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Journal

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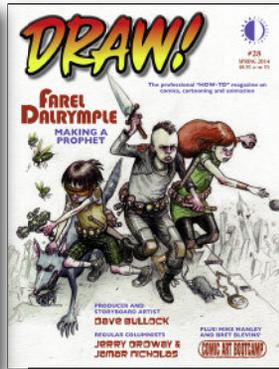
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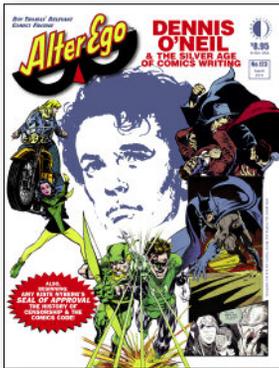
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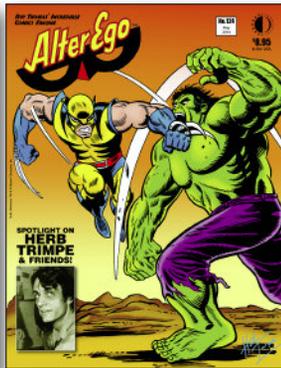
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DENNY O'NEIL's Silver Age career at **Marvel**, **Charlton**, and **DC**—aided and abetted by **ADAMS**, **KALUTA**, **SEKOWSKY**, **KA-ZAR**, even **Phantom Eagle**, and featuring **THE SEVERIN SIBLINGS**, **LEE**, **FRIEDRICH**, **THOMAS**, **GRAINGER**, **BUSCEMA**, and others, plus more of **AMY KISTE NYBERG's** groundbreaking book on the history of the **Comics Code**, **FCA** (Fawcett Collectors of America), **Mr. Monster**, **BILL SCHELLY** and more!

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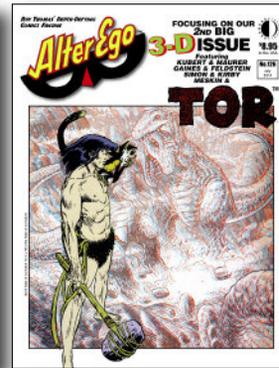
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Golden Age "Air Wave" artist **LEE HARRIS** discussed by his son **JONATHAN LEVEY** with interviewer **RICHARD J. ARNDT**, with rarely-seen 1940s art treasures (including mysterious, never-published art of an alternate version of DC's **Tarantula!**) Plus more of **AMY KISTE NYBERG's** exposé on the **Comics Code**, artist **SAL AMENDOLA** tells the story of the **Academy of Comic Book Arts**, **FCA**, **Mr. Monster**, and more!

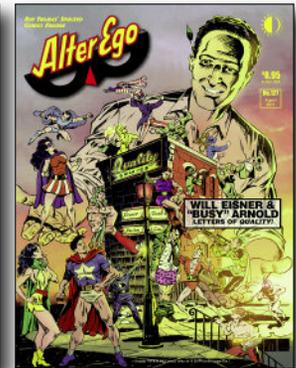
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Second big issue on **3-D COMICS OF THE 1950s!** **KEN QUATTRO** looks at the controversy involving **JOE KUBERT**, **NORMAN MAURER**, **BILL GAINES**, and **AL FELDSTEIN!** Plus more fabulous **Captain 3-D** by **SIMON & KIRBY** and **MORT MESKIN**—**3-D thrills** from **BOB POWELL**, **HOWARD NOSTRAND**, **JAY DISBROW** and others—the career of **Treasure Chest** artist **VEE QUINTAL**, **FCA**, **Mr. Monster**, and more!

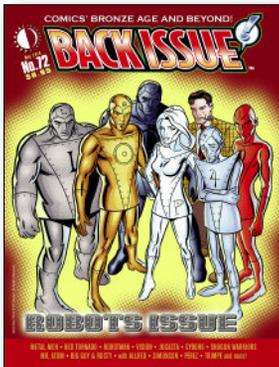
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1940s **WILL EISNER/"BUSY" ARNOLD** letters between the creator of **The Spirit** and his **Quality Comics** partner, art and artifacts by **FINE**, **CRANDALL**, **CUIDERA**, **CARDY**, **KOTZKY**, **BLUM**, **NORDLING**, and others! Plus **Golden Age MLJ** artist **JOHN BULTHIUS**, more of **AMY KISTE NYBERG's** **History of the Comics Code**, **FCA**, **Mr. Monster's** **Comic Crypt**, **BILL SCHELLY**, cover by **DANIEL JAMES COX!**

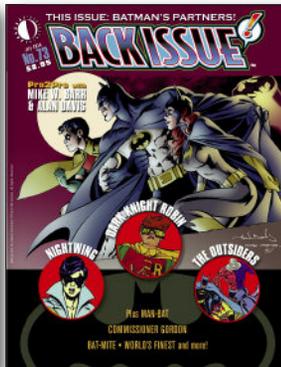
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"Robots" issue! **Cyborg**, **Metal Men**, **Robotman**, **Red Tornado**, **Mister Atom**, the **Vision**, **Jocasta**, **Shogun Warriors**, and **Big Guy** and **Rusty the Boy Robot**, plus the legacy of **Brainiac!** Featuring the riveting work of **DARROW**, **GERBER**, **INFANTINO**, **PAUL KUPPERBERG**, **MILLER**, **MOENCH**, **PÉREZ**, **SIMONSON**, **STATION**, **THOMAS**, **WOLFMAN**, and more, behind a **Metal Men** cover by **MICHAEL ALLRED**.

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"Batman's Partners!" **MIKE W. BARR** and **ALAN DAVIS** on their **Detective Comics**, **Batman** and the **Outsiders**, **Nightwing** flies solo, **Man-Bat** history, **Commissioner Gordon**, the last days of **World's Finest**, **Bat-Mite**, the **Batmobile**, plus **Dark Knight's** girl **Robin!** Featuring work by **APARO**, **BUSIEK**, **DITKO**, **MILGROM**, **MILLER**, **PÉREZ**, **WOLFMAN**, and more, with a cover by **ALAN DAVIS** and **MARK FARMER**.

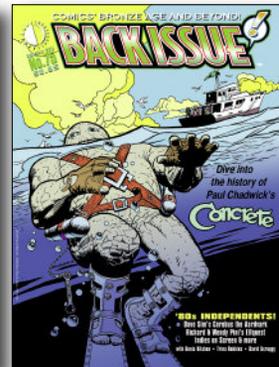
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"Bronze Age **Fantastic Four!**" The animated **FF**, the **FF radio show** of 1975, **Mego** goes solo, **Galactus** villain history, **FF Mega** figures... and the **Impossible Man!** Exploring work by **RICH BUCKLER**, **JOHN BUSCEMA**, **JOHN BYRNE**, **GERRY CONWAY**, **STEVE ENGLEHART**, **GEORGE PÉREZ**, **KEITH POLLARD**, **ROY THOMAS**, **LEN WEIN**, **MICHAEL WOLFMAN**, and more! Cover by **KEITH POLLARD** and **JOE RUBINSTEIN**.

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"'80s Independents!" In-depth looks at **PAUL CHADWICK's Concrete**, **DAVE SIM's** **Cerebus** the **Aardvark**, and **RICHARD AND WENDY PINI's** **Elfquest!** Plus see '80s independent comics go **Hollywood**, **DAVID SCROGGY** remembers **Pacific Comics**, **TRINA ROBBINS' California Girls**, and **DENIS KITCHEN's** star-studded **horror/sci-fi** anthology **Death Rattle**. Cover by **PAUL CHADWICK!**

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About the Cover:

A rendition of the Iron Build.

Art by Paul Lee.

About the Contents Page:

The Rocket Ride rises above the Gotham Park pier. Photo by Carlyle Livingston II.



From the Editor:

And now for something completely different.

This issue became a *book*. I was expecting it to have a lower number of stories than usual since I decided to spotlight the Iron Builder competition, but I wasn't expecting this.

We have a history of the competition in this issue, thanks to the work of Guy Himber and Nannan Zhang. With over 3 years of competing, there have been dozens of

matches. We couldn't cover them all for various reasons, but we did give you an idea of what was built in the many photos that you'll be seeing.

To give you an idea of what can happen during a match, there is a timeline of one of the most impressive matches of Iron Builder between Siercon and Coral and the Brothers Falworth. You'll be astonished at what they made in the span of a month.

With that, we still managed to fit in most of the departments, so there are some instructions for other things.

Have fun reading and learning about Iron Builder! Hopefully, you'll be inspired to build something new!

Joe Meno, Editor

P.S. Have ideas or comments? Drop me a line at admin@brickjournal.com. I'm open to suggestions and comments and will do my best to reply.

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Glossary

AFOL (Adult Fan of LEGO)

NLSO (Non-LEGO Significant Other)

MOC (My Own Creation)

TLG (The LEGO Group)

BURP (Big Ugly Rock Piece)

LURP (Little Ugly Rock Piece)

POOP (Pieces—that can be or should be made—Of Other Pieces)

SNOT (Studs Not on Top)

LUG (LEGO Users Group)

LTC (LEGO Train Club)



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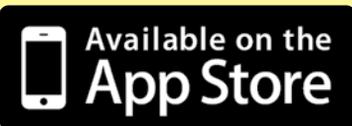
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ISSUE #28 SHIPS IN MARCH:

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Paul Hetherington with the Joker's Funhouse.

BrickJournal readers, indulge me for a moment. Let's take a little time-travel trip back to our childhoods. Cue the 1960s Batman theme in your mind...you know the one: "Nananana Nananana. BATMAN!" I can see it now: we are riding our bikes (I mean Batmobile) through the local park. Suddenly, our best friend (who happens to be the Joker) cuts us off from behind a tree. A choreographed fight ensues. BIFF! BAM! SPLAT! THWACK! The fight ends and we both speed off on our Batmobiles to the Batcave, where Mom has lunch ready..

Welcome to the Joker's Funhouse!

Article by Paul Hetherington

Photography provided by Paul Hetherington and Carlyle Livingston II

I had a good imagination back then, and still do. That was the Batman of my childhood, based on the campy, Pop Art-styled 1960s *Batman* TV show. As kids, we just assumed that was the way Batman was. As adults, we learned that this show wasn't the most accurate portrayal of the Batman and Robin characters.

Decades later, in the 1990s, I was at a toy store and came across some action figures from *Batman: the Animated Series*. I was instantly drawn in by the packaging graphics and the style of the characters. Over the next few years, I managed to collect the entire line. I also became very impressed by Mark Hamill's portrayal of the Joker as I watched the show.

Fast forward to 2008, when I went to see *The Dark Knight*. While I thought Mark Hamill's voice acting was great in the animated series, Heath Ledger took the character of the Joker to the next level in the movie. For me, it was the first time I began to more fully understand the Joker's character. I was fascinated by how far the Joker will go to torment Batman for his entertainment. I credit this movie for planting the seed in me to eventually build a LEGO Batman creation.

I think the feel of LEGO Batman lies somewhere in the middle of the Batman franchises detailed above. I don't think that Batman and Robin are as campy and light-hearted as the 1960s TV show. I also don't believe that LEGO Joker is as cold-blooded a killer as portrayed in *The Dark Knight*. In my vision, the Joker lives to execute elaborate set-ups designed to lead Batman and Robin to a predictable outcome: the punchline! Like the A-team TV show from the '80s, you would see the bad guys get knocked down and thrown off buildings, then you would always see them hobble away to fight another day. This is the spirit in which the stories within the Funhouse are presented.



Section 3:
Rocket Ride

Section 2: Funhouse Interior

Section 1: Entrance Gate

An overview of the Joker's Funhouse.

The Design Process...

I was very happy to discover that LEGO was bringing the Batman line back to stores in 2012. As soon as I saw the sets, I instantly bought a copy on the Joker's Funhouse. In that moment, visions of a large, very detailed Funhouse MOC started filling my imagination.

However, it is one thing to decide to build a funhouse, but it's quite another to have a specific layout with all the animation points and transportation issues worked out. My creations can take a bit of time and work to flesh out, but the Joker's Funhouse was fairly quick to come together. Driving time is where many of my ideas come, and I had about three hours to finalize the Funhouse details in my head while returning from Seattle one day. From my research, I knew that the Joker's Funhouse was mainly a concept from the Batman video games. Luckily for me, there didn't appear to be a definitive version, so I felt I could exercise some artistic license in creating my Funhouse. There was one LEGO Batman image that really stuck in my mind: a view from the cockpit of the Batwing. Situated out over the ocean, it is flying toward the Joker's carnival. In the distance, you can see that it is located on a pier. There are twisting roller coaster tracks, brightly colored tents, and assorted amusement park rides in disrepair. Images like this one helped me come up with the overall look and feel for my Funhouse.

I decided to build the Funhouse in three sections: section 1 is the entrance gate, which would be on one side. Section 2 is the Funhouse interior, which would be a lightbox with two floors that would feature three motorized vignettes each: a lower floor with a tilting floor, animated plants, a swirling acid vat, and a teacup ride, and an upper floor with a hiding character, a Joker-in-the-box, and a moving word puzzle. Section 3 (on the other

side) would have a rocket amusement ride. Finally, I would add a curved roller coaster track on top to finish the main structure. This approach allowed me to use three sets of Batman and Robin minifigures. I thought of the Funhouse as a storytelling progression from left to right.

As part of the design process I am always thinking ahead to ensure that there is room to add all the motors and gears that will power the moving features. In this case, building the Funhouse on a pier allowed for an eight-brick high space underneath the floors where these could be situated. It also meant that I could add in some oceanfront, which provided a much-needed organic element to the Funhouse. I wanted to give the ocean a very murky and cold look. During this phase of planning I did many image searches on abandoned warehouses and piers, as I knew that I wanted the Funhouse to appear very rundown and deserted.

When it comes to LEGO building, tiles are one of my favorite parts. My building style has evolved where most things I create tend to be studless, where only a few studs are showing and most are covered with tiles or other smooth parts. I like this style because of the clean lines that it affords. Ironically, I also think there is more potential for texture when the studs are covered up. For the Joker's Funhouse, the tile I used was the dark purple 1x2 tile. This became the Funhouse's Most Valuable Piece (MVP—a running joke I have with my MOCs), as it was the part that allowed me to feature so much purple on the entrance and in the walls of the Funhouse. In a stroke of luck, the Pick-a-Brick wall at my local LEGO Brand Retail store had this part a few months before I began construction. Back then, I didn't know exactly how it would feature in the Funhouse but I knew that a purple tile was definitely a Joker-style piece.



Luna Park photo by Donaldytong, Wikipedia Commons.

Enter if you Dare..

Recreating the face on the entrance gate was the section I was most concerned about getting right. It was the biggest challenge and also the most rewarding part for me. It was crucial to get the crazy, demented look that Joker's Funhouse required. While searching online for inspiration for the entrance, I came across an image of the entrance gate for Luna Park in Melbourne, Australia. The gate is a large clown face that reminded me slightly of the man on the moon. Framed with some Arabian-style architecture, this seemed to be the perfect entrance to Joker's hideout. Just as importantly, I could see how I could construct it in LEGO elements, including the starburst of colored poles surrounding the head. I knew I would use yellow flex tubes and 1x1 round bricks, which are fairly common parts.



The face begins to take shape.

I built the face separately from the main structure. I used what I would call the "Mr. Potatohead" approach. First, I made the outline of the face with assorted slopes and filled it in with white bricks. I then made many different eyes, noses, mouth openings, and cheekbones that I could mix and match until I was happy with the final result. It took a few days to get the proportions correct, as my initial attempts were several bricks too tall and thus out of proportion to the minifigures. As a result, I decided to add 1x1 plates to the bottom of each minifigure's foot to give them a little height. This makes them a little more human-proportioned.

With the face completed, I set about building the starburst around the scalp. I used a 32 stud-long yellow flex tube to anchor the starburst poles. This allowed me to get a very even curve that could be adjusted easily to the contour of the head. To anchor the flex tube, I used 1x1 round bricks topped with the 1x3 Technic beam. I pushed the tubing into hollow studs on the round bricks and then used the technic lift arm to secure them to the structure of the face.



The sunburst in progress.

It was also important that the entrance look rundown and abandoned. This styling set the tone for the entire Funhouse. I had some experience modeling a rusted and abandoned truck from my Fabuland MOC I built a few years earlier. Using lots of 1x1 and 1x2 plates in black, dark gray, and assorted brown shades can really add to the rusted and worn look. Another useful technique is to leave out a few small plates and bricks to make it look as though the brickwork is decaying or the walls are rotted through. Using this approach takes many extra bricks and greatly increases the build time, but the results are worth the extra effort.

Don't Like my Friends? They're Dying to Meet you..

Before starting construction I already knew the automation I wanted to incorporate in the entrance gate. The main points for the face would be crazy rotating eyes and a dangerous tooth-grinding-styled portcullis. Along the top of the gate on one side, there would be a clown sentry rotating back and forth as though he was carefully guarding against intruders. On the other side, Robin would be sneaking up behind two of Joker's henchmen who are about to throw dynamite down on Batman. The rolling eyes, portcullis and clown guard are run by one Power Functions M-motor. The motor is hidden in one of the wings and has the power branch off the main drive towards the eyes with a set of gears. There is one large gear in-between the eyes that the portcullis is attached to. As this gear rotates, the portcullis moves up and down in a circular fashion. Meanwhile,



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the main drive coming from the motor continues straight upwards to the down guard. Here, a cam and lever causes the figure to swivel on a 2x2 round brick. On the opposite side of the gate Robin is powered by a second motor, which uses a crane mechanism to cause Robin to rise and fall as though he is sneaking up behind the two Joker thugs.



A look at the gearing for the door and towers.

On the pier level in front of the entrance gate Batman is fighting an epic battle against Killer Croc and two of the Joker's henchmen. The mechanism for the fight is located in the base of the pier. Using another Power Functions M-motor to power the four fighting minifigures, Batman is driven by the main drive coming out of the motor. As a result, he rotates continuously as though he is doing a spinning back kick. To slow down his spin, I used several gears to step down his rotation speed. The three villains are automated by hooking them up to a rotating cam and lever that causes the minifigures to rock back and forth as if they were punching Batman.



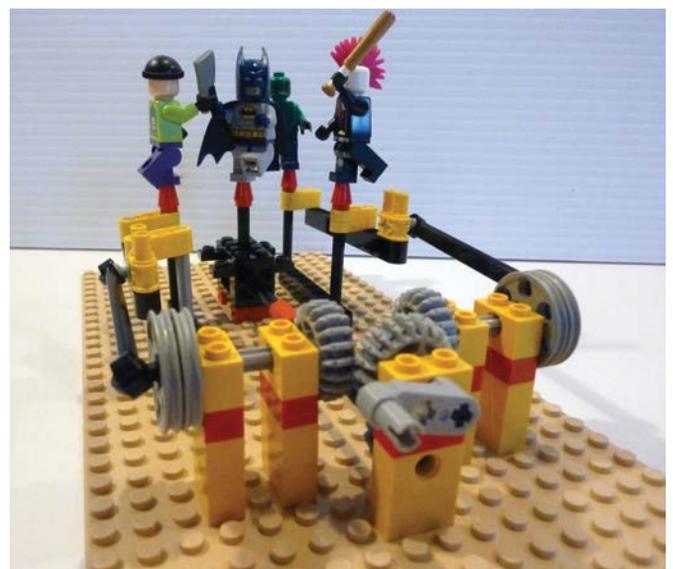
An overhead view of Batman's fight.

Let the Games Begin..

With the entrance gate completed, I turned to working on the Funhouse itself. Built on two 48x48 baseplates (to ease transportation), I started by constructing the pier struts and ocean using 1x1 transparent green tiles placed on top of black plates. This gives the ocean a very murky, sinister look. Once the ocean was done, I had room to put the mechanisms in for the animations.



The completed entrance gate.



Another view of Batman's fight.



Looking at the first floor. From left to right: Poison Ivy and her plants, Harley Quinn and a vat of acid, and Two-Face at the teacup ride.



A closer look at Poison Ivy's plants (above) and Harley Quinn's acid dip (below).



I decided to build the animations first, then plan the look of the Funhouse around them. This was easier to do than retrofitting animation into a prebuilt section. The first animation sections I built were the tilting floor and acid vat, which are powered off one Power Functions M-motor. Next, I used another M-motor to animate Poison Ivy's plants and the hanging arm that Commissioner Gordon and Harley Quinn swing on. Finally, I built the teacup ride for Two-Face and linked it to the motor used for the acid vat and floor.

Welcome to the Jungle..

My goal was to make Poison Ivy's plants look comical but also vaguely threatening. Inspiration came from a local community theater production of *Little Shop of Horrors* that I had seen. The automation was achieved by a rotating cam with a lever attached to a technic axle that descends from the plant's base. This results in the plant rocking back and forth. In addition to this, I use a simple trick to open the plant's mouth. By attaching a green whip to the top portion of the mouth, when the plant moves off center and leans forward, the whip stops the mouthpiece from moving and forces it to open. As the plant returns to center, the whip relaxes and the mouth closes.

The floor that Robin is on tilts back and forth in sections using another cam and lever system. In the picture, you can see a chicken thigh on the floor next to Robin. Is the snapping plant going for Robin or chicken? And is that really Octan fuel behind Poison Ivy, or is it Joker Venom in disguise?

Would you Like the Full spa Treatment, Commissioner?

Harley Quinn's acid bath feature caught a lot of people's attention at Brickcon. It was achieved by using a cam with a lever attached to an axle that descends from the platform under the bath. The platform is attached on opposite sides with technic pins that allow it to rock back and forth. As this has essentially the same mechanism as the tilting floor, it is run by the same Power Functions M-motor.

In this day and age, the LEGO community is becoming accepting of a certain level of customization. For this model, it was the light effect which was done by using an IKEA LED puck. To make the 'acid,' I first used some plastic wrap to form a loose barrier over the light on the platform. After securing the wrap with clear packing tape to the inside of the acid bath, I poured in some transparent clear 1x1 round plates. Lit from below, the round plates wash against each other and create a realistic swirling acid effect.

Heads or Tails...

The final feature to be built on the ground floor was originally a Riddler-themed shooting gallery in the corner. However, I reworked this idea and replaced it with a teacup ride for Two-Face. Here, several teacups are loaded with dynamite. Vicki Vale, who Two-Face has taken hostage, is tied up in one of the teacups. Two-Face is nearby with a lit torch and is about to flip a coin to decide whether to light the dynamite or not. The fate of everyone in the Funhouse is left to chance, and even the Joker might feel some unease with these 50-50 odds.

The teacup ride is powered by the same Power Functions M-motor that controls the tilting floor and the acid bath. All of the automation on the ground floor is run off of two of these motors, as I try to efficiently use them. There is a balance, though, that must be achieved to run several features off one motor. The gearing has to be very smooth and cannot drag. At conventions, these displays are required to run for up to 12 hours a day. If a motor is put under too much stress, it can become overloaded and stop working.

I have talked to many builders over the years about tips and tricks for motorizing LEGO creations, and there is an art to making bombproof animation. Even the most experienced ball contraption builders have run into situations where motors have burned out, or gears have crumbled.

Most automation will easily work for 5 minutes. The real test is running them for hours on end. One trick I used is to test your animation for at least 30 minutes to see if the motor becomes overheated or begins to slow down. This can head off problems that you don't want when you have a line of public visitors who want to see your creation in motion. Another very useful tip is to be sure that your motors are easily accessible for maintenance. I always locate my motors along the sides of my creations. This way, I don't have to disassemble anything to reach them.

I also used three 9V train controllers to power all the motors in the Funhouse. It would be possible to use batteries, but for convenience and cost savings I found the 9V controllers to be the best for this purpose.

Why so Serious?

I Designed This all For you...

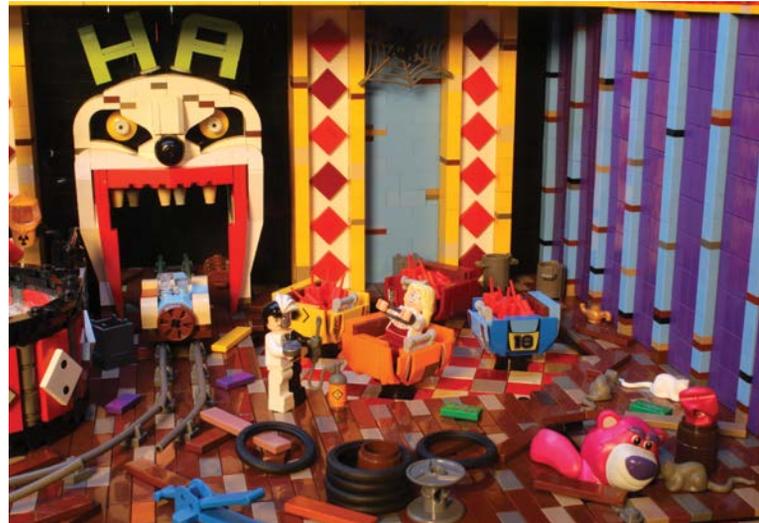
Once the ground floor automation was completed, I was able to fill in the remaining space with bricks to support the floor plates. For this purpose, I use old worn bricks I have saved from used collections over the years. The next step was to begin designing the look of the Funhouse. Choosing colors for the walls and deciding which patterns to use took some time and experimentation. In this case, I wanted a very colorful, chaotic looking room. The Joker loves chaos, so I assumed his decorating style would be unorthodox. I also suspect he has never cleaned up a mess in his life.

The colors you use can make or break a MOC. I knew that those purple 1x2 tiles I got from the Pick-a-Brick wall would feature predominantly in this look. I designed a pillar structure that used 2x2 tiles at an angle to create a diamond shape. Several red and brown shades were chosen to show that the walls were in decay. With the pillars in place to delineate the space, I was able to choose the final colors for the walls.

I chose light blue to complement the dark purple color. This wasn't an obvious choice, but I'm pleased with the way the dark purple brings out the purple tones in the light blue bricks.



The acid dip dissected for examination.



A slightly closer look at the teacup ride.

For the remaining walls, I used shades of brown and some black to fill in the back spaces. These darker colors allow the reds, yellow and light blue to 'pop.' As a result, many people commented on the color scheme when the Funhouse was displayed at Brickcon. LEGO designer Jamie Berard dropped by and complimented me on my color use. If color is used well, it can elevate your creation to the next level. Take extra time to experiment with color options.

Now you see me, Now you don't...

With the walls starting to come along, I decided to use some small mirrors I had found at a dollar store. It had been my intention to use mirrors in some way, and I used them to give the appearance that the Funhouse has more depth than a 48-stud deep display would normally allow. I also thought it was fitting for a funhouse as there are usually trick mirrors involved. The ground floor rear wall is built about 10 studs from the back of the baseplate. This allows just enough room behind to give the hint that the Funhouse extends much further. The most effective use of the mirror that I achieved was to run the cart track right up to the mirror. As the track is reflected, this gives the illusion that it continues into the recesses of the building. Just for fun, I used the same design of track cars that I used in my FunHaus MOC: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/14964802@N07/8099067264/> I figure the company that made the cars would have supplied them to many different parks. I enjoy having a little bit of continuity between my models and always wonder: Does anyone notice?

It is always important to plan ahead while building. One of the big questions that needed to be answered early was how the roof would be supported. My plan was to take advantage of the side walls of the model, which ended up being four studs thick. Two studs of the wall became an outer layer to allow space to build inset windows. The inner layer had to be two studs wide as well to allow for the stud-sideways construction



The second floor, with a money room for Catwoman, a Joker-in-the-Box, and a riddle to decode.



The Joker-in-a-Box...



and its interior.



Catwoman peeks out of the money room.

of the plates covered in dark purple tiles. With these very sturdy walls, my plan was to construct several brick- and plate-built beams, which would serve two purposes: supporting the two 48x48 plates that would cover the roof and to hide the IKEA LED strip lights I used to provide lighting inside the Funhouse. The strength of the thick walls and beams meant that I wouldn't have to use any pillars to help support the roof.

This Jack's For You

Finally, I could start designing the second floor. Just like the first floor, I began by constructing the automation and then built the decor around that. I had already established most of the colors as they echoed some of the design of the ground floor. That left me to focus on the automation. The Joker's Jack-in-the-Box, which I intended to be the focal point of the interior, was a fun model to make. In this case, I attached the Technic axle base of the Jack directly to a cam wheel. This meant that I had to build a sleeve that rotated with the Jack to allow it to move up and down as it rocked back and forth. With this in place I made a mechanism on the side of the box to connect with the Joker minifigure. The Joker minifigure uses minifig legs with springs (from the NBA Basketball minifigures line) that permit him to bend at the waist. In this way, he appears to be cranking the Jack as it fights Batman.

My first attempt with gearing had the Jack moving and the Joker pushing the handle in the opposite direction, which didn't look natural. I had to adjust the mechanism to a less direct route using gears to guarantee that the Joker pushes the handle forward with the Jack.

