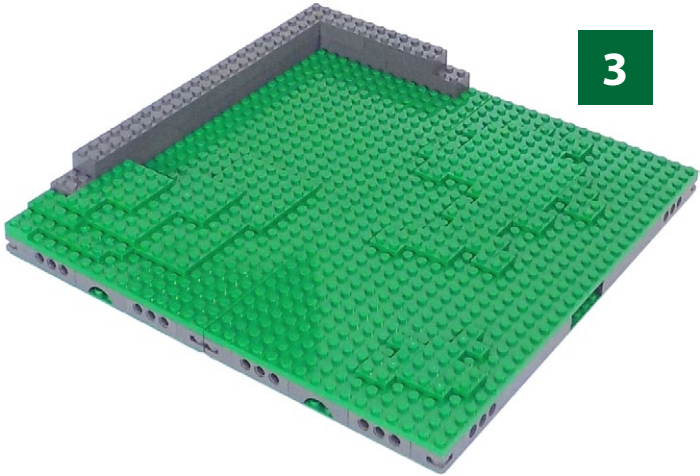
8 As the areas of the mountain under construction were being defined, in the central area, I realised that the steps of the short part



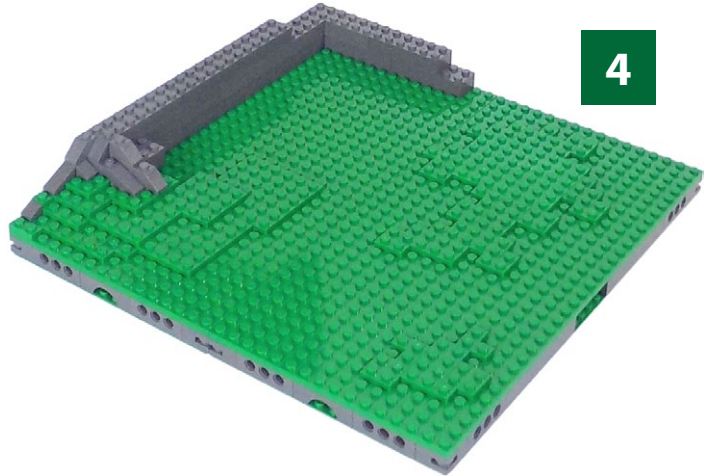
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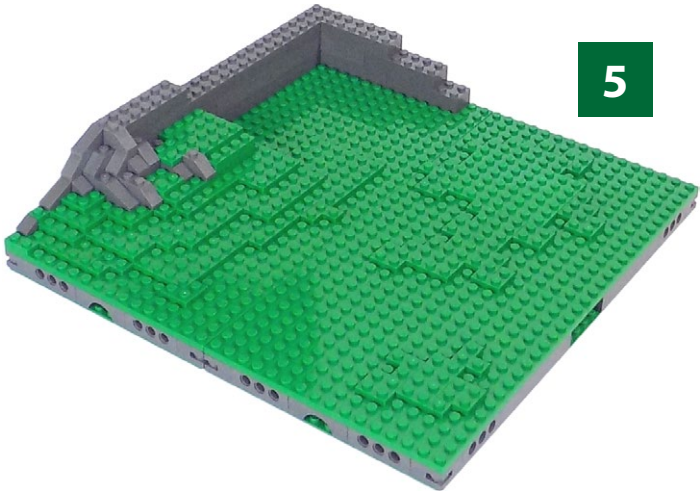
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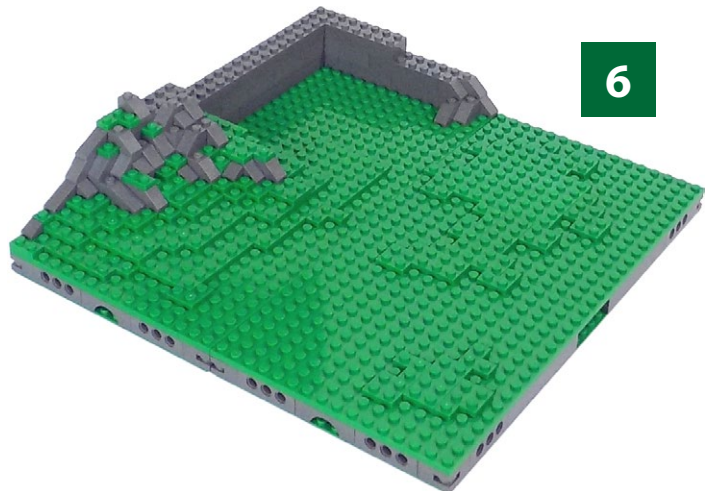
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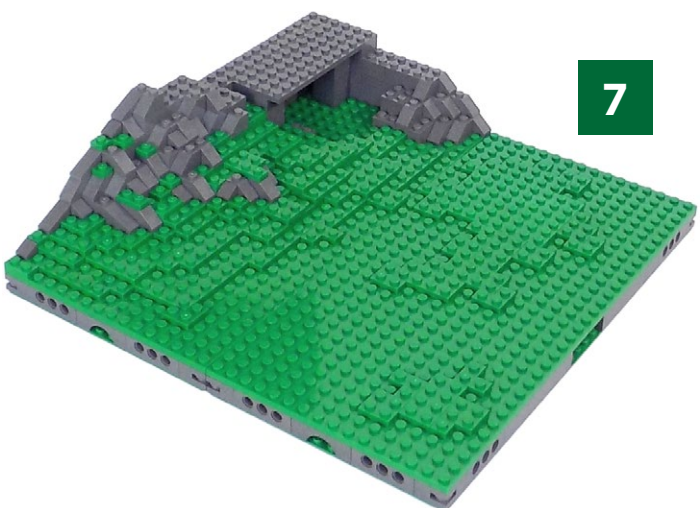
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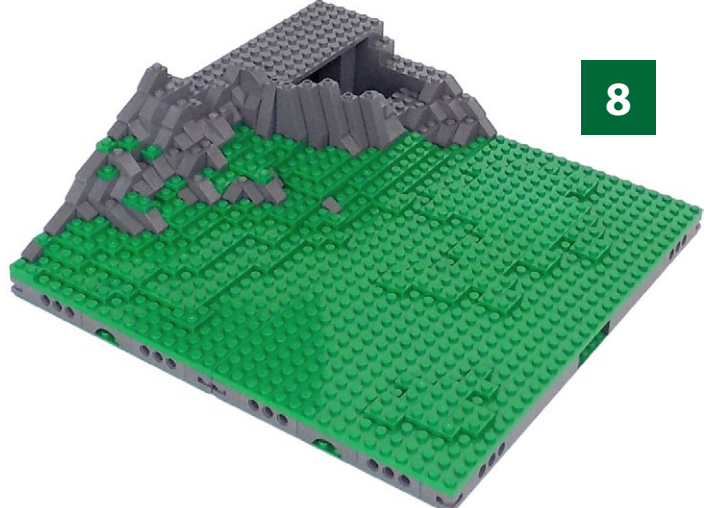
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(upper area) were not high enough to coincide with the height of the edge, so I had to resort to steeper slopes, to make the height coincide without any very abrupt cuts. I continued the wall with 2 x 1 x 3 slopes up to the area of lesser slope, forming a small bump on the hillside.

9 At this point, it is time to discuss one of the tricks I usually use to see if the slope of the module I am building conforms to MILS standards. It's something very easy; I simply compare it with another module with the same profile. By doing this I can see if I'm staying below or above the height I need to reach.



10 When adding new height levels it is advisable to check the general appearance, to see if there may be any gaps, or areas that are not covered with pieces. At this point I had to redo the junction area of the 2 x 1 x 3 slopes with the slope of the long edge, as there were some gaps between the slopes and it was necessary to cover them.

11 Once the problem was solved, I continued with the construction of the slope. I decided to use that small projection to have a small flat area, where if necessary I could put a tree or place minifigs. At this point, the brick wall served to place support and reinforcement areas.

12 As the height increased it was necessary to make more adjustments so that the new slopes could fit the shape of the mountain. This is where I had to use the small 1 x 1 and 1 x 2 bricks to avoid leaving gaps in the wall and to be able to fit the slopes coherently.

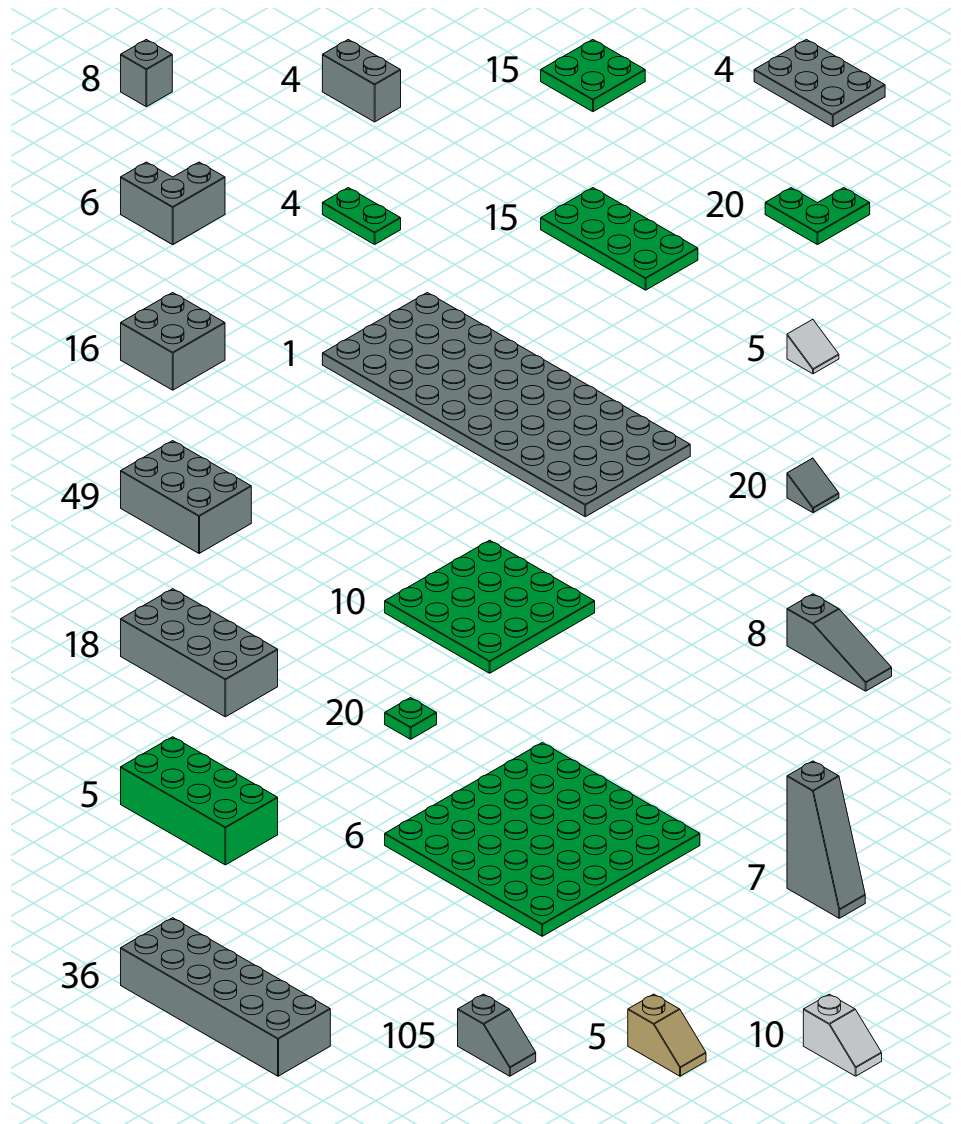
13 The last part went quite fast as it was almost perfectly shaped to fit the slopes to the summit.

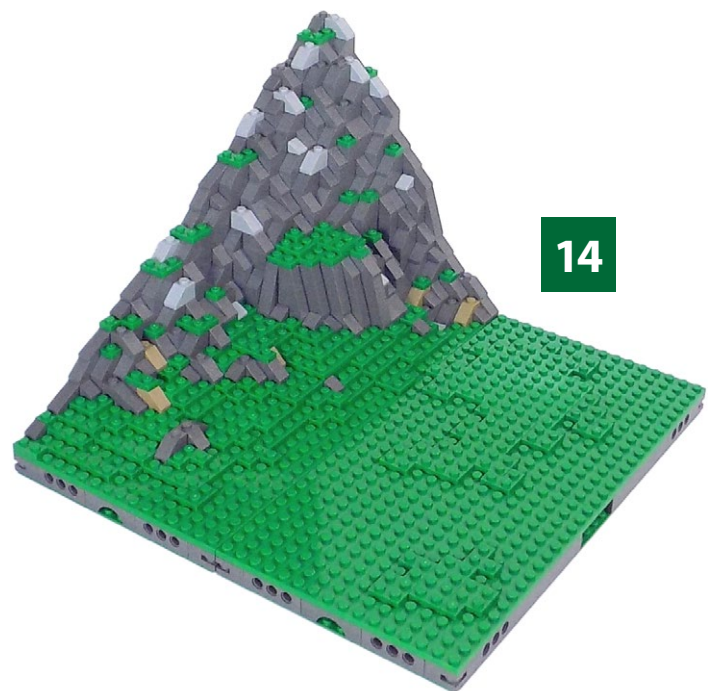
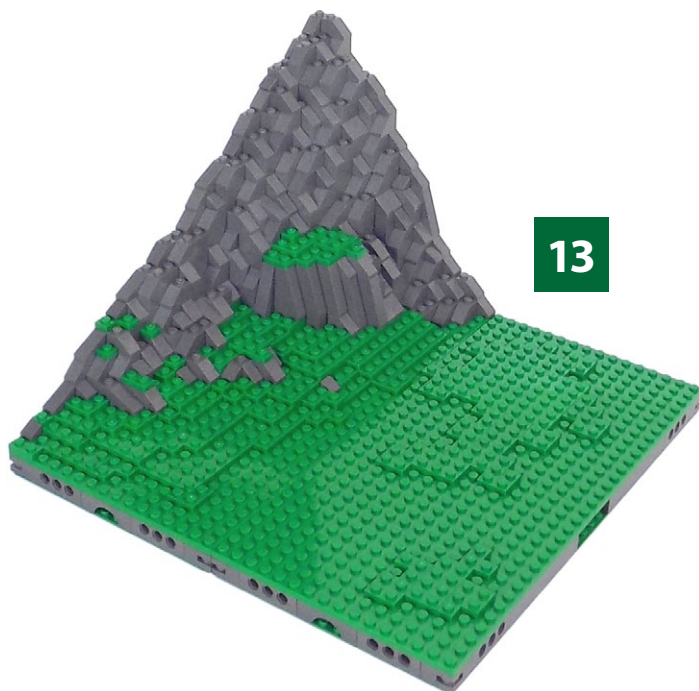
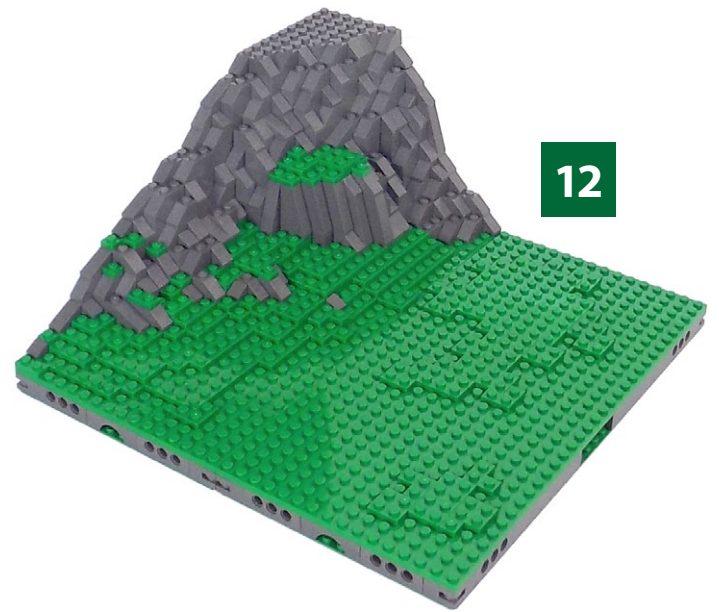
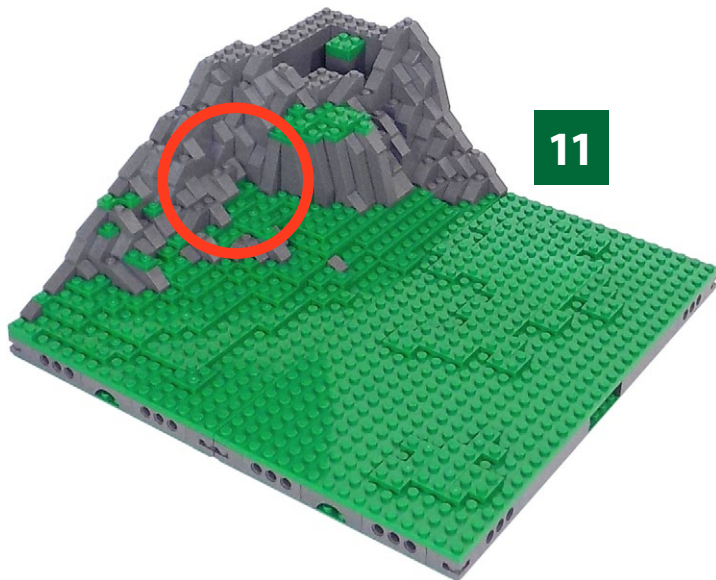
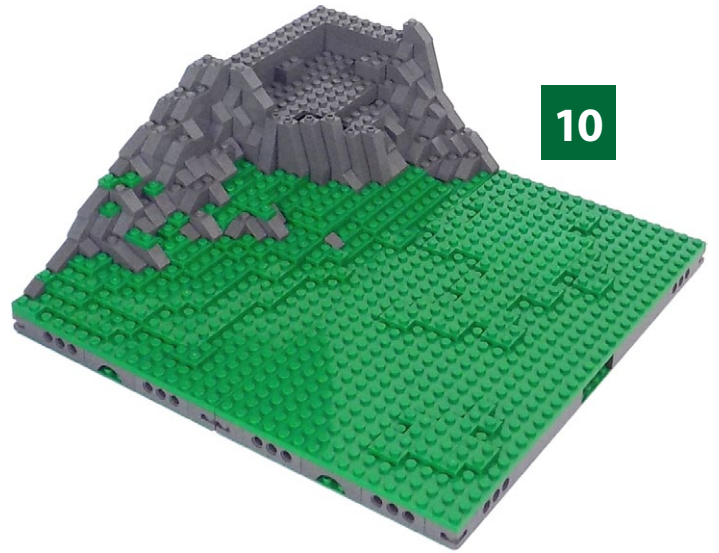
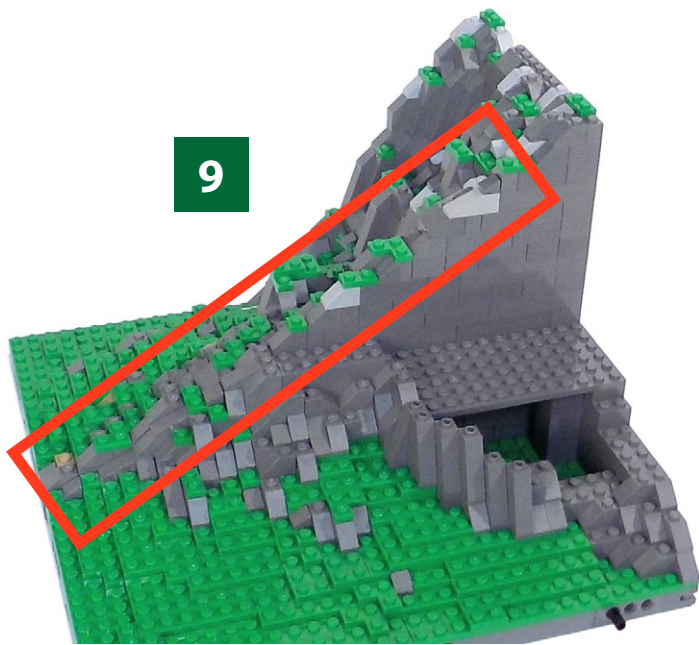
14 With the module already finished, I proceeded to make some improvements, swapping some slopes for light bluish gray, adding green plates in areas with visible studs, so that the mountain would be more colourful.

