



TM

HISPABRICK MAGAZINE

ENGLISH

038



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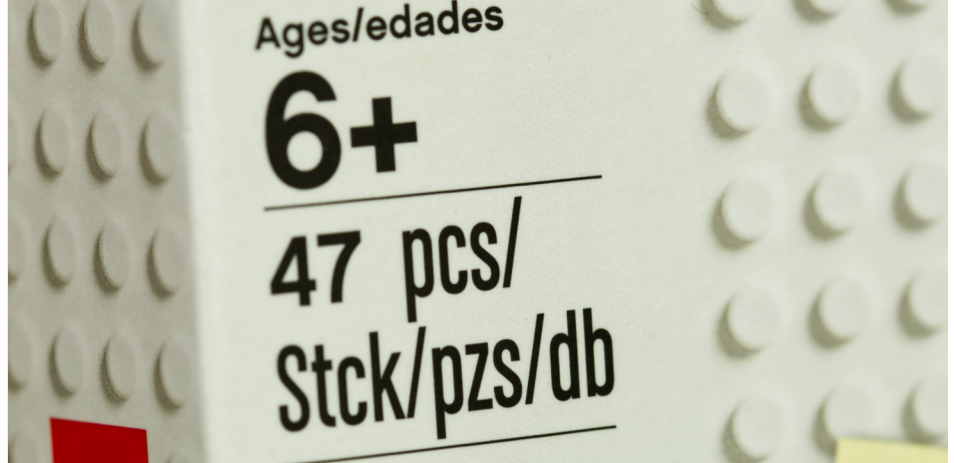
Portada/Cover, 88-89: Beverly Thomas, Stuck In Plastic. P2-27, 50-73, 76-87, 105: Mark Favreau. P28-33: José Manuel Ruiz Carvajal. P34-36: LEGO. P37-39: Michał Piotrewicz. P40, 42, 45-46: Atresmedia. P42-44: Valbrick. P47: Oton Ribić. P48-49: Wikimedia. P74: Gonzalo Carro. P90-94: Juan Ruiz Tablada y artistas anotados/artists noted. P95-97: LOLUG. P98-104: Ralf Langer. P106-109: artistas anotados/artists noted.

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EDITORIAL

By Mark Favreau

Putting together an issue of HispaBrick Magazine is always educational and always hell. Sort of like being fourteen years old and in public school, but without the hormones.

One hell for this issue was the part count for the sets in the staff Castle story. I researched this and Jose researched it. Jose came up with one set of data and I came up with a different set of data. Sometimes our piece counts matched and often, more often than I really wanted to deal with, they did not. So I had to look at this some more. Well, I probably really didn't have to look at it some more, but somewhere along the line I inherited an unhealthy degree of anal retentiveness from my younger brother.

On the one hand, in some instances, we still had some boxes, and there was a part count on them. On the other hand we had BrickLink inventories to look at. On the other other hand we had Brickset for reference. On the other other hand there is Rebrickable, but having four sources to cross reference was one too many sources and having three hands was already one hand too many for most people.

I've done a number of set reviews where I've referenced LEGO's web site for part counts. On more than one occasion they will list a part count as being X in one place and Y in another place and even, occasionally Z in another. . . all on the same page, so there is certainly corporate precedent for part count confusion.

Cross referencing the two or three sources I chose to reference, the numbers just didn't add up. . . that's a pithy cliché apropos of the situation. They didn't.

I really wanted to trust Brickset's data, but that data seemed to be the least consistently accurate data set. I would like to trust the piece count on the LEGO boxes themselves, but I don't know what methodology they are using to arrive at that number. BrickLink is superficially the most

trustworthy as they require actually opening a box and cataloging everything (probably because of the inaccuracy of LEGO's reporting) and then verifying it. But even with BrickLink there are issues. . . issues relevant to BrickLink and the way they handle inventories.

Let's look at two BrickLink issues. Issue one: parts on a sprue. In the older Castle sets we would have knights and forestmen minifigures and they would have feathers and other headgear adornment that would ship three feathers on a sprue. For a while these three feathers were treated as three separate parts. Then came along an edict that they should be included in inventory as one part, because one part called “three feathers on a sprue” was how LEGO shipped it. Then that got undone because it messed with the minifigure inventory where Forestman would use a single feather and not the other two on the sprue. So this headgear sprue is handled one way. Other things on a sprue are handled another way. One of those others is, for example, *Minifigure, Utensil Tool Wheel, 6 on Sprue*.

This handling of things-on-a-sprue leads to internal-versus-external inconsistency in part counts at BrickLink. City sets with Minifigure Utensil Tool Wheel, 6 on Sprue will count that as one piece and the castle sets with 3 feathers not-on-sprue will count that as three pieces.

Issue two: Some sets had stickers or cards or some other “part” that wasn't a buildable part. For example set 5004419 has a model (45 pieces) and a sticker sheet (1 piece) and an instruction manual (1 piece) which I guess is how LEGO arrives at 47 pieces on the box. I would like to say that that count paradigm is consistent across all LEGO products, but I doubt it is.

After some head scratching and blue language I settled on using the BrickLink count, minifigure parts broken out, with a caveat. If the set used feathers in caps or on helmets, the BrickLink part count -2 for each hat would be used. Sticker and whatnot count would not be included.

If only Count von Count was on staff. . .



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By Mark Favreau and José Manuel Ruiz Carvajal

Castle

The HispaBrick Magazine staff takes a look at their Classic (and not so classic) Castle sets.

We love vintage LEGO and can get quite nostalgic about it, so we had to do this review of the classic sets of one of the main LEGO themes, just like we did in issue 036 with Classic Space.

The year was 1978, the birth year of many of the team (or most of them, give or take a year or two) and LEGO decided to release a theme dedicated to the world of castles. The first thing that comes to mind is the yellow castle, yes, yellow. "Light Gray" and "Dark Gray" must have

already been expensive to get back then... some things never change.

Initially the sets focused on medieval life, with lots of castles and knights. Later on, fantasy and mythology elements began to be incorporated by adding dragons and wizards, elements that simply had to be present after growing up with films such as Willow, Monty Python and the Holy Grail, or Excalibur.

After the 90s and with the arrival of 2000, LEGO decided to release "something" called Knights

Kingdom... Bionicle did some serious damage, to some, of course.

After the obligatory "Dark Ages" in the Castle theme, we came back to our hobby thanks to the appearance of the "Fantasy Era" at the end of 2000... the prodigal son returns. 2017 came and we were orphaned again until 2021 when we got the big surprise of The Medieval Blacksmith 21325, which, although it does not belong to the Castle theme, has given us hope that the theme will return... knock, knock... LEGO?



1289 Weezil's Stone Bomber

2000 † 22 pieces

The set contains the Weezil minifig equipped with a crossbow, a spear, and a small catapult. . . I bet Weezil is helping Cedric the Bull stay hidden. Helping Cedric though doesn't mean that Weezil is unable to practice his chill and enjoy the sun. This was a promotional set for Kabaya in Japan.



4806 Axe Cart

2000 † 27 pieces

This time Weezil comes with a massively wheeled cart outfitted with two front projecting halberds and a pair of crossbows. If that's not enough weaponry, a banner flies from an attached spear. The set also features a kite shield with the Cedric the Bull logo imprinted on it. You don't want to be anywhere near this thing when Weezil comes around because he's too short to really see where he's going. Carnage both intentional and inadvertent is sure to ensue.



1463 Treasure Cart

1992 † 24 pieces

A Crusader soldier pulls a small cart carrying a chest of treasure. Not any massive amount of treasure, just a couple small bits of red and a couple small bits of yellow bling. But who is to say what bling is worth? The cart is adorned with weapons including a spear, a sword, and a shield. . . could this possibly be the chest that was stolen by the Forestmen and taken to the ruined castle? Could be. Forestmen have a serious, serious jones for bling, you know. This set was also later released as 1695 Treasure Cart (1992) and 2889 Treasure Cart (1998).

4816

Knights' Catapult

2000 + 50 pieces

This catapult is operated by two minifigures. Princess Storm and Richard the Strong are sure to be looking for Cedric to settle a score. Storm is carrying a special chrome plated sword . . . it's a magical sword because chrome plating wasn't invented until the 1920s.

1584

Knight's Challenge

1988 + 168 pieces

This set is identical to the 6060 Knight's Challenge which was released a year later (1989) and was not available in Europe. It is the only set that contains both Crusaders and Black Knights. It depicts a jousting tournament and features a grandstand for the audience, a weapons rack, a keg, two horses, and eight minifigures including two knights on horseback and a maiden. The Crusader Knights are ready to take on the Black Knights as the others prepare to watch the joust.





1596 Ghostly Hideout

1993 † 37 pieces

The set's focal point is a tree with a hidden sliding compartment that reveals a ghost. Makes total sense. If you were a ghost, your top priority would be to find an old tree with a secret compartment to hide out in, wouldn't you? I mean the medieval forest must have been rife with those. Hard to find nowadays, though, because all the trees died out from having secret compartments and birds and spears attached to them. Well, maybe not because of the birds. Is the ghost an ally or enemy of the bandit... and is it also the ghost of the Black Monarch? On another note, the ghost makes use of a 1x2 brick and a 1x2 plate in lieu of legs.



1877 Crusader's Cart

1990 † 59 pieces

Two Forestmen ride on a black and blue wagon, pulled by a white horse. The top of the wagon lifts up on a hinge to reveal a hiding place between the wagon wheels. The wagon is loaded with bales of hay and a saddle. Attached to the wagon is a pitchfork and a shield. Crusader's Cart is one of the smaller sets of the Forestmen series. It is similar to the 1680 Hay Cart with Smugglers set, but with one less minifig. Also, for purposes of variety and nothing else, we decided to call this cart a wagon.



1732 Crossbow Cart

1993 † 23 pieces

Guess what. It's another cart. We are not going to call this one a wagon. This set contains a cart—that's right, a cart—with two crossbows, kite shield, spear, and sword (yes, it's a heavily weaponed cart) being attended by a Dragon Master soldier. The boxed version of this set was not available in the US; the essentially identical 1712 Crossbow Cart was released in the US in polybag packaging.

1736 Wizard's Cart

1995 † 18 pieces

Majisto the Wizard comes equipped with his typical glow-in-the-dark wand, but without a cloak. The accompanying chest—on a cart—contains two transparent gems (round plates 1x1), one blue and one green. A gray bird is also included. 1736 is the boxed version. Other identical versions were released, one in polybag format in 1995—1746 Wiz the Wizard—and again in 1998 as a promotional set for the Japanese company Kabaya—2891 Wizard Trader.



1752 Boat with Armour

1996 † 21 pieces

The curiously named Boat with Armour doesn't appear to sport any armor, but it does include a Royal Knight minifigure with two crossbows, a shield, and two oars. 1752 is the boxed version. Other identical versions were released, one in polybag format with the more appropriate name 1804 Crossbow Boat, and as a promotional set for the Japanese company Kabaya, 2892 Thunder Arrow Boat. Really. Thunder Arrow Boat. What a great name. If I ever get a hamster I'm going to name it Thunder Arrow Boat.



1917 King's Catapult

1993 † 22 pieces

This set is comprised of a Black Knight minifigure and a small catapult. The set is identical to the 2890 King's Catapult that was released as a promotional set in Japan in 1998. This is one of only two catapults in the Black Knights theme, the other being on 1992's 1491 Dual Defender. This catapult design owes some design cues to set 1480, with the same name incidentally, from two years earlier.





6056 Dragon Wagon

1993 † 106 pieces

A dragon is caged in a wagon pulled by two horses and handled by two Dragon Master minifigures. In the UK the set is called Ogwen the Dragon, implying that the dragon's name is Ogwen. The dragon had no name in the United States. The dragon did, however, agree to lend his likeness to a banner for the wagon while he was on holiday in Fire Island. Also, for some reason (rhyming), LEGO decided not to call this a cart.



1971 Black Knight's Battering Ram

1993 † 36 pieces

The set was only available as part of the 1967 Bonus Pack set, and it contained a battering ram and a guard. The minifigure is equipped with an inverted teardrop shield, making it the only standard Black Knights guard to come equipped with one. This looks like a cart, but isn't one.

2539 Fright Knights Flying Machine

1998 † 20 pieces

This Shell promotional set features Basil the Bat Lord—not riding on his Black Dragon—oh, no! He flies on a small flying machine powered, no doubt, by fuel that can be purchased at a Shell station. The wings of the machine are large bat wings. Basil carries a magic chrome plated longsword and a staff with a bat on the end—which makes one pause to wonder how he steers the flying machine. For this outing he has forgone his bat cape. Undoubtedly he didn't want it to catch ablaze with the Shell-fuel fire emanating from the back of the flying machine.



2540 Fright Knights Catapult Cart

1998 † 28 pieces

Another Shell promotional set featuring Basil the Bat Lord. This time Basil is pushing a teeny tiny cook pot catapult on a... wait for it... cart. It seems he is short-staffed and has to do thankless tasks. Well, if you want something done right, do it yourself. The minifig is identical to the one in set 2539 Fright Knights Flying Machine.



2848 Fright Knights Flying Machine

1997 † 19 pieces

In this set we see Basil the Bat Lord (anybody got their fill of Basil the Bat Lord yet?) flying in a flying machine. A different flying machine. One without bat wings and not powered by Shell fuel. The set includes a bat and a crystal ball, brand new pieces in 1997. When Basil's black dragon isn't available and in the absence of the giant bat he's been pestering Willa the Witch to conjure up, it seems that Basil will settle for soaring about in flying machines... Does he have Leonardo da Vinci at his service?





2872 Witch and Fireplace

1997 † 18 pieces

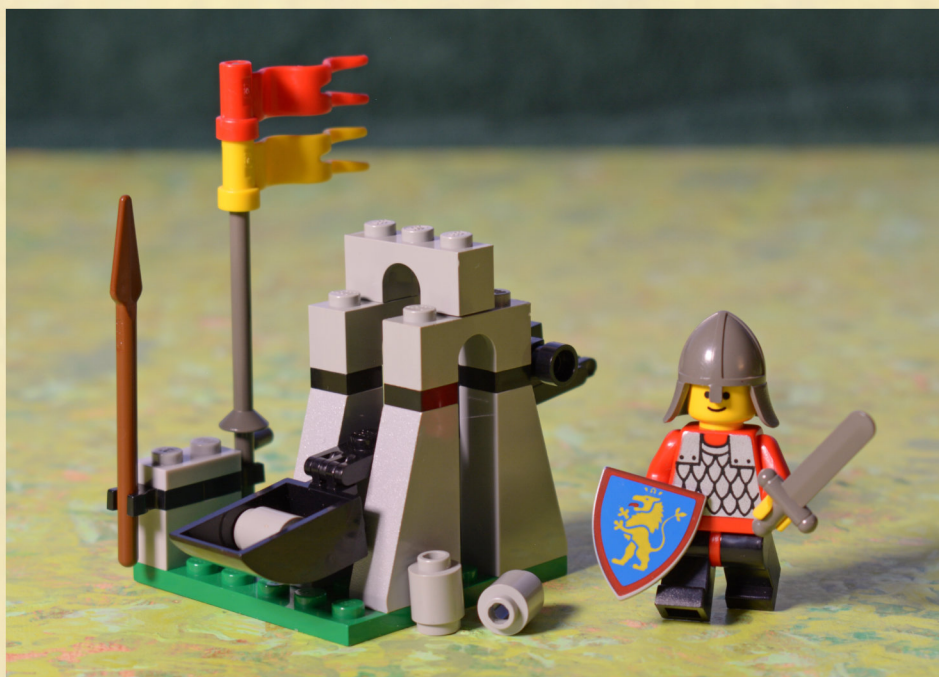
In an unprecedented, bold thematic move, LEGO in 1997 gives us a small castle set that isn't a cart or a catapult. Finally. The set includes Willa the Witch accompanied by a bat, a crystal ball, a crouching cat, a barrel, and a transparent red magic wand. Willa clearly purchased her magic accoutrements at a more upscale magic shop than 7955's Wizard. He has a stick.



1547 Black Knights Boat

1993 † 58 pieces

A small boat with two steering oars, a guard and a knight guarding a barrel. . . apart from the steering oars, shouldn't there be more oars to propel the boat? Eh. Maybe they're sculling. The set did not appear in any catalog and is the only Black Knights ship we will find besides the 6057 Sea Serpent. The dragon head in this set consists of a variety of pieces, unlike newer sets that come with a single piece.



1480 King's Catapult

1991 † 33 pieces

You know we can't have a castle spread here in the magazine without a catapult or a cart; just saying in case you were worried there weren't any more catapults. This catapult with a finger-operated mechanism is accompanied by a Crusader soldier. . . it will take many more catapults than this one to storm a castle. Probably bigger ones, too. But we aren't really at a loss for finding catapults. This is the only set in which this minifig can be found.

4819 Bulls' Attack Wagon

2000 + 50 pieces

Weezil is back! We haven't seen Weezil for pages! He is accompanied by Gilbert The Bad in a chariot pulled by a horse. The elephant-pulled chariots weren't available at the dealership, so they had to settle. They did get the white horn upgrade on the horse helmet, though, so it wasn't a total bummer. This set includes an exclusive chrome shield. Also note we called this cart a chariot and not a wagon because a horse is pulling it. So, technically, yeah.



5615 The Knight

2008 + 21 pieces

The set brings us a Crown Knight with various weapons and armor: a spear, a sword, a shield, two helmets and a breastplate. . . will the Crown Knight be able to stop the trolls' attack? Probably not. He was unable to requisition a troll-attack-repellent-worthy catapult because that requires paperwork (nor could he requisition the fancier catapult on a cart because that required *more* paperwork) and he needed a scribe, who he didn't have, to help him out with that. He got the spare helmet instead. It will just have to do.



5618 Troll Warrior

2008 + 19 pieces

A troll warrior, accompanied by his emotional support rat, Luis, is ready to attack the crown kingdom with—you guessed it—a cart! This cart features twin spears and a flick-fire missile. . . the epitome of medieval troll technology!





6037 Witch's Windship

1997 † 60 pieces

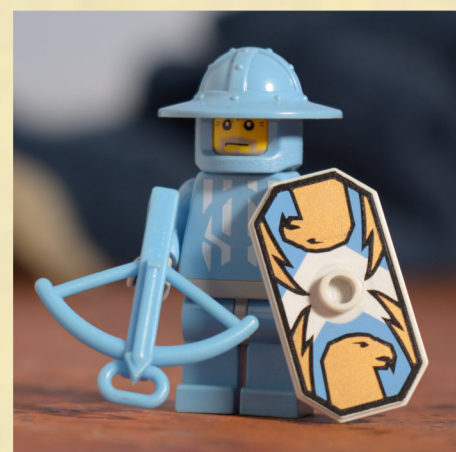
Willa the Witch appears in a flying machine consisting of a gondola powered by a green dragon. This is the only set with a green dragon with black wings, although the wings do not appear to be part of the dragon, but of the structure supporting the gondola. Advanced biomechanical witchery at work in this contraption, for sure. Witch don't need no stinkin' cart.



7950 Knight's Showdown

2010 † 61 pieces

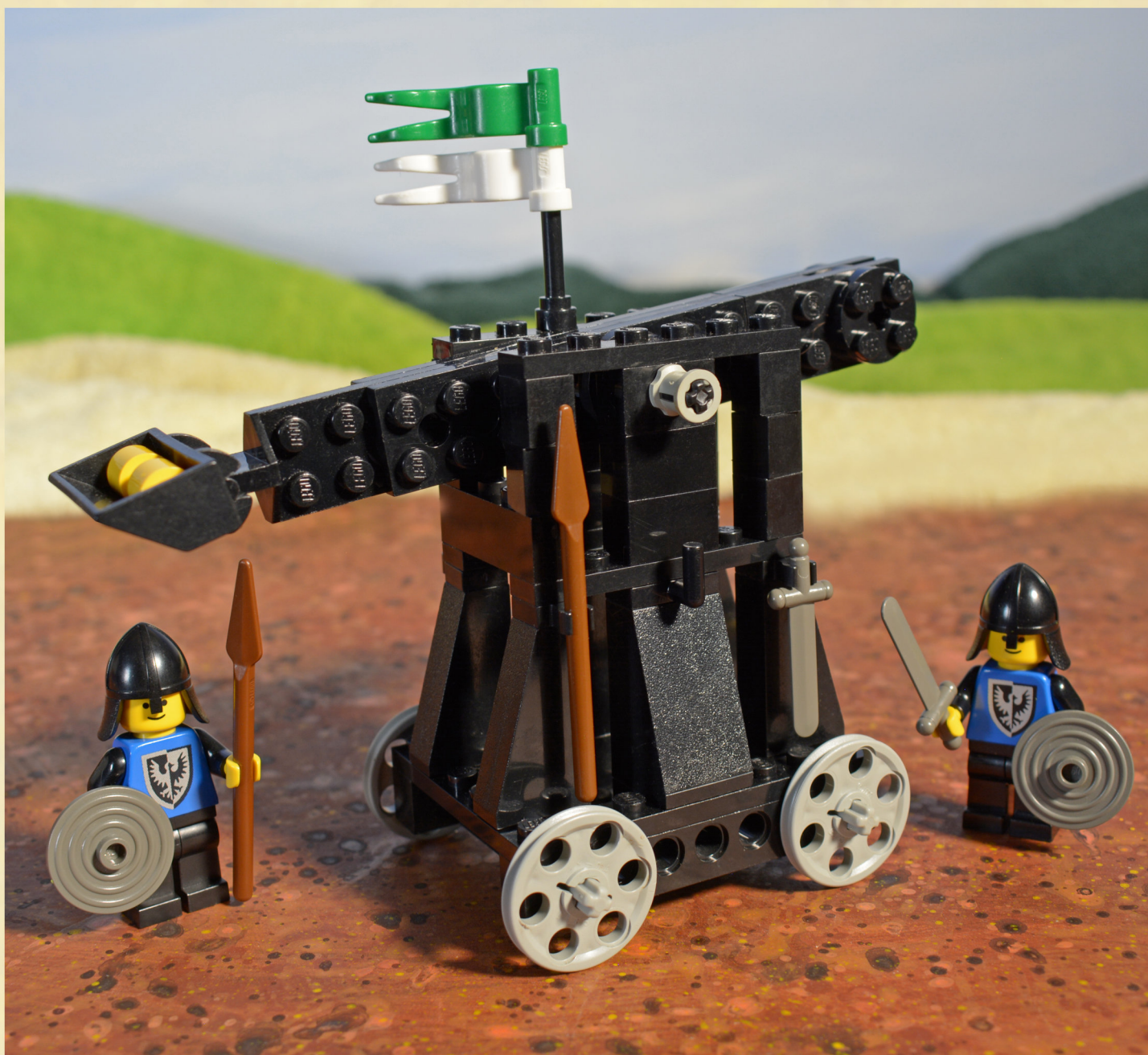
The main part of the set is the Lion Knight's mobile catapult (that's another way of saying it's a catapult on a cart). We also find the Dragon Knight weapon stand. A Lion Knight and a Dragon Knight are the minifigures in the set, equipped with a sword each, plus a battle axe for the Dragon Knight and a shield for the Lion Knight.



5999 Jayko

2005 † 6 pieces

The set contains the minifigure known as Jayko—a famous swordsman—although here he appears as an archer.



6030 Catapult

1984 † 83 pieces

This is the first catapult of two that appear with the Black Falcons, the other appearing in 6059 Knights Stronghold. It is manned by two Black Falcons, equipped with a spear and a sword respectively, who are ready for the assault on any castle that stands in front of them.

6032 Catapult Crusher

2000 † 54 pieces

The set contains Gilbert The Bad, a catapult, multiple weapons, and rocks to be launched by the catapult. It's like a cart, catapult, and battering ram all rolled into one!





7955 Wizard

2010 † 19 pieces

Dragon Wizard here settles for a mundane brown magic stick instead of a bling transparent wand with a star at the end. A small dark green dragon sits between two jars, and no, we're not going to guess what's in the yellow one. A stand holds a scroll with an illustration of a dark green dragon (who knew dark green dragons were a thing?) and the words: "You are far more powerful [sic] than you would ever imagine. . . ." Hopefully that phrase is relative to the dragon and not whatever is in the yellow jar. The minifig is exclusive to this set.



6004 Crossbow Cart

1997 † 21 pieces

The small set consists of a Fright Knight accompanied by a cart with three, count 'em three, crossbows and two kite shields with bat decoration. The minifig has multiple fleurs-de-lis printed on the torso. Those delightfully decorative fleurs-de-lis must have distracted whoever was running quartermaster that day because Fright Knight here has a quiver and a spear, but no bow. Just gonna have to make do.



6007 Bat Lord

1997 † 16 pieces

This time Basil the Bat Lord appears with his favorite non-flying-machine mount, a black dragon. Should we presume this is an American Unnamed Dragon? Also I'm a little confused why *Bat Lord* has a badass dragon and not a badass bat. Anyhoo. He's carrying his magic chrome plated sword and red bat pole and this time is wearing his gray cloak with a bat on it. Basil needs his bat cape to keep his backside warm when riding the Unnamed Dragon because the dragon doesn't have Bat Lord ass warming Shell gas fire coming out his non-mouth end.

2538

Fright Knights Fire Cart

1998 † 20 pieces

Whaddyaknow? Another spread, another cart. But this time it's not just any ordinary cart, oh no. And it's not a catapult cart or a crossbow cart. It's a fire cart! The set was a Shell promotion, so we can safely assume the barrel there is full of Shell gas to power the firepower of the fire. This Fright Knight's outfit didn't distract quartermaster because Fright Knight is sensibly equipped with a crossbow. Not to be missed is the usual bat.



6046

Hemlock Stronghold

1996 † 221 pieces

This tower hidden in the forest is equipped with the tech! It has two different types of catapult and a fountain with a water pump—I have it on good authority that one of the Forestmens spent a semester at Dark Forest Community College working on a plumbing degree before joining up with the gang. Also knocking about are a skeleton, a couple forestmen and a couple Lion Knights. Not to be outdone by other sets, this set also features a small cart. That's right! A big rotating catapult, a fixed cook pot catapult and a cart. What's not to like?





6039 Twin Arm Launcher

1988 † 77 pieces

So, don't let the name of this set mislead you. It does not launch the arms of twins. Well, I suppose it could, but it is really a catapult with two finger-operated articulated arms on a four-wheeled platform which might or might not be thought of as a cart. You can never have too many cart catapults or too many arms on your catapults. Manned by two Crusader knights, one of them mounted on horseback, this was the first set in the line to include a barding cover for the horse.

6054 Forestmans' Hideout

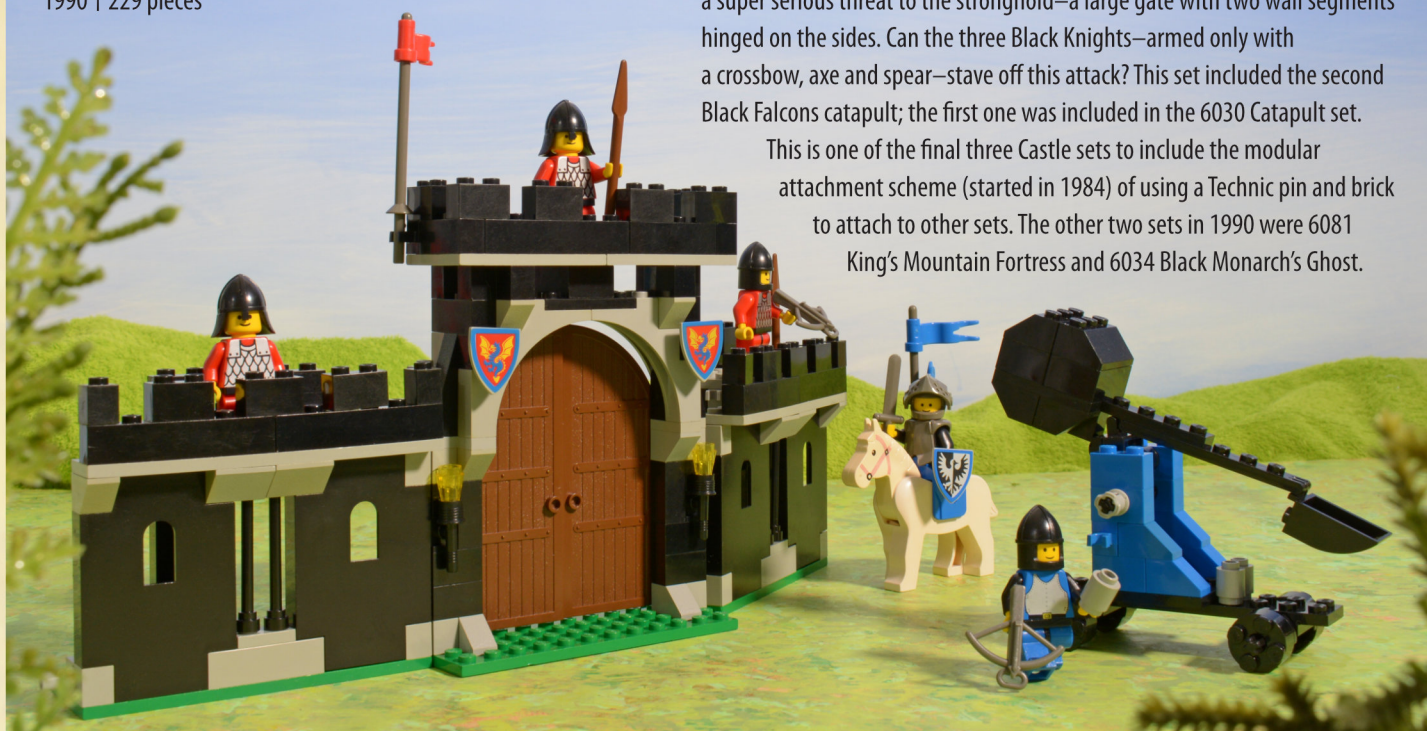
1988 † 201 pieces

A forestman and his leader, Robin Hood, hide in a lair built in the hollow of a tree. The hollow tree can be opened to gain access to its interior. The entrance to the first floor allows us to access a small house on the upper floor. On the outside two lianas hang from the tree allowing its inhabitants to move between trees. . . will Robin Hood be found by The Black Knight? This set was the first to feature the printed target on a 2x2 round tile. You know what else? No cart or catapult anywhere to be found.



6059 Knight's Stronghold

1990 † 229 pieces



The stronghold belonging to the Black Knights is being attacked by the Black Falcons. The mighty Black Falcon attack force consists of one knight on horseback and one crossbowman doubling as mobile catapult operator. It's a super serious threat to the stronghold—a large gate with two wall segments hinged on the sides. Can the three Black Knights—armed only with a crossbow, axe and spear—stave off this attack? This set included the second Black Falcons catapult; the first one was included in the 6030 Catapult set.

This is one of the final three Castle sets to include the modular attachment scheme (started in 1984) of using a Technic pin and brick to attach to other sets. The other two sets in 1990 were 6081 King's Mountain Fortress and 6034 Black Monarch's Ghost.

6078 Royal Drawbridge

1995 † 259 pieces

The set contains a fortified bridge, a small raft, three Royal Knights guards, a Black Knight on horseback, and a skeleton. Skeleton is chillin' under the ramp 'cause that's where skeletons chill. The Black Knight has a helmet and torso piece that are more common for Dragon Masters, plus a Black Knight kite shield with a blue dragon... is the knight Sir Lance? Is this the highly awaited thematic crossover event of 1995? And, Honey, where's the cart and who forgot the catapult?





6071 Forestmen's Crossing

1990 † 214 pieces

A large hollow tree and a ruined castle, separated by a river, are connected by a bridge that allows the forestmen to cross from one side to the other easily. Also they could probably just jump across the stream there at the narrow point, but why risk getting one's feet wet? The ruined castle houses a hideout with a treasure chest. The set did not appear in the European catalogs and is the only one that includes the forest maiden and the particular baseplate with the river and marked studs. Also in this set is the forestman with the black collar, whose only other appearance is in 6066 Camouflaged Outpost.

1888 Black Knights Guardshack

1992 † 49 pieces

A small tower guarded by a Black Knight guard with a halberd, two spears and two swords. . . he seems to be heavily armed, although we do not know if the weapons will serve to neutralize the ghost coming out of the tower.

6097 Night Lord's Castle

1997 † 608 pieces

The great castle of Basil the Bat Lord—known here for reasons of marketing and mystery by his alias, Night Lord—consists of three segments: the front part with the gate, the back part with a throne room, and the separate four-story tower section. The castle is of modular construction and can be configured in a horizontal layout if desired. The set also includes Willa the Witch, a skeleton, three Fright Knights, and a Royal Knight who has fallen prisoner locked in the third floor of the tower. For animals there are two horses, a number of bats, and of course, a dragon. This was the tallest LEGO castle released and is the only set that contains the flag with the bat emblem.





30061 Attack Wagon

2010 † 36 pieces

This polybag set contains a small siege cart and a Dragon Sword Knight. This polybag was not launched in the US.

7038 Troll Assault Wagon

2008 † 161 pieces

The assault wagon has four large wheels and a firing turret with space in the back to place other trolls. The wagon is pulled by a giant Troll tricked by a Troll Warrior with a chicken leg. The set also contains two Crown Knights with a cart with weapons waiting to take them on.



6036

Skeleton Surprise

1995 † 74 pieces

In this set, a Royal Knight guard protects a small black-and-gray tower. A skeleton hides in the ceiling of the tower on a pivoting stick and swings down—surprise—when a pin is removed. This set is one of the first four sets released in 1995 that contained the skeleton. Curiously, the instruction manual is labeled with the Dragon Masters logo.

7041

Troll Battle Wheel

2008 † 508 pieces

A large battle wheel driven by a troll captain and two troll warriors will engage in a presumably very brief battle against three crown knights who have a catapult barricade to try to stop the wheel. Had the knights set up in a narrow pass, they might have had a chance, but as they're in an open field, the trolls can just roll around them.





7009 The Final Joust

2007 † 62 pieces

The set includes on one side Lead General with armor riding a horse and on the other side, General Bone with armor riding a black skeleton horse. No shortage of jousting weapons such as shields, axes, maces as well as banners. . . who will be the winner?

6012 Siege Cart

1986 † 54 pieces

A ballista manned by two Crusader soldiers bearing the crests of lions on their torsos. The ammunition consists of three spears, but there is no mechanism to fire them.



5004419 Classic Knights Minifigure

2016 † 45 pieces

This was a promotional item available on LEGO.com for free to VIP members when they spent a certain amount on purchases. The set sold out within the first week. It is a modern interpretation of the 6012 Siege Cart set and includes a Crusader minifigure and a sheet showing how the Castle characters have changed from Classic Castle to Nexo Knights.



30062 Target Practice

2010 † 31 pieces

Lion Knight is on the practice range and he's brought along lunch. The set was launched as a polybag at LEGOLAND California and Target retail stores in the US.

6034 Black Monarch's Ghost

1990 † 48 pieces

The knight in this set was the first of the Black Knights to be equipped with the new helmet with a movable visor and a breastplate and was one of the first two sets to include the glow-in-the-dark ghost figure. It is also one of the last sets with the modular Technic pin scheme for attaching to other Castle sets.



4801 Defense Archer

2000 † 15 pieces

The set contains a minifigure on a rotating platform. There are also two other identical versions, one in polybag format as 4811 Defense Archer and one as a promotional set for the Japanese company Kabaya as 1287.

7953 Court Jester

2010 † 22 pieces

The set includes a court jester with three "juggling balls", simulated by round plates. . . what would a court be without a jester?





1624 King's Archer

1993 † 22 pieces

This set is a precursor to the 30062 Target Practice set without the crossbow and lunch. It is the last set to contain the hard-to-find and now quite pricey 2x2 yellow tile with target pattern.



6027 Bat Lord's Catapult

1997 † 55 pieces

The set contains a horse-drawn catapult, plus two minifigures: a driver and a knight. The catapult consists simply of a seesaw with a barrel, and, oddly, no ammunition. I have absolutely no idea what those flaming cones are about. Are they the ammunition? And is this really the best catapult that Bat Lord could have come up with? Dude. The guy has two flying machines and for a catapult he has a barrel on a plank? Okay, it is a step up from his other cook pot catapult. On the upside it features a bat sitting upright riding a horse, so right there there's a spectacle of nature to behold.



6009 Black Knight

1992 † 22 pieces

The set includes a Black Knight minifigure, a horse, two swords, the (then) new kite shield, the dragon feather and wings on the visor, and a small armorer with a lance and crossbow. Best of all, the minifigure features a funny red mustache and goatee.

6043 Dragon Defender

1993 † 156 pieces

One of the more whimsical sets in the line, this catapult takes the form of a big dragon. A clip holds the launch assembly at the ready. Flip the clip and the dragon lowers its head and raises its tail, launching the brick rocks. Unfortunately, though, two things... One: if the dragon wings aren't positioned just so, they can interfere with the front-mounted banner pole when the launch arm pivots, disrupting the launch. Two, if unimpeded by the banner pole, the rocks fly only about six stud lengths in front of the massive catapult, which places this defender squarely in the category of decorative weaponry.



6024 Bandit Ambush

1996 † 60 pieces

From their secret hiding place behind the cover of trees and a hollow rock (don't ask me how they managed to hollow out a rock) the forest bandits can launch a surprise attack on travelers in the forest. The cook pot catapult launches 1x1 cylinders and a flip of the ladder will get the archer to a vantage point on the top of the rock. So far the take has been fairly paltry, though. Only three 1x1 plate "gems" are in the loot chest.



6031 Fright Force

1998 † 32 pieces

Hey, hey, hey, the gang's all here. Bat Lord, Willa, and two Fright Knights are ready to scare the bejeezus out of anyone who dares stand in their way. Both Bat Lord and Willa are sans cape in this set, and there aren't any bats to be found other than painted on shields. Meh. Maybe they're not so bejeezusly frightening after all. Then again, Willa's dental hygiene is frightening, so if halitosis can be weaponized, that is in their favor.





1794 Dragon Master Chariot

1994 † 36 pieces

I know what you're thinking. . . another cart. Oh, how wrong! It's not a cart nor carriage nor wagon. It is a bona-fide war-ready chariot! This horse-drawn vehicle of mayhem has hinge-mounted swing-down halberds for indiscriminately cutting down enemies at the knees.

The horse hitch piece, shown here in blue, wouldn't appear in a castle set after this for another eleven years. As with all the head-armored mounts in the Dragon Knights line, the war horse here wears the signature red helmet with the dragon-inspired design.



6008 Royal King

1995 † 12 pieces

Royal King? Elvis notwithstanding, I ask you, is there really any other kind of king? I know, I know, Lion King was out because of reasons (ahem, Disney). I bet if LEGO let the Japanese name this set it would have been on par with Thunder Arrow Boat. Just sayin'.



6028 Treasure Cart

1998 † 23 pieces

Whaddyaknow? It's another cart. Sure seems like there was a preponderance of treasure being hauled around and stored in chests back in the day. Folks didn't put other things in chests in the fictitious long-ago. . . furs or clean laundry or crazy Uncle Philbert's prized hand-carved wooden spoon collection? I guess not. This Fright Knights set was also released in a polybag as 6029 Treasure Guard. 6028/6029 were the only sets other than 1988's 5988 Temple of Anubis, from the Adventurers line, to contain the dark gray bat.

6023 Maiden's Cart

1986 † 44 pieces

A horse-drawn carriage carries a maiden guarded by a soldier with the emblem of crossed axes on his torso. The back of the carriage carries a treasure chest. . . is the maiden going to the knight's joust? The white maiden's hat is exclusive to this set.



6011 Black Knight's Treasure

1985 † 26 pieces

A red and yellow two-wheeled cart carrying a light gray treasure chest, drawn by a black horse and driven by a lone Black Falcon knight. The set includes a rare yellow saddle with a single clip and is the only set to include the light gray treasure chest. . . and ironically the chest is probably now worth more than whatever treasure it may have contained.

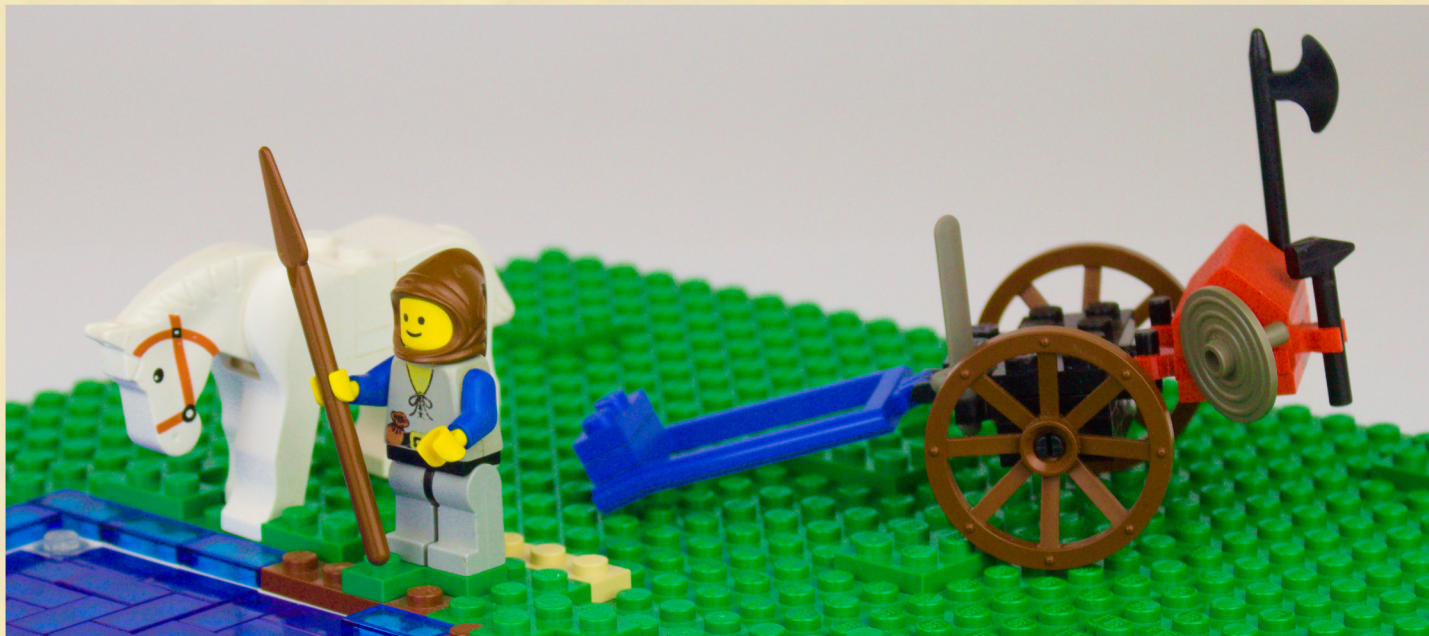


6055 Prisoner Convoy

1985 † 115 pieces

The set depicts a team of three Crusader soldiers escorting a peasant prisoner in—wait! He's escaping from—a blue and black jail wagon pulled by four horses with a cavalryman escort riding a fifth horse. Because the whip piece was not introduced until 1988, the coachman here has to settle for a lance. The Convoy is notable for having five horses—the most ever released in a single LEGO set—surpassing the 6080 King's Castle which had four.





6010 Supply Wagon

1984 † 33 pieces

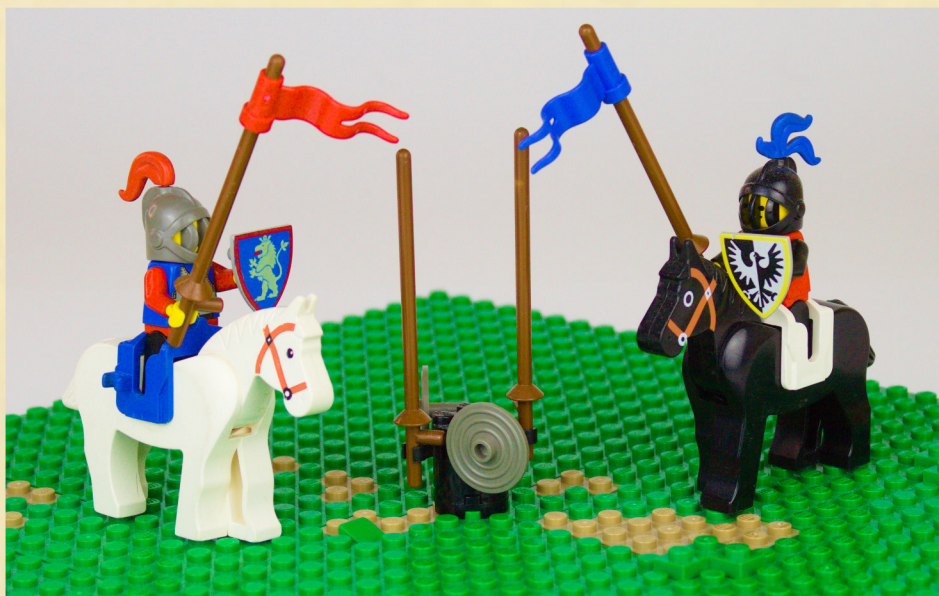
A peasant carries weapons in his cart, pulled by a white horse. A spear, a black halberd, a sword, a hammer and a round shield make up his luggage. It was the first set in which the minifig's torso was printed with a small bag... we sense that it will hold all his money.