The Cat's Meow...

It is no surprise that Catwoman is found sneaking out of the Joker's money room, as this is where he stores all the money and treasures he has stolen. Catwoman is the wild card in this story. She is carefully opening and closing the door as she decides what course of action she will take. Will she escape with the diamond or assist the Joker in capturing Batman? Or will she switch sides and give Batman a hand in capturing the Joker?

The door uses the same cam and crank mechanism as many of the other animated displays use in this model. This time, I used a 2x2 modified plate with pin bottom to attach the lever to the door. Power comes from a Power Functions M-motor. The room has an IKEA LED puck light inside to illuminate the interior. I also use a mirror along the back wall to give the illusion that there is twice as much money and treasure as there really is, suggesting that the room extends much further into the recesses of the Funhouse.

The crazy design of the room and the face on the outside were fun to create. Demented faces and strange characters populate most funhouses, and this one was no exception. I used Spongebob's mouth from set #3826 (Spongebob Squarepants' Build-a-Bob) as the starting point to create this odd character.

Riddle me This, Riddle me That...

The Riddler's riddle machine was the last feature to come together. As I mentioned earlier, I had toyed with the idea for a Riddler-themed shooting gallery. I also had an idea for Mr. Freeze that would have him shooting a moving ice beam at Batman, which would have also involved covering some of the Funhouse in ice. The idea of bringing in some penguins to join in on the attack on Batman was also added, but ultimately, I decided that the ice wouldn't fit in with the Funhouse and came up with the riddle machine instead. (Sorry, Mr. Freeze fans! I really did try to fit him in!)

For this vignette, it's good to know Riddler's character. He's very intelligent, but his weakness lies in the fact that he can't keep a secret. He always finds a way to broadcast his next caper with a complex riddle. The riddle machine is based on my observation that many six-letter words are made up of two three-letter words. For example, Gotham is made up of "got" and "ham." Using this idea, I made a machine that has six three-letter words. The machine requires you to combine them into three six-letter words to find the Riddler's next crime.

The automation uses the cam and crank mechanism again. There are three of these each connected to a 2x14 plate assembly. These assemblies are tiled on the front to allow for the lettering, which was created by using some stickers from a large stationery store.

Behind the riddle machine was located a Power Functions M-motor. By adding an axle, I extended the main drive directly out of the motor and down the length of the building, allowing the motor to power all three automations on the second floor. As the drive axle passes each automation, I use gears to divert the power. The element that makes this transition of power very easy is the Technic 2x 4x3 1/3 gearbox. This element incorporates a worm gear, which decreases speed and increases torque, which are two useful properties when automating LEGO.

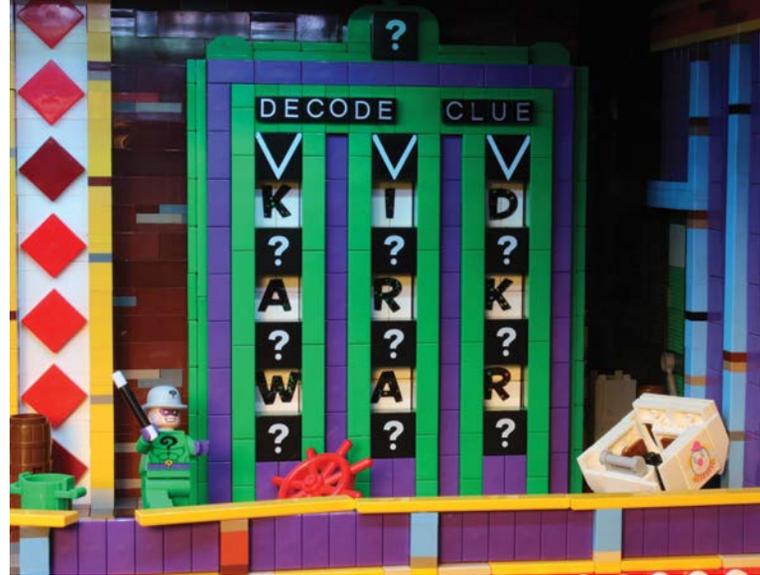
Would you Guys Just Take it Outside...

The final section of the Joker's Funhouse is the outdoor Rocket Ride. This section is built on a 48x48 baseplate for ease of transport. The first step for this section was to build an elevated pier. I wanted to have a height difference from the rest of the Funhouse to create some visual interest. Adding several levels breaks up the simple lines of the outer wall of the Funhouse.

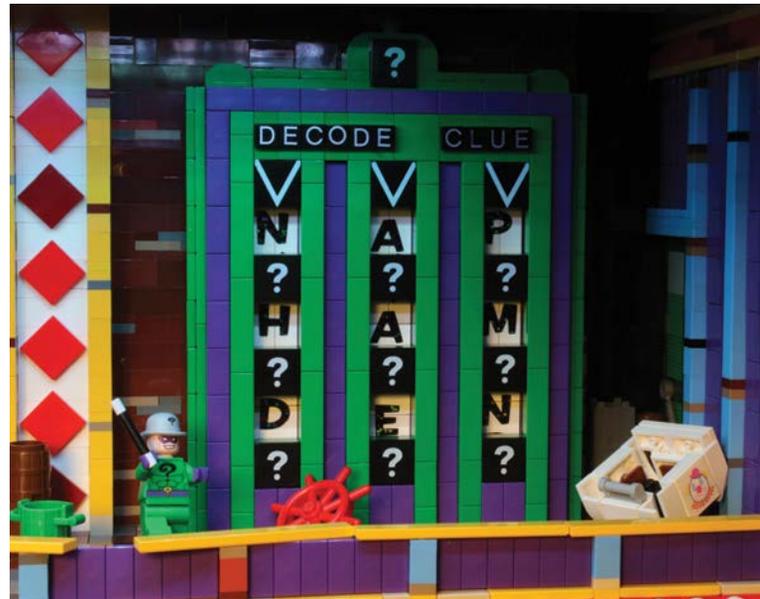
There are other advantages to having raised pier. The first was to allow extra space for viewing the Penguin's submarine. It also allowed for more of the ocean detail to be seen. It is in this final section that the ocean takes a more prominent role and is the set-up for the Penguin's submarine and his appearance in the Funhouse. The strips of water along the front of the Funhouse give a flavor of the ocean. Underneath the piers are some old loading bay doors that harken back to the Funhouse's past as a warehouse. It also seems that someone had used these doors for a more sinister purpose as there is a skeleton hanging from a chain just outside. One of Gotham's missing persons perhaps?

Having docked his submarine, the Penguin is deploying his mind-controlled penguin commandos to attack Batman and Robin. I wanted to automate the penguins on a conveyor belt, as it would have been great to see them moving out of the submarine. Due to space restrictions, though, I wasn't able to.

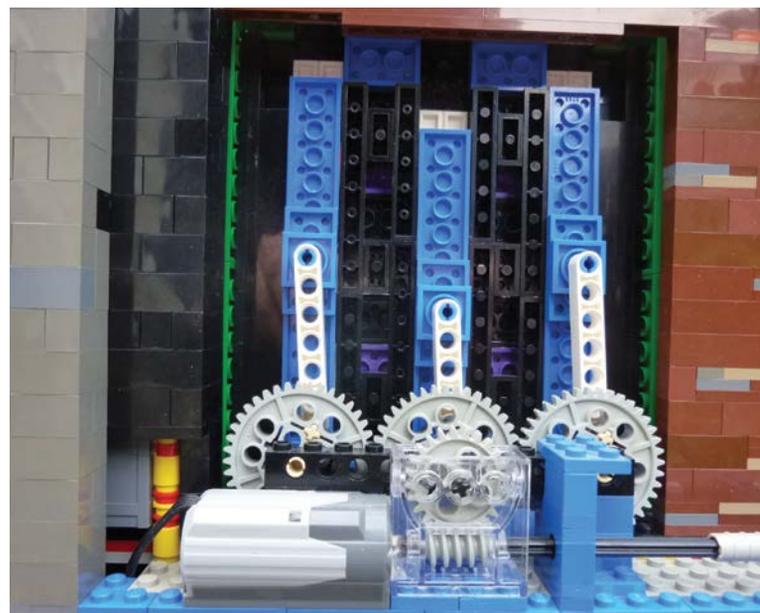
Instead, I focused the action on the rocket ride itself.



Your clues are here...



What will Riddler do next?



Behind the cube is the mechanism that makes the letters move.



Gotham Park.

On the pier level, the Penguin has set up a penguin launcher, which was obviously inspired by the many hours I have played Angry Birds. I thought it would be a humorous addition to the scene to have the villain trying to knock the heroes off the Rocket Ride.

Round and Round we go...

The Rocket Ride serves two purposes. The first is to offer a cinematic climax to the story of the Funhouse. I've noticed that in many Hollywood superhero movies the final battle scene is staged on a tall dramatic building or on

some kind of dangerous outdoor structure. This is typically the climatic scene where the villain is finally captured or killed. I wanted a tall ride that had a vintage feel that would fit in with the rest of the Funhouse. Inspired by the Golden Zephyr ride at Disney's California Adventure, I built the Rocket Ride.

The second purpose is to give the illusion that Gotham Park is much larger than the elements shown in my creation. I thought it was important to include at least one large amusement ride in the Funhouse. The entrance gate, Rocket Ride and other sections combine to give the flavor of a much larger park.



The idea for the mechanism for the Rocket Ride came from an old Technic helicopter set (#8856). I used the rotor mounting element from this set to create both the spinning and rocking motion required for this ride. Without these two great parts—the Technic Propeller 4 Blade 7-Stud Diameter with Square Ends, and Technic Helicopter Rotor Holder—this ride would have been difficult to construct. The Technic Ball with Grooves is also required in the center of these parts to complete the assembly.

The rollercoaster on the roof was the last element to be added. I used Adam Reed Tucker's Rollercoaster Factory set to make

up the track section. The coaster's main purpose is to provide visual interest for the roof of the Funhouse. Its gentle curves distract from the hard boxy lines of the building. The coaster also allowed me to add in some lettering. I brick built the word "Gotham" to tie in with the Gotham Park concept and to make it clear that this was indeed a Batman-related creation.

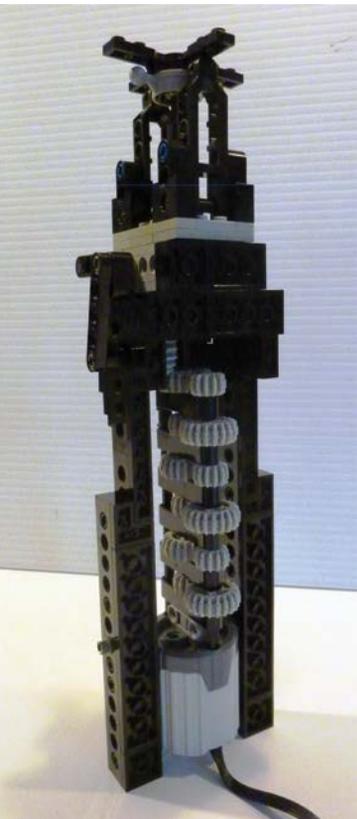
The finishing touch was adding in the minifigures and mind-controlled penguin commandos. Batman and Robin, having made it through all the perils in the Funhouse, now have a final showdown with the Joker and the rest of the villains.



Penguins disembark from the Penguin's submarine.



The last fight: at the Rocket Ride.



The Rocket Ride's motor and rotor.



Angry bird?



Robin between lines.

The Joker and Batman face-off with their weapons of choice: the Joker armed with his infamous trick gun and Batman with a Batlauncher. The Penguin plays a prominent role and takes up the lower section of the pier. Higher up on the roof I placed Man-Bat poised as though he is about to swoop down in on the action. Finally, Bane makes an appearance high above on the rigging of the Rocket Ride, working to cut down the cables that support Batman's rocket jet. In the end, it is up to you, the viewer, to decide the outcome of all the stories I have presented. Will Batman and Robin succeed in returning everyone to Arkham Asylum, or does the Joker have an elaborate escape planned? Is that a helicopter I hear in the distance...?

Time For Show and Tell..

Each year I have a goal to build a new creation to show at Brickcon, Seattle's long-running LEGO fan convention. Starting each August, I budget two months to hammer away at my latest project. The build schedule for the Joker's Funhouse allowed for two weeks to build the entrance, four weeks for the Funhouse, and two weeks for the Rocket Ride, roller coaster and any extra details that would need to be added. I managed to stick to this schedule and finished with a day to spare before I had to pack up the different sections and prepare to travel to Seattle with my Vancouver LEGO Club friends.

I was very excited as I had been in contact with Carlyle Livingston II and he had agreed to bring his and Wayne Hussey's Batcave to display again. The Batcave was the perfect foil for the Joker's Funhouse. Over the convention weekend, many people stopped to watch all the automation and to enjoy the stories that the Funhouse held.

On Saturday night, I was presented with the Evil Genius! award in the Superhero category of Brickcon awards. The trophy is an awesomely evil chair that incorporates many gold rings from the Lord of the Rings sets. At the end of the convention, I was very honored to win the Best in Show award as well as receive Honorable Mention in the People's Choice Category.

On a final note, I want to thank Carlyle Livingston II for his support and for his invaluable help in photographing and editing the final Funhouse pictures. Also, thanks to Nicole Snyder, who did a fantastic job filming and editing the Joker's Funhouse video that you can find on my Youtube and Flickr pages.

We have such a great community here in the Pacific Northwest. I feel extremely thankful that I get to spend time with so many great people each year and am blown away by the support that I receive for my creations! 📺





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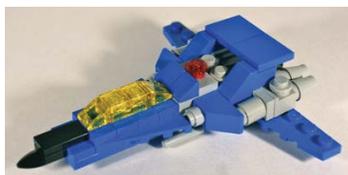
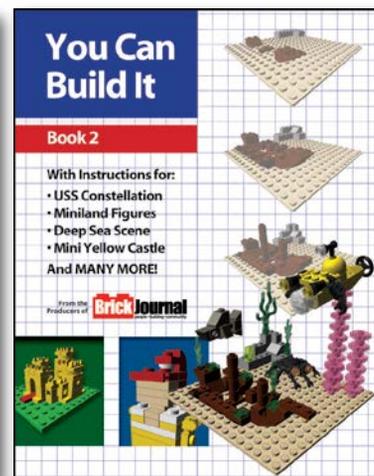
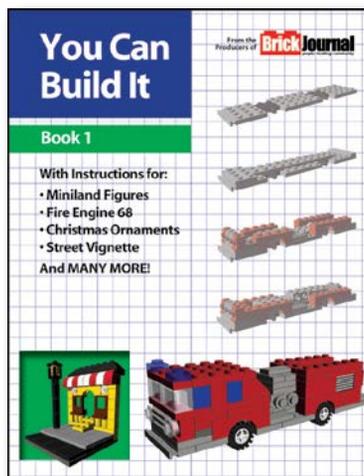
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Mouse Droid

Design and Instructions
by Tommy Williamson

About this issue's model:

Anyone that knows me knows I'm a *Star Wars* fan. I have been since I was nine years old, and I will be forever. I still have vivid memories of the first time I saw the film with a small group of friends. And I remember all of us laughing out loud when this curious little robot was patrolling the halls of the Death Star only to come face-to-face with our heroes, and sent fleeing with a roar from Chewbacca. I've had plans to build a mousedroid at several scales for ages (one of my ever-growing list of MOCs to build) but never had time. Well, I've finally designed one at this scale, and here it is. I hope you enjoy it. **b**



You can find BrickNerd's website by going to www.bricknerd.com or scanning this QR code!

Parts List (Parts can be ordered through Bricklink.com by searching by part number and color)

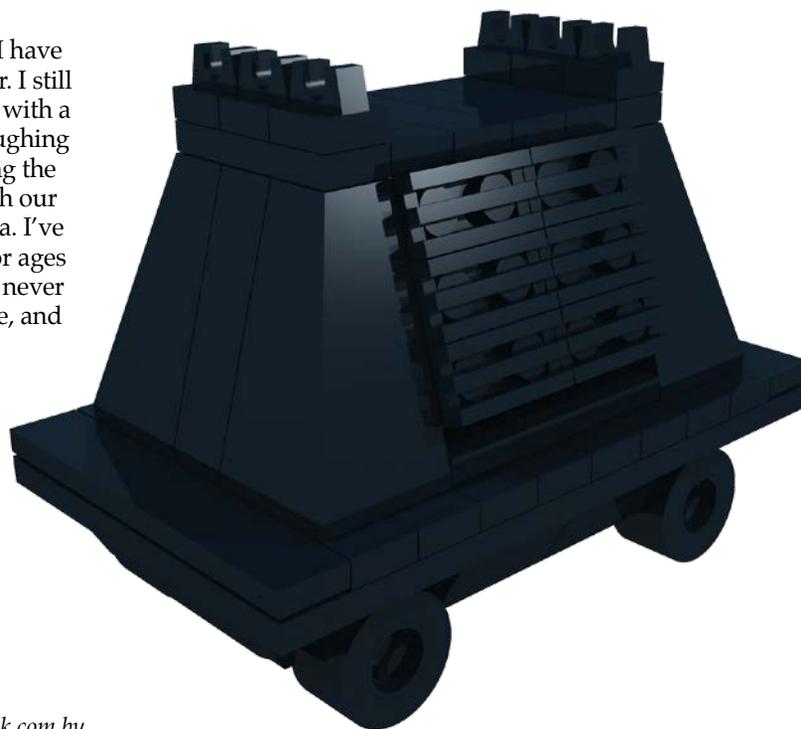
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2	6134.dat	Black	Hinge 2x2 Top
24	3794a.dat	Black	Plate 1x2 without Groove with 1 Centre Stud
2	3623.dat	Black	Plate 1x3
2	6157.dat	Black	Plate 2x2 with Wheels Holder Wide
4	3021.dat	Black	Plate 2x3



Tommy Williamson is no stranger to *BrickJournal*, having been featured previously for his Jack Sparrow miniland scale figure. Since then, he has gone farther into building, making some remarkable *Star Trek* props and other models. He's now doing a new column for *BrickJournal*: DIY Fan Art. Here,

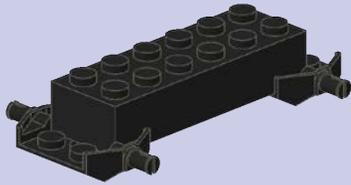
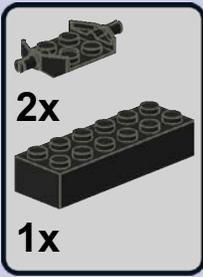
Tommy takes a little time out from his busy schedule to make a model of his choosing for the magazine.

What is he busy on? Tommy's now a LEGO community blogger with his own website: BrickNerd (www.bricknerd.com) As he says, "I've been a fan of LEGO all my life, and got into the AFOL scene about 8 years ago. I decided it was time to take my unhealthy obsession to the next unhealthy level and start a fan site. Not only do I cover great MOCs and LEGO news, I host a bi-weekly web series. I also do reviews and feature artist bios and interviews. If you're nerdy about the bricks, BrickNerd is for you!"

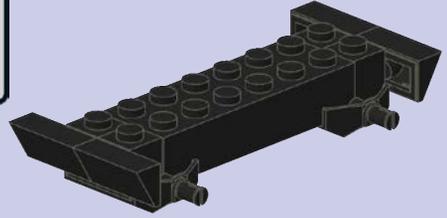


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4	30027a.dat	Black	Wheel Rim 8x8 Round Hole for Wheel Holding Pin

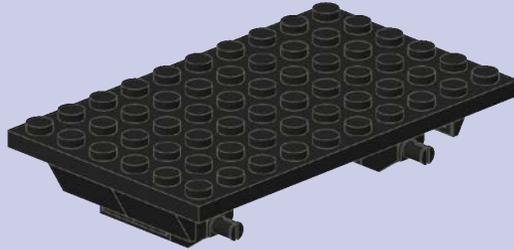
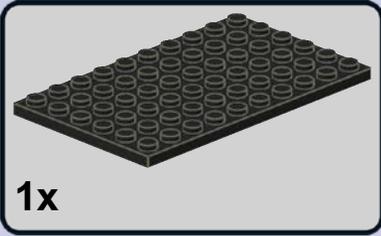
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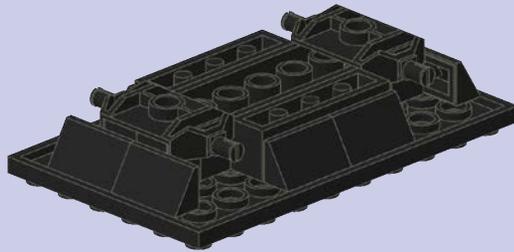
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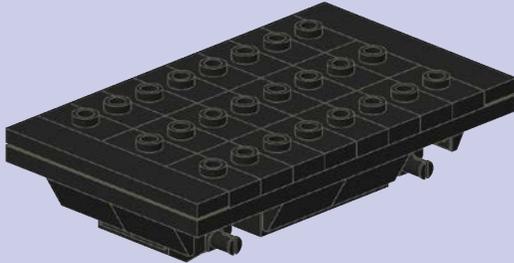
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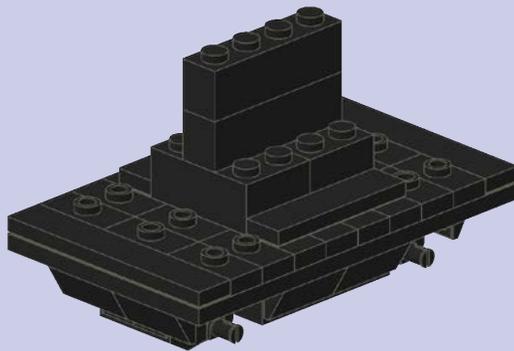
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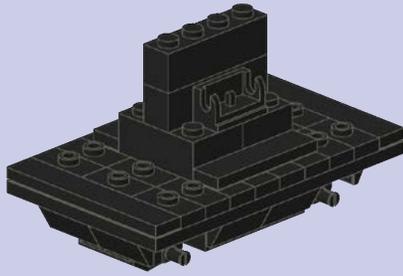
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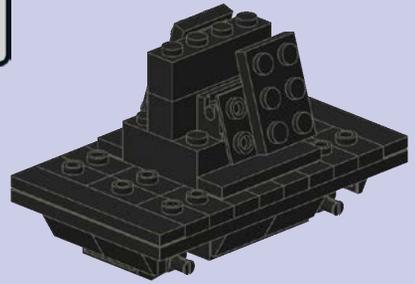
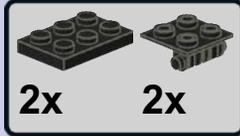
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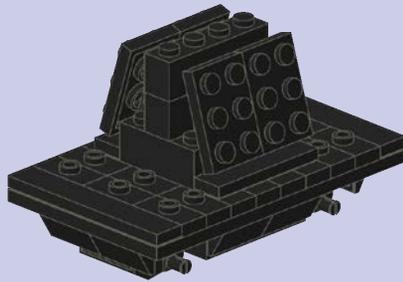
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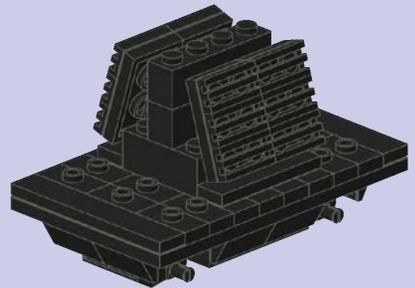
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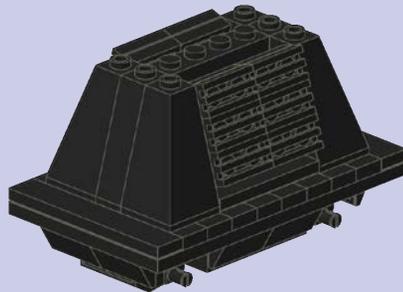
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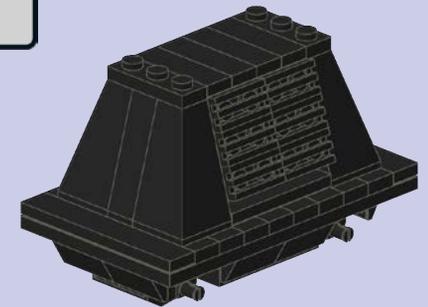
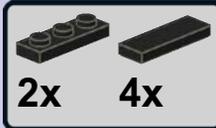
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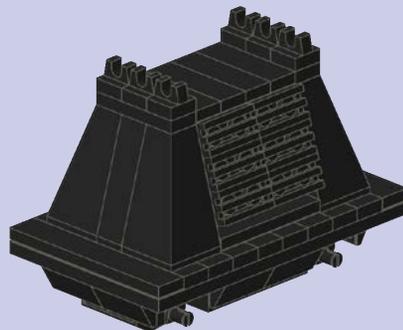
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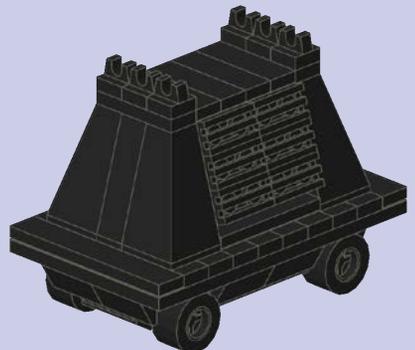
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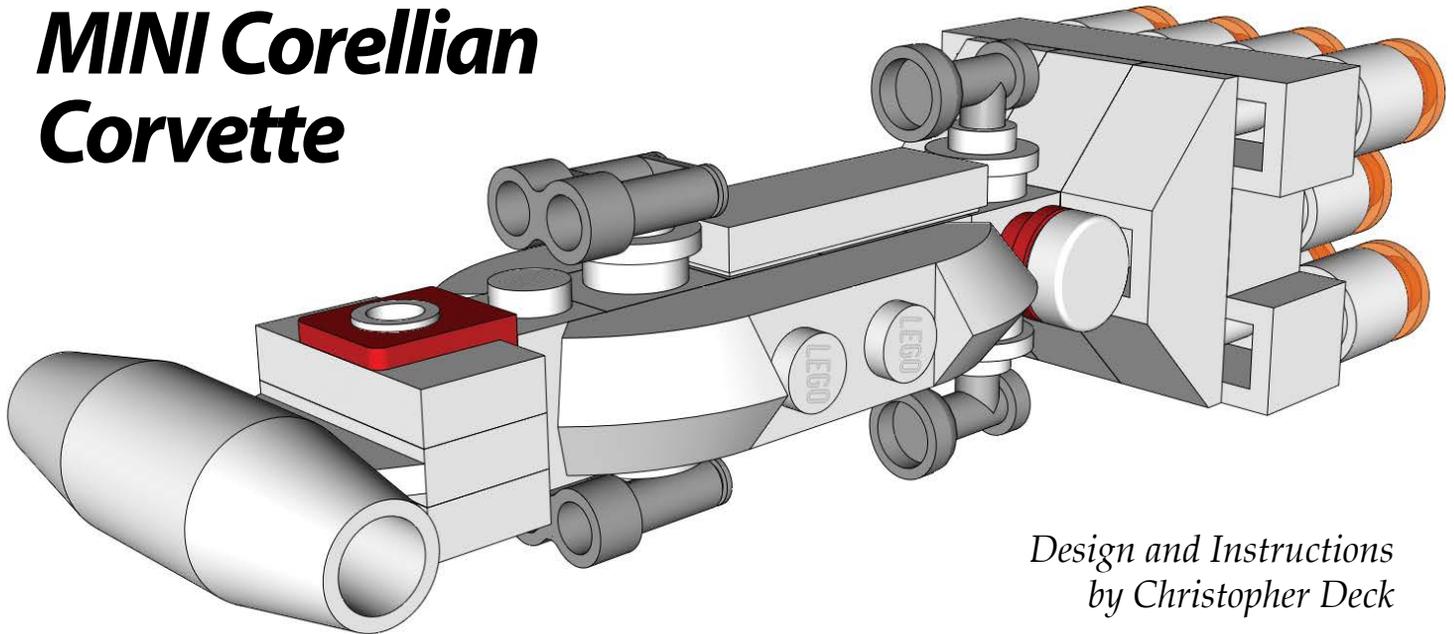
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14



MINI Corellian Corvette



*Design and Instructions
by Christopher Deck*

Hello everybody! It's my pleasure to join you again for this issue of *BrickJournal!* Together, we will build another mini model today, by going unusual ways to obtain certain shapes. Building a proper minimodel is not an easy task. Shapes are often complex and difficult to build in small scale. The smaller you get the more difficult it is to maintain a good level of recognition. During the past years we have built many minimodels in *BrickJournal* together. It was—and still is—one of my main building objectives to use unconventional pieces in models that no one would expect to see there. We have seen building tricks for how to incorporate such pieces in a model so that they contribute to the shape—they merge with the design instead of sticking out.