In the end, including the stops to take pictures, the construction process took me about 5 hours. It's true that the stops to make the photos broke with the continuity of the construction, but the result is quite decent. There are areas that could have been better, such as the edge of the short side in its central zone, which is too continuous, or some cracks, which have consecutive vertical surfaces of more than 1 brick in height. Perhaps it could have been improved with 2 x 1 x 2 slopes, but considering that I only used the pieces I had at that time, I can say that I managed to meet the challenge.

Listed below as a reference are the pieces used to build this mountain section, not including the base of the module:

- 3005 8 Brick, 1 x 1, Dark Bluish Gray
- 3004 4 Brick, 1 x 2, Dark Bluish Gray
- 3003 6 Brick, 2 x 2 corner, Dark Bluish Gray
- 3003 16 Brick, 2 x 2, Dark Bluish Gray
- 3002 49 Brick, 2 x 3, Dark Bluish Gray
- 3001 18 Brick, 2 x 4, Dark Bluish Gray
- 3001 5 Brick, 2 x 4, Green
- 2456 36 Brick, 2 x 6, Dark Bluish Gray
- 3024 20 Plate, 1 x 1, Green
- 3023 4 Plate, 1 x 2, Green
- 2420 20 Plate, 2 x 2 corner, Green
- 3022 15 Plate, 2 x 2, Green
- 3021 4 Plate, 2 x 3, Dark Bluish Gray
- 3020 15 Plate, 2 x 4, Green
- 3030 1 Plate, 4 x 10, Dark Bluish Gray
- 3031 10 Plate, 4 x 4, Green
- 3958 6 Plate, 6 x 6, Green
- 54200 20 Slope 30, 1 x 1 x 2/3, Dark Bluish Gray
- 54200 5 Slope 30, 1 x 1 x 2/3, Light Bluish Gray
- 4286 8 Slope 33, 3 x 1, Dark Bluish Gray
- 3040 105 Slope 45, 2 x 1, Dark Bluish Gray
- 3040 5 Slope 45, 2 x 1, Dark Tan
- 3040 10 Slope 45, 2 x 1, Light Bluish Gray
- 4660 7 Slope 75, 2 x 1 x 3, Dark Bluish Gray







RACINGBRICK

by Jetro de Château

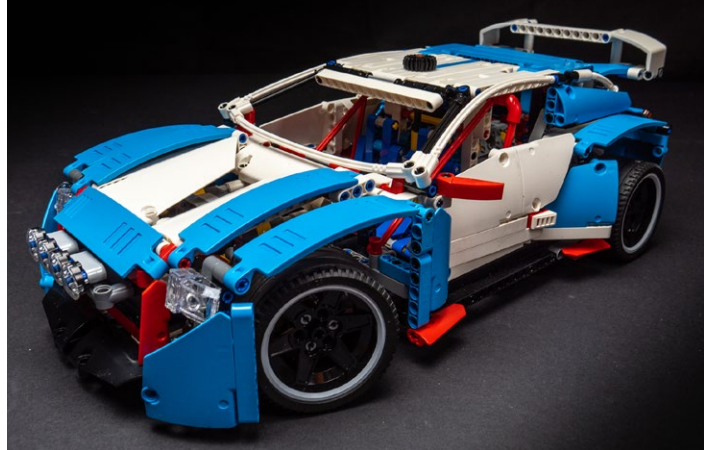
In our quest to learn more about many Recognised LEGO fan communities, HispaBrick Magazine spoke to Balazs Kiss who runs the Recognised LEGO Fan Media (RLFM) RacingBrick. We were of course curious to know how he picked that name and what it represents. Balazs comments: "When I created my YouTube channel I didn't want to use my own name, so I was looking for something related to LEGO and cars as I was planning that to be the main theme. I had a lot of ideas, some of which were abandoned to avoid potential legal issues (you can't use the word "LEGO" in any form) while others were already taken, and I finally ended up with RacingBrick.

Like many Adult Fans of LEGO, Balazs played

a lot with LEGO as a kid, but went into his "dark ages" after his teenage years. Becoming a parent got him interested in LEGO again. "My son had many LEGO sets and he also played with the bricks from my childhood. I enjoyed playing with him and I think I was joking about getting a set for myself as well, so I was surprised and delighted when I received 42029 as a gift for Christmas. After building it I wanted to make it RC, but since I like challenges (and because I didn't have many Technic pieces at that time) I wanted to do it without any additional parts apart from the PF components. I ended up building a modified version of an excellent C model Jeep made by Yoshiny. It took me around a year to figure out the whole thing, but I was learning a lot along the way and by the end it was working well. After this

challenge I was hooked on LEGO RC and I started to build more and more. Photography was a long-time hobby for me so I had the idea to combine it with LEGO, but with the RC cars I found that creating video content was the better choice. This is how my YouTube channel was born, as a means to showcase my builds and RC modifications."

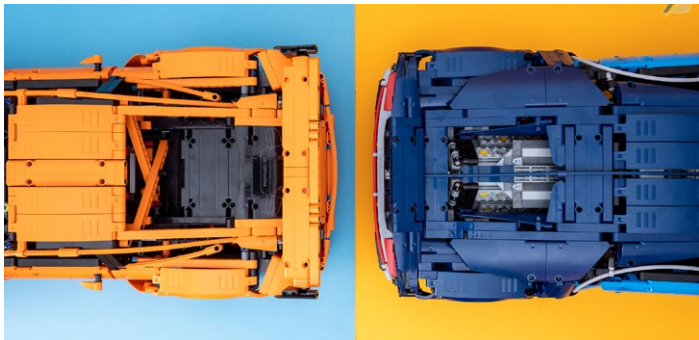
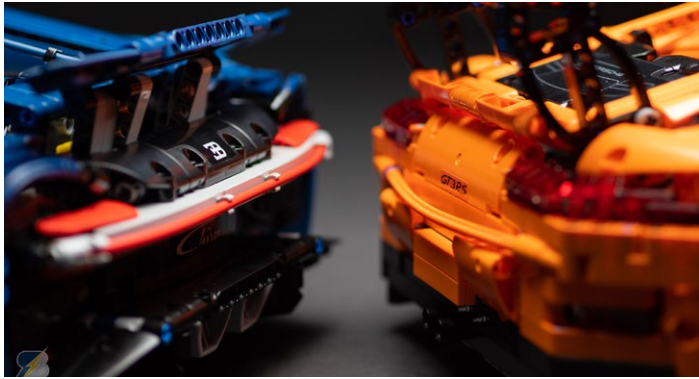
My first goal was simply to share my creations and evolve in videography. I found some great resources online about LEGO RC solutions, but after a while I also wanted to share my experience and help others on their journey. This meant information sharing, tutorials and set reviews quickly became a core part of my content, and I am mostly focusing on these topics nowadays, especially on new technologies like Powered Up. We know that TLG has some challenges sharing



information about this subject, especially for novice users, so I am trying my best to methodize and share everything I learn about the system.

Although the word “community” conjures up images of a large team, RacingBrick is, as Balazs puts it “practically a ‘one man band’ at the moment. However, he gets a lot of support from his family. “I couldn’t do everything by myself without them. I also receive more and more support from my followers on different social media channels. They provide great feedback for improving my content, and even share a lot of valuable information that I can use to extend that which is available on my webpage.

Discussing the future of his RLFM, Balazs mentions he would like to find some collaborators so as to share even more content with a greater



variety. "I have so many ideas but limited time, so it would be great to involve others as well in the creative process."

Running an RLFM is an investment in time, energy and also comes with some expenses. RacingBrick uses the 'traditional' YouTube monetization possibilities with ads displayed on videos, and also has some paid remote control motorization instructions that help Balazs to get all the parts and sets he uses in his videos. Regarding the time spent on the community, Balazs comments "

I'd say every minute of the day that is not spent with work or family I spend on RacingBrick.

When asked about the future of his community Balazs says: "I hope to see my audience growing on the different social media channels. I also started a Facebook group a couple of months ago where the aim is to create a helpful community focusing on LEGO RC solutions. Information gathering and sharing is probably my most important goal, but the format used today on my webpage is probably not the best, so I hope to

find a better solution for that in the future."

Covid-19 also has had an impact on RacingBrick. "As a lot of people were stuck indoors I saw a growing interest in LEGO and also in the different creative solutions for using the sets and parts people already have at home. I was also locked up for a few weeks with the family so we tried to come up with some indoor games using our RC sets. I recently published a video showing the results of this, using two 42095 RC Stunt Racers. Unfortunately I didn't have the opportunity during this time to take my vehicles outside so some people were missing the 'outdoor live-action' videos, and hope to be able to create more of these soon."

As we mentioned at the outset of this article, RacingBrick is recognised by LEGO as an RLFM. This has implications for the relationship between the community and the company. "As an Ambassador I do my best to contribute to the daily conversations on the LAN. Being recognized obviously gives me an opportunity to create more set reviews, but more importantly



 racingbrick.com





I have the chance to participate in different workgroups and projects where I can collaborate with other Ambassadors and directly share my feedback with different LEGO departments about their products or solutions and this is a very exciting opportunity."

I think communication and feedback is very important for a company, and I feel that TLG has some room for improvement in this domain. There were multiple opportunities in the past where we had the chance to share our findings with the respective department, but I think this could be improved further to make the process faster and more effective. It'd be great to find a way for the Ambassadors to collect and summarize the feedback from their communities about various topics and send this to the appropriate people within TLG.

To demonstrate just how much of an impact that relationship can have Balazs mentions the following experience: "published several videos about the 42110 Land Rover Defender set, as it has a quite complex drive train and people seem to have had challenges building it properly or fixing different issues later on. I received several comments on these videos from people who were initially looking for fixes for their real-life Defenders and then ended up watching my videos on the LEGO issues and solutions."





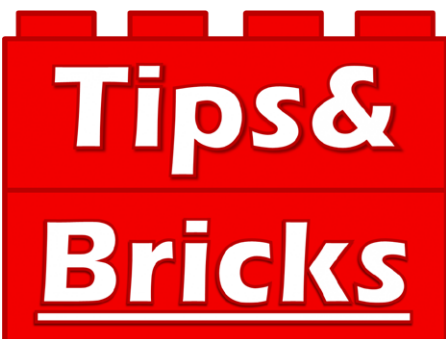
From posts on the blog Tips&Bricks

THE UNOFFICIAL GUIDE TO BASIC BUILDING TECHNIQUES

Created by Alex Johnson



BUILDER'S HANDBOOK



by Alex Johnson tipsandbricks.co.uk

Tips&Bricks was founded in July 2017 and I started it with a clear aim—to share interesting building techniques and custom creations in hopes of inspiring and teaching

wannabe master builders. There were so many amazing builders already creating MOCs, but very little information on how these builders had learned what they had. It was clearly through practice, and while practice is key, by sharing techniques I've certainly learned a lot over the past three years and I hope my audience has too.

Since then the blog's goal has remained relatively the same, while also expanding into other areas such as set reviews and reveals, with the unique perspective of a custom builder. For instance, for every set review I show the most useful and unique parts and break down the key techniques used to create the models.

Tips&Bricks was originally called 'LEGO MOCs—Tips & Tricks', partly because I couldn't think of a

catchy name but also because it's exactly what it says on the tin: sharing tips and tricks for creating custom LEGO models. After about a year, I was brainstorming new names and liked Tips & Tricks, but wanted to lego-fy it, so Tips&Bricks was born!

As of July 2020, the community is nearly 70,000 people strong on Instagram and just over 12,000 strong on Facebook. I run the blog and create daily posts by myself but have collaborated with the YouTuber Ben Cossy, who will be properly joining the team later this summer. I am also recruiting for other contributors to help create content so watch this space!

I'm currently 19 and studying for a degree in Product Design at the University of Leeds in the UK. Although when I was younger I had the dream

Small-scale WATERFALL TECHNIQUES

1. By Jme Wheeler

2. By Justin Stebbins

3. By Classical Bricks

4. By LionBricks

Tips& Bricks

Tips& Bricks FLOOR TECHNIQUES

1. By Isaac

2. By Ranghaal.

3. By Jakob Escher

4. By ForlornEmpire

5. By Corvus Auriac

Tips& Bricks

FLOWING LIQUID:

1. By balbo_

2. By ekjohnson_1

3. By balbo_

4. By @pasq6 on Flickr

Tips& Bricks

#915 Detailed wall techniques

Tips& Bricks

Panels

1x1 cheese slopes

SNOT brick back wall

Mechanical claw

1x1 open stud

by Simon Hundsbichler

of designing products for LEGO like many others, my career goals now lie in business management or consultancy, and Tips&Bricks has been very useful in developing skills for these areas.

In the future, I'm hoping to keep growing Tips&Bricks whilst developing our content to be as inspiring and informative as possible. We're currently working on several projects, one of which is 'Set Upgrades' for which I am working with talented custom builders to create modifications for sets that our audience can do themselves. The two other upcoming projects are more technique handbooks and a Patreon for our followers who would like to support us while accessing some fun rewards for their generosity. We currently sell two handbooks on our website which is how we keep

the blog running—this way the vast majority of our content is free to enjoy for all. I'm hoping that the handbooks and the Patreon going forward will ensure the blog's success and management for the foreseeable future.

I currently post to Tips&Bricks every day, with a generally constant schedule of types of posts to provide a format for each week. This consists of MOC features on Mondays, techniques Tuesday to Thursday, Favourite Brick Friday and other posts such as set reviews or tips for collections at the weekend. A post can take anywhere from 20 minutes to an hour to create with the exception of set reviews, which excluding the build time, can take upwards of three hours. Therefore, I mostly spend time researching and creating posts, as

well as interacting with our audience on our social media which is always fun.

Tips&Bricks became a Recognised LEGO Fan Media in August 2019 and since then I've loved having support from LEGO themselves. I use this support to request sets with interesting building techniques that we know our audience will enjoy, and I appreciate being able to help announce new sets. In the future, I would love to attend some conferences or shows in Denmark and although I believe RLFM are invited to these, LEGO aren't able to fund these travels, which is something I'm hoping will change in the future. If not, I'll have to combine it with something else as visiting the LEGO House is high up on my bucket list!



BrianzaLUG

Brianza LEGO® Users Group

by Jetro de Château and Francesco Frangioja

When and how did the idea for your community come about and what was its original purpose?

BrianzaLUG was founded in 2012, when a bunch of friends started to meet on a regular basis, both because we shared the same passion (LEGO bricks, building together, etc.) and because we lived in the same area. The goal is and has always been to base everything on friendship, both between the original founders and with those individuals and families who have joined the group over time.

To what degree has that goal been fulfilled and how has it evolved over time?

Our goal has been achieved since the foundation. The prerequisite required to be part of BrianzaLUG is friendship. You enter BrianzaLUG because you are a friend of one of the members and over time this friendship extends to the other members, with varying degrees of intensity and fellowship, extending to partners and kids.

How many people are working on the site and how did you meet?

The 'core' team includes 11 guys: [brianzalug.it/?page_id=375](https://www.brianzalug.it/?page_id=375). Before the COVID situation, we were used to meeting every two weeks over pizzas and beer. During lockdown we have organized video chats via Zoom while trying to maintain the same frequency of meetings, and even now, since the region in which we live is still 'critical' and subject to special rules, we continue to meet and talk regularly both via WhatsApp (with a group chat) and Microsoft Team.

What plans/goals do you have for the future of the community?

The goal is always the same: to have fun with LEGO, in a friendly environment, by spending time with people who take care of each other.

How is your community funded?

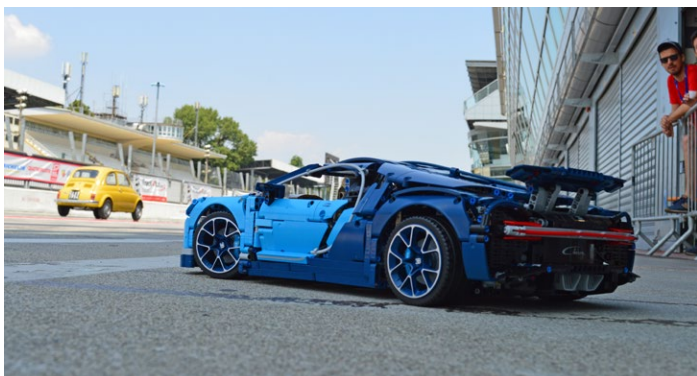
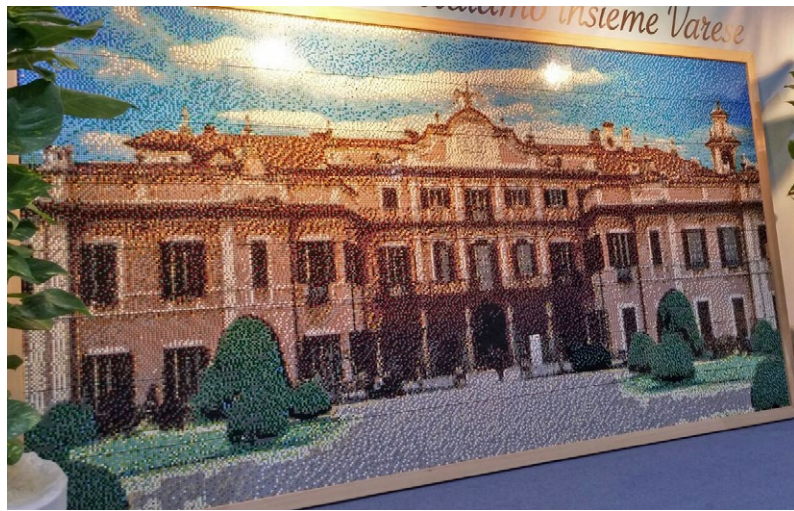
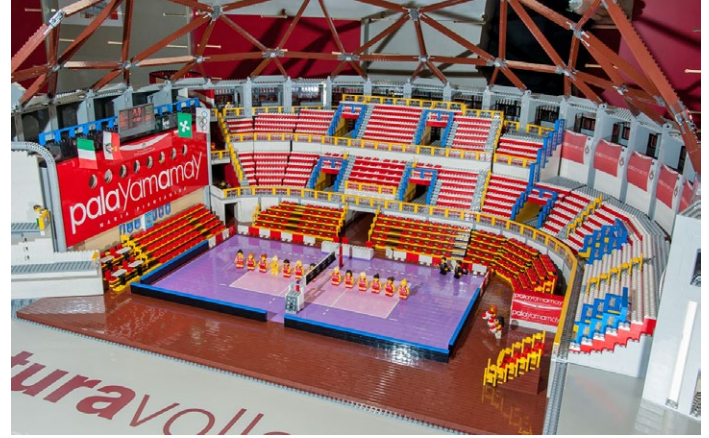
We have no sources of funding. When we need something (website costs, clothing, etc.), we organize this ourselves with internal fundraising.