6022 Horse Cart

1984 † 42 pieces

A brand new kind of cart in the Castle cart-a-palooza, the horse cart is pulled by a black horse (hence its name, no doubt), filled with weapons, and accompanied by two Crusader Knights. Also in the cart is a blue saddle in case one of the knights wants to ride the horse.



6021 Jousting Knights

1984 † 37 pieces

Looks like there's going to be a little jousting today. Sir Richard, knight of the Crusaders and the Black Knight, leader of the Black Falcons are set to do battle. They are accompanied by their horses, various jousting weapons and shields. Each carries a different colored flag, red and blue... who will win the joust?

This is one of only two sets to contain the white saddle, the other being 6080 King's Castle.

6040 Blacksmith Shop

1984 † 92 pieces

When your cart breaks down (and you know it is going to break down because of all the battling and treasure toting), where do you take it? To the blacksmith, of course! This was the first Castle set to feature a civilian minifigure, a blacksmith with a bare torso wearing a unique-to-the-set brown cape as an apron. The instruction booklet included an alternative build: a small tower and a horse-drawn cart.

The smithy was part of Castle's first modular collection of wall parts, and could be connected to 1984's 6073 Knight's Castle set using Technic pins.



6067 Guarded Inn

1986 † 246 pieces

An inn guarded by a Crusader knight on horseback and two Crusader soldiers. Also included is a maiden wearing a red hat and a small blue cape. Half of the building is gray and built like a castle while the other half would be the inn, with some red and black colors to highlight the building... it's not all going to be fighting, there is also time for a break and a drink at the inn. Does that make sense? If there's drinking at the inn, there's bound to be some fighting.

This 1986 set added to the modular collection started in 1984 to increase the Castle diorama. Other compatible 1986 sets included 6041 Armor Shop and 6074 Black Falcon's Fortress. Due to its popularity, the set was re-released in 2001 as 10000 Guarded Inn.



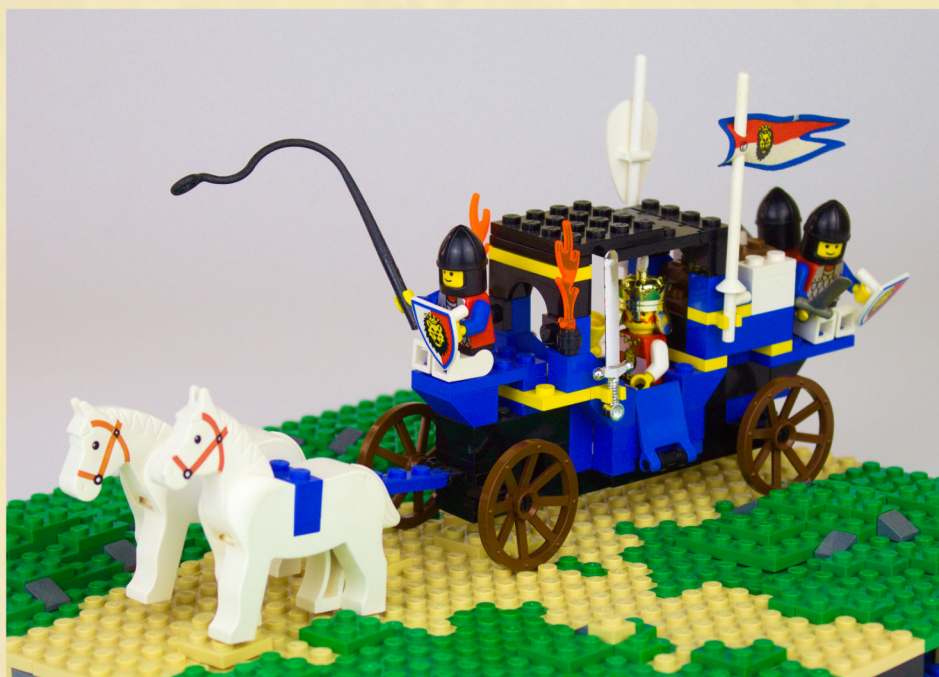


6041 Armor Shop

1986 † 109 pieces

A small pavilion serves as a weapon store manned by an armored salesman. A Crusader knight and his horse visit the shop... full of weapons and helmets but curiously devoid of armor... maybe not so curious as the 2587 body armor piece won't be released until four years later in 1990.

Interesting to note is that these various modular castle attachment sets actually integrate sets spanning the various Castle themes of Black Falcons, Lion Knights, and Crusaders.



6044 King's Carriage

1995 † 125 pieces

A horse-drawn carriage transports King Richard, with his golden crown. Three Royal Guards accompany him on the journey to the castle, since in addition to the king, they have to protect a chest full of jewels.



6016 Knights' Arsenal

1987 † 37 pieces

A small two-wheeled wagon pulled by a white horse driven by a Crusader knight... from the amount of weapons the Crusader is carrying, it is clear that something important is in the offing.

6035 Castle Guard

1987 † 49 pieces

A small guard tent where a knight on horseback and a soldier do their guard duty... always alert. This set was the first to contain the red 2418 "Windscreen 6x6x2 Octagonal Canopy" piece to simulate the tent canopy.



6049 Viking Voyager

1987 † 101 pieces

So, this set in the Lion Knights sub-line is a large rowboat (without oars) captained by a Lion Knight with an otherwise non-lion-knight crew... Vikings are coming! Vikings? The fact that we don't see oars in the set, replaced by spears, is because LEGO didn't introduce oars until 1989 with the Pirates theme. Although we begin to see Viking aesthetics, it is not until 2005 when we have the first set in that theme.

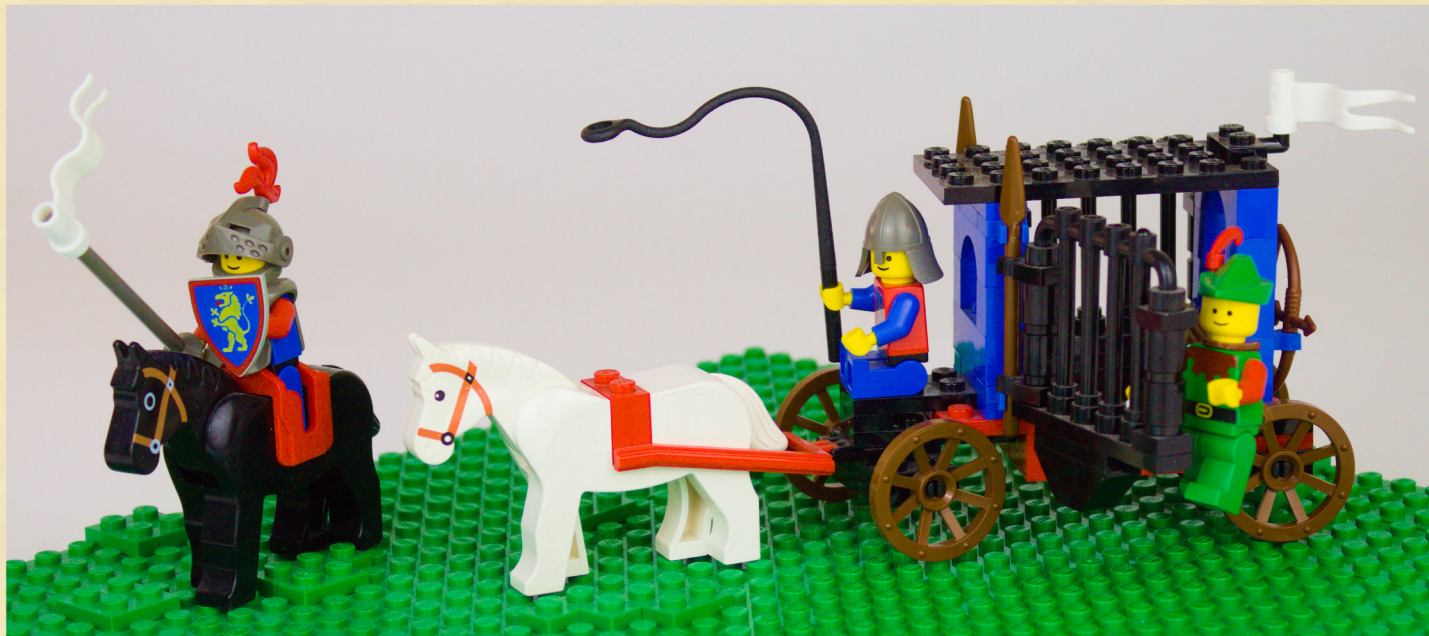


6018 Battle Dragon

1990 † 54 pieces

A small boat with a dragon head and two soldiers, one of them with a Black Falcons shield... finally we have oars! Thanks Pirates. This is the first boat in the Castle line to include real oars instead of spears.





6042 Dungeon Hunters

1990 † 109 pieces

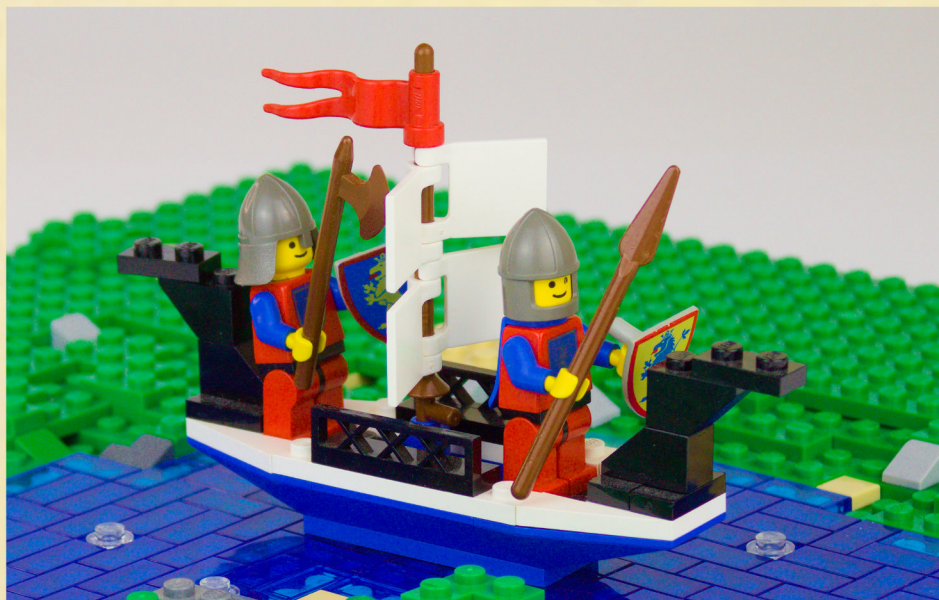
A carriage with a cell and a knight contains a cell for transporting a prisoner. Another knight on a black horse accompanies him... it looks like Robin Hood has been caught. This time, unlike 6055 Prisoner Convoy (1985), the coachman does have a real whip instead of a spear.



6038 Wolfpack Renegades

1992 † 97 pieces

Two Renegades flee in a horse-drawn wagon. The wagon is equipped with a false bottom to hide the loot, a barrel, and a treasure chest containing four "gold pieces" and a yellow cup... they are on their way to the Wolfpack Tower... and for some unknown reason they've picked up a bird as a passenger. Why fly when you can take a ride?



6017 King's Tharsmen

1987 † 45 pieces

A small blue, white, and black sailboat is manned by two Crusader knights. The sails were built with white hinged banners, attached to a mast made of a spear... let's hope that the sailboat does not belong to the Vikings, as it is bad enough to have the Black Knights as "enemies".

Reflections on the Castle Theme

by Carlos Méndez

It was the beginning of the 80s when the LEGOLAND Idea Book (6000) fell into my hands.

I had only been in the world of LEGO for a couple of years and my parents made an effort to find and buy, in a small province of Spain in that decade, those sets which filled my letter to Santa Claus each Christmas. Back then my collection was exclusively City (or Town, or whatever you want to call it) and upon seeing the adventures of the book's main couple, I decided to expand my horizons (my parents still regret getting me that book!). Other AFOLs of my generation may remember the book. A couple of minifigs went through different scenes of the city until they decided to travel to space and later to the middle ages.

It is not very clear if everything that happens is a movie in their heads, a shared dream, or a good trip provided by some spoiled popcorn that they were having in the cinema where their journey through space-time began. The point is that the book was a discovery and an inexhaustible source of ideas for me (a win for LEGO). Given my budget limitations at that time, I had to choose where to diversify my hobby, and my more fantastic side was stronger and Space became my reference line (over time I abandoned the City theme). But I'm



not going to lie to you, Spain is a land of castles and knights, so I never stopped seeing news of the Castle theme. Just as I couldn't stop watching it disappear.

It is true that less and less historical films are seen on the screens. It is rare to see Roman or medieval films in today's cinemas, though both genres have been very important in the history of cinema. Probably that is because we talk about history, about characters that have existed and events that have happened, which always leaves less room for imagination. How many movies are

there about King Arthur? How many about Robin Hood? It is clear that the future gives much more scope to the imagination than does the past. But not everything was going to be bad news, the truth is that stories of knights and princesses seem to have found their salvation in fantasy. The Lord of the Rings, The Wheel of Time, The Malazan Empire — a large number of successful fantasy books have, to a greater or lesser extent, a medieval air, either in their stories, or in the aesthetics of castles, swords, bows, magicians and, why not say it, chivalric honor. Because in the end, the charm of castle stories is the eternal struggle between good and evil, balanced by a technology that forced enemies to look each other in the eye when fighting, where honor was what separated the good from the bad guys.

Although there is no longer any Castle theme as such, LEGO has not completely forgotten its fans. The Lord of the Rings sets were a breath of fresh air for fans of the theme, who were able to access new parts and minifigs for their most classic builds. And in recent times Creator sets have appeared that have fueled the illusions of a new Castle theme. But what would LEGO have to do for a new Castle line to be successful among AFOLs and at the same time attract younger generations?

We have asked Bruce NH (of Bricktales and a member of Classic-Castle) about the subject and here we leave you his opinion.



“There have been some great offerings for LEGO castle builders recently, like 21325 Medieval Blacksmith, and 31120

Medieval Castle, not to mention the Collectible Minifig line, where almost every series gives us one or more great figs. But what we really need is a dedicated theme. Large sets such as 21325 are amazing for adults who are already focused on this theme, but the high price makes them prohibitive for kids or those just starting to get interested. The big sets also make it nearly impossible to build up an army. We all love the new Black Falcon design, but it would cost US \$250 to get four of them from these recent sets. A true theme would have sets at multiple price points, ranging from low priced sets a kid could buy (or that an adult could buy in larger numbers) up to a signature very large set. This would make it possible for new people to get invested in the theme (thus ensuring a new generation of castle fans) while also offering something special for established builders to look forward to.

If I were designing such a theme I would start with a modular castle. If you go back to the early days of LEGO Castle, sets were designed to fit

together. Sets from the 80s like 6040 Blacksmith Shop, 6061 Siege Tower, and 6062 Battering Ram, have short pieces of wall with a pin system that allows them to connect together. These even could connect up with larger sets like 6067 Guarded Inn, and 6073 Knight's Castle, to make a large walled castle. LEGO has even employed this strategy more recently (well, ten years ago) with 9474 The Battle of Helm's Deep and the modular add-on set 9471 Uruk-Hai Army. It was easy to





buy several copies of 9471 to extend the defensive wall, and since each one came with five figs, a horse, and multiple weapons, it was a great way to build up two opposing armies.

My proposed LEGO Castle theme would consist of multiple modular sets at different price points, and two opposing factions. These could be combined to create a large castle under siege. Buying multiple sets and connecting them up in different ways would give the builder the option of configuring their castle however they want. The smallest set would consist of a short length of wall, one or two defenders, one or two attackers, and a small siege engine such as a ballista (essentially a new version of 9474). The next larger set would consist of a larger section of wall, again with both defenders and attackers, and a catapult or siege tower. At the next price point we would get a corner tower, again defenders and attacking figs, and a trebuchet. It would be

important for the walls to connect up to the tower either at 90 degree angles or at 180 degrees, so the castle could take on multiple shapes. Next up we get a gatehouse with a battering ram. Finally, the largest set would be the main castle keep. Each of these sets would include both attacking and defending minifigs, hopefully with a couple of torso variations for each faction, but as we get to the larger sets they would also include specialized figs, such as a knight in full armor in the tower set, a general for the attacking army in the gatehouse set, and a king and queen in the main castle keep.

The next year of this theme would be peaceful, focused on civilian buildings. This could be a town surrounding the first year's castle, with a blacksmith, an inn, and a farmhouse. Maybe introducing a faction of bandits like the old Wolfpack for some conflict. A third year would be back to conflict, but this time with a different style of modular castle – perhaps the home of the attacking faction from the first year.

Castle is one of the classic LEGO themes, with over forty years since the original Yellow Castle, and it deserves a reboot. The occasional special large set is great for AFOLs like me, and probably many of those reading this article, but what we really need is a plan to move forward with a theme to get new builders involved. This will





ensure the life of the best LEGO theme for the next forty years and beyond."

Bruce NH himself put us on the trail of Michał Piotrewicz and his medieval castle project which he presented to LEGO Ideas some time ago, and this is what he told us:

"Like many of us adult fans of LEGO, I really miss the good old days when the LEGO knights proudly ruled over the land (or just the carpet) guarding their mighty castles, fighting tournaments and setting out on an endless number of adventures. But fond childhood

memories and sheer sentiment are not the only reasons for me to miss the old Castle series. These old sets also included many features that made them really fun to play with, provided good flexibility and extensibility, and also (like most LEGO sets back then) sparked our imagination by including pictures on the boxes and in the instructions booklets showing alternative things that you could build with the parts from your main set. With all this you had the feeling you could rebuild and reconfigure your castles, make them bigger or smaller, or a different shape, and just create something new to play with every day.

With the Modular Knight's Castle project I attempted to bring the spirit of the old Castle series back to life by creating a set that was easily reconfigurable and could provide many play possibilities. While designing it, I was doing my best to follow these four simple requirements:

- It had to be modular, i.e. composed of fairly

generic modules that can be built once and then be easily rearranged to create the different shapes and looks of a knight's castle without the need to completely disassemble it and build again from scratch.

- It had to provide flexibility to shape the castle quite freely, not just by using straight lines and right angles. This implied designing walls with hinges – similar to those which we all know well from classic LEGO Castle sets.
- It had to be sturdy enough even for younger children to play with, without causing damage (or at least not too much). The system used to connect the modules also had to meet this requirement.
- It had to be as playable as possible: including all the play features that you can expect from a toy castle, such as a working drawbridge and/or portcullis, and still have enough

space on the walls and inside the towers to easily place all the knights who are defending it.

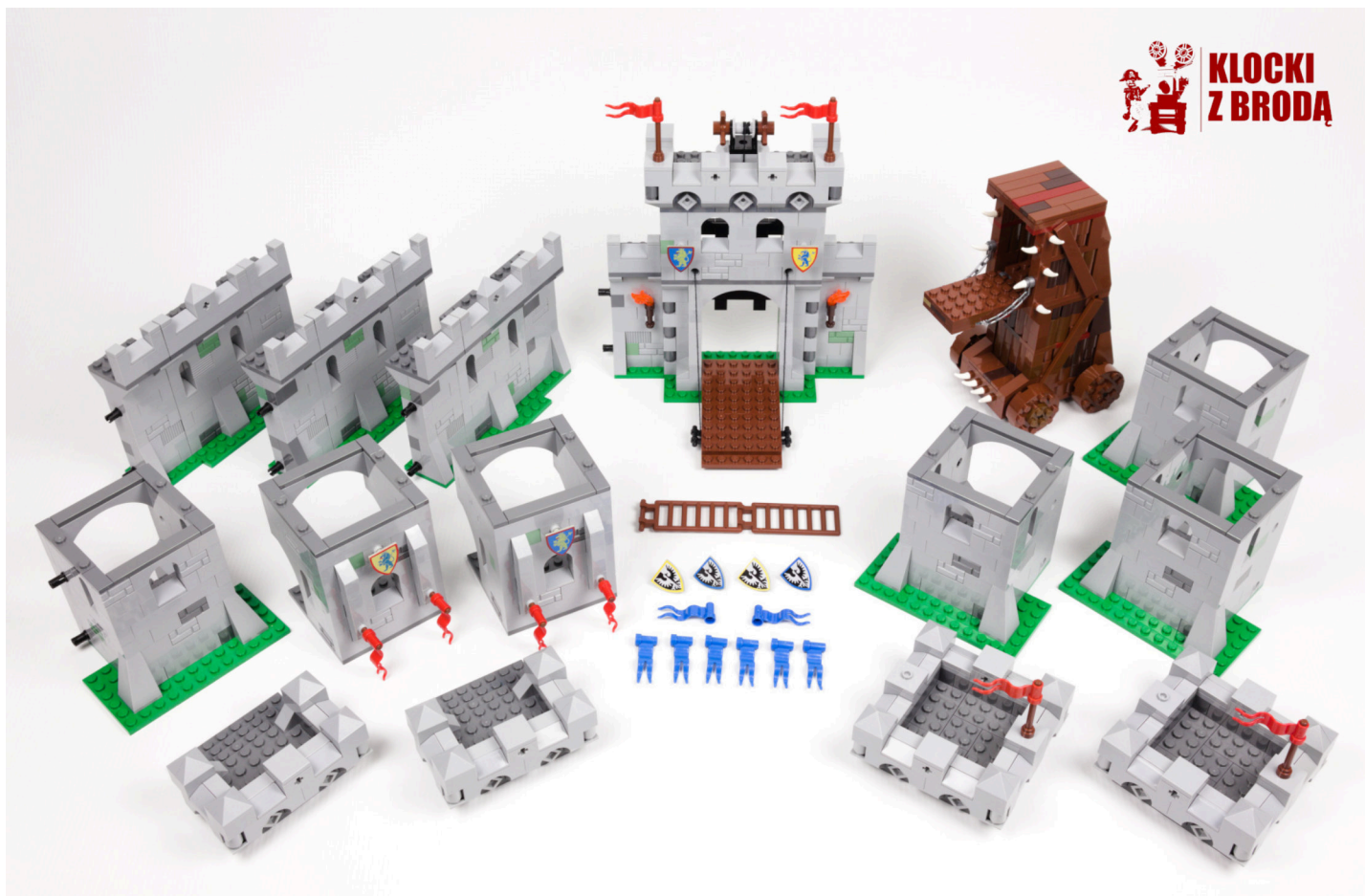
As you can read, ideas are not lacking, nor are AFOLS unwilling to revive the line, as shown by the success of sales, for example, of the Castle sets put up for sale through Bricklink, or the expectations that each new set or each new rumor about this line arouses. Perhaps in the near future, the multitude of franchises now filling the LEGO catalog will leave room for the return of our favorite classic lines."

Bruce N H: www.classic-castle.com

Michał Piotrewicz: www.flickr.com/photos/156847189@N02/

Pictures by Michał Piotrewicz and Brickset







VALBRICK LEGO MASTERS

Interview by Rafa Muriel

LEGO Master images provided by Atresmedia

Images from the Alzira exhibition by Valbrick

Within the community section we wanted to take advantage of the fact that in this year the 1st edition of the Spanish LEGO Masters show took place, and thus be able to chat for a few minutes with the winners. They are both members of a community called Valbrick. Let's get to know more about them in this little interview.

HBM: Hi, Víctor and Stefan, tell us a little about who you are, what you do, and what association you belong to.

VICTOR: I am a "standard" family man, born in the Jedi year 1977 and therefore with 43 moons behind me. I'm married in my first and only

marriage with Belén Cardona, and I'm the father of two children, Lucia, 13 years old, and Martín, 10 years old. We also have two dog daughters that complete the family.

My occupation is the management of a family business that I share with my brother Raúl, who is dedicated to the manufacture of composite components. I always like to say that I dedicate myself to "handicrafts to the beast". I belong to the RLUG Valbrick, and I tend to be quite active and participatory in the association at all levels.

STEFAN: Well, I'm 35 years old, married to my wife Gloria, so the wedding was Stefan and Gloria, and not like the singer Gloria Estefan :), and we

have two little ones Jorge, 6, and Laura, 4. The four of us assemble LEGO at home.

HBM: Do you remember how you started playing and building with bricks?

VICTOR: Unlike Stefan, I have gaps, and I don't remember exactly what my first set was. I do remember that it was the toy that I liked the most by far, and I also remember the last set before my "dark ages", and that was the mythical Technic Chassis.

Of all that first "LEGOLian" phase of my childhood, nothing has remained to my misfortune.

The second "LEGOLian" phase already appears much later, with approximately 33 years, that is to



say 10 years ago. It has been a re-enjoyment, a rediscovery of this beautiful and complete hobby that is building with LEGO.

STEFAN: When I was about 7 years old I started playing LEGO and my first big set was the Metroliner, an iconic 9V train, I think it's the ref #4558 (1991).

HBM: How much time do you spend building with LEGO?

VICTOR: What work and family obligations allow me. It is a question that many people ask me and it is difficult to answer. I would change the question and formulate it this way: How much time do you dedicate to LEGO?

At my present "Sickly LEGOLian" level, the time that one dedicates to the hobby is not only for construction. If the question is formulated in this way, other facets of our hobby are included, such as the time dedicated to the association, the organization of events, the planning of new projects, etc. . .

I would say that of all the hours of the day that I am awake, for at least 2 hours my mind or my hands are doing something with LEGO. 365 days a year x 2 hours a day = 730 hours a year at least I dedicate to LEGO, with total security.

STEFAN: Not much lately, since I am fully preparing for a civil service examination that will





surely be called in 2023, but even so, I get a few weekly hours.

HBM: What are your favorite themes?

VICTOR: Without a doubt, Star Wars. But like all fans we love other themes and we are amazed by the creations and techniques that you discover in them. I must be honest and admit that I like each and every one of the themes, current or old.

STEFAN: What I assemble the most is Creator Expert (trains, modulars, etc.) and above all I like MOCs in order to make models on bases with the MILS system.

HBM: Great, you know and use the MILS system! A question that seems difficult for me... if you had to choose a piece, what would it be?

VICTOR: Indeed it is difficult, because depending on the project that one has at hand it can vary, but given my love for Star Wars I could say the Wedge Plate 12x3 (47398 from the right or 47397 from the left) in light gray.

STEFAN: Not counting bricks, which is probably what we have the most in general, I really like tiles, since I don't usually like studs in sight.

HBM: Tell us a bit about Valbrick. When was it born?

VICTOR: I am not a founding member, although my involvement is total and I consider myself part of the association from the first. For me it was a great discovery and a great joy to meet Valbrick, to meet people from my environment with the same hobby.

STEFAN: Well, everything was born from meeting a lot of AFOL people in Valencia and getting to know each other, and then seeing what we could form from a good group of people and if we could do something more than just have a few beers and exchange sets, at which point my wife told me: "you could form an association". The founders Garci, Luis, Isa, Rafa, Toni, Tyr and I spoke about that in person... at that moment Rafa began to lay out paperwork and Garci and I processed it and that is how this was born, which is like another child with shared custody.

HBM: How many members does Valbrick have?

STEFAN: Well, I would say that we have passed the figure of 60 already...

VICTOR: And growing... I would say that the really important thing is not how many we are, but how dynamic and participatory we are. In Valbrick we have a very nice problem... People are so active, so participatory, that sometimes there are problems allowing everyone to exhibit everything they want to exhibit. Holy problem!

HBM: What exhibitions do you usually do each



year as fixed, or which ones do you always have in mind?

STEFAN: We used to have some fixed ones, but with this LEGO Masters thing, Valbrick is experiencing an impressive boom and we're expanding the calendar, so maybe we'll plan on four big annual events and some additional small collaborations, but this is changing. . .

VICTOR: As Stefan says, after LEGO Masters we are seeing a lot of interest. My experience and what I detect is that where we exhibit, people are impressed and grateful. Stefan does not indicate it, but today we could say that we have three fixed expos: Alaquás, Alzira, and Gandía.

HBM: What places do you usually visit?

STEFAN: Regarding LEGO, the horizons are expanding, since we have both been in an exhibition in Paredes de Coura. For my part, I was recently at the LEGO store in Belgium and at Easter we will go to Billund, or so I hope, because due to Covid I have already had to cancel the trip twice two years ago.

VICTOR: What a nice question! The COVID problem of recent times has cut our wings in relation to this issue, but it already seems that things are normalizing, so in which places would I like to move? In all that I can! I would love to take advantage of the LEGO hobby, using the expos in other places as an excuse to travel and meet other fans.

For now, I have several goals:

- Paredes de Coura





- Navarre (Pamplona)
- France (Orléans)

This last objective, if finally fulfilled, will be spectacular. It is a joint construction between three crazy people in the Star Wars Tatooine theme. We know each other from social networks, and we have agreed to get to that expo to assemble together and set a Guinness record. LOL!

HBM: In the end, the common challenges as an association added to your own challenges are what make an exhibition something rich and varied. What objectives do you have during the year as an association in addition to your personal challenges?

STEFAN: The association is very dynamic and tries to satisfy the objectives of all partners, so if someone wants to exhibit something then they have free rein, as long as it is LEGO. . .

VICTOR: As a member of the Board of Directors of Valbrick, I could say that part of my personal challenges are common to those of the association, but if I have to answer the challenges/objectives of the association, among others, I would emphasize achieving "exhibition infrastructure" so that the organization and assembly of the exhibitions is comfortable, simple, fast and with a perfect aesthetic finish.

HBM: Regarding LEGO MASTERS, how long have you been dedicated to this project?

STEFAN: I wanted to sign up two years ago in another country. When they took us in Spain we researched other programs in other countries, but that is something common to all the participants.

VICTOR: I have to say that is fair and necessary. Stefan prepared himself perfectly and extensively. But hey. . . 5 weeks of shooting I would consider it a lot of time spent. . . right?

HBM: How much time did you have for each episode?

STEFAN: As you well know there are short and long tests, so the short ones were recorded on the same day and the long ones more than one day, there was no fixed rule. . .

VICTOR: Regardless of the length of the tests themselves, which were variable, each episode was shot in 3 days. I knew when I was going on set but I didn't know when we would leave the set. . . Marathon sessions!

Not only did the time of the test count, but there were other factors that made the shooting faster or slower. In any case, and seen from a temporary distance, time passed quickly and we were more than entertained. I liked to say that it didn't matter how many hours we spent, it would be worse to spend a single hour "working in the sun".

HBM: Was the program spontaneous or was it subject to a script?

STEFAN: The production people would obviously have a script. We (Stefan and Víctor) did not have a script but we did have an action plan, if such a test comes out, well this. . . obviously there are tests that we could not plan like the one with the motorcycle, since we did not know the type of pieces that would be available.

VICTOR: One is completely ignorant of how this "television" works, and from the outset one may think that everything is more natural and spontaneous. Once inside you realize that there is a script, which obviously in a reality show is very dynamic and variable.

When I say that there is a script, I am not saying that there is a script from beginning to end. That is, I do not mean that who is going to reach the end is scripted. When I say that there is a script, I mean an "on the fly" script, a script that is established as the shooting progresses.

HBM: What feelings do you get from the experience, both positive and negative?

STEFAN: The truth is that it's very hard and you miss your family a lot. In terms of the experience with Víctor, because it's something you'll remember all your life and having won, the feeling is clear, isn't it?

VICTOR: As a positive I highlight several things. The most notable isn't having won. Far from it, I personally consider Dani and Ángeles also winners of LEGO Masters. For me, the most pleasant experience has been the response of people in general.

I had a certain "fear" or restlessness in going public in this way with our healthy hobby. I was "afraid" of how I would come out on screen, how I would be reflected. My decision was to be myself, to be the Víctor that my friends and family know. The result has been infinitely more pleasant than I ever could have imagined. Outside of the "LEGOLian" environment, the affection, the shows of support, being amazed at what we were doing has been brutal. They have really made me proud of myself. Is there anything more positive than feeling accomplished?

As a negative experience, maybe not seeing my dogs for so long.

HBM: Now that you are LEGO Masters, what would you say is necessary to be a LEGO Master?

STEFAN: Víctor and I are still the same, but what I have learned, well I would say we both have learned, is not to depend on a specific piece to find a solution for a certain construction.

VICTOR: To be a LEGO Master on a technical level, you have to force yourself out of your comfortable environment. You must build with what you don't normally build with. You must forget about the immense catalog of parts that we have and build with basic parts. But most importantly, you must enjoy building as a child does.

In addition to the above, to be a LEGO Master you have to marry your teammate. You must know the virtues and capabilities of your partner, and you must give in even if sometimes your idea is different. You must trust your partner, there must be communication, you must know how to forgive. . . You must make the most of the power of four hands and two heads.

HBM: There were people related to other associations and another who lacked that link. Do you think there was any advantage to having that link?

STEFAN: What I noticed most about people who build and are in close contact with LEGO people is having the vocabulary to talk technically: slope, tile, hinge, jumper, panel, etc. . .

VICTOR: Being associated or not, I think, did



not imply an advantage as such. However it is true that those of us who were associated with some LUG, we could see that we had more experience in construction. Surely there are people who are not in any association and build a thousand times better than us.

HBM: You mentioned that for the program you had been asked for photos, videos, and in your case, Stefan with the family building at home, etc. . . How has it been being separated from your families during those weeks in which you have been recording the Program?

STEFAN: I would have preferred it if, as in other countries, when the contestants are presented, a photo or video would have been shown with my family, whether they were building with LEGO, traveling or playing in the park.

VICTOR: Regarding the family environment, I am left with the pleasant feeling that they are very proud of me, and that the experience, regardless of the victory, has been worth it.

HBM: Then behind closed doors, at home, in privacy, you will have had time to savor the experience and be able to recreate yourself at certain times. Would you repeat the experience?

STEFAN: Yes, I would repeat the experience but with other conditions, that is, being able to see the family weekly.

VICTOR: The truth is that behind closed doors I have enjoyed seeing myself. I laughed a lot at the gestures, the phrases. I have remembered

many moments and details that do not appear in the programs. Repeat? The truth is that right now I wouldn't know what to tell you. Perhaps I would say yes, without a doubt, if I could compete with my children.

HBM: Hmmm, funny question, was the money real? Would you have also liked to be able to opt for material in the form of LEGO bricks?

STEFAN: If the money had been real I would have run away with it. . . A trip to the birthplace of LEGO would have been nice. . . Billund.

VICTOR: Joking aside, I think we were all surprised that there was only one cash prize, for only one couple. If before starting the program they had proposed that the two finalists had a prize, for example 70% for the winners and 30% for the other couple, we would have all signed.

And I think we all would have signed too, if it wasn't all a cash prize, but shared with LEGO materials, or a trip to Billund. . .

HBM: Do you think that now you will be able to dedicate yourself to your hobby in a more recognized way? For example, you went to the LEGO Store in Barcelona last January assembling your winning creation, which was part of the prize of the LEGO Masters contest. Do you think that this could be part of a series of collaborations or on the contrary it will not be more than an addition to your personal experience?

STEFAN: Obviously now there are people who associate you with that and didn't even know it

before, although we almost have it tattooed on our forehead "I AM A VERY BIG FAN OF LEGO".

VICTOR: Well, honestly, I think it would have been brutal if the program had been broadcast at the correct time. Unfortunately, it has gone completely unnoticed by the general public.

In my personal case, I live in Alzira, a city of 45,000 inhabitants, so many people have seen it and, without a doubt, they have discovered another way of seeing LEGO.

Recognized? More than recognized in my city. So much so that we are currently fully involved in an exhibition, carried out by Valbrick, which is proving to be a success that no one expected.

HBM: Do you want to thank anyone for being able to live the experience?

STEFAN: Finally, I want to thank you for this interview and I want to thank Víctor for having shared this magnificent experience and also my wife Gloria for having supported me from minute zero.

VICTOR: Of course, I have a lot to be thankful for. To my family, my wife Belén, my brother Raúl, who gladly took care of everything in my absence. Stefan obviously, because even though we are very different, we are united by a passion for LEGO, and we have been able to form that team, that "marriage" that I spoke of before, capable of speaking, capable of yielding.

HBM: My sincere congratulations on that LEGO Masters cup and thanks for your time.



Utilitarian, having scarcely any outside windows, this LEGO example may seem plain on the outside, but it ticks many boxes of historical accuracy. *Oton Ribić*

CASTLES

Reality vs Fiction

By Oton Ribić

If you're a LEGO fan and reading this then you are likely well aware of the huge range in medieval-style castles, especially those following European design, in the world of our favorite plastic brick. Real or imaginary, ruined or intact, large or small, they have been around almost since the dawn of LEGO, and show no signs of disappearing anytime soon.

Having said that, probably the most fun one can have with castles is building them! Of course, everyone is free to pick any style and technique to their liking (that's the fundamental point of LEGO, isn't it?), but what if you are a builder who strives to make their castles resemble real ones as closely as possible? Since their features are in reality often quite different to Hollywood depictions, we

will explore several concepts to help you make your castles more realistic.

Firstly, some terminology. Strictly speaking, a castle has to satisfy two criteria: it has to be a proper home to its owner, and it has to be fortified and protected against attacks from the outside. If only one of these two criteria is met, it is better described as either a palace or a fortress respectively.

The overall form of a castle depends on the period of its construction. The earliest castles, from approximately the 10th century in continental Europe and from the 11th century in England, were of motte-and-bailey type. These consist of a hill, artificial or natural, atop which a keep is constructed. The entire area is surrounded

by a wall, i.e. a palisade and optionally a ditch. The first motte-and-baileys were made of wood, but by the early 12th century, stone was used for the keep and the surrounding wall, and by the 14th century the majority of castles were made of stone. The main advantage of a motte-and-bailey design (especially if using wood) is the fast construction time combined with low average skill required for building them.

By the 13th century, new designs appeared, reinforcing gatehouses as the key weakness in most castles' defense, as well as introducing stronger and higher outer walls. Eventually construction morphed into the other familiar design, using the keep's outer walls as the main defensive feature, doing away with the separate



A famous example of a keep having multiple walls, which was not uncommon for the very rich owners to order. MathKnight, Wikimedia.

baileys, and using the castle's inner courtyard for outdoor activity.

The next important influence in castle architecture was the invention of gunpowder, which allowed cannons to largely replace trebuchets by the mid-15th century. As a countermeasure, angled bastions were invented in the early 16th century, which employed sharply angled star shapes to deflect cannonballs rather than absorb them. But that was already the beginning of the end, as by the 17th century castles had largely lost their defensive value, and except for in England during the civil war, they were being converted into decorative palaces, with larger and more numerous windows.

Regardless of the time and shape, the location of a castle was always carefully chosen. It was preferable to have it on the top of a hill to slow down the invasion, and on largely rocky terrain where possible, to prevent or at least deter attackers from digging underneath the castle. However, building on soil allowed for another important defensive feature if the owner could afford it: a moat.

A further excellent, if rarely available, advantage was to build a castle right next to a river, sea, or a lake. This would allow castle dwellers under siege to at least keep some connection to the outside world by being restocked by ship—or perhaps escaping in one.

The contours of the stone walls, whether used for the keep or the outer walls (of which elaborate castles could have many), largely depended on available resources. Rounded walls are more stable, more resistant to direct attack, and allow more internal space for their length, but also take longer to build and require greater masonry skill. Contrary to common romantic notions, building a castle was an extremely expensive undertaking at the time, even for kings, and skilled labor has always been rare and expensive.

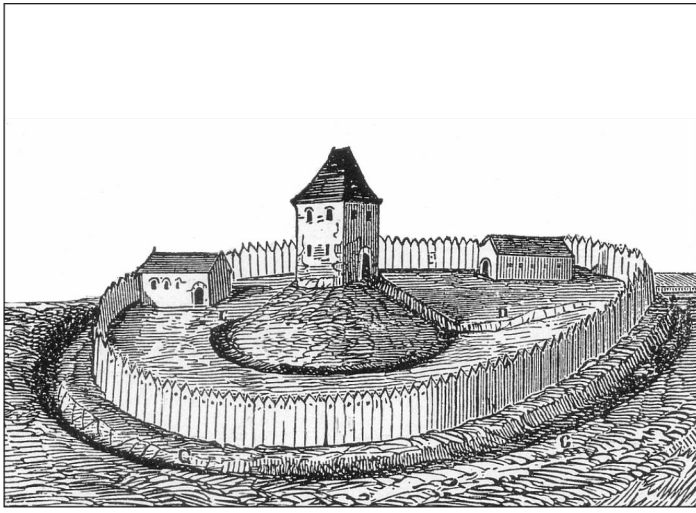
The allocation of rooms in a castle also tended to deviate from our modern expectations. While it is nice to dream about castles with endless dance halls, lavish dining rooms, billiards salons

and elaborately decorated chapels, the reality was much more practical. Any proper castle had to devote an even higher share of space to various “boring” utility areas than a regular house does. This is because even in usual circumstances (and more so during political difficulties) a castle would house a significant garrison of military personnel.

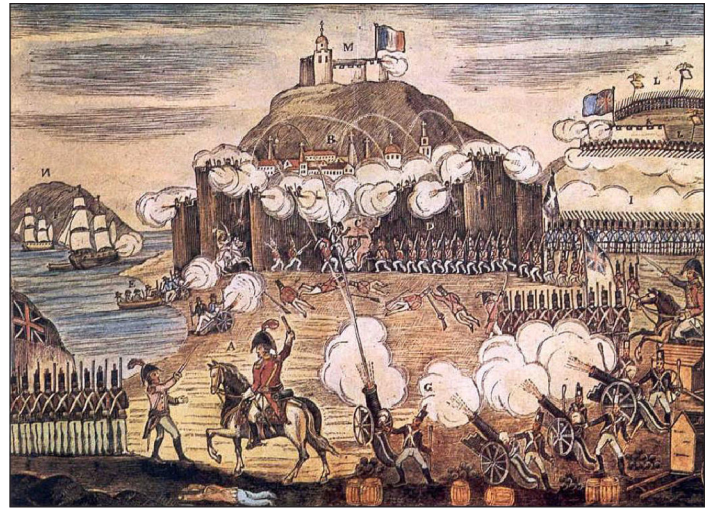
Of course, a soldier's living space was not particularly luxurious, with the main hall often being used in place of rarely used barracks. Yet the need for dozens, or hundreds of soldiers to be fed daily meant that a typical castle's stores, stables and kitchens would seem enormously oversized and over-designed by today's standards. The



Castle decoration was not just for the owner's comfort: expensive tapestries and banners were often displayed as a symbol of wealth and influence. Tangopaso, Wikimedia.



Motte-and-bailey, the oldest castle design, built from wood in the early days. Later, stone became the preferred building material.
Arcisse de Caumont, Wikimedia.



Gunpowder spawned a new, angled castle design, but in the longer run signaled the beginning of the decline of the castle era.
Denis Dighton, Wikimedia.

owner could afford the luxury of a main hall and a personal, private section of the castle, but without a significant military presence a castle would make little sense. To give an analogy, during troubled times medieval castles were like a static version of a modern aircraft carrier, i.e. a well-defended base from which attacks could be launched against surrounding areas when needed.

A further reason for huge stores was the possibility of a siege, where even the tiniest piece of food could help in enduring the siege for longer than the surrounding enemies could patiently wait. The majority of sieges were not won or lost through trebuchets or direct fighting, as movies often portray, but rather on the castle defenders' ability to avoid starvation.