This time we want to build a Corellian Corvette, a popular starship design whose most famous representative probably is the Rebel Blockade Runner *Tantive IV* from the opening scene of *Star Wars: A New Hope*. There are two official mini models by LEGO® of this starship (as a part of sets 10030 and 75011) but we will take a completely different approach for our model here.

The model roughly can be divided in three parts: main body, engine block, and cockpit. The first unusual piece we will use is a modified 1x4 brick with curved and sloped ends (part number 40996) for the side expansions of the ship's middle section. It plays two key roles at once: it widens the body by leading outwards by a curve, and it slopes the expansion to the upper and under side. Going to the rear of the ship we reach the unique engine block of a Corellian Corvette: eleven engines in a 4-3-4 assembly. By using three of the more rarely seen double inverted 1x3 slopes (part number 2341) we can use the three bottom tubes of a common 1x4 brick to slide into the open studs

of the double inverted slopes. We stuck four studs on three others. Using these slopes also smoothly increases the height of the starship to the needed dimensions of the engine block without the need of any additional 1x1 slopes. Finally we have to attach the cockpit. But instead of going with the conventional method of having a 1x1 brick with studs on all sides with two cones attached on opposite sides, we are using an unexpected jet engine (part number 3475). This resembles a perfect cylindrical cockpit with cone ends already included.

With that, our model is finished. I hope you will enjoy building this, and always remember: Building the unexpected way can benefit the design! 



You can find Christopher's webpage by going to www.deckdesigns.de or scanning this QR code!

Parts List

(Parts can be ordered through Bricklink.com by searching by part number and color)

Corellian Corvette Main Body

Qty	Color	Part	Description
2	White	4070.dat	Brick 1x1 with Headlight
3	White	4733.dat	Brick 1x1 with Studs on Four Sides
2	White	40996.dat	Brick 1x4 with Sloped Ends and Two Top Studs
2	Light-Bluish-Grey	30162.dat	Minifig Tool Binoculars Town
2	Red	6141.dat	Plate 1x1 Round
2	White	6141.dat	Plate 1x1 Round
2	White	85861.dat	Plate 1x1 Round with Open Stud
2	Light-Bluish-Grey	4599a.dat	Tap 1x1 with Hole in Spout
1	White	6541.dat	Technic Brick 1x1 with Hole
2	White	98138.dat	Tile 1x1 Round with Groove
1	White	63864.dat	Tile 1x3 with Groove

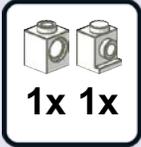
Corellian Corvette Engine Block

Qty	Color	Part	Description
11	White	3062b.dat	Brick 1x1 Round with Hollow Stud
1	White	3622.dat	Brick 1x3
2	White	3010.dat	Brick 1x4
11	Trans-Neon-Orange	6141.dat	Plate 1x1 Round
3	White	2341.dat	Slope Brick 45° 3x1 Inverted Double

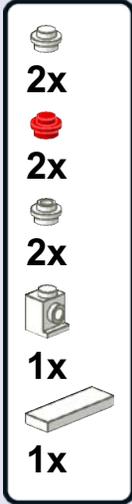
Corellian Corvette Cockpit

Qty	Color	Part	Description
1	Red	42446.dat	Bracket 1x1 - 1x1
1	White	3023.dat	Plate 1x2
1	White	3475b.dat	Plate 1x2 with Jet Engine and Axle Hole
1	White	3794a.dat	Plate 1x2 without Groove with 1 Centre Stud

1  **1x**

2  **1x 1x**

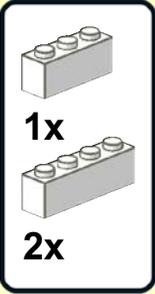
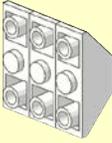
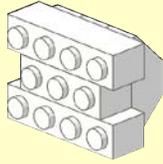
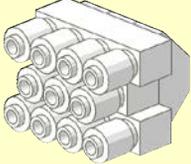
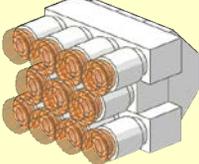
3  **2x**

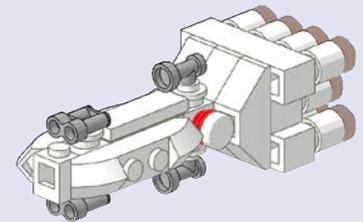
4  **2x**
2x
2x
2x
1x
1x

5  **2x**
2x
2x

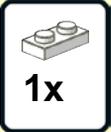
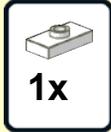
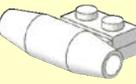
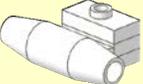
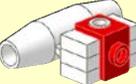
6  **2x**

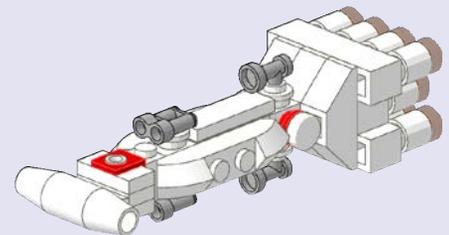
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1	2	3	4
 3x	 1x  2x	 11x	 11x
			



8

1	2	3	4
 1x	 1x	 1x	 1x
			



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Making a Collaborative Build: Cycycles!

Article by Gregory Coquelz
and Joe Meno

Art by PixelFox

Instructions by Joe Meno

In 2114, the miniaturization of anti-G modules not only revolutionized personal transportation, it also opened a whole new world of possibilities for motor racing. As one would expect, it was indeed only a matter of time before these modules would be fitted into racing type vehicles. The technology marked the end of the F1 era and the beginning of the Cycycles era. The prototype architecture was very simple really: a single-person vehicle equipped with an anti-G module, two thrusters and two flaps for maneuverability —very fast and very dangerous too. The initial designs were restrained to about 2,000HP but modified versions quickly appeared on the secondary market. If the official races are nowadays kept under strict surveillance by the Cycycle Federation, all bets are off in the street racing world where “legal” racers are nowhere to be found. These modifications unfortunately very often result in the contestant’s own demise...

A few weeks ago, Joe Meno approached us at a North Carolina LEGO Users Group (NCLUG) meeting with his first Cycycle prototype. The model was the result of a recent insomnia bout and he had brought it with him to share with the group. Very quickly, we started brewing an idea around the small racer. We had a public display coming up at the NC Comicon and it occurred to us that this would make a good subject for a collaborative build. A few minutes later it was decided that every LUG member taking in a part in the show would bring his/her own racer along with a standardized pit stop built on a 16x16 base in order to form a larger layout. What started out as a simple idea turned out to be one of the highlights of our display and the public’s response was very enthusiastic.

The model itself made a good choice for a project like this one; first it was small enough to be easily put together in a couple of hours with a handful of pieces and two, it had just about enough versatility to be customized to everyone’s own style and preference—Space, Fantasy, Super-Heroes or Castle!

Both elements contributed in creating a diverse yet coherent layout. There are already plans for the next show to try and engage the public into the concept even more by running real races based on the visitors’ votes.

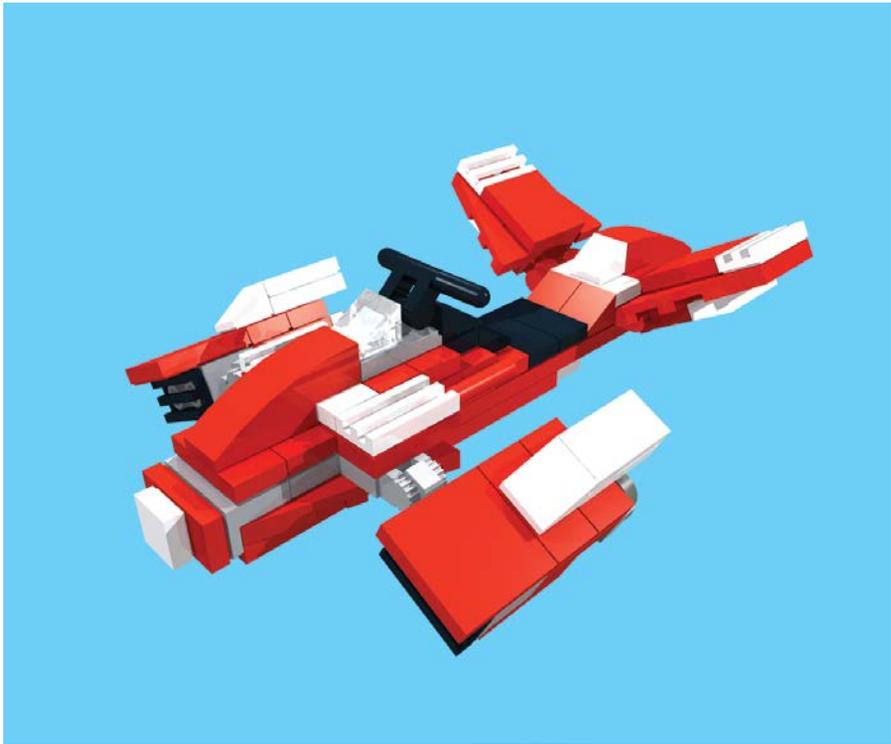
Parts List for the Cyclopedia

(Parts can be ordered through Bricklink.com by searching by part number and color)

Qty	Part	Description	Color
3	99781.dat	Bracket 1x2 - 1x2 Down	Light Bluish Gray
2	44302.dat	Hinge Plate 1x2 Locking with Dual Finger on End Vertical	Light Bluish Gray
2	44301.dat	Hinge Plate 1x2 Locking with Single Finger on End Vertical	Light Bluish Gray
1	30031.dat	Minifig Handlebars	Black
1	3024.dat	Plate 1x1	Black
4	4073.dat	Plate 1x1 Round	Dark Bluish Gray
1	3023.dat	Plate 1x2	Light Bluish Gray
4	3023.dat	Plate 1x2	White
4	3023.dat	Plate 1x2	Red
2	60470a.dat	Plate 1x2 with 2 Clips Horizontal (Open U-Clips)	Red
2	3794b.dat	Plate 1x2 with Groove with 1 Centre Stud	Light Bluish Gray
3	3794b.dat	Plate 1x2 with Groove with 1 Centre Stud	White
14	3794b.dat	Plate 1x2 with Groove with 1 Centre Stud	Red
2	48336.dat	Plate 1x2 with Handle Type 2	Red
1	3839a.dat	Plate 1x2 with Handles Type 1	Red

Qty	Part	Description	Color
1	92280.dat	Plate 1x2 with Single Clip On Top	Light Bluish Gray
1	3666.dat	Plate 1x6	White
2	3022.dat	Plate 2x2	Red
2	2444.dat	Plate 2x2 with Hole	Red
1	3021.dat	Plate 2x3	Red
1	3020.dat	Plate 2x4	Red
2	3034.dat	Plate 2x8	Red
1	54200.dat	Slope Brick 31 1x1x2/3	Trans Clear
2	54200.dat	Slope Brick 31 1x1x2/3	Red
2	54200.dat	Slope Brick 31 1x1x2/3	Black
3	54200.dat	Slope Brick 31 1x1x2/3	White
1	3665.dat	Slope Brick 45 2x1 Inverted	Red
2	50950.dat	Slope Brick Curved 3x1	Red
1	3070b.dat	Tile 1x1 with Groove	White
2	2412b.dat	Tile 1x2 Grille with Groove	Black
4	2412b.dat	Tile 1x2 Grille with Groove	White
2	3069b.dat	Tile 1x2 with Groove	White
2	3069b.dat	Tile 1x2 with Groove	Black
4	3068b.dat	Tile 2x2 with Groove	Red
1	41770.dat	Wing 2x4 Left	Red
1	41769.dat	Wing 2x4 Right	Red
2	48183.dat	Wing 3x4 with 1x2 Cutout with Stud Notches	Red



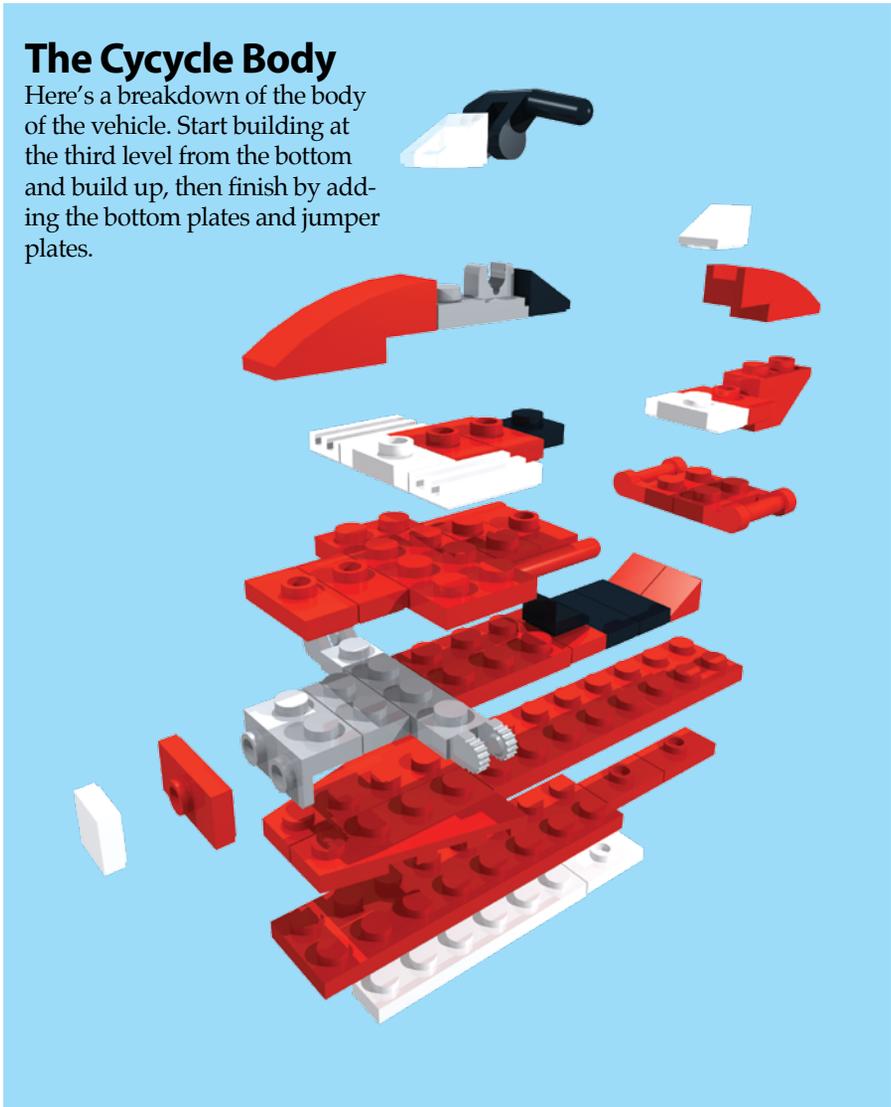


The Cycycle

As mentioned earlier, this was built during a late-night building session when I couldn't sleep. Playing with a click hinge, I started thinking about a simple air cycle model that could be easily made. A couple of hours of building and rebuilding, and I ended up with the cycle design you see on the right. Both the front drive units and wings fold, so they can adjust as desired.

Playing with the model at the NCLUG meeting brought up the possibilities this simple frame had to be customized and rebuilt, so this initial model became the "street-legal" version.

I created directions for the Cycycle and e-mailed them to club members to follow—and modify. You can see some examples on the next page, including a "Coffinator" Cycycle that is run by Dracula!



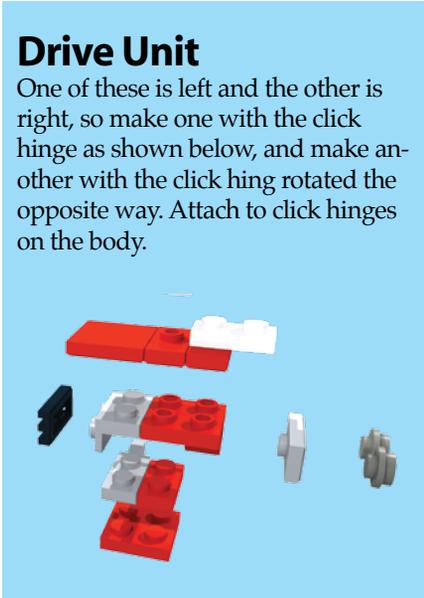
The Cycycle Body

Here's a breakdown of the body of the vehicle. Start building at the third level from the bottom and build up, then finish by adding the bottom plates and jumper plates.



Wings

Build two of these and attach to the rear bars.



Drive Unit

One of these is left and the other is right, so make one with the click hinge as shown below, and make another with the click hinge rotated the opposite way. Attach to click hinges on the body.

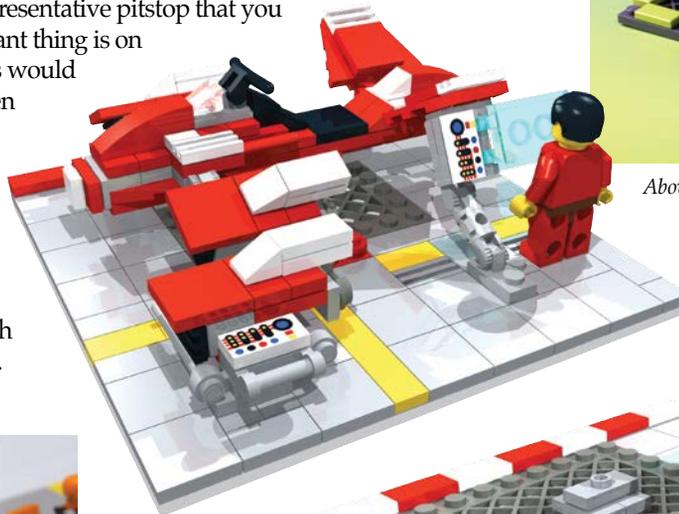


The Pitstop

The idea of a pit stop came up while talking about collaborating. It made sense to make a place for a cycle to stop, and since this was thought of as a race environment, a pit stop was the logical thing to do.

While the cycle was one way to show a character's style, the pitstop was meant to provide a display stand and another opportunity to show a racer's and his or hers or it's style. If big engines were needed, there would need to be a spare engine and equipment, right? So I built a representative pitstop that you see at the right. The most important thing is on the edge—the broken stripe. This would be the separator for the pits. When lined up, as seen above, the lines create a pit row.

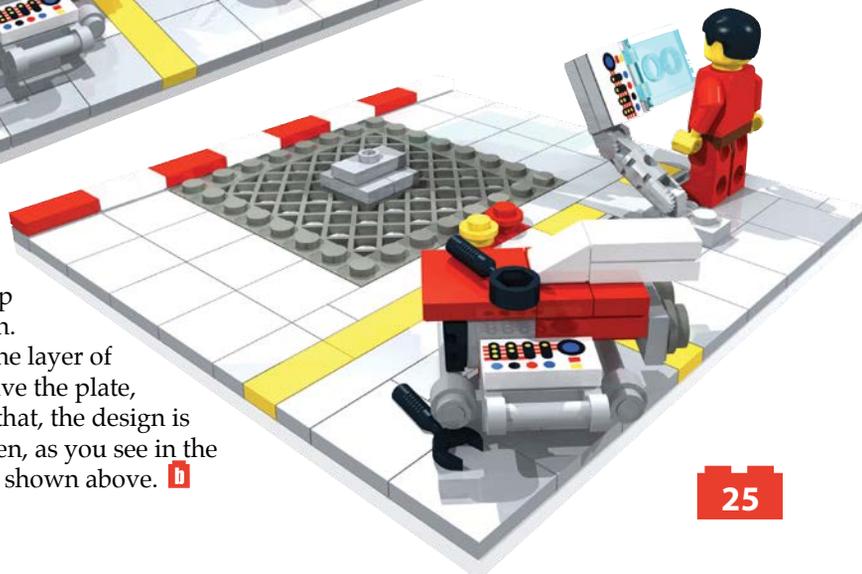
As mentioned, the size is a standard 16 stud by 16 stud plate. Larger baaseplates were used to make a track. Further additions planned include a finish line, stands and support vehicles. What would you add?



Above: Additional cycles by Greg Coquelz.



Here's the pitstop on its own. There's one layer of tiles to pave the plate, but after that, the design is pretty open, as you see in the examples shown above. 



Building

Minifigure Customization 101: Thinking Outside the Box When You Are Outside!

by Jared K. Burks
and Michael Marzilli

When this article series started, there was little to no minifigure customization occurring. At most, AFOLs, TFOLs, and CFOLs (Adult, Teen, and Child Fans Of LEGO) were mixing and matching official LEGO elements in an attempt to create unique minifigures. I have even written about this form of purist customization before and with a bit of imagination you can achieve some excellent custom figures. However, today customizers abound and aftermarket items are everywhere. These items and the aftermarket suppliers seek to fill every void in the market and find their own unique niche where they can offer something no one else can. While they are doing quite well at this, there is still one place where they can never really fill the need: your own imagination. Just as customizers once picked up LEGO and started modifying it, decaling it, painting it, cutting it, customizing it, I recommend you take that same keen eye to these aftermarket items. Make them your own. Today's article is going to be about modifying some of these aftermarket items, from something that was originally meant to be used as something else, into something unique. Some of these examples will be a bigger stretch than others. Take inspiration and show us what you think up. Don't settle, this is what drove customizing during its infancy; create your vision with any piece of plastic, cloth, or whatever. Just because these aftermarket companies are producing cool new pieces to go outside of the licensed LEGO box, doesn't mean that you have to stay confined to their box either!

This article is meant to be inspirational instead of directly educational. This is to demonstrate what you can do when you listen to your imagination. As the point of the article is to inspire I hope you take it and start creating new and different items, customizing everything.

Modifying Decals

There are two easy ways to modify decals; change the colors or apply them in unique and unexpected ways. Several customizers who use decals I have made have applied them in ways that I never envisioned, creating totally new figures. Others have requested color alterations yielding completely new and stunning results. The examples I am going to share here resulted in a combined effort of mine and Michael's. While trying to create a *Star Wars* Republic Commando by the name of Gregor we decided to modify the color scheme and created the Skittle Squad. The Skittles utilize backpacks and helmets from Arealight's Custom Works Shop.

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SKITTLE SQUAD

Mission Objectives: Sgt. Crush Lt. Sol Meanie Baby Blue Pinkie

Primary - Become adept at resisting the influence of "The Force" on the hostel world of Felucia. The skill of resisting the influence of "The Force" is critical to the squads ultimate operational objective of locating and assassinating Sith. The Skittle Squad is a non-standard unit featuring five members instead of the typical four. This rare assignment of the additional member is key in achieving the primary objective.

Secondary - Locate and identify medicinal flora Nysillin native to Felucia. Bacta is scarce, finding the mythical medical flora of Felucia could tip the balance in the war by allowing for stronger and faster recovery of injured members of the Grand Army.

Tertiary - Win the trust and help of the indigenous sentient life. This population could assist in the identification and harvesting of Nysillin. Jungle Felucians are the warriors and fighters of their race; getting them to help set up defense while Meanie and Pinkie gather/implement Nysillin is imperative.

Skittle Squad:
SC-3995 Lt "Sol" - Force Sensitive Leader
SC-3996 Sgt "Crush" - Demolitions Expert and second in command
SC-3997 "Baby Boy" - Sniper and outsider
SC-3998 "Meanie" - Science Specialist with Botany training
SC-3999 "Pinkie" - Field Surgeon
MISSION: SITH TERMINATION UNIT
DEPLOYMENT: FELUCIA - TRAINING

Unique Kit:
This unit has trained with adaptive colorimetric camouflage designed specifically for the jungles of Felucia. The RC's recieved their names based on the primary color in their camouflage.

CLASSIFIED

Figure 1: The Skittle Squad.

The Skittle Squad also demonstrates another skill that requires thinking outside the box: applying decals when no template exists. There is no template for Arealight's RC backpacks. This requires trimming and fitting as you work your way through the backpack. Using the decal softening solution to conform the decal to the surface requires tricky skill; if the decal overlaps itself it will be visible and detract from the final result. This sort of application takes time and patience as well as a skilled hand. Also many of the aftermarket parts don't exist in the colors we needed, which meant finding paint matching LEGO colors.



Figure 1a - e: Individual Skittle Squad members.

Another example of this sort of cut-to-fit application is Michael's camo-wearing Mandalorian. This decal set was designed for a clone trooper with a specialized clone helmet, not a Mandalorian helmet. Michael started with a printed trans-clear helmet that he painted around the printed area, then modified and cut the decals to fit and apply. After modifying the decals to fit the Mandalorian pieces, Michael applied the Mandalorian decals on top and then painted specific parts of the figure to complete the creation. This started with a printed helmet and jetpack from Arealight, but wasn't complete until painted and modified decals were applied. As an example Michael has replicated the process in the second part of Figure 2.

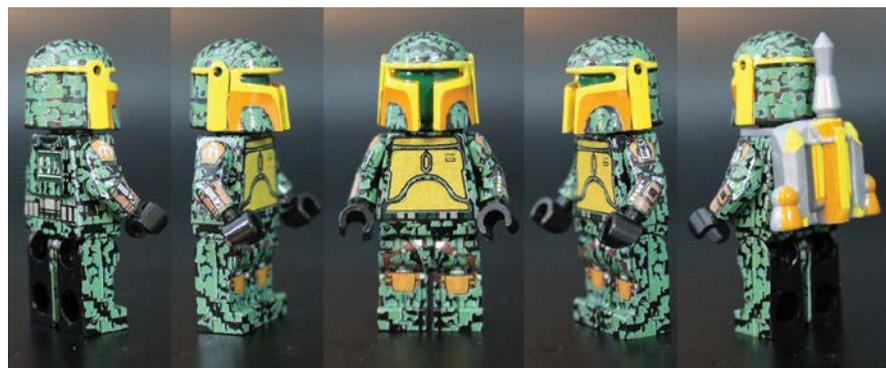


Figure 2: Camo Mando.



2a. Step by step in creation of a similar figure. Helmet color was altered with paint; decals were cut to fit and applied. Then camo was added to the torso and legs, but clone bits were covered using Mando designs to create the custom Camo Mando.

The second example in this article is re-envisioning a part in a new application. Here is a prime example of using a BrickForge flashlight as a custom lightsaber. These also feature a custom blade, which was modified from a LEGO antenna.



Figure 3: Custom Lightsabers.



Speaking of thinking outside the box when it comes to parts, many utilize parts that were never intended for LEGO. Some of the best customs come from using Games Workshop parts. Be it Warhammer 40k or some other line from the store, many of their small figure accessories can be easily utilized in LEGO creations. Dave Geoshift does this seamlessly.

Figure 4: Games Workshop parts used in a custom figure by Geoshift.

Other items along this line can be very helpful in creating custom figures. I have used small gaskets and toy rubber chickens from small board games to create custom figures. Next time you are passing the gumball machine, stop and check it out: Who knows what custom part you could find for twenty-five cents?



Figure 5 and 5a: Honkey & Lt Bubbles.

One of the easiest ways to modify aftermarket accessories is to simply paint them. Many of the details are not highlighted as the aftermarket items are made economically. Prime examples are the Ghostbuster minifigures featuring Brick Forge items. These items were completed with small dabs of paint here and there on their consoles and proton packs.



Figure 6 and 6a: Ghostbusters.

Finally, a way to complete a custom figure might be to look outside of LEGO and items designed to work with LEGO all together. This form of customization really deals with how we share our creations online. Digital customization can be a very helpful tool to create the environment our figures live in. By placing our figures in a digital environment we add and further the customization. Would the Skittles be meaningful without the classified document version, or simply some brightly colored Republic Commandos? A simpler example would be Commander Rogers. When Steve Rogers becomes the head of S.H.I.E.L.D. he uses a photonic energy shield. To create the shield I used a trans-red radar dish. To complete the look I added a glow around the dish to make it look more like it does in the comic. Other examples include Phil Coulson and Maria Hill. These two Agents' of S.H.I.E.L.D. just aren't complete without the S.H.I.E.L.D. emblem. Another example is the Umbrella Corporation Soldier featuring the Minifig cat accessories. While these are great, without the Umbrella Logo the figure is just not the same.



Figure 7: Commander Rogers.

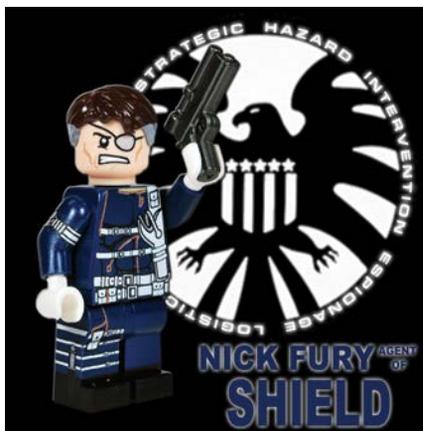


Figure 7b: Classic Nick Fury.