How do you see the future of your community?

We can't wait to resume organizing our events, both recurring and new ones, welcoming in the meantime all of those who show interest in being part of this great family of ours. While waiting to resume this activity, we are working on some community projects, one of which we have returned to again after a 4-year break to re-apply for project support.

How has Covid-19 changed or affected your community? How have you adapted to these challenges?

The two worst things we faced were the impossibility to meet as we had been used to (as we were a group of friends before becoming an AFOL community) and the fact that we had to cancel all our events—which for our group are an important opportunity to get involved for all those members who can not participate regularly in our 'pizza and beer' evenings. For a 'physical' community like ours, not being able to meet each other was dramatic. The same went for events: for reasons of distance, time or work, these are often the only occasions for everyone to meet each other with any regularity. Cancelling events meant for us not being able to see some people for a long time, so we can say that Covid-19 has struck us more in our feelings than our health and physical well-being.



We have partly solved this with video-chat sessions over Zoom and Team, but it's definitely not the same as chatting in front of a pizza or around a table. Always keeping the security aspects very much in mind, we slowly started to meet again, but always with great caution because many of us interact for work with a lot of people and at home we have elderly parents and/or children to consider.

Describe your relationship with LEGO?

Conflicting, in some ways. LEGO bricks are a hobby and a passion. LEGO as a company... well, it is a company. We know very well that they are aimed at generating turnover and profits. We also know that whatever they give to AFOL Communities is a bonus and not an entitlement, and we recognize that while we often do not understand or agree with their choices, this doesn't mean they

are wrong. On the other hand, we really don't understand some behaviours towards communities: from leaks that are leaks only for communities, to certain rules included in the Fair Play Policy. That said, we are also a community that has long since put aside everything about sets to orient itself more towards MOCs and community dioramas. So all things considered, issues concerning the 'world' of sets leave us mostly indifferent.

What changes/improvements would you like to see in that relationship?

Surely, we wouldn't mind more involvement with our local office. We have excellent skills (LEGO Technic, MOCs and dioramas) and a good network of contacts (newspapers, YouTube channels, museums, event organization, etc). We would like to be able to make them available to our local office for organizing live events, with the

public, etc. when launching prestigious sets (e.g., Lamborghini, Ducati, Crocodile...)

Can you share any anecdotes about your community?

A tradition we started last year during our flagship event is named "the parallel event". In practice, this is what it is all about: during the event, a sort of reserved area is set up backstage where, in rotation, exhibitors meet for a tasting moment where they eat the typical culinary specialties of the place where the event is being held (cold cuts, typical bread, etc.) and celebrate their meeting with locally produced wines (all obviously far from the eyes of visitors and children). Put this way it doesn't sound like much, but it's a time that everyone looks forward to: not only for the food and wine, but for the family atmosphere that is created.

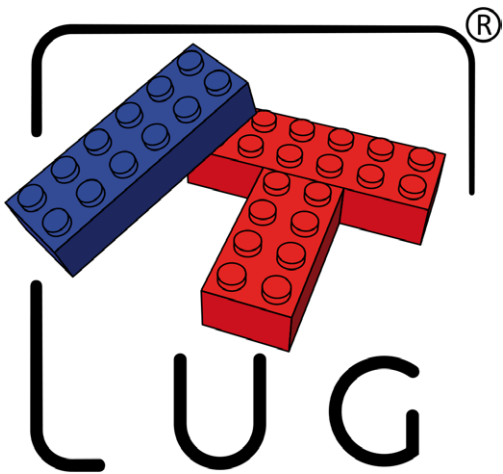


1999



2019

ItLUG compie vent'anni!
LEGO House — 24 giugno 2019



by Jetro de Château

HispaBrick Magazine has a long standing relationship with ItLUG, the Italian LEGO Users Group. That LUG name that was chosen when there were no other Italian LUGs and a national LUG was set up. That relationship is based in part on the fact that we live in the same part of Europe and have similar cultures.

The original members of ItLUG met on LUGNET in 1999. Back then LUGNET was the place to be, for AFOLs. Seeing other groups being created, it seemed natural to come up with an Italian one too, and that's how ItLUG was created. The purpose was to have an Italian community, of course, and initially it was very MINDSTORMS oriented (but the first System people arrived very quickly!) The LUG started meeting privately in what was called "LEGO Fest" (as it was still possible to use the word 'LEGO' back then), and soon these meetings became public and turned into events. Their first international event was held in 2005 held in Turin (with AFOLs coming from France and with... Jan Beyer!) In 2006 they started their event in Ballabio (now Lecco) which over time has become their main event, and always has AFOLs coming from all over Europe (a certain Lluís Gibert, editor for HispaBrick Magazine was one of the first!)

Today, ItLUG is still the Italian national LUG, even though there are many other LUGs and communities now (local or specialized) so the

original purpose of the community is still the same. Ten years ago ItLUG also became an official association and that came with an official goal: "promote the passion for the LEGO brick by facilitating exchange of information and experiences among fans, also through online resources, events and media". And they are still doing that today.

Francesco Spreafico, the current ambassador for ItLUG comments: "Right now we have about 450 members in the LUG. By law we have a board



"Io taglierei la corda", by dabol_it



ItLUG members around "Il Pirellone", a LUG community project

that's elected every three years and is composed of seven members: the president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary and three regular members. Of course not all of these 450 people are active, but many of them are. Some organize events, some participate in events, some write on the forum, and some help in other ways. We intend to continue organizing events (well, after COVID-19) and promoting the LEGO brick in any way that we can.

By the way, ItLUG wasn't always called ItLUG, and for a very brief time the founders played with the idea of calling it ILM—Italian LEGO Maniacs. Luckily, they settled for ItLUG!

When asked about the future of the LUG, Francesco says: "We've noticed that our numbers have been constant for a few years now. . . some people don't renew (being a member of ItLUG comes with a 20 € yearly fee), but the same number of people join us. It would be nice to reach more people, but 450 is not a small number, so it's probably okay. We expect to have



"Giostrina", by FiveCraft

*** itlug.org**

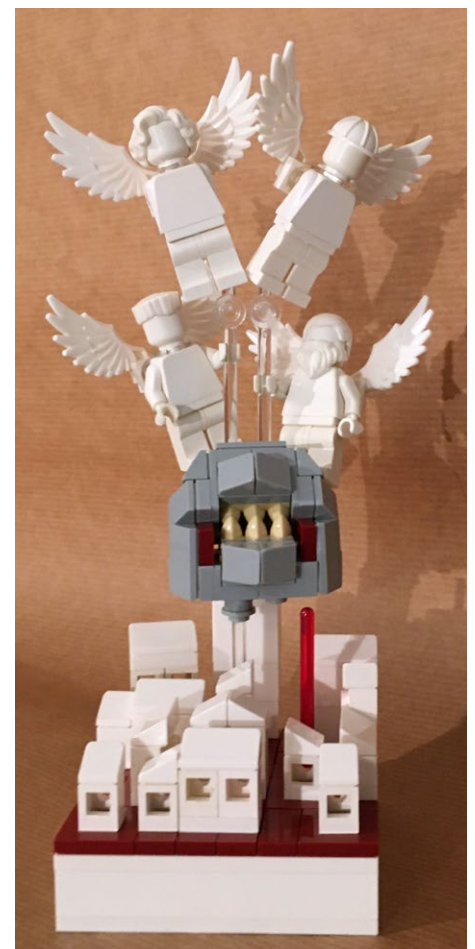
fewer members next year since now everything is cancelled and generally events are where we recruit new members. Luckily it's not going to be an economic problem for us (all our events have free admission), but it might affect the number of new members. . . it'll probably take two or three years to recover from that. But it's okay, it could have been worse.

Most of our activities normally are physical events, but we also have an online forum, so we used that to launch a few special contests related to lockdown. We generally have a few contests every year anyway, but with the first of these special ones we've had a level of participation that we'd never seen before (this was during the actual lockdown, back in April). We did consider online events and meetings, but eventually decided not to proceed (at least for now, we'll see how long this situation will go on)."

We also asked Francesco about the ItLUG logo: "Our logo was created by one of our first members, Domenico Franco, back in 2001. They had a few proposals and this was the winner, though the logo pictured is an updated version which Domenico made in 2011. You might ask: "Why is it white, red and blue and not white, red and green like the Italian flag?" It's a good question. Some people used to say that the reason was that there was no green brick in the early 1960s (a time people generally associate with the 'original' LEGO colors) but the real answer was, simply: "we liked it more this way"."

ItLUG is a Recognised LEGO User Group (RLUG), so we asked Francesco to tell us a little about their relationship with LEGO. "I think our relationship with LEGO Billund is great. Much better than when I started as an ambassador. But I'm

biased because I often go to Billund (except this year), and I can talk to everybody in person, so I understand LUGs that are based far away and can't do that and miss the personal aspect of the relationship (the LAN is great, but nothing beats meeting in person). I'm not sure something could be done about that. . . except having the AFOL Engagement Team travel more all around the world! At the moment we don't have any kind of relationship with LEGO Italy. . . this was about to change, a meeting was about to happen, when COVID-19 struck (again). So now everything's suspended there too."



"Virus", by vedosololeg0



by Jetro de Château and Nicola Rigoni

**What is the name of your community?
Where does the name come from?**

The acronym CLV was born in 2007 when some AFOLs from Verona decided to become independent from the rest of the already established Italian community. CLV in its original version was "LEGO Veronesi Collectors" and this was our name until the early months of 2013, when the group decided to seek official recognition by TLG. Knowing that the use of the word LEGO was not appreciated by Billund for unrecognized groups, it was decided to keep only the abbreviation CLV by adding "Brick Team Verona" to it. Following our acceptance as a Recognized LUG in 2014, and in the first months of 2015 having already started recruiting AFOLs from outside the province of Verona, our LUG decided to expand its recruiting territory throughout the Veneto region. The name became CLV only and the writing "Brick Team Verona" was removed. The Verona section, in addition to being our foundation, is responsible for recruiting young people from the provinces of Verona, Vicenza and



Rovigo (West). Our other section is the North East section, which covers the provinces of Padova, Treviso, Venice and Belluno. For this reason, the board must have at least one member per section as a spokesperson for the CLV AFOLs in that area. Now CLV is an acronym for 'LEGO Veneto Community' and our current name is CLV LUG.

When and how did the idea for your community come about and what was its original purpose? To what degree has that goal been fulfilled and how has it evolved over time?

CLV was born in 2007 from the desire of some AFOLs in the Verona area to become independent and to meet more frequently and in person, to have dinner and share their MOCs in search of improvements or advice. For many years

the situation remained crystallized for the six founding boys who in the meantime had created their own forum, name, logo, and their own badge with engraved bricks.

Between 2012 and 2013 new AFOLs from Verona were recruited, and the first official uniforms were introduced. In January 2014 CLV became a recognized LUG and in 2015 we officially gained access to the entire Veneto region for AFOL aspirants to come under our banner. In 2018 the historic minifigure skull logo was changed (though this will remain on uniforms until January 2021) to our new current logo.

To date, CLV has about 40 AFOLs from all over Veneto and the neighboring provinces, and organizes numerous national and local events, among which the CLV MEI stands out. This is the Model Expo Italy model fair in Verona, which today is the most popular AFOL event in Italy with over 70,000 media visitors throughout the weekend.





How many people are working on the site and how did you meet?

The LUG has a board of directors comprising a president (brick dark red on the uniform) and a team of 6 collaborators called 'charges' (black brick on the uniform). These are the vice president, secretary, treasurer, sergeant (in charge of discipline, uniforms, and recruitment), master of ceremonies (coordinating the success of events) and an adviser. There is also an ambassador team with two components, the official ambassador representing CLV in LAN and LEGO, and a vice ambassador who deals with virtual management in LAN.

Another important team is the webm@sters team, taking care of all CLV virtual interfaces. We have:

- an external webmaster who collaborates with the management and the webm@sters team
- a manager with some moderators for the Facebook page
- a manager for the Instagram page
- a Twitter manager
- the LAN manager (vice ambassador)

What plans/goals do you have for the future of the community?

How do you see the future of your community?

CLV continues to grow together with the world of LEGO bricks. The goal of the LUG, in addition to the continuation and improvement of the activities of a LEGO User Group, is to bring the CLV MEI to a worldwide and not only European level.

What our future will be like is a good question,

the answer to which is difficult. We live by our passion day by day, and we like to think it should be like this, not thinking about tomorrow but about the present, which we try to live for as much as possible.

How is your community funded?

CLV is financed exclusively with the help of its members.

How has Covid-19 changed/affected your community?

Covid was a serious blow for everyone. As far as we are concerned as a LUG, not being able to host events was really a problem, as being together and showing what we do is the real motivation that pushes us to continue.

We adapted. We started proposing online events and contests, and we found ourselves as a community using Zoom etc. to meet. We tried to show others, but above all ourselves, that we could still do something even in difficulties. With the restart, we have started to see each other again, safely respecting social distancing. . . to carry on our interrupted projects, to sort the BULK. . . to return to normal.

How would you describe your relationship with LEGO? What changes/improvements would you like to see in that relationship?

A relationship of understanding was immediately established with LEGO since the 2013 LEGO Fan Weekend where the idea of becoming an RLUG was born. In 2014 the official Recognized status arrived.

Our relationship with LEGO has always been excellent. The boys of the CEE Team are available and smart; we have no improvements to suggest. Our hope is to be able to continue to cultivate this passion by sharing it with LEGO in the most genuine way possible.

We have not yet had the pleasure of having TLG representatives at our events, though we hope this may be possible in the future.

Can you share any anecdotes about your community?

In October 2016 our LUG was granted the opportunity to visit Billund for a mini inside-factory tour. This was a trip from Italy to Denmark with 5 campers and 25 AFOLs. It was an unforgettable journey, and afterwards our LUG gave TLG a huge 2x4 red marble brick (a typical granite from our area) very faithful to the original plastic, made in collaboration with the Marble School of Sant'Ambrogio di Valpolicella (VR), in 1:18 scale with a weight of 20kg.

What challenges have you faced due to Covid-19 and how have you adapted to them?

With the Covid situation we had to transform our being RLUG, having no more physical events to organize, we got busy. We started organizing online events, contests etc., to guarantee the safety and social distances imposed by the Italian government. In general LEGO for us means being together share and talk about the same passion by attending us and seeing us, with covid this is all more difficult, but we hope to return to normal soon!!!

REBELLUG

by Jetro de Chateau and Danny Dirienzo

What is the name of your community?

Where does the name come from?

My community's name is RebellUG. It is named after the Rebel Alliance from Star Wars, since the community was founded by primarily Star Wars MOC builders. LUG stands for LEGO Users Group.

When and how did the idea for your community come about and what was its original purpose?

RebellUG was originally just a name created for a group of six LEGO Star Wars YouTubers who partnered together for a collaboration called Clones Alone. Following this collab's release, myself and the other builders flew out to Brickworld Chicago 2016 for our first ever in-person meetup. It was after this convention that we decided to formalize RebellUG as a community and began recruiting new members. Its original purpose was to bring together Star Wars MOC builders to work on collaborations.

To what degree has that goal been fulfilled and how has it evolved over time?

Since its inception, RebellUG has successfully

published ten unique collaborations—far surpassing what we originally envisioned. The goal of RebellUG has since evolved beyond collaborations to also include more opportunities for its members and the greater MOC-building community. This includes hosting contests, running monthly building challenges, and organizing convention displays. A great emphasis is put on providing social opportunities for members and fans.

How many people are working on the site and how did you meet?

The RebellUG leadership team consists of 24 positions held by 11 different members. Members are able to occupy multiple positions; I myself occupy three. Most of us met virtually or at LEGO conventions. The members occupying leadership roles vary from time to time. Of the six founding members of RebellUG, two of us—myself and Spencer Hubert—still occupy leadership roles. The most essential positions are as follows: Design Lead (Spencer Hubert, US), Operations Lead (Noah Hennings, Germany), Collab Lead (Simon Liu, Canada), LAN Ambassador (Danny Dirienzo, US), Social Media Curator (Luka Grković, Croatia), Admissions and Retention Lead (Olav Grimstad,

Norway), Web Admin (Spencer Hubert, US), and Community Engagement Lead (Jet Ochoa, US). RebellUG's leadership thrives from our diversity, as seen by the five different countries represented in our key leadership roles.

What plans/goals do you have for the future of the community?

RebellUG is currently working towards creating more member benefits, such as partnerships with BrickLink stores and additional member-only competitions. We have also put an increased effort into our public presence. Led by the community engagement committee and community engagement lead Jet Ochoa, RebellUG has fostered a public community environment in the "FOL Hangout" section of our Discord server. Recent additions to this include the "2hr monthly build challenge", "FOL Friday", and "Spotlight Sunday". The ability for FOLs (fans of LEGO) to share work in progress pictures of their builds and receive direct feedback from RebellUG members and community members has been the most rewarding part of this initiative.

How is your community funded?

RebellUG is funded by the profits from our





online instructions store and our merchandise sales. Occasionally, we will also enter into a sponsorship deal with a third-party LEGO company, such as those that make custom printed figures, and that provides additional LUG funds. It is also important to note that many of our activities would not be possible without the support provided from LEGO as part of their Recognized LEGO Online Community program.

How has Covid-19 changed/affected your community?

As an online-based community, COVID-19 has had a minimal effect on Rebellug. It has cancelled nearly every convention that we regularly display at; however this has given us the opportunity to put together more online activities both for our LUG and for the greater community.

How would you describe your relationship with LEGO?

I have had a long-standing, loving relationship with both the toy and the company LEGO. Since I can remember, I have always been collecting LEGO sets. In July of 2012, I started my own Star Wars YouTube channel—Lego Buff Productions—in which I primarily focused on building large LEGO Star Wars battle scenes. To this day, I continue to collect and build. Rebellug was founded in 2015 and became officially recognized in 2018. It was then that I began my relationship with LEGO as a company in my occupation of the LAN ambassador role. Since then, I have had the opportunity to work at my local LEGO retail store as well as collaborate through Rebellug with the

LEGO marketing team on events held at the LEGO booth at Star Wars celebration 2019. All of my interactions with the company and the toy have been exceptional.

What changes/improvements would you like to see in that relationship?

I look forward to further growing my relationship with LEGO. It would be great to develop more connections within the different functions of the company. A long time bucket list item of mine has been to take a trip to Denmark to visit its headquarters and go on the highly coveted Inside Tour.