At this point one might wonder how and why, if castles were designed on strictly utilitarian principles for warfare and efficacy, they ever came to be so decorative. This is an important question as it opens another topic on which cinema and general pop culture rarely touch.

Namely, while most of the "interesting" time periods for castles revolve around conflicts, battles, sieges and political tensions, this was far from being their regular *modus operandi*, even throughout the medieval era. While castles had to be ready to defend their owners, for most of the time they were praying and hoping to retain peace. Contrary to typical belief, medieval lords were typically very reluctant to solve conflicts by force, as peace meant prosperity, and prosperity meant higher income via taxes. Castles were a home, with all the little comforts and decorations any homeowner likes to apply.

An important related aspect is the role of castles as medieval instruments of psychological warfare. They were meant to impress guests, enamor

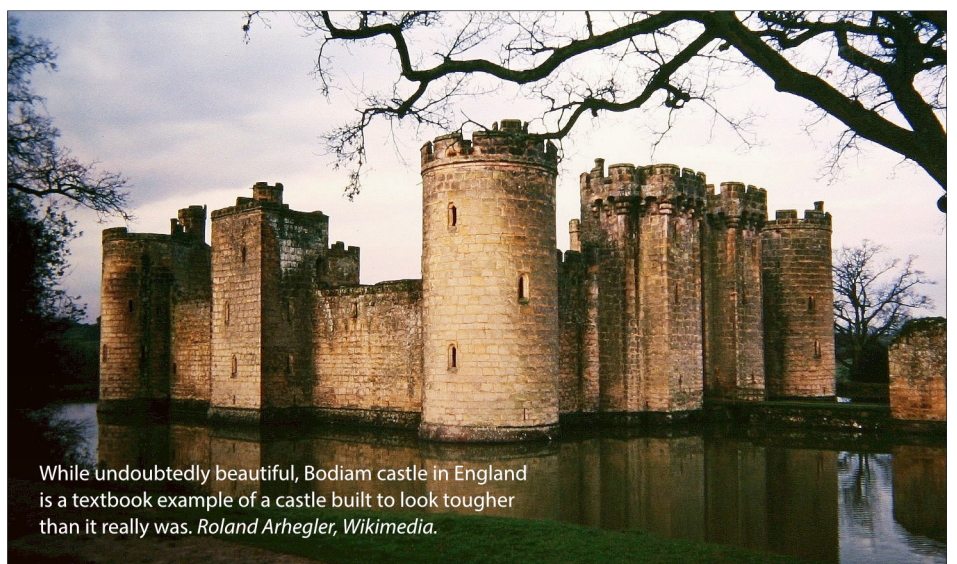
potential allies, and deter potential enemies. For that reason, many real-world castles were built to look much more formidable and unconquerable than they really were. Once pointed out, these cosmetic features often show their funny side. For example, machicolations (used for dropping rocks on invaders who manage to reach the wall below) make little sense in castles with close moats. One or two portcullises at the entrance have a practical defensive purpose, but having four or five is completely bonkers and over-the-top. They were there instead to be seen by visitors.

Decorative shields or colorful banners hanging from the windows follow the same principle. Due to the extreme cost of vivid dyes throughout most of history, an entire cascade of lively banners and tapestries served to show off the supposed wealth of the owner, giving an important psychological edge in negotiation should times become messy. (The same mentality exists today, though via other means.)

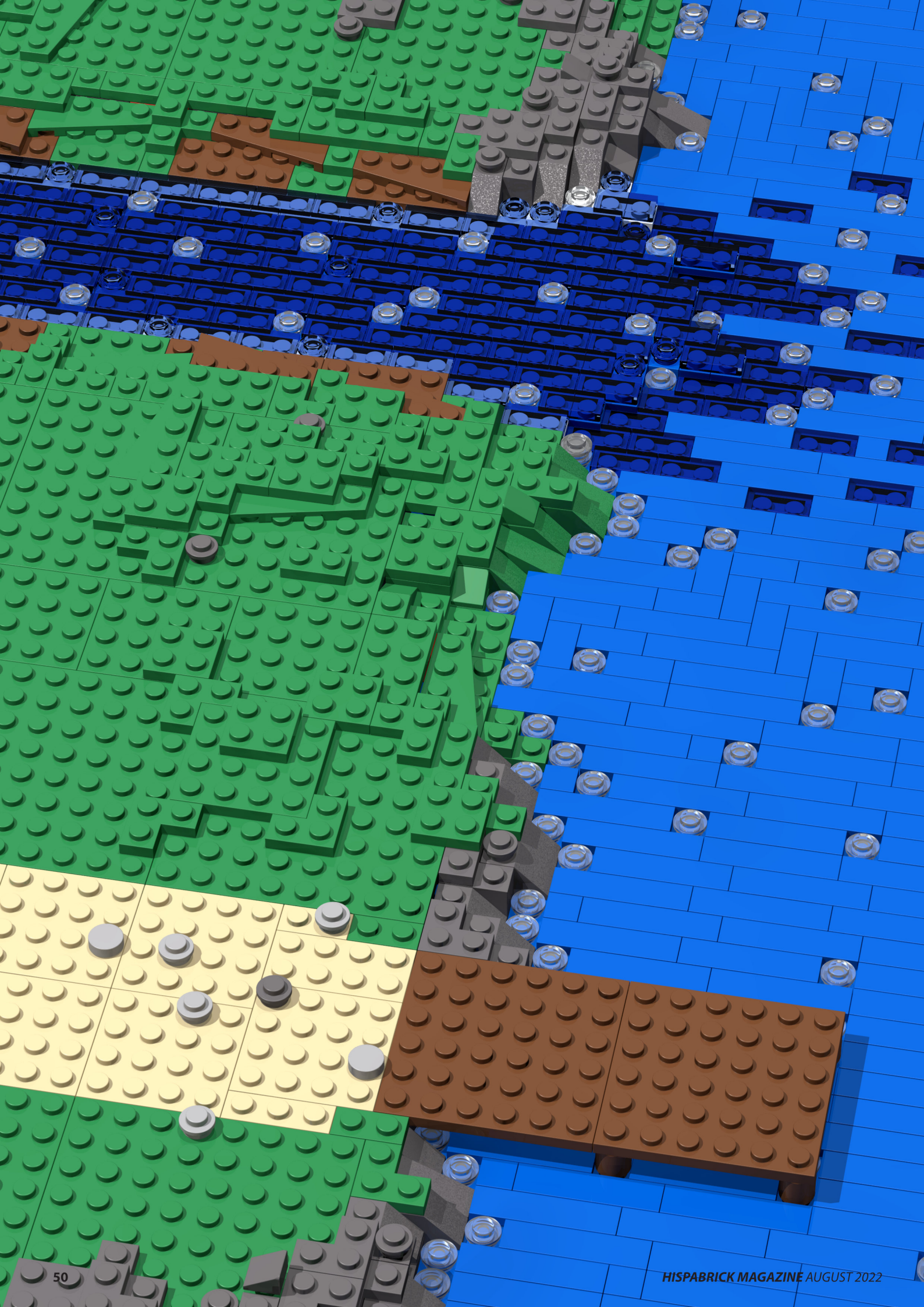
These considerations touch again on the

practical principles governing a castle's construction. Apart from the main halls and other important areas where guests would be received, most of the rooms in medieval castles were surprisingly small with low ceilings. Heating, especially during winter nights, was extremely demanding. Heating the whole castle (especially one with thick stone walls) was simply out of the question, as this would require a stupendous amount of firewood. Instead, inhabitants were either lumped closely together, or crammed into tiny areas that could be properly heated by a normal fireplace.

This is also one of the reasons why proper defensive castles rarely had windows, except for archers' slits, although windows have also often been avoided due to being obvious weak spots when under siege. The magnificent large castle windows we often imagine are the product of a more peaceful later era when castles had long lost their defensive purpose and became instead rather sturdy-looking palaces.



While undoubtedly beautiful, Bodiam castle in England is a textbook example of a castle built to look tougher than it really was.
Roland Arhegler, Wikimedia.



CASTLE MILS MODULES WATER

By Jetro de Château

MILS has been around for quite some time. As a matter of fact, for a little over a decade already. The fact that it appeared when it did wasn't entirely coincidental either. Several factors contributed to its development and in this article, I will give you a peek into my personal relationship with the system and how I came to embrace it.

There is a strong connection between the development of MILS and the LEGO Castle theme. As a kid, most of my LEGO sets were Space—until I discovered Technic as a preteen and almost entirely forgot about System themes. But every time I got my hands on a catalogue and saw the Castle theme it captured my imagination. Unfortunately, there was a small budget for LEGO sets and while Castle and Train most certainly had my attention none of the sets of those themes ever made it into my hands.

All of that changed when Castle was graced with a 10000 set—a series number that indicates the set was specifically aimed at adults—even if “Adults Welcome” wasn't officially a thing back then. 10193 Medieval Market Village drew me back towards Castle which, at the time, was still very much in the fantasy era fighting trolls and the like, something that didn't appeal to me at all. However, that was about to change as well with the new subtheme, Kingdoms, of which the Medieval Market Village appeared to be a precursor.

As an AFOL my available LEGO budget was

considerably more substantial than what I had as a kid—and this was a set I just had to get. When the more traditionally Castle-y theme “Kingdoms” followed in 2010, I had to get it all. That wasn't too hard to do either as there were only seven sets in 2010, four in 2011 and one in 2012 (not counting promotional sets, polybags and battle packs).

The largest and most exciting set from the first wave was the King's Castle (7946). I loved the fact that it was a modular setup, with each tower and each wall section built on its own base and then joined with Technic pins. While I really liked the castle, I felt the walls were too low and decided to use it as the basis for a taller castle while preserving the modular approach. And while I was at it, I wanted some landscape around the castle... including a proper moat for starters, as depicted in the box art. That presented two interconnected problems: making the water level lower and making the land level higher. I could already see this project was going to take up at least four 32x32 baseplates, meaning it would be too large to store as a whole.

I decided that to preserve the modularity of the castle and be able to store the landscape in sections, those four baseplates would be easily separable sections of landscape atop which I could place the castle. I didn't want to use too many pieces so I decided the moat level would be as vertically close to the baseplate as possible. The moat ended up being assembled from blue, dark blue, and white plates (the green of my baseplates didn't really fit with my idea for water) covered with transparent clear, light blue, and

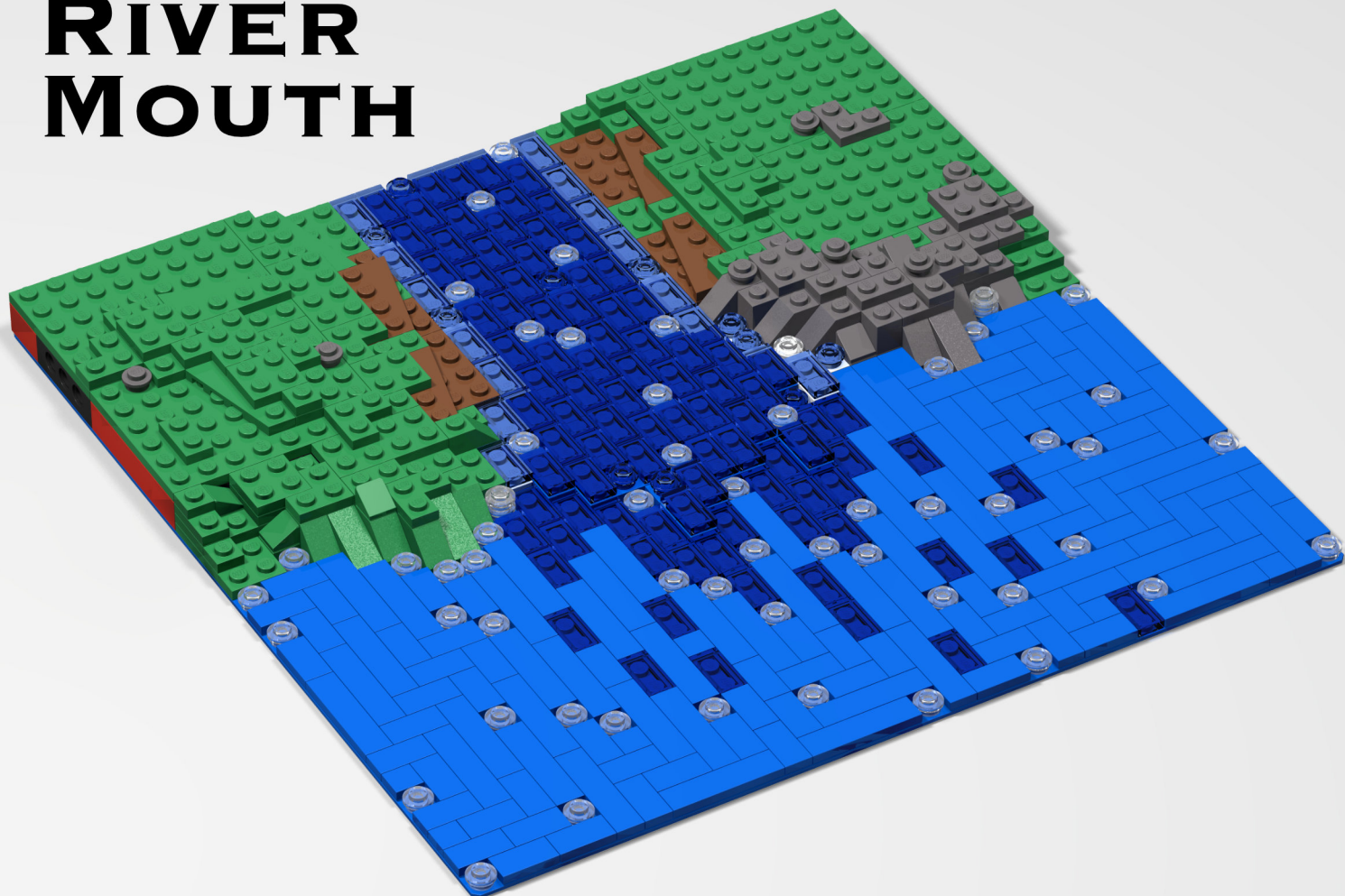
dark blue plates to create different shades in the water. The easiest way to make the surrounding land a little higher was placing bricks around the moat and putting green plates on top of those to represent grassy land.

I had been sharing some of my progress on the HispaBrick Magazine forum we then used, and it was around this time that fellow HispaBricker Antonio said “wait a minute! This looks a lot like an idea I'm working on for a modular standard.” To be honest, I was only concerned with making some landscape for my castle and had never considered the much broader possibility of making this into something more standardised and usable in different configurations. That idea really sparked my imagination.

At that point, Antonio took the lead in laying out the general rules for a broader standard. I then concentrated on what had captured my imagination in the first place: having water (from a moat, a river, or the sea) at a lower level than the ground, while at the same time making sure my large(ish) displays could be easily stored in my small apartment.

So what happened to my King's Castle and its moat? Well, it got cancelled. I was unhappy with how the castle looked as I made it taller and decided to build something from scratch. The moat never made it past the planning and testing stages. But I stuck with the idea of incorporating water into my landscape and I want to show you a few of the ways I have done that, to give you some ideas of how you can include them in your MILS displays as well.

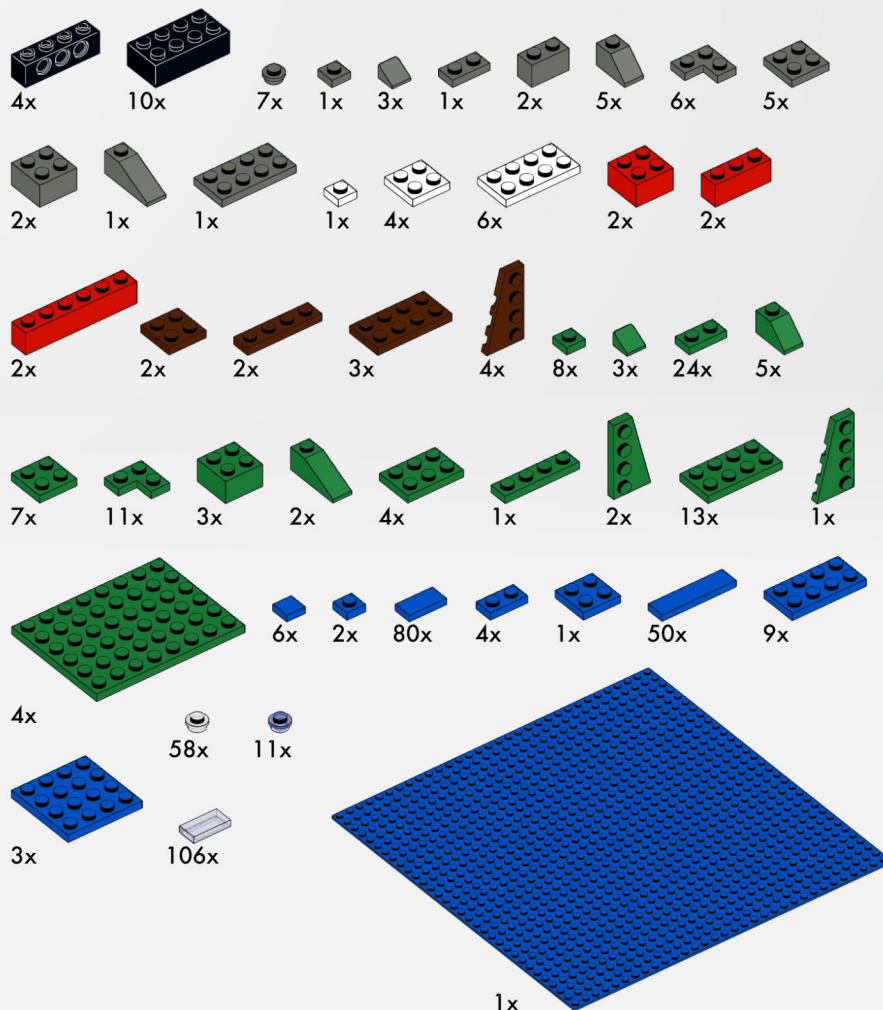
RIVER MOUTH











Every river has an end. And eventually all that water flows out into a lake or a sea. That means it can reasonably be expected that those bodies of water have a slightly lower level than the river itself. For MILS sea-level is defined as one plate above the baseplate. Some people don't want to tile over the entire surface of their sea. That is of course a very personal decision – and possibly cost driven. Of course, a choppy sea is not perfectly flat, so go with whatever you feel works best for you.









In this module I wanted to let my river run into the sea and show how the waters mix. To this end I placed some trans dark blue tiles from the river in the area that represents the sea and I placed them in the direction of the flow of the river. Since the river is a plate higher than the sea I decided to make an uneven break between the river mouth and the sea.

While you can see transparent plates round 1x1 on the front corners of the digital model, I don't normally place any plates there. I use the empty corners to connect the module to adjacent modules with blue tiles, both for stability and to prevent the corners of the baseplate from curling up.



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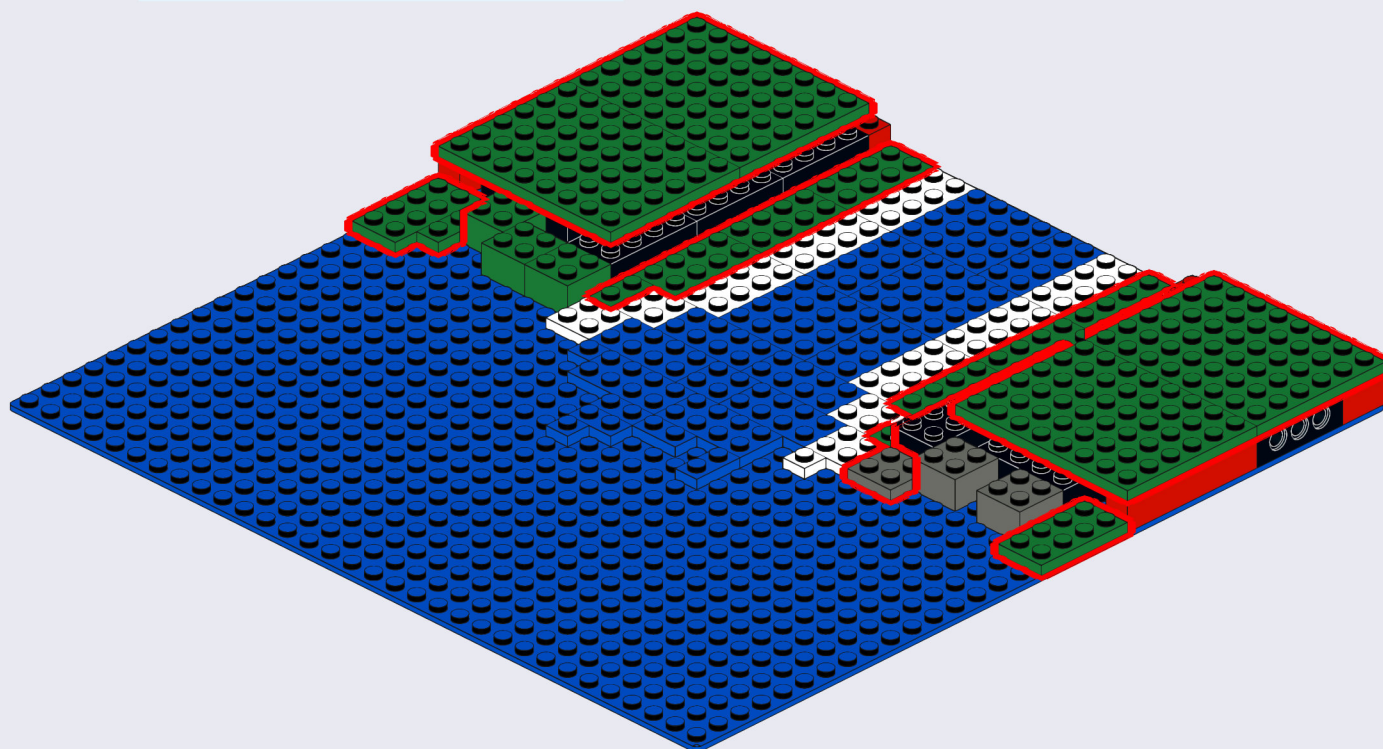
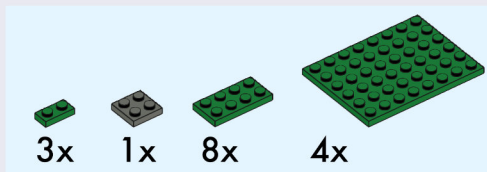


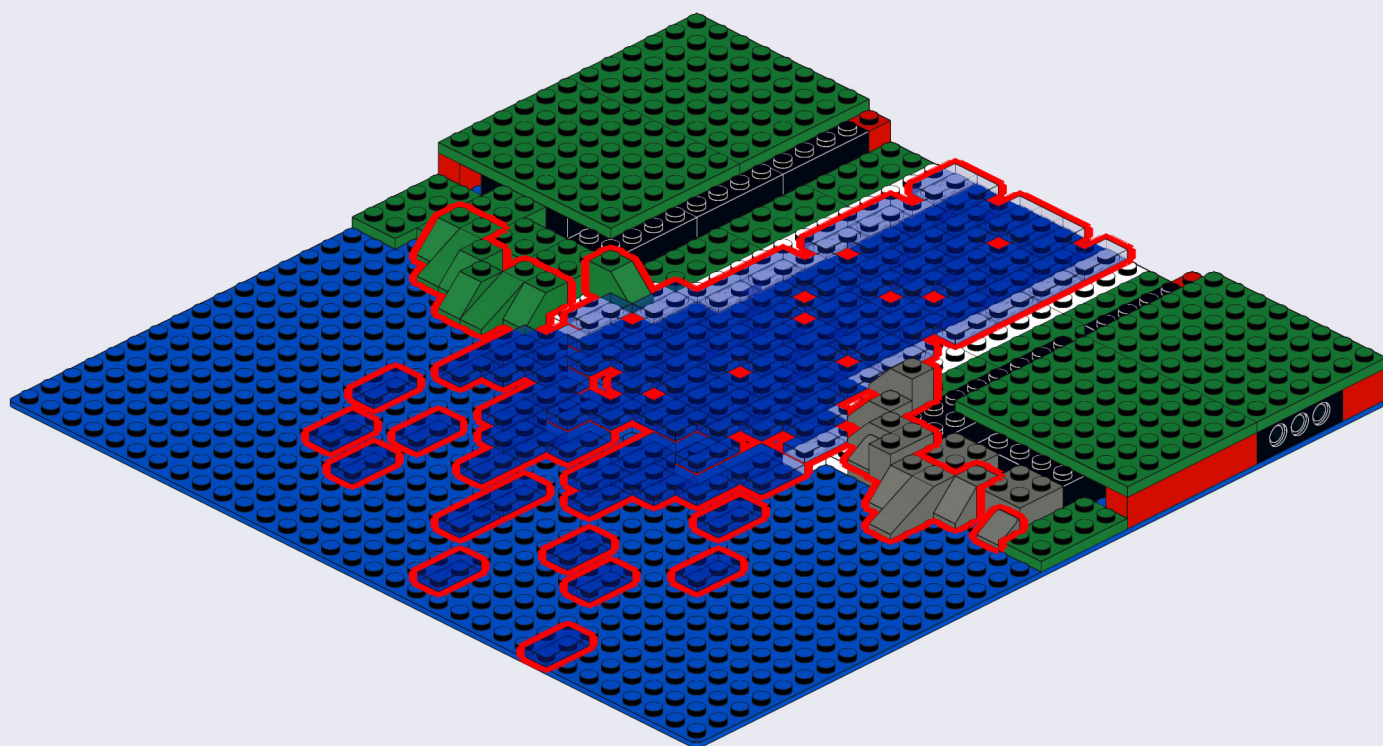
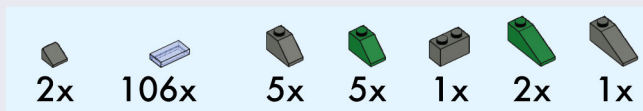
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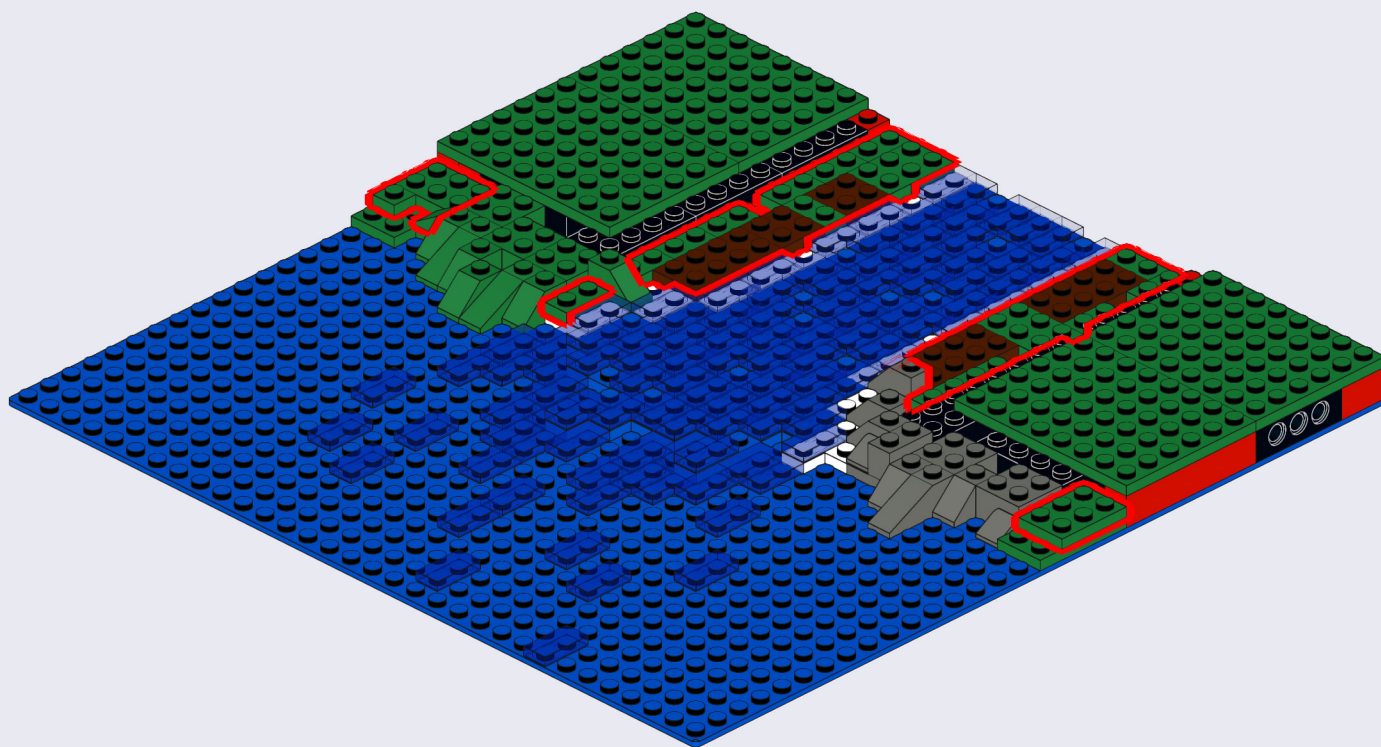
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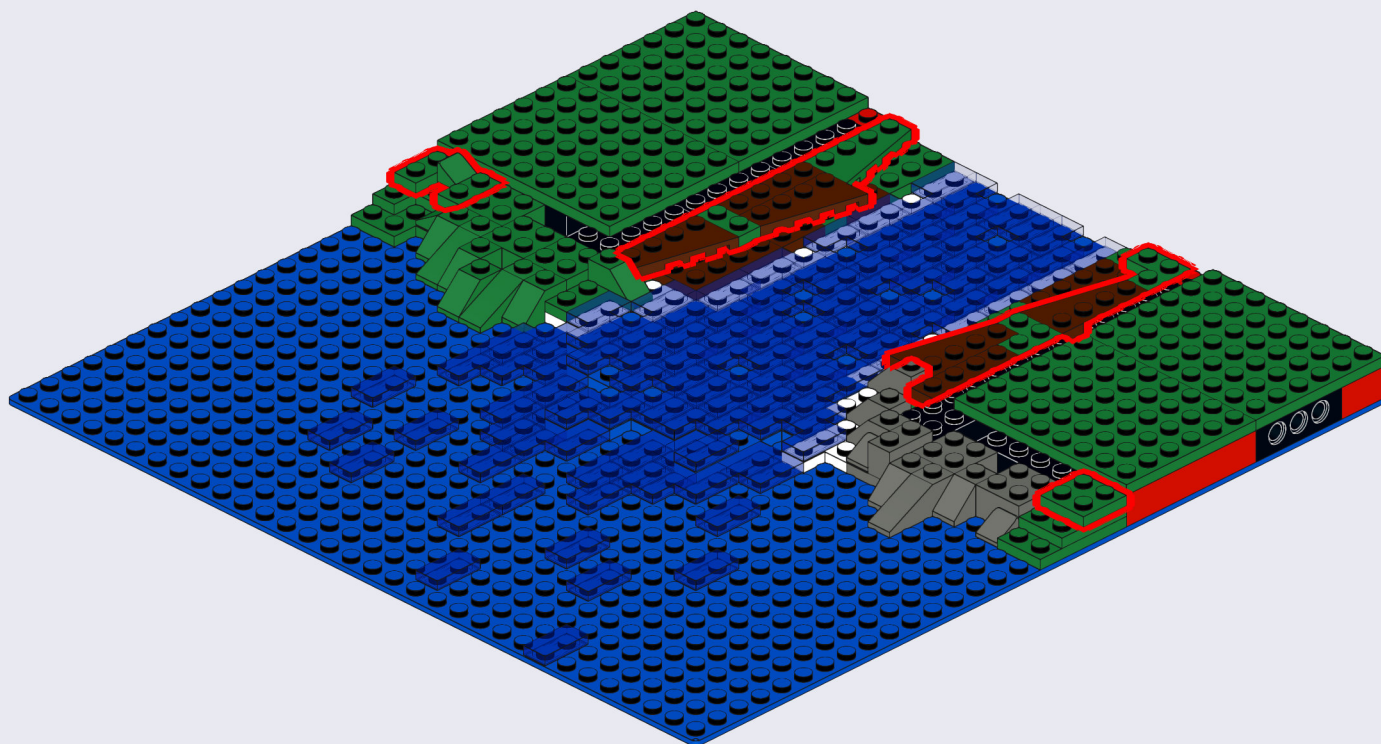
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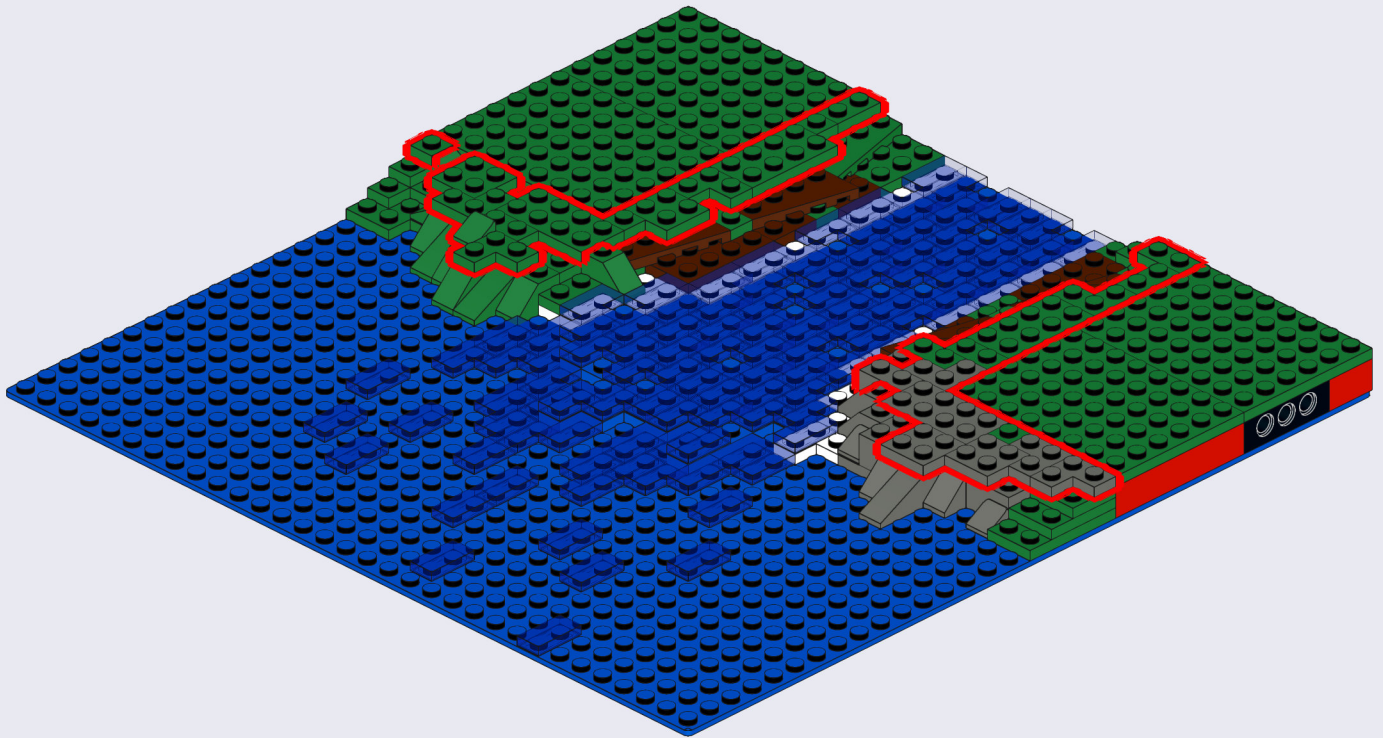
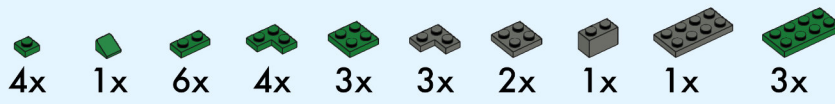
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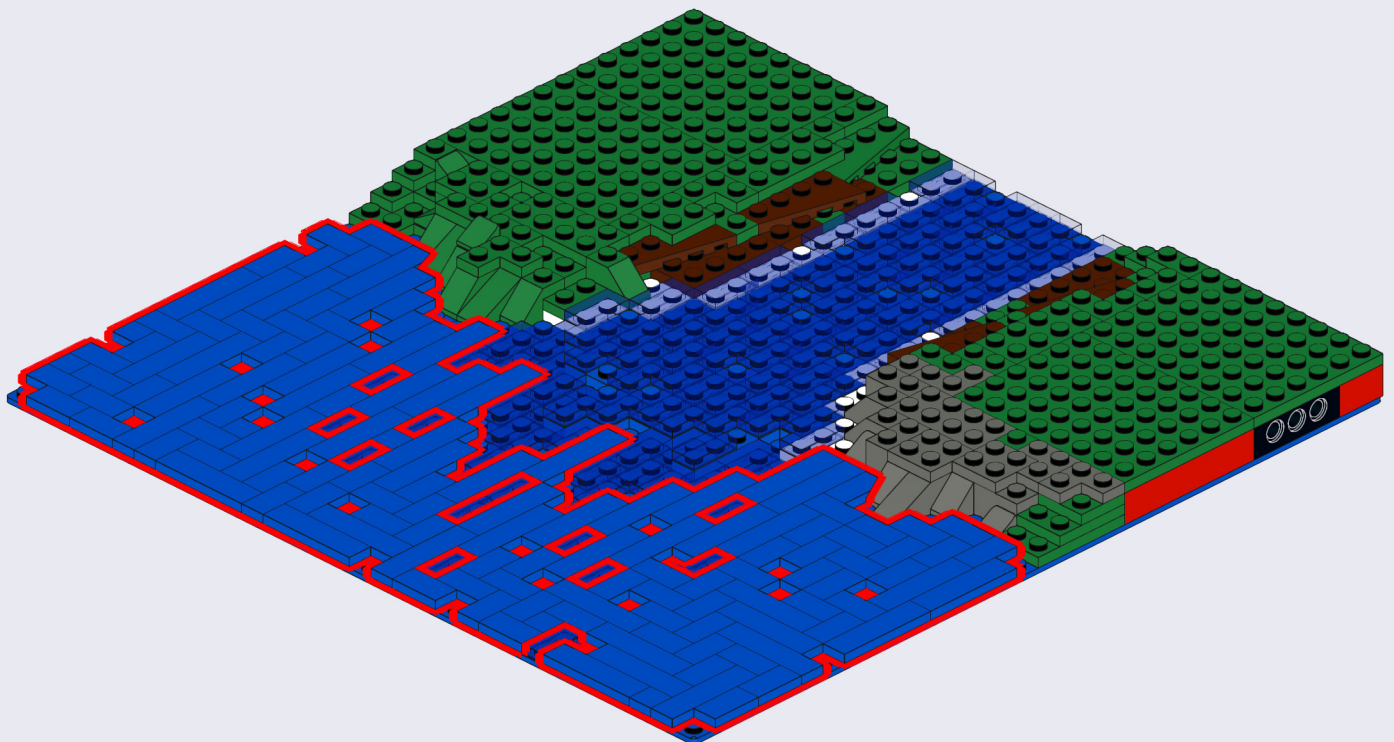
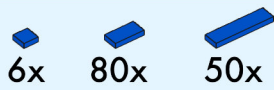
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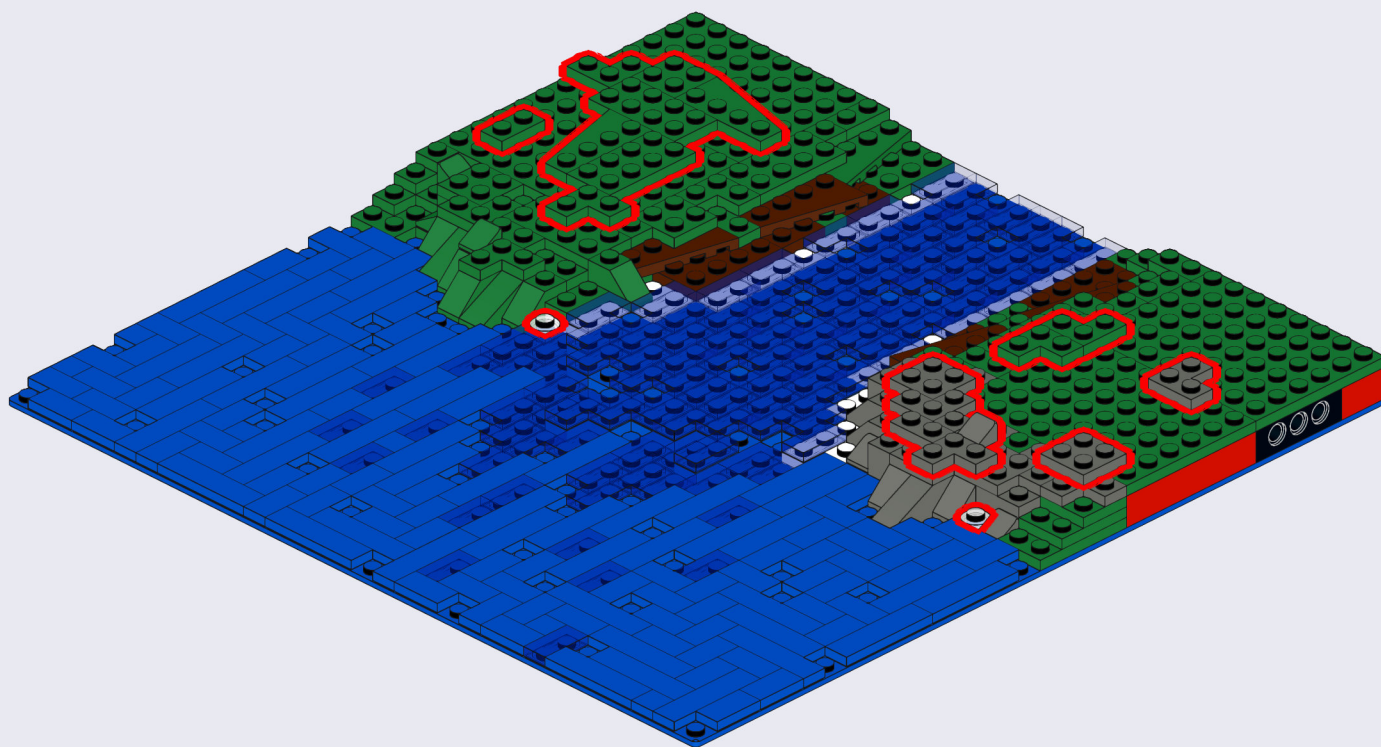
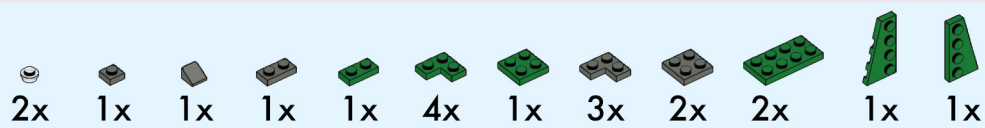
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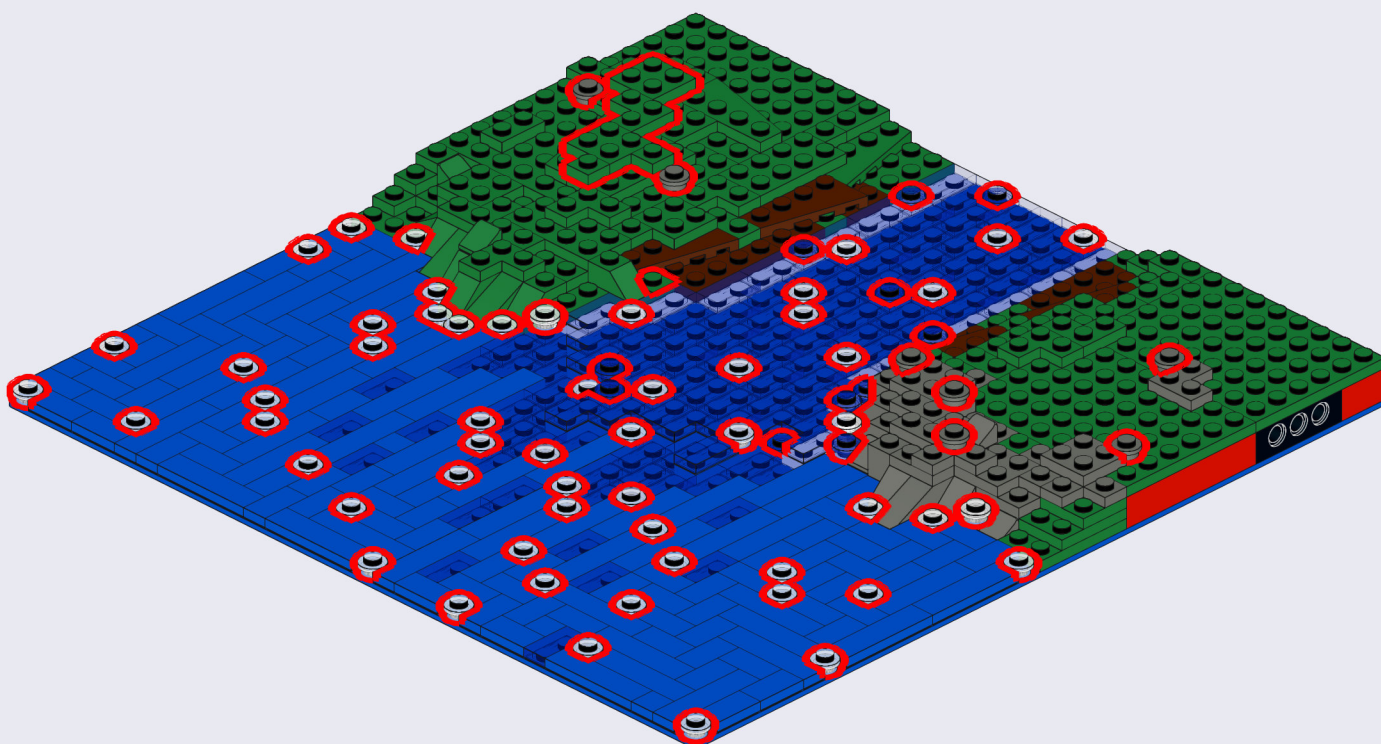
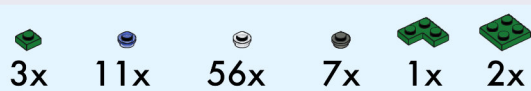
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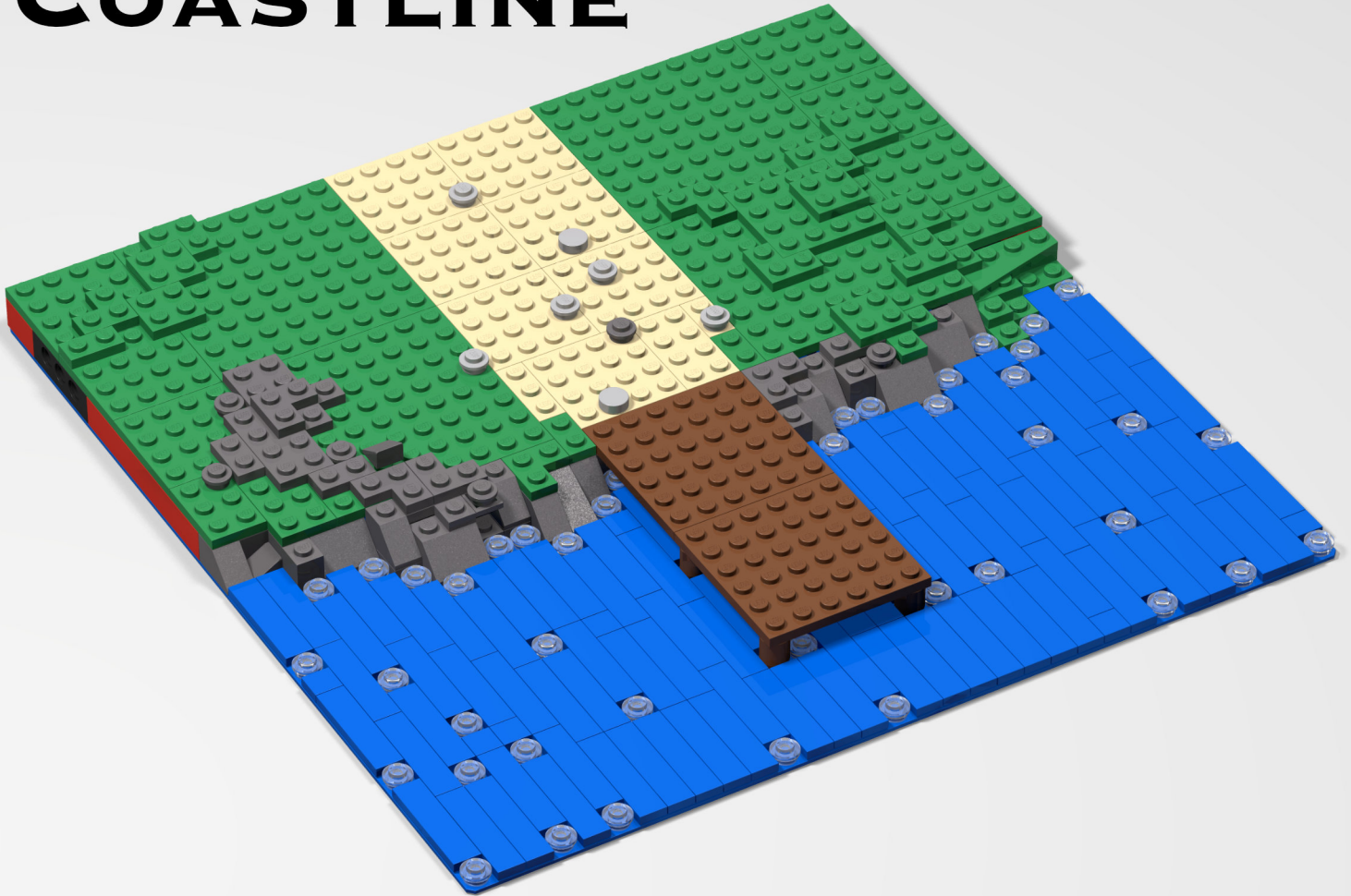
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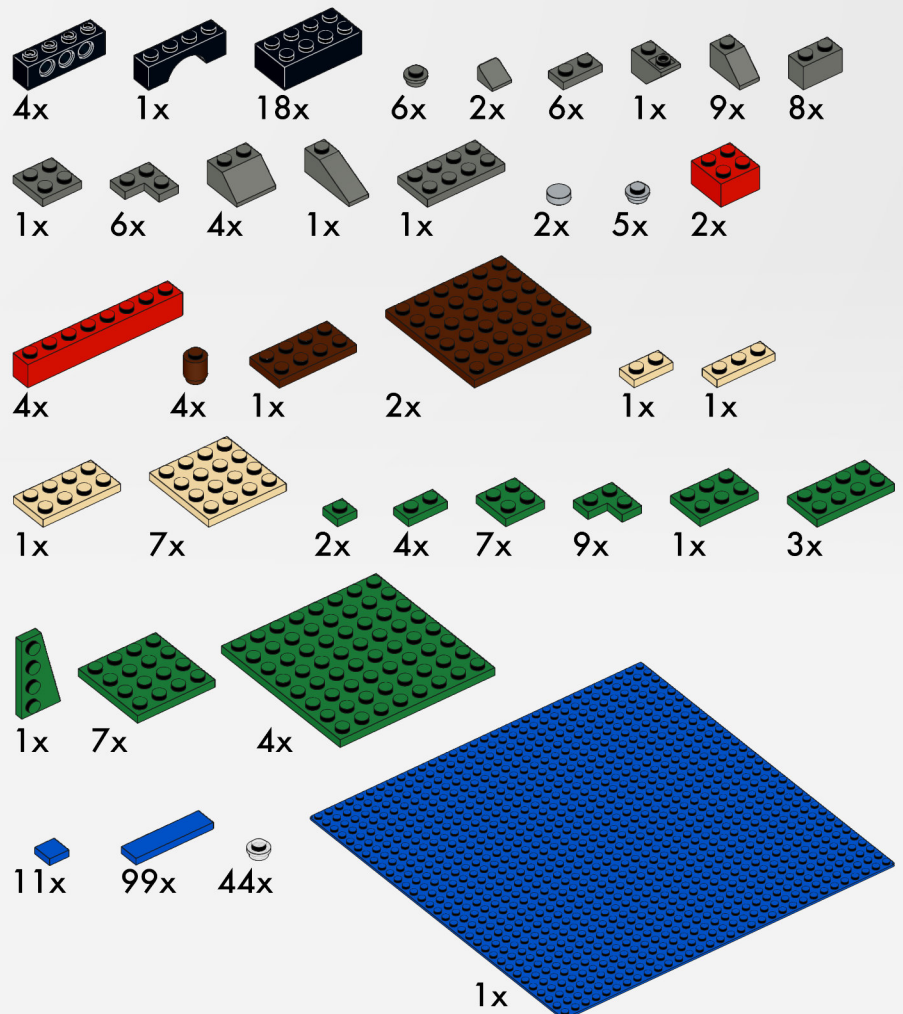