Figure 7c: Maria Hill.



Figure 7d: Phil Coulson.

Keep reaching out, keep customizing, and keep looking at parts in new and different ways. Push your custom figures to the next level. This is going to sound crazy, but I commonly carry a minifigure in my pocket. The only reason that I do this is when I run into something that I could use in a custom figure I have a figure handy to compare figure scale to the new find (will this random find be the right size, too large, or too small?). I have found parts from the Christmas aisle all the way to the gumball machine. Happy hunting! Find the odd and incorporate it in an unexpected way. 



Figure 7e: She-Hulk.

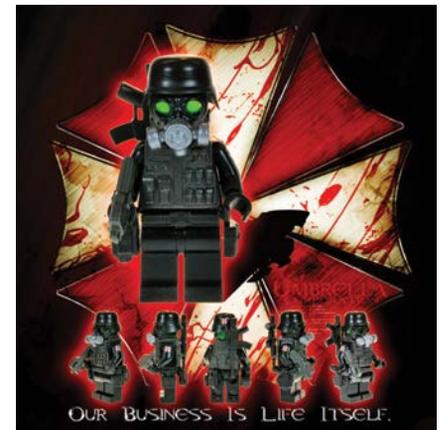
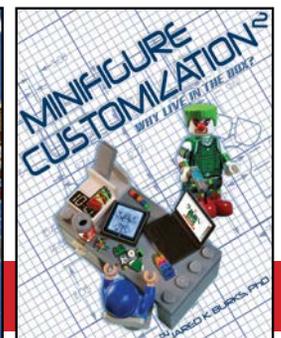
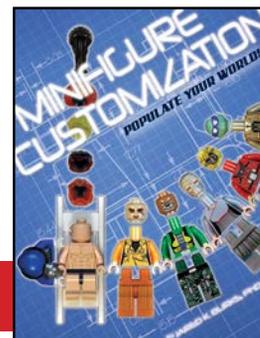


Figure 7f: Umbrella Corp Soldier.



You can find Jared's webpage by going to <http://www.fineclonier.com/> or scanning this QR code!

Don't miss Minifigure Customization: Populate Your World! and its sequel Minifigure Customization: Why Live In The Box? (both are available now at www.twomorrow.com)



More Minifigure Customization 101 next issue!



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Jared's all-new sequel on minifig customizing!

The original *Minifigure Customization: Populate Your World!* book (still available) shows a wide range of techniques you can use to alter the lovable LEGO® Minifigure. Now, *BrickJournal* columnist Jared K. Burks presents the sequel—*Minifigure Customization²: Why Live In The Box?*—offering more advanced techniques to alter minifigures:

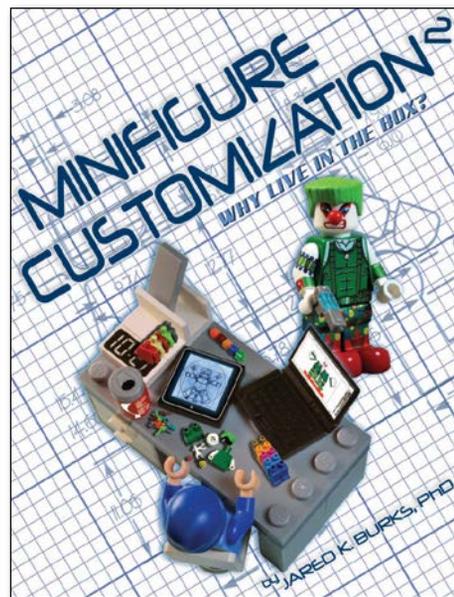
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In a sea of contests, one brawl stands head and shoulders above the rest. A contest of Thunderdome-esque building skills where two builders enter, one builder leaves. In this dread arena, dreams are crushed and blood is spilled in the purest of mano-a-mano competitions.

That contest is IRON BUILDER.

The rules of the Coliseum are simple and few. Having received a batch of 'secret ingredient' parts, the duelists build their hearts out for a month and then put their fate in the hands of the esteemed judges. The criteria are Building Skill, Presentation and Part Usage. To the winner goes the title of 'Iron Builder', the love and admiration of his peers and a trophy built by the defeated. To the loser goes eternal shame and a giant Jack Stone Fan Club medallion that must be worn about his neck!

It's not a contest about who can read the rules of the contest best, it's not a contest about rare prizes and free LEGO sets; it's a pure contest about two gladiators challenging their imaginations and stretching their building skills to the breaking point.

There is no place to hide during the intense month of brick battle, as the contest from beginning to end is under the real-time watchful eyes of the online Flickr community.

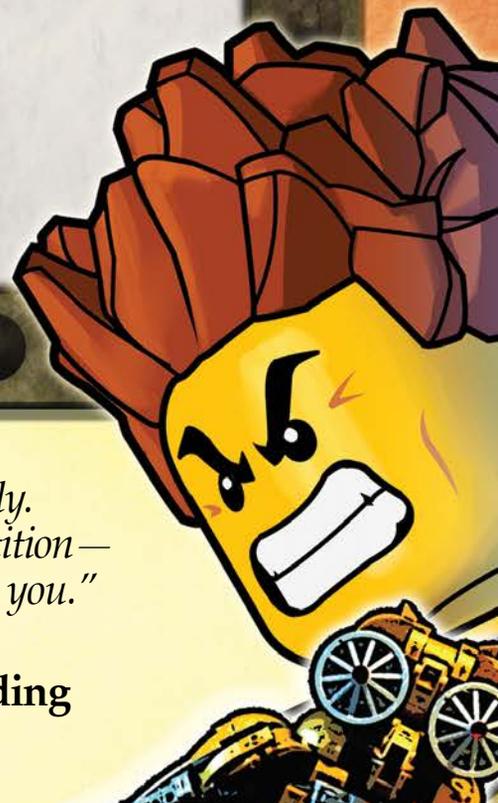
What follows is an issue filled with the intense history of the Iron Builder contest, interviews with many of the talented builders and competitors, and inspired photos of the amazing competition MOCs.

Enjoy!

*Guy Himber, a.k.a. V&A Steamworks
Co-Chairman, Iron Builder*

*"Live daringly, boldly, fearlessly.
Taste the relish to be found in competition —
in having put forth the best within you."*

**Henry J. Kaiser,
father of American shipbuilding**



The first Iron Builders were ThePaleMan (Don Wilson), Legohaulic (Tyler Clites), and CarterBaldwin.

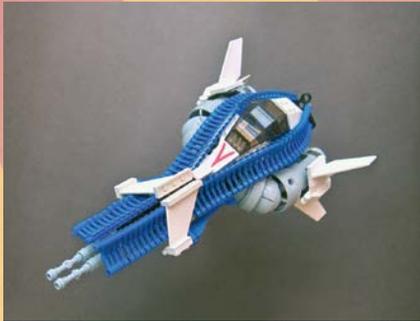
SEASON 1

(first contest March 15, 2009)

1-1 - IB CarterBaldwin vs. Thwaak (Brent) – Glow-in-the-Dark Tentacles

1-2 - IB ThePaleMan vs. Unique Name – Purple Flames

1-3 - IB Legohaulic vs. Olog (Adrian Floria) – Blue Droid Arms



Olog's blue droid arm fighter.



Legohaulic's Alice in Wonderland centipede.

1-4 - IB Unique Name vs. TadashiState – Black Storm Trooper Helmets

1-5 - IB Carter Baldwin vs. Cole Blaq – Plates with Octagonal Bar Frames

1-6 - V&A Steamworks vs. Crimson Wolf vs. Darkkazmo – Crystals – Tri-Color



V&A Steamworks' Victorian Kaiju.

What does it take to be the best LEGO builder? A few years ago, members of a community of the best builders online created a competition to decide who was the best. The name of the competition? Iron Builder. From this group, Iron Builder has grown to become an international contest that has stretched the globe with competitors from throughout the U.S. and Canada, Germany, the UK, South Africa, Australia, Brazil and Scotland. And from its beginnings as a secret community contest to public online competition, Iron Builder has become a raucous, funny and awesome display of the building prowess of the best of the LEGO community.

The History of Iron Builder

By Nannan Zhang

Iron Builder was inspired by the cooking show called *Iron Chef* where a competitor challenges an Iron Chef to create dishes out of a secret ingredient. I thought this idea would translate well into building with LEGO, so I ran the first round in 2009 at an online community called Builders Lounge. I asked three builders to participate as Iron Builders, and a volunteered challenger selected which Iron Builder to compete with. After one month of building, I would select three volunteer judges to grade each builder based on a modified version of the *Iron Chef* judging criteria, where the category of "taste" became "building skill," "originality" became "use of mystery part," and "presentation" remained the same. The winner became or remained the Iron Builder, and the loser got to pick the next challenger from a list of interested participants.

In these early days of Iron Builder, we didn't see many builds for each round. The mentality was different back then. For one, the competition was not viewable by the public because Builders Lounge was a private community, so there wasn't much pressure to impress an audience. Furthermore, the atmosphere of competition had not been established, and builders were not used to smack talk being the norm of the current rounds. As a result, people treated Iron Builder as a diversion from their normal building routine rather than a full-fledged commitment.

This routine continued for two years without any change. An average round had about three creations from each builder, but the slow rounds only saw one build from each side. In 2011, Guy Humber stepped into the picture and proposed changes that would spice up the competition. He had competed a few months ago against someone he knew well, Lino Martins, and both produced a series of high quality builds along with some rivalry smack talk that entertained the audience. Guy wanted a high level of enthusiasm to be the norm of Iron Builder, so we worked together to draft new rules that changed the game. I also made the mistake of letting Guy co-host with me, and now Iron Builder is on the cover of a magazine.

From then on, under the new rules each builder must build something within the first two weeks of the round, and each was encouraged to build at least three creations. As further motivation, the loser was obligated to build a trophy for the winner. On top of it all, Guy and I selected each challenger based on their potential to put on a good show. With these changes combined, Iron Builder gained a new life, and suddenly the public saw an influx of Iron Builder-related creations from their favorite builders, so they became interested in the competition as well. Guy created a separate page on Flickr for the contestants to post their creations for the public and made posters for each round. With much glory and bragging rights at stake, the competitors had no reason not to give it their all to win.

Four years since the humble start of Iron Builder, it became one of the most intense competitions in the LEGO community between two highly skilled builders. Regardless of the outcome, they often emerge from the grueling month with a mutual respect for their opponent, a profound hatred of the mystery piece, and more importantly, a stream of cheers from everyone watching the show.

The First Iron Builder: Not the Best Beginning

Nannan Zhang vs. Andrew Lee (Onosendai2600)

Back at the beginning of this competition, the Builders Lounge community of LEGO builders was a group that was known only to a few, as it was meant to be the best builders online. Questions about how members were selected arose after some builders that were consider lesser talents were admitted. The perceived elitism seen in the secrecy of the

group and the then largely undefined criteria for membership led to what became the first Iron Builder contest.

BrickJournal: Andrew, you were part of an infamous smackdown with The Brothers Brick's own Nannan Zhang. Talk about the evolution of this conflict, how it resolved and builder-vs.-builder competitions in general.

Andrew Lee: Somehow I knew I couldn't get interviewed without this coming up... Well, strap in 'cause this one's a doozy.

Back in 2009 I was invited to be part of the exclusive Builders Lounge forum. I accepted the invite as I knew a few builders there and found myself dismayed by the general level of elitism bandied about. It was particularly disconcerting that a forum based in elitism had mediocre builders within its ranks. I figure if you're going to have a secret club it might as well have standards, right? Yet it appeared that politics and who you knew were the key to getting in. Anyway, I was never real active there until the first Iron Builder contest got under way.

I figured I had a beef with the Zhang and what better time and way to settle the conflict than through an epic building smackdown. I decided that some good-natured ribbing was in order to prompt the action and I took a cue from the one and only King of Smack. I then issued my challenge on both the lounge and publicly on Flickr. At the time Builders Lounge was a publicly viewable forum—this has since changed. Unfortunately the dirty plebeians among your readers who aren't part of the in-crowd will never be able to see the original post or thread. In fact, I believe the whole thread was deleted by the admins when I left the forum shortly after.

So Nannan accepted my challenge, the mystery part was picked (UCS Falcon dishes!), judges were nominated with some confusion as to how many votes a particular celebrity judge got, deadlines were set, and the smack started to flow. The ultimate stake was placed on the table with contest coverage promised to be carried by this very blog. Smack continued to flow and the contest thread was closed to comments by Nannan, using his administrative powers to shut down the verbal sparring until our entries were ready.

Fast forward a few weeks and the deadline approaches. I've built a gigantic model space station carved out of an asteroid that houses a micro scale city with an arena at its core, all sheltered by a giant space dome. Within the arena two opponents challenge each other for ultimate glory. Microscale ships surround the station to take in the action. I built iconic representations of Nannan and myself for the ultimate meta-buildoff within the arena's walls and to this day I count it as one of my best models.



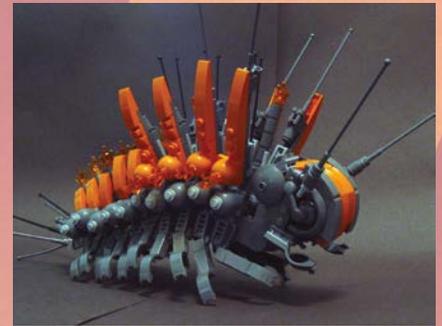
Andrew Lee's entry, *On Approach to Solaris 8*.



Nannan Zhang's entry.

The deadline came and went and I had unveiled the story I crafted through my bricks on both the lounge and Flickr several hours prior, accompanied with plenty of smack. Nannan then posted two pictures on the contest thread using The Brothers Brick's server as an image repository just before the deadline passed. The photos were not posted to his much used and viewed Flickr stream nor were they made public outside of the lounge. It should also be noted that at this time the admins closed the lounge off from public viewing despite one of the judges not being a member. More smack ensued. A few hours later Nannan made his model public.

1-6 - V&A Steamworks vs. Crimson Wolf vs. Darkkazmo - Crystals - Tri-Color



Darkkazmo's centipede.



Crimson Wolf's diorama.

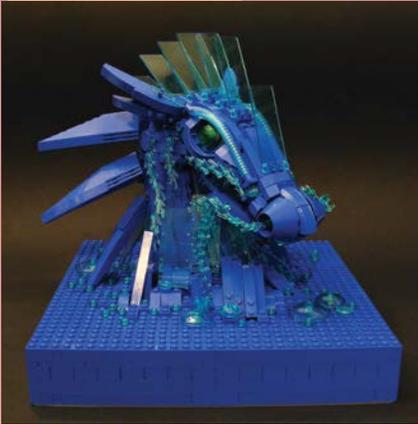


1-7 - IB Karf Oolhu vs. Cole Blaq - Transparent Light Blue Flags



Karf Oolhu's spacecraft entry.

1-7 - IB Karf Oolhu vs. Cole Blaq
- Transparent Light Blue Flags



One of Cole Blaq's entries.



1-8 - IB Legohaulic vs. Aaron -
Technic Panel Fairing #8



Scrapmetal-Bot Scorpion by Aaron.



One of Legohaulic's entries.

The next day Nannan posted additional pictures and some clever spectators were apt to point out changes and improvements to his build which occurred after the deadline. More smack ensued and I posted up a comparison shot of the build originally posted and the new and in my opinion illegally improved build. It was also at this point that I called him a cheat. The crowd once thirsty for blood seemed to realize the spectacle was getting out of hand and feelings were going to get hurt if not already. The judges then denied victory to either the Zhang or I citing poor sportsmanship on both of our parts.

From this first match, there was much learned and much yet to be learned. It took a new member of Builders Lounge to change not only the face of Iron Builder, but also the heart of the competition. The member's name? Guy Himber. You might also know him on Flickr as V&A Steamworks and recognize him from his work in BrickJournal #16, the Steampunk Issue. Guy continues the story...

Guy Himber: I was first invited to join the Builders Lounge by mi AFOL amigo grande, Tyler Clites (a.k.a. LEGOhaulic on Flickr). He later asked if I would like to compete as part of the newly created Iron Builder competition and after a bit of hesitation, I said 'yes'. I won my 3-way competition and was bestowed the title 'Iron Builder'. It was a thrill, and appealed to my barely hidden competitive side. Not too long after the contest I sponsored a round of IB myself (LEGOhaulic vs. Aaron) and I was officially hooked. In my next battle, I had a hard-fought round vs. Lino Martins—which I barely won to retain my title—and started to think a little more in-depth about the existing structure and management of the contest. After some chatting with Lino, I created a graphic to help represent the newly public face of IB, something that would serve as a sense of what the contest was all about and an easy visual identity that viewers could recognize as the Iron Builder 'poster'.

At the start of a battle the poster has (6) black dots filled solely with '?' marks. At the conclusion of the conflict the '?'s are replaced with representative builds from the Iron Builder and his challenger.

Having also seen a number of management dilemmas with the existing contest set-up when I came on board, I discussed with Nannan Zhang some structural changes that could be implemented to make the contest run smoother and keep it more entertaining.

The big changes were:

1. The loser is *required* to build the winner a trophy.
2. Competitors no longer pick the Iron Builder they wish to compete against, as people were picking friends, not necessarily picking good match-ups.
3. Shipping of secret ingredient parts occurs well ahead of the contest start date. (International shipping times are a schedule killer!)
4. Create a *requirement* of minimum number of builds and times due— although the 'now standard' prolific building spirit of IB has made this rule unneeded.

Soon after, I became one of the Administrators of Builders Lounge and then Nannan invited me to become the Co-Chairman of the IB competition.

In my next title defense I went up against the skilled Scotsman, Rod Gillies (2MuchCaffeine on Flickr). In the ensuing carnage, he came out the better man that day. I was both crushed and somewhat relieved. I was 'sad' to lose, certainly—but the pressure to build was both exciting and draining. I had gotten into the habit of keeping a secret ingredient part in my pocket to fondle and contemplate during the day when I wasn't building!

In the ensuing years we have kept striving toward making the brawls as interesting and balanced as possible. The caliber and skill of the competition has continued to grow beyond our wildest expectations! The bar keeps rising higher and the Iron Builder competitors keep jumping over it ... bricks at the ready.

Since then, Iron Builder has become a spectacle of LEGO building. Seen frequently on the LEGO fan blogs, including the Brothers Brick and BrickNerd, models for the Iron Builder competitions have shown the skill, creativity, and ingenuity of some of the best LEGO builders in the world.

BrickJournal interviewed some of the Iron Builder competitors about their experiences. (Editor's Note: Comments have been edited for language.)

Comments From IB Aaron Dayman (Season 1, Match 8 and Match 10)

BrickJournal: When did you first hear about Iron Builder and Builders Lounge?

Aaron: I'd heard rumblings of Builders Lounge back before it migrated to Flickr but the first real experience was the epic smackfest between Andrew Lee and Nannan. Months later I got an invite to the original site by Darkkazmo.

Who did you compete against in your battle(s) and how did it turn out?

As a challenger I had the honor of battling Tyler (LEGOhaulic) and although the judges deemed I had defeated him I felt like I was playing 1 on 1 with Michael Jordan. It's the epitome of a Cinderella story. As an IB, I was challenged by Tadashistate and although I wasn't able to defeat him I was able to meet him face to face during the competition at Brickcon. I'd consider him a friend so the smack talk wasn't really up to par as much as two dudes getting stoked on each others models and being inspired to build.

What was it like to compete in front of a full live audience?

It's both strange and comforting. There's lots of encouragement from fellow loungers but it is strange in that there's similarities between them and cheering fans in the Gladiatorial Arena. When the dust settles, you just hope the crowd doesn't give you the thumbs down.

Favorite/most proud personal IB build(s)?

Each of my rounds had a personal highlight for me which is the best prize anyone could hope for.

Against Tyler I went way out of my comfort zone and feel it was a worthwhile risk and built the Scrapmetal-Bot Scorpion (seen on the previous page: www.flickr.com/photos/cbla_member/4465434354/)

Against Tadashistate one of my all-time fave models made the entire battle worth it if only cause it inspired the Devastaku Heavy Battle Suit (at the Iron Builder gallery after this article, page 52): www.flickr.com/photos/cbla_member/4999625972/in/set-72157624977198726

Favorite IB builds from anyone and why?

Too many to name but one stands out above the rest: "On Approach to Solaris 8" (Andrew Lee's initial IB model, seen on page 33. www.flickr.com/photos/wintermute2600/3488864099/in/set-72157617455985020)

What has been your favorite IB round to watch so far and why?

Just about any round with either Bruce Lowell (BruceyWan) or Karf Oolhu. Both are prolific with the bricks and masters of innovative parts usage.

How important is Smack Talk?

In jest, it can be rather entertaining and add a little something extra to the builds but truth be told, I'm a polite laid-back Canadian for the most part so it doesn't come naturally to me.

Describe your IB experience(s). Was it stressful, what was your working technique, how did you prepare?

It was an honor to be chosen but also a bit daunting. I don't think anything can prepare you for a building challenge like this.

First thoughts when you opened up and revealed your secret ingredient part?

What the heck am I supposed to do with this!?!?!?!?!!!!

Give a detailed account of your competition experience (please!).

See above. :p

Would you compete again?

If I was at a place where I could build regularly I would love to give it a whirl again.

Funniest/most memorable moment?

www.flickr.com/photos/cbla_member/4555790976/
Masterful photoshoppery, good sir.

No Contest - IB Olog vs. Unique Name - Aircraft Doors (Flake Out round)



1-9 - IB V&A Steamworks vs. LINO - Arch 1x6x3 1/3 Curved Top



Lino's Lionfish.



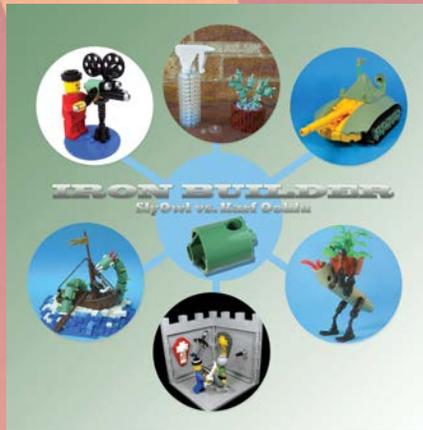
V&A Steamwork's shoe.

1-10 - IB Aaron vs. Tadashistate - Dark Tan Dome Tops

1-11 - IB Olog vs. LDM - Blasters

1-12 - IB Tadashistate vs. New Right - Atlantis Rings

SEASON 2



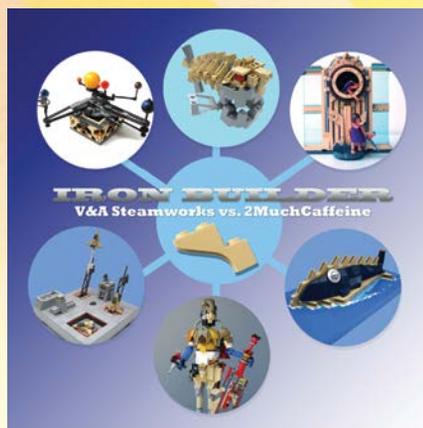
Round 1 – IB Karf Oolhu vs. Sly Owl – Sand Green Robot Body



One of Sly Owl's entries.



One of Karf Oolhu's entries.



Round 2- IB V&A Steamworks vs. 2MuchCaffeine – Brick, Arch 1x3x2

Any tips or pointers you would share with future competitors?
Hold tight and have fun.

What was your overall building/competing strategy?
Honestly I had no real strategy other than to sit down with the “ingredients” every day and see where inspiration takes me.

Comments From IB MonsterBrick (Matt Armstrong) Season 2, Round 8

When did you first hear about Iron Builder and Builders Lounge?
I first heard of Iron Builder through my contact's pictures: I noticed a few peeps were making many cool MOCs with a seed part and I considered taking a stab at the same piece. Suddenly I get an email from the infamous Nannan asking me if I would like to be a judge for Lino and the LEGO user he competed against (cannot remember who it was). I replied I would... but was not an invited member of the “Builders Lounge.” Shortly after that, I did receive an invitation to the group. The next month I was asked to compete. I remember my competitor had some finals or something going on so would have to wait a month or so to have a go at it.

Who did you compete against in your battle(s) and how did it turn out?
When I learned it was Tadashashi, the four-time champ, I was a little intimidated but was not backing down. I decided to take the bad-mouthing and MOC building to new levels with a MOC a day for the 28 days of February that we competed. Not only did I have to battle Taddles, a bunch of his spacer cronies jumped in to give me a kick in the shins. Probably the thing that brought me down was thinking it was the MOC-Olympics and not concentrating on solid Iron Builder MOCs (although I did have a few good ones). Sadly I lost by one point in the judging rounds. I know the loser usually sends the winner a trophy but since Tag-a-long stole the competition from me... I stole his trophy and have it sitting proudly in the LEGO room.

What has been your favorite IB round to watch so far and why?
My personal fave was of course Tad's trophy “The Bird” which is also a common salute along the San Diego Freeways. Your number on Taggle.

I really liked all of Andrew Lee's builds as well as Bruceywan's; the realism was amazing.

I have not really watched every round as closely as I should (except for the Brothers Brick blogged MOCs)

How important is Smack Talk?
For me again I will say the smack talk was epic and surprisingly encouraged, which was difficult for me since I am all about respect and good manners on the web.

Describe your IB experience(s). Was it stressful, what was your working technique, how did you prepare?
Doing a MOC a day for a month is taxing...also it is cold in the LEGO Room in winter. I did go into a brief “Dark Age” after the competition, avoiding the LEGO Room completely.

First thoughts when you opened up and revealed your secret ingredient part?
The day the postman handed me the package I got all giddy and rushed in to see what the piece was. At first I just pushed them around on a table making different shapes or words out of the piece. (His part was Tan flag with two clips).

Would you compete again?
Would I compete again, you bet I would! I have learned from my past mistakes and would love to hold the title. Took me 5 years to win the LEGOLand Jr. Mastermodel Builder title, hopefully I can do it in less tries with Iron Builder. Plus free LEGO is a great thing!

Funniest/most memorable moment?
I guess what I remember the most about the competition (besides bribing the judges publicly with free LEGO) was the one point difference. Also I recall how many peeps wanted in on the competition after my bout... sending me to the end of the line. Lastly I would like to thank my better half Mrs. Monster, who let me sit in the LEGO Room for hours on end, even during our 19th year anniversary.

Tips for future competitors... LOOK OUT, MONSTER IS COMING!

Comments From IB Pasukaru76 (Pascal) Season2, Round 10

When did you first hear about Iron Builder and Builders Lounge?

I learned about Iron Builder from contacts posting their entries for the competition. Investigating what Iron Builder is about then quickly makes one find Builders Lounge: first, confusingly, the disused website and then the flickr group.

Who did you compete against in your battle(s) and how did it turn out?

In my first Iron Builder battle, I went up against 2MuchCaffeine and managed to barely defeat him. I basked in my glory for half a year, then had to defend against :VolumeX, who managed to dethrone me by coming out less than one full point ahead of me.

What was it like to compete in front of a full live audience?

Funnily enough, in my battles I was thinking more about my opponent's builds than the audience itself.

Favorite/most proud personal IB build(s)?

I'd say my thatched shack from the battle with :VolumeX; I really managed to bend that pesky yellow arch to my will and it was received very well by the audience.

Favorite IB builds from anyone and why?

Tricky to say since every round seems to produce a lot of fantastic builds, but it's probably the giant sushi roll by Siercon and Coral, just for the brilliance of the idea and the sheer scale of the thing.

What has been your favorite IB round to watch so far and why?

That would be Iron Builder 2.0 round 9 between LEGOhaulic and bruceywan. I love Iron Builder rounds that are fast-paced, and these two did not disappoint in that regard, plus awesome builds and smack talk to boot.

How important is Smack Talk?

It just doesn't feel like Iron Builder when there's no smack talk. Nothing greater than throwing a great MOC in your opponents face and also telling him where he can stick his own builds, at the same time.

Describe your IB experience(s). Was it stressful, what was your working technique, how did you prepare?

The most stressful thing about Iron Builder for me was when you go to the round's thread on flickr, preparing to post your latest entry, only to find a totally awesome MOC by your opponent that blows yours out of the water. Or when you opponent has been slow and suddenly starts posting a new entry every couple of hours. Then you feel a need to catch up, which isn't really helping.

I rarely plan my MOCs, so my preparation for the competition was very basic—once I knew the secret ingredient, I would just search my collection for useful parts the same color as the seed part.

First thoughts when you opened up and revealed your secret ingredient part?