Can you share any anecdotes about your community?

Brickworld Chicago quickly became the main LEGO convention in the United States where Rebellug would display. Since I live in the

Chicago suburbs, my house became the hotel for the Rebellug members who attended, with most members flying in from other states and countries. My house became known as the “Buff ‘n Breakfast”, named after my YouTube channel, Lego Buff Productions. I have many great memories from these stays including creating LEGO YouTuber diss-tracks, jamming out to the video game Rockband, and crazy morning alarms and “wake-up routines”.

How many members does your community have?

Rebellug currently has 55 members across 10 different countries, though this tends to change every month. We vote on new member applications at our monthly meetings and our inactive members decommission to the role of Legacy Member.

How much time do you spend to keep your community running?

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly how much time is spent on keeping Rebellug running. When we have a collaboration launch or are in the middle of a community contest, I will often be putting in up to three hours each day. Outside of these occasional circumstances, I usually spend 30 minutes to an hour each day interacting. It is important to note that I view “keeping the community running” as interacting with Rebellug members in social chats in addition to administrative work. The interactions present within the community and the relationships formed serve as the glue that holds Rebellug together.





QuéLUG

by Patrick Begin

We are QuéLUG, the Québec LEGO User Group. Québec (population 8.5M) is one of the ten provinces of Canada (population 37.6M), and QuéLUG is the only RLUG in Québec. Our LUG was founded in 2006 and the majority of our members are located in Montreal and Quebec City (cities separated by 300km).

Our community started in an attempt to find LEGO friends to play with at a time when in America, Brickfest in Washington DC and BrickWest on the West coast of the USA were the only gathering events besides lugnet.com.

Currently we have 135 French-speaking members across Quebec province and I think we have a nice critical mass of varied interests (collectors, MOCers, Technic, Robotics, Space and every other theme) to exchange ideas.

We fund our community with a 20CAD/yr LUG subscription fee. The LUG fee pays for location rental, brick printing, website related expenses and administration. When or if there is a surplus, we spend this on special brick printing projects (minifigs/flags, etc.) or we purchase

discounted sets for a megadraft held at one of our quarterly meetings.

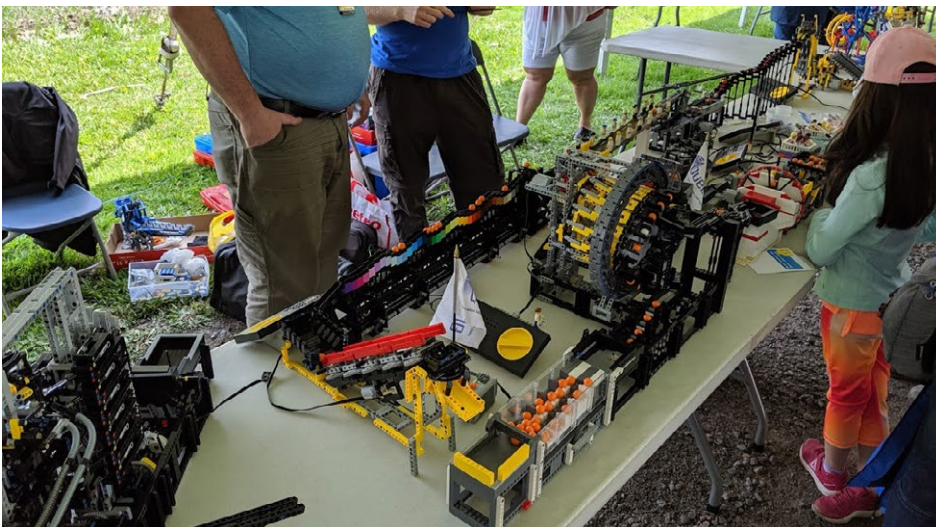
We also get community support from LEGO and use those sets to organise MOC contests, games, for thank yous, expo support, and drafts (if any are left).

We have always had an ambassador since the beginning of the program in the 2000s (Pierre Normandin at first, then myself since 2008). We

participated in the first LUGBulk in 2009. We got great special support from LEGO Enfield (USA) before the support program was modernized some years ago. Now we get regular Activity Support and we received Project Support in 2018. In summary, we have a great relationship with LEGO.

Before COVID We would meet every quarter (January, April, July, and October) for our regular LUG meetings. We hold these meetings in a rented space in hotels. Between 40 and 60 members would come to these meetings. Our January meeting is our big Dirty Brickster game. Our April meeting is the General Assembly. We try to hold games where our members can win LEGO sets at every meeting. Additionally, we





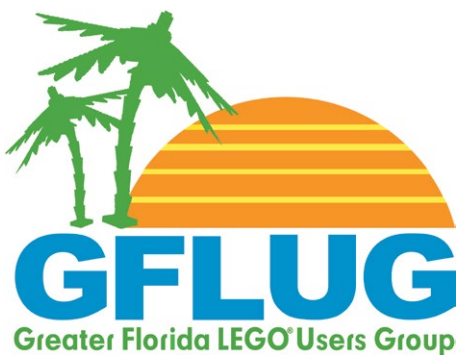
QuéLUG Web Site
<https://quelug.org>

hold about ten expos every year between April and November.

Due to COVID we had to make some changes. All our 2020 expos have been cancelled but Our online activities were not affected, so we decided to also take our meetings online. So far, we have done about nine virtual sessions. During a videoconference we have done a Q&A for new members, we have talked about subjects like Bricklink, Managing our LEGO inventories, Stop Motion or Printing on bricks. We also did a game where one member would call out the name of a specific brick, and the fastest person to show it on their camera scored a point. . . The person with the most points got a prize.

Holding those virtual events makes it easy to present a subject. When you do it in a regular environment, you must bring a lot of stuff to make it happen: Internet connection, projector, computer, etc. . .

Back in April, I started using Cisco Webex as the platform of choice to hold those meetings, unfortunately, they are now back to their regular settings. It is not free for all any more and we are limited to 40-minute meetings. Too bad.



by Shelley Kappeler gflug.org

We are GFLUG—the Greater Florida LEGO Users Group. Because our membership extends throughout the state, our name is meant to encompass all of Florida. Currently, we are the only Registered LUG in our state.

This year we are extremely excited to be celebrating our 20th year together as a LUG. In 2000, our founding member, Robin Werner, had a small LEGO train display set up at a local retail hobby shop, Tent Show & Sale. A couple of other people also said they enjoyed LEGO trains and setting up layouts, and they were talking to a few other friends on LUGNET. Initially, four people got together and formally inaugurated a LEGO Train Club and the Greater Florida LEGO Users Group. Although the original purpose of the club revolved around train layouts, our membership grew to include adult LEGO builders with a diverse skill set and variety of interests from robotics to mosaics.

Our LUG has never strayed far from its original purpose of functioning as an Adult Fan of

LEGO (AFOL) hobby group and to serve as good stewards for the LEGO brand. This simple mission has served our membership well over the years. Our club has remained strong and we have retained many of our long time members. Our members come from a variety of interests and backgrounds—our membership includes several theme park engineers, business leaders, a LEGO model builder, an architect and a few educators. We have more than our fair share of FIRST robotics coaches who enhance our technical capabilities and connect us to our local Makerspaces.

Our membership and project goals grow right along with some of LEGO's product lines. Several of our members are expanding their displays to include lighting, LEGO's Super Heroes and Harry Potter. Our LUG is currently talking about a large collaborative project utilizing Project Support, which would be a first for our Group. Our LUG also primarily appears at large-scale shows and we have discussed the importance of seeking smaller venues and display opportunities without a gate charge to reach a new and different audience.

We keep a very modest budget for our small LUG. It is funded both by membership dues and by revenue generated from our show participation. These funds offset our expenses for club storage of assets, such as tables, stanchions, signage, and playbricks.

Living in Florida, we are starting to recruit new AFOLs who are moving here to retire, so we welcome that pipeline of seasoned AFOLs with large LEGO collections to the sunshine state! We continue to pursue community outreach

opportunities and other ways in which we can share the LEGO brand locally.

COVID-19 has resulted in the cancellation of four shows to date, with two of those being events that would have generated revenue for us to help offset expenses. Several of our members have also experienced being furloughed or permanently laid-off, so we are periodically checking in with everyone online. We've moved our summer meet-ups to Zoom and these have been well-received, especially by those of our members who consistently miss out on weekend meet-ups due to work conflicts. We've also had two month-long build contests to encourage our members to keep active.

Our LUG has a great relationship with TLG and especially our local LEGO Store, which for us is the Flagship Disney Springs store. Our LUG continues to promote the value of the 'Window Into the Community' Display. We have been long-time caretakers of our Window. We would love to see this program reinstated across North America as most families do not travel to a fan convention and a Community Window may be the only opportunity some kids have to see a





large creative LEGO build in person. Because of our positive experience with the Community Window program, GFLUG continues to advocate for its expansion and increased participation by more LBR stores who recognize its impact and the opportunity to connect to their local community and surrounding AFOL fanbase. We are able to track via our social media who finds us as a result of the Window Build. They wind up following us on Facebook where we actively post Store info, PAB wall updates, monthly builds, etc. which generates customers back in to shop LBR.

One thing you may not know about us is that our LUG served as the beta testing ground for what became the popular Brickworld Boat Race. We made decorative boats, innovative boats, fast boats, and boats that sunk, all in an effort to see if this would be a fun doable event.

Our LUG has also been very fortunate to work with TLG and the local Marketing Office on many special events over the years. From helping with Florida LBR openings and building ribbon models, to working on large displays for Star Wars Celebration, they have all been rewarding. One event stands out among the others over the last twenty years, and that was being asked to represent TLG at the Build The Future Event in cooperation with NASA and the last shuttle launch. This once-in-a-lifetime experience was a great weekend with LEGO, building and sharing our love of all things STEM!

Our LUG has faced several economic challenges during the Stay At Home Order(s) in Florida. Right away, we had several members who work in the Theme Park industry who suffered work reduction hours or were furloughed. Other members have

experienced layoffs from their employers as the COVID-19 crisis has not abated this summer and number of cases in Florida have continued to rise.

Our LUG also does 10-12 Public Event Shows a year. It is normally how we socialize as they happen almost every month. With these events postponed indefinitely or cancelled, some of our consistent revenue for 2020 is gone. We did have a cushion, so we are okay financially going into 2021, but it's definitely having an impact as far making any large group project plans or large individual MOC building.

Finding the motivation and resources to keep building is hard. Everyone is challenged during this Pandemic in a different way and we just try and meet all our members where they are in the moment. We offered LUGBULK assistance to anyone who felt they might need to opt out this season. We are doing small building challenges to keep members interested but that aren't too demanding. At each Virtual Meeting, we are raffling LEGO sets and holding drawings. We are finding good ways to stay engaged and sharing and using ideas from other LUGs.

One of the bright spots has been the ability to Meet-Up, virtually. Just like many other LUGs, we are steadily embracing this new format and have seen some distinct benefits. In our first Virtual Meet-Up in April, the majority of the members who participated were individuals we had not seen at a Public Weekend Show for some time. These members have conflicts on weekends for work and family. Our LUG also encompasses the entire state of Florida, which could mean a 5 hour round trip drive to a Meeting for a member. So these new Virtual Meet-Ups are very inclusive and we plan to do more of them, once we determine the easiest Platform for our LUG. We had also welcomed several new members right before the Stay At Home Orders, so Facebook and our Virtual Meetings have allowed us to be active with our newer members.





קבוצת בניי לגו ישראל ISRAEL LEGO USERS GROUP

by Reuven Kawesch

[facebook.com/IsraelLegoUsersGroup/](https://www.facebook.com/IsraelLegoUsersGroup/)

IsraelLUG is one of the newest Recognized Lego Users Groups worldwide, and the first ever in Israel! We would like to introduce ourselves to you: Hispabrick Magazine readers.

We first met almost two years ago, following some discussions on a Hebrew-language facebook group for AFOLs. We knew we wanted to facilitate some physical AFOL interactions, but we weren't sure what else we wanted to do with the LUG. However, pretty quickly we had set up a show for the general public, we were having monthly meetups, and more.

Our members come from across Israel. Most live in the Tel Aviv metropolitan area (which parallels the country's population spread), but we have members from northern and southern Israel too. Our members speak Hebrew, although English is widely spoken among us, in addition to Arabic, French and Spanish. We mostly use our English name since every Hebrew translation we've come up with doesn't have the same rhyme as "IsraelLUG."

Lego requires every Recognized Lego Users

Group (RLUG) to nominate an ambassador, who is the point of contact between the RLUG and The Lego Group. Our ambassador is Reuven Kawesch, who was one of the founders of the LUG. Other than ambassador, we don't have any assigned jobs, but that might change in the future. We are a very democratic group, where every member plays a role. IsraelLUG members have taken on different roles: finding venues for events, maintaining our Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages, marketing our shows, charity outreach and more. We are also looking for new members and everyone is encouraged to help as much or as little as they can.

Our first public show took place on the Passover holiday in April 2019. We really weren't sure what to expect—but it turned out to be great! Ten of

our members displayed MOCs and sets from their collections, and hundreds of people came to see our displays (luckily the venue that hosted us had done some effective advertising).

Since that first show we have continued to grow. We are finding new members in all sorts of ways: on existing facebook groups, through rebrickable and bricklink, and even by chance. One member even googled "Israel Lego" and found us. Activity wise, we had monthly in person meetups, which we have been able to continue online since COVID-19 hit Israel in March. Our original plan was to have two big annual shows, but last year we ended up having four (a good problem to have): Passover, Sukkot, Hanukkah, and Israel Space Week. Each show was larger





COVID-19 has hampered many of our LUG's activities. We haven't had any in-person activities since March, we have already cancelled two planned public shows, and don't know when we will be able to next have one. That said, Zoom and Google Meet have helped us stay in touch with each other. If there's one upside to this pandemic it's that everyone is used to online meetings now, which is good for us since we're physically separated from other LUGs and AFOLs. According to Lego's community finder, the closest RLUG to us is over 1100 kilometers away. Using digital platforms, our members have been able to participate in Lego conventions, have lectures from prominent AFOLs (including HispaBrick Magazine's own Jetro de Château), and even virtually tour the Lego House! Additionally, Corona has definitely made our members' WhatsApp much more active—even our ambassador admits that he has our group on mute.

Our hope for the future is that one day IsraelLUG is a household name—that AFOLs and the community alike look forward to attending our events, and that we are able to be a home for all fans of Lego in Israel. So far we're on the right track—we just need to keep growing and be active!



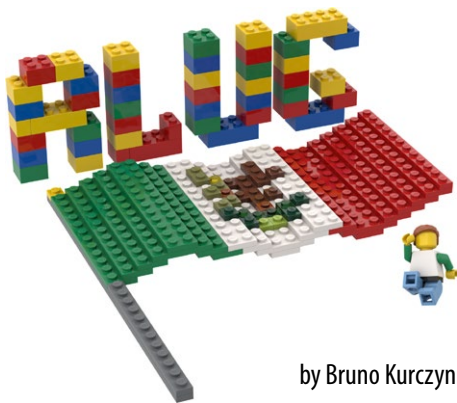
than the previous one, with more LUG members displaying and more members of the public attending. Almost all who visit our shows are impressed and inspired to go home and build something themselves! We also have some play brick for kids to play with at our shows.

Despite our successes so far, we want to find bigger venues that are more geographically diverse, and also join other events: last year our collaboration with Israel Space Week was a great success, we're looking into other possible collaborations including with a local Maker-Faire, the National Parks Service, local childrens' hospitals and more.

Speaking of local childrens' hospitals: we were privileged this year to participate in Fairy Bricks' International Program. For those who don't know, Fairy Bricks is a UK charity that provides free Lego sets to hospitalized children. They were generous enough to ship us three huge cartons full of new

LEGO sets, which we distributed at two hospitals: one in Tel Aviv, and the other in Afula (a small city in northern Israel). This was a particularly rewarding activity for our LUG members who were able to participate.





by Bruno Kurczyn

Hello, my name is Bruno Kurczyn, and I am the ambassador for the RLUG Estado de México. The main idea for our LUG was to create a group of LEGO fans in Mexico, which in its time didn't exist, and to have a place where we could have all the LEGO news and share parts, MOC's, etc. We were also thinking about doing set unboxing and sharing it with the community.

Over time, and with the recognition of LEGO, the club took off with more and more followers. The idea of unboxing was not pursued because of school and work. But the community continues to grow little by little. We share more and more news and the events we have had have also helped. For example, we received an invitation from Warner Bros for the launch of the LEGO Worlds game and from the University of Valle de Mexico, where we are already a regular club that they almost always invite to interact with the students.

There are currently three people working on our website. One is my sister and the other is a friend from university, whom I know from the beginning and they help me to share news about LEGO on the website, coordinate events, etc.

One goal we have is to make the group grow even more, to be able to continue with the idea of unboxing sets to share with the community. Another plan we have is to share a type of inventory of sets and costs from various shops in the city so that fans, in case they are looking for a specific set, can know where it is sold and at what price. In Mexico we don't have LEGO Stores, so they have to be bought from other shops.

My dad was very keen on using TENTE since

he was little and he collected it all his childhood. When I was a kid, my dad used to lend them to me and he started to give me LEGO as a gift/buy it and I've always been a fan. One day while surfing the internet I saw that there were LEGO fan clubs in the world and looking for them in Mexico, there were none, so I decided to create one to have a LUG here in Mexico. Now the community is quite big, it's very participative and that helps a lot to grow.

Covid-19 has had a considerable impact on our community. We had three events scheduled this year and we had an anniversary meeting planned which also had to be postponed. But at the same time it has changed, because it gives us more





time to look for more news or plan better for the future of the community.

Since our community was recognised by LEGO, our relationship with the company has been very good. However, I believe that specifically in Mexico it can improve since it is not possible to have support directly from LEGO, since LEGO here in Mexico has no communication with fans. I would love to be able to establish good contact with LEGO in Mexico and so be able to support us for events or visits, etc.

We have had several curious anecdotes. At our first event we were invited to a YouTube channel that was doing LEGO unboxing and was going to hold an event for the fans. When we arrived, we realised that the fan community in Mexico is huge, we didn't imagine we had so many people. They were expecting 300 people and we had about 4000 people, not including the press.

Another anecdote was that Warner Bros Games contacted me so that we could support them in the launch of the LEGO Worlds video game. They gave us games for the community, we went



to support them in several activities in the city and I was interviewed by several magazines and gamer channels. In turn, they invited me to be part of a project with a Mexican architect, which was to create a perspective of a Zócalo (Mexico City's main square) in a post-apocalyptic world. They asked me for support in order to create this world in the video game to scale. The project was published and it was a unique experience, as a LEGO fan. The video game helped a lot to see the LEGO world in a different way.

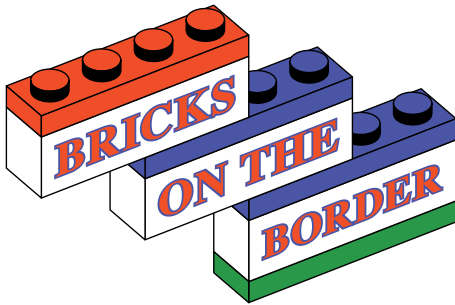
In 2017 we had a competition where you could win several LEGO sets. I seem to remember that they were the Yellow Submarine and the LEGO Worlds game. The competition consisted of designing a logo and the logo with the highest number of votes won. We received six or seven proposals and this was the winner.

