

The Magazine for LEGO® Enthusiasts of All Ages!



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# Brick Journal

Issue 35 • July 2015  
people • building • community

## History in Bricks!

*Interviews with  
Ryan McNaught  
Lasse Vestergård  
Dan Siskind*

Instructions  
AND MORE!



# Brick Journal

Issue 35 • July 2015

people • building • community

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Ryan's Pompeii display at the Nicholson Museum.

# Ryan McNaught: Building the Past and Present!

Article by Joe Meno

Photography by  
Ryan McNaught  
and Joe Meno

*Ryan McNaught has been in BrickJournal before (issue # 23) as the builder of Elvis, the Skycrane helicopter that was displayed in Australia. Before then, he had built other models that got him selected to be the first LEGO Certified Professional in Australia. BrickJournal caught up with him and talked about some of the models he has built and his displays.*

**BrickJournal: When did you start building?**

**Ryan McNaught:** Well, way back when I was a youngster, I of course loved LEGO, and my Dark Ages started from when I was about 14 years old until our twin sons came along. Luckily for me, my mum had not thrown out all my old LEGO! So I got back into it in 2007.

**What did you focus your building on?**

Growing up I was into classic space, LEGO city and a good bit of LEGO trains, although they were always so very expensive, most of the time I'd build a set once, then of course use it for parts.

**What's your favorite building style?**

I guess back in those days it was all pretty simple; there wasn't much SNOT action or any of the advanced techniques we use today.

**When did you start building big models? How did that lead you to building cutaways?**

That was 2007, we took a holiday to Florida and of course discovered the LEGO brand retail store there at Downtown Disney. It really inspired me; as a kid growing up I really loved those cutaway books of planes, ships—you name it—so I figured that would really translate well into LEGO.

***How did this lead to you becoming a Certified Professional?***

It was Brickworld 2010, and I had made my cutaway A380 out of LEGO and filled it with a dozen or so MINDSTORMS-powered functions, and what I did was write some software to allow it to work with a touchscreen (which hadn't been done before) that allowed people to be the pilot and use all the functions. It was here that I met a whole heap of people from LEGO. They were pretty cool cats and when I got back to Australia they hooked up some interviews with the local LEGO team, and it went from there. I'd like to think it was luck, right people, right place, right time!

*Ryan built a cutaway of the Pacific Princess (The Love Boat) for Brickworld 2011 that resulted in Gavin MacLeod, the actor who played Captain Stubing in the series visiting and signing the ship!*