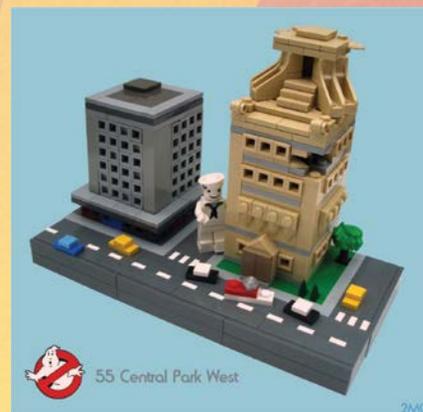
For the blue droid bodies on my first battle, my first thought was "Yay, a really useful piece" and the second was "Blue? Why blue?". For my second battle, we had to use the yellow arch piece... my first thought was "Wow, that part has a really strange geometry" followed by "Yellow? Why yellow?". Funny how I was put off by the color both times.

Give a detailed account of your competition experience (please!).

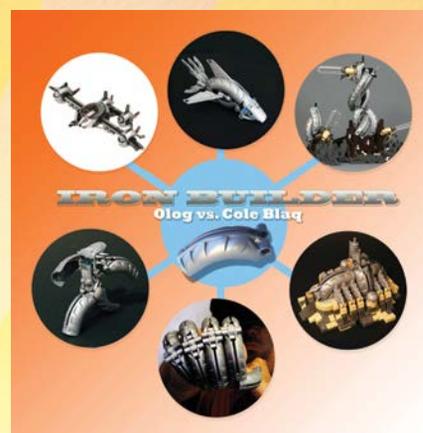
First, I was very excited to be selected as an Iron Builder contestant. When I learned I had to go up against 2MuchCaffeine in my first battle, I was somewhat intimidated. Then I saw the mystery piece (blue droid body), which suited my style of building very well, so I was starting to think I might actually have a chance of winning. We had a running start, posting a lot of entries in the first few days of the round, which is a great feeling. Then things started to slow down a bit. It's a bit strange when you post multiple entries without a reaction from your opponent—you get the feeling that either he's working on something epic or you're flooding the competition with builds too quickly. Near the end of the competition I grew tired of the seed part, which led to some repetitive builds and others where the seed part played only a minor role.



One of V&A Steamworks' entries.



One of 2MuchCaffeines' entries.



Round 3- IB Olog vs. Cole Blaq – Bionicle Rahkshi Back Cover with Groove

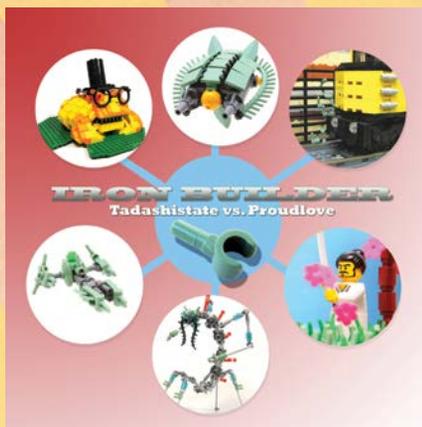
Round 3- IB Olog vs. Cole Blaq – Bionicle Rahkshi Back Cover with Groove



One of Olog's entries.



One of Cole Blaq's entries.



Round 4- IB Tadashistate vs. Proudlove – Sand Green Minifigure Hands



One of Proudlove's entries.

In my second battle, against :VolumeX;, I had a good start whereas he posted nothing in the first couple of days. It was a bit strange not knowing how your opponent is coping with the seed part. I was actually relieved when he started posting awesomeness. For most of the round, I felt we were competing on an even level, but near the end my builds got worse whereas his only got better. I lost by a very small margin, but I think :VolumeX: deserved to win, so no hard feelings.

Would you compete again?

Yes! I love working with restrictions, and being handed a strange piece to work with for a month really gets my creative juices flowing.

Funniest/most memorable moment?

Going up against :VolumeX;, we exchanged some flickr mails near the very end of the competition, discussing whether to end the round a day or two early. I said I still had some stuff to post and so we agreed to continue. So I flushed out my queue of builds, which weren't all that great. What did :VolumeX: do? Oh, he only proceeded to post three awesome final builds. My jaw dropped, I can tell you that.

Any tips or pointers you would share with future competitors?

Go slow at the beginning and see what your competitor has to offer. If you go fast at the beginning, there's a chance you may run out of ideas at the end of the competition, which can lead to uninspired or repetitive builds. Also, try to make the seed part stand out, resist posting an otherwise awesome build that only uses the seed part "because it has to be there".

What was your overall building/competing strategy?

Generally I tried to keep up with my opponent, aiming to have the same number of builds at the end of the round. So when I had posted something, I tried to wait for my opponent's next MOC (I failed doing this a couple of times). I also paid more attention to presentation than I normally do; can't cut your opponent any slack in that department.

Please feel free to share any other tales of note.

Let me just propose a toast to the organizers of Iron Builder: here's to many more rounds to come! Big thanks to Guy and Nannan for devoting their time and money to one of the most inspiring competitions in our community.

Comments From IB Lino Martins (Season 1, Round 9 and Season 2, Round 6)

When did you first hear about Iron Builder and Builders Lounge?

I knew of Builders Lounge and Iron Builder way back when it was its own website. It seemed like this exclusive secret club of only the world's most elite builders and I was on the outside looking in. And I wanted in...bad! Then one day they asked me in and I was honored. Once in, I realized there was a lot of passwords you needed to know as well as a fair bit of HTML code just to post images. Already spoiled by the ease, exposure, and intuitiveness of Flickr, the novelty of Builders Lounge wore off for me. But then they moved to Flickr and I'm pretty sure the whole thing skyrocketed from there. It still feels like an elite club but with more exposure. Good move on their part!

Who did you compete against in your battle(s) and how did it turn out?

For my first Iron Builder battle I competed against the esteemed Guy Humber and the second time I was up against the equally...uh...steamed Rod Gillies. Just like the George W. Bush elections, I won the popular vote but still lost both times anyway.

What was it like to compete in front of a full live audience?

It was quite a rush. I almost wish it was in an actual colosseum but then again watching two grown-up men build with LEGO for a month might not be that exciting to watch.

Favorite/most proud personal IB build(s)?

I have to say, of my top twenty creations most favored by others, a good chunk of them are Iron Builder creations. It really brings out the best in me and I'm sure for others as well. But a couple of Iron Builder entries that I'm most proud of are my Lionfish (seen on page 35) (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/12622904@N03/4810404552/>) and my Admiral Snackbar (seen on page 40) (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/12622904@N03/6360180259/>)

Favorite IB builds from anyone and why?

I've always admired anything Bruce Lowell and Tyler Clites does. Bruce's mastery of making mundane objects look so plausible in LEGO is uncanny and Tyler's humor and storytelling is state-of-the-art. When they competed against each other, it was a magical moment for sure. Amongst my fave creations by them is Bruce's '80s era brick phone, seen on page 54 (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/bruceywan/6851728358/>), and Tyler's creepy old man in the shower, also on page 54 (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/legohaulic/6785928302/>).

What has been your favorite IB round to watch so far and why?

Besides the aforementioned Tyler/Bruce Battle, I particularly enjoyed the one where Siercon and Coral battled against Bart De Dobbelear. See, they're a married couple who somehow work phenomenally together as one unit. That boggles my mind as I have yet to find someone whom I can let into my head and my creative processes like that. That was a stellar match to watch.

How important is Smack Talk?

Smack Talk is very important...although I find that I don't engage in much of it while I'm competing, even though I am known to be a venomous wordsmith who can weave a tapestry of lowbrow obscenities and witty insults. When I compete hard, I seem to channel a Clint Eastwood approach...say nothing and keep them guessing. I feel not knowing exactly what you're competitor is up to is far more intimidating than hearing him spout off insults every few minutes.

Describe your IB experience(s). Was it stressful, what was your working technique, how did you prepare?

I was exhilarated to be a part of it but, boy oh boy, is it ever stressful! My working technique was akin to being a war general...always quietly strategizing and trying to outthink my opponents. I prepared by making a list of what I should build...stuff that would push my limits as a builder...nothing mundane or easy. I wanted to be afraid of everything I was about to build. If I wasn't afraid of it, it wasn't worth doing. And when I thought I wrote enough on the list...then I wrote several more for good measure. Then I knocked them out as quickly as I can.

First thoughts when you opened up and revealed your secret ingredient part?

I felt like the piece was tailor-made for me. It's like they knew I could take a whole slew of white curved arches and make magic with them. It made me wonder if they pick the piece based on the competitors. I was quite happy with the possibilities.

Give a detailed account of your competition experience (please!).

First the list. Lots of planning. Guy tried to goad me with smack talk but I paid little attention...or so it would seem. Actually I did notice, but appearances, you know...I had to be tough and quiet and just get down to brass tacks about it. We each had our own "walk-on music" though to psych us up. It was sort of a way to taunt the opponent as wrestlers would do. Lots of stress as mentioned before and pushing the limits to what I can do. I was probably not very pleasant to be around because when I wasn't building, I was thinking about building. It was a hard month akin to battle as mentioned before. Actually it felt like being in a month-long boxing match. But it was a relief when it was over.

Would you compete again?

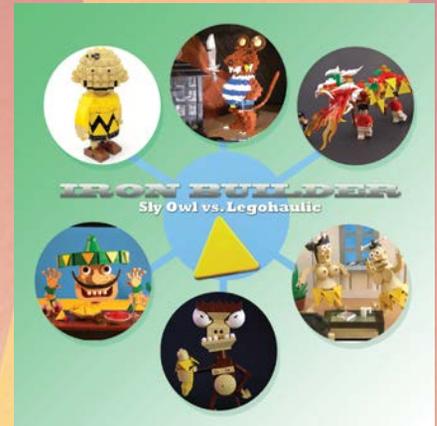
Oh yes! My current job responsibilities may inhibit me from doing so any time soon but I would be honored to compete again.

Funniest/most memorable moment?

There are two moments that stand out as most funny and memorable for me. I actually got a big chuckle out of Guy's video of a giant foot stomping a Cube Dude version of me. I was appalled that the Cube Dude Lino had a receded hairline and a slightly paunchy belly but I remember thinking that crapes, that bastard Guy had me down pat! In response I joked that cheap movies with bad special effects can be expected from Guy as...well, that's what he does for a living. Seriously. Go ahead, look it up. I'll wait. See what I mean? Aquaman? Trick R Treat? What the heck were they thinking with that?! But even though I joked about it, I was honored. It means I have arrived as a builder if someone can poke fun at me so well. Iron Builder is tough, but it brings out friendships, even amongst fierce competitors. I can say that I am good friends with both gentlemen I've competed against.



One of Tadashistate's entries.



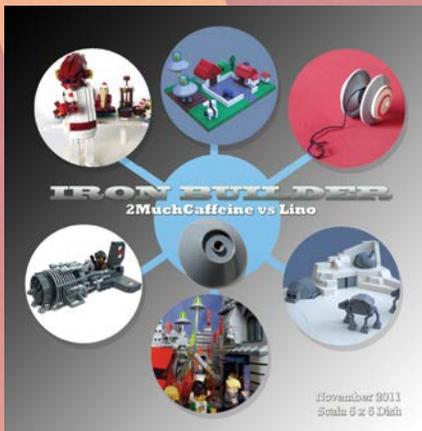
Round 5- IB SlyOwl vs. Legohaulic - Yellow Train Sign



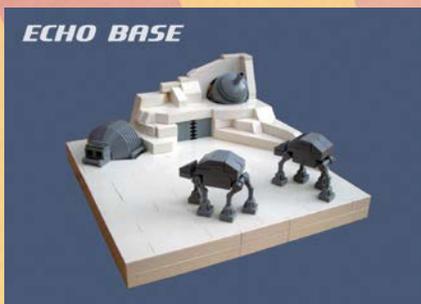
One of Sly Owl's entries.



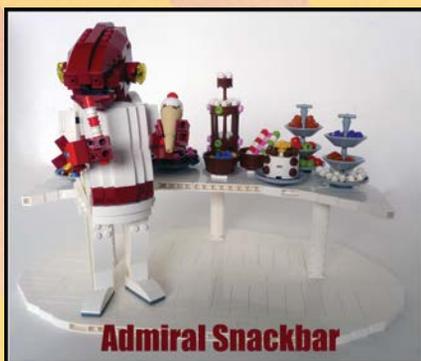
One of Legohaulic's entries.



Round 6- IB 2MuchCaffeine vs. LINO – SCALA 5x5 Dish



One of 2MuchCaffeine's entries.



One of Lino's entries.



Round 7- IB Olog vs. Legoloverman – Minifig, Utensil Sextant

Any tips or pointers you would share with future competitors?

Yes, build outside your comfort zones. Build what people won't expect of you. Surprise yourself. Be afraid of what you're building. Anything that doesn't feel even a wee bit scary may not be worth doing. If you're a mech builder, six mechs in a row isn't going to impress anyone. Use the secret ingredient piece in ways it isn't obviously intended. For example...a minifig hairpiece probably shouldn't be used as such, but lots of them may make a nice scale texture on a koi carp or something. Lots of smaller entries may win out over a few epic ones, so consider that as a strategy. If you lose, build the winner a trophy; it just shows bad form otherwise. Humor is good. Friendships are good. Compete hard, but still find the time to kiss your significant other. Photo quality can sometimes outweigh build quality, so hone those skills. Know a little photoshop trickery but don't rely too heavily on it. Build from your heart. If you can't, then build from your gut. Enjoy good music while you build... and always use sunscreen.

What was your overall building/competing strategy?

A good rule of thumb for me or anyone, really...don't brag about what you're doing. Almost 100% of anyone who brags doesn't really follow through with what they say they're going to do. And don't post countless WIP (Work In Progress) photos... it softens the impact. Consider the LEGO world as a pond. Do you want to drop a tiny pebble into it or a Volkswagen? An impressive MOC that you quietly drop like a bomb will make far bigger ripples in that pond than something you've been bragging about for weeks. So speak softly and carry a big stick... or something.

Comments From IB 2MuchCaffeine (Rod Gillies) Season 2, Rounds 2, 6, and 10

When did you hear about IB and Builders Lounge?

Joined the Lounge back in the dim dark days when it was separate to Flickr and super-exclusive. I hear they're letting anyone in nowadays.

Who did I compete with?

First time around, I skunked Guy Himber, which was most enjoyable. Then I had a seriously close-run contest with Lino which I was astonished to win. Then I lost my crown to Pascal (Pasukaru76), which still rankles.

What was it like competing in front of an audience?

Kind of stressful, kind of exciting. More people paying more attention to your stuff really focuses the mind.

Favorite personal IB build?

Probably Starfighter Command (seen on page 52), or maybe Echo Base, (seen above left) both of which were pretty good (even if I do say so myself).

Favorite ever IB builds and why?

Couldn't say. They're all so different because of the secret part, but probably just about anything Bruce Lowell builds.

Favorite IB round to watch?

Bruce and Tyler mixing it up back in February / March 2012. It was a pleasure to behold—two amazing builders ripping it up with some amazing builds. Genuinely fantastic stuff.

How important is smack talk?

Apparently you Colonials seem to think it's very important, whilst us Brits tend to let our building do the talking. Although it has to be said, I'm not good at turning the other cheek and tend to get dragged down to my competitor's level.

Describe your IB experience.

Burning indigestion, crippling insomnia, fear. The awful dread that your opponent is about to post the exact thing you're working on. The sheer disbelief when he posts *yet another* MOC. No kidding—it's grim. But that's kind of the point.

What was your technique?

Build every day, creating a bank of little creations you can post if you're bereft of inspiration, or stuck whilst making a bigger MOC.

How do you prepare?

You can't.

First thoughts when you opened up your secret ingredient?

Despair, followed by flashes of really obvious uses, then more despair.

Would you compete again?

Of course. It's hard, it's stressful, it's not actually any fun. But that's the point: if it was easy, it wouldn't be worth winning.

Funniest or most memorable moment?

It wasn't funny, but I don't think I'll ever forget the final hours of my match with Guy. I was so desperate to finish stuff, I stayed up until about 5am and had cuts and scratches all over my hands from raking through brick bins.

Tips or pointers to share?

Don't freak if your opponent posts something similar to something you're working on. Unless it's exactly the same, post it anyway.

Consider building in a number of different scales.

Comments From Iron Builder Bruceywan (Bruce Lowell) Season 2, Round 9 and Season 3, Round 2, and Round 6.

When did you first hear about Iron Builder and Builders Lounge?

After taking a few years' break from the online community I began following Brothers Brick, and noticed that they kept highlighting MOCs from an "Iron Builder." After a while I got curious and looked into it more, and found Builders Lounge from there.

Who did you compete against in your battle(s) and how did it turn out?

Tyler Clites (Legohaulic), Luke Hutchinson (Derfel Cadarn), and Chris Maddison (cmaddison), respectively. All three have turned out in my favor!

What was it like to compete in front of a full live audience?

Not only do you have to produce high quality MOCs for yourself and for an audience, but against a top-notch builder. Every MOC the competitor posts is another "Why didn't I think of that?!" moment, with all the accompanying mental torments, sleepless nights, and generally peak levels of stress for an entire month. In other words, it was fantastic...

I'd like to say that it gets easier with time, but I'd be lying.

Favorite/most proud personal IB build(s)?

Probably the bead maze (built during my round with Tyler), leaky faucet (built during my round with Luke), and Iron Man (built during my round with Chris).

Favorite IB builds from anyone and why?

Tyler's circus scene, Luke's claw machine, and Chris' dartboard are among the top contenders.

What has been your favorite IB round to watch so far and why?

Any round that's not mine is great to sit back and watch, but I think both Simon (Si-MOCs) and Andrew (onosendai) did a particularly great job in their round, both with the builds and the puns.

How important is Smack Talk?

It's definitely necessary and always fun to watch, but creating snarky comments is not my forte. I know there are children watching the competition too, so I keep that in mind when posting.

Describe your IB experience(s). Was it stressful, what was your working technique, how did you prepare?

It's definitely stressful, but fun competitive and creative stress. I always have a pretty long list of ideas for MOCs, so if I can incorporate any of those into my builds, I definitely try to. I don't really go into the contest with a technique other than BUILD! BUILD! BUILD! as soon as the contest runner says go.

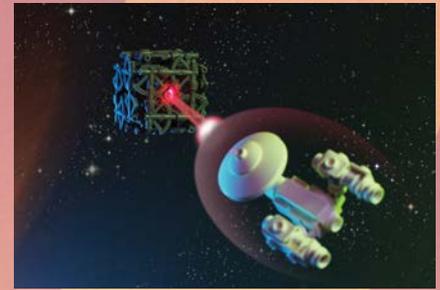
First thoughts when you opened up and revealed your secret ingredient part?

All three times I've competed the initial thought was "WHAT?!?!? What am I going to build with this?!"

Give a detailed account of your competition experience (please!).

The initial mental anguish of my third round started with my second victory and knowing that I'd have to, again, defend my title. The naming of Chris as

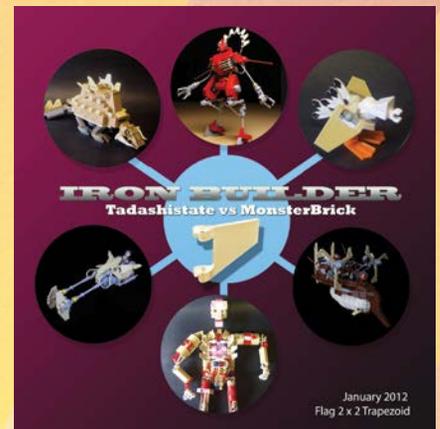
Round 7- IB Olog vs. Legoloverman – Minifig, Utensil Sextant



One of Legoloverman's entries.



One of Olog's entries.



Round 8- IB Tadashistate vs. MonsterBrick – Flag 2x2 Trapezoid

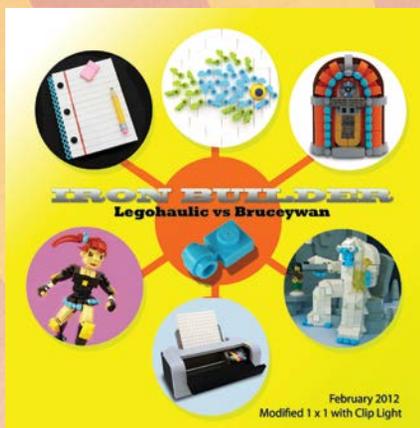


One of MonsterBrick's entries.

Round 8- IB Tadashistate vs.
MonsterBrick – Flag 2x2 Trapezoid



One of Tadashistate's entries.



Round 9- IB Legohaulic vs. Bruceywan –
Modified 1x1 with Clip Light



One of Legohaulic's entries.



One of Bruceywan's entries.

my competitor did not help at all! Until the start of the competition I tried to pool together ideas I'd had for MOCs, hoping they could incorporate the seed part, but not knowing until the contest began. I also tried to study Chris' style, which was another torment because of the variety of cool MOCs he's produced. By chance, I happened to be out of town right before the contest began, so it helped get my mind off of it until the whistle was blown and the contest began. By then I'd built up a little self-confidence and thought I'd draw first blood by posting the first MOC but he beat me to it. Chris did a great job of posting great MOCs in high volume throughout the entire month. Every time I went to publish a picture he had posted a new MOC, if not two. I think my previous IB rounds produced fourteen and sixteen MOCs respectively, and this round I produced twenty-five, but he even beat that. As happy I was with my output, I always tend to prepare for the worst. The most agonizing days are after the contest has concluded, the judges have been announced, and I'm left waiting for my inevitable defeat. But, as fate would have it, the judges voted in my favor and I retained my title. It probably took a day or so for the nerves to go away and for it to finally sink in that I claimed the title for a third time, and I was able to go about my life normally again.

Would you compete again?

I've said yes twice to competing again, but I think after three successful rounds it might be time to pass the reins onto new worthy competitors.

Funniest/most memorable moment?

Funnier than all the lame puns we're subjected to for a straight month? I think receiving the e-mail before each round stating "you will be competing against..."

Any tips or pointers you would share with future competitors?

Have fun! That's the most important thing to remember about the challenge. I've always tried to build quality over quantity, but in the middle of a competition like this, when the juices start flowing, it's really easy to do both!

What was your overall building/competing strategy?

Before I start building for the contest, I really try and take an in-depth look at the seed part; really understand its geometry and connection points. From there I'll write down as many different uses as I can think of for future MOCs, play around with the part in relation to other parts, and start building. I try to keep to my list of MOCs (although some new ideas do pop up throughout the month) just to make sure I'm not piggybacking on my competitor's ideas. My basic strategy has been to build and post pictures, and that's about it.

**Comments From IB Karf Oohlu
Season One, Round 7 and Season 2, Round 1**

When did you first hear about Iron Builder and Builders Lounge?

Back in 2007, my mate Aaron Andrews (Darkspawn) who introduced me into the world of LEGO, was a member of Builders Lounge, back before it took up residence in Flickr; those were the days of the original Iron Builder. Sometime later, I was sponsored into the Lounge by Thwaaak.

Who did you compete against in your battle(s) and how did it turn out?

My first battle was against Cole Blaq, it was a close fought battle and Cole did some awesome MOCs, but I managed to hold on and take him out, scoring myself an Iron Builder's seat.

My second battle was against 2MuchCaffiene, a tough slug 'em out battle, blood and guts was thrown in but I did not survive, 2Much was just too much.

What was it like to compete in front of a full live audience?

What! They were drunk *and* alive... all of them... even... oh dear.

Favorite/most proud personal IB build(s)?

'The Demountable Mineral Refinery', using the secret ingredient, 2x2x2 sand green droid body, in the round against 2MuchCaffeine, seen on page 54 (www.flickr.com/photos/dragon55/5681415144/in/set-72157626508220225)

Favorite IB builds from anyone and why?

Too many choices, but from my personal tastes in recent rounds it's LEGOhaulic's, 'It sucks to be a ghost', seen on page 50. Love the wordplay in the

name and the action and build quality is awesome and funny (www.flickr.com/photos/legohaulic/7007479141/).

What has been your favorite IB round to watch so far and why?

To be honest, with the recent few rounds, my favorite has been the last round played at the time of asking. They've just been getting better and better.

How important is Smack Talk?

Listen here, you Bucket' o' steam, colorful banter is an essential ego-bursting ingredient to competing; it enhances the overall flavor, and helps keep the audience on their seats. And if you don't believe me, I'll rip your bloody arms off and use the wet ends to clean the stains off, oh what am I saying... (sobs) I never really got into it in my last round....and see....I lost, so obviously it's very important...

Describe your IB experience(s). Was it stressful, what was your working technique, how did you prepare?

The first one was a bit stressful, my first real public performance since joining the LEGO online community, but I guess as far as preparation is concerned, I just relied on my usual daily output to manage it....wrong, my usual daily just kept up its own thing and I had to find extra time for the IB builds (silly I know, but established habits are hard to dislodge). So I guess I'm a pretty poor example for techniques or preparation, don't really have any other than staying open-minded about the intended function look of a brick.

First thoughts when you opened up and revealed your secret ingredient part?

"Why the heck would she have said that to me at that particular moment?" Oh wait... that's the thought at the time, but you meant regarding the LEGO piece, lols. Sorry, don't recall, but then finding uses for unloved and under-used bricks had already been my established playing card.

Give a detailed account of your competition experience (please!).

No. You had to be there. (Thanks!)

Would you compete again?

No, I'm just an old Chaos constructor, I prefer to relax and let the bricks show me what they want, so much easier, no thought; just fill in the empty spaces till it looks cool. First and foremost, I build because it's fun, creative and stress free : D

Funniest/most memorable moment?

Lol, yeah, I had one, I laugh every time I recall it : D D

Any tips or pointers you would share with future competitors?

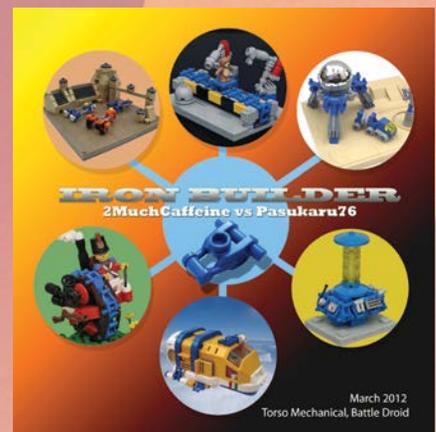
To have been following the IB comps to understand the nature of the beast. To always keep in mind, the audience needs to see the "special piece" and go "nice" when they see it, no good using it as some freaky useful structural thing if in the end, it's buried inside the MOC. But most important, have fun. Winning's just a bonus (and a chance to get your own trophy in the trophy room, there's the real icing, lol).

What was your overall building/competing strategy?

To try and overwhelm my opponent in number of uploads, and to cover as many themes and sizes as I could. (Bearing in mind, that usual non-IB MOCs are also still being worked on—helps that I prefer to work on multiple WIPs, and not having a social life any more, lols.)

Please feel free to share any other tales of note.

Back in my teenage years, a bunch of us had gone skinny dipping in this excellent looking dam we'd stumbled on. It was spring, the grass was green and soft, just a lovely sunny day for swimming. Still to this day, I don't understand how none of us saw the bull at the far end of the grassy paddock until we were all naked in the water. And more importantly, how none of us got harmed (much) between a ton of bull and barbed wire fences to be jumped over (do be remembering the naked part at this point). I guess that's why the ancient Greeks went naked in the Olympic games....you're just that much faster, no bull.



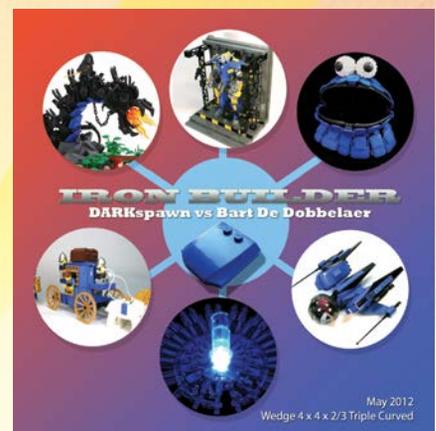
Round 10- IB 2MuchCaffeine vs. Pasukaru76 - Torso Mechanical, Battle Droid



One of Pasukaru76's entries.



One of 2MuchCaffeine's entries.



Round 11- DarkSpawn vs. Bart De Dobbelaer - Wedge 4x4x2/3 Triple Curved

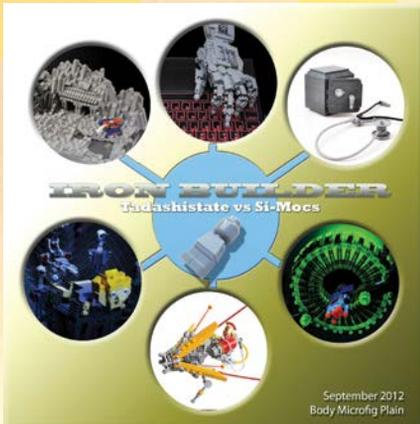


One of Bart De Dobbelaer's entries.