Now, because of Covid-19 one of the biggest challenges is that we have not been able to get the team together for planning and strategy. We would get together, brainstorm for events, competitions, etc. What we have done so far since quarantine, is to meet through Teams or Zoom. It's very different to brainstorm in a group in person from a distance but it has worked quite well for us, the team has bonded.

We plan to improve our website, with a more pleasing design and to add a forum. On the facebook page we are planning competitions to build on this community and we are in discussions with a publicist to help grow our community in social networks and thus continue to grow our community.



The Palacio Oriental (above) is the place where every year on the 15th of September the president of Mexico proclaims independence. Together with the metropolitan cathedral (left) they are located in the main square of Mexico City. We created virtual versions with LEGO bricks to include them in LEGO Worlds.



by Geoffrey Reid, Bricks on the Border™ Inc. Club Secretary and RLUG Ambassador

[facebook.com/bricksontheborder/](https://www.facebook.com/bricksontheborder/)

The name of our LEGO® community is Bricks on the Border™ Inc. or BOBLUG, and as an Australian LEGO club on the border of Victoria and New South Wales, in the twin cities of Albury-Wodonga, we thought it would be a fitting name for our club.

The origins of our LEGO club started in 2015 when like-minded AFOLs found each other at 'Inside the Brick'—a Melbourne based company holding a LEGO exhibition in Albury-Wodonga for the first time. We started with three members who have a passion for building with LEGO and we now have over twenty active members who build in all sorts of LEGO themes. We hold two general LEGO exhibitions at the MYER department store and attend Australia's biggest LEGO exhibition 'Brickvention' in Melbourne each year. We also run several minor LEGO displays at other events in regional Victoria and New South Wales.

Our LEGO club was organising its own major LEGO exhibition 'Brick Muster™' in October 2020 but due to the COVID-19 crisis we had no option but to postpone the event for everyone's safety.

Achieving RLUG status in 2018 gave us a huge lift and sense of pride to be more closely involved with The LEGO Group. As the clubs RLUG Ambassador, I find LAN to be an especially useful tool for keeping up to date with all things LEGO-related which I can then relay to our community members. We are being proactive with other LEGO communities and media to promote the

hobby and engage AFOLs and the viewing public at exhibitions and community meet-ups.

The Bricks on the Border team consists of five committee members, three of whom are founding members and the driving force behind our club. Gus Terry (President) is a keen builder and collector who collaborates on LEGO projects with Matthew Fankhauser (Events Co-ordinator). Their latest MOC is a Medieval Castle which was on display at 'Brickvention' 2020. Geoffrey Reid (Secretary & RLUG Ambassador) is a LEGO custom builder of TV & Movie MOCs as well as a builder of local Albury-Wodonga iconic buildings and



landmarks. Peter Fartuszynski (Vice President) loves building with LEGO Technic, and built a replica of the historic Beechworth Bakery where he works as a pastry chef. And Neil Strachan (Treasurer) is a passionate builder of LEGO train layouts. Many of our other members build and create awesome LEGO MOCs and are immensely proud of their achievements.

Some of the highlights of our club's history would, for me, be going to Brickvention 2020 in Melbourne for the first time. Being in a wheelchair, it has always been a difficult task travelling to other places. While there I displayed my 'MALCOLM' Film MOC which caught the attention of Ryan McNaught (AKA The Brickman), host of LEGO Master Australia. I also got to meet up with other AFOLs and RLUG Ambassadors over the weekend, and it was awesome to see everyone in person for the first time since all

my prior interactions had been online. While at Brickvention I spoke to a gentleman from Fairy Bricks UK who told me about how they donate LEGO sets to children's wards in England and how they wanted to bring this joy to other parts of the world, so I said count us in, and they did just that. With a generous donation of LEGO sets from Fairy Bricks UK, our club presented them to the Albury Base Hospital Paediatric Ward. It was such a good feeling to be able to do this.


The COVID-19 crisis has had a devastating effect on our LEGO community, as we have not been able to hold exhibitions and club meetings or attend other events. But being a resilient bunch we have soldiered on and held club meetings online and communicated with other LEGO communities to bolster the morale of all our LEGO friends.

We held a few building competitions online for our members, and even put together a LEGO COVID-19 stimulus package of sets for our members to build during self-isolation. Our main source of funding is through raffles of LEGO sets at our events and sponsorship from local businesses, but for now that revenue stream has dried up and we still have overheads like insurance, government fees and other costs.

Once this crisis is over all our LEGO communities will be back bigger and better than ever in 2021, ready to recommence our LEGO exhibitions and bring joy to the viewing public.

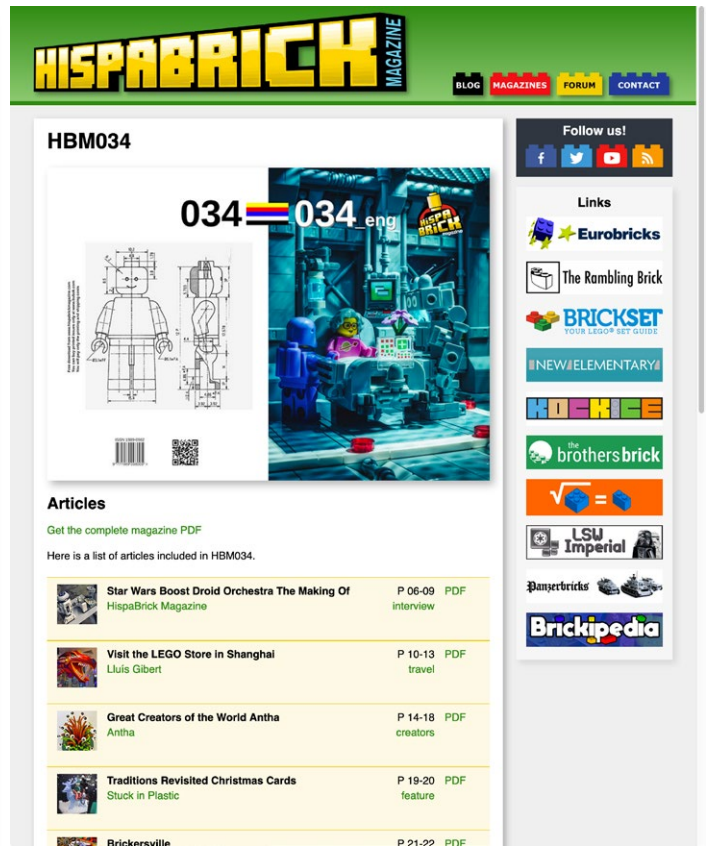


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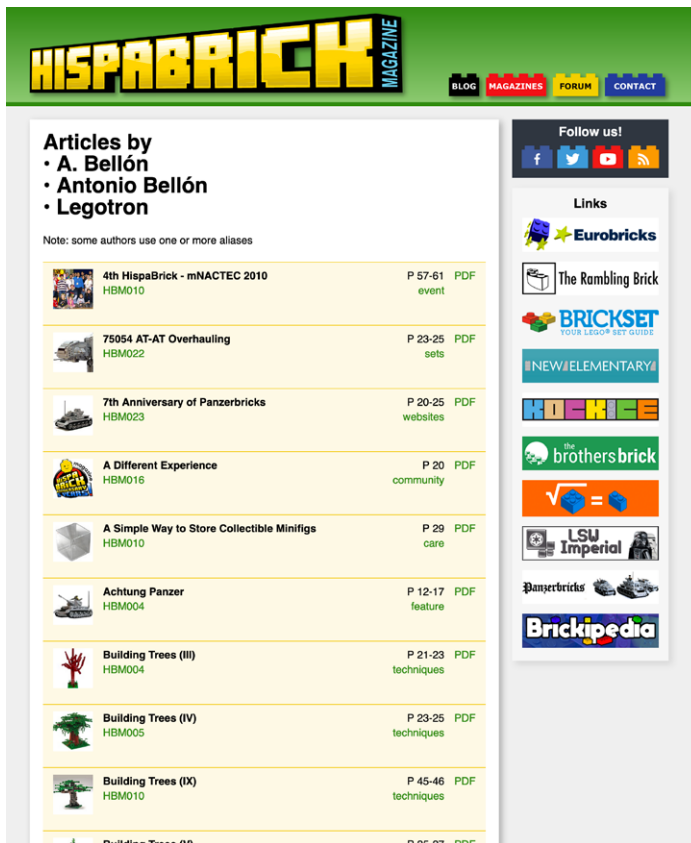
The  hispabrickmagazine.com website now provides access to all Spanish and English issues in a new format. You can now view entire issues or individual articles and sort and view by issue, author, and article type. Let us know what you think!



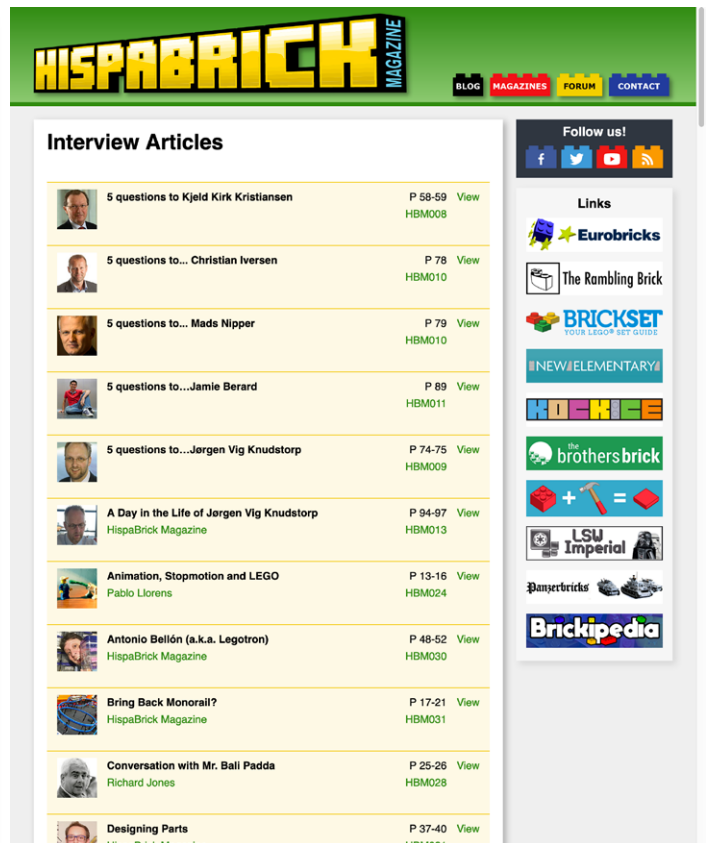
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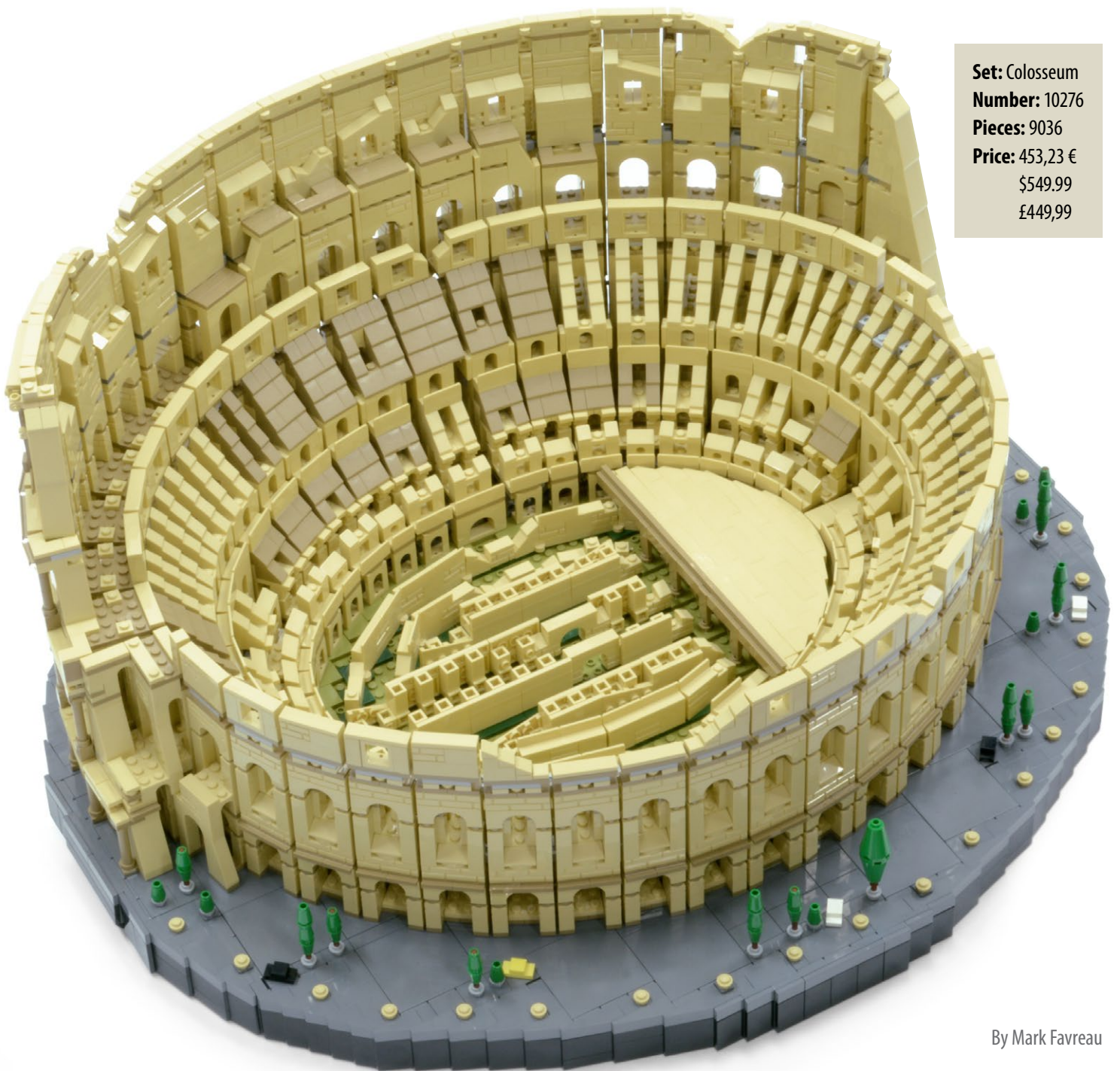
REVIEW 10276



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.

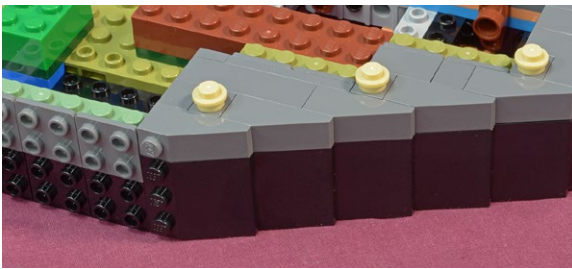
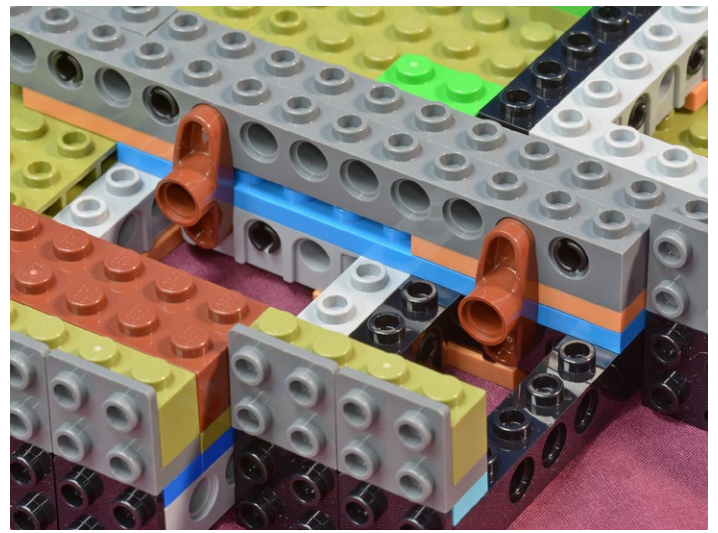
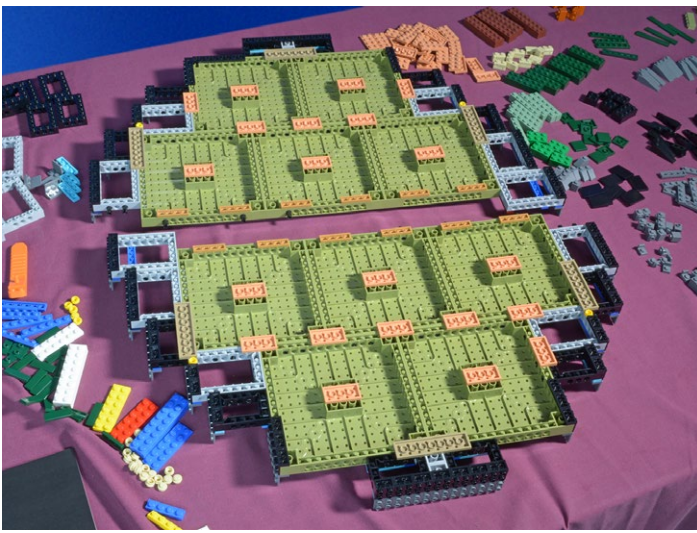
It was evident that the package designer had their act together. Against a black background was the image of the SPQR Colosseum framed along the bottom by the brick-yellow greebling. The image and title gloss varnished against the matte of the black and the greebling. Exquisite.

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.