COASTLINE

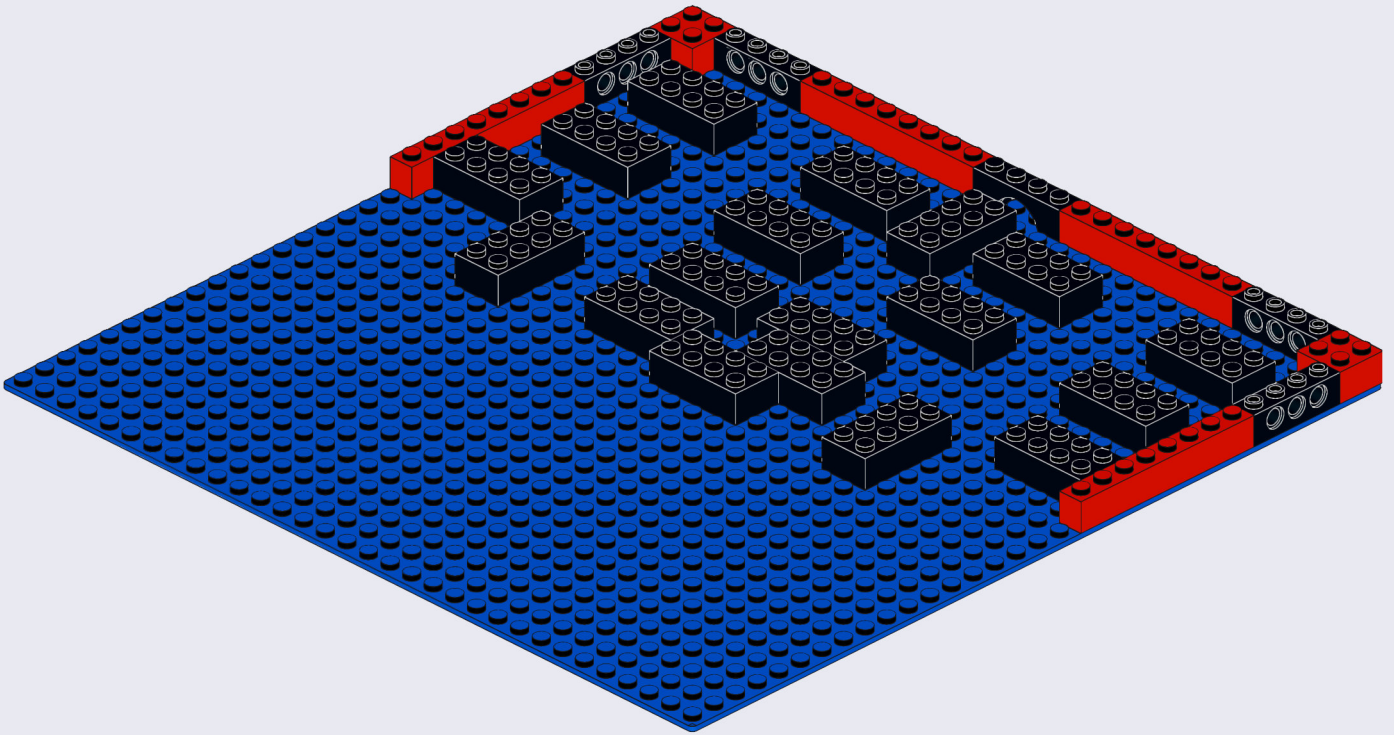
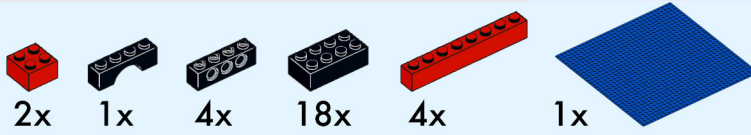


The rules for the coastline itself are very similar to those of the riverbanks: starting at the level of the water you go up one plate for each stud of separation until you reach the desired height of a brick plus a plate, again with a margin of plus/minus one plate. This rule applies to the external face of your module only. Inside your module you can use any inclination you like. In the coastline module you will find below I have used ascending plates in one corner, but for most of the coastline I chose to use slopes. The position for the start of the coastline on the external faces of the module is halfway along the baseplate: 16 studs in.

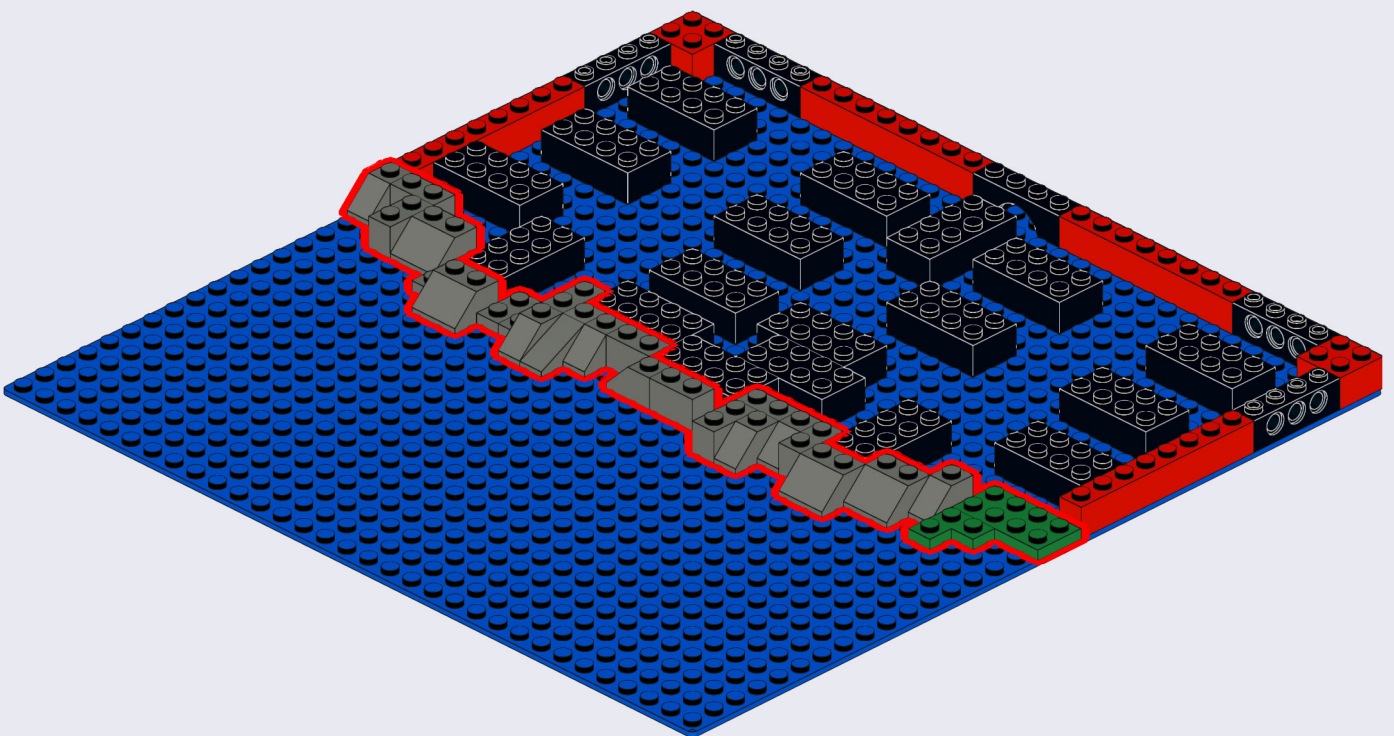
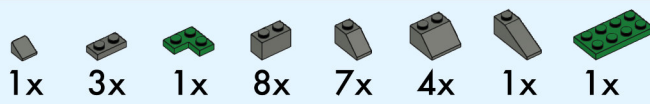
This module again includes a piece of trail that ends in a landing or pier. You can of course also just make a stretch of "straight" coast or include a beach or some other feature. As long as the external faces of your module conform to the standard anything goes.



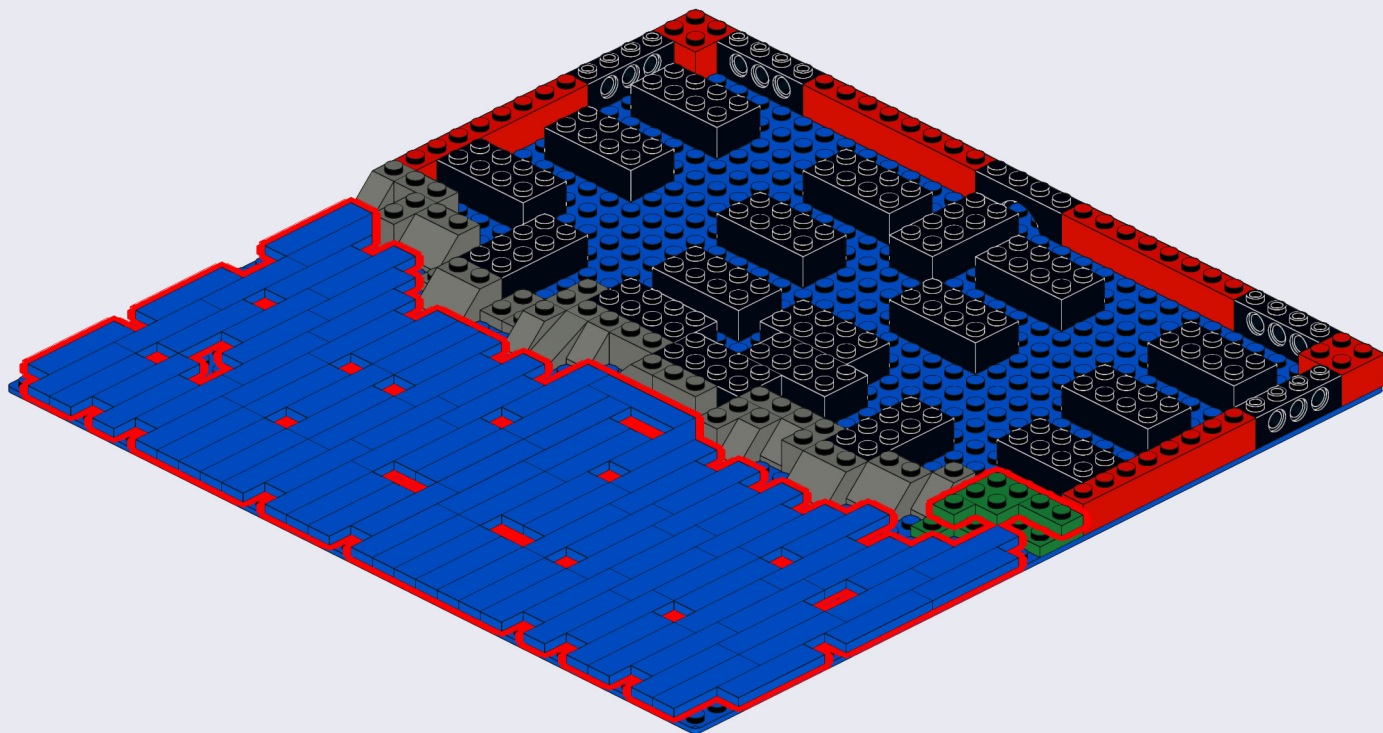
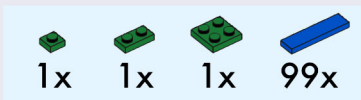
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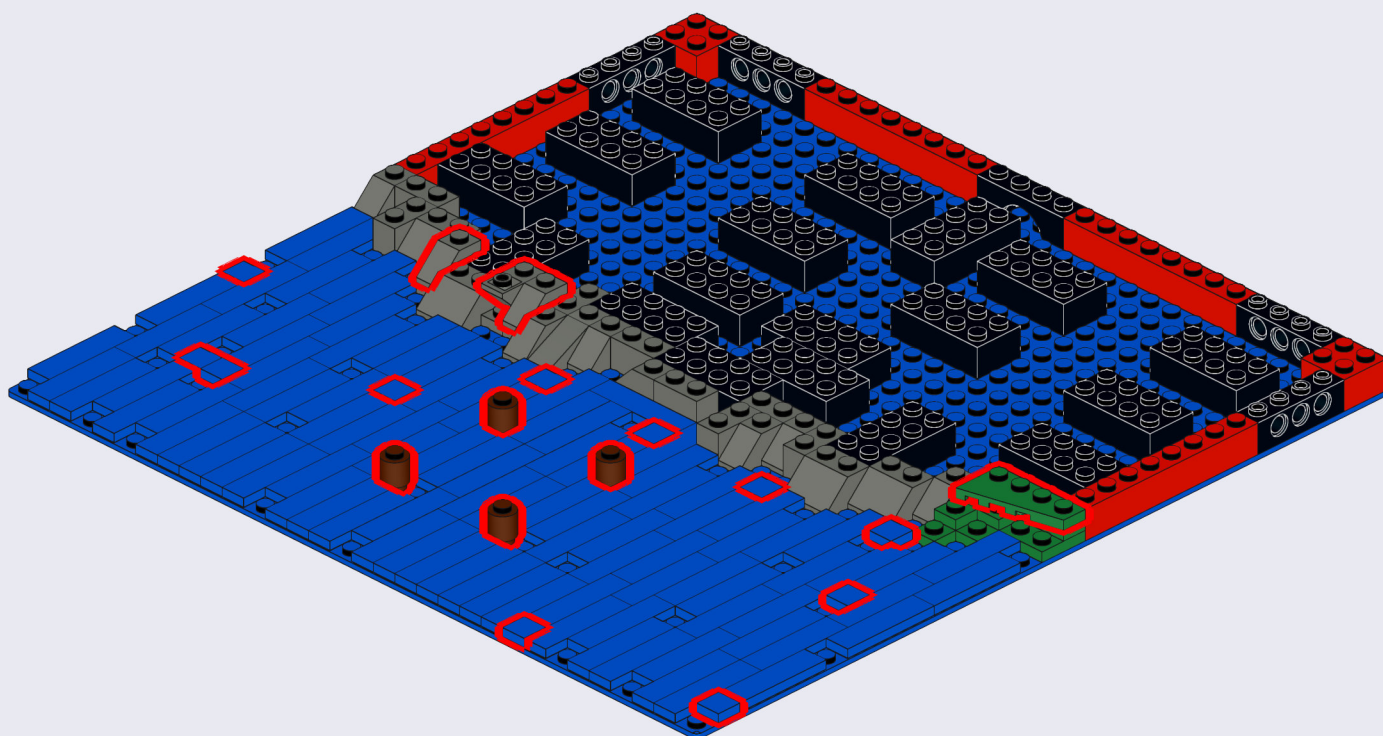
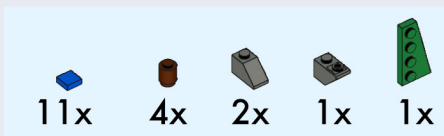
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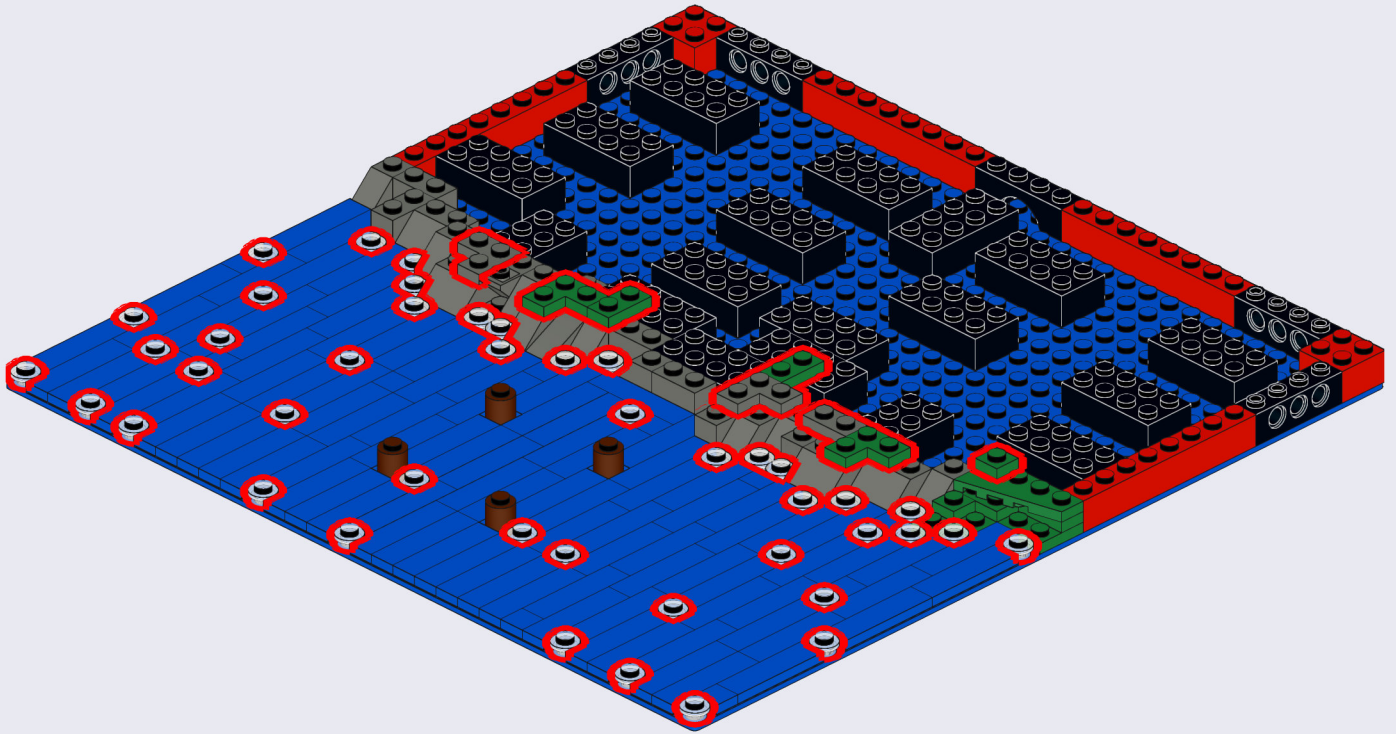


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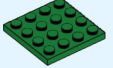

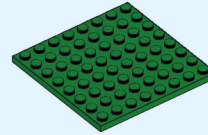


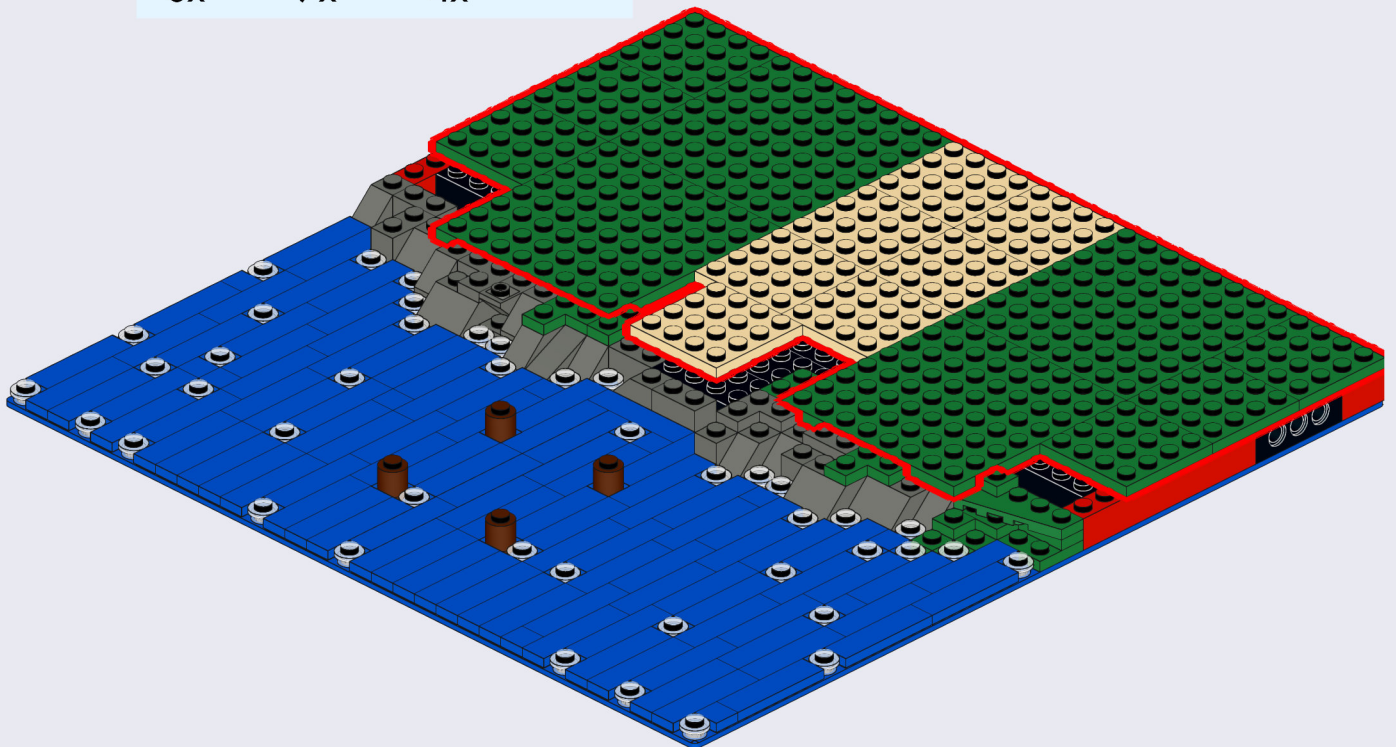
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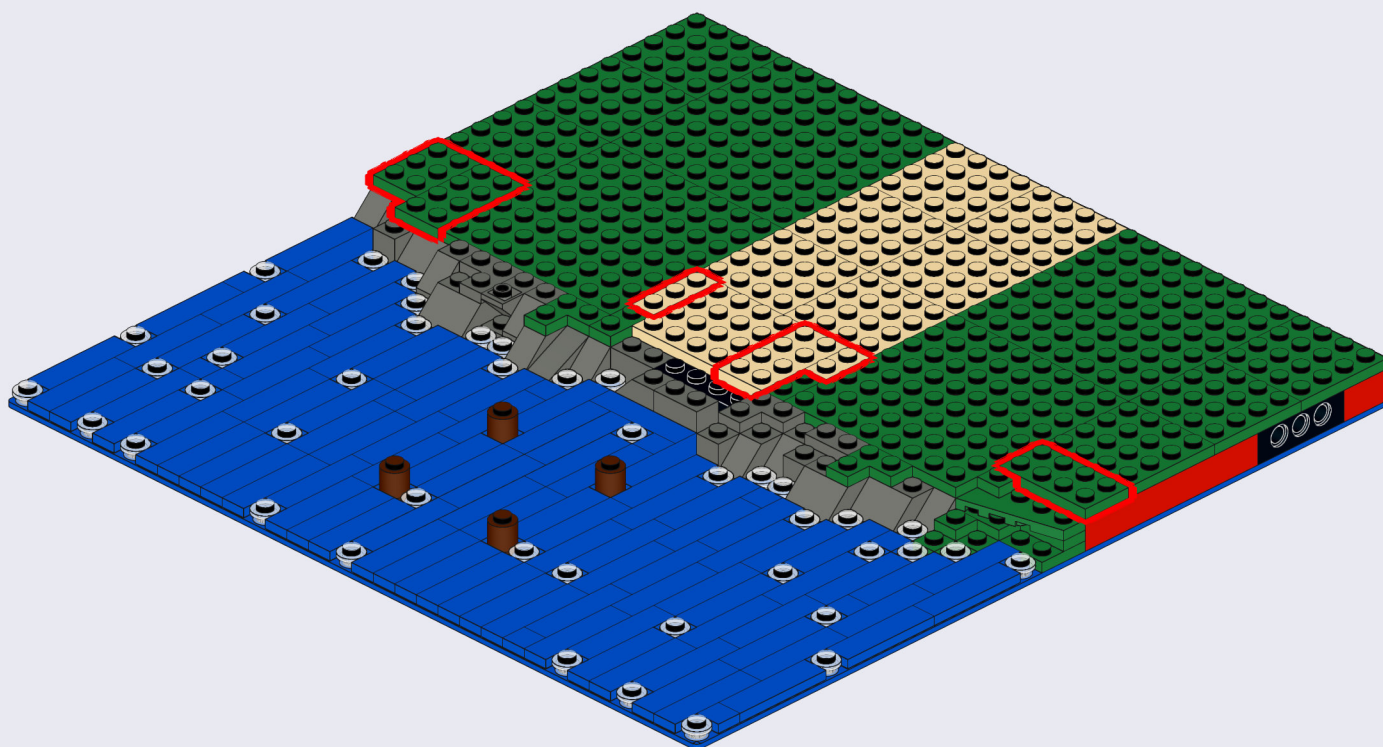
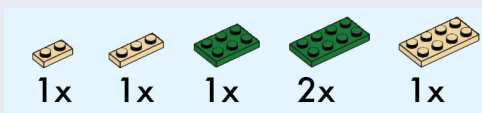


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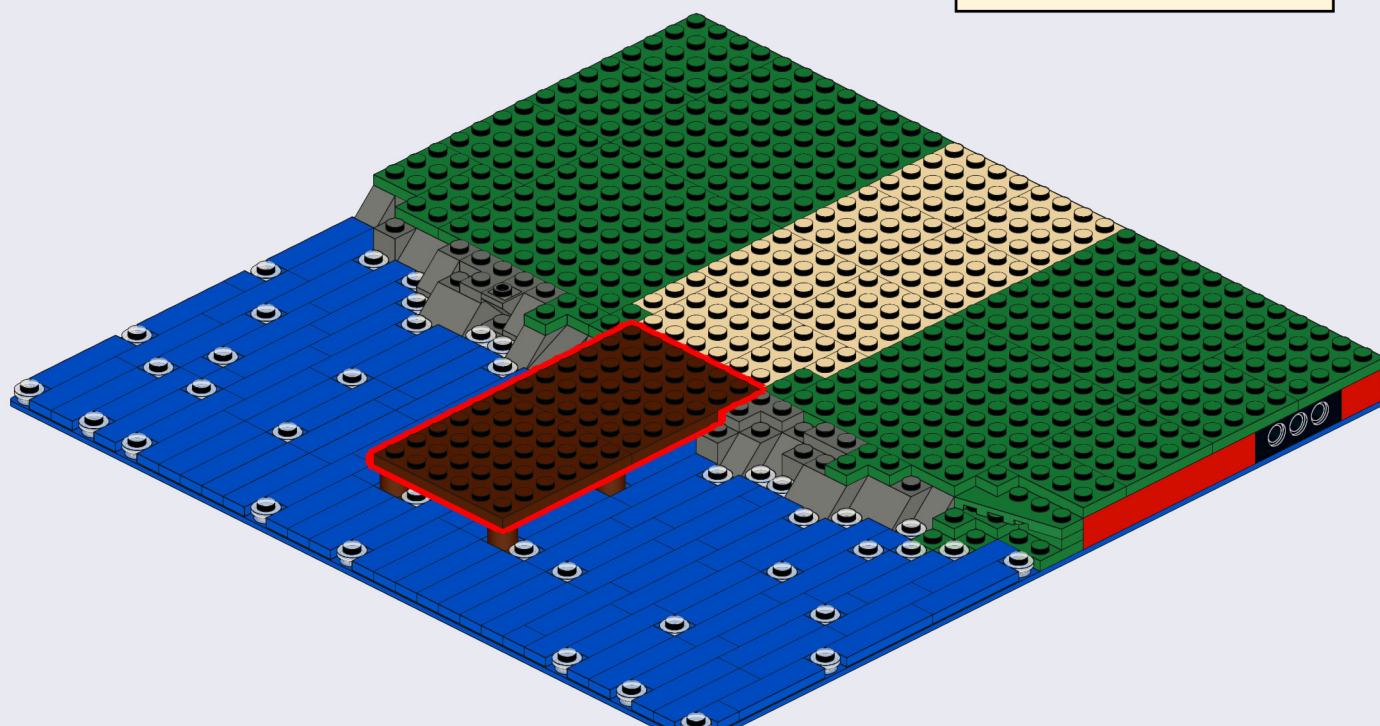
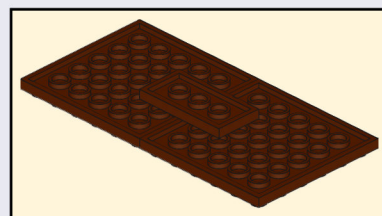
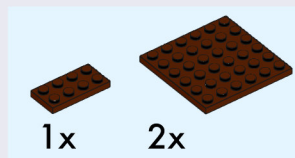
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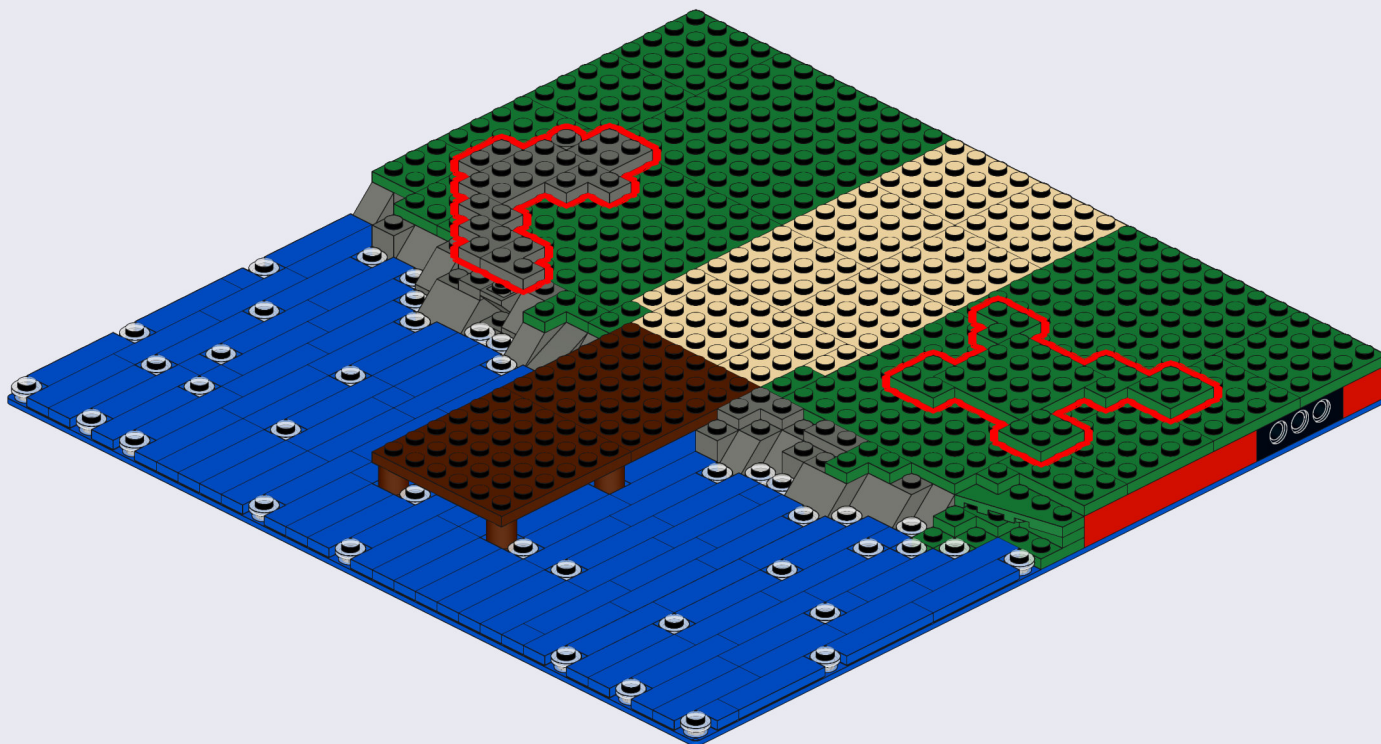


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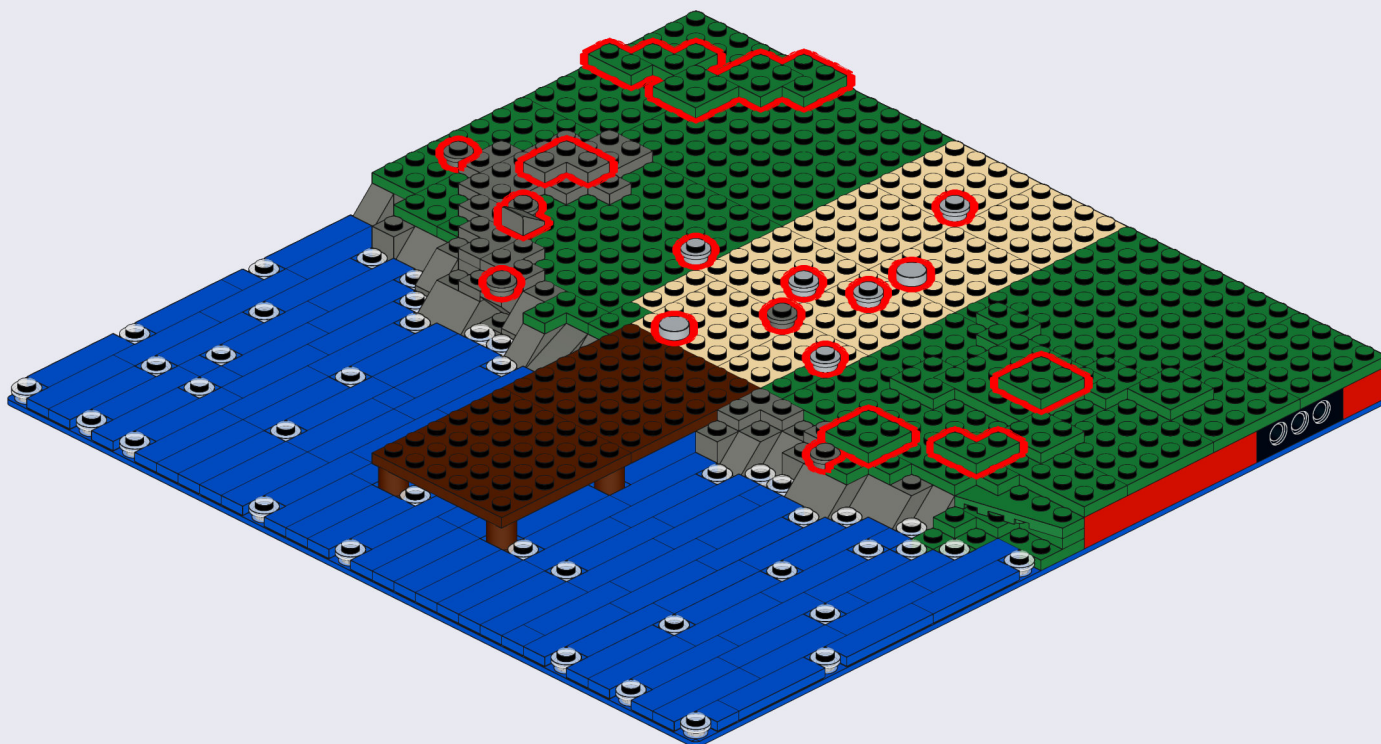
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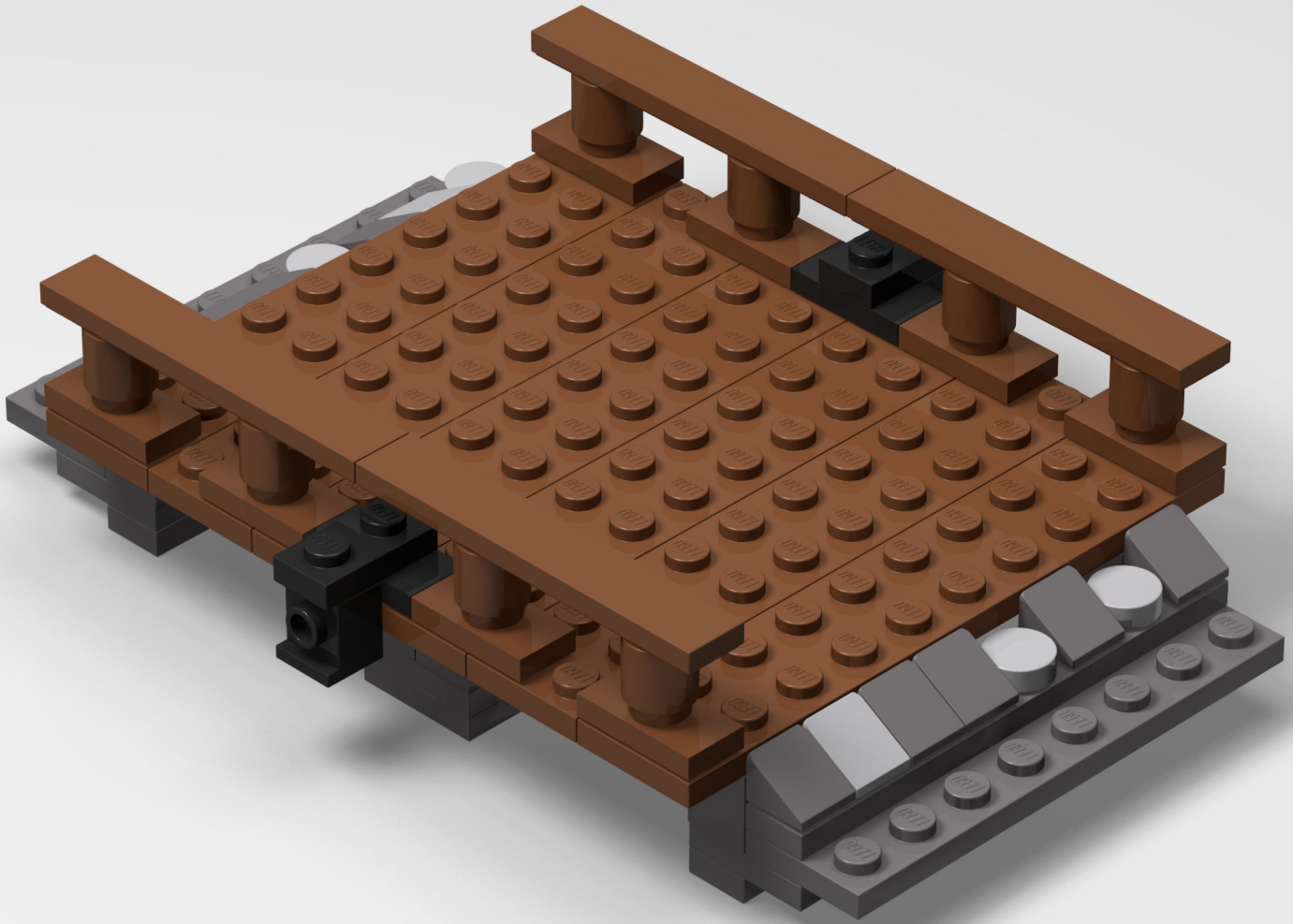


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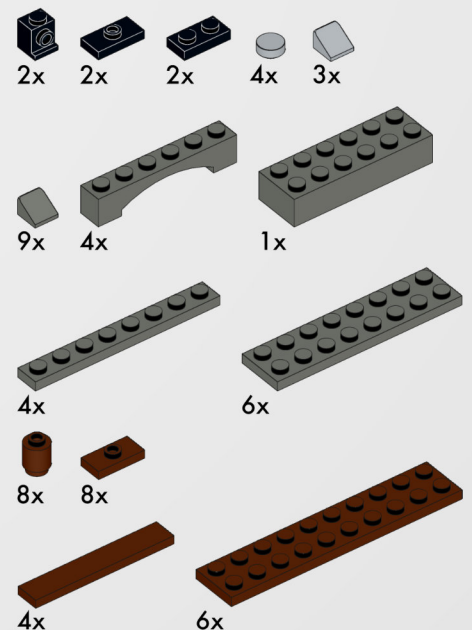
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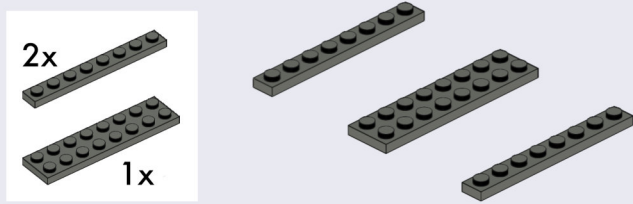
BRIDGE



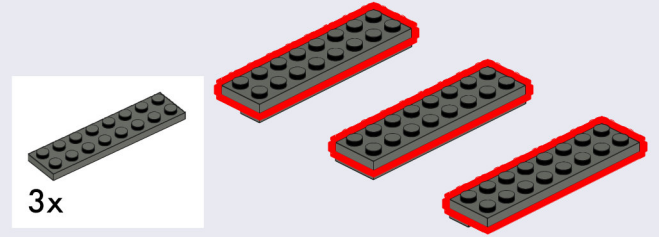
How do you cross a river? You might throw a tree trunk over it and hone your balancing skills. You could also find a ford and wade through, then dry your boots on the other side. Maybe you can find a beaver dam and use that to cross. Your safest option though, is a bridge. When I built this module I wanted to build something simple, but nice. And I wanted to use the relatively limited parts I had available. I ended up building an 8-stud wide bridge. With the railing taking up one stud on either side that meant a six-wide cart should be able to cross, right? It turns out the answer is no. Cart wheels take up a little extra space and driving the cart across the bridge will either get the cart stuck or do some serious damage to the railings. By the time I realised that I tried widening the platform but it just didn't look right to me. And then LEGO presented 7188: King's Carriage Ambush—a six stud wide carriage plus wheels. That was going to require a bridge that was at least ten studs wide, not counting the railing. I decided to give up. The king was not welcome on my bridge and for now I'm sticking with my eight-wide pedestrian approved bridge.