One of DarkSpawn's entries.

SEASON 3



Round 1— IB Tadashistate vs. Si-MOCs —
Body Microfig Plain

Comments From IB Chris Maddison (CMaddison) Season3, Round 6

When did you first hear about Iron Builder and Builders Lounge?

In mid-2012, shortly after returning to LEGO and the online community after my second Dark Age. When I went dark in 2004, Lugnet was still a central hub of the community, so it took a little bit of looking, but I found Flickr, found some old friends, and from there noticed a lot of them belonged to this "Builders Lounge" group.

Who did you compete against in your battle(s) and how did it turn out?

What was it like to compete in front of a full live audience?

Bruce Lowell, a good friend that I've known for over 10 years. It was very satisfying to compete against a builder I know and respect, but also intimidating. In the end, Bruce retained his title, but I've taken a lot of pride in all the "best Iron Builder round ever" comments people have given me.

Favorite/most proud personal IB build(s)?

My dart and dartboard seemed to be a trivial thing that turned into a nightmare, because making square bricks round is a challenge in itself, let alone having a pattern worked into them. I had no idea so many people had attempted one, then chalked it up as impossible at 1:1 scale. Had I known that, I probably wouldn't have tried in the first place. I'm also quite proud of my final build, Mortal Komba's Sub-Zero performing his fatality on Scorpion. I took a lot of inspiration from great brick-built figure builders like Ian Heath, and it worked out in the end.

Favorite IB builds from anyone and why?

Andrew Lee's Bat'leth, on page 55, stands out in my mind, as does Bruce's Zoidberg, on page 49. Andrew's for the awesome and deadly presentation (on top of bringing nice "closure" to the round, using Simon's first build as a springboard for this final build). And as a Futurama fan, Zoidberg is *perfect*. The only thing I don't like about that build is that it was my opponent who built it.

What has been your favorite IB round to watch so far and why?

The battle between Simon and Andrew, for two reasons. They're both builders I respect and admire. And they win the all-time prize for best smack talk ever.

How important is Smack Talk?

It takes a backseat to the builds, but it definitely helps engage the crowd and provides a lot of levity for an otherwise mentally-exhausting month.

Describe your IB experience(s). Was it stressful, what was your working technique, how did you prepare?

Stressful in a good way. When you look at the same subject matter (in this case, the seed part) for so long, no matter what art medium or style, you reach a point where it's stale and uninteresting. The challenge is to push past that, and when you do, that's when real creativity happens. You're forced to re-evaluate techniques, view things differently, and stretch outside your comfort zone. This is almost always for the best.

As far as preparation is concerned, there was a lot of brainstorming, but very little actual plan. I let the process happen organically. During the competition, I tried to build every day, even if it was just throwing random pieces together to find new shapes or textures.

First thoughts when you opened up and revealed your secret ingredient part?

My seed part was the dark red fez, and I was very pleased with it. The color is very interesting, has lots of applications, and a broad parts list to pull from. And the round shaping meant this seed part could work in almost anything. I immediately starting making lists of everything it reminded me of. From that original list, I threw away probably 90% of it.

Give a detailed account of your competition experience (please!).

My experience was overwhelmingly positive, even though I lost. Bruce is who I wanted to build against, since we share similar styles. I knew there would be some obvious things we would both build (like palm trees), so I tried to push those kinds of things out early to beat him to the punch. As the challenger (and relatively unknown to today's online group of AFOLs), I knew I was the

underdog, so my primary goal was to make Bruce fight to keep up with me. I wanted to pump out a build a day, but not sacrifice quality or interest to do so. The one area I knew I would be lacking in was presentation, as Bruce is a photoshop guru and my skills are very lacking. I tried to make up for this with a larger number of builds, and good atmosphere in “scene” builds. I also wanted to do a lot of pop/nerd culture builds, to keep people interested with recognizable subject matter. For instance, I made flowers. But I made them flowers on Batman’s parents’ headstone. And as an added bonus, 4 of my builds were featured on The Brothers Brick within a month of each other. Not sure many others can boast that. :) At the end of the contest, I was mentally drained and my fingers hurt, but happy with the work I had put in, happy that I gained a lot of exposure, and would love to compete again if invited to do so.

Would you compete again?

Ha! I genuinely hadn’t read this when I finished my answer for the above question. But yes, definitely. :)

Funniest/most memorable moment?

Using a LEGO match to start a fire and burn half my arm hair off, easily. The head of the match was soaked in gasoline to help it burn longer, and I attempted to toss it in the barrel 7 or 8 times, but it went out each time. So on the last take, I just committed to sticking my arm down in there with no regard for personal safety, just to avoid having to keep shooting takes. It worked. :)

The added bonus to this was that Bruce also posted a video, something I don’t believe he had done in an IB competition until I did it first while competing against him. Always good to push the master to new levels. :)

Any tips or pointers you would share with future competitors?

Focus on quality builds of course, but spend more time than I did on presentation. And keep momentum in your favor; don’t build something then sit for another week without posting. Any favor you’ve gained will be lost by then. Keep a steady stream of builds to keep your opponent fighting while backing up.

What was your overall building/competing strategy?

On top of what I’ve already mentioned, I can sum it up with “I don’t need to eat/sleep/[insert other requirement of life here], I need to build more.”

COMMENTS FROM IB Simon Liu (Si-MOCs) Season 3, Rounds 1 and 5

When did you first hear about Iron Builder and Builders Lounge?

I believe it was actually through Iron Builder that I heard about Builders Lounge, I was a fairly new whippersnapper on Flickr when I started noticing this LEGOhauliguy kept using the same Yellow Triangular piece over and over again. My initial reaction was: “Hmmm must be some Flickr fad or something” with a scoop of “Wow, I’ll never be that clever” but when I started looking deeper is when I found the Iron Builder and Lounge.

Who did you compete against in your battle(s) and how did it turn out?

IB 3.0 R1—Tadashistate—“Win”—Unfortunately tadashistate—Kahan ran into this real-life thing and was not able to compete, and I believe I was the only Iron Builder to win by default.

IB 3.0 R5—onosendai2600—Andrew Lee—Loss

I gave it my best, but Andrew used his Ronin-like skills to cut me down with Air Katana Blades.

What was it like to compete in front of a full live audience?

Well, unless someone hacked into my webcam it wasn’t really live...

But I was very much aware of the pressure and expectation that people were watching and waiting for the next build. In my round against Andrew our builds produced rate wasn’t necessarily as high as some other rounds in the past or since, but given the fairly large size of our piece, I think our ‘bricks stacked’ count was very respectable. Ultimately the builds rate has a lot to do with keeping pace with your opponent.

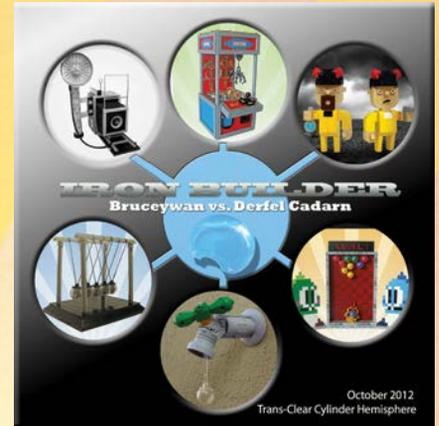
Round 1—IB Tadashistate vs. Si-MOCs – Body Microfig Plain



One of SiMOCs’ entries.



One of Tadashistate’s entries.



Round 2- IB Bruceywan vs. Derfel Cadarn - Trans-Clear Cylinder Hemisphere

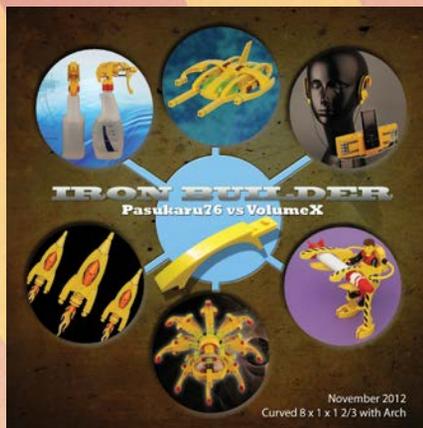


One of Derfel Cadarn’s entries.

Round 2- IB Bruceywan vs. Derfel Cadarn -
Trans-Clear Cylinder Hemisphere



One of Bruceywan's entries.



Round 3- IB Pasukaru76 vs. VolumeX -
Curved 8x1x2/3 with Arch



One of Pasukaru76's entries.

If the other guy is pounding out builds and you're not meeting that pace, it's a hard race to win. At the same time if you're not putting out your best, then no amount of builds will win...

Though I have always thought that a "Live" Iron Builder: Convention Edition, would be hilariously awesome. Two Iron Builders could compete on site at a convention to do a mini Iron Buildoff.

And depending on how close/trusting/deviuous the two Iron Builders were—there could be some interesting twists—like they could only use pieces from their *opponent's* layout.

Favorite/most proud personal IB build(s)?

My proudest build I think was the Robot Hands, on page 45: (www.flickr.com/photos/43378406@N08/7988598431) from my round against Kahan. Not only did the build come out really nicely, it was one of my first 1:1(ish) scale builds I had done. What wasn't overly apparent in pictures was how accurate the fingers were—I wasn't going for poseability or accuracy, but with the use of the various traxis bricks (1x1 brick with studs on 4 sides), T-bars, and turntables, the fingers turned out extremely accurate and I spent a lot of time trying to come up with the most interesting picture (I settled on using a backlit keyboard/mouse). The thumb, on the other hand, was disappointing.

From my more recent round, the floating magnetic bridge (www.flickr.com/photos/43378406@N08/8529873142) was pretty cool, but I think I'd pick the RockBand (www.flickr.com/photos/43378406@N08/8575424187) build—even though people thought it was 'hiding' the mystery piece as frets, I thought it was a novel use of the piece, and it was fun building my MocAthalon team in "Ochre Jelly" style.

Favorite IB builds from anyone and why?

The most impressive IB "build" had to be Sean/Steph's Super Mario stop motion video. The concept alone was brilliant, but the effort that went into it was just insane.

Though my personal favorite has to be Bruce's Zoidberg. I'm a huge Futurama fan, and Zoidberg was my favorite character and that was just perfect.

What has been your favorite IB round to watch so far and why?

There have been so many great rounds, many involving my heroes... but I think I'll have to go back to one of the first rounds I followed from start to finish—which in my mind one of the best—Tyler vs. Bruce: some really truly inspired builds and creative use of such a little piece. I really loved how both of them used the pieces seamlessly, at times you'd really have to look to try to find them...

How important is Smack Talk?

I don't think it really impacts the actual outcome of the round, but it certainly makes things more interesting and fun for those watching. Going into my first round, I was prepared to smack talk with the best, even though I don't actually know Kahan and honestly felt a bit apprehensive slugging such an esteemed builder... It was fun at first until it became obvious that he wasn't able to compete and I just backed off and built...

In my second round against Andrew Lee I thought it was a fairly tame affair. I had actually met the guy at Brickcon 2012. I knew he was a cool dude—but his reputation preceded him. I was also well aware of the result of his previous Iron Builder match, so I was a bit hesitant to dive into too much smack talk lest have him and/or RoninLUG on my back the entire month, ha-ha.

Describe your IB experience(s). Was it stressful, what was your working technique, how did you prepare?

While I had two vastly different IB rounds and outcomes, they both felt very similar. My first round, against Kahan, I went in as a virtual unknown builder, with this being my chance to make it 'big'. So I was definitely motivated to do well, as well as there was a bit of wanting to prove that I should even be in this illustrious crowd. As the month progressed it became apparent that it was going to be one-sided and I ended up building against myself ...

In my second round, even though I was reigning Iron Builder—it felt very much the same, the new kid going up against Andrew coming out of retirement—who had a sizable crowd cheering him on.

So there was definitely a lot of pressure to do well and perform—and there was definitely no coasting involved in either rounds. It also didn't help that Andrew was queuing up his builds to counter any build I posted (yes I noticed... if you're going to be sneaky at least change your timestamps.) And this relentless onslaught did get to me at first—there were a few builds early on that I rushed too soon to try to capture that momentum, but in the end I fell into my own pace...

First thoughts when you opened up and revealed your secret ingredient part?

Against Kahan (light bley micro fig): "Yes! Bley... wait, there's only two connection points?!"

Against Andrew (Air Katana swords): [expletive] me.

Give a detailed account of your competition experience (please!).

For both my rounds I presorted as much as I could prior to the competition. Before my first round it was my first major sort since I started building seriously. I also dismantled a lot of my old MOCs to make parts for the round. When the round started I used to keep one of the seed pieces in my pocket so that during the day when I was away from my brick I could look at it and think about what I could build—I kept a list of ideas trying to plan out what to build first/how to build it and making sure I hit my mental list of 'must build' themes.

Since I spent so much time thinking, the build got done pretty quickly as I already knew what I was doing, and I might have pre-built some of the difficult parts in my head already.

Also due to the nature of doing Iron Builds—the building technique changes a bit—I started looking at it from a presentation perspective. Since only 1 or 2 pictures of each build was going to be taken, I fell into the style of "What's the fastest and easiest way to build to look good in those shots?" mentality. So back sides and things out of frame would be completely rainbow or flat out not even built.

Then there's the fun question of 'Am I going to keep this?'—some builds are scrapped right away, sometimes the seed pieces are just taken to be replaced later. So as I'm building there is a bit of thought to see if I want to keep it and take it to conventions.

But during Iron Builder is also the time you break out all your tricks—those ideas you've wanted to do, those techniques you've been saving or even those ultra-rare pieces you seldom use. Anything goes. I don't know about other IBs, but it's an expensive month as well, with rush BL orders to try to bulk up useful pieces. My first round I was lucky to get a fellow AFOL to lend me a bunch of colored microfigs to use. In my second round I borrowed a few pieces here and there, but I went out and bought a ton of technic bits. I wasn't sure how I would use it at the time, but I bought a bunch to try to figure out how to use those stupid Air Katanas.

So the month basically went into a cycle of: think about what you're going to build during day, build like crazy at night. People joke about lack of sleep, but I really didn't sleep much those months, and I don't think I'm the only one. :P

Would you compete again?

No. I was able to die honourably in the field of battle and I was blessed with not one, but two fights in the ring. There are many better builders out there that should get a chance to experience this particularly fun torture.

Plus it actually eats up a lot of your time—from sorting, to the actual competition, to the post IB letdown/burnout, it occupied about 2 months per round... do it twice in a year, that's 4 months of build time lost that you aren't able to work on promised Collab builds, etc.

So if I was asked again, I would gracefully decline...

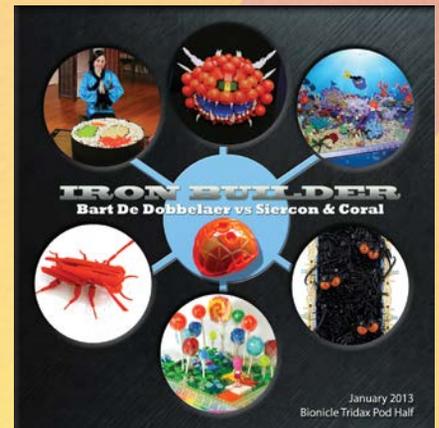
...unless I got to choose who I got to battle with.

Funniest/most memorable moment?

I think my most memorable moment will go down as the Iron Beer Stein (www.flickr.com/photos/43378406@N08/8595734627/)—I think it best represents the



One of VolumeX's entries.



Round 4 – IB Bart De Dobbelaer vs. Siercon and Coral - Bionicle Tridax Pod Half



One of Siercon and Coral's entries.



One of Bart De Dobbelaer's entries.



Round 5 – IB Si-MOCs vs. Onosendai2600 – Bionicle Air Katana



One of Onosendai's entries.



One of Si-MOCs' entries.



Round 6 – IB Bruceywan vs. CMaddison - Fez

competitive drive to try to win at any cost—including purposefully making a leaking cup to score stupidity points with the judges.

The original idea was just build the Stein, never intending to actually film me using it, as I knew it'd be a silly video... but after weighing my options, I decided I *had* to do it—thinking it would cement my victory, so I swallowed my pride and recorded the video...

Incidentally, the original build actually had a closed bottom, so it wouldn't have leaked. I made the changes *just for the video*. And since everyone asks... I will go on record and state that the video posted was take #3.

Second most memorable moment is probably the Alien probulator (www.flickr.com/photos/43378406@N08/8022291096/) which someone dared me to build.

Any tips or pointers you would share with future competitors?

Sort. Clear your calendar. Get a Starbucks fast pay card. Stock up on instant noodles.

What was your overall building/competing strategy?

I think the most obvious requirement for all builders is *sort*. So if you need to tile something, all your tiles are there. If you need some SNOT pieces, it's in this drawer full of them. People argue that sorting your bricks requires the same amount of time as it takes for you to find it in a large pile... and I think I agree with that. But in Iron Builder time is your most precious resource, so anything to give you more time is worth it.

For my first round I didn't really have much of a strategy outside of trying to hit a variety of build styles. In my second round I got a bit ambitious—competing in both Iron Builder and MocAthalon at the same time. This resulted in some great build inspirations, but at other times it really hurt the creative process. Though I'm not the first Iron Builder to attempt this particular March Madness—Tyler also did it in 2012, ironically with the exact same result...

I also made a decision early on in my second round to build 'normally'—I would try my best to do builds that could conceivably be something I would build normally. Ultimately I wanted people to see my IB as my builds, and not an IB build. So I tried to make sure that it wasn't necessarily a glaringly in-your-face usage of the piece—I wanted to ride that fine line between integral part of the build, but natural enough that it didn't look like I was building for sake of using the piece. This probably backfired on me, as this resulted in a lot of my builds being 1) *way* bigger than necessary (wasting time), and 2) having the seed parts not as prominent, and sometimes easy to miss.

Please feel free to share any other tales of note.

This is the story of how I was actually approached to compete in Iron Builder... It was at Brickworld 2012, where Guy approached me to do Iron Builder. Initially I was unwilling to partake, I didn't think I was good enough nor tough enough to compete, not to mention the fear of public humiliation at the hands of one of the mighty Iron Builders weighed heavily on me. But several libations and an impassioned "no Guts and no Glory" speech later, Guy convinced me otherwise.

And I'm glad he did.

Comments From IB :VolumeX: Season 3, Rounds 3 and 7

When did you first hear about Iron Builder and Builders Lounge?

I had seen the awesome group via Builders Lounge and watching people attack the seed part looked very challenging.

Who did you compete against in your battle(s) and how did it turn out?

I was brought into the arena to battle Pasukaru76 (who still owes me a trophy??). I won by the narrowest margins ever!

What was it like to compete in front of a full live audience?

It was pretty intense, we both came from different styles so it going to be a hard fought round with a part that was very strange in shape.

Favorite/most proud personal IB build(s)?

Bottle and headphones. The spray bottle I loved as it was a 1:1 scale; the headphones pushed me, I actually had a dream and I quickly did a small sketch and then processed to figure out the 1:1 scale dimensions.

Favorite IB builds from anyone and why?

Crazy Crane Capers by Luke Watkins Hutchinson seen on page 55, he stepped outside his comfort zone and pulled off an incredible build with the 'Trans-clear bubble helmets!' I was in awe at that MOC, I love that one.

What has been your favorite IB round to watch so far and why?

I think all of them, I can't single out one as they've all provided entertaining alternatives with the part at hand. Everybody who has taken part showed great results. So in my book they are all winners!

How important is Smack Talk?

I think you've got to chat up a little..well a lot, venting on somebody else's lawn is always a great way to relieve one's building stress and to send a message to your competitor that you are not going away quietly. LOL.

Describe your IB experience(s). Was it stressful, what was your working technique, how did you prepare?

Yes, stressful, you are stuck with the seed part and you now need to think of how it can be integrated into a complete build and I decided I'd try something very large on my first attempt and feel my design direction from there. My first build actually was the architect for many other elements. I wanted to keep them in yellow but stray from it on odd occasions. I landed up with about only two builds I never posted.

First thoughts when you opened up and revealed your secret ingredient part? Give a detailed account of your competition experience (please!).

The lucky packet which came all the way to the Southern tip of Africa was a celebration in itself. Trust me, things disappear here when you write 'gift' on a mailed package; others take it upon themselves to get a closer look. So I first jumped for joy and then I said, gosh, they want me to build 'what' with this? I looked at the previous installments of the contest, and to be honest, I think this was the first time they really threw us in the lion's den with a lemon. The seed part was going to be my new friend for around 31 days or till I gave it the boot. :)

Funniest/most memorable moment?

Taking Pasukaru76's (www.flickr.com/photos/67800098@N07/8290674476/) build and using it as a target in my own MOC was pretty funny, I thought that would rev his motor a bit. Also we built a lot of creations between the two of us and that must be a record of sorts. I think becoming the closest winner was awesome, knife-edge stuff.

Any tips or pointers you would share with future competitors?

Ensure your collection is ready for something as big as this, you'll need to think fast and build faster, so if your collection is all over the place you'll be wasting precious building time trying to find that part.

What was your overall building/competing strategy?

Well I could only build from my humble collection of less, also I've never ordered anything from Brinklink ever, so I'm pretty proud that everything you see me build is from parts I have, that puts a lot more pressure on me to deliver. Since the seed part was yellow, I'm thankful that is the colour I had a lot of so my direction was going to melt well into using the seed part. I studied my competitor's previous round and decided I'd throw different themes at him, you'll see I did space, real life items, fantasy, I tried offering a broad spectrum of builds.

Comments From IB Andrew Lee (Onosendai2600) Season 3, Rounds 5 and 9

When did you first hear about Iron Builder and Builders Lounge?

I was first invited to Builders Lounge after Brickcon '08. At that time Builders Lounge was a private invite-only forum supposedly based on a combination of building skill and being a good community member.

Who did you compete against in your battle(s) and how did it turn out?

Shortly after my joining Nannan Zhang announced the first Iron Builder contest. It was also at this time that I challenged him in an Iron Builder contest directly on both the private forum and publically through Flickr. We only built one model each with the 10-stud-wide *Millennium Falcon* dish as the seed part. We built our giant models and he modified his after the initial posting deadline and updated

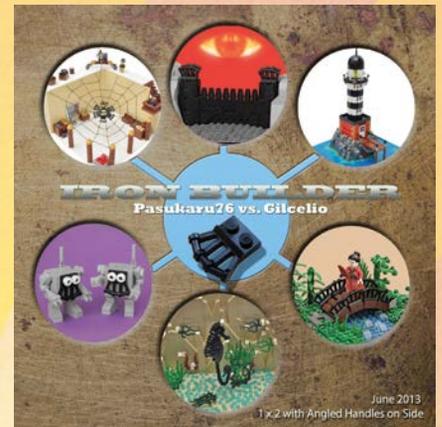
Round 6 – IB Bruceywan vs. CMaddison - Fez



One of CMaddison's entries.



One of Bruceywan's entries.



Round 7 – IB Pasukaru76 vs. Gilcelio Chagas -
1x2 with Angled Handles on Side



One of Gilcelio's entries.

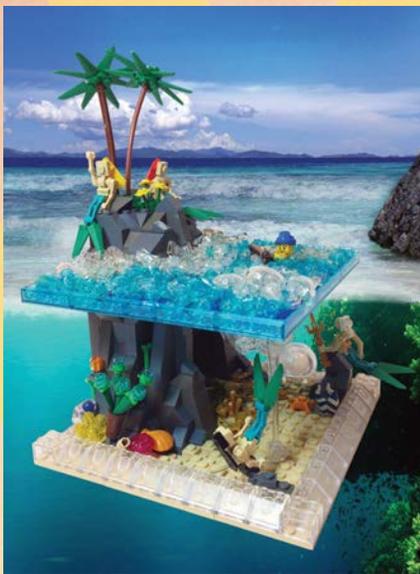
Round 7 – IB Pasukaru76 vs. Gilcelio Chagas – 1x2 with Angled Handles on Side



One of Pasukaru76's entries.



Round 8 - IB Siercon and Coral vs. The Brothers Falworth



One of Siercon and Coral's entries.

his photos. I then called him a cheater and drama ensued. Eventually the judges declared all parties losers—something about our conduct if I recall correctly.

The second time I competed in an Iron Builder contest was against the venerable Simon Liu (Si-MOCs). We each built 18 models over the course of 28 days. It was a breakneck speed and insanely challenging. It was also awesome. I won by a unanimous decision but truth be told it was probably by the skin of my teeth.

What was it like to compete in front of a full live audience?

I love it. I never realized how competitive of a person I really was until I was thrown in the arena. The first time was voluntary and I made quite the spectacle in the thunderdome. The second time I was recruited and knew to play to the crowd. Are you not entertained?

Favorite/most proud personal IB build(s)?

The sword of Kahless is pretty slick. However Solaris 7 still remains one of my favorite MOCs to this day and I'm particularly proud of the presentation and the story it told.

Favorite IB builds from anyone and why?

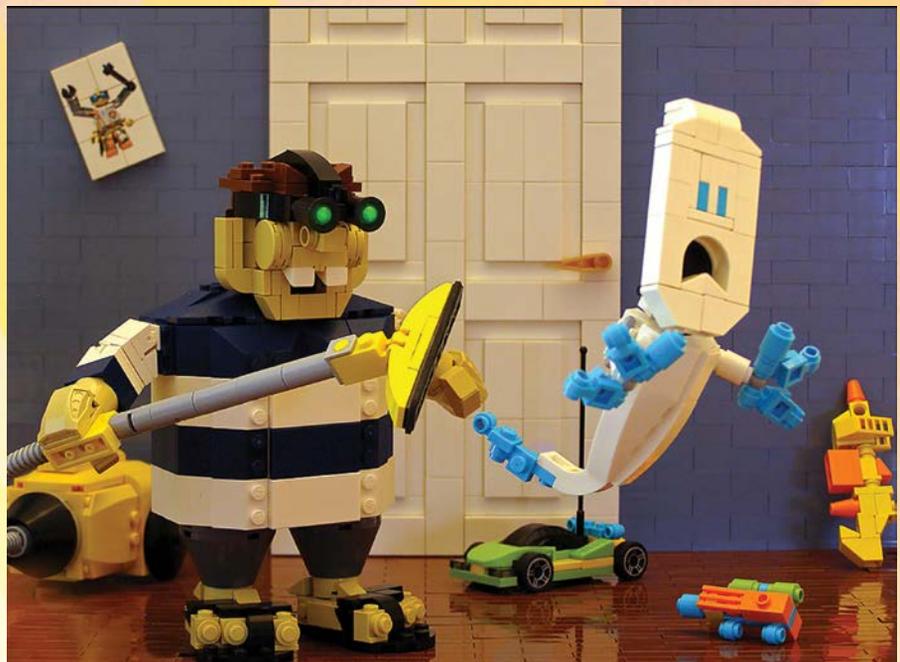
Any of Bruce's builds—they always seem to use the seed piece in some obvious yet great way. Siercon and Coral's Armageddon's Blade for sheer slickness and presentation. Si-MOCs' beer stein for the entertainment value.

What has been your favorite IB round to watch so far and why?

Siercon and Coral vs. Bart De Bobbler—the bar was seriously raised with this one.

How important is Smack Talk?

In my opinion it's super critical. Part of the contest is entertaining the crowd and smack talk is by far the best way to do this. It's even better if the builds can reflect the smack. Bruceywan vs. LEGOhaulic had some great back and forth which I tried to emulate in my round with Si-MOCs. I would love to have a fourth judging category added for cleverness/smack talk.



"It Sucks to be a Ghost," an entry of Legohaulic for Season 2, Round 9. Mystery part: 1x1 plate with Clip Light.

Describe your IB experience(s). Was it stressful, what was your working technique, how did you prepare?

My experiences were both very positive albeit very stressful. It's crazy challenging to put up that kind of building power in both volume and creativity and when your opponent's keeping the pressure on there's no chance to catch your breath. I don't want to give too many secrets away but my strategy for my latest challenge was to draw first blood and keep the pressure on until the showdown was over. I sorted for a couple of weeks before the contest and made some small acquisitions to be ready. I also practiced connecting bricks with only my mind, meditated on SNOT connections, and read every previous Iron Builder challenge.

First thoughts when you opened up and revealed your secret ingredient part?
"Curse you, Guy Himber!"

Would you compete again?
Heck yes.