*Ryan's A380 on display.*



*The interior of the A380.*



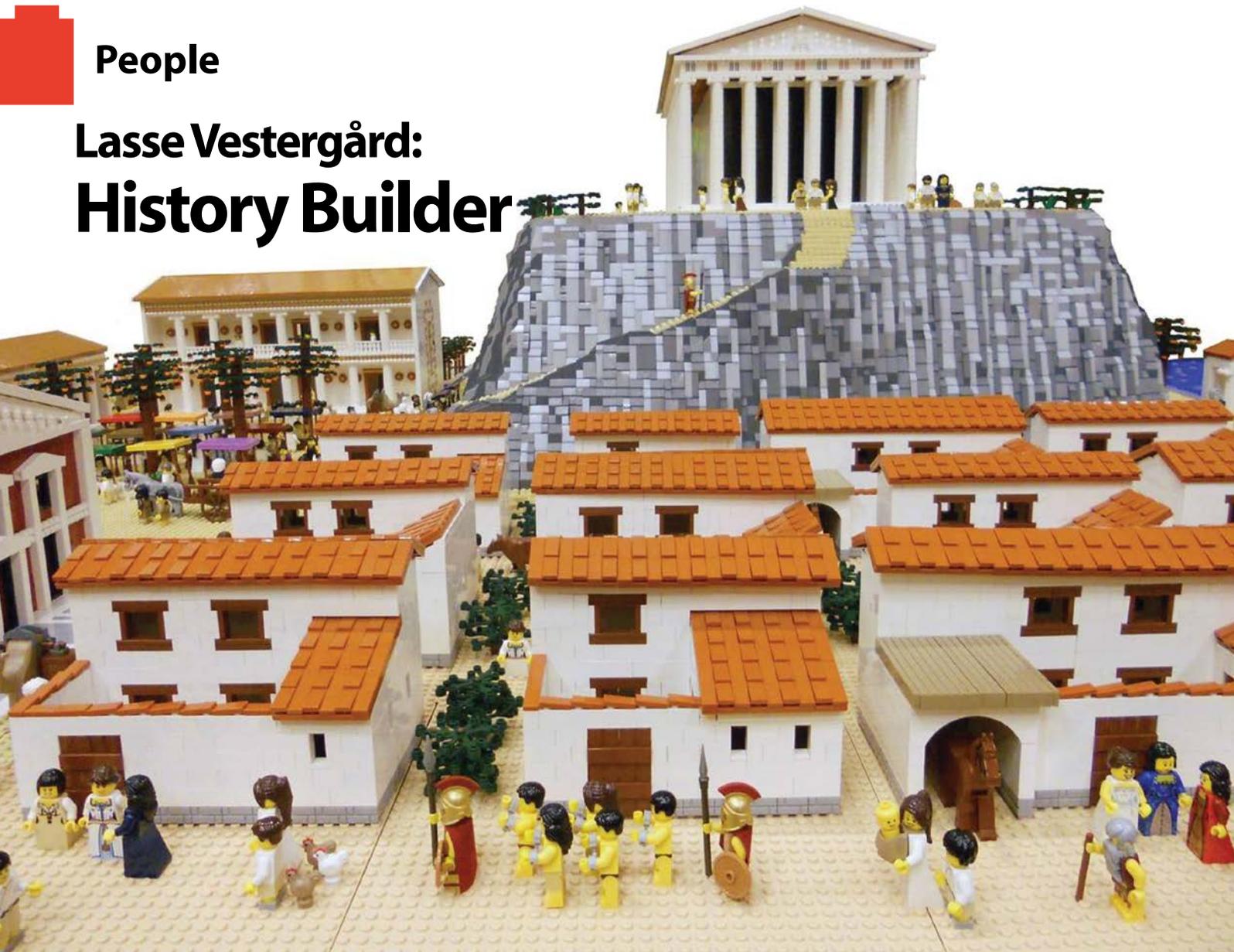
*The interior of the Pacific Princess.*



*The interior of the A380.*

People

# Lasse Vestergård: History Builder



*Ancient Greek houses.*

*Article and Photography by Lasse Vestergård*



*Overhead view of Lasse's  
Greek layout.*

My name is Lasse Vestergård and I was born in 1995. I live in Roskilde in Denmark and am studying law at the University of Copenhagen.

I have been a LEGO fan all my life. When I was 10 years old, my mother (Anne Mette Vestergård) and I were visitors at a LEGO exhibition which was organized by the Danish LUG Byggepladen. That was the first time I heard about AFOLS. In 2007, my mother joined Byggepladen and we began to participate in the club's various activities. When I was old enough I also became a member of Byggepladen. In the beginning we were mainly collectors of LEGO sets. But in 2010 my mother and I began to build MOCs together. Today we are mainly MOC-builders.



Dan Siskind on the deck of his current project, a model of the USS Missouri.

# Dan Siskind: Brickmaniac!

Article by Joe Meno

Photography by Dan Siskind

Dan Siskind is something of a legend in the LEGO fan community. He's one of the first generation of LEGO fans to start showing and building, first online, then at displays. Nowadays, he designs and sells custom LEGO sets under his company Brickmania, which has become one of the most well-known third-party set sellers in the world. He also still builds, as you'll find out in the interview below.

**BrickJournal:** When did you start building, and did you have a Dark Age? What was your first set?

**Dan Siskind:** My parents went to Europe in the early 1970s and brought home my first LEGO set. As far as I can deduce it was Universal Building Set 115 from 1973. I never really had a true Dark Age, but there definitely were times when building wasn't possible due to housing conditions or work schedule.

**What theme did you start out building with?**

I was in elementary school when the Yellow Castle came out. I was super excited to get one



A look at prototype models as of Spring 2015, including on the front row (left to right) a P-40 Warhawk, Hurricane, and Messerschmitt Bf-109. Top row (left to right) is an M26 Pershing tank, an IS-2, a M3 Grant, an A12 Matilda II, a Bren Carrier, a SDKFZ 10, a HUMMIV, and the Event Kit from World War Brick in Anaheim.

of friends, I not only build my own castle models, but also made some to sell to friends from RTL (rec.toys.LEGO Usenet group) and LUGNET.

**What was your first kit? And how did it sell?**

I made ten copies of the original Blacksmith Shop from parts I had accumulated from clearance sets. Back then there was no Bricklink or Pick-A-Brick to buy parts, so I had to find my parts from existing sets. I then made a simple e-commerce web site and purchased the domain Brickmania.com. I priced the sets at \$120 each and figured I'd be lucky to sell them all within a year. To my surprise they all sold out in a week or two, and people started asking for more.