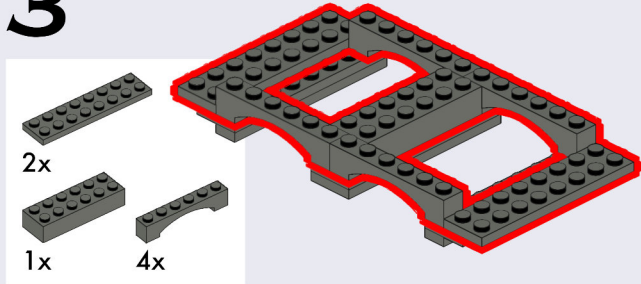
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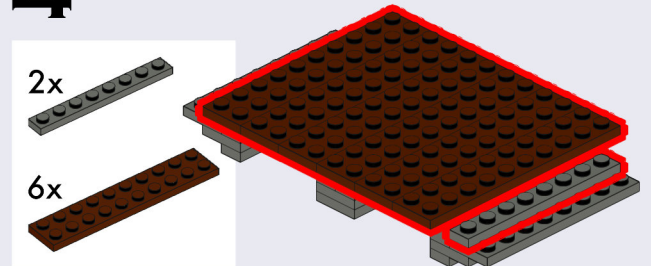
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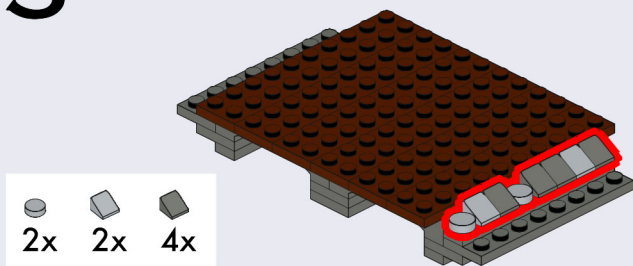
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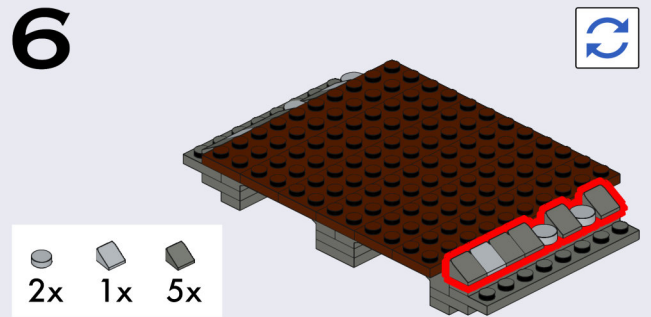
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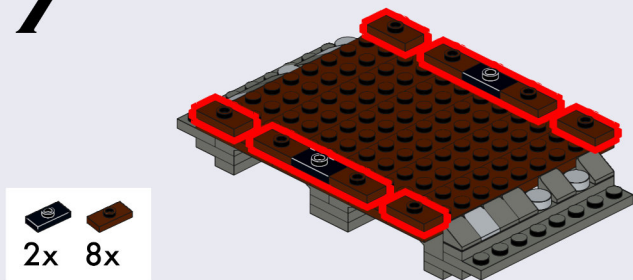
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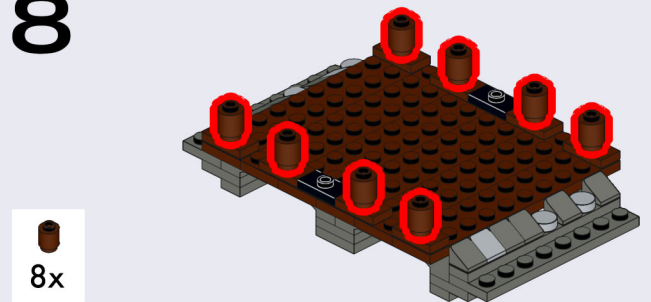
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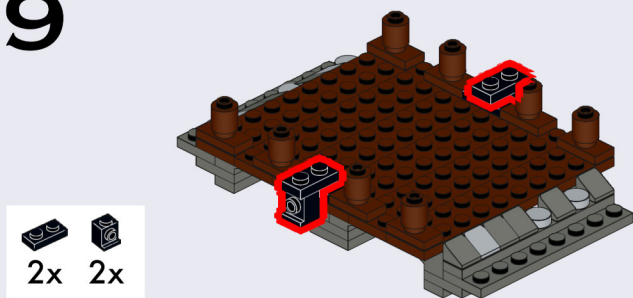
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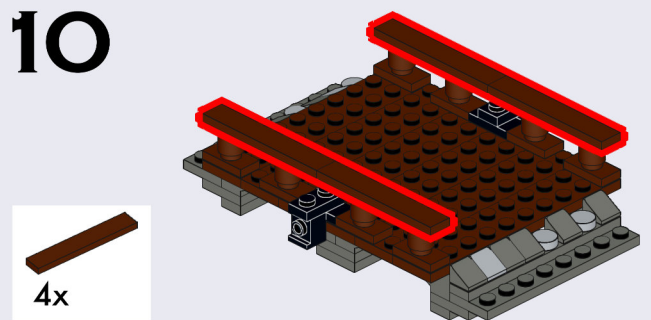
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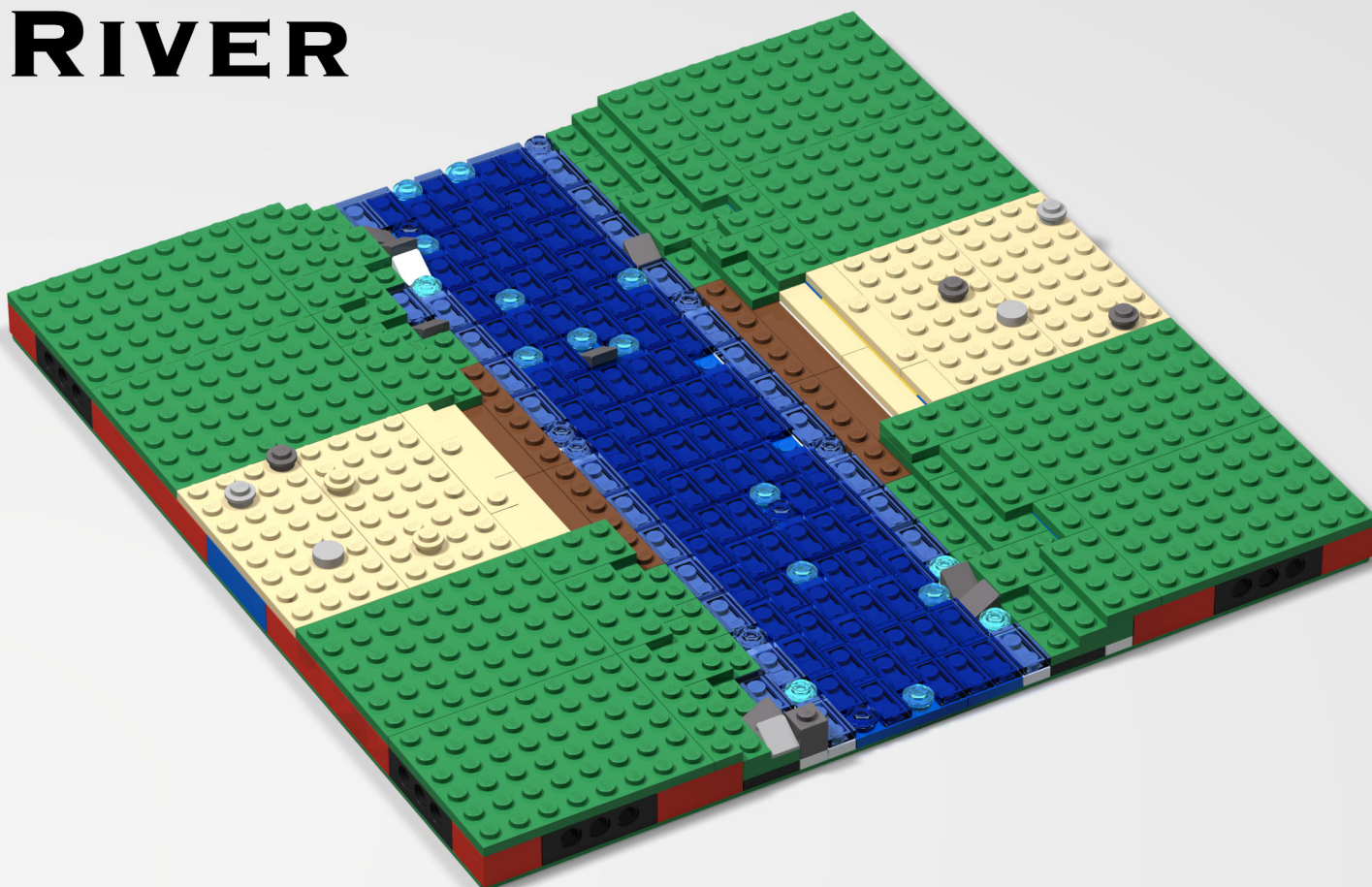
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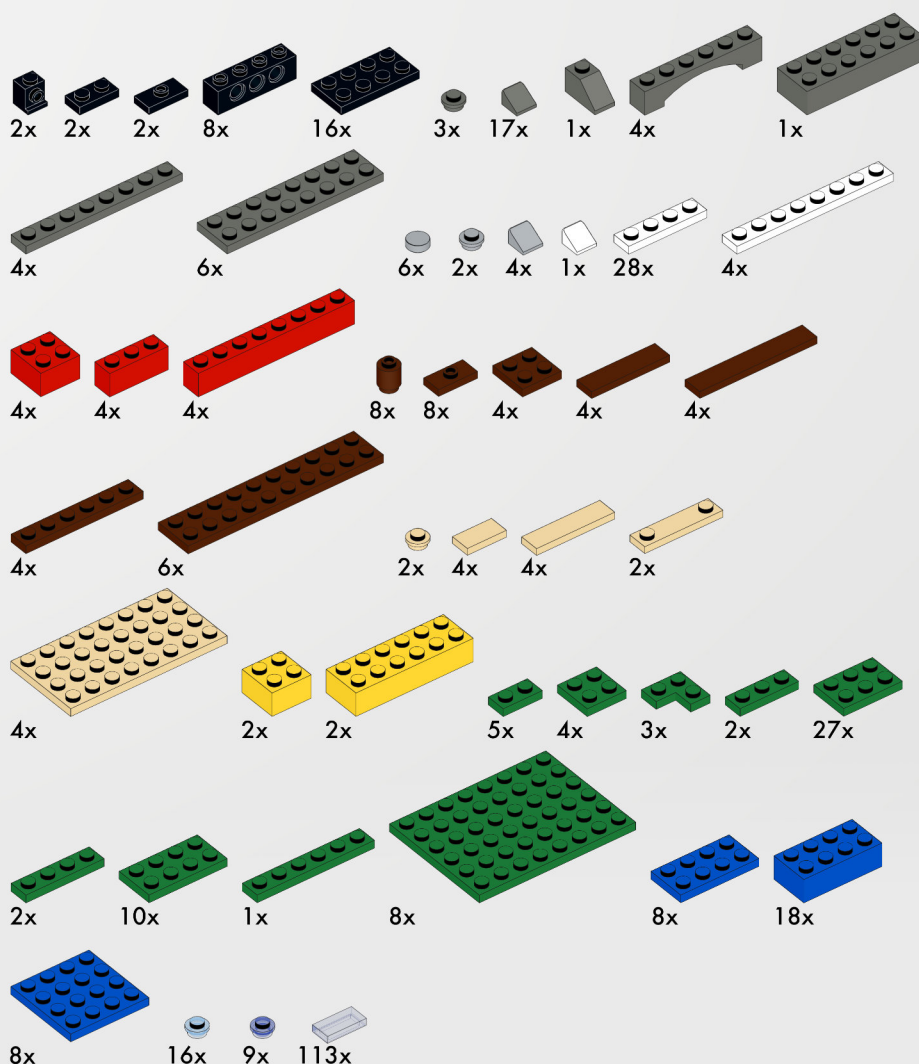


RIVER



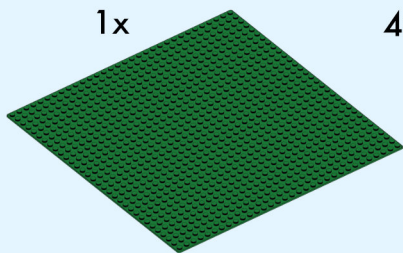
One idea I took from my earlier tests on the moat was to not use just a single color for the riverbed. Although it was never explicitly stated or explained, already in the second tutorial (in HispaBrick Magazine 014) you can see that the underlying colour on the sides of the river is white where the centre of the river uses blue. The idea here is that a lighter colour indicates the water is less deep while a darker colour (including dark blue) indicates deeper parts of the river. As the standard explains, the external faces of a MILS module with a river section need to follow specific rules. The river should be in the middle of the external side and be 8 studs wide. This is the same with roads. The river should be one plate and one tile above the baseplate. The riverbanks should increase one plate per stud as you move away from the river. There is some margin here (give or take a plate) so you can put a boulder on the side of the river or use slopes instead of ascending plates.

In the model instructions you can find below you can see how I have combined a river with a trail. Since the bridge makes the module tall and therefore harder to store, I built it in such a way as to be able to easily remove the bridge and store it separately. Of course, that means you could also substitute the bridge with a ford, a dam, or some other way to connect the trail on either side.

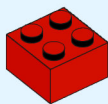


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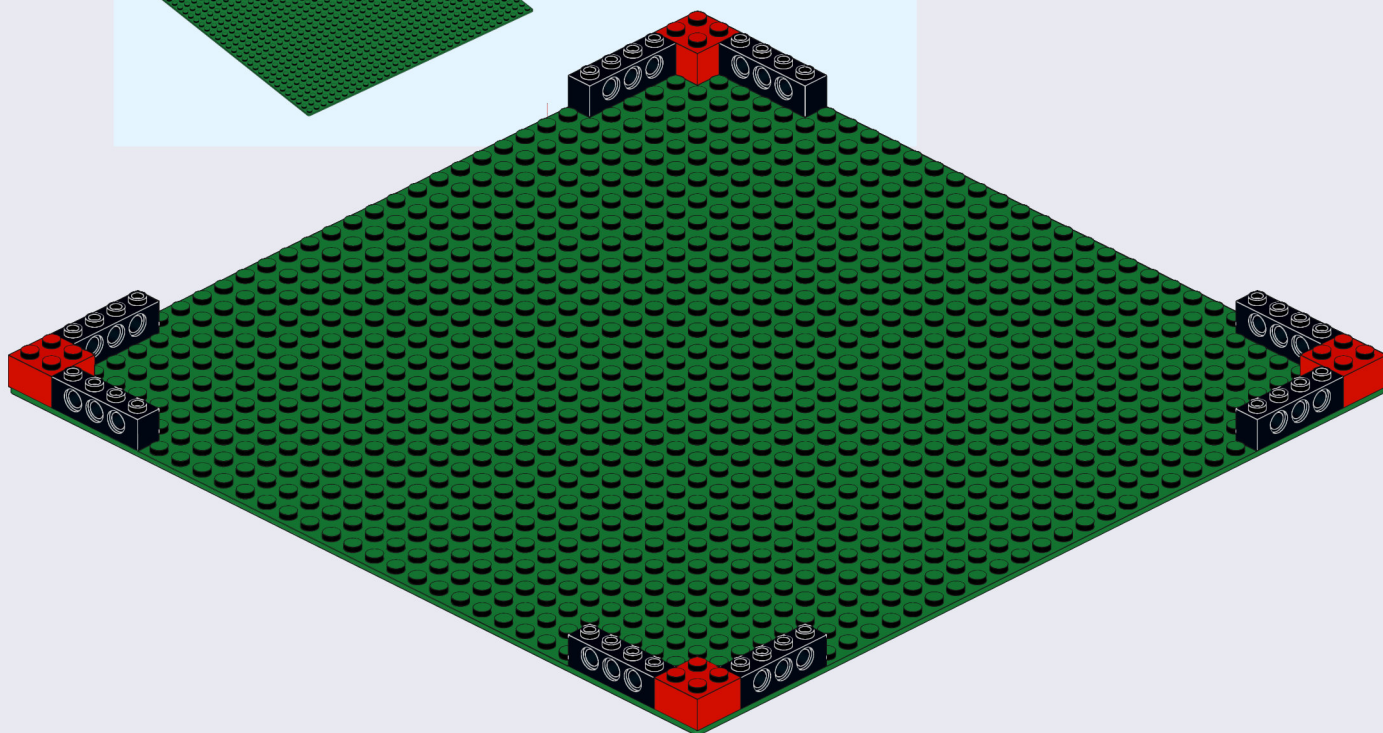
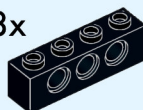
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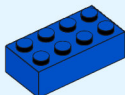
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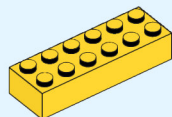
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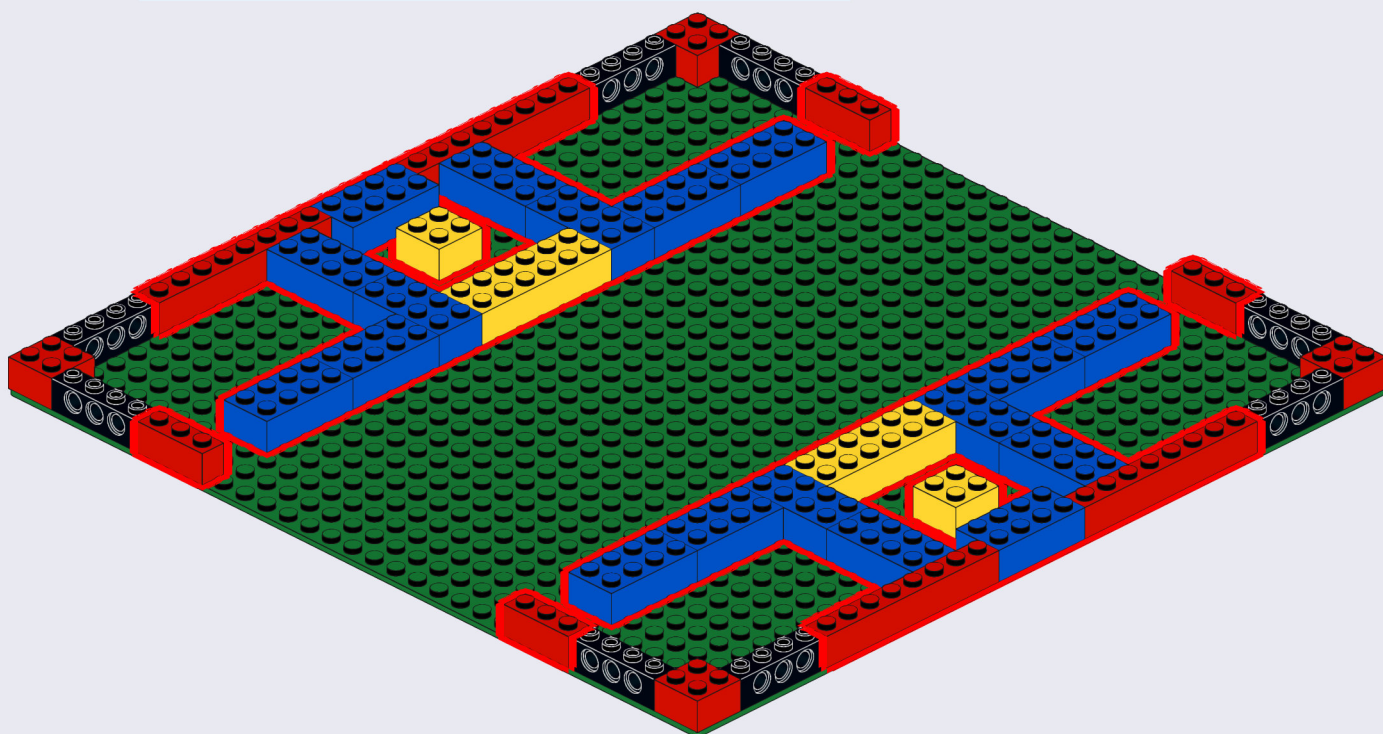
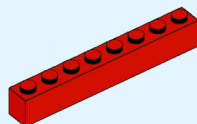
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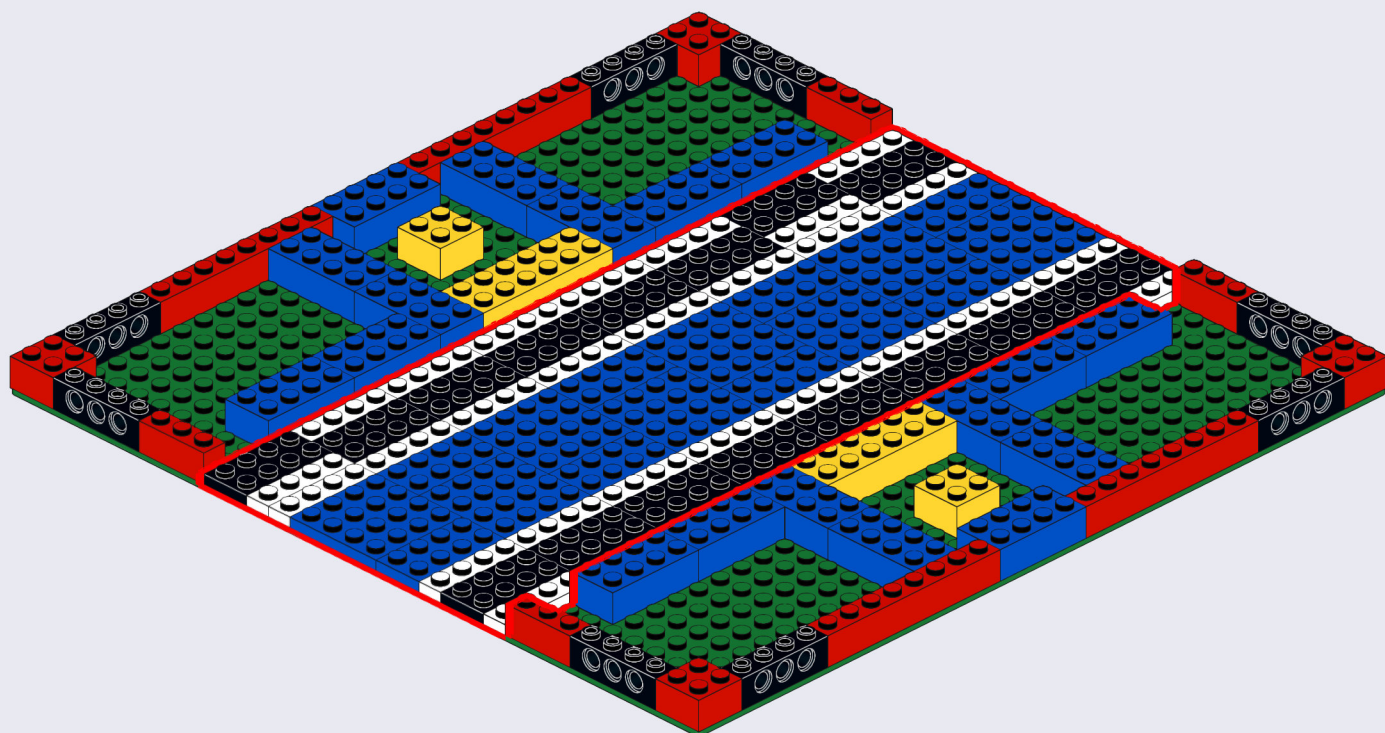
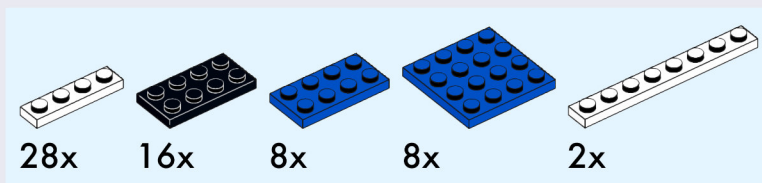
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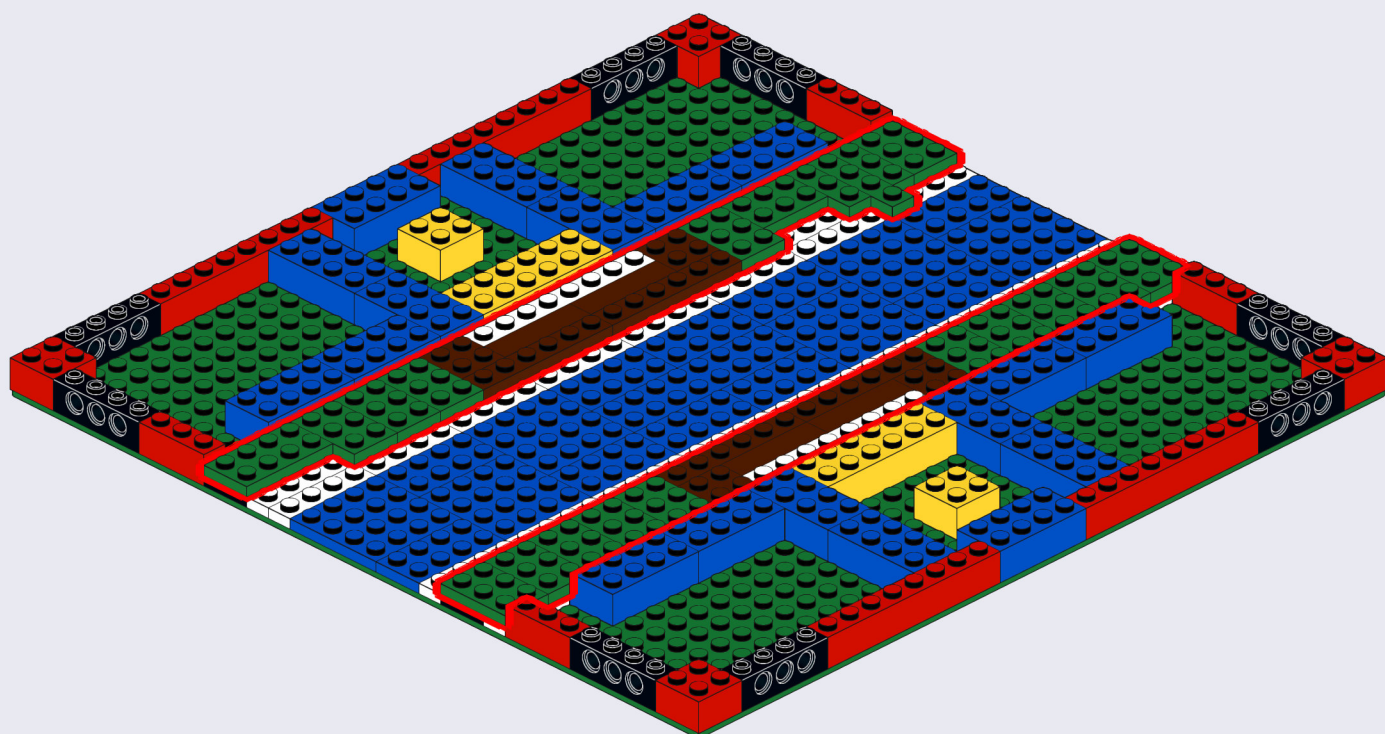
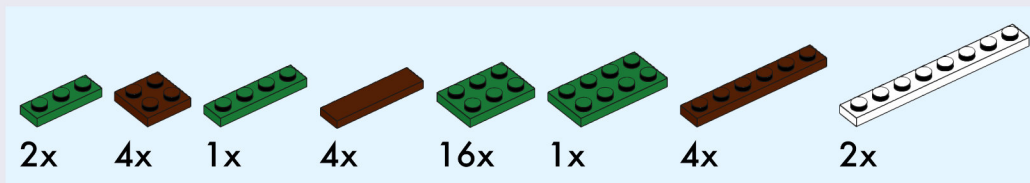
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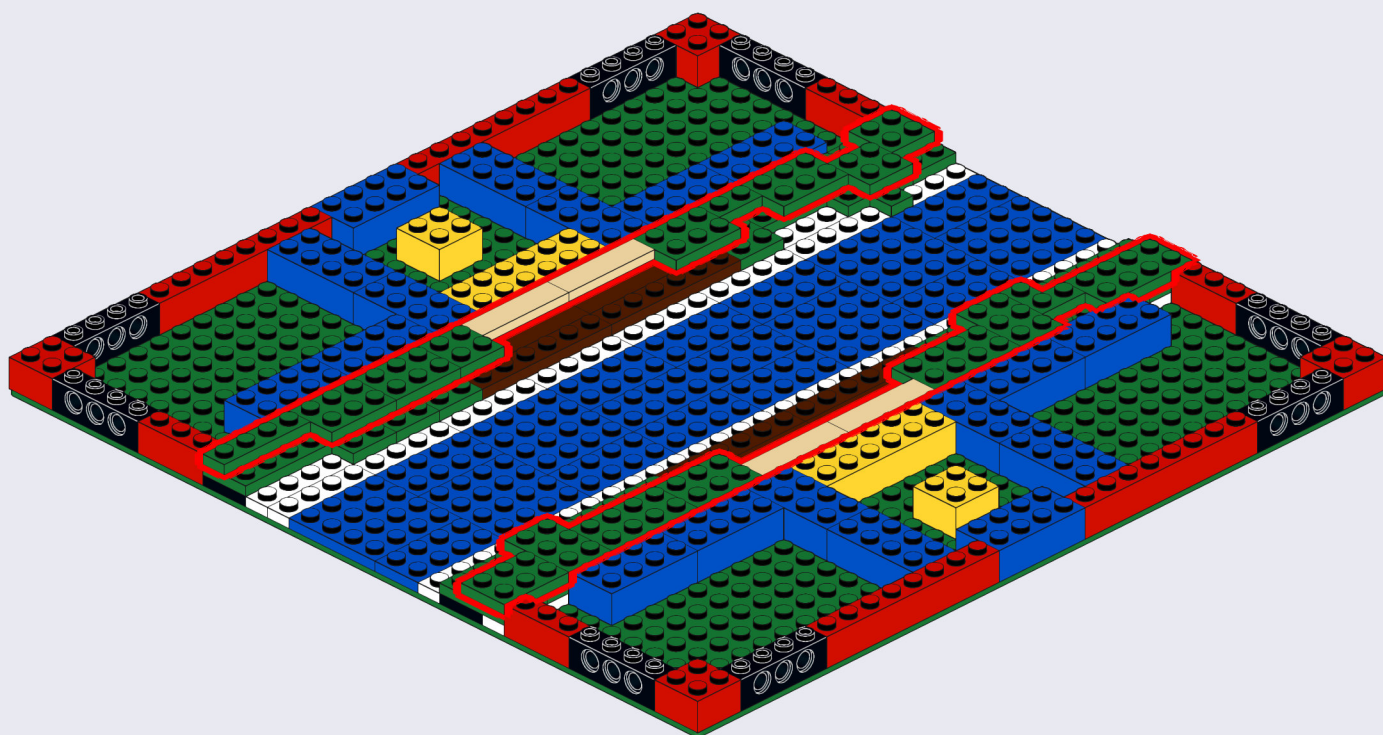
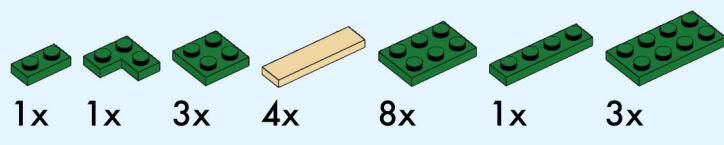
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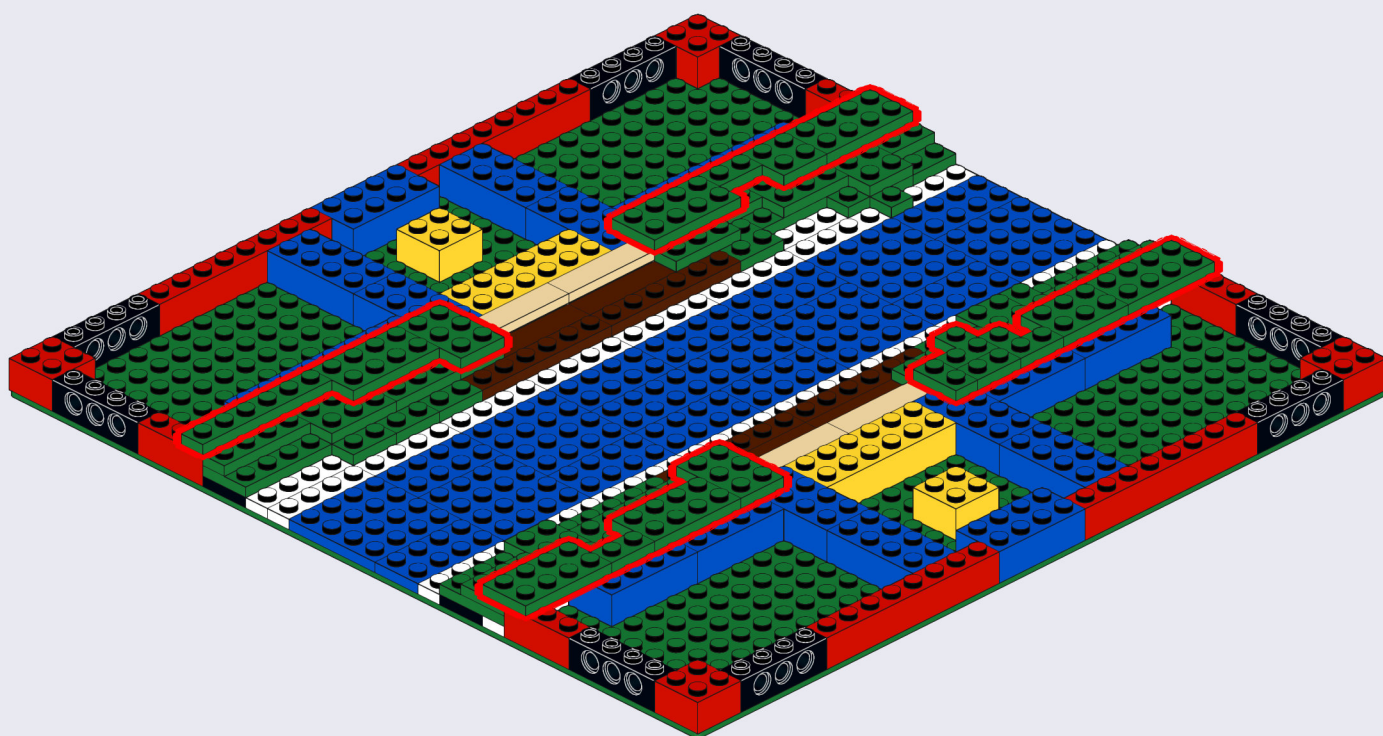
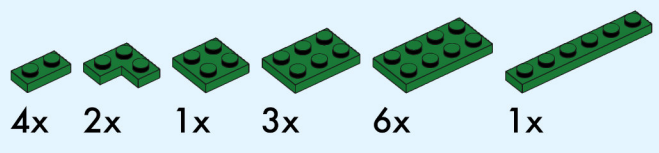
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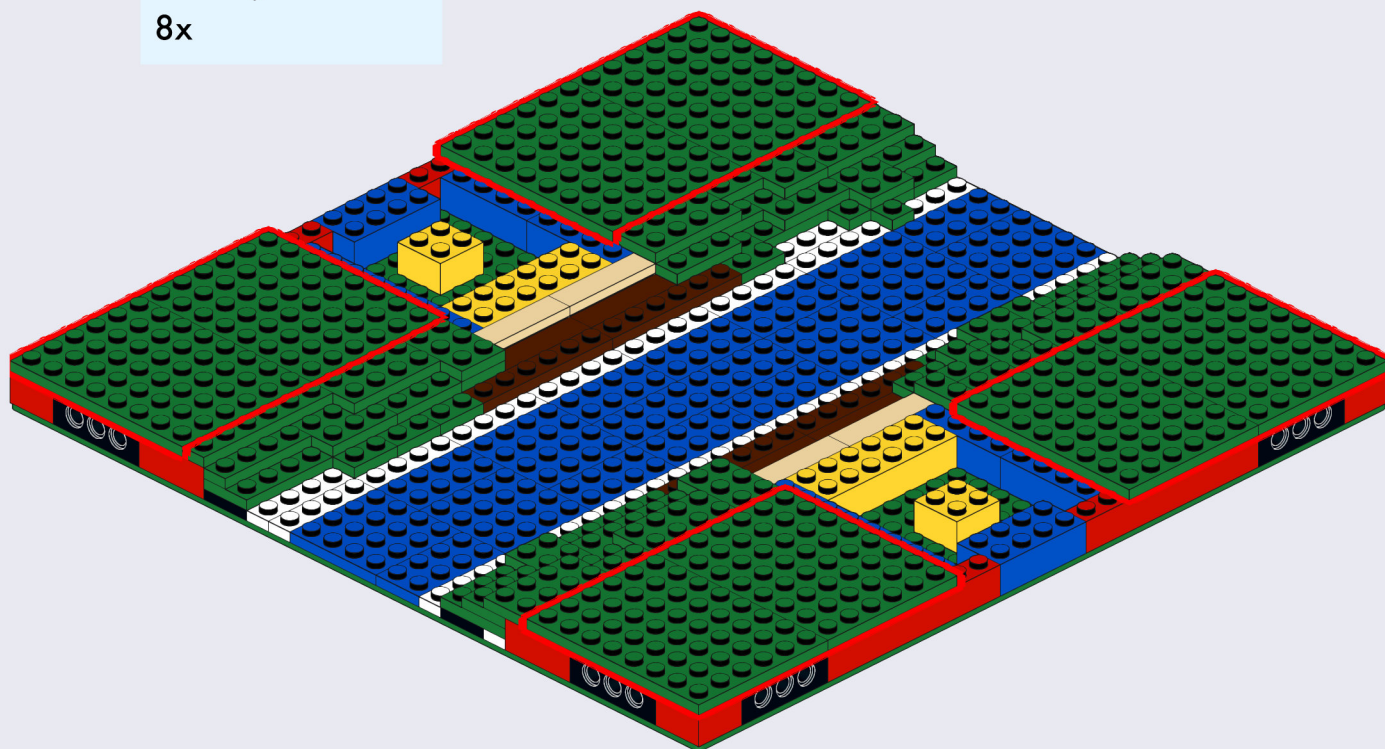
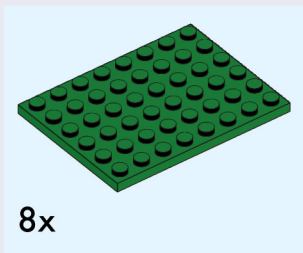
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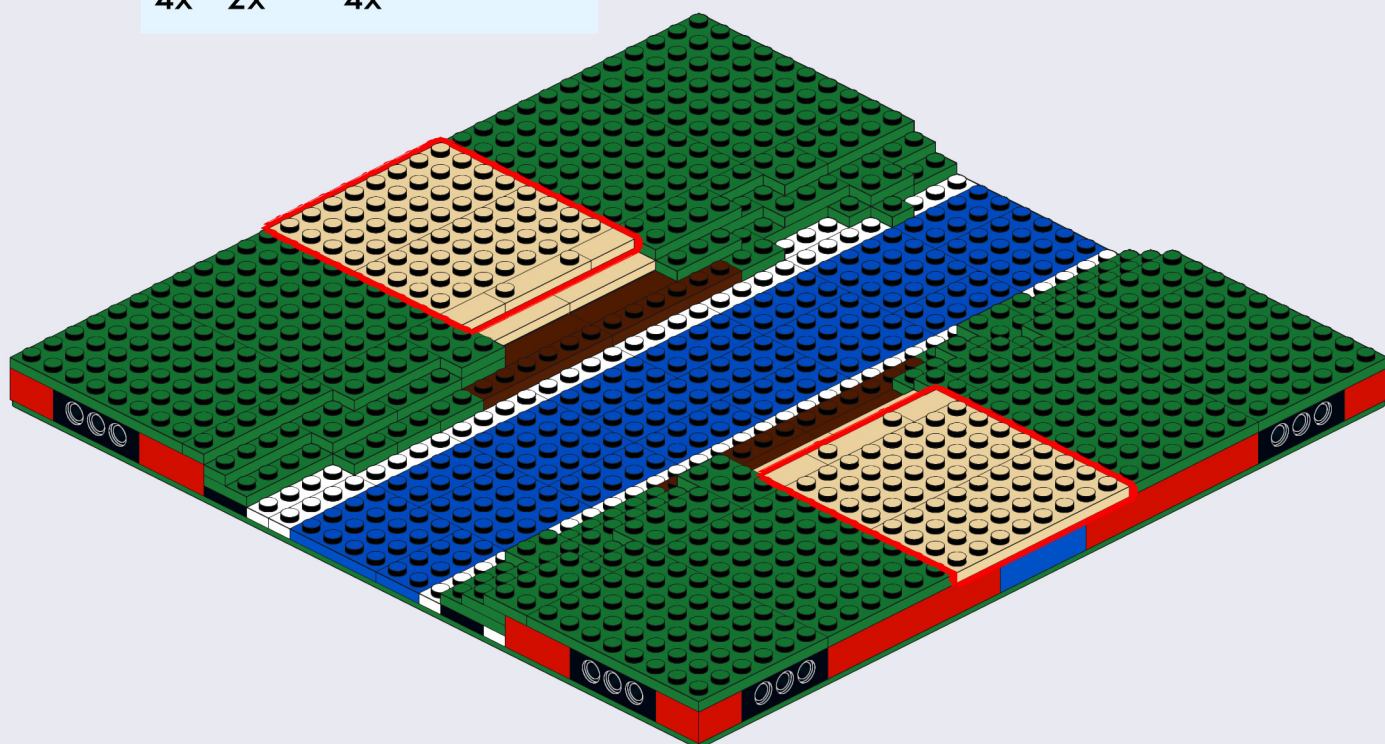
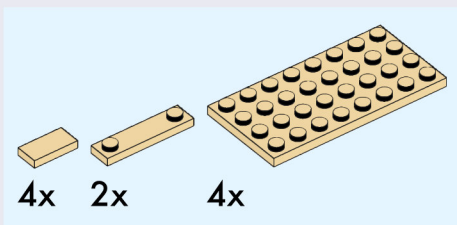
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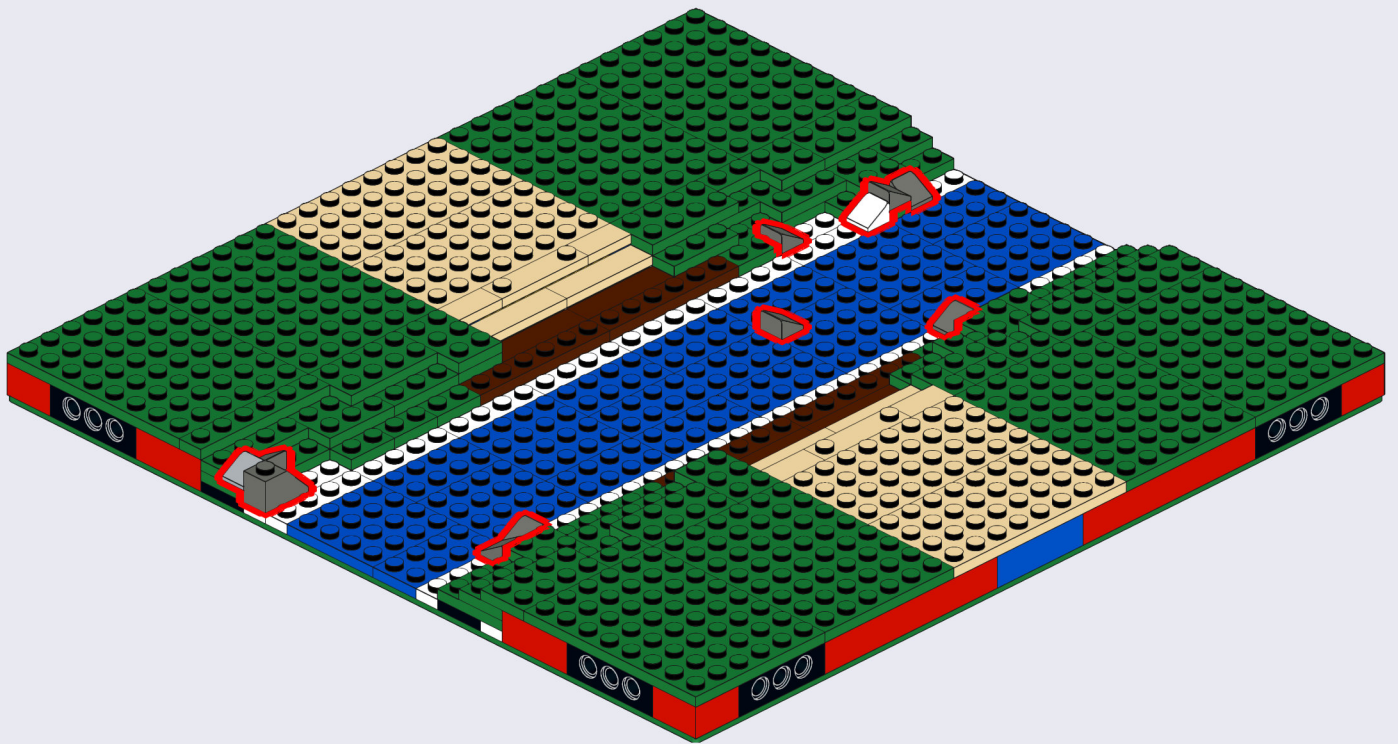
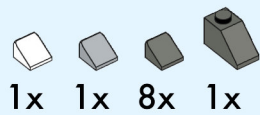
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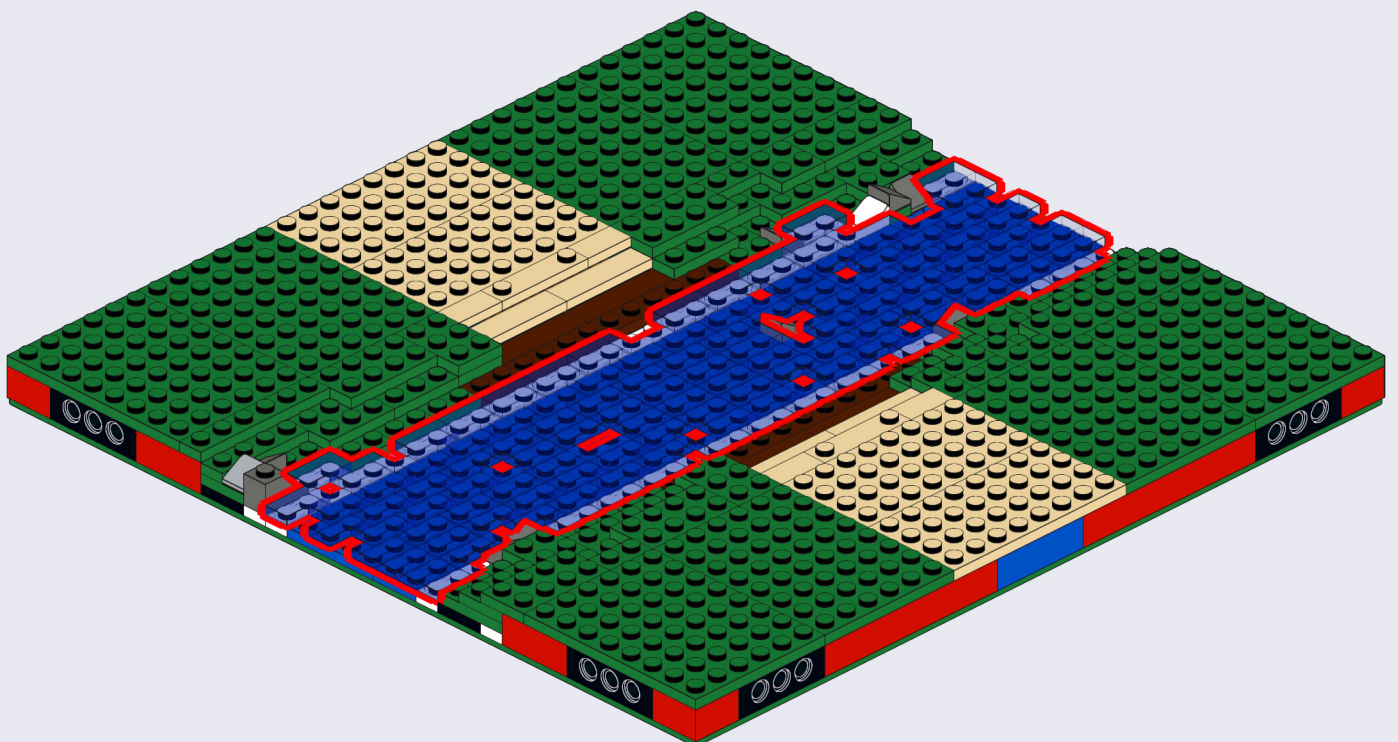
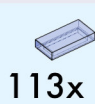
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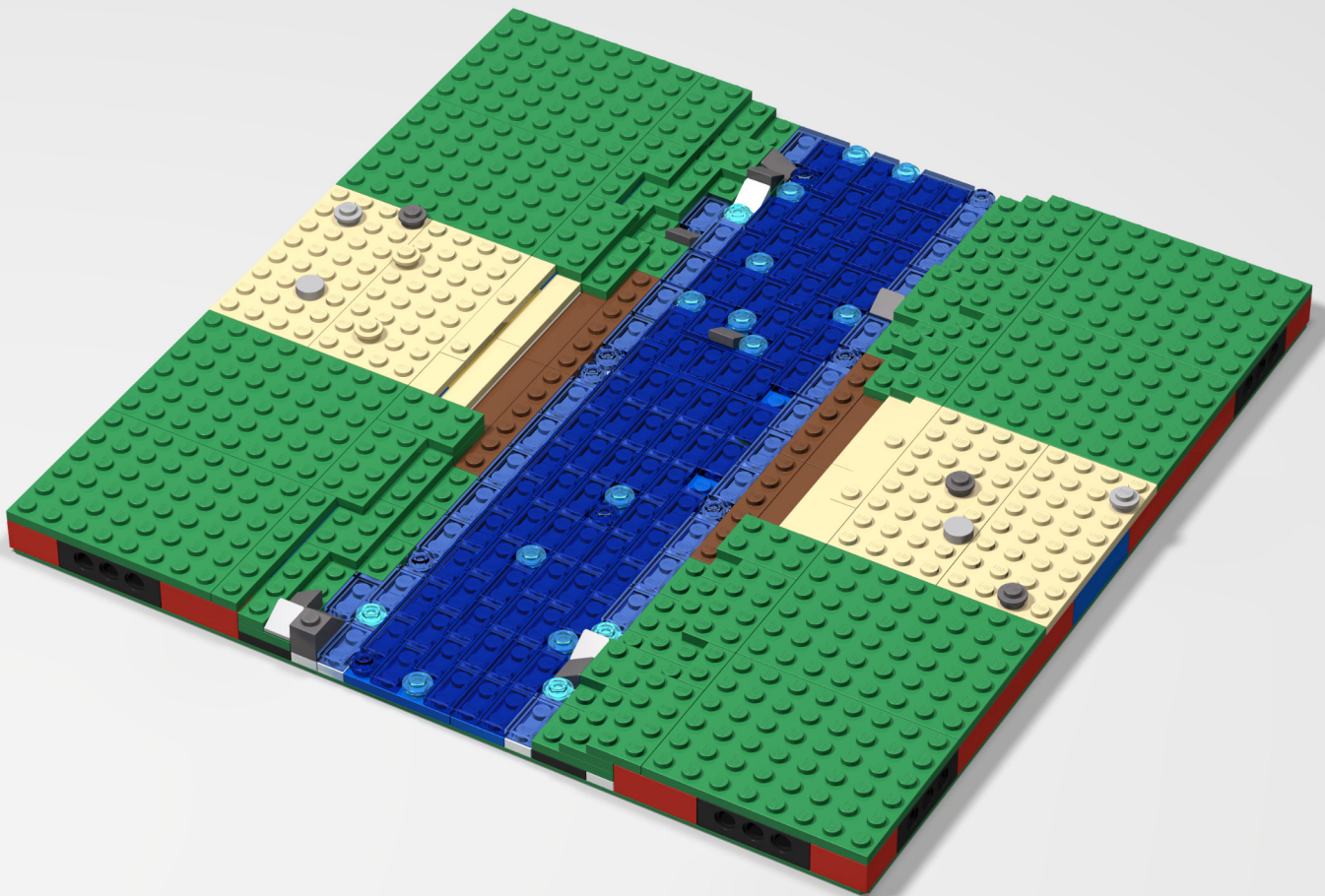
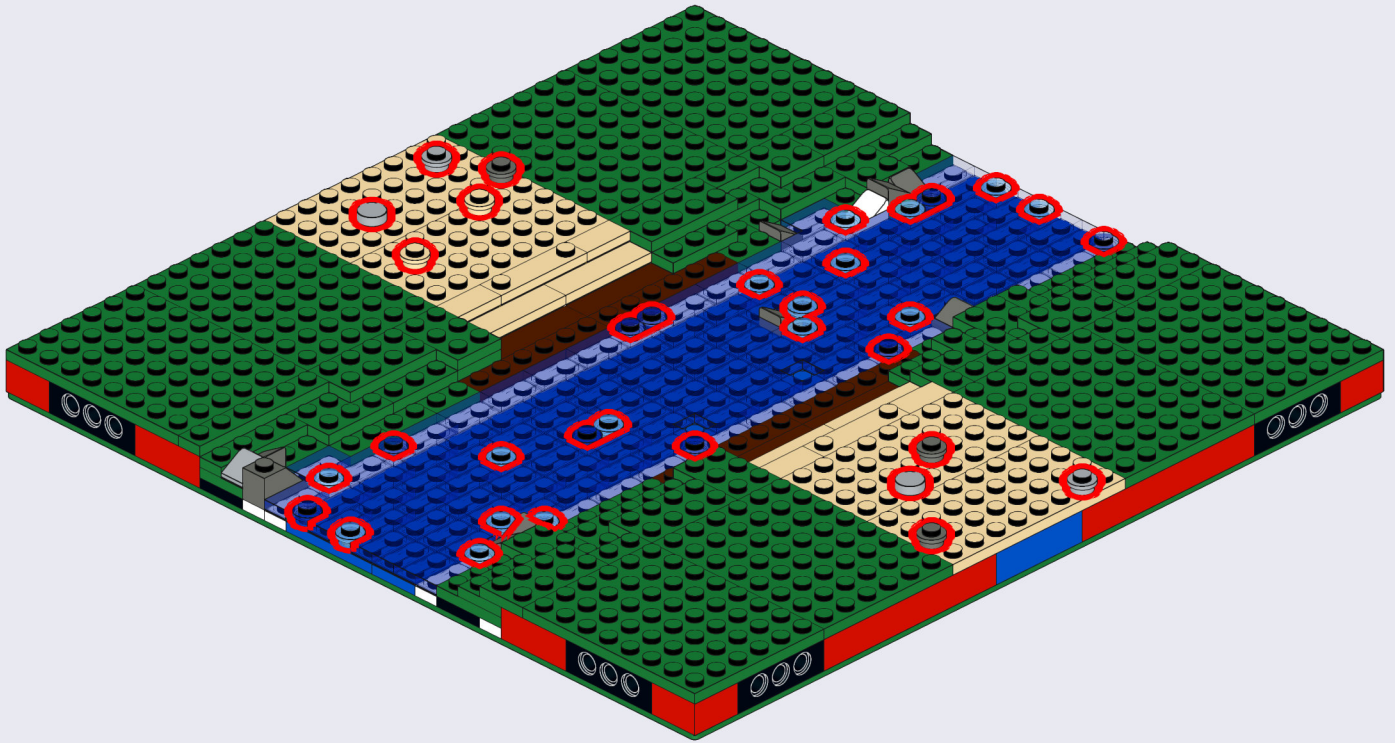