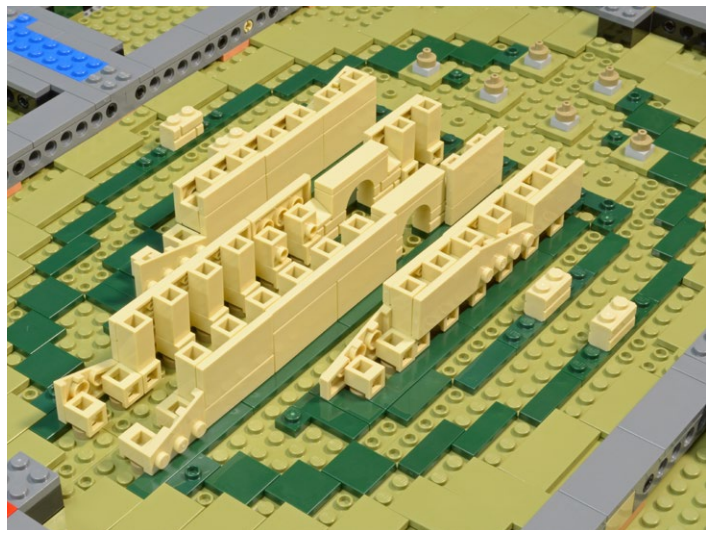
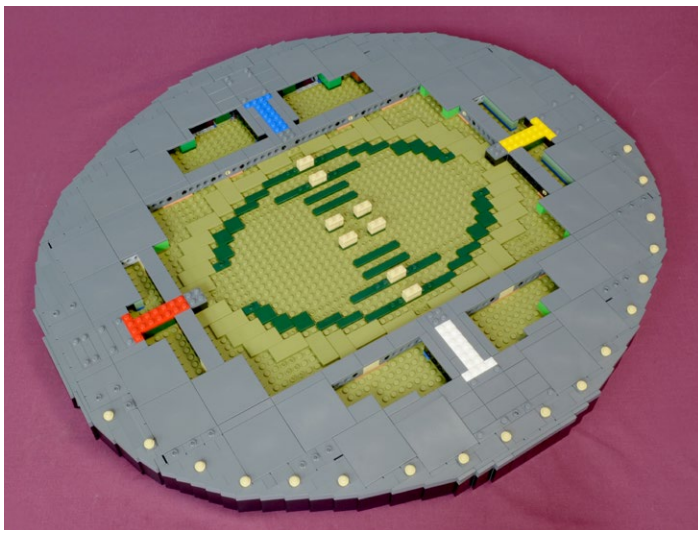
The I instruction manual starts out with a welcome message, photos, drawings, and some information about the actual colosseum. The I instruction manual also contains the parts reference for the set. Your humble author would also like to recognize LEGO's decision to include an entire page of the manual 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.

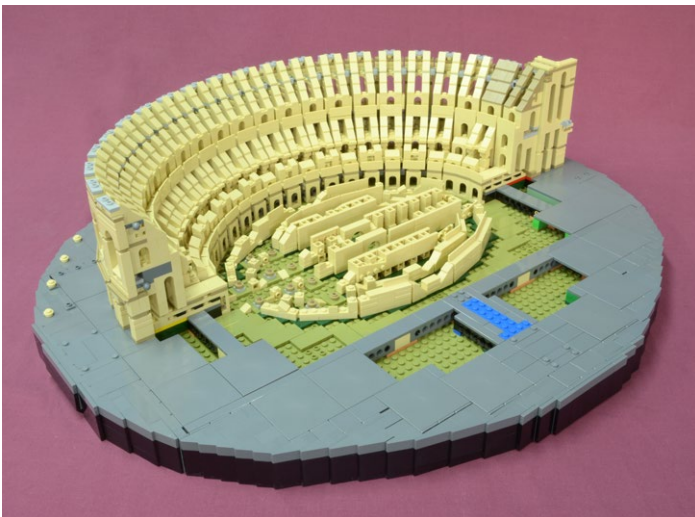
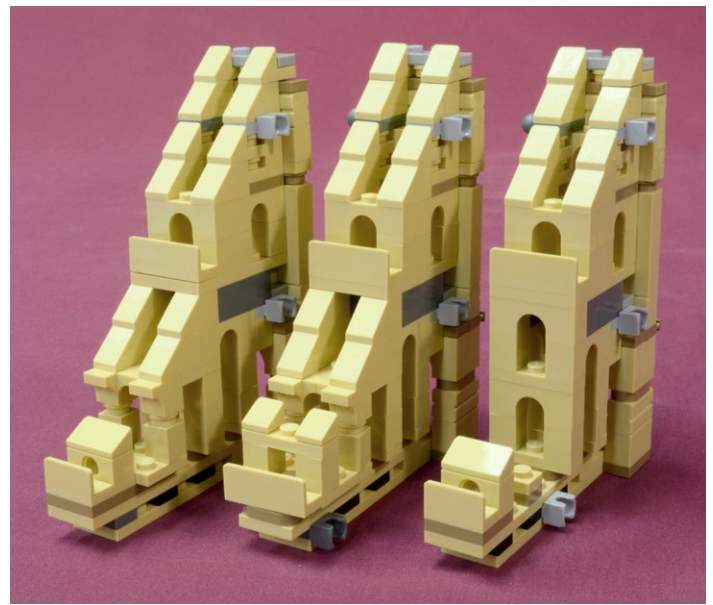
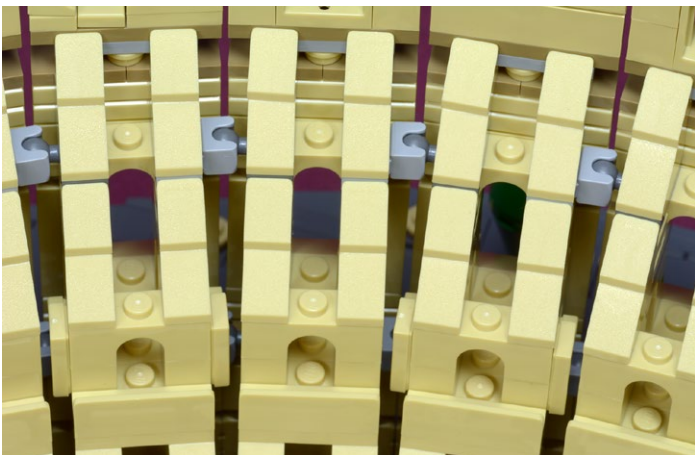
Bag 6 are effectively a repeat of Bags 5 from

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

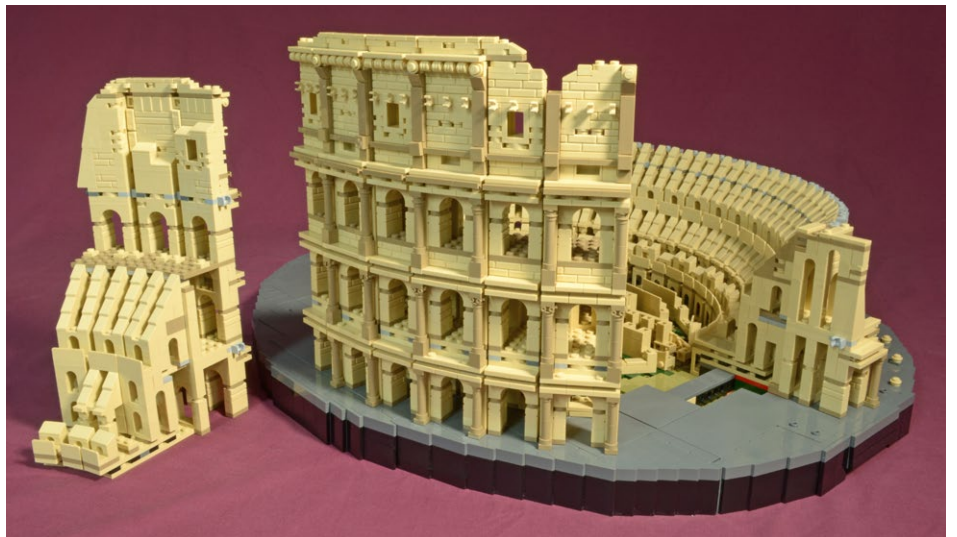
and 3794 1 x 2 jumpers. We often see angle plates and angle bricks used in builds to create "roundness" but the overall effect here is created exclusively with 90-degree corner parts. There are only six small angle plate in this entire 9036-part build, and those are used as wall fragments in the center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

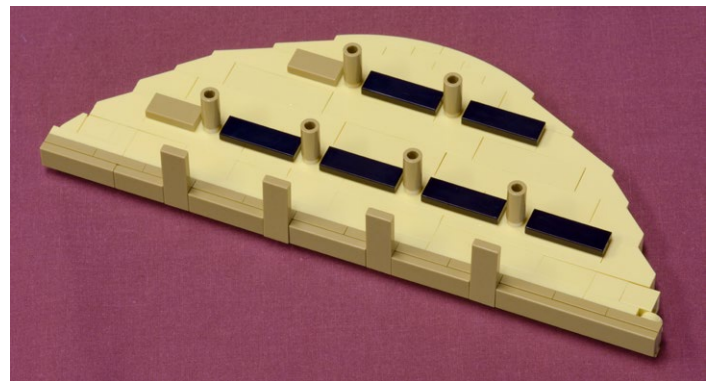
Bags 21 through 28 contain parts for the north wall sections. Bag 21 is the north center-fixed section. Bags 22 through 28 continue the section assembly counter-clockwise from the north center section.

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.

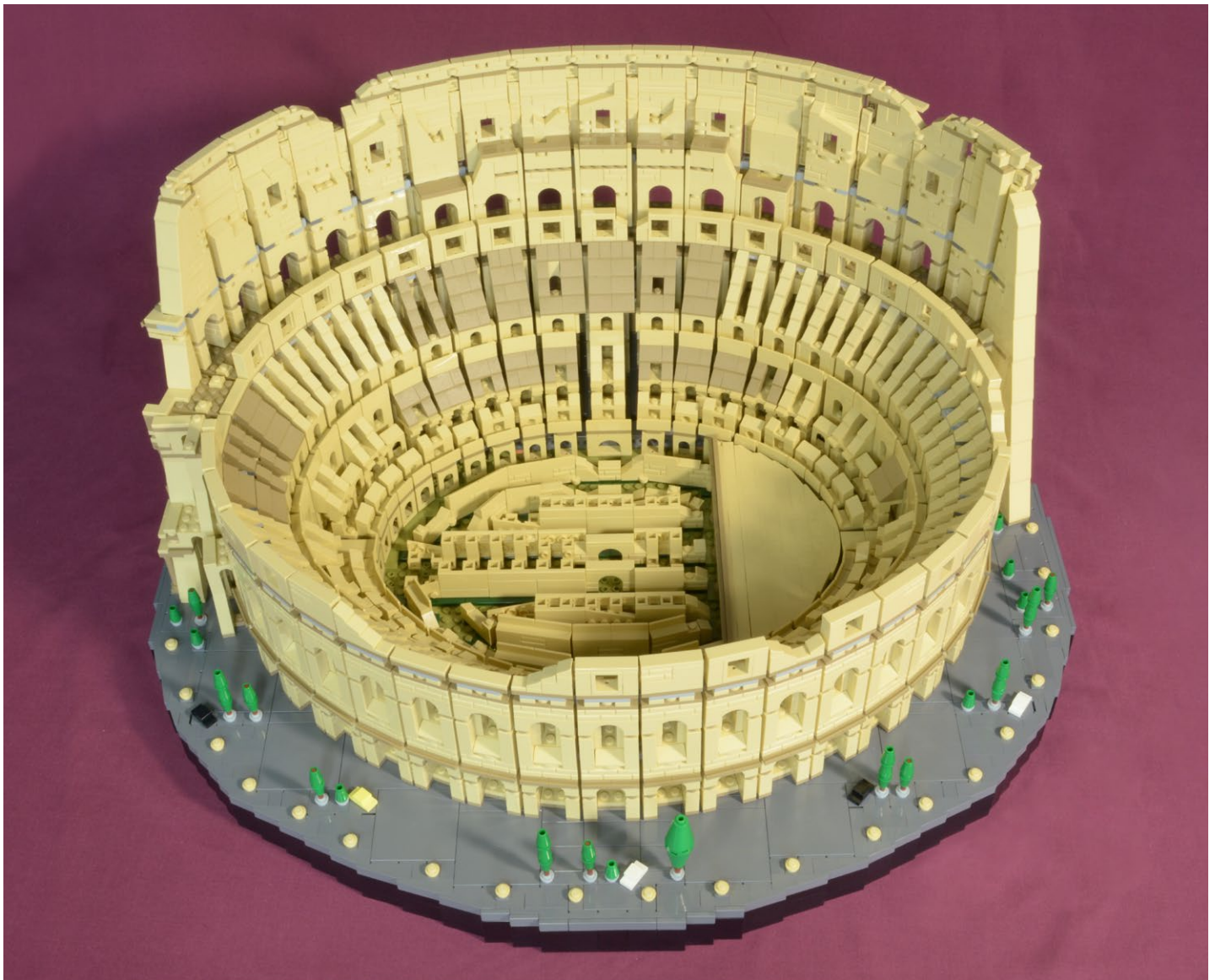
Bag 39 contains "final touch" pieces, window sections that crown the lower oval section. **Bag 40** contains pieces to build the partial arena floor and decorative elements that adorn the plaza. The arena floor is a little tricky to align and set in place as one has to perfectly align the holes of the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

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.

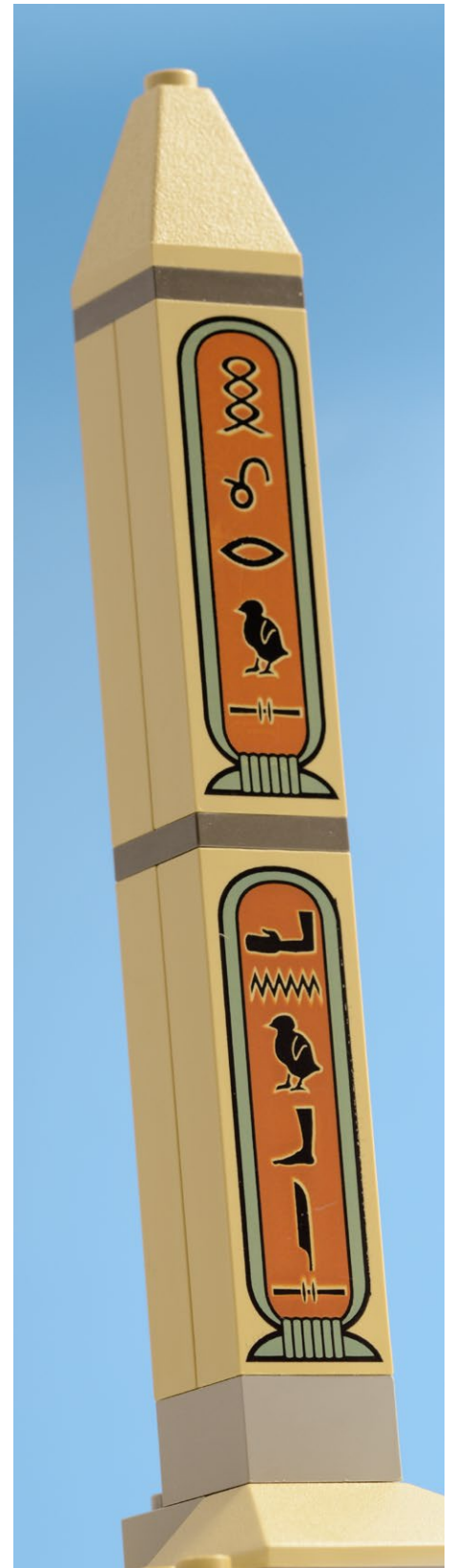


The Heads of Anubis

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?? 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.



DOTS
41904
pictures and text:
Muriel

Animal Picture Holders

Set: Animal Picture Holders
Pieces: 423
Minifigs: 0
Number: 41904
Price: 14.61 €

In this review, we will talk about set 41904 of the new dots line. As far as I can tell from various websites, this new line that appeared in 2020 dates from approximately the same time as the film "The LEGO Movie 2" (early 2019), but was finally launched in March this year. The animal picture holder is designed for children aged six and over.

Packaging

The product is packed in a stackable tray with six holes on the sides and a larger central hole. On the negative side, the way the tray is made it does not seem to be able to be stacked safely, as it does not fit into the bottom of another tray, even though a grand stud has been moulded into the transparent lid. On the positive side, the inside of the compartments has been

manufactured with angled inner edges, i.e. the angle between the base and the sides is more than 90 degrees, so that if you try to slide a part out of the compartment it doesn't get stuck

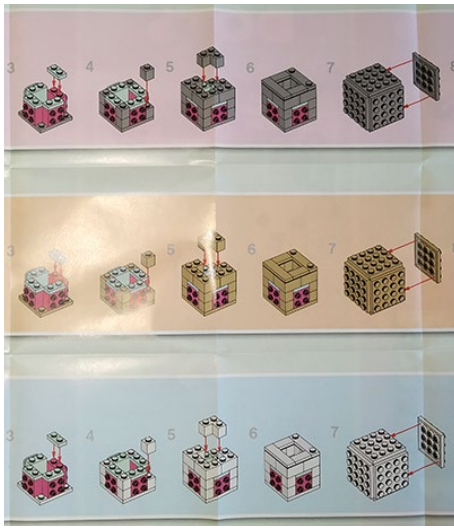


inside. This makes it much easier to play with these small pieces. I don't know if LEGO should sell these trays, since as I said before they cannot be safely stacked.

Construction

The set allows you to build three photo frames in the shape of cubes. The structure of the cubes is exactly the same in all three and only the colours change, as does the face of the pet. The construction reminds me of Brickheadz sets, but obviously without a body. The sides and back of the cubes are left to the imagination of the child or adult builder, as in the instructions themselves you can see some images of designs to inspire





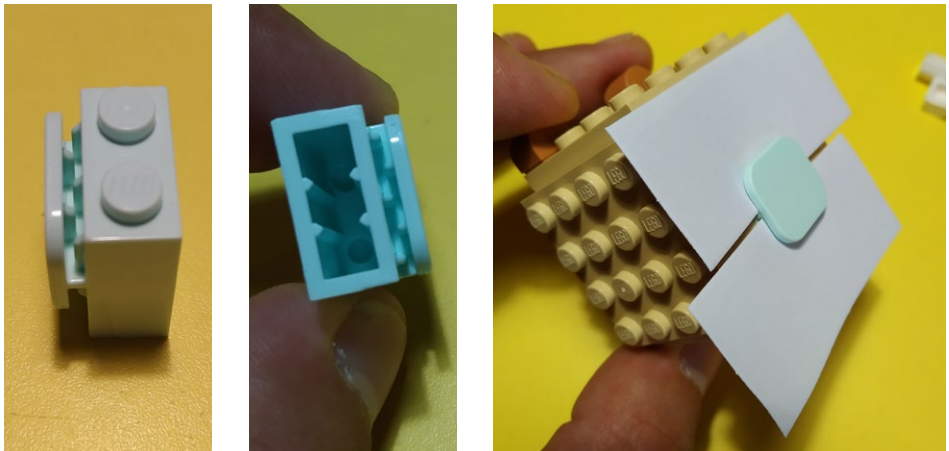
[flickr.com/photos/muriel_lego/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/muriel_lego/)



young and old, but not the steps to make them. This allows for infinite possibilities and maximum creativity. The negative aspect of these cubes is that there is hardly any room inside, but they give a good idea of how to make one on your own with greater capacity if you want to. Once the three cubes are finished, we can decorate them with the amount of tiles and pieces at our disposal and create a lot of possibilities.

Novelty

In this set we get a novelty in the form of a new piece. On BrickLink it appears as reference 37452 modified 1 x 2 x 2 with paper/photo holder. We will see how we can integrate this piece into our MOCs and dioramas. The good thing is that it not only has one position to insert the photo, that is, you can insert two images and not just one as it appears in the images on the packaging. This makes it possible to use these pieces in some construction with snot techniques. For example, to be able to use flags, capes or any other similar LEGO element.



Conclusion

The faces of the pets are surprising because of their unmistakable design, as you can tell at a glance which animals they are, and with only a few pieces on a 4 x 4 plate!

For those builders who like lots of colourful pieces, whether for making mosaics, for themes like Friends or simply for any fun and colourful construction, LEGO Dots is an ideal theme.