**When did you make the decision to go into set production?**

I must have had a premonition that my kits would sell, because I had actually designed three follow-up companion models for the Blacksmith Shop even before it was released. Buoyed by the initial success of the Blacksmith Shop, I released three follow-up kits within a year. I still had a day job, so production of Brickmania kits was a relatively slow affair and remained a hobby business. In 2003 I actually decided to hang it up because it was becoming too much of a job and decided to go back to building for my own enjoyment. I actually managed to stay away from new kit production until 2008, when I was eventually pulled back mainly by the persuasive underground following I had acquired. In 2009 I quit my day job for good and by 2010 Brickmania was officially incorporated and I hired my first employees.

**What is the production flow of a set from start to finish?**

**Research:** First step is to immerse myself in research materials until I have an understanding of the subject and its particulars. Whenever possible I try to get multiple published sources for my research and will look at video material when I can find it. One nice side effect of all of this research is I've accumulated an amazing reference library.



Siskind's Sherman tank in a diorama.



Siskind's Panzer III model.

Building

# Dream Garage: Officina Super Sprint Classic Vespa Workshop

*Article and Photos  
by Andrea Lattanzio  
(Norton74)*





Workbench and tools.



The sandblaster.

A wooden workbench, with wrenches and vise, is positioned at the center of the workshop. On the left of the workbench is the sandblaster. The sandblaster looks very realistic, even if it's made with classic bricks and slopes, and it's one of my favorite models. The sandblaster door on the side is an old 1x3x4 door.

I love using different parts from different LEGO series; the two Fabuland jerrycans are an example.

There are two wide windows made with old clear windows 1x4x5 (that probably comes from my old LEGO city airport #6392...) and two big sliding doors. If you look carefully at the top of the doors you'll see that I used the old steering wheels for the sliding system (I love this detail).

The floor is made with a lot of expensive 6x6 tiles and there also are a few water drains.

Four pendant lamps are hung on two dark bluish gray supports and are made with inverted 6x6 dishes (radar); take a look at the pirate hooks...



A look at the garage door. You can see the steering wheels at the tops of the doors.



The garage without any loose items.



A closer look at the lamps with the pirate hooks.