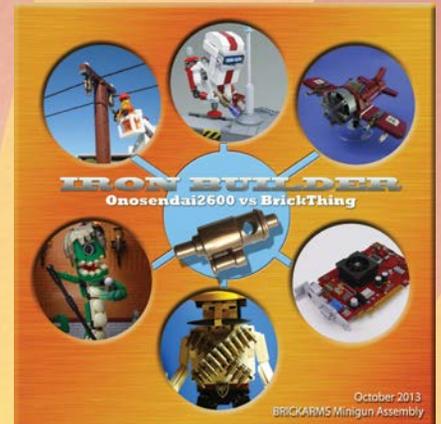
Funniest/most memorable moment?
So many to pick from... Watching Simon spill beer all over was awesome.

Any tips or pointers you would share with future competitors?
Make sure you (as well as your spouse, kids, family, and friends) understand that Iron Builder will consume all your time resources for a month.

What was your overall building/competing strategy?
Two builders enter, one builder leaves. Don't screw up. 



One of the Brothers Falworth's entries.



Round 9 - IB Onosendai2600 vs. BrickThing



BruceLowell.com

An entry by Bruceywan for Season 3, Round 2.
Mystery part: Trans-Clear Cylinder Hemisphere.



One of the Brickthing's entries.



You can find the Iron Builder Flickr gallery by going to <http://www.flickr.com/groups/2167827@N22/> or scanning this QR code!

Iron Builder Gallery

Starfighter Command



An entry by 2MuchCaffeine for Season 2, Round 2. Mystery part: Brick, Arch 1x3x2.



An entry by Aaron (Dayman) for Season 1, Round 10. Mystery part: Dome tops.



An entry by Siercon and Coral for Season 3, Round 4. Mystery Part: Bionicle Tridax Pod Half.



An entry by Olog for a round that never materialized in Season 1 The mystery part? An aircraft door, seen on the front bottom.



NIGHT AT THE VICTORIAN MUSEUM
BY V&A STEAMWORKS

Entries by V&A Steamworks for Season 1, Round 9 (above) with Mystery Part: Arch 1x6x3 1/3 Curved Top, and Season 2, Round 2 with Mystery Part: Brick, Arch 1x3x2 (below).



LEGO ORRERY
by V&A Steamworks



Entry by Bruceywan for Season 2, Round 9. Mystery Part: Modified 1x1 with Clip Light.



Entry by CMaddison for Season 3, Round 6. Mystery Part: Fez.



Entry by Karf for Season 2, Round 1. Mystery Part: Sand Green Robot Body.



Entry by Legohaulic for Season 2, Round 9. Mystery Part: Modified 1x1 with Clip Light.



Crazy Crane Capers!

By Derfel Cadarn

Entry by Derfel Cadarn for Season 3, Round 2. Mystery Part: Trans-Clear Cylinder Hemisphere.



Entry by onosendai2600 for Season 3, Round 5. Mystery Part: Bionicle Air Katana.

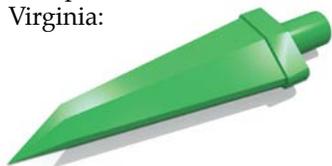
An Iron Builder Timeline

*Timeline
by Joe Meno*

*Entries by
Mark and Steve
Erickson and Sean
and Steph Mayo*

*Photography
provided
by the Ericksons
and Mayos*

The Iron Builder match for August 2013 was between, for the first time, two teams of builders: the Erickson brothers (known as the Brothers Falworth) and the Mayos, Sean and Steph, also known as Siercon and Coral. They were given the following as the seed part at Brickfair Virginia:



Over the next month, from August 15 to September 15, the teams built. And built. And built.

Here's a timeline of all the models that were built in that match, with comments and insights from the builders. At the end, there's a gallery with some closeup and different photos of some of the outstanding builds. Enjoy!

August 15

The Brothers Falworth (Mark and Steve Erickson)



The *Good Morning Monster* was a playful way for us to start off the competition. What a wake-up call! The minifig represents Sean, and the green spikes made really great claws!



We decided to continue the monster theme with *Duel in the Deep!* The figs represent ourselves, fighting the monster that is the Iron Builder. This time the spikes became flippers on the ocean beast!

August 16



We got nearly fifty Flickr comments about that pool of ketchup. Everyone thought this picture was of real food until they looked again! Hold the Mayo!

Siercon and Coral (Sean and Steph Mayo)



As the Ericksons and we both built flowers in a "teaser" speed build just before the actual round began, we wanted to quickly start the contest off with a build that used the idea in a more refined way.



Oscar! This MOC just fell together. It was one of our best builds that took the least amount of time. It started from wanting to create scales or skin for a dragon and morphed into fur.



One of our friends said to build a pineapple! At this point the rose, Oscar, and this MOC were all speed builds, as our strategy was to heavily invest our time into future builds for the last week. This piece was also an opportunity to honor outstanding AFOL Nannan Zhang.

August 17

The Adirondack Express



We wanted to use the green spikes in an architectural detail, thus the train bridge. And the mini-trees too!



We wanted to keep the audience and Sean and Steph guessing about what we would do next, so we tried new themes, styles, and techniques we had never attempted before. This Tribal Warrior is made on the same scale as the displays you see at LEGOLand!



We had built half a meal and the wine glass on the first day of the contest and were saving it for later; when we woke up in the morning to see their food and ketchup! But since they "got there first" we wanted to get this off our plate, and threw the rest of it together so we could post it after theirs.

August 18



Well...we just watched *Jurassic Park*...so a giant dino eye seemed the thing to do. Red snake pieces became veins and the green spikes form the iris.



After visiting the Statue of Liberty the month before Iron Builder, her ladyship's crown immediately inspired us to make a 150-stud high replica of the monument.

This was truly the most epic Iron Builder ever!

—Mark Erickson

August 19



Surprisingly, the green spike has many uses, one of being a palm-thatch roof for a secluded pirate hideaway. This build afforded Mark an opportunity to showcase his rockwork technique, just about his favorite thing to build.

August 20



Ancient history is easily portrayed in LEGO. So are tiny paintings.



August 21



As we continued our quest, our figurative selves moved to fighting mighty birds, some painted and some soaring toward us. This desert landscape was fun to build and it was nice to get back to minifig scale creation in a castle-ish theme.



Immediately after the piece reveal we ordered a large number of the seed part, to give ourselves the ability to build in quantity like Oscar and this grass! We are fans of "Phineas and Ferb" and used the piece for Ferb's hair as well.



We had built most of this mosaic "painting" and were saving it for the final stretch along with several other MOCs, since it helps to keep some major hits in reserve. They forced our hand early with their paintbrushes, though!



We were starting to get paranoid that they would continue posting various ideas we had been working on and were saving! This was one of the concepts that we thought they could potentially come up with. We had so much fun working with this color scheme.

August 22



The Giant Jumping Shoe Spider was a retort to the sneakers of our competitors. We wanted to remind Sean and Steph that there's danger in every corner, inside every nook and cranny, and lurking in every shoe. Here we were experimenting with 'fuzzy' effects, using lever pieces.

August 23



LEGO is once again a victim of historical authenticity. We are huge fans of Greek and Roman history. This helmet won't fit a person but we got kudos for a cool crest.



The green spike decided what we built in this round. One of our friends suggested Stegosaurus...so much cuter than that freaky eyeball!

August 24



Being that the part is green it naturally leans towards foliage for us...this build was a graceful scene of a serene kelp forest. It looks simple but is really quite intricate.



It had only been 7 days. As IB champion defenders we knew that the last two weeks are the hardest. We chose to continue working on future builds in the background while posting little fun fillers like Yoda.



August 25



It was time to build in SPACE. This epic little spacecraft fit the bill! Once again, Sean and Steph followed in our footsteps and also did a spaceship.

August 26



Convincing functionality combined with gaudy medieval architecture...and you get a German Cuckoo clock. Priceless.

August 27



This build is heavily inspired by the *Calvin and Hobbes* "Spaceman Spiff" scenes, *Star Trek*, and all the other good sci-fi stuff out there. Again we branched out into a totally new theme and entered a new dimension. Our sigfigs managed to jump from the ancient age to the 23rd century! Zounds!

August 28



Who doesn't love a nice day at the beach? While desperately scrambling for more ideas, we slapped together a few simple starfish; the technique later was "borrowed" by some seaweedy merpeople who shall remain nameless... :-)

Video link:

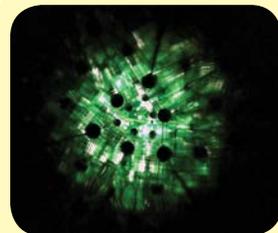
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/mark-of-falworth/9601673941/in/photostream/>



It's typically a very bad idea to do other LEGO contests in the midst of IB. However, since we had already signed up for it, this was built for our leg of the Star Fighter Telephone Game. The timing of that game coincided with putting some Sci-Fi into our IB battle.



At this point they had posted food, paintbrushes, and a spaceship just before ours! This was frustrating as some of those MOCs had been around for days before posting. So we threw this together purely to claim the idea of arrowheads. As we were most of the way through building our working compound bow, we particularly didn't want them to steal this concept!



One thing we learned from our last Iron Builder was to capitalize on builds that come together easily. What you spend the most time building may not always have the greatest effect in a seed part duel. This kaleidoscope was an example of buying time to build other things while coasting on something easy and quickly made.

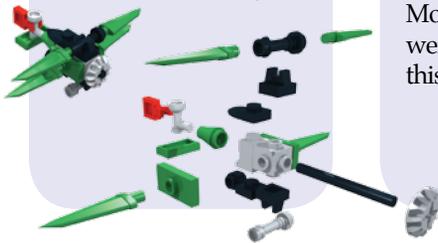
Video link:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/legocy/9611766641/>

August 29



Soaring from the clouds, the mini fighter planes of WWI enter the ever escalating dogfight of Iron Builder! A small but effective addition to the ever-growing stack of builds we churned out daily.



August 30



Doesn't this Venus Fly-Trap look vicious? We doubled up and used the spike for both teeth *and* a plant in this build. Monsters and plants were sort of the theme of this "Green" build.

August 31



Meet CHARL-Z, the "Conventional Hovering Artificial Reconnaissance Liason, Z-class," Here we were broadening our scope, for this was one of our first robot creations.

September 1



We have a big garden at our house, so it inspired us to build a replica of it for Iron Builder. The lush and vibrant veggies add a colorful vibe to this homey scene.



It was time for some heavier hits. One of our favorite things is to include multiple uses of the seed part in one build, which we did with this car dashboard. Also, Mark and Stephen posted a video of them sorting LEGO in the car, preparing to battle us! We took a screen shot, put them in our rearview mirror, and it brought some extra fun to the build.



Somewhere around this time we were watching some amazing slow-motion videos online and figured it would be fun to make a watermelon being shot and exploding. We also decided that we could post something smaller and keep plugging away on larger, more time consuming builds.

September 2



Again inspired by our favorite sci-fi classics, and again far out of our castlely comfort zone, we presented a Death Ray Zorcher, set from "Stun" to "Medium Well."

September 3



We hardly had time to use these razors and combs during this Iron Builder event! We stayed pretty busy making something every day. Building lifelike objects to scale is not something we usually do, so this provided a great building challenge.

September 4



This time our minifigs survived the apocalypse while slumming it in a sewer full of shady characters and shadier corners full of sludge and vermin! Definitely not our usual theme, but an effective build, nonetheless. The seed part made a convincing ripple effect in a river of green slime.

September 5



From apocalypse to the glories of the age of steam did our characters go! This hot-air steamship sailed against Sean and Steph's skylands. In this round of Iron Builder, we sought to prove that we could build *anything*... out of *anything*! :)



Micro Castle is probably one of our favorite categories to build in. More importantly, it is our easiest. Even in contests like IB that play towards variety it's nice to do a few genres we love and get a bit of a break from time to time. We used the piece as flags, tower roofs, landscaping, and oars on the ship in the harbor!



We knew both parties were preparing for the end game at this point. By using the piece in multiple easy ways here such as spines and ears we were able to include an interactive video while still working on other MOCs. This build features Skylanders and their "Portal of Power."

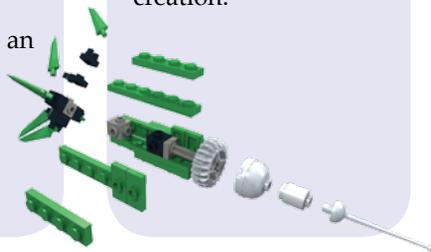
Video link:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/legocy/9681759410/>

September 6



Again proving a point, (pardon the pun!) we made these sharp little darts to throw at a poster of our competitors... but decided it would be lowbrow. The seed part made an interesting frill design—the point was actually a musketeer sword!



September 7



We come from a long line of fly-fishermen who explored the streams of the Adirondacks, and the green spike was a natural for the tiny lures in this creation.

September 9



Our minifig characters finish their fantastic journey at their humble abode... and invited their worthy opponents to a grand feast in the great hall. This was mostly Mark's work, as Steven built many of the smaller scenes during the last weeks while Mark crafted the castle.

September 11



In every Iron Builder, it is customary to have a giant weapon somewhere... we rose to the challenge with this life-size Sword of the Brotherhood.

Video link:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/mark-of-falworth/9728205560/in/photostream/>

Working Drawbridge:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/mark-of-falworth/9728205560/in/photostream/>



We saw an opportunity to build mermaids' tail fins with the piece, and they fit the scale of our palm trees as well. This multi-dimensional MOC was fun to dream up and build!



So we woke up this day to find that our non-LEGO builder and awesome friend Josh (who'd spent the night at our house) had randomly built a table scrap of a poor little minifig pinned up against a wall. It was hilarious, and gave us a short break to turn the idea into a full MOC with a knife that "flies" across the hall.



Video link:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/legocy/9694228396/>



The Viper Compound Crossbow was built before our 'Green Arrow', and was why we wanted to claim arrowheads as an idea. We then waited for a 1:1 scale weapon from the Ericksons, as everyone seems to build one during IB. Once they did, we were able to respond with our own that was fully functional, and a video of us shooting it!

Video link:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/legocy/9725253716/>



This was the final stretch and we had two more MOCs that took the entire month to build. Sometimes the last few days of Iron Builder show how much time the competitor was able to chip away at grande finales during the first several weeks. We were finally in a place where we had started posting our saved MOCs. This terrarium and the working flamethrower mech were two of our heavy hitters.

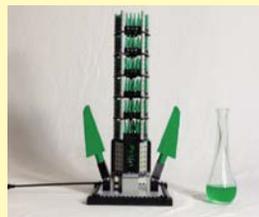
This all started because Sean was so sick of IB that he built a random red-eyed tree frog. That, combined with a technique for building giant ferns, left us needing to build the entire environment! We made details like the flowers, grass, twigs, and chameleon. This build was filled with detail and had to be water tight for the working waterfall. It was a huge relief to finish as it truly took us three weeks.

Video link:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/legocy/9735045326/>



You can find Sean and Steph's Flickr gallery by going to <http://www.flickr.com/photos/legocy/> or scanning this QR code!



Mixing science with LEGO is fun! Why not use the seed piece to create an actual green fire tornado with a spinning vortex?

Video link:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/legocy/9732193824/>



The *Doomsday* was also an entry for Shiptember, a contest that requires a spaceship that is 100 studs long or more... roughly three feet! This freaky alien ship was our final thrust against the daring duo opposite us, and the writhing limbs on this spacecraft were ready to cripple the competition.



You can find Mark Erickson's Flickr gallery by going to www.flickr.com/photos/mark-of-falworth/ or scanning this QR code!



You can find Steven Erickson's Flickr gallery by going to www.flickr.com/photos/76437548@N04/ or scanning this QR code!



In the history of Iron Builder, most people post a grand final MOC. This time we wanted to try something different. We posted twelve medium MOCs on the last day, ending with one of our most difficult builds.

Video link:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/legocy/9754971536/>

After over 60 creations done by both teams, a winner had to be chosen. Judged by fellow LEGO builders Chris Giddens, Bruce Lowell, and Paul Vermeesch, the victor in this buildoff was Siercon and Coral. As with Iron Builder rules, the Brothers Falworth built a trophy, but it had a secret chamber...

Video link:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/legocy/9754380302/>



Some final remarks from the competitors:

Brothers Falworth

When the round first began, we were named by the organizers of the contest as “castle builders” with “Lack of cross-theme experience” ... Challenged by these words, we set out to prove to the LEGO universe that we were capable of creating anything we desired no matter what scale, theme, or dimension. They say imitation is the highest form of flattery... and we were certainly flattered several times... :) However, it was an incredible honor to battle against very awesome, experienced builders whom we have the distinct pleasure of calling our friends. It was a unique experience getting out of our comfort zone, and even more unique to be the underdogs! But we hardly mind the loss, for it is the journey that matters, not the destination. God Bless you both!

Thanks for the adventure!

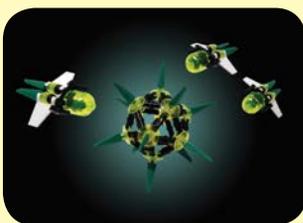
Mark and Steven Erickson ~ The Brothers Falworth

Siercon & Coral

We knew going into this round, that it would be brutal. Mark and Steven are both great builders and love putting out lots of MOCs at an incredible rate. Though they came into this contest as primarily castle builders, we knew they would rise to the challenge and be truly excellent opponents. This was an epic contest, not just in build quality and quantity but also in the sportsmanship and friendship built among us and the brothers as well as the online LEGO community as a whole. Many people ask what is Iron Builder, what is a good strategy, or how do I get ready for this particular contest. The truth is that over the last year alone, each battle has been uniquely different, many of which change future rounds. Regardless, it is always a treasured experience... after it's over, and you can take a long desired breather.

Well done, Mark and Steven!

Siercon and Coral 



This mech was our final one in the series and the contest, coupled with a video showing it shooting an actual working flamethrower. We followed all these mechs with a stop motion video of all twelve, combined with voices of each character in a video game-esque selection screen!

Video link:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/legocy/9754380302/>

GARBAGE!



Who doesn't love Oscar the Grouch? And with a little bit of a MEME thrown in there, he was a fun way of implementing "trash talk" (literally!) into the contest. We used three hundred of the seed parts in this MOC, with a LEGO card for the soda can.



Phineas and Ferb is one of our favorite cartoons. We don't have kids yet, but we're still young enough at heart to sit and watch it without 'em! Sometimes you can find us building LEGOs on the floor with *Phineas and Ferb* playing in the background. We made sure the MOC included both Perry the Platypus and the cool kids inventing their crazy gadgets.

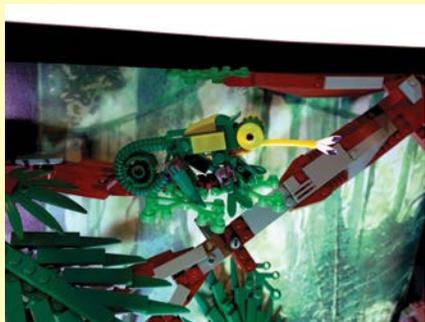
Building several MOCs for this contest either in Forced Perspective or with loose connections really helped save us time in the long run. This build plays only to the frame of the camera to try and gain the effect of a full scene with a single screen. So, though the display as a whole wasn't transportable, little bits like Perry were able to stay intact. At the end of the day, it was really a fun build, a blast to do, and another day of Iron Builder behind us.

August 21

At BrickFair we had the honor of meeting Schneider Cheung: (www.flickr.com/photos/schfio). He is a master of sculpture and has, as one of his builds, created a sweet pair of sneakers. We love them and thought that shoelaces would be a perfect, yet unusual application for the green spike piece. The base, or box lid, is created with mosaic lettering on the front using trans green pieces which are lit from the inside of the base.



The inscription reads “Coral’s Kicks,” as they are tiny shoes—much more likely Steph’s feet than Sean’s! Coral is Steph’s name online, as you can see in our username “Siercon and Coral.” Working with the green, white, and black color scheme was fun for designing these Chucks.



This was a build we started on right at the beginning and were working on until the end of the competition. The difficulty of the creation was that it was actually a water fountain. It had a working waterfall flowing down the rocks into the pool below. The MOC starts upside-down at the bottom with a flipped Belville baseplate serving as our watertight pool. As you travel up the model, we gradually shift from studs upside-down to rightside-up to achieve various rock work and texture. Since this Iron Builder was such a fast paced match, we knew we wanted to save builds that took longer than a day to build. As a MOC a day seemed to be the pace, we wanted to have several builds saved for the end that simply couldn't have been executed well unless we'd planned them from the beginning.

We love building MOCs with life. In the above you can find a chameleon, a fly, three tree frogs, a turtle, lots of various plant life, and running water! The picture tacked to the back of the terrarium is taken directly from a LEGO Chima poster.



	<p>Red-eyed Tree Frog (<i>Agalyptis Callidryas</i>)</p> <p>Diet: Carnivore Average life span in the wild: 5 years Size: 1.5 to 2.5 inches -Lives in the Central American rainforest -Non-ambiguous, must blend into it's environment -Flashes it's markings at predators -Spends the majority of it's life in trees</p>		<p>Eastern Gray Tree Frog (<i>Hyla versicolor</i>)</p> <p>Diet: Carnivore Average life span in the wild: 8 years Size: 1.3 to 2.4 inches -Lives in the Forests and swamps of Eastern Co -Central United States and Canada -Camouflage ability, changes color to match the environment</p>
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On the final day everyone was expecting the clash of two enormous, epic MOCs. As the "Shiptember" contest by Si-MOCs (www.flickr.com/photos/si-mocs) was going on, many people were hoping to see two colossal ships from each opponent duking it out. We knew this, and wanted to do something different and unexpected. Early on in the contest we had the idea of contacting some of our online LEGO friends (many of whom are famous builders) and asking them to record voice clips of various lines that would fit into a versus style video game. From that point on we kept chipping away at building characters that matched up with each person's voice and personality. We weren't able to make a huge battle sequence, but it was a blast bringing each character to life in a video game "selection screen." The stop motion video featured each person saying their lines. Also, at this point in the competition one of the lingering questions was "quantity vs. quality." The Erickson brothers had simply posted more builds than we had. So instead of ending with a single entry, we thought it would be fun to wait till the end and still match their number of 32 builds in 1 month. On the final day we posted 12 builds, one every hour at the end of the competition and ending with the stop-motion video. 



Retinace as *Tzarach Wyvern*.



Blake Baer as *Baerndread*.



Littlehaulic as *Emerald Dagger*.



Bermudafreze as *Fuchikoma-72*.



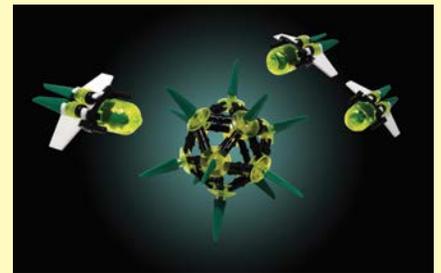
Mark and Steven Erickson as *Erick, son of Aldiur*



Chris Malloy as *Sergeant Malloy*.



The Firethorn.



Simon Liu as Frog Pod Decadron Mine



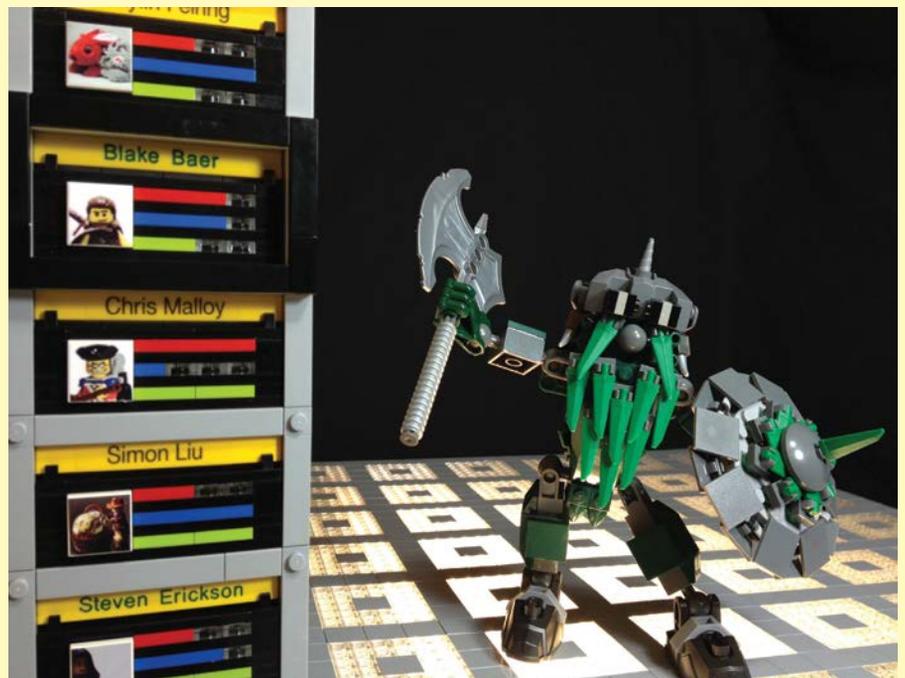
cmaddison as Dino-Might!



Legohaulic as Camo Sniper.



Caylin as Emerald Reaper.



Frame from stop-motion video.

August 15

At this point, Siercon and Coral had only built one creation, and we were hoping to gain an edge by building a second creation for the first day. Steven was initially trying to build a dragon head, but we eventually decided a sea-monster was a more unique idea.

Duel in the Deep features two minifigs built in the likeness of ourselves. This is a theme we kept throughout most of the Iron Builder... time-traveling, of course! The third figure is sort of a personal "Easter Egg" symbol... his name is Yursuff the Used Camel Dealer. He is featured subtly in many of our creations.

The sea monster is built in four different sections, not including the head. The segments were independently created and attached in a snake-like manner. The same technique applied to the piece of him 'grappling' the boat.

Mark designed the crashing boat and splashy water scene, while Steven labored on the beast itself.

We had trouble choosing which picture to feature as the "main" photo on Flickr, as we loved them all.

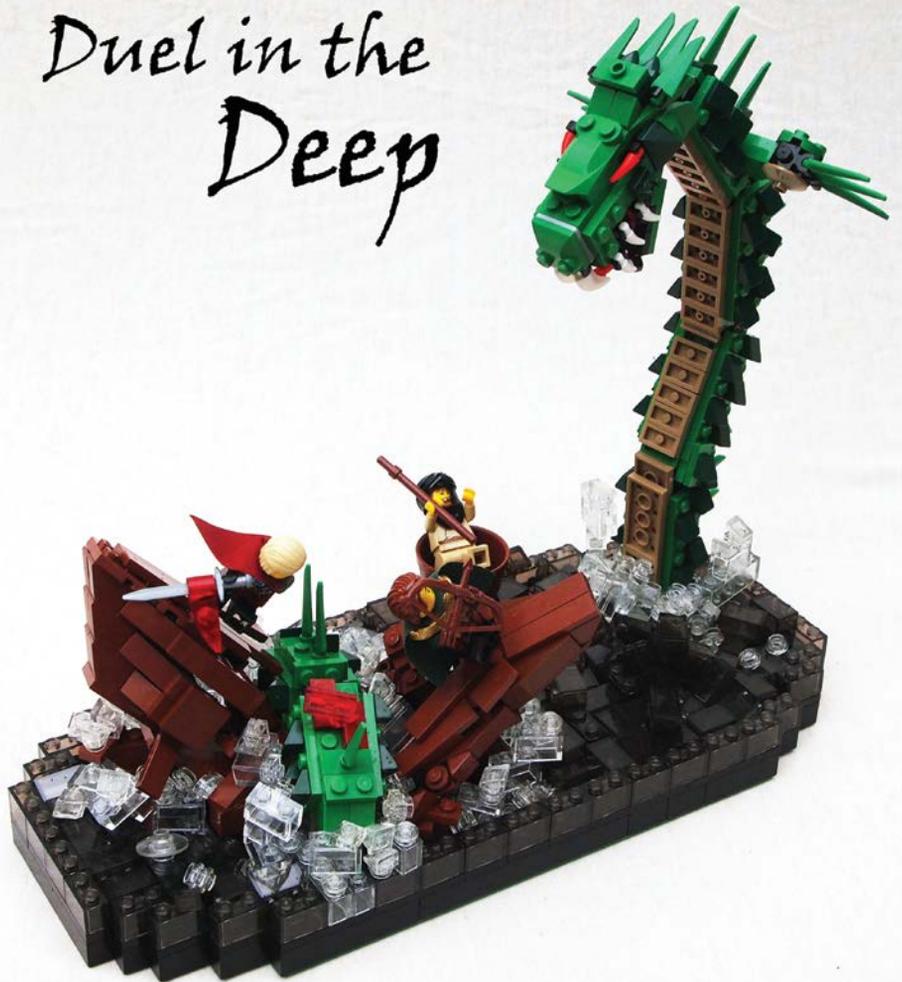
Unfortunately, as soon as we were done photographing, the entire scene collapsed, promptly ending any further attempt at photo re-shoots!