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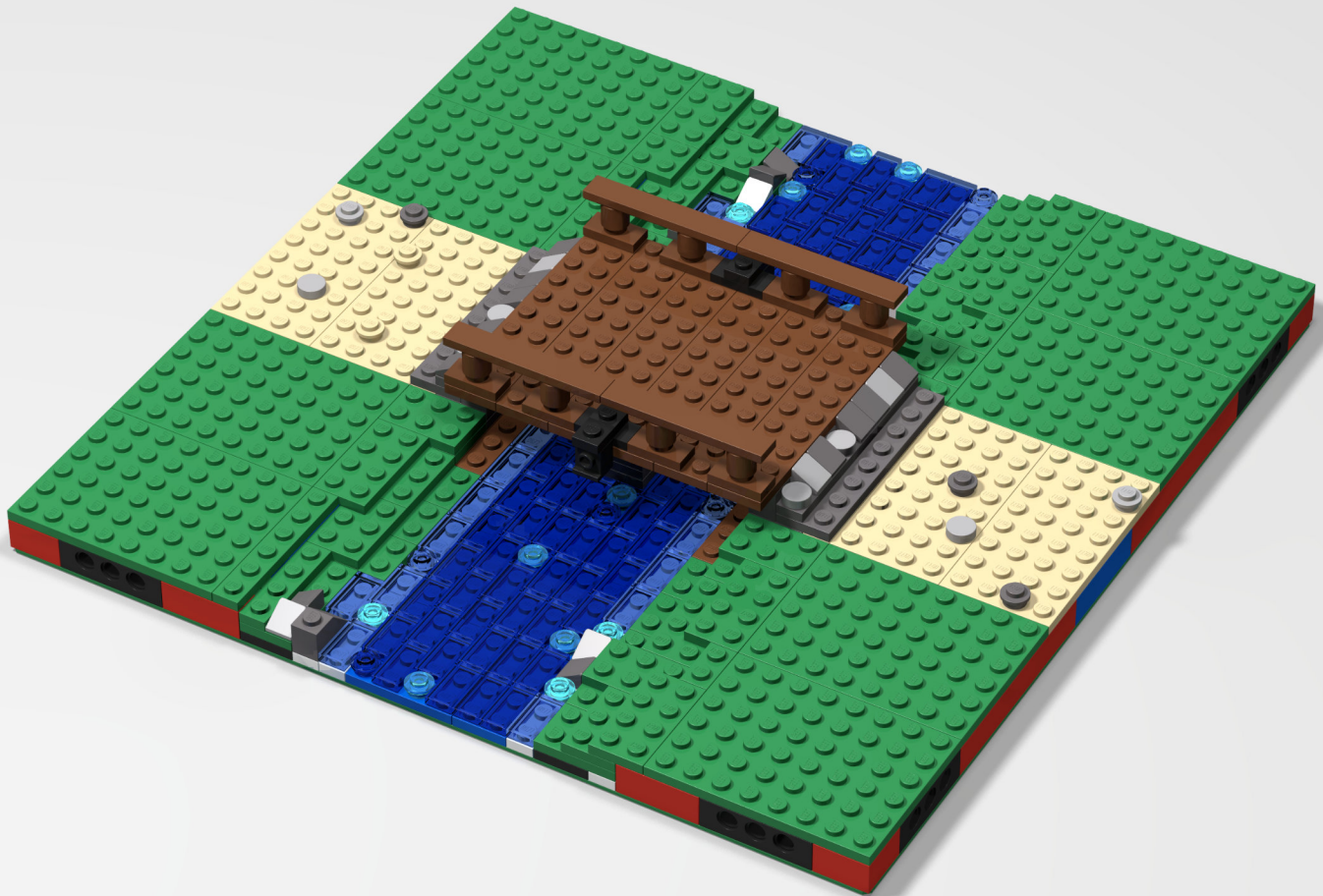
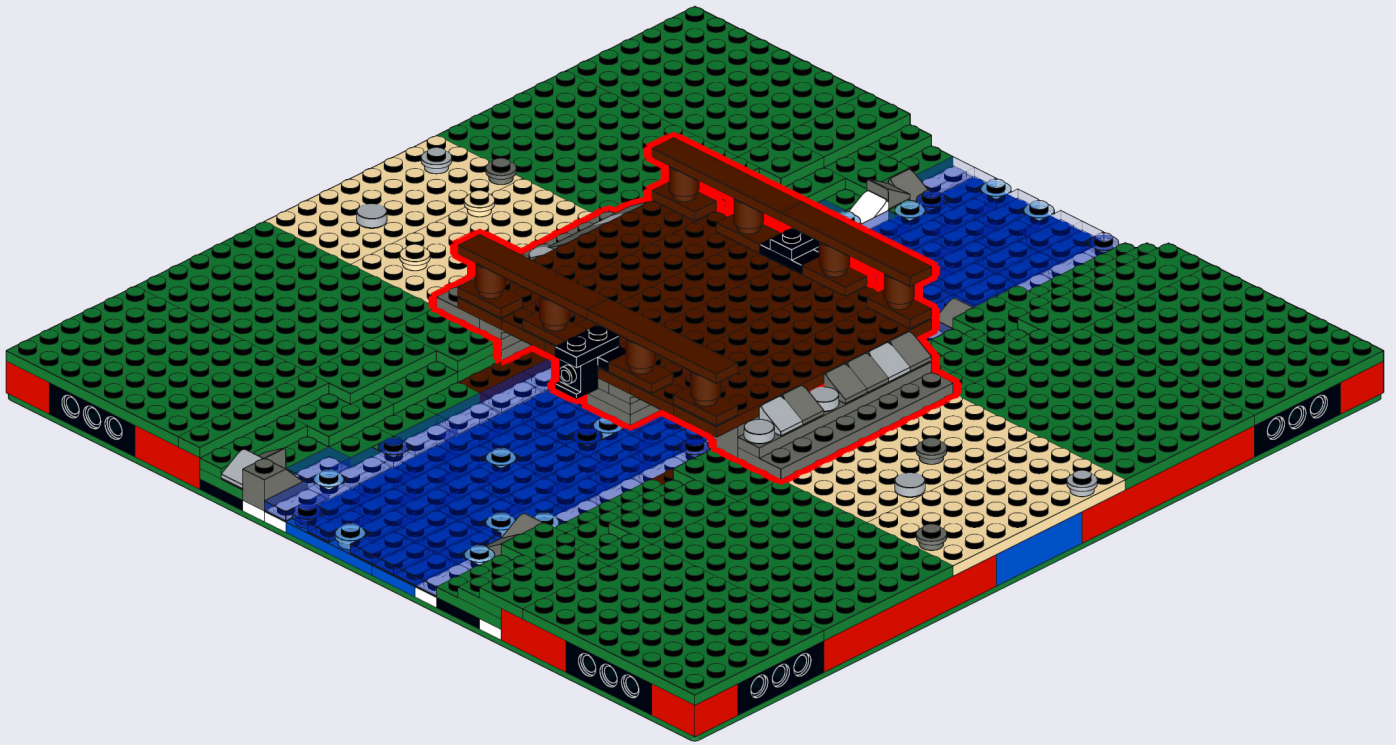


11

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  2x
  9x
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12



Gonzalo Carro

◀ DIGITAL CREATOR ▶

Text by Muriel
Photos and instructions by Gonzalo Carro
(@bricks_fan_uy)



When the theme of medieval times was proposed for HBM038, the idea was to do an article by one of the AFOLs who share their digital instructions with the community in an altruistic way. Personally, I did not know Gonzalo; Jetro sent me his Instagram profile a long time ago for me to take a look. Later, I was talking to a fellow AFOL colleague known for his medieval taste who also recommended that I take a look at a particular profile. We are talking about the account @brick_fan_uy, and behind this account is Gonzalo Carro. We present this interview with him so that those of you who don't know him yet will know and enjoy his content.

HBM: Hello Gonzalo, tell us a little about yourself. Where are you from? Your age? What do you do? And do you belong to a LUG?

GC: I am a Telecommunications Engineer, I am 35 years old, and I live in Montevideo, Uruguay, where I was born.

HBM: Is it easy to get LEGO in Uruguay?

GC: If we talk about getting LEGO like buying a set, it is much easier than it was when I was a kid. Back then it was very, very rare that anyone sold LEGO in my country. In that sense I was lucky as a kid because my parents could get some sets on the border with Brazil where we had a summer house. Nowadays you can get them, but in general they are sets one or two years old and mostly oriented to young children. The LEGO store in Uruguay is nothing like the LEGO stores in other countries. There is no wall of pieces, nor is there a LEGO web page to buy at B&P. That is to say, for the services that an AFOL might want to use, access to LEGO in my country is much inferior to what is available in Europe or the United States. The way for me to get parts is to buy them on eBay or BrickLink in the US and pay international freight from there to my city, in addition to having to pay import taxes.

HBM: Are there a good number of AFOLs out there?

GC: No, I only know of one other besides me, but he has no public activity on social networks.

HBM: How long have you been building with LEGO and how did you start?

GC: As a kid it was my favorite toy. According to my calculations I must have played with LEGO from 1992 to about 1999. Then when I grew up, I took it up again during the fateful year 2020. One day looking for something else at home I found my saved collection. . . I started to assemble the sets and since then I haven't stopped.

HBM: Did you also suffer the "dark ages"?

GC: Yes, my dark ages were approximately from 1999 to 2020.

HBM: Do you have a favorite piece and color preference in your builds?

GC: Yes, my favorite piece is the "masonry brick" 98283 in Light Bluish Gray. It's a piece that I knew growing up and is excellent for texturing any Castle-style building.

HBM: What would you say are your favorite official and unofficial lines par excellence? Do any themes inspire you apart from medieval and Viking?

GC: My favorite lines are the ones from my childhood: Castle, Pirates, and Space. In that order. Of the new ones, I like Ninjago and Creator 3-in-1. I'm not a fan of the licensed themes. At the moment, the medieval theme inspires me the most, because it was my favorite and because of how vast it is. No two castles are the same and I am a fan of the architecture of that era. Vikings are another theme that has inspired me a lot; I started building Viking MOCs when I started playing the Valheim Game last year. The Norse are a fascinating people. Sometimes they seem like fantasy stories and with very distinctive architecture so I spent quite a bit of time on them.

HBM: Where do you get the inspiration for these themes? Do you document or let your imagination run wild?

GC: Inspiration comes in a moment, when I see something and I start to imagine it in LEGO. Then comes a stage of googling information about that object, whether it's a castle, a ship, a house, or whatever. Since I build historical things, I always like to be able to include realistic details as much as I can. The limit is set by playability and the amount of pieces required. That is to say if by making the MOC realistic I have to sacrifice playability (access to interiors, etc), or if it takes me a million pieces to make something that only adds a small share of realism, it doesn't happen.

HBM: Why did you start posting on Instagram and on Rebrickable? What motivates you to build and share medieval and viking themed tutorials with the community?

GC: In 2020 during the pandemic, upon finding my childhood LEGO collection, I did what anyone would have done today — I took pictures of what I built to share with my family or friends. Soon after that, and already being an IG user, I searched for LEGO accounts and came across a whole community. That's why I started the profile as brick_fan_uy (the name is self-explanatory). As soon as I uploaded some pictures of my clumsy creations I started connecting with other AFOLs

and one of them told me that Studio software existed. I had tried to use LDD without much success, and Studio for some reason seemed simpler and opened a world of new possibilities. Once the limitation of getting parts was lifted, I started to build everything I could imagine. Then I learned how to make instructions and put them on Rebrickable.

My motivation to share the tutorials is to contribute to the AFOL community on the internet. Talking to different people from different cultures, I realized that there are those who have many pieces but find it difficult to create, those who have ideas but lack pieces, and of course those who have both the pieces and ideas. In general those are the brackets. My idea with the tutorials is to share my creations so that those who do not find it easy to create from scratch can take it as a reference, modify it and make it their own. Luckily that has been the case with many of the MOCs I've published, especially the Modular Castle series. I share them for free because my livelihood is my day job. . . it won't make a big difference to me to sell PDFs day in and day out. . . and I find that the return from other AFOLs either thanking me or showing me their builds is far superior to simply charging money. Likewise, there are generous members of the community who insisted on collaborating, so I opened a web piggy bank to receive voluntary donations. I have also received gift pieces from other members of the community, which has been very gratifying.

I also recently authorized a supplier to sell some of my MOCs with compatible parts. These parts are those which are no longer protected by LEGO licenses so there is nothing illegal about it, and each MOC is checked to make sure it is compliant. It seemed like one more way to get my designs out to more people, to include them, since not everyone is willing to learn "the Bricklink dance" or has the money to buy all the original LEGO pieces. Being legal, I prefer to do everything to include people in the fun of the LEGO community, although I confess it was a difficult decision to make, given the bad reputation that compatible pieces have. We'll see how that goes.

HBM: You have more than 10k followers on IG, did you think you would reach so many thousands sharing your creations?

GC: Not at first and it wasn't my goal or desire either. I simply wanted to share what I was putting together and comment on the posts that others were making. Then when I noticed that the number of followers was growing I paid a little more attention to the number. Sharing tutorials

was key to the increase in followers, but it's not why I do it frankly.

HBM: Do you have any anecdotes regarding your experiences as a LEGO fan?

GC: Once when telling a community member that I had never been able to own a Forestmen set, he sent me five vintage Forestmen minifigures in the mail. Also, another member of the community helps me by building the designs I make in Studio to verify the stability and robustness of the constructions, without asking me anything in return and just for the pleasure of doing it. Others have also sent me minifigures, parts, books, and even sets. They are sympathetic to know that the reality of an AFOL in my country is so different from theirs in terms of access to parts. They are all friends on IG that chat on an almost daily basis.

HBM: What are your favorite reference sites for building with LEGO?

GC: Rebrickable for MOCs, Bricklink for official sets, and Back of the Box Builds for building the designs on the back of vintage LEGO boxes.

HBM: Did you know about Hispabrick magazine and the MILS system?

GC: I didn't know it, but discovered the MILS system while researching a couple of weeks ago. It was suggested to me when I asked in the

community what to do with some bent baseplates I have. I think it's great, although by the scale of constructions that are made I don't think it's something I can dedicate myself to.

HBM: Do you miss any specific site, or do you think that there is anything missing online related to our hobby, in spite of the net being so wide?

GC: The site I miss the most is LEGO.com. Having access to all the services LEGO offers would be amazing. If we are talking about a service that doesn't exist today, I don't know. . . I still find it fascinating that Bricklink, Rebrickable, and LEGO Ideas exist. It might be some minifigure exchange service, but maybe that already exists. One service I would like to see would be providing the ability to send your design to a company that would manufacture the parts to build it, but I can think of several reasons why that might not be entirely feasible.

HBM: Would you like LEGO to bring out "Castle" lines again?

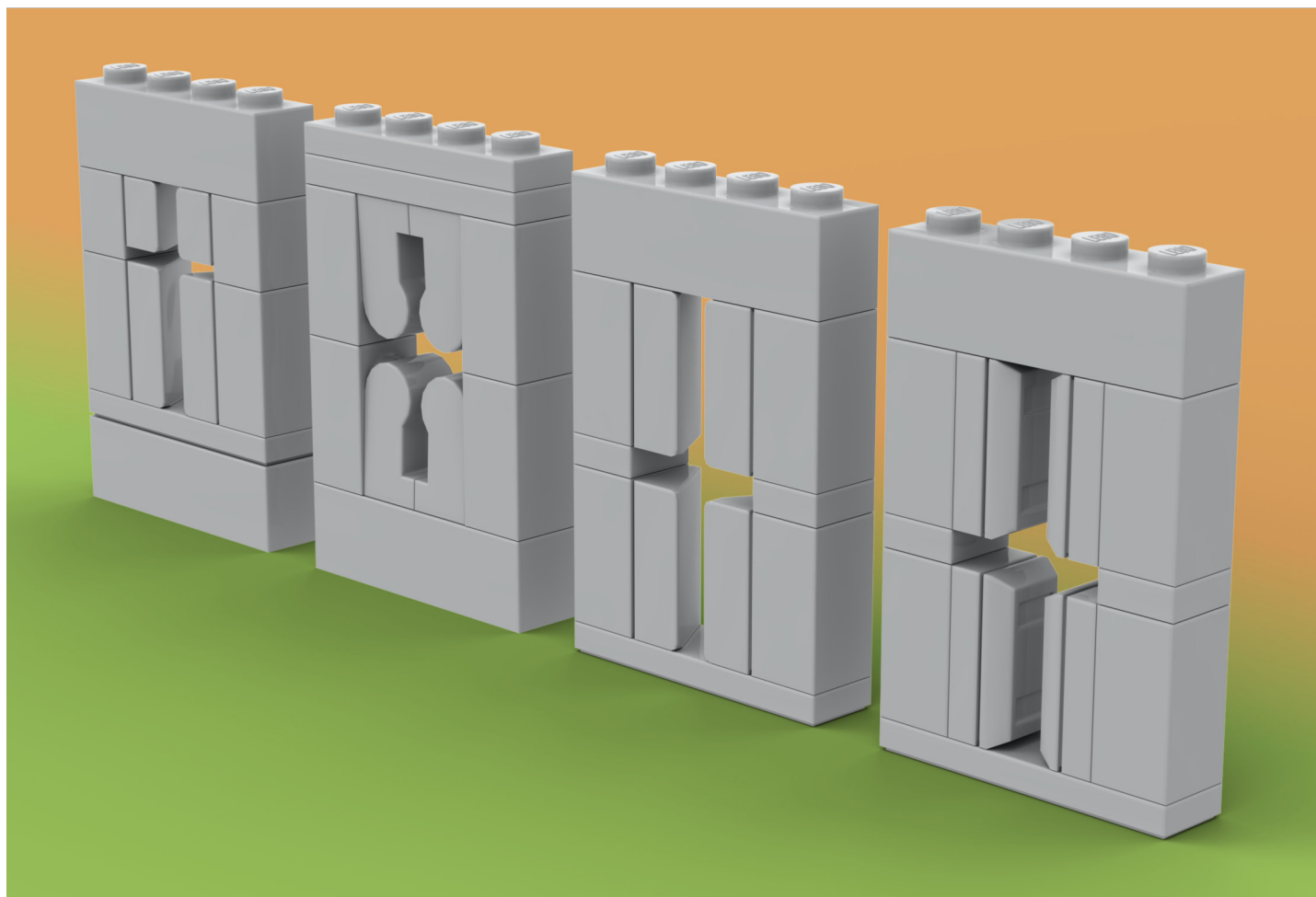
GC: Yes, I would. But at the same time I don't think it would be enough. If they have discontinued it, it must be because it was not being profitable. Nobody can argue with LEGO about that. Who, if not them, knows what the numbers say, and the numbers rule in every company. I think that if the Castle line comes out

again it should not be with the same style/spirit as before, but be oriented to those of us who were kids during the golden age of Castle and today are AFOLs. In any case it is LEGO's decision. Initially in my IG posts I used to include the hashtag #bringBackLEGOCastle, in an attempt to generate traction for them to re-release it. Then I understood that even if they did release it, I'd like to keep doing what I do. LEGO is never going to keep everyone happy, either, and probably new mostly kid-oriented sets wouldn't fill the space for me that I fill today with MOCs and whatnot. That's why I chose to change the hashtag to #keepLEGOCastleAlive, let's keep LEGO Castle alive, MOC to MOC. The idea of not letting it die but on the contrary, letting it evolve as LEGO evolves with new pieces, and as we evolve. . . those of us who create, as we improve. It seems to me much better than the attitude of complaining because LEGO has discontinued the line.

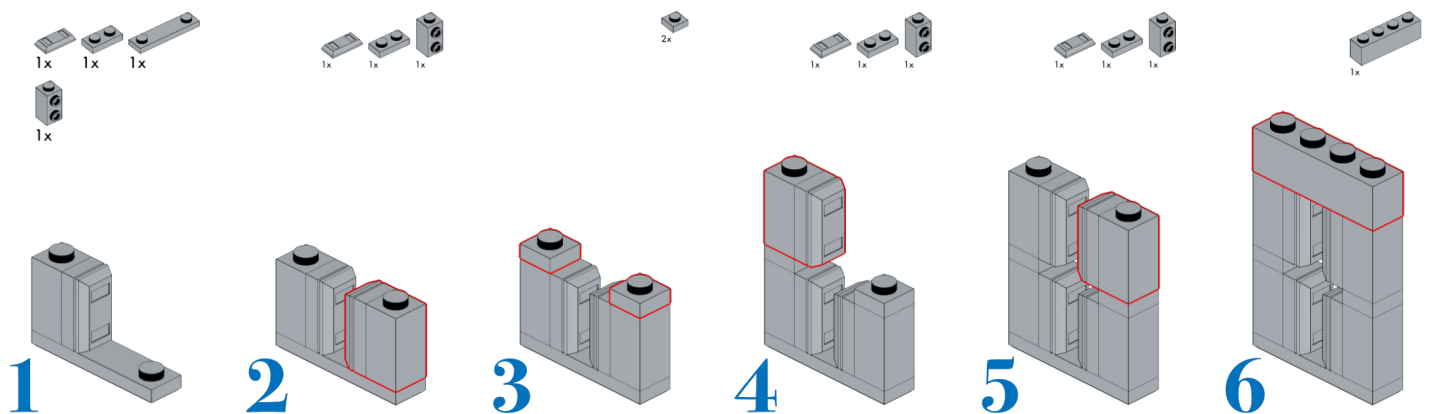
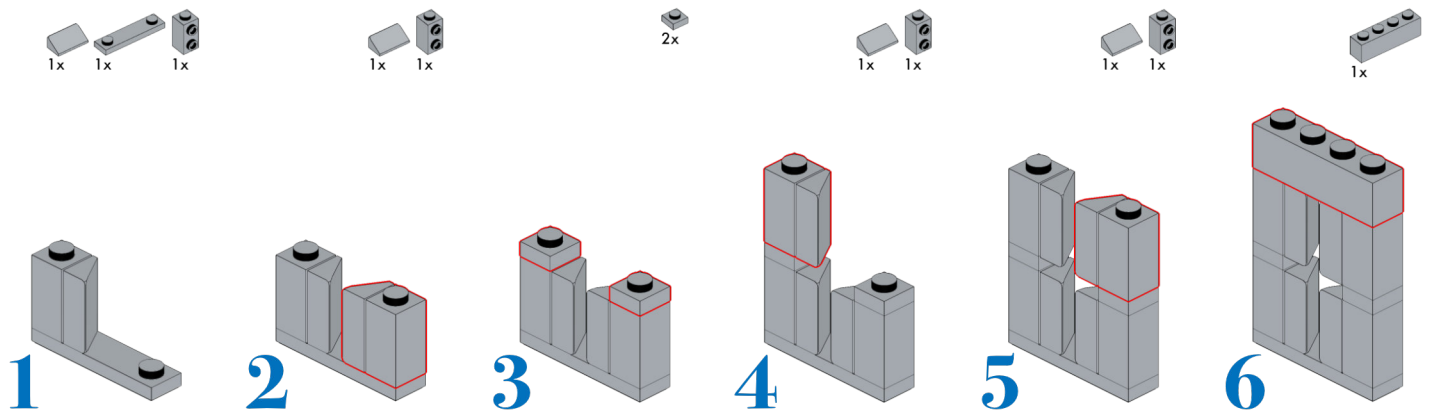
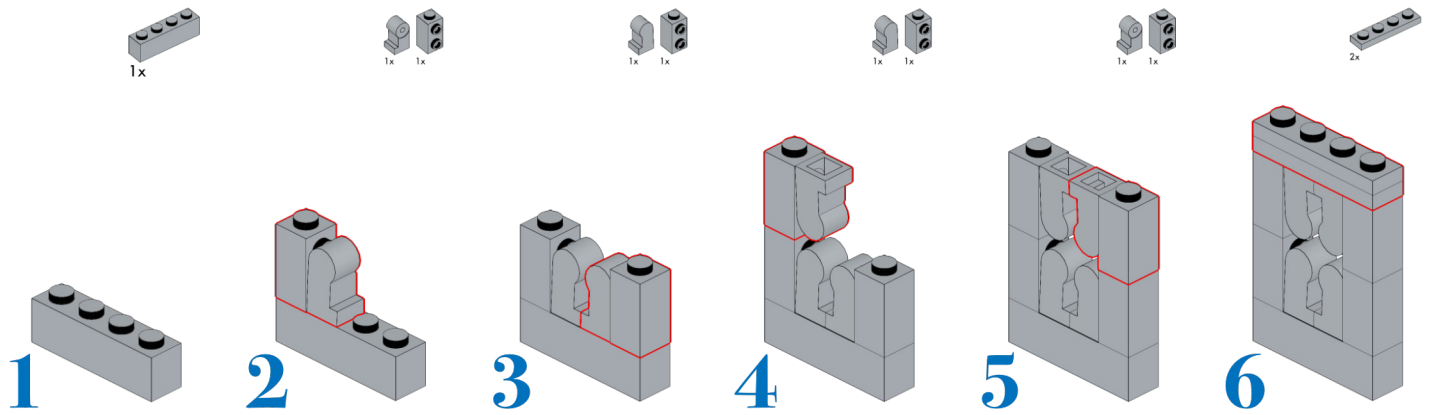
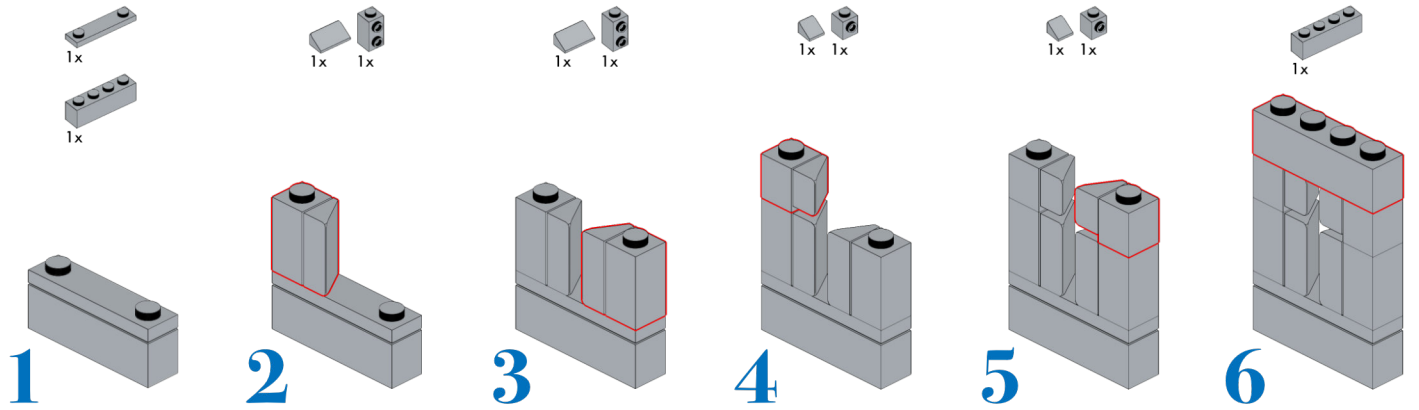
HBM: I think we will have some new Castle by the time this issue comes out, or so the rumor mill says.