Building

# Model Spotlight: Cologne Cathedral

Article by Joe Meno

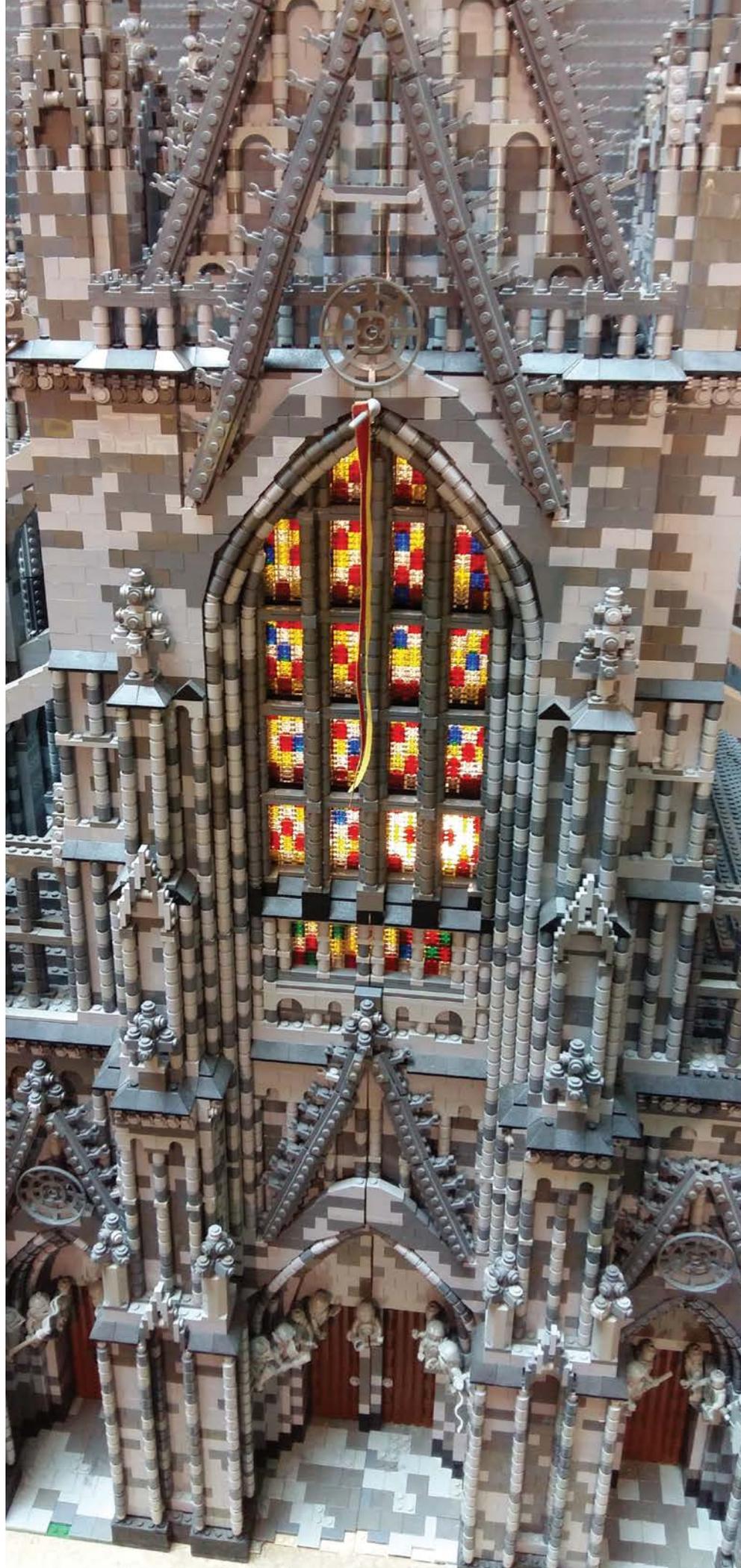
Photography  
by Jürgen Bramigk



Making an outstanding model takes a combination of skill, resources and patience. Jürgen Bramigk, a German LEGO builder, was inspired by his interest in Gothic architecture and the Middle Ages to build the Cologne Cathedral and began the project in 2005. At that time, he was 35 and he spent his days landscaping. His nights and weekends were devoted to researching and building the cathedral. Starting with a ground plan and using many photos he had taken and seen online, he slowly started construction.

Three years later, he completed it, which became his largest model. Standing 3 meters (almost 10 feet) high, and 2 meters (6.5 feet) wide, the cathedral is a minifigure-scaled model, complete with interior details. His love of cathedrals is evident in the amount of detail that he built into the model. Individual bricks are dark and light gray, giving the building a mottled and aged appearance and a layer of authenticity. While building structures like flying buttresses is a challenge on their own, a closer look at the building reveals statues and other intricate stonework that was replicated by Bramigk. The South Tower, which is on the right side at the entrance, houses the bells of the cathedral. Viewers can see these through the open windows of the tower.

*Some close-ups of the cathedral, including the windows and doorways.*



# Liberty Bell

Design and Instructions  
by Tommy Williamson



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 column for *BrickJournal: DIY Fan Art*. Here, Tommy

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

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

Qty	Part	Color	Description
4	3004.dat	Reddish Brown	Brick 1 x 2
1	3006.dat	Reddish Brown	Brick 2 x 10
2	3022.dat	Reddish Brown	Plate 2 x 2
1	3020.dat	Reddish Brown	Plate 2 x 4
1	3832.dat	Reddish Brown	Plate 2 x 10
2	3747a.dat	Reddish Brown	Slope Brick 33 3 x 2 Inverted without Ribs between Studs
2	3700.dat	Reddish Brown	Technic Brick 1 x 2 with Hole
12	3024.dat	Dark Bluish Gray	Plate 1 x 1
8	3023.dat	Dark Bluish Gray	Plate 1 x 2
4	3623.dat	Dark Bluish Gray	Plate 1 x 3
6	3710.dat	Dark Bluish Gray	Plate 1 x 4
2	4032a.dat	Dark Bluish Gray	Plate 2 x 2 Round with Axlehole Type 1
1	87580.dat	Dark Bluish Gray	Plate 2 x 2 with Groove with 1 Center Stud
2	3021.dat	Dark Bluish Gray	Plate 2 x 3
5	3020.dat	Dark Bluish Gray	Plate 2 x 4
10	3795.dat	Dark Bluish Gray	Plate 2 x 6
2	3034.dat	Dark Bluish Gray	Plate 2 x 8
14	3031.dat	Dark Bluish Gray	Plate 4 x 4
12	98138.dat	Dark Bluish Gray	Tile 1 x 1 Round with Groove
2	4150.dat	Dark Bluish Gray	Tile 2 x 2 Round
9	4733.dat	Black	Brick 1 x 1 with Studs on Four Sides
2	4274.dat	Technic Pin 1/2	Blue

## About this issue's model:

When I was working at the visual effects studio Dive in Philadelphia, I really enjoyed my short walk to work. Not only could I stop at my favorite street cart (Luckys, on the corner of 6th and Chestnut) but every day I passed Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell. So much history and it's right there to admire on a quiet morning walk. When Joe told me the theme of this issue of *BrickJournal*, my first thought was of this bell and what it represents. I hope you enjoy it. 