We would like to thank LEGO for providing this set for review. The public opinions expressed in this review are mine alone, therefore LEGO neither approves nor supports them.



2014 LEGO® FRIENDS MINIDOLLS

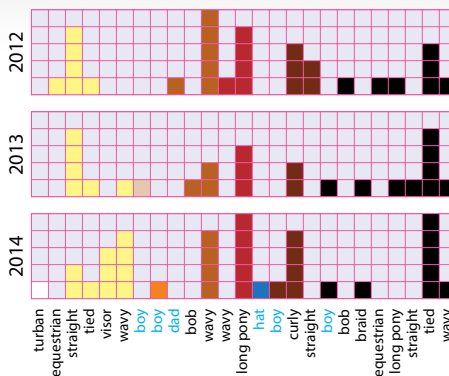
story and photos by Claire Kinmil brickomotion.com



The minidolls first appeared in 2012 with the LEGO Friends theme. The dolls lived in Heartlake City and consisted mainly of girls wearing bright summery clothes and smiling faces. In 2013 the theme continued the trend. Only in 2014 do we see the first noticeable changes to the dolls. The biggest is that the minidolls also became Disney Princesses in their own theme. Hurray for them and us! However, here we'll solely focus on what changed and what stayed the same regarding the new 36 Friends dolls.

The five main Friends characters—Emma, Stephanie, Olivia, Andrea, and Mia—remain the five main characters. You can recognize them by their face and hair. Their faces obviously don't change, because they're happy with the polite smiles. Why would they ever want to express any other emotion?

Hair/Hat Distribution



Their hair pieces are a slightly different matter. For a character, they never change color, but they do morph into other styles. In 2014, Stephanie pulled her hair into a ponytail and put on a visor on three occasions. That's the biggest hair related change and it doesn't seem big until you consider

an avid LEGO Friends fan. If you started collecting the sets in 2012, by 2014 you were guaranteed to have multiples of several hair pieces. At that point, every change is a welcome one.

In 2012 and 2013 the main girls were careful to never wear the same shirt another main friend wore. In 2014 they apparently stopped caring. Both Olivia and Stephanie can be seen in the same stripy green shirt Mia wore the year before. Shocking, I know. At least they remembered to put on different skirts. That averted a complete scandal and showcased how versatile a shirt can be.

2014 gave us a record breaking four male figures. If that sounds low, you are correct, it is. But the previous two years combined put out three male minidolls. As I said, record breaking.

With regard to skin color, not much has changed: 28 Light Nougat, zero Nougat, and





eight Medium Nougat skin colored dolls. This ratio is in accordance with the previous years. It's interesting to note that to this point in time, there are only 3 different Medium Nougat and ten Light Nougat faces. Ten of which are female and three male. All of them are smiling.

The only adult, Sophie, has also the only new face printing this year. Sophie's enjoying her day off in a shopping mall spa with a face mask on.

Although the dolls primarily wear summery clothes, a Summer subtheme emerged in 2013 and continued into 2014. It focused on giving the girls swimsuits. And when I say swimsuit, I mean the torso has a swimsuit print and the legs have a wraparound skirt or short pants. Even with such low criteria for a bathing outfit, not every main friend got one during these two years. To get all five to the beach, you would need to wait till 2017 if you aren't too picky, and till 2019 if you are.

The most significant changes to the dolls came from the new subtheme Jungle Rescue. The girls and boys helped rescue various animals from the local jungle. For that, they had to dress in earthy tones the likes of which Heartlake City has never seen before.

I'll use my LEGO color ellipse to demonstrate the differences. In the prior years, the earthy



triangles were completely devoid of any plastic, now they are not.

The color distribution changes were apparently innovative enough for the minidolls to omit any new clothing moulds. Or, all of the moulding capabilities were used up on the skirt and tail moulds in the Disney Princess line.

The only warm clothes were included in the advent calendar. As usual, the two minidolls are a main friend and a friend's friend. The novelty in 2014 is that Stephanie already wore Mia's torso in



2013. In the previous years, both advent calendar torso prints were unique.

2014 is the year when the Friends first added earthy tones to their wardrobe. Alongside all of the clothes from the previous years, that added a lot of variety to their possible outfits. However, their winter department was still almost non-existent, and their emotional palette was lacking everything but friendly smiles. I guess that after three years, we can stop calling these flaws bugs, and start calling them features.

CITY 2020



by Lluís Gibert

One more year we will analyse some CITY sets from 2020, to take the pulse of the line.

I could say there is “nothing new under the sun”. Policemen, firemen and vehicles. But there is something new and worrying in my opinion:

Juniorisation: I see the police station and I notice simplicity, too much. The construction site looks empty. Four walls (well 3) and something inside. And I think the problem is in the 4 walls. There is nothing that makes the building “nice”. Straight lines, simple, square. . .

Too much emphasis on vehicles and not enough on buildings. I think many of us were looking forward to seeing the new service station. And when the first images arrived. . .the great

disappointment. A fuel pump post and a tiny shop, which doesn't even have a roof. And what to say about the sign announcing the gas station. . . Honestly, it's something a five-year-old could have designed.

The same happens with other sets, such as the one that reproduces the bank robbery, which is again three simple walls with something inside. The Monster truck is bigger than the bank, which barely has a table, a chair and some safety boxes.

Although it is true that some vehicles are interesting, such as the ice cream truck or the street sweeper, what I see is that too much importance is given to vehicles, and little (or very little) importance is given to buildings. I don't know if the CITY team has many designers of vehicles and few (or none) of buildings, but the reality is that there is a decline in the line that

is beginning to remind me of times that I prefer to forget.

I will end the introduction with another comment, perhaps more local, but which I fear may happen in more markets and which alienates potential buyers: price. Two of the sets I will comment on below are 25% more expensive in Spain than in countries where the economy works better. As a customer, I would feel cheated paying 25 €, for example, for the helicopter set 60248, which we will also see doesn't fly. There is hardly any building work and if the recommended price in Germany (20 €) already seems to me to be too high, the 25 € price in Spain is simply an insult. In general, many prices in Spain are above the European average and this only scares off potential parents as it gives the impression that it is becoming a toy for the rich.



First semester

We are going to see three sets with vehicles from this first semester, since I did not consider any of the sets with buildings interesting enough.

60248 • Fire Helicopter Response

When I saw the first images of the set, I was very curious about it. A helicopter that flies! I had had a toy like this as a child, and I was interested to see how it worked. The reality? It doesn't fly.

The helicopter consists of four pieces: a one-piece chassis, the front glass, the propeller and the tail made of a plastic sheet. Only one minifig fits inside the helicopter.

The set includes a quad and a small accessory.

In flight tests, with the strength of an adult, the helicopter falls to the ground. Although it falls "on its feet", in my opinion it does not meet expectations. The problem lies in the size of the propellers. The diameter is too small and no matter how fast they turn, they do not generate enough lift to fly for a couple of seconds.

60251 • Monster Truck

It seems that LEGO likes monster trucks, as we have had many types over the last few years. This one complements the one launched in 2014 (60055). I was surprised by the colour scheme, which coincides more with the Hidden Side theme than with CITY.

The construction is quite simple, and does not present a great challenge even for a young child. The model, once assembled, looks great. It has no special function and it is missing a ramp or some accessory to create an obstacle.

It is an eye-catching vehicle, and the advantage is that, even if it does not have any accessories, with these large wheels it can go over any obstacle that is built with four slopes that we have at home.



60256 • Racing Cars

This set includes two racing cars. In my opinion, one of them is the complement to set 60053 (Le Mans 24-hour car), and the other is the complement to set 60113 (Rally car). I think it is good that they have put both cars in one box, as it provides more possibilities of building and creating alternative models than with just one car.

In this case the vehicles are quite well made. They have beautiful lines, inspired by real racing cars. The colours are also nice, different from the typical "Octan" green, and red. In fact, in the endurance car we find the Octan logo with a new colour scheme, read cyan and orange, which corresponds to the electric car division, or Octan-e.

To put a but, in the resistance car I see that at the back of the front wing there is a gap. I don't know if it's a budget issue but the car looks incomplete to me. It lacks something. Regarding the rally car, I have to say that the car is nice, but the air intake completely covers the view to the driver, and it looks a bit strange.



Second Semester

You know from other articles I have written that the second semester usually offers us different sets than vehicles, police and firemen. In the past we have seen subjects such as the airport, the farm, mining, underwater exploration, space. . .

This year we have had a pleasant surprise in the form of collaboration with National Geographic on a series of ocean exploration sets. According to the press release, "New LEGO® City and LEGO® Friends sets have been developed to raise awareness about exploring and protecting endangered species in the world's forests and oceans."

60266 • Ocean Exploration Ship

This set is the star of the theme, a large ocean exploration boat, with many accessories that allow children to recreate a whole underwater exploration adventure. These include: a bathysphere, a wreck, a cage for swimming with sharks, a shark, a manta ray and several divers.

The boat's hull is made up of two U-shaped halves joined together, leaving a hole in the centre of the boat. This allows you to put the bathysphere or shark cage in the water using the crane on the boat. It also has a hold to store the bathysphere, a heliport, a crane and a complete navigation bridge, with the wheelhouse, a scientific laboratory with sonars and an adjacent meeting room, and well a room with two beds.

There are also interesting details such as fish tanks in the different rooms and a shark that can eat a minifig. The mould has existed since agents 2008, although it now has a different printed decoration. There is also a manta ray, which is a new mould. The wreck is small, but it simulates the remains of the stern of a wooden ship with some gold ingots inside.

The crane can be moved along the entire length of the hole in the centre of the hull, allowing it to take the bathysphere from the hold and put it in the water.

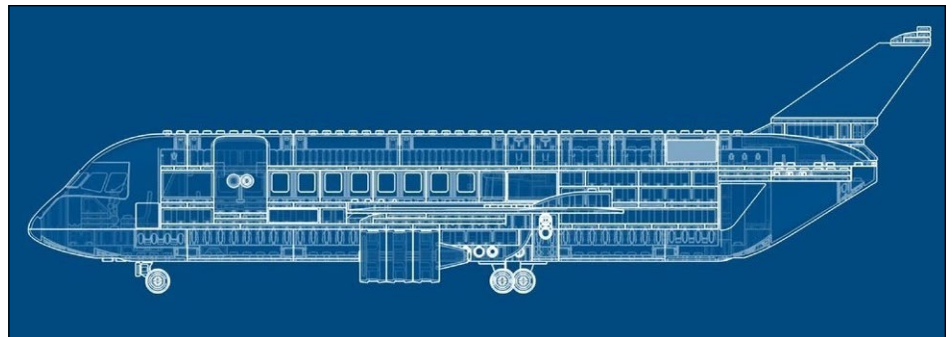
The set contains 8 minifigures, including divers, the captain and a character linked to the LEGO CITY TV series. I am surprised that there are still five men and three women, when they could perfectly have made it four and four.

It's a very playable set, and if you put it together with the rest of the sets in the line you can build a complete and very realistic underwater world.





Terminal from set 60104



60262 • Passenger airplane

The last set I will look at is the new airliner. It follows the line of the latest passenger planes, in terms of massive size, and also includes new parts that allow the plane to be one brick taller than the previous ones.

The plane has a small passenger cabin, which fits three minifigs. Behind this cabin there is a service cabin, with a receptacle to store the luggage, the area to park the cabin service trolleys, and a toilet. Also, as a novelty, at the back of the wing, there is a storage area where a sports car is loaded.

I have to say that there is a major design flaw, although it is easily solvable. The landing gear is so low, that it does not allow the plane to take off. While the design of the aircraft is very good, I think they could have spent a few pieces (I think no more than six-eight bricks) on a landing gear that would allow for more realistic behaviour.

The ground support vehicle is small and includes a trailer for the car that is loaded in the hold. This trailer has a mechanism to lift the car to the height of the cargo bay. There is also a basic access ladder to the plane.

There are nine minifigures, two of which are related to the TV series. I find it hard to

understand why LEGO CITY needs a TV series to support it, but it may be of another generation and I don't understand that today, without TV there is no product. In any case, I think this dependence on a TV series is a pity.

The set includes a small terminal. And this is where my reticence about the set comes from. Returning to what I said at the beginning of the article, I think that the airport is insufficient. The set is sold as a passenger plane, the terminal is a mere accessory. But it is too basic a terminal. In 2016 we had set 60104, which included an aircraft, support vehicles and a decent terminal. The set had 694 pieces for 99 €. The new plane has 669 pieces for the same price, and we get a much smaller terminal. The importance of the buildings is decreasing dramatically in the CITY line, both in terms of design and in terms of their decreasing size. I am also surprised that the planes are getting bigger and bigger. I don't know what homes are like in other countries, but in the case of Spain, many of us live in flats that are not very big and a plane of this size hardly fits into a child's room and you don't know where to put it. I'm not saying that four-stud aircraft are the solution, but maybe six-stud aircraft, like the 3181, would be

the perfect balance between size, construction without huge parts (like the wings) and detail.

Conclusion

Overall, I find CITY 2020 disappointing. Too many vehicles, way too many. Very simple buildings, not enough detail and endless repetitions of the same topics. The only breath of fresh air is the collaboration with National Geographic, where we can find detailed and newer sets.

It is a pity that CITY is taking this turn and that, somehow, it is making some of the mistakes of the late 90's again. And I'm not a romantic who thinks that the 80's were better (well, a little). You only need to look at the CITY sets from 2008-2014 to see that you can do things right with current, market-oriented designs. I hope that there will be some reflection within LEGO and that they manage to recover a "core" theme for the company, which should continue to be a "flagship" for the LEGO, instead of so much licensing.

I would like to thank LEGO for providing the sets for review. The opinions expressed are mine alone.

TOP MOC microbuilds



Sergio Rojas (AKA: Brickolaje), Chile

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/sergiorojas/>

My beginnings were when I was a very young child (approximately five years old) and in those times what mattered were the stories that one was creating with more imagination than bricks, with ideas more than shapes but with the passage of time interests change and pieces were saved. Then, older, around 2009 was when I rediscovered the hobby by seeing the neat work of Tyler C, Nannan Z, Chris McV and so many more.

◆ 6396 *International Jetport*, March 2018



Johan Alexanderson (A.K.A Jalex), Sweden

<https://www.instagram.com/legobyjalex/>

I built a lot with LEGO as a kid, but like many other AFOLs I gradually stopped building in my teens when I found other interests, and so I went into my 'Dark Age'. About 15 years later, in 2011, I had a very stressful time in my life where I felt I needed something to relax with. So I pulled out my old LEGO bricks and started building again. I enjoy building MOCs in all kinds of genres, but I specifically like creating larger realistic looking rooms with a 70s or 80s interior design.

◆ 381 *Police Headquarters*

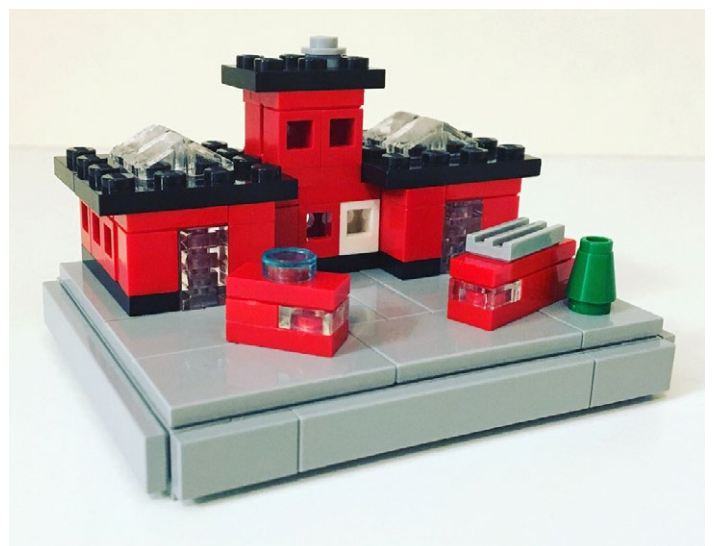


Jme Wheeler (AKA: Klikstyle), USA

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/klikstyle/>

I got started with LEGO® a long time ago as a kid. LEGO gives you the unique opportunity to take your old sets and turn them into something new, and that aspect of it has kept me building ever since.

◆ 6378 *Service Station*, February 2018



Olle Goto (AKA: le_goto), Sweden

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/53719076@N05/>

I started as a child around five years old. Restarted when my own child started to build.

◆ 6382 *Fire Station*, February 2018



Adeel Zubair, United Kingdom

👉 <https://www.adeelzubair.com/>

Initially I started as a child with the traditional bricks as most do at this age, the first specific set I remember owning was 4753 Sirius Black's Escape. Several years later I stumbled upon a Christmas 2009 Catalogue and was amazed by all the diverse product lines at the time, specifically LEGO Star Wars. Today I exclusively build MOCs; for me the bricks are a form of art; I've taken what I've learned from their products and AFOL community to enrich the lives of children/adults globally through my inner child.

📌 70620 Ninjago City



Timothy Ng, Hong Kong

👉 <https://www.facebook.com/Timothymoc/>

I started LEGO when I around twelve. In Hong Kong we get the small set when buy milk powder. Sound interesting, then I have dark age during 20 something. I go back to Lego when I go to business trip in USA, when I see the train set 4512. After I bought it, I also start MOC in that period.

📌 10247 Ferris Wheel, March 2018

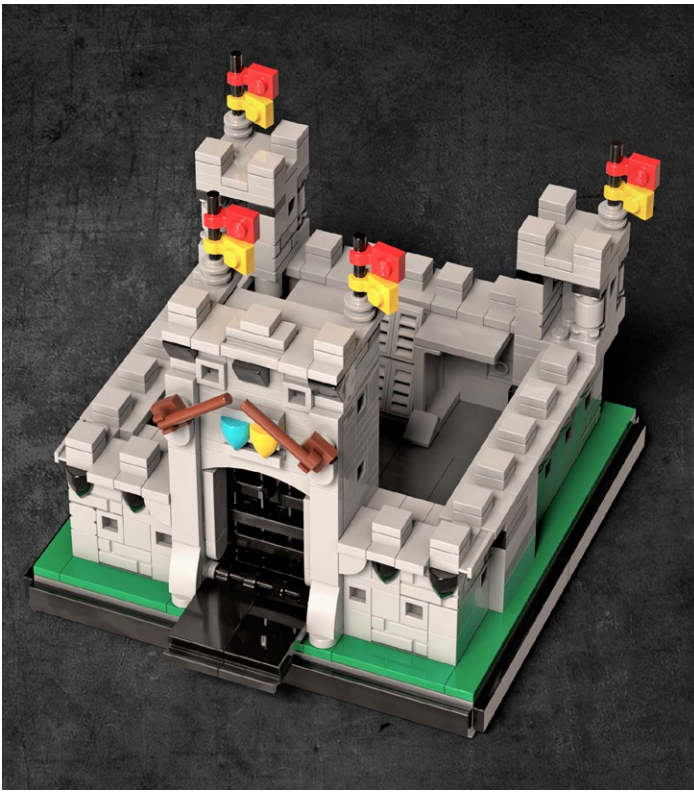


Nicolas Kolbeck, Germany

👉 <https://www.flickr.com/photos/156747181@N05/>

I don't know exactly—LEGO has kind of always been in my life. One of my favourites was no doubt the first Harry Potter line. I took a break from buying new LEGO during my teenage years, but the modular buildings got me back into it. At the age of 21, I started getting into MOCs. Fortunately this was very easy since I had never sold any of my old LEGO. I work with computers a lot, so building LEGO is my way to switch off and do something creative with my real hands.