GC: I hope so, although according to the leak, it's going to cost me a kidney to bring it here.

HBM: We'll see. Thank you very much, Gonzalo, for dedicating this time with your words and instructions!



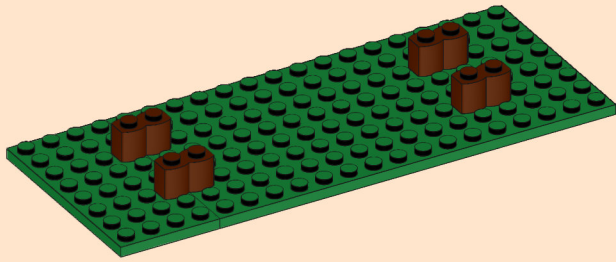
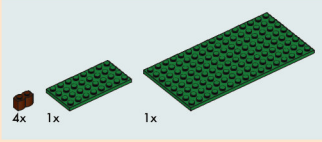
Window Slits



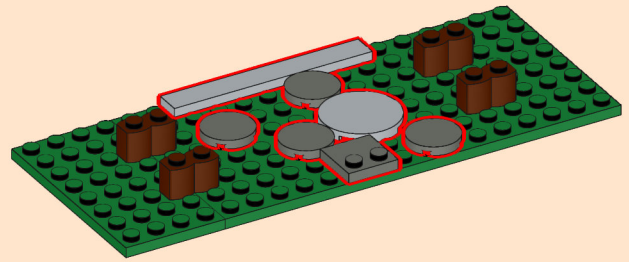
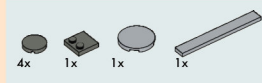
Modular Gatehouse



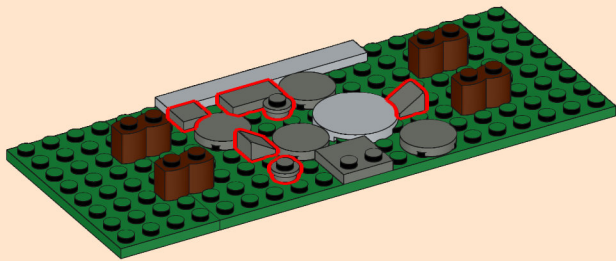
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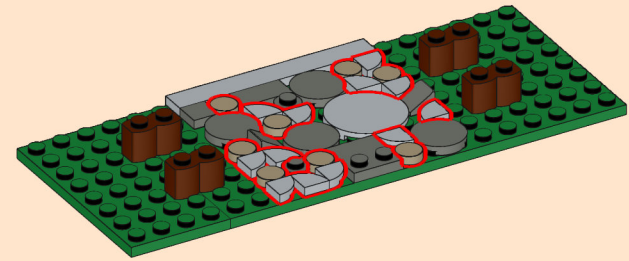
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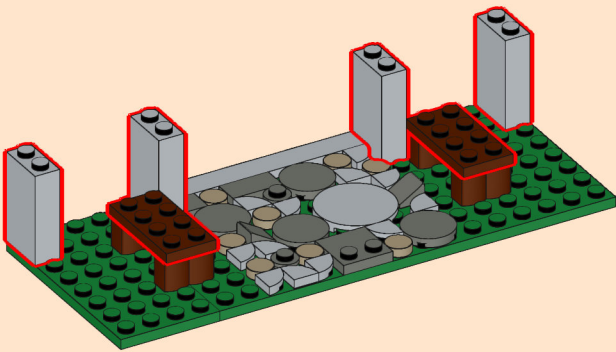
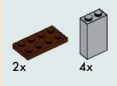
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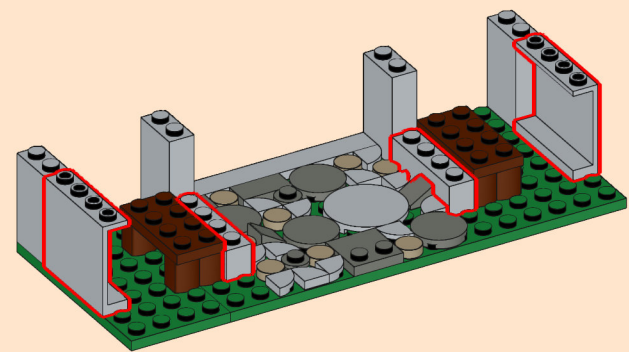
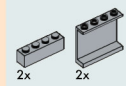
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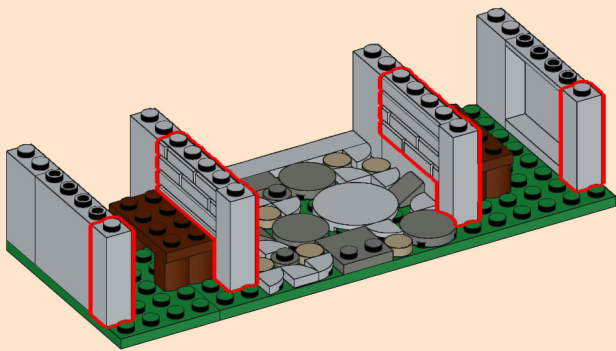
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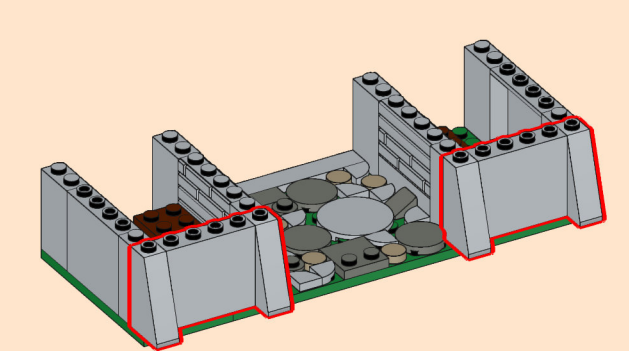
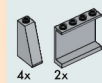
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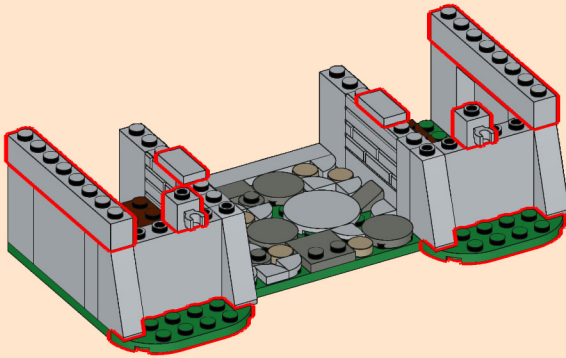
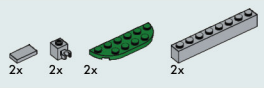
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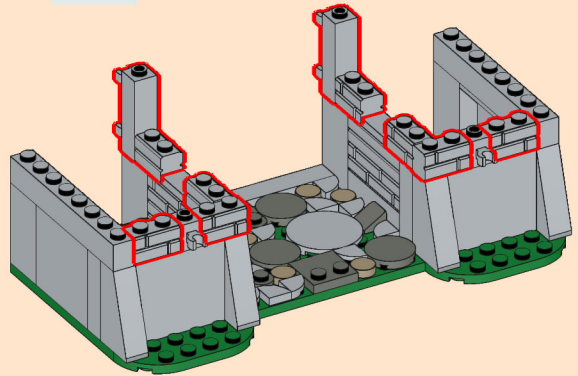
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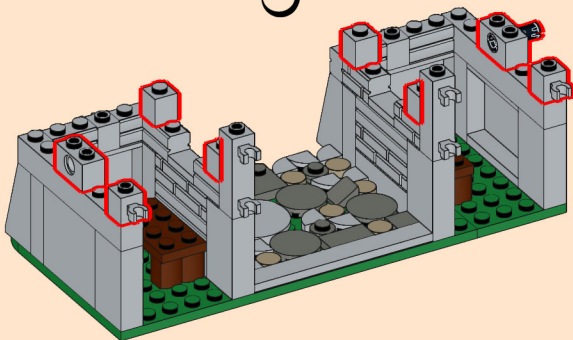
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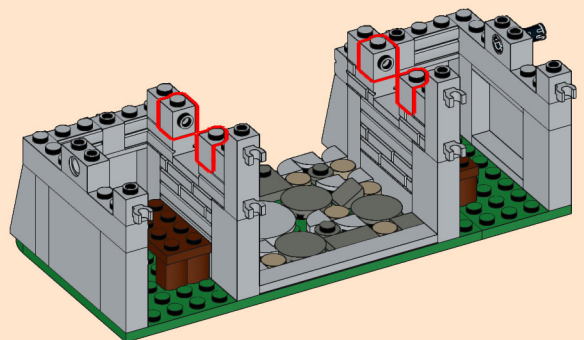
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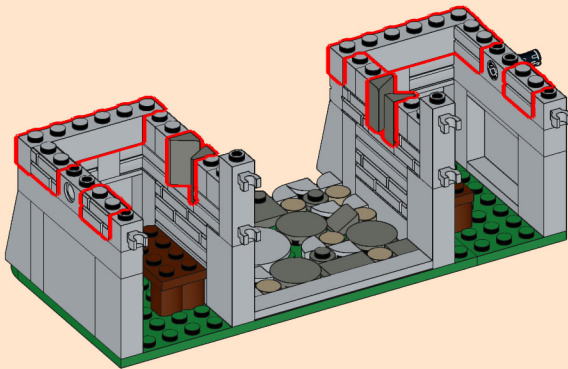
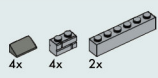
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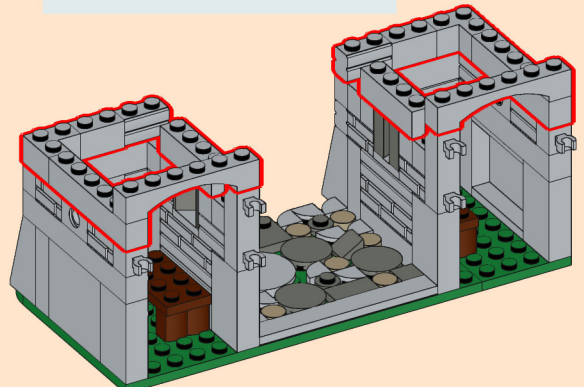
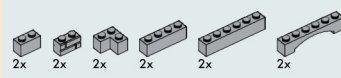
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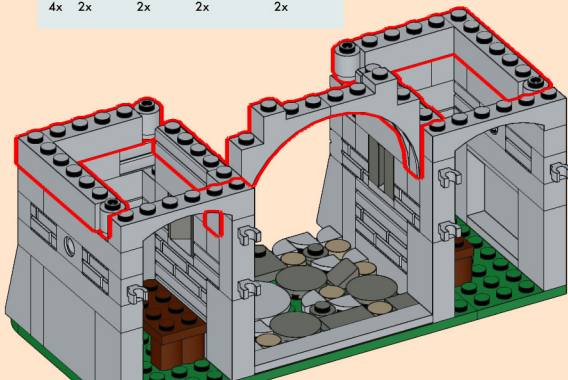
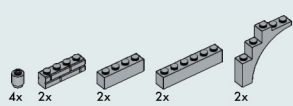
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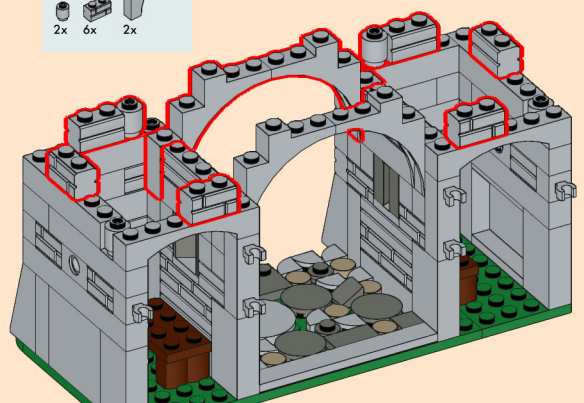
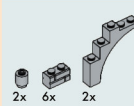
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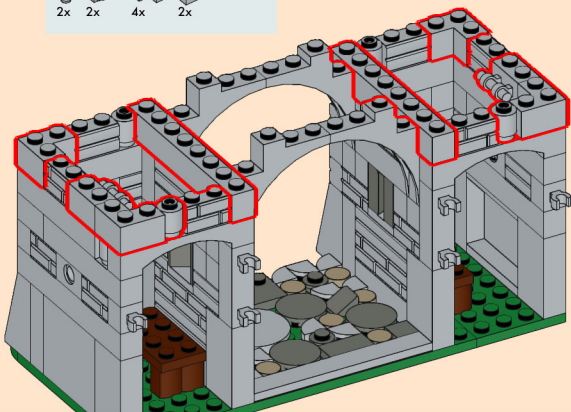
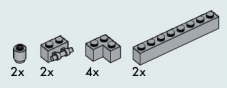
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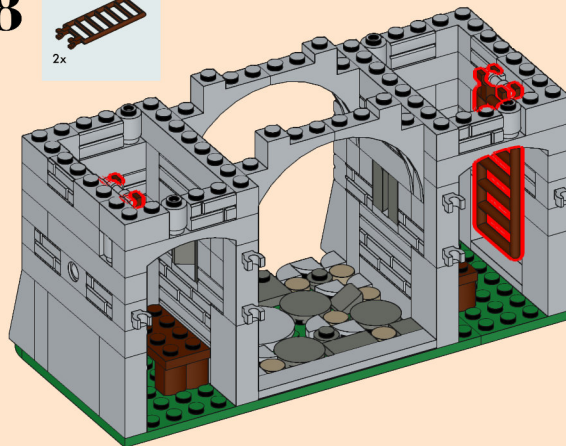
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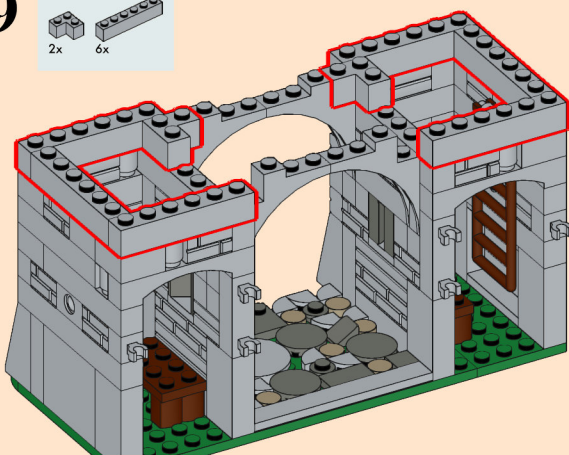
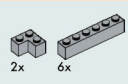
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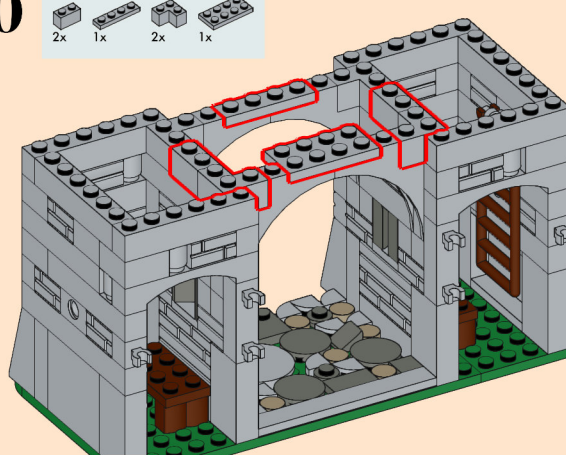
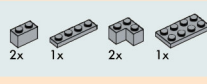
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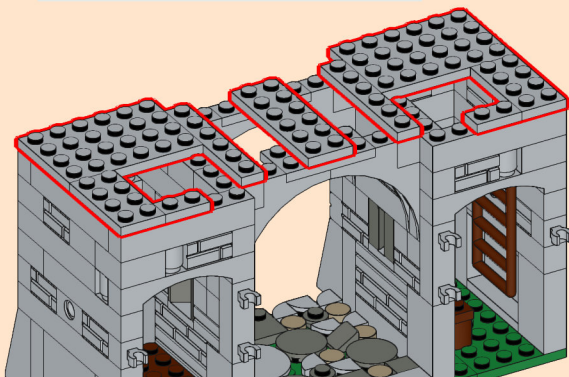
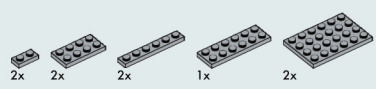
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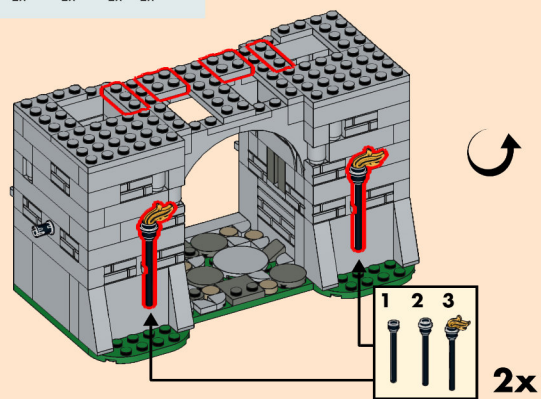
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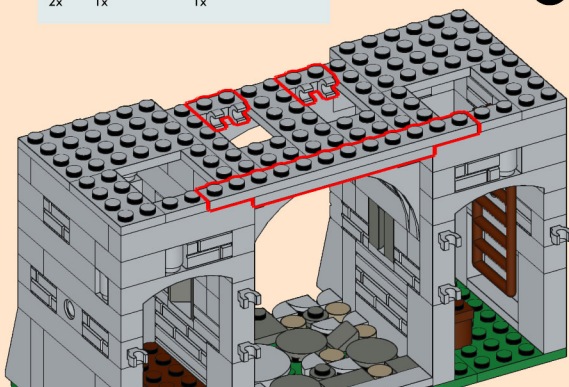
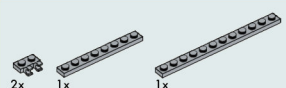
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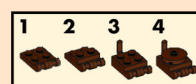
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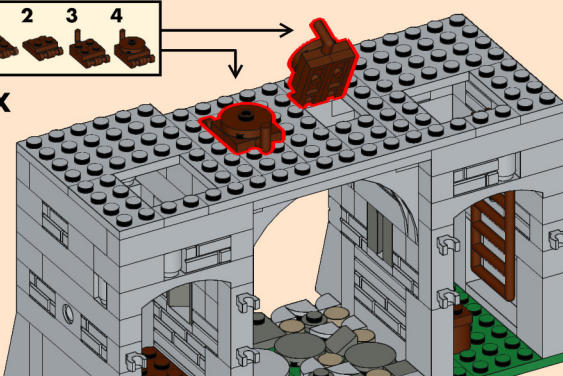
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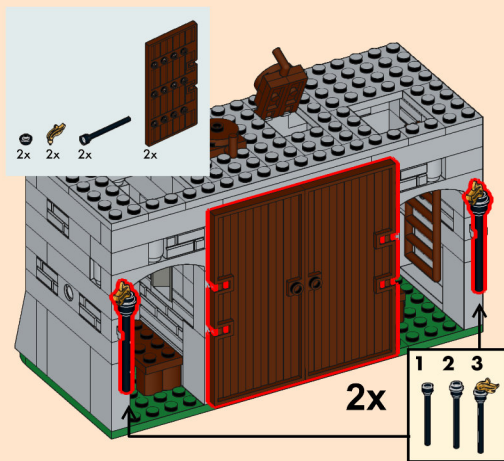
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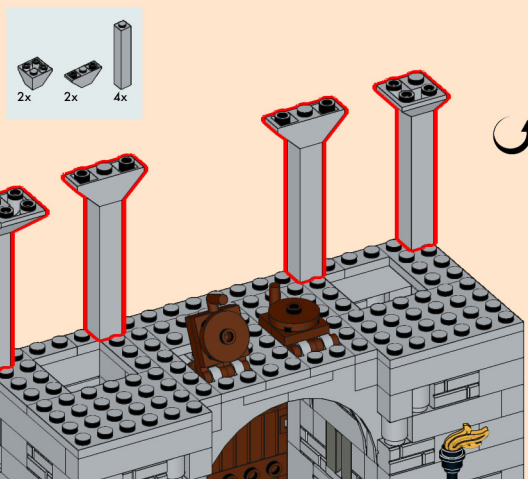
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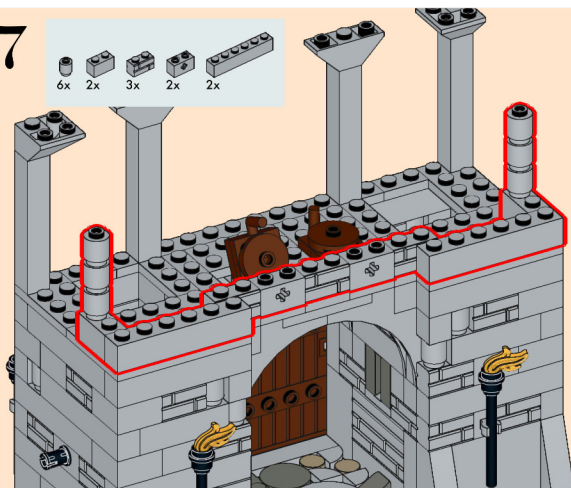
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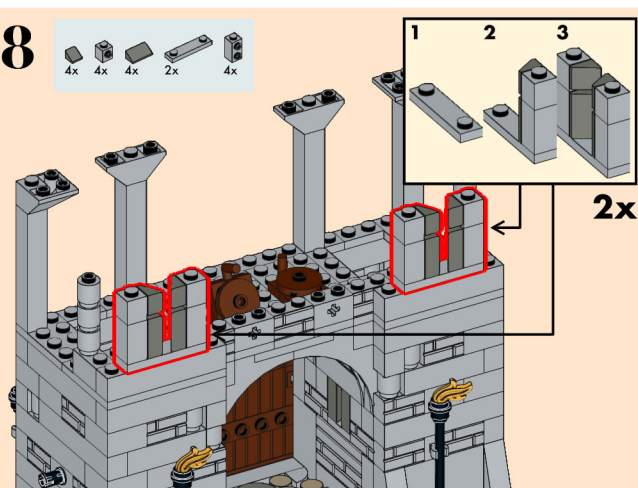
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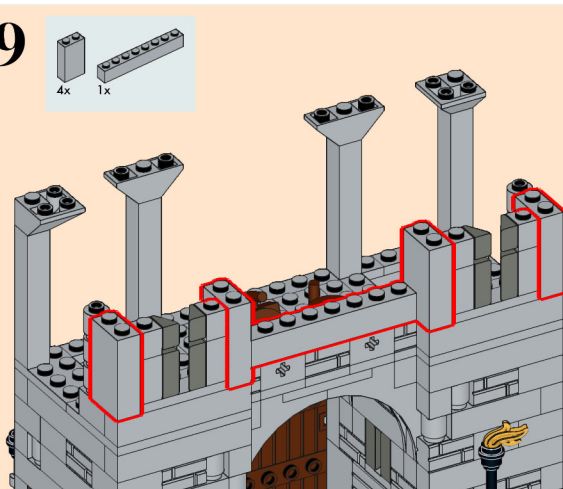
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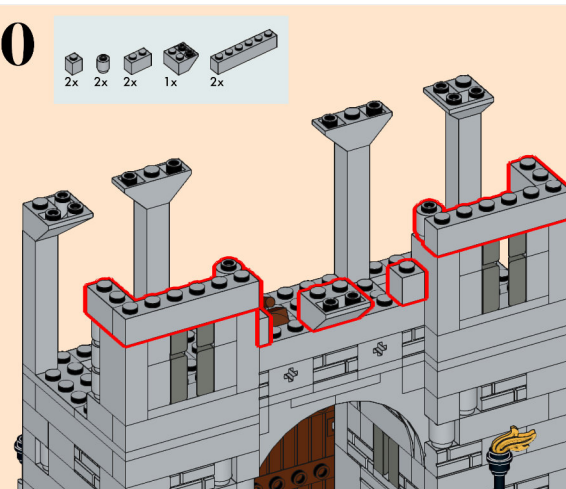
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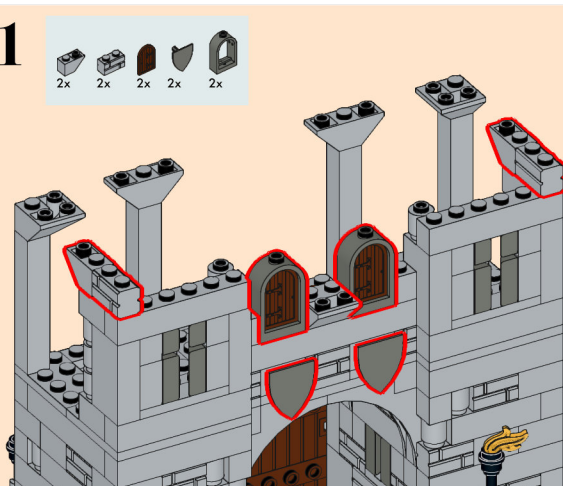
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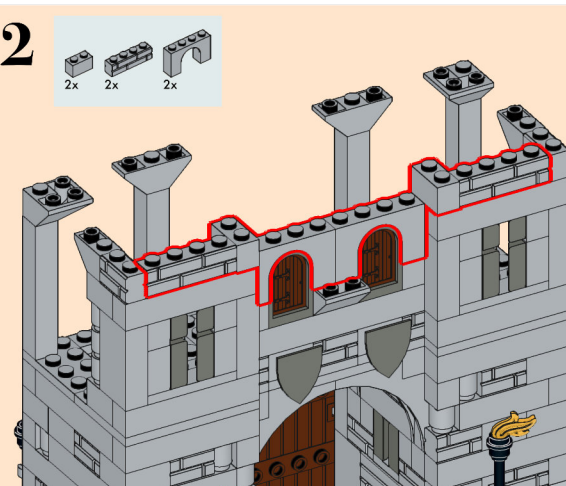
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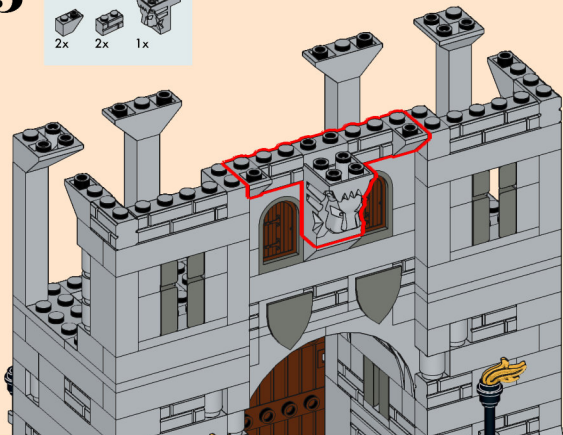
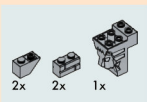
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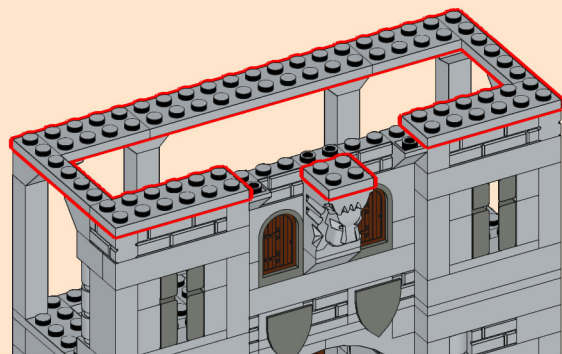
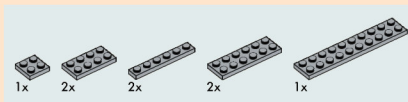
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33



34



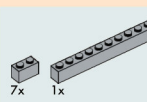
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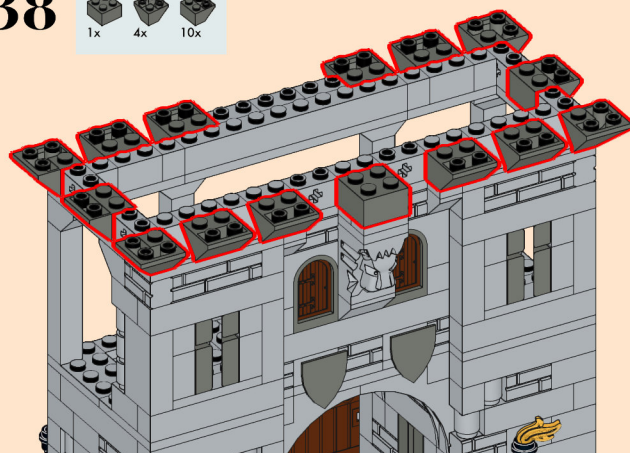
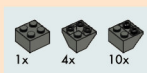
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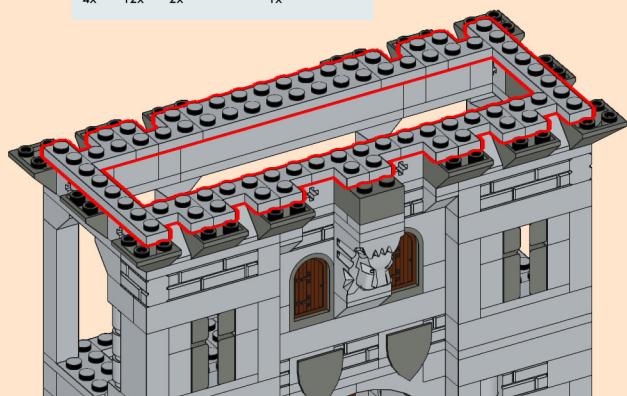
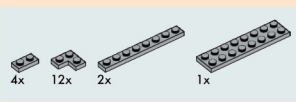
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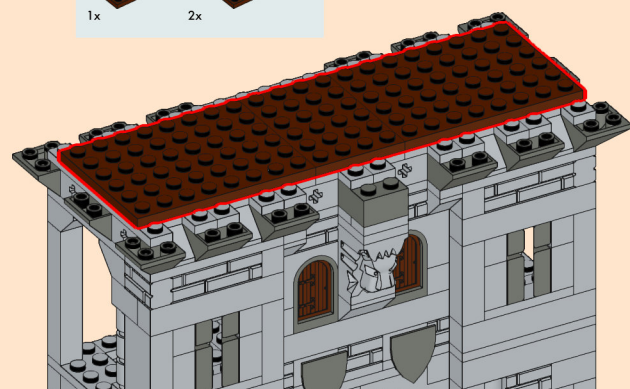
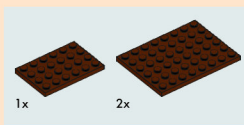
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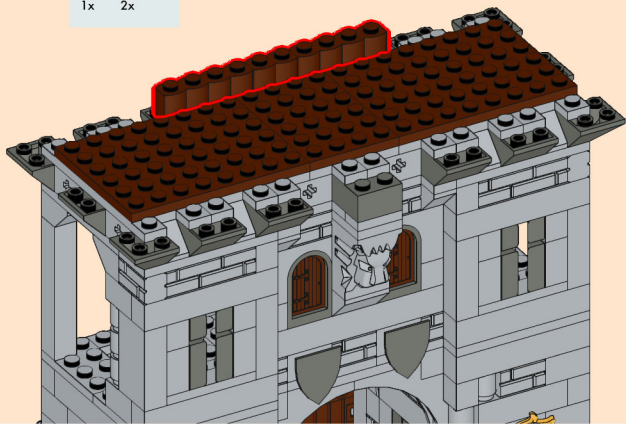
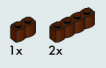
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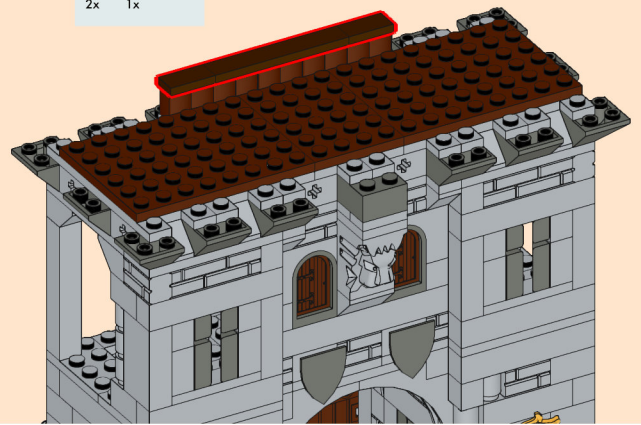
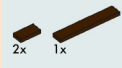
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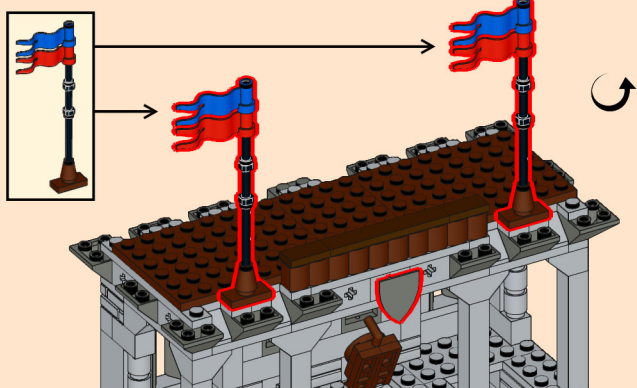
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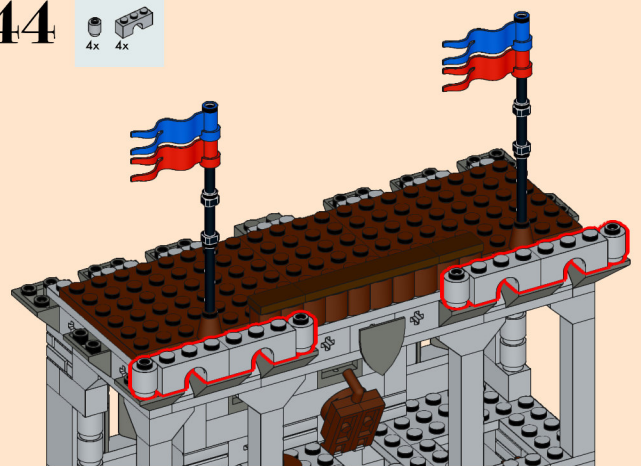
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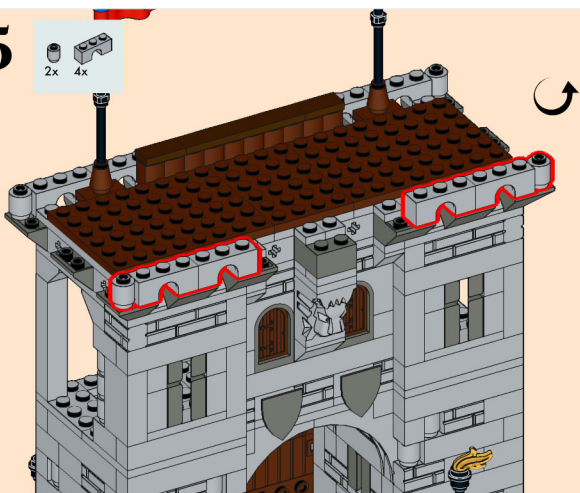
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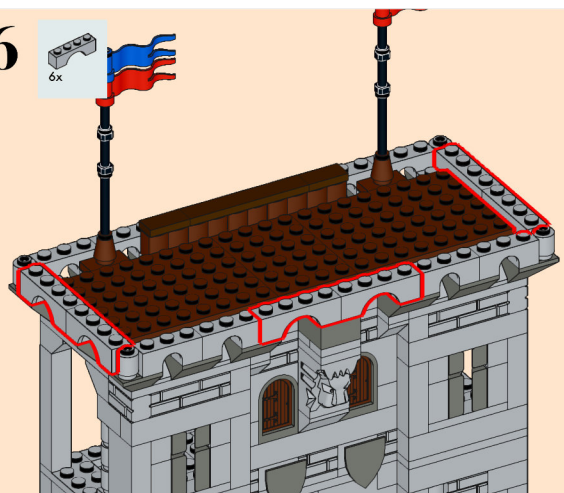
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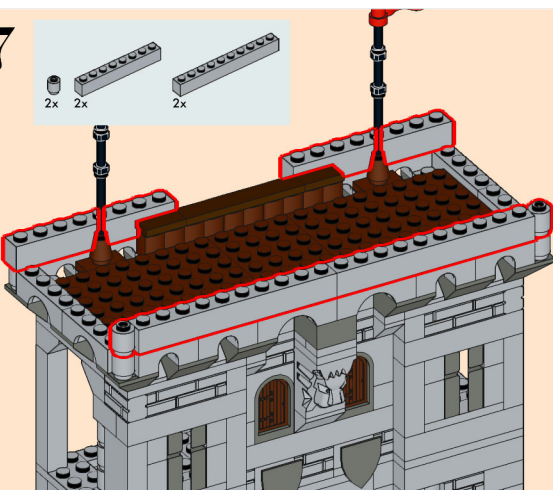
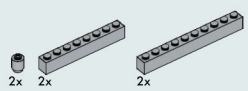
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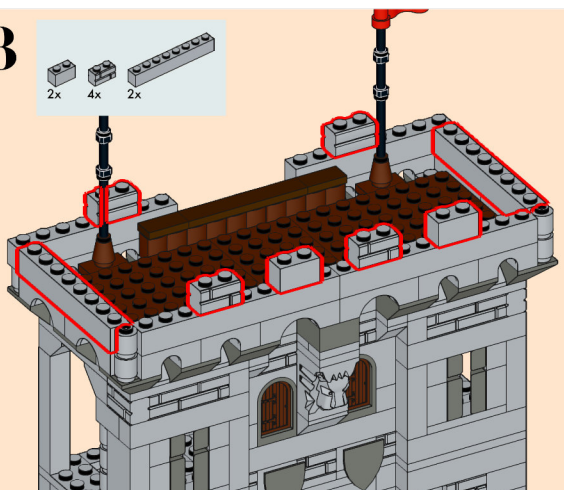
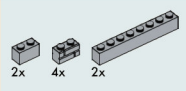
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47

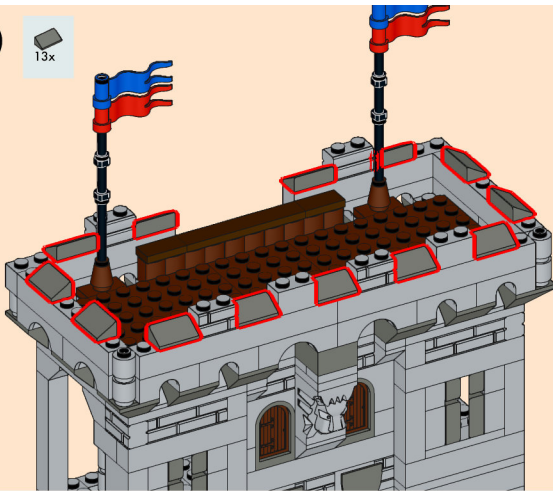


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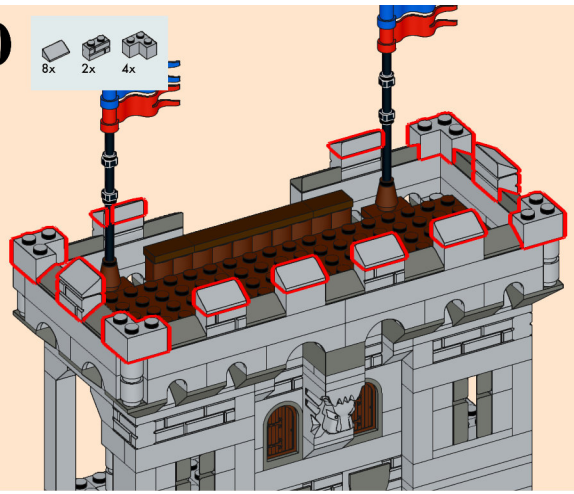
49

13x



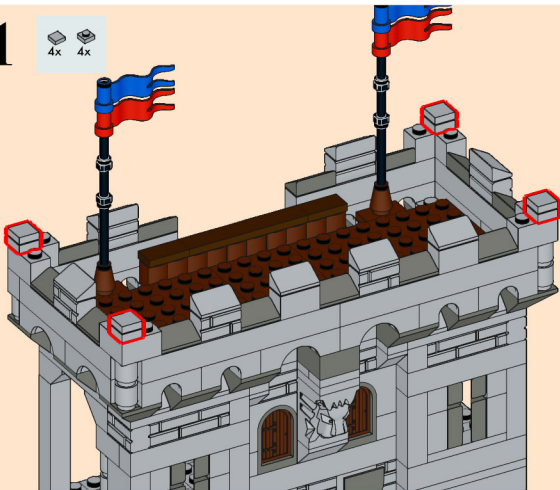
50

8x 2x 4x



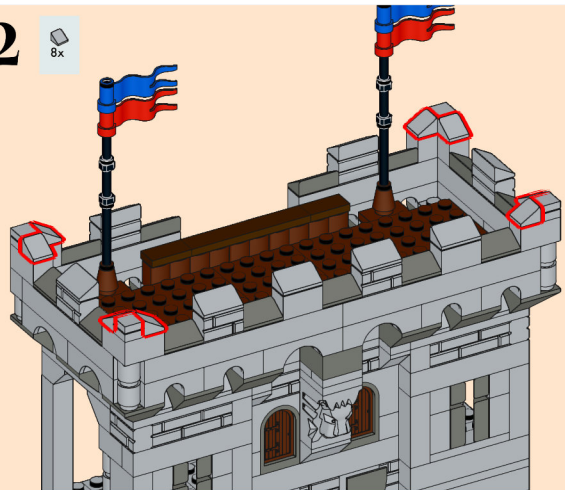
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4x 4x

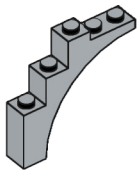


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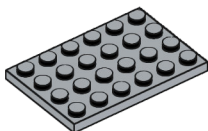
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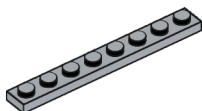




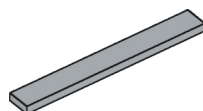
4x
2339
Light Bluish Gray



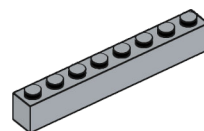
2x
3032
Light Bluish Gray



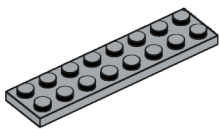
3x
3460
Light Bluish Gray



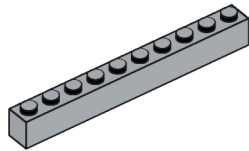
1x
4162
Light Bluish Gray



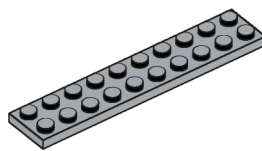
9x
3008
Light Bluish Gray



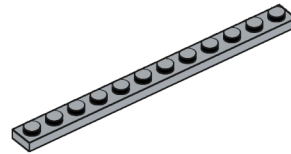
1x
3034
Light Bluish Gray



3x
6111
Light Bluish Gray



1x
3832
Light Bluish Gray



1x
60479
Light Bluish Gray



2x
4495a
Red



2x
4589b
Reddish Brown



2x
15573
Reddish Brown



2x
3023
Reddish Brown



5x
30136
Reddish Brown



2x
18674
Reddish Brown



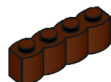
2x
4623b
Reddish Brown



4x
60478
Reddish Brown



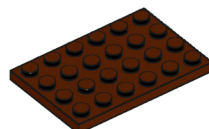
2x
94161
Reddish Brown



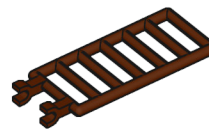
2x
30137
Reddish Brown



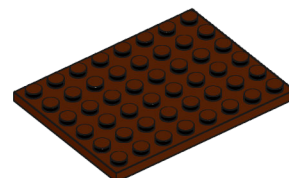
2x
3020
Reddish Brown



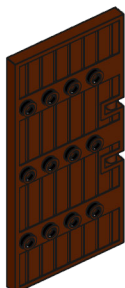
1x
3032
Reddish Brown



2x
6020
Reddish Brown



2x
3036
Reddish Brown



2x
87601
Reddish Brown



2x
3069b
Dark Brown



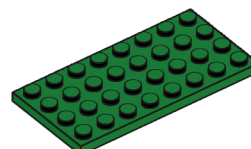
1x
6636
Dark Brown



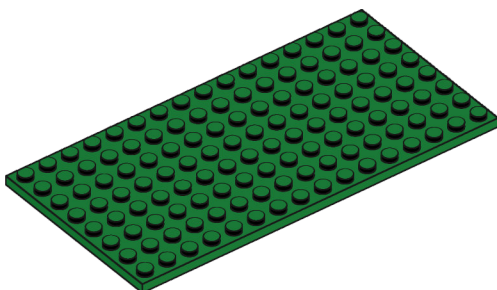
8x
98138
Dark Tan



2x
18980
Green



1x
3035
Green



1x
92438
Green



2x
4495a
Blue



4x
64647
Luminous Soft Amber



Cover Shot

By Beverly Thomas, Stuck in Plastic

When Stuck in Plastic were approached to create another front cover shot for the wonderful guys over at HispaBrick Magazine, I immediately said yes. Previously I had created the front cover for the 037 On the Road edition and I loved what was eventually produced. This edition is based on LEGO Knights and I will be honest, I have a soft spot for these little minifigures. Back in 2021, the Stuck in Plastic crew exhibited in The Hermitage, Amsterdam, and we produced a series of individual images that came together in one story.