The head was probably our favorite part of this creation! The jaw was immensely flexible, as shown in the photo. Wish we'd had more time to play with this guy and pose him! We were also really happy with the flippers and the undersides of his wrists, which are actually mushroom top pieces!

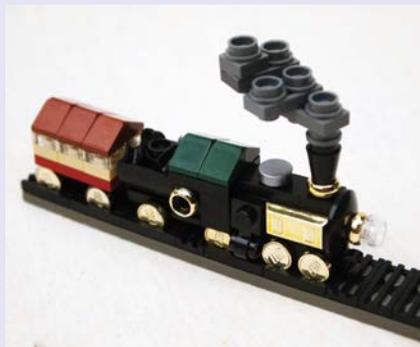
We nearly ran out of dark green 1x1 slopes on the sides of the serpent, but thankfully our stash held out.

Duel in the Deep



August 16

The Adirondack Express



This build was a personal favorite of ours. Mark once again had the audience gaping at his glorious boulders and mountains, while Steven's train was so impressive in its chrome-gold goodness, that it made an appearance on the very prestigious LEGO Car Blog, even though it isn't a car!

We strove to use the seed part in uses besides plants, though green can be a tricky color to work with. In this case we used it in steel support structures for the micro-scale train bridge.

We got comments about this train having supernatural powers, because though it passes through two mountains, it does not appear on either end! All we can say is that this inexplicable phenomenon has baffled scientists in the Adirondack mountains for generations... ;)

August 21



This elaborate creature was also intended to be a dragon that we had planned to construct, but it also eluded the classic design... becoming far more birdlike in appearance. We threw up our hands and abandoned the idea of the dragon in favor of a "Tyrfing"—a giant bird-like beast that stalks the Mansaa deserts in search of a succulent morsel to munch in the form of our over-brave heroes.

We spared it the indignity of showing its untimely end as Steven sent a well-timed shot into its heart from his minifig bow.

We had purchased many parts at Brick-Fair Virginia, quite a few of which were earth orange slopes. They helped create the beautiful texture of this extraordinary desert landscape. It highlighted the brilliant bright blue-green colors of the Tyrfing.

This was posted shortly after Sean and Steph's parrot mosaic... it seemed ironic that our heroes were fighting their own form of flying creature! ;)

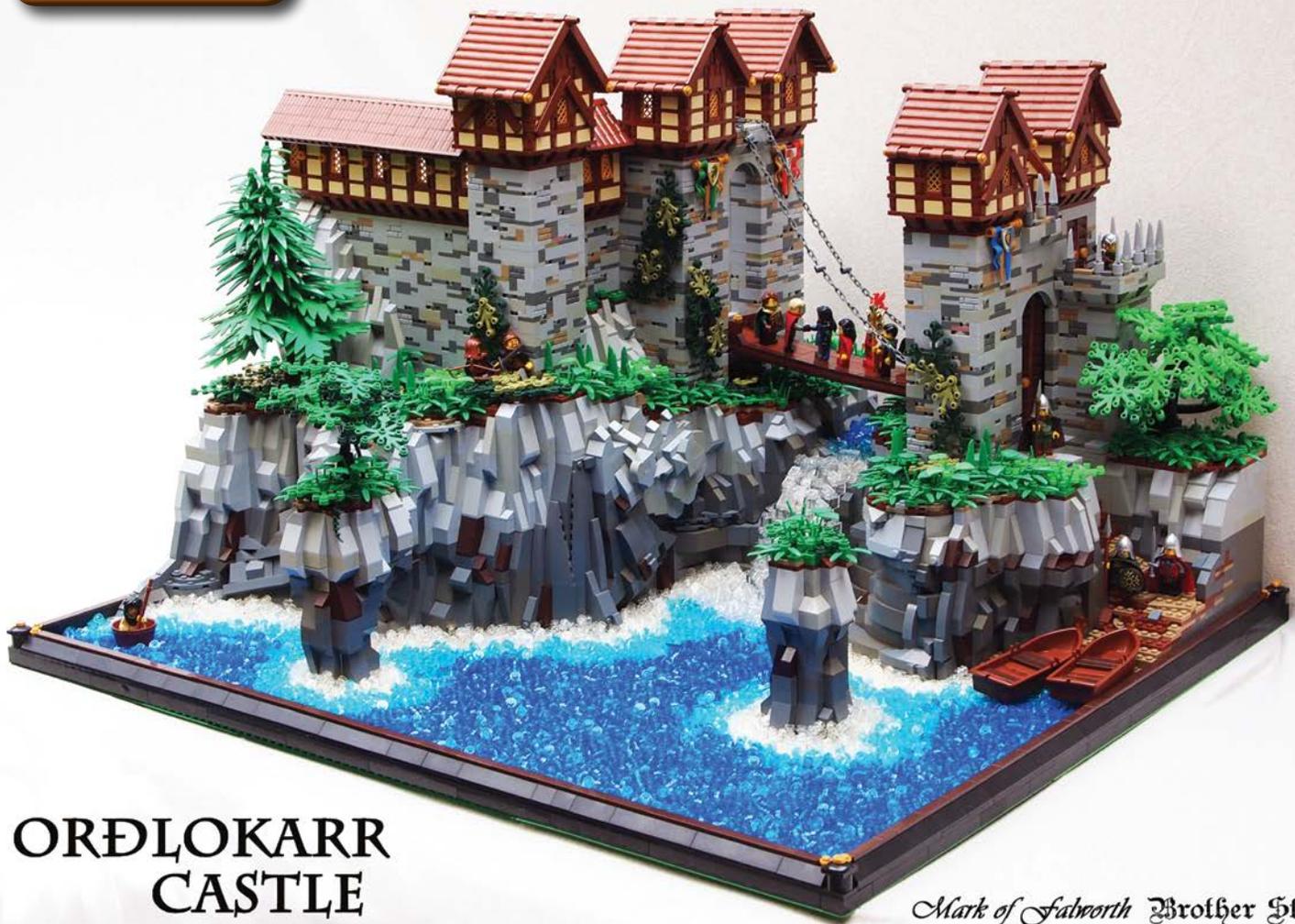


If we were both born in the days of sail, there is little doubt in our minds that we'd end up as buccaneers! Besides Castle, Pirates is probably our next-favorite theme. The seed part made a far better roof than we had at first expected, and that became the driving point of this build. Yursuff makes another appearance in his small round tub, and our minifig selves gaze across the ocean.

At first, we thought about including an entire wrecked ship on top of this green-covered piece of rock, but pressed for time, we figured a watchtower and an embedded cliffside shack would suffice.

This ended up being one of the more popular builds of this round. Amazingly, it actually only took 2 days to build! Though we already had reputations as quick builders, we were able to sharpen our skills at speed-building all the more during this entire grueling contest.

At this point in the contest, we definitely had the advantage over Sean and Steph—many commenters claimed that we would win. We'd made three unanswered builds and had the upper hand. In the end, the Mayos came out with the victory, but we'd like to think that we made 'em work for it! :)



ORÐLOKARR CASTLE

Mark of Falworth Brother Steven

During the final stretch, Steven held most of the weight for the Falworth team, building day-by-day as Mark had a very busy work schedule during the latter half of the month, sometimes with 16-hour workdays. But between getting up and falling in bed, for two weeks Mark slowly pecked away at this monolith of a Castle.

This is the largest LEGO creation ever made by the Erickson brothers, measuring more than 100 studs long and weighing roughly twenty pounds; we have no idea many parts it contains! But we know it took all our gray pieces and our transparent blue and white studs.

This was also made for the Castle Anniversary contest on Rebrick.com. Once again, our minifig characters

make an appearance as the residents of this gigantic fortress—welcoming the opposition, minifig medieval-style copies of Sean and Steph, into the castle, along with many minifig versions of prestigious people in the Iron Builder circle. We wanted to show that there was no ill feeling whatsoever towards our good friends the Mayos, and by “inviting them to dinner”, we hoped to bring out the most chivalrous side in all of us. We needed it after the exhaustive battle we’d just fought!

The drawbridge in this castle is operated by a Power Functions LEGO element. Its power was far too strong for its easy task. We would recommend watching the video to see the hilarious results of the minifigs being roughly catapulted inside! We had to

adjust it until it closed gently!

The walls are made with a blend of small plates and tiles and profile bricks, giving it a fantastically detailed brickwork effect. It contrasts starkly with the rugged rocks below.

From a distance, this castle appears to have little to do with the Iron Builder round. The seed parts seem to disappear, although we used every single one in our possession. 64 green spikes hide among this massive pile of plastic!

(Can you see Yursuff?) :)

We are proud to say that this is the most viewed picture to this date in this Iron Builder round and also in any Iron Builder round ever, with over 19,000 views!—very closely followed by Sean and Steph’s terrarium.



Mark's favorite feature about this build was the cascading towers and the historically accurate, separate gatehouse. The waterfall was initially going to be more prominent, but got a bit lost in the grandeur of the other aspects.

Steven really liked the way that even though we were in a very neck-and-neck, ruthless competition, we still kept a lot of respect for our competitors by cordially inviting them into our medieval world of LEGO.

By the way, Mark only uses slopes in his rockwork to achieve a highly organic feel with no robotic or blocky effect, and how color splashes within realistic layers can be appealing to the eye instead of a solid, bland, neutral color.

Many different foliage pieces were used around the base and up the walls of this castle; the entire water effect is created using thousands of 1x1 round studs in trans-clear, trans-blue, and trans-aqua to give it a glorious shimmering look when photographed.

We loved getting comments on our builds throughout this contest. It gave us the inspiration and the energy to keep going on this epic building streak despite the exhausting round.

Though this build wasn't the very last grand finale of ours, (that honor went to the Doomsday) it was a high note near the end of this legendary sparring match.

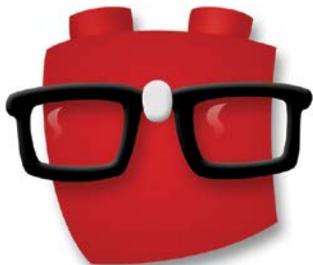
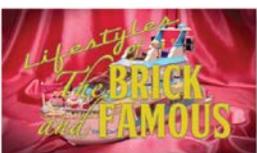
We're not the only ones who thought this was an amazing Iron Builder round! Here is a quote from one of our judges, a three-time Iron Builder champ himself:

"I think it's safe to say that this has been the Iron Builder to remember. There are LEGO contests, and there's the king of LEGO contests, and there are the kings of the king of LEGO contests, battling it out over such an unassuming piece as the green spike... even though there can only be one king between the kings of LEGO contests, I can safely crown the four of you with the laurels of the most epic LEGO face-off on the Internet. I mean that. Let the 64 builds speak for themselves. Well done, guys. Seriously."

Thanks for reading! God bless! 

Community Ads

seriously nerdy.

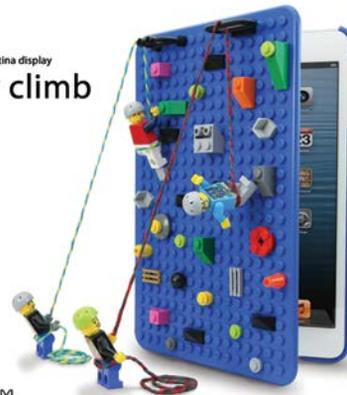


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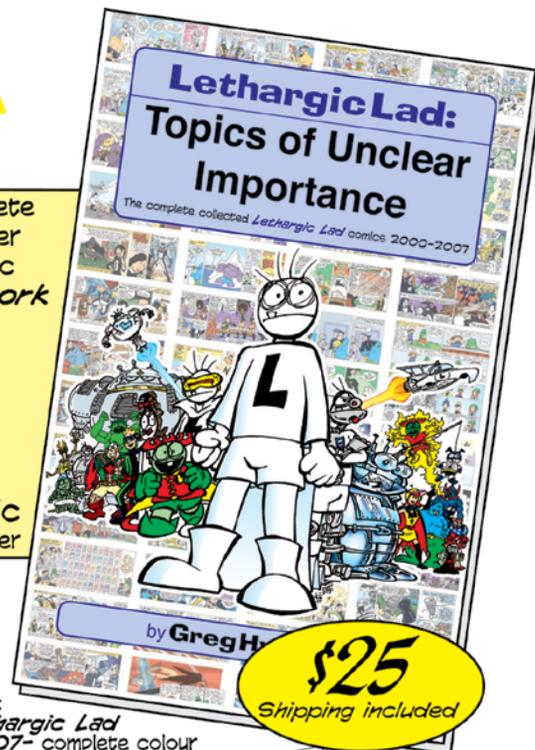
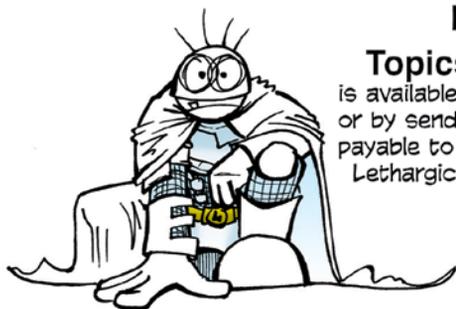
-John Kovalic
Dork Tower

Lethargic Lad:

Topics of Unclear Importance

is available exclusively at www.lethargiclad.com or by sending check or money order made payable to "Greg Hyland" to:

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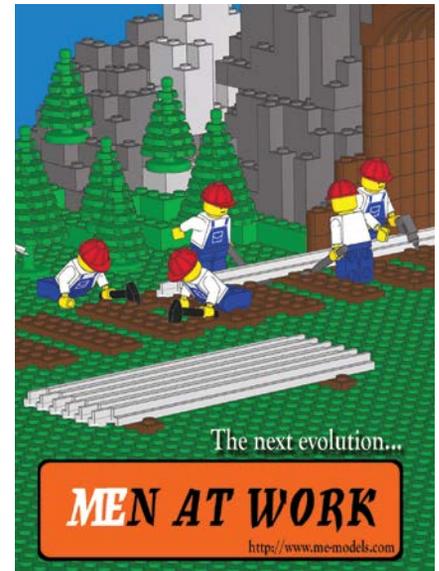


They're not my kids.

This is the FIRST® LEGO League team I advised last year at an elementary school where I live. By advise, I was the guy they asked about how to build a Mindstorms robot initially, then as time went on, how to build other components. I was their LEGO geek, or as I was called, LEGO Joe.

This year, the team aged out to a middle school, and after some time I was called back in by the kids to help out again. And this year, like last year, the team is going to the State FLL competition in January, maybe around the time this magazine goes out. Last year, they were the Burning Bricks, and this year they are the LEGO Lightning. I hope they do well and wish them good luck!

And to all the readers, see you next issue! 

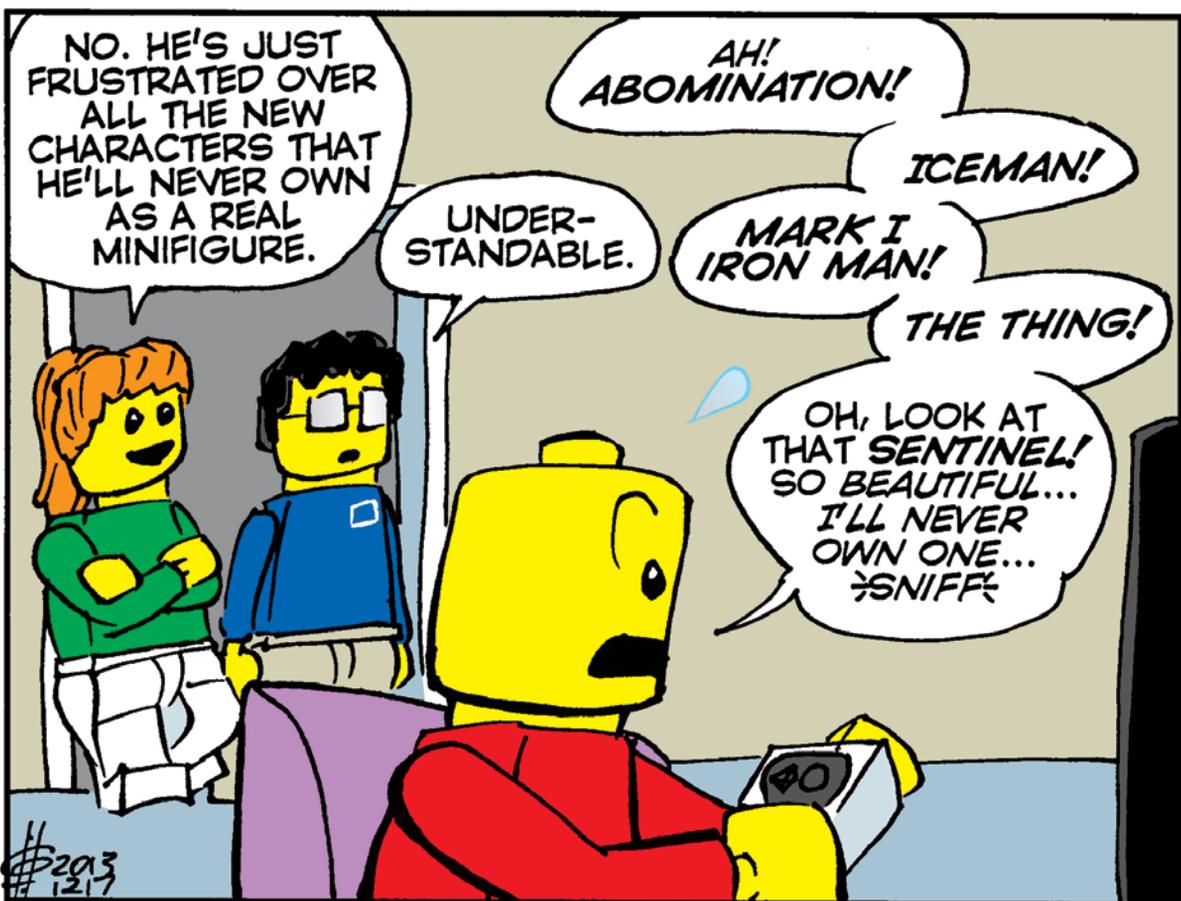


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The ultimate resource for LEGO enthusiasts of all ages, showcasing events, people, and models! FULL-COLOR #1 features an interview with Certified LEGO Professional NATHAN SAWAYA, car designs by STEPHAN SANDER, step-by-step building instructions and techniques for all skill levels, new set reviews, on-the-scene reports from LEGO community events, and other surprises!

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This FULL-COLOR issue spotlights blockbuster summer movies, LEGO style! Go behind the scenes for new sets for INDIANA JONES, and see new models, including a MINI FLYING WING and a LEGO CITY, a lifelike IRON MAN, plus how to CUSTOMIZE MINIFIGURES, BUILDING INSTRUCTIONS, a tour of the ONLINE LEGO FACTORY, and lots more!

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BRICKJOURNAL #3

Event Reports from BRICKWORLD, FIRST LEGO LEAGUE WORLD FESTIVAL and PIECE OF PEACE (Japan), spotlight on our cover model builder BRYCE MCGLONE, behind the scenes of LEGO BATMAN, LEGO at COMIC-CON INTERNATIONAL, FIRST LEGO LEAGUE WORLD FESTIVAL, plus STEP-BY-STEP BUILDING INSTRUCTIONS, TECHNIQUES, and more!

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BRICKJOURNAL #4

Interviews with LEGO BUILDERS including cover model builder ARTHUR GUGICK, event reports from BRICKFAIR and others, touring the LEGO IDEA HOUSE, plus STEP-BY-STEP BUILDING INSTRUCTIONS and TECHNIQUES for all skill levels, NEW SET REVIEWS, and an extensive report on constructing the Chinese Olympic Village in LEGO!

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BRICKJOURNAL #5

Event report on the MINDSTORMS 10th ANNIVERSARY at LEGO HEADQUARTERS, Pixar's ANGUS MACLANE on LEGO in film-making, a glimpse at the LEGO Group's past with the DIRECTOR OF LEGO'S IDEA HOUSE, event reports, a look at how SEAN KENNEY's LEGO creations ended up on NBC'S 30 ROCK television show, instructions and spotlights on builders, and more!

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BRICKJOURNAL #6

Spotlight on CLASSIC SPACE SETS and a look at new ones, BRANDON GRIFFITH shows his STAR TREK MODELS, LEGO set designers discuss their work creating the SPACE POLICE with PIRATE SETS, POWER FUNCTIONS TRAIN DEVELOPMENT, the WORLD'S TALLEST LEGO TOWER, MINI-FIGURE CUSTOMIZATION, plus coverage of BRICKFEST 2009 and more!

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BRICKJOURNAL #7

Focuses on the new LEGO ARCHITECTURE line, with a look at the new sets designed by ADAM REED TUCKER, plus interviews with other architectural builders, including SPENCER REZKALLA. Also, behind the scenes on the creation of POWER MINERS and the GRAND CAROUSEL, a LEGO BATTLESHIP over 20 feet long, reports from LEGO events worldwide, and more!

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BRICKJOURNAL #8

We go to the Middle Ages, with a look at the LEGO Group's CASTLE LINE, featuring an interview with the designer behind the first LEGO castle set, the YELLOW CASTLE. Also: we spotlight builders that have created their own large-scale version of the castle, and interview other castle builders, plus a report on BRICKWORLD in Chicago, and still more instructions and building tips!

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BRICKJOURNAL #9

BrickJournal looks at LEGO® DISNEY SETS, with features on the Disney LEGO sets of the past (MICKEY and MINNIE) and present (TOY STORY and PRINCE OF PERSIA)! We also present Disney models built by LEGO fans, and a look at the newest Master Build model at WALT DISNEY WORLD, plus articles and instructions on building and customization, and more!

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BRICKJOURNAL #10

BrickJournal goes undersea with looks at the creation of LEGO's new ATLANTIS SETS, plus a spotlight on a fan-created underwater theme, THE SEA MONKEYS, with builder FELIX GRECO! Also, a report on the LEGO WORLD convention in the Netherlands, BUILDER SPOTLIGHTS, INSTRUCTIONS and ways to CUSTOMIZE MINIFIGURES, LEGO HISTORY, and more!

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BRICKJOURNAL #11

"Racers" theme issue, with building tips on race cars by the ARVO BROTHERS, interview with LEGO RACERS designer ANDREW WOODMAN, LEGO FORMULA ONE RACING, TECHNIC SPORTS CAR building, event reports, instructions and columns on MINIFIGURE CUSTOMIZATION and MICRO BUILDING, builder spotlights, LEGO HISTORY, and more!

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BRICKJOURNAL #12

A look at school sculptures by NATHAN SAWAYA, builder MARCOS BESSA's creations, ANGUS MACLANE's CubeDudes, a Nepali Diorama by JORDAN SCHWARTZ, instructions to build a school bus for your LEGO town, minifigure customizations, how a POWER MINERS model became one for ATLANTIS, building standards, and much more!

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BRICKJOURNAL #13

Special EVENT ISSUE with reports from BRICKMAGIC (the newest US LEGO fan festival, organized by BrickJournal magazine), BRICKWORLD (one of the oldest US LEGO fan events), and others! Plus: spotlight on BIONICLE Builder NORBERT LAGUBIEN, our regular column on minifigure customization, step-by-step "You Can Build It" instructions, spotlights on builders and their work, and more!

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BRICKJOURNAL #14

Discover the world of stop-motion LEGO FILMS, with brickfilmmaker DAVID PAGANO and others spotlighting LEGO filmmaking, the history of the medium and its community, interviews with the makers of the films seen on the LEGO CLUB SHOW and LEGO.com, and instructions on how to film and build puppets for brick flicks! Plus how to customize minifigures, event reports, step-by-step building instructions, and more!

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BRICKJOURNAL #15

Looks at the LEGO MECHA genre of building, especially in Japan! Feature editor NATHAN BRYAN spotlights mecha builders such as SAITO YOSHIKAZU, TAKAYUKI TORII, SUKYU and others! Also, a talk with BRIAN COOPER and MARK NEUMANN about their mecha creations, mecha building instructions by SAITO YOSHIKAZU, our regular columns on minifigure customization, building, event reports, and more!

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BRICKJOURNAL #16

Focuses on STEAMPUNK! Feature editor GUY HIMBER gives a tour with a look at his work, DAVE DEGOBBI's, NATHAN PROUDLOVE's, and others! There's also a look at the history of LEGO Steampunk building, as well as instructions for a Steampunk plane by ROD GILLIES! Plus our regular columns on minifigure customization, building tips, event reports, our step-by-step "You Can Build It" instructions, and much more!

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BRICKJOURNAL #17

LEGO SPACE WAR issue! A STARFIGHTER BUILDING LESSON by Peter Reid, WHY SPACE MARINES ARE SO POPULAR by Mark Stafford, a trip behind the scenes of LEGO'S NEW ALIEN CONQUEST SETS that hit store shelves earlier this year, plus JARED K. BURKS' column on MINIFIGURE CUSTOMIZATION, building tips, event reports, our step-by-step "YOU CAN BUILD IT" INSTRUCTIONS, and more!

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BRICKJOURNAL #18

Go to Japan with articles on two JAPANESE LEGO FAN EVENTS, plus take a look at JAPAN'S SACRED LEGO LAND, Nasu Highland Park—the site of the BrickFan events and a pilgrimage site for many Japanese LEGO fans. Also, a feature on JAPAN'S TV CHAMPIONSHIP OF LEGO, a look at the CLICKBRICK LEGO SHOPS in Japan, plus how to get into TECHNIC BUILDING, LEGO EDUCATION, and more!

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BRICKJOURNAL #19

LEGO EVENTS ISSUE covering our own BRICKMAGIC FESTIVAL, BRICKWORLD, BRICKFAIR, BRICKCON, plus other events outside the US. There's full event details, plus interviews with the winners of the BRICKMAGIC CHALLENGE competition, complete with instructions to build award winning models. Also JARED K. BURKS' regular column on minifigure customizing, building tips, and more!

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BRICKJOURNAL #20

LEGO SUPERHEROES! Behind-the-scenes of the DC and Marvel Comics sets, plus a feature on GREG HYLAND, the artist of the superhero comic books in each box! Also, other superhero work by ALEX SCHRANZ and our cover artist OLIVIER CURTO. Plus, JARED K. BURKS' regular column on minifigure customization, building tips, step-by-step "You Can Build It" instructions, and more!

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BRICKJOURNAL #21

LEGO CAR BUILDING! Guest editors LINO MARTINS and NATHAN PROUDLOVE of LUGNuts share secrets behind their LEGO car creations, and present TECHNIC SUPER-CAR MODELS by PAUL BORATKO III and other top builders! Plus custom instructions by TIM GOULD and CHRISTOPHER DECK, minifigure customization by JARED BURKS, step-by-step "You Can Build It" section, and more!

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LEGO PLANE BUILDING! Top builder RALPH SAVELSBERG takes off with his custom LEGO fighter models, there's a squadron of articles on Sky-Fi planes by FRADEL GONZALES and COLE MARTIN, find instructions to build a Sky-Fi plane, plus our regular feature on minifigure customization by JARED BURKS, AFOLs by GREG HYLAND, other step-by-step "You Can Build It" instructions, and more!

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BRICKJOURNAL #23

STAR WARS issue, with custom creations from a long time ago and far, far away! JACOB CARPENTER's Imperial Star Destroyer, MARK KELSO's Invisible Hand, interview with SIMON MACDONALD about building Star Wars costume props with LEGO elements, history of the LEGO X-Wing, plus our regular features on minifigure customization by JARED BURKS, "You Can Build It" instructions, and more!

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BRICKJOURNAL #24

LEGO TRAINS! Builder CALE LEIPHART shows how to get started building trains and train layouts, with instructions on building microscale trains by editor JOE MENO, building layouts with the members of the Pennsylvania LEGO Users Group (PennLUG), fan-built LEGO monorails minifigure customization by JARED BURKS, microscale building by CHRISTOPHER DECK, "You Can Build It", and more!

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BRICKJOURNAL #25

MEDIAEVAL CASTLE BUILDING! Top LEGO® Castle builders present their creations, including BOB CARNEY's amazingly detailed model of Neuschwanstein Castle, plus others, along with articles on building and detailing castles of your own! Also: JARED BURKS on minifigure customization, AFOLs by cartoonist GREG HYLAND, step-by-step "You Can Build It" instructions by CHRISTOPHER DECK, and more!

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BRICKJOURNAL #26

CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL with builders SEAN and STEPHANIE MAYO (known online as Siercon and Coral), other custom animal models from BrickJournal editor JOE MENO, LEGO DINOSAURS with WILL PUGH, plus more minifigure customization by JARED BURKS, AFOLs by cartoonist GREG HYLAND, step-by-step "YOU CAN BUILD IT" instructions by CHRISTOPHER DECK, and more!

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