📌 10217 Diagon Alley, March 2018



César (AKA: Corvus Auriac MOCs), Spain

👉 https://www.instagram.com/corvus_auriac/

I used to play with LEGOs as a child like all children, but I left them at twelve or so until 2017, which gave me to download the LDD and try, so I designed a few things and people began to ask me for orders and I already started designing regularly, so I've basically been at this for 3 years.

📌 6080 King's Castle, December 2018



Unijob Lindo, Portugal

👉 <https://www.flickr.com/photos/unijob/>

I think it all started a long time ago, when I was very young and my mother got me a small Lego set as a present after a long hospital stay. It was a tiny set with a Majisto minifig, that blue wizard from the now old Dragon Masters/Castle theme. I guess I just kept collecting from there. I still have fond memories of the Fright Knights, Ice Planet 2002, Johnny Thunder and all those Lego themes/characters from the nineties.

📌 6097 Night Lord's Castle, 2018



Michał Piotrewicz, Poland

👉 <https://www.flickr.com/photos/156847189@N02/>

I have been hooked on LEGO ever since I got my first set as a kid around 1990 (the tiny yet magnificent 6506: Precinct Cruiser—I still have it by the way).

Since then I never really stopped building :)

📌 6086 Black Knight's Castle, March 2018



Letranger Absurde, Rumania

👉 <https://www.flickr.com/photos/vitreolum/>

My interest in building was reignited when I decided to sort my childhood collection to sell it—instead of what I intended, I ended up doing the exact opposite. For a while I only collected sets, but after discovering the MOCing community, I decided to try my hand at building my own models and haven't looked back since.

📌 6769 Fort LEGOREDO, December 2018

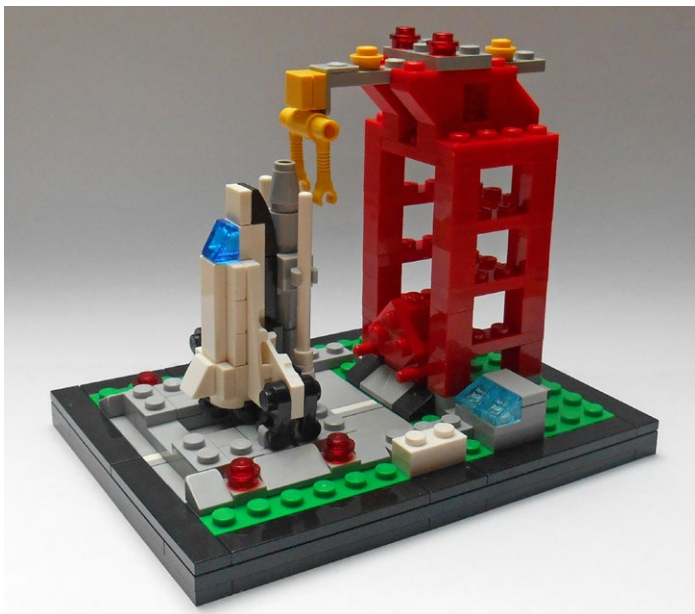


Nilton Pereira (AKA: militiadesign), Portugal

👉 <https://www.flickr.com/photos/153037453@N08/>

I started with Lego in the early 80's, when I was three. My mother really encouraged me and my parents would buy me smaller sets. I remember having a few Space and Fabuland sets, but I was more into City sets. I grew up during the golden age of LEGO, and at age six I was already building bigger sets on my own, like the Service Station 6371, the Police Station 6386 or the Airport 6392. In the 90's we moved countries and I didn't have easy access to new LEGO sets. The last big ones I got were Intercoastal Seaport 6541 and Holiday Home with Caravan 6388, which is still one of my favourite LEGO sets ever, and also part of the reason why I built it in microscale.

📌 6388 *Holiday Home with Caravan*, February 2018



Peter Šácha (AKA: Bafisko), Slovakia

👉 <https://www.flickr.com/photos/157648979@N08/>

I started with LEGO bricks as a kid, when I was playing with my uncle's old LEGO, which was set 722 mixed with some space sets and other bricks. Unfortunately "Dark Ages" appeared in my life too. I became AFOL after I bought LEGO Collectible Minifigures Series 7, which brings me back and LEGO started to be my main hobby.

📌 6339 *Shuttle Launch Pad*, February 2018

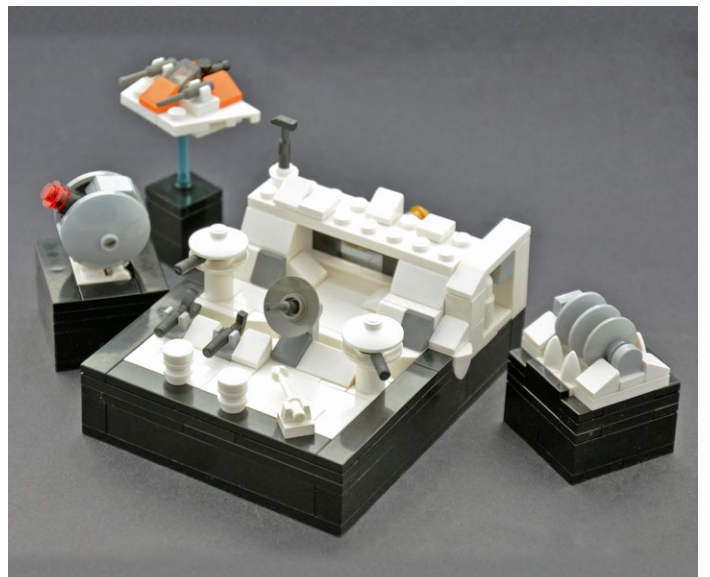


Liam Spall (AKA: LEGOParadise), United Kingdom

👉 <https://www.youtube.com/legoparadise>

I've been into LEGO my whole life; the infinite potential to create whatever I can imagine has always fascinated me! Even as a child, I loved building in a variety of different styles and scales, and to this day I continue to explore all of the possibilities of this system on my YouTube channel LEGOParadise. I've always been interested in action themes such as Adventurers, Power Miners and Extreme Team which is what this build is based on! 6584 is bursting with adventure, with the multitude of vehicles and the giant raised baseplate, so it was a fun challenge to recreate each of these elements in micro scale. I especially like the tiny flag and zip line made out of a fishing rod rope!

📌 6584 *Extreme Team Challenge*, March 2018



Richard Young (AKA: iamKritch), Scotland

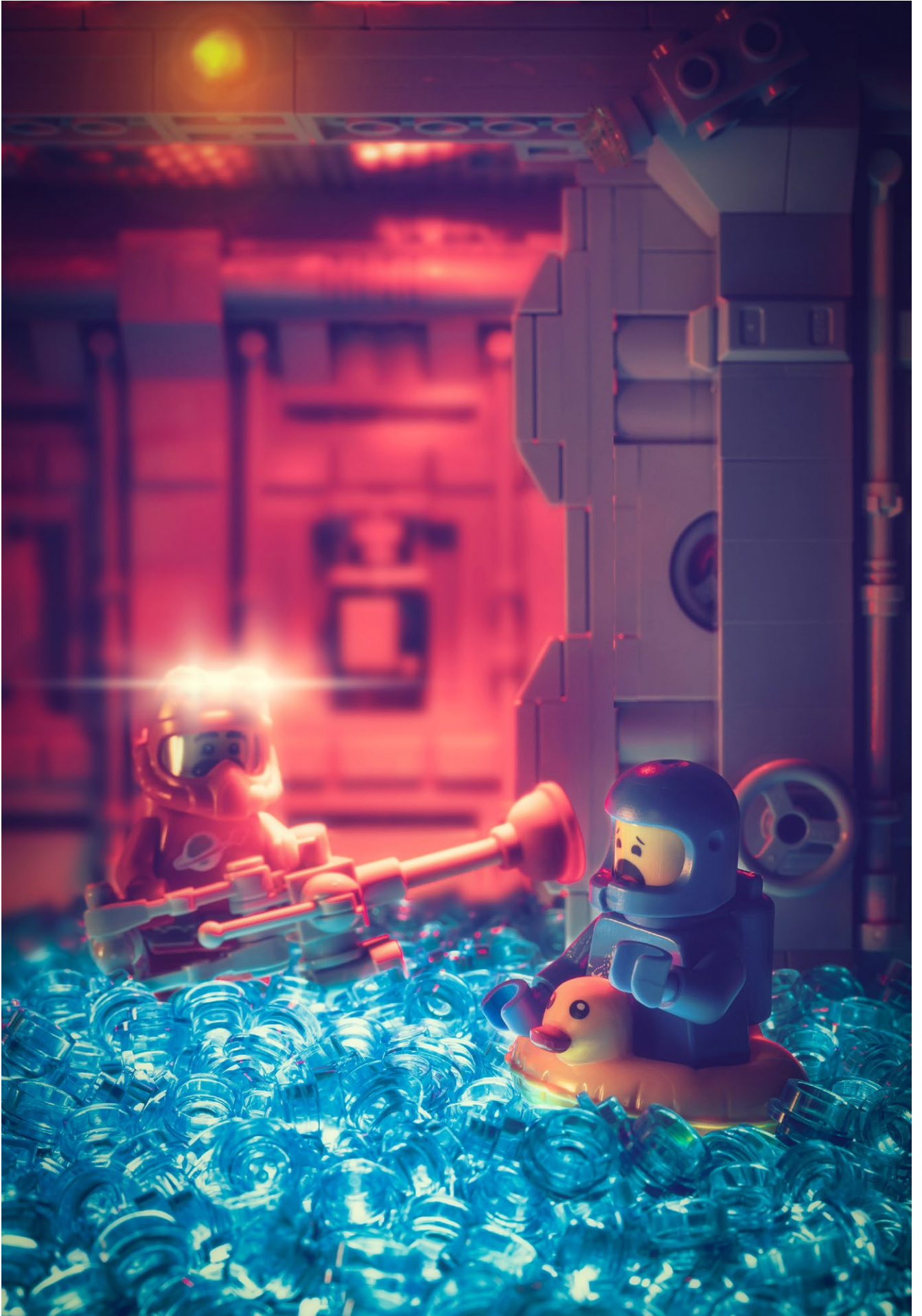
👉 <https://www.flickr.com/photos/iamkritch/>

When I was four-and-a-half I was given 6805 Astro Dasher and 6806 Surface Hopper for Christmas. I thought they were amazing. I just kept building and rebuilding them into different spaceships for days and days and I have loved LEGO ever since.

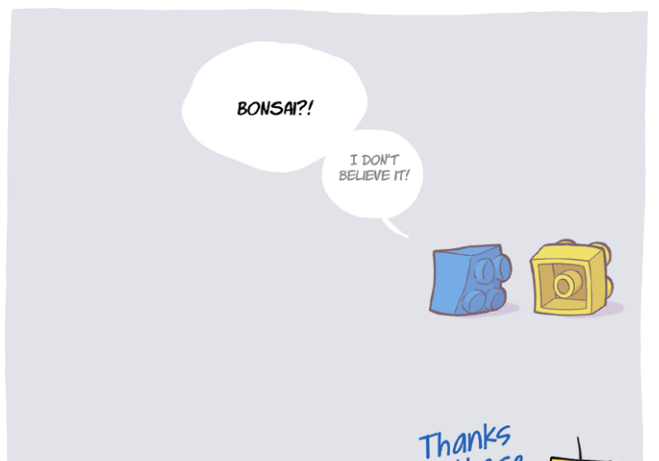
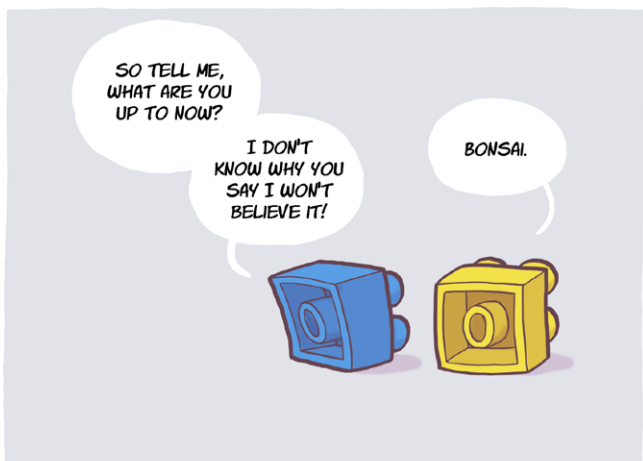
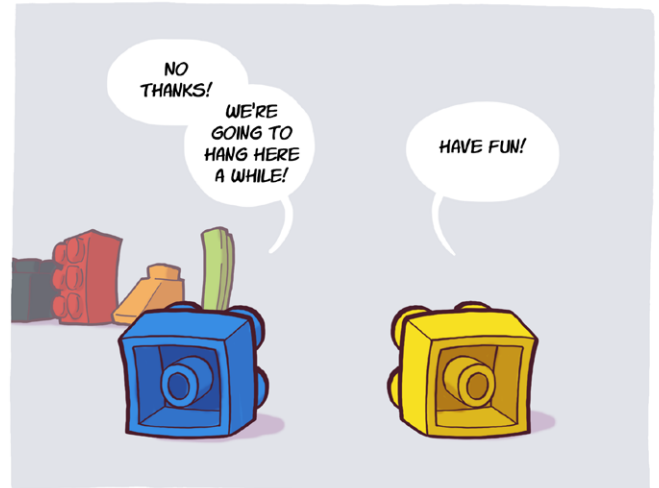
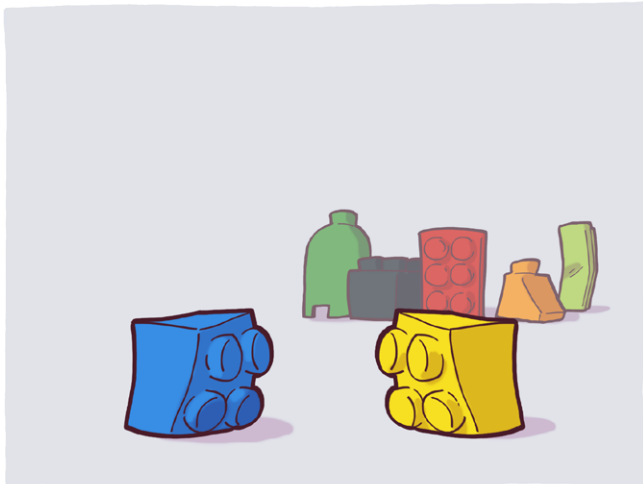
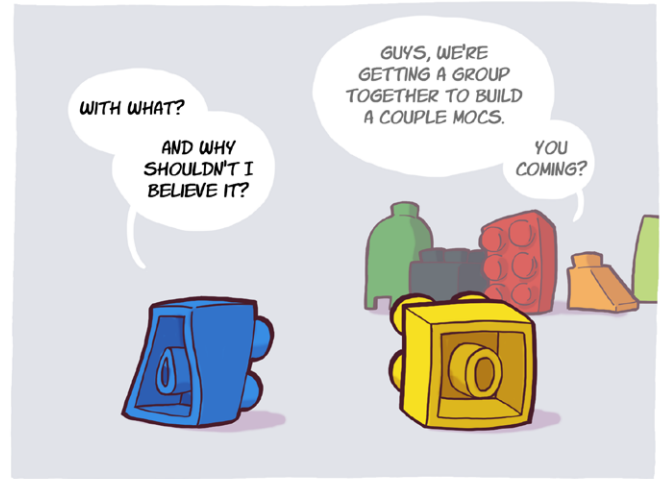
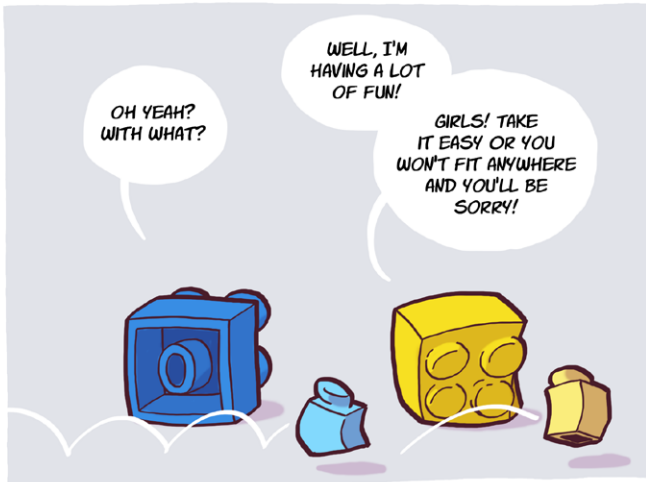
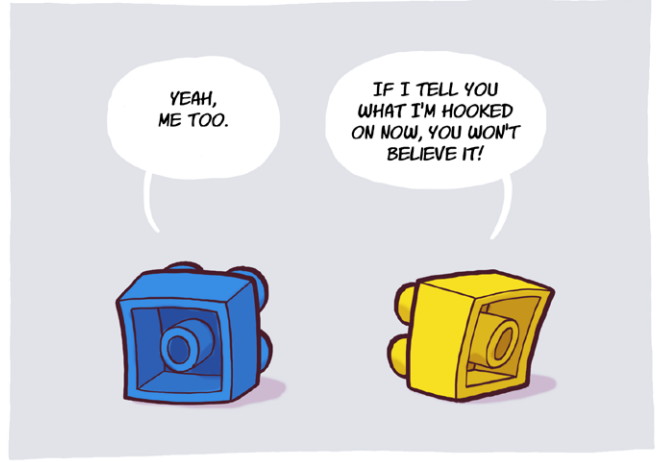
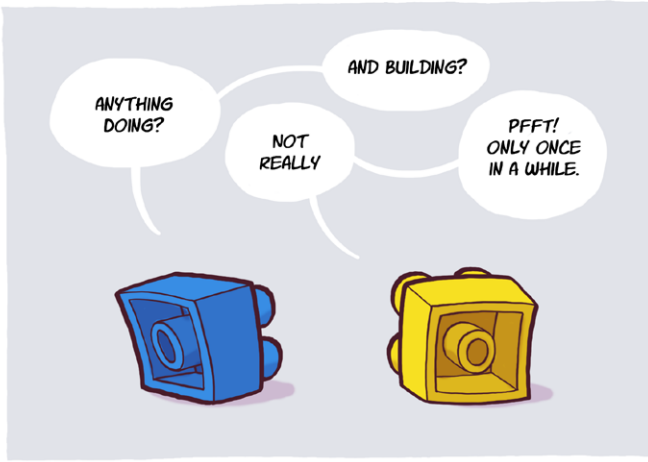
📌 75098 *Assault on Hoth*, March 2018

BENNY'S CORNER

BY LUIGI PRIORI
[flickr.com/photos/priori70/albums](https://www.flickr.com/photos/priori70/)



Has anybody called a plumber?



Thanks for these 12 years!

035

E N G L I S H