Inspired by our Stuck in Plastic exhibition at The Hermitage, my thoughts reverted back to the history that surrounds my hometown of Pembroke and how kings and knights once roamed the land. And I decided to write A Knight's Tale to tell the story of Pembroke Castle as I understood it. The plan was to use toy photography to present the results of my research on who was who, and what happened when. I introduced the LEGO Knight minifigures to help represent these historic people, which in turn has put the timeline in order for me and perhaps helped others learn about our wonderful history.



The whole story of A Knights Tale can be read over on our Stuck in Plastic blog <https://www.stuckinplastic.com/2021/07/a-knights-tale/>.

Afterwards the LEGO Knights minifigs ended up back in their box—at least until now, as they have another Knight's Tale to tell and a new castle to conquer. Wales is part of the United Kingdom, and is renowned for its connections to historic castles—many of which are now visitor attractions. And Carew Castle is no exception, with a history stretching back at least 2000 years. As a photographer, this castle has often been a backdrop for

my work, so I went through my photographic library and decided this image was to become the background for the cover shot.

The Raven Knights have reached the outskirts of the castle, but their horses are feeling uneasy. Something has spooked them, and the knights find themselves consoling them before heading into battle.

The setting was made using a cardboard box in the form of a diorama which we covered during a virtual workshop and was also inspired during the Stuck in Plastic 2022 weekly TGIF challenges.

I have used it a few times now and just changed the background image. A simple empty cardboard box can be recycled into dramatic scenes just by using a bit of imagination.

Although I was shooting in a studio environment, I still wanted the image to look like it was taken in natural lighting. So, I diffused some window light and added a small LED portable VL120 RGB camera light, set on daylight, positioned to the right just on top of a photographic diffuser placed completely over the top of the box. This helped eliminate those pesky reflections of light on the wonderful shiny minifigure faces.

I used my Nikon D750 set on a tripod with a 105mm macro Lens attached and an aperture setting of F/3.3. Exposed at 1/10 seconds, in live view enabled me to get the correct exposure I wanted. Because I wanted depth of field, I had to open my lens to f3.3, and doing this helped with the background, but in turn made the figures in the foreground appear blurry except for the one minifigure I was focusing on. To rectify this on the same settings, I chose to focus on each individual minifigure's eye area and then Photoshopped the images to create a sharp foreground. A little tweak in Lightroom then produced the cover shot final image.





CRUSADERS CASTLE

Interview with Juan Ruiz Tablada by Rafa Muriel

I still remember that exhibition organized by Antonio (aka Legotron) in Mungía where he told us that he had been at an event days ago in Asturian lands organized by the LUG Asturbrick. There he had met an AFOL named Juan who had an impressive castle full of details. "He told me that he will come to pay us a visit at our expo if he can," said Antonio. And indeed, there he came and we spent a long time talking about constructions, parts, purchases... just like all AFOLS gathered in their sauce of bricks.

Commenting on what articles could be made for this medieval issue, José proposed this interview in a very successful way, so in this article we wanted to show you his castle—which, by the way, was 2021 MOC of the year in the HispaLUG community. We hope you enjoy it as much as we did.

HBM: Hi Juan, tell us something about yourself.

JRT: Hi! In the networks I make myself known as Blackfalcon81, I am 40 years old, born in Segovia, but Asturian by adoption!

HBM: How did you start in this LEGO thing?

JRT: My first LEGO set was 3654 from Fabuland (Lisa Lamb's House, 1982), a gift from my uncles when I was 3 years old. From that moment on, LEGO sets became my favorite birthday and Christmas gifts: medieval, space, pirates... what great memories!

HBM: I guess you would have had your "dark ages" like almost all AFOLs, right? Or are you one of those lucky ones who never stopped enjoying bricks since their earliest childhood?



JRT: Hehe, I had my “dark ages” when it comes to building, but I was always aware of what LEGO was doing and I bought some small Star Wars sets to stay in shape, LOL.

HBM: I know for a fact that you have an excellent stock in light grey, dark grey, and green... Very medieval I would say. Not to mention some very beautiful armies. Apart from medieval, do you also build in any other themes?

JRT: Gray is my downfall, because in addition to being valid for castles, it is also valid for Star Wars, another of the themes in which I build.

Medieval is my weakness, that’s how it is, but to be honest I really want to make a pirate creation... with a good ocean built from

thousands of trans blue tiles... I get excited just thinking about it.

HBM: Speaking of themes, what are your favorite official themes, and why?

JRT: LEGO Star Wars for the minifigures and LEGO Ideas for the techniques, since they are aesthetically very successful sets. LEGO, if you read this, then #bringbacklegocastle

HBM: You like MOCs built at minifig scale and although you are not very fond of instruction books, you have some constructions built based on them, especially from Star Wars. What does construction give you without a manual in front of you?

JRT: This is going to sound weird, but I build

very little with manuals, and when I do, I almost always want to modify things, extend it... so building without instructions allows me to do what I want, with only the limitations of available ABS—although the same thing happens to me with instructions as without them, I always want to modify things... What is this disorder called? :)

HBM: With construction in general, what do you prefer? Quality, quantity, or both?

JRT: For me, without a doubt, both. Although, for a single constructor, making a MOC of more than 12 base plates, although it is possible, causes many details to be lost. Or you do not reach the degree of detail that you would like in all the parts.

HBM: If you had to choose just one part, what would it be and why?

JRT: Aesthetically I love tiles, but without hesitation the chosen part would be a 1x2 plate since with several you can replicate practically any brick, even with three we already have a 1x2 brick... and so on ad infinitum.

HBM: What do you think of the extensive catalog of parts that fans have today? Do you think it is a success to add new parts year after year, or do you consider yourself a bit of a purist lover of the classic inventory?

JRT: For me it is a success, since it allows construction to evolve more and more, and the possibilities are infinite. I only wish that when LEGO produces new molds, it would not be limited to only using the colors of the set where that new part is included.

HBM: Focusing on your medieval diorama, what led you to make this beautiful castle with that level of detail?

JRT: As a good Segovian I grew up seeing the Alcázar. This, added to the memory of my LEGO castles and finding out how loose parts could be bought, were the three key ingredients for starting this project.

HBM: How much time have you dedicated to it? And do you plan to update it in the future?

JRT: It’s hard to calculate, because this is the



third version, and each one took me about two months. In addition to modifying the castle, I build a new exterior diorama after every two exhibitions (more or less) to avoid repetition.

What follows will not be an update, it will be a reboot. Until now I was reusing parts, walls, towers, etc. The next castle is going to be similar only in colors, which is all I can say at this point.

HBM: Have you rebuilt some parts? If so, why?

JRT: I'm never satisfied, as I was saying: raise the rock that supports the castle, improve the interiors somewhat, expand it...

HBM: What do you base your models on? Do you do research to give more realism to the construction?

JRT: For this castle, the build was based on a real Templar castle (I have the photos but I don't remember the name), where you have to go around the side of a mountain to enter and the entrance door is located in the back. I do not use historical documentation, except for basic knowledge of the moat, drawbridge, towers, walls, etc.

HBM: What have you enjoyed the most in this build?

JRT: Above all, to be able to see little by little how I managed to do what I had in mind and of





course to see the result of so much effort—it's a great feeling!

HBM: Which part of the medieval diorama are you most satisfied with?

JRT: What I like the most is the keep and the building with a roof.

HBM: You are a builder who gives importance to both content and presentation. A good example is this castle. . . by the way, I haven't asked you, does this diorama have a name or title?

JRT: Crusaders Castle (I just made that up :)). Then I'll do the Black Falcons castle next which will be mostly old Light Grey.

HBM: We know you are familiar with the MILS system. Do you build MOCs in MILS?

JRT: Yes, I have adapted the MILS system to my needs. I put my armies in MILS bases to keep them well organized. Starting from the same approach, I am currently making modules of 64x64 studs, because they are just as versatile but allow me to transport them better (whereas before I would have to put together 4 modules of 32x32).

HBM: What benefits do you think the system has for your constructions?

JRT: Being able to collaborate with other builders, and in my case being able to transport

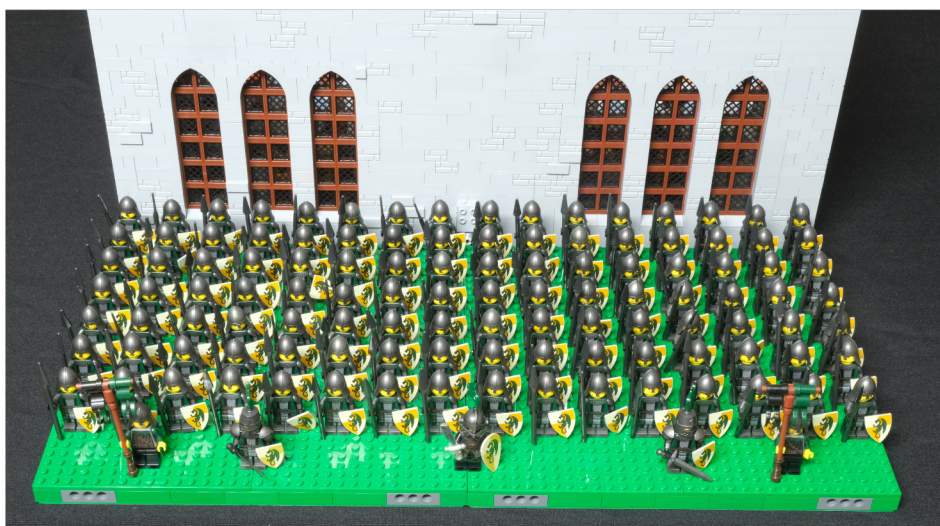
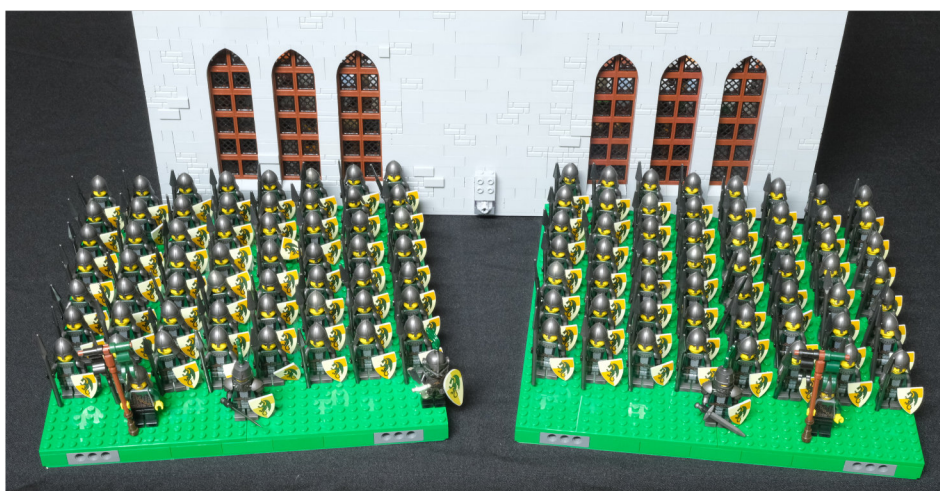


them, since it is much more stable than building on a baseplate. Also all the advantages it has when making reliefs and playing with bricks built high on the baseplate.

HBM: You have also revealed yourself as a great lover of classic Transformers robots. Transformers, LEGO... the formula can be easy to come up with but difficult to solve, we know you're working on it. We will be very attentive to the result that is already promising according to what has been seen. We thank you very much for your time and the dedication you have put into this space since you have had to rebuild the entire base of the castle for the images in this article, as well as some additions that will be enjoyable for all to see.

JRT: Well, first of all, I would like to thank the entire HispaBrick Magazine team for this great opportunity to share what I do and who I am with other LEGO fans. For me it is a dream, and although I am far from the greatest creator, I strive every day to learn more techniques and improve my MOCs little by little. You can follow my creations (not only medieval) on my instagram @blackfalcon81.

Thanks to Muriel for his efforts and Javier @f2studio for the photos, Alex @lexdreamphoto for the battlefield photo and @eowyn_afol for the vintage photo.





Interview with Nate Flood by Jetro de Château

HBM: What is the name of your community?

LOLUG: LOLUG. The name is an acronym for Lincoln Omaha LEGO User Group. Lincoln and Omaha Nebraska are the two major cities located in eastern Nebraska and the area where our LUG operates. Prior to Covid-19 our meetings would be held in Omaha (odd months of the year) and in Lincoln (even months of the year). Events that showcase our creations are held across both cities and across the State of Nebraska.

Nebraska is very sparsely populated with the majority of people living along the far east border. We are an agricultural state where the majority of the land is dedicated to crops and livestock.

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

LOLUG: In 2012 AFOLs Chris Malloy and I met through Flickr when we both realized we lived in the same city and were both fans of LEGO. We met at a local restaurant and decided to start a LUG as there wasn't one in the area. Chris came up with our logo which included a circle to represent Omaha and the State Capitol building which was in Lincoln.

The purpose for starting the LUG was to bring together Adult Fans of LEGO and discuss and build with LEGO. Neither of us knew what the future held and how LOLUG would evolve over the years but neither of us expected the path the group would take.

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

LOLUG: The goal when Chris and I started LOLUG was to just find enough AFOLs to be recognized by LEGO and put together a few events to showcase our creations. By using social media extensively and scouring LEGO online forums such as Eurobricks, Classic Castle, and FBTB, LOLUG grew quickly in terms of membership as AFOLs in the area quickly flocked to the meetings. The group quickly outgrew the meeting space in restaurants and switched to community rooms as the group had build competitions, presentations, show and tell of MOCs and set drafts.

One of LOLUG's first events to showcase our creations was held in the back of a hobby store called HobbyTown. HobbyTown would play an essential part in the evolution of LOLUG. The store is one of the largest LEGO retailers in Lincoln. The first event had a hundred people visit and ask questions about our creations. LOLUG continued the events twice a year and eventually the line was out the door waiting to see what we displayed. Television and newspapers completed dozens of stories about our group. Radio stations conducted live streams from our events and conducted interviews with our members during the events. The showcases also added to the growth of the group as many AFOLs attended and wanted to be involved.

As of today LOLUG has grown to over 100 members, is a registered nonprofit and helps organize the area's largest LEGO convention called Brick Days.

The Brick Days event is a partnership with HobbyTown and stemmed from the back of the store events that they hosted. Brick Days has become a multi-day event that includes LEGO vendors, games and activities and incredible creations along with other LUGs across the midwest. It is held in Lincoln and in Omaha during the year.





LOLUG often refers to itself as a tribe. We are a very close family and when a new member joins they are quickly welcomed into the fold. It's been said from some members, who previously had social anxieties, that LOLUG helped them overcome their fears. Overall we are a tribe that loves LEGO, good whiskey, and good conversation!

HBM: How many people are working on the operation of the LUG?

LOLUG: The LUG currently has a five-person Board of Directors along with an attorney. The BOD consists of a President, Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer, Social Media Coordinator and an At-Large position. The positions (besides the attorney) are voted on by the membership of LOLUG. The election process is established in our By-Laws. While the LUG has a Board of Directors; all the members help at our events and our meetings. The BOD is only for leadership as the LUG is a very tight knit group of friends. We often do activities together outside of the LUG. Members will also lead a meeting when they give a presentation about a new build technique, such as building trees and landscaping to building Great Ball Contraptions.

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

LOLUG: LOLUG hopes to continue success with Brick Days and turn it into a well known convention that spans 4-5 days. We want to continue our work with other non-profits and our community including the City of Lincoln. Prior to Covid-19, the

LUG was working on a second series of trading cards that we would produce that would have city landmarks. We were going to cooperate with our library system to have young readers work on a scavenger hunt involving these landmarks where the trading cards could be collected.

HBM: How is your community funded?

LOLUG: The funding began as a "pass the hat" to help pay expenses but evolved to include donation boxes built out of LEGO that are displayed at all our events.

LOLUG has developed a tiered membership system where one level is a "basic member" and another is a "subscribing member". The subscribing members pay dues which offsets the costs of advertising, website fee's, etc. LOLUG also receives a donation for working at Brick Days.

HBM: How do you see the future of your community?

LOLUG: LOLUG will become an even bigger non-profit in the Lincoln and Omaha community.



We are donating to causes throughout the area with LEGO gift baskets that are supported by the membership. The reaction from the public is mind numbing as so many people are excited to be receiving a huge basket filled with LEGO sets! A simple gesture in these trying times really goes a long way in giving joy to somebody who desperately needs it.

HBM: How has Covid-19 changed/affected your community?

LOLUG: While we weren't able to meet in person during 2020 we continued to meet on Zoom. We still have monthly build challenges and vote as we would if we met in-person. We still have presentations, and in fact, they are a bit easier online than in person. By being active in the community the LUG has grown faster than ever with more members wanting to join our happy group of LEGO enthusiasts.

HBM: How would you describe your relationship with LEGO?

LOLUG: LOLUG has an outstanding relationship with LEGO. We strive to be representatives of the LEGO Group at our events and promote the LEGO hobby to everyone! We are very thankful that they allow us a small voice in their very large community. We hope by sharing our experiences on the LEGO Ambassador Network that we can inspire other ambassadors from across the globe.

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

LOLUG: We have grown a rabid fan base of



followers, in fact LOLUG is the most followed LUG on social media in the USA. Our events are extremely well attended by the public and are comparable to other LEGO Conventions so we would love to see a LEGO Brand Retail store in Omaha. Of course we don't expect it as we are in Nebraska and with that comes some preconceived notions that we still ride on horses with covered wagons. One of our members was recently asked

if we had running water in Nebraska (the answer was yes).

HBM: Can you share any anecdotes about your community?

LOLUG: As previously mentioned we are a tight knit community and we travel really well together to Brickworld Chicago (an 8+ hour drive). The pre-party usually turns into the "LOLUG Bar" where we have discussed printing banners and giving our bar a name. One time the microphone used by Brickworld staff for announcements was left unattended and it became an impromptu comedy show hosted by LOLUG member John Olive. We are fairly certain the microphone will never be left unattended again. Fun fact: LOLUG member John Olive auditioned for American Idol. While John does have an amazing voice; he sadly wasn't selected to continue his singing career.

Nebraska gets very few celebrities at our Comic Con's. Sean Gunn (Guardians of the Galaxy) was the highlight at our Comic Con and he happened to walk by and notice Eric Price's (one of our members) MOCs based on Guardians of the Galaxy. Eric was thrilled when Sean asked if he could take pictures of it and visited our booth

before heading to the hotel that evening. We are fairly certain Eric still gets giddy when we bring up Sean Gunn.

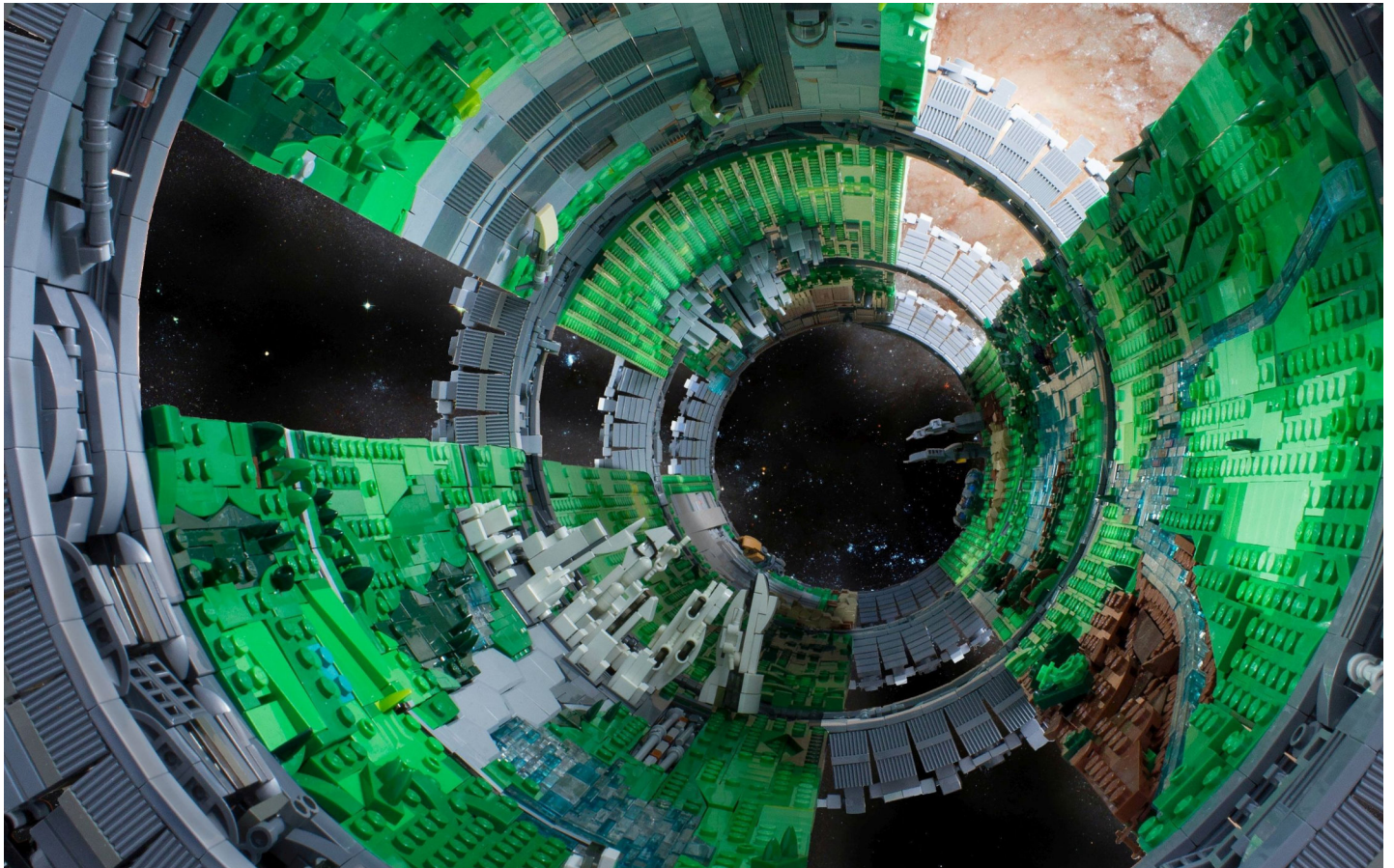
LOLUG loves to display at any event and once during a local convention our tables were across from an amateur wrestling ring. Two members decided it would be best to begin voicing play-by-play for any and all to hear that walked past. Needless to say; the play-by-play became more popular than amateur wrestling.





INTERVIEW WITH RALF LANGER

by José Manuel Ruiz Carvajal



Left: My first MOC. Top: The future is bright. Above: The Wood Triptychon—The Tower

HBM: Hi Ralf! It is an honor to be able to have an interview with such a technical and detailed LEGO builder, and we look forward to learning more about your great work. But first, could you tell us a bit about yourself?

RL: Hi, my name is Ralf Langer. You may know me as ranghaal. I was born in 1971 and I work as a software engineer in Cologne.

HBM: How much time do you spend building with LEGO®?

RL: Certainly too much. I try to keep it down but I still underestimate the time it takes when planning a new model. I only use my own designs and trying out new designs is the most time consuming part. Having a clear vision of the result speeds things up a lot but unfortunately I get lost in thousands of micro decisions too often. I don't build every day but it's the major part of my spare time.

HBM: What do your family/friends think about your hobby?

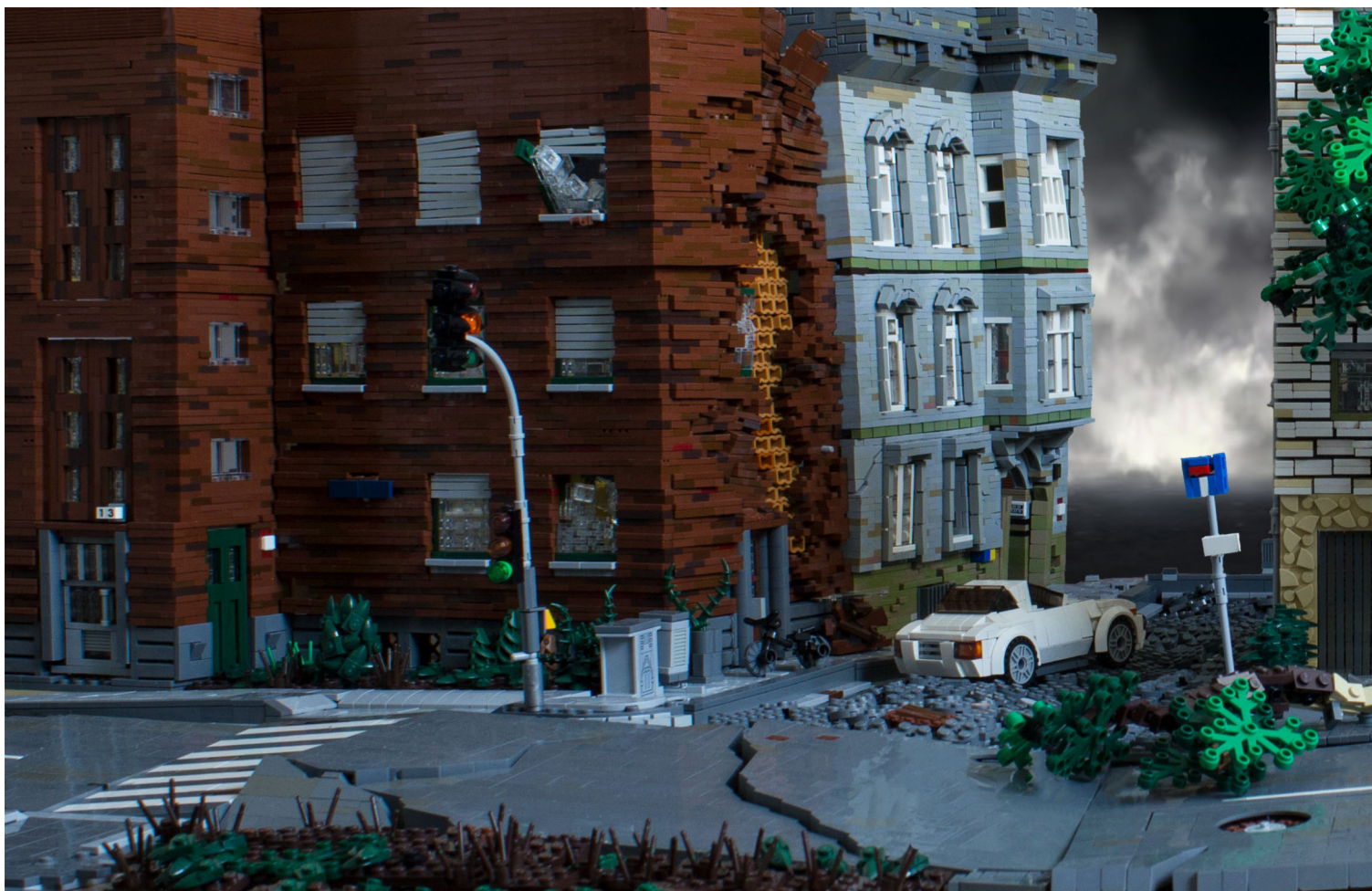
RL: They all know it but most don't care much or at all.

HBM: How did you start with the world of MOCs?

RL: Before building MOCs as an adult I bought some sets in 2014 or 2015.

I tried a Technic car, a large Star Wars shuttle and a modular build (Parisian cafe).

The cafe was the most fun and pleasing to me. I don't use parts from sets for building MOCs.



Top: Broken Home. Right: Fishing in muddy waters. P101, bottom: Arrr.

I started to build up a collection from scratch and it took me years before I could begin.

HBM: What inspires you to create your layouts and MOCs?

RL: Inspiration is everywhere. I am a big comic fan (franco belge style preferably) and I am sure this had a major impact on me.

The initial idea is totally different most of the time. It might be a story, a general graphic setting or mood, some techniques I haven't tried yet, etc.

Just to name a few:

My first MOC—I was just looking for a couple of forms and wanted as many crazy angles as possible.

"Broken Home!"—This was a real incident. A tree fell on my fathers house. I just added a dozen buildings familiar to my surroundings in Cologne where I live.

"The future is bright"—A science fiction cliché. I played Mass Effect before and it also features a tube world.

Sometimes I have a clear vision, other times I just rearrange the components over and over.

"Fishing in muddy waters", "Magnum Opus Fachwerkus" and "Arrr" were more or less done that way.



HBM: What are the most important goals you have achieved in recent years?

RL: I have won the colossal castle contest in 2018.

I have reached 10k votes on LEGO ideas for some of my designs. Feel free to support my

current ones: <https://ideas.lego.com/profile/Ralf%20Ranghaal/entries?query=&sort=top>

Most importantly I am still building large intricate builds.

HBM: What is your favorite commercial LEGO® building theme?





Above: A Light in the Dark. Below: Black world with a pink twist. Opposite: Magnum Opus Fachwerkus

RL: I like Pirates of the Caribbean but my favorite theme might actually be City.

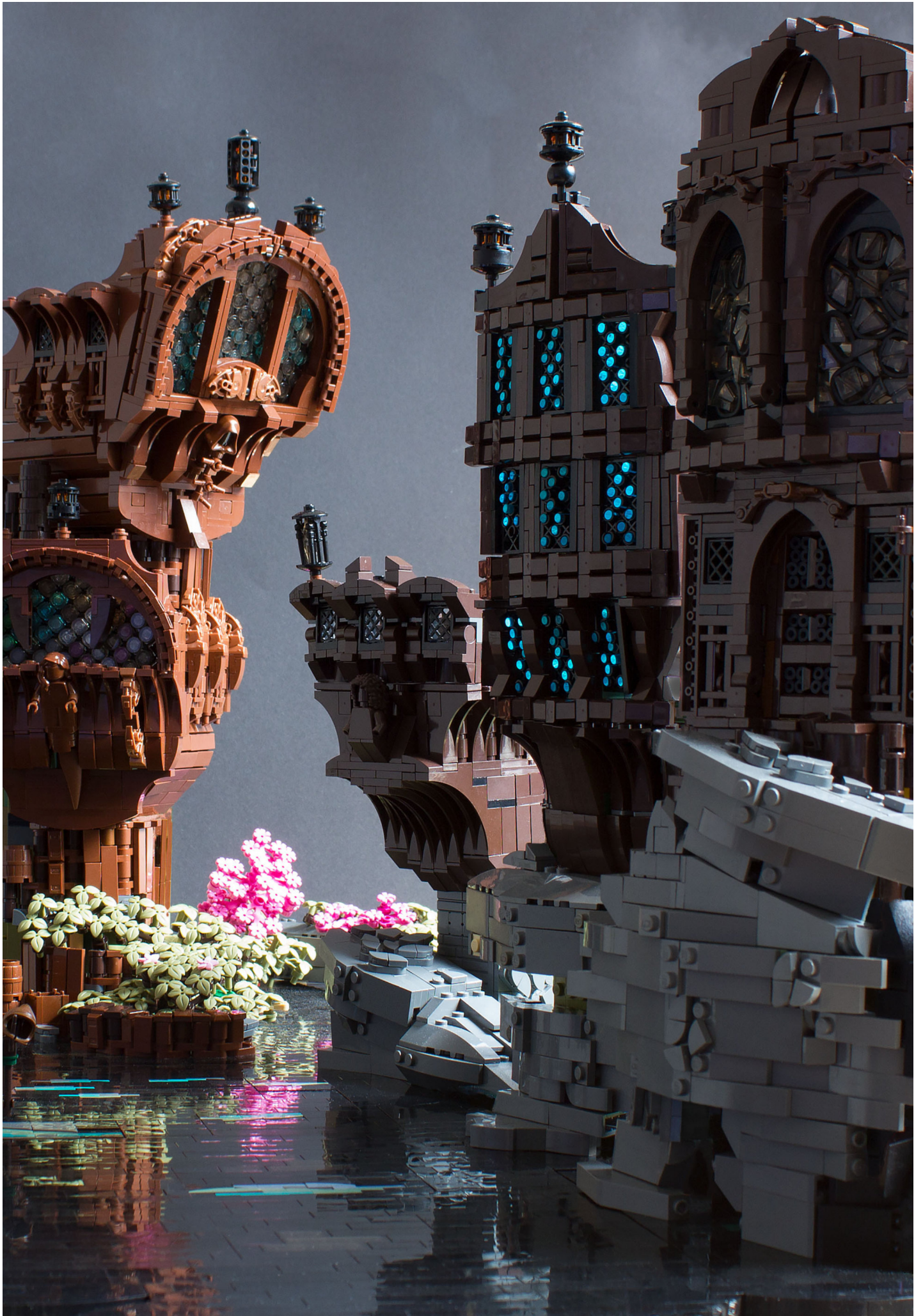
HBM: What is your favorite LEGO® element?

I have been using tons of quarter tiles lately. Easily my most used special part besides 1x2 tiles and plates. You can see, for example, in my MOC "A light in the dark" how I use this part for walls and texture.

HBM: You are specialized in creating MOCs about medieval and above all in the use of techniques that seek the greatest realism in construction. How was your first MOC? How has this approach evolved?

RL: My very first MOC was all about forms and weird angles. The more angles the better. There







was hardly a brick that wasn't connected to a hinge. I didn't use consistent techniques. Every brick was like adding a new hinge, having a new angle and painful trial and error for every step. It took me months.

I changed my style a few months later. My MOC "The wood triptychon—the tower" features more realistic textures and less form.

"Magnum Opus Fachwerkus" was the peak of realistic textures. I didn't realize it consciously but I was trying everything to make it look like it's not LEGO. I used parts as small as possible, tiny bends all over, discoloured and worn pieces. Most pieces were put on hoses or hinges and there were tiny bends everywhere.

I knew I could never top that one so I toned down afterwards.

It might not occur at first glance but the

following builds like "Fishing in muddy waters" or "A light in the dark" were actually quite a bit simpler and more conventional.

HBM: It's always wonderful to see your medieval houses. . . . Do you plan to provide them with interior details in the future?

RL: Not really. I feel more like a painter and I don't really care for play features. I like to design. I don't play with my models.

Interiors in minifigure size are always flawed. You can do either a great looking interior or a great facade/building. When combining both there is a huge problem with the proportions. Take a look at a regular modular build. The interior looks tiny. It would have to be many times larger. But then you would end up with a monstrously large building.

HBM: What MOC are you most proud of?

RL: Very tough question.

"Magnum Opus Fachwerkus" is technically by far my hardest effort.

My most important model to me might be "The future is bright". It was so weird and complex and allowed me to do a couple of round tube models.

HBM: What other theme do you like to build in?

RL: I don't really think in terms of themes. I like landscapes and architecture.

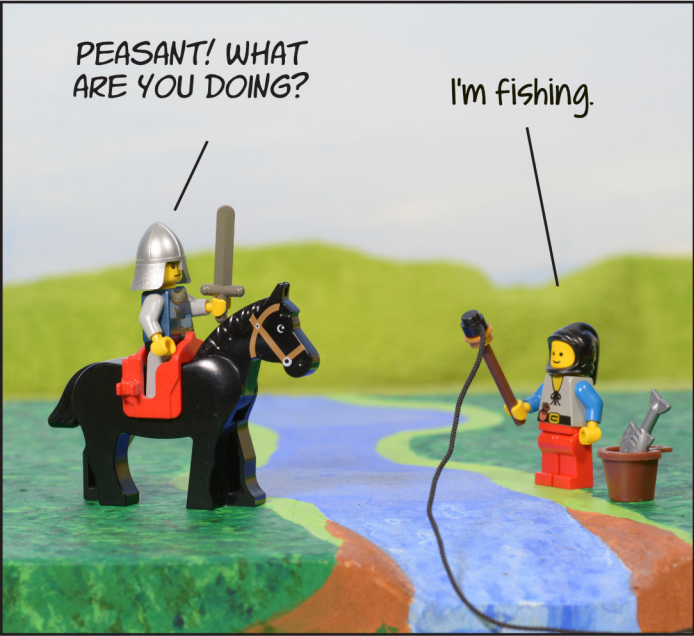
HBM: Do you have any suggestions for new MOCers?

RL: Use social media to connect yourself. A lot of people are willing to help.

HBM: Are you currently working on any MOCs or other LEGO related projects?

RL: I have been working on a texture driven build for a few weeks now. Hopefully it should be finished soon.

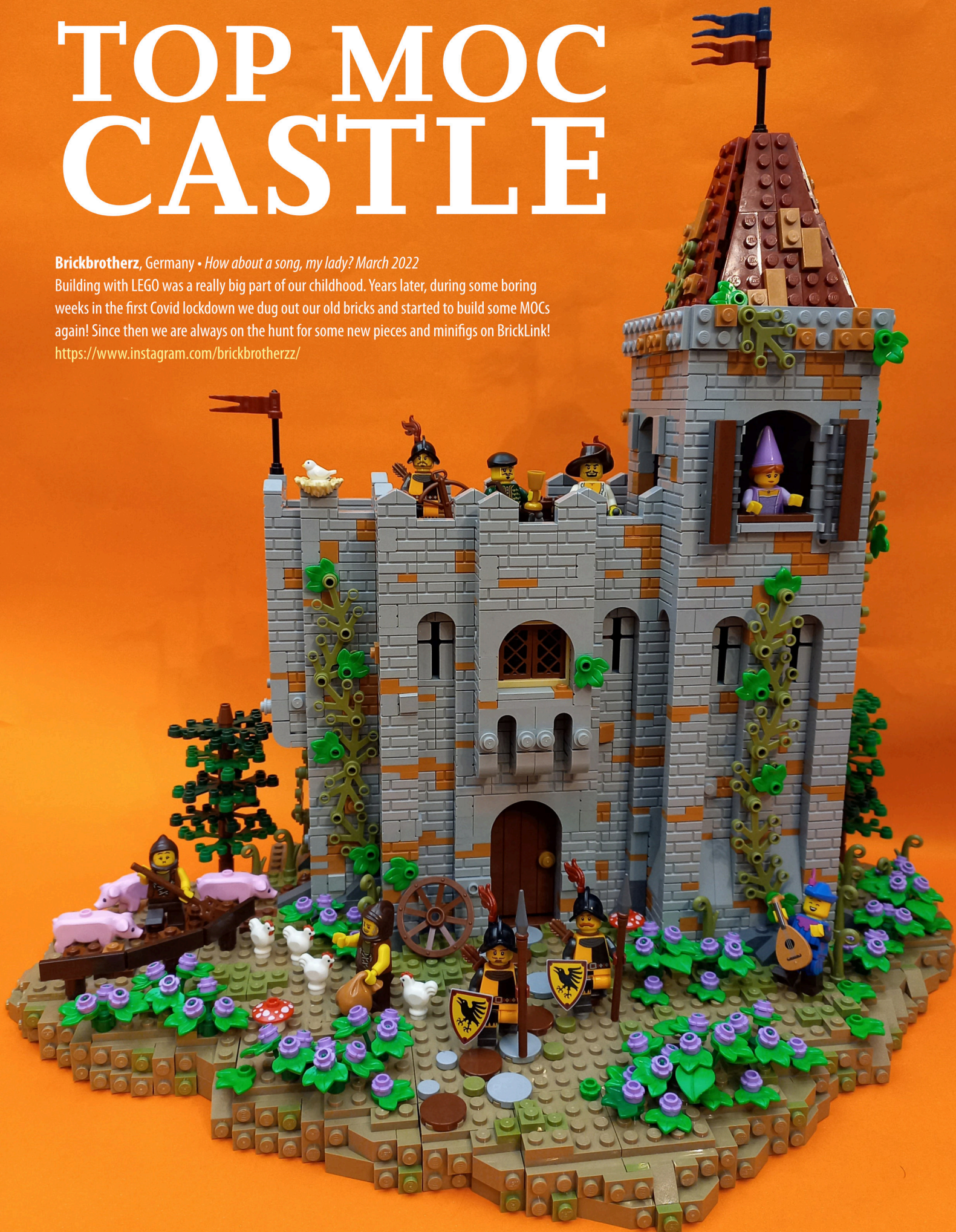
Beyond Desmontados by Mark Favreau



TOP MOC CASTLE

Brickbrotherz, Germany • *How about a song, my lady?* March 2022

Building with LEGO was a really big part of our childhood. Years later, during some boring weeks in the first Covid lockdown we dug out our old bricks and started to build some MOCs again! Since then we are always on the hunt for some new pieces and minifigs on BrickLink!
<https://www.instagram.com/brickbrotherzz/>





Guilherme Santos, Portugal

Guarded Inn, December 2016

I have played with LEGO since I was born in 1981! This was thanks to my mother, who was lucky enough to have a few LEGO sets when she was a little girl and carried her enthusiasm to me. The sets from the 80s and 90s have a special meaning to me. The nostalgia of my childhood plays an important role, but the main reason was the importance of the space and medieval themes. Both continue to be my favorite themes of all time.

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



Paweł Michalak, Poland

Chateau Mokotoff, May 2020

How did I start? As well as I can remember I saw photos from Colossal Castle Contest somewhere on the internet.

I thought: "it's fantastic I have to try". And that is the whole story.

https://www.flickr.com/photos/kris_kelvin/



Sylvain Rioux, Canada

Medieval Castle, November 2019

I got my first LEGO kit, Basic 190, when I was 10. I played a lot with LEGO until I was about 15, then put them away for a long, long time. Then I had kids. They started playing with my LEGO and that was it, I was hooked. They have since grown out of their LEGO phase, but I haven't!

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/76204831@N04/>





Frank van Eenbergen, Netherlands

The Western Wall of Fraketon, October 2019

As a kid I was fascinated by the Danish bricks. I always asked for LEGO on Christmas and birthdays and the times I got something else I tried to exchange the gift in the toy store. But as most AFOLs my age, I also had a dark age. I think that started somewhere around the time I was 17 when I started studying at the Dutch equivalent of a university (HBO-school). Back in 2006, when I moved in with the woman I still share my life with, my LEGO moved with me. I must have been 23 around that time. I felt compelled to build some old Technic sets from my childhood period in the evenings and before I knew it I was searching for second hand sets that I always wanted but never got.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/tijger-san/>

Maciej Koszyka, Poland

Black Falcon's Stronghold, May 2019

I started playing with LEGO around 1986 as a kid with two Basic sets. I came back to it after quite a short Dark Age in high school. I've been an AFOL for 20 years now.

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

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