## Building

### Minifigure Customization 101



*Amelia Earhart.*

# What can we Learn from Minifigure Customization?

*Article by Jared K. Burks*

*Photos by  
Michael "Xero" Marzilli*

As the title states, what can Minifigure Customization teach us? Specifically, what can it teach us of history? The old saying goes, "Those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it." The origin of this quote is up for debate, but many credit it to George Santayana, who stated, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." So what does this have to do with Minifigure Customization? Well, everything. Every trick or new method we try allows us to create new figures. Many of these customization tricks are quite old, and it takes digging to uncover them as they have been lost, but that is a topic for another article. The article today is what can Minifigure Customization teach us?

How about history?

When I was in school taking history classes, which was some time ago, it was always dry facts and dates. The occasional war would catch my imagination, but for the most part, there was nothing to *do* to learn about history. It isn't biology, where you can dissect an animal to learn about the circulatory system, or chemistry, where you can mix chemicals and measure a reaction. It isn't physics, where force can be measured, or even like math, where problems can be solved. Recent history is a touch easier; you can go to the video. However, history before cameras is a bit more difficult. To explain the point I am belaboring, let's briefly talk about how we learn.

# Building

## MINDSTORMS 101:

# Adding Personality to Your Robot!

Article and art by Damien Kee

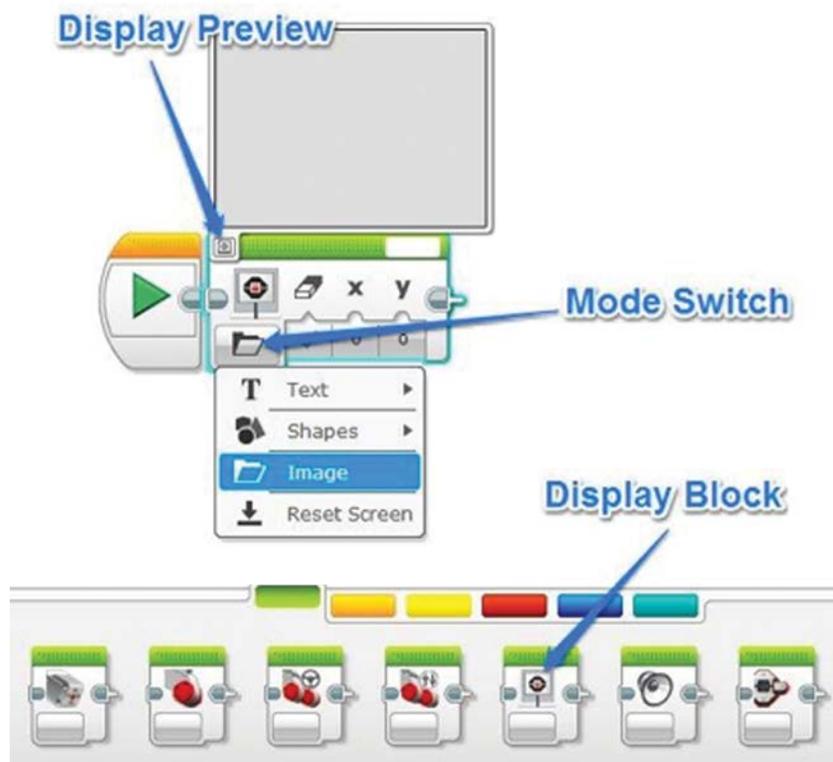
Damien Kee returns from a brief absence for another MINDSTORMS tutorial. In the last installment of our MINDSTORMS tutorials we talked about the perils of dead reckoning. This time, we look at something different...

While it's a great achievement to get your robot up and moving, and an even better achievement to have it reacting to its surroundings, sometimes it's just plain fun to give your bot a little personality. I'm going to outline two different ways you can achieve this.

### The Display Block

The Display Block controls the screen of your robot. If you don't use it, then the screen of your robot just says something boring like *Mindstorms*, *ProgramA running* (or something similar).

The Display Block allows us to change what is on the screen either by adding some pictures or some words. You'll find the Display Block in the Action palette (Green Tab). Click on the Display Preview button to see what image will be placed on the screen. Use the Mode switch to choose either Text-Grid or Image. There are other options, but I'll leave them up to you to discover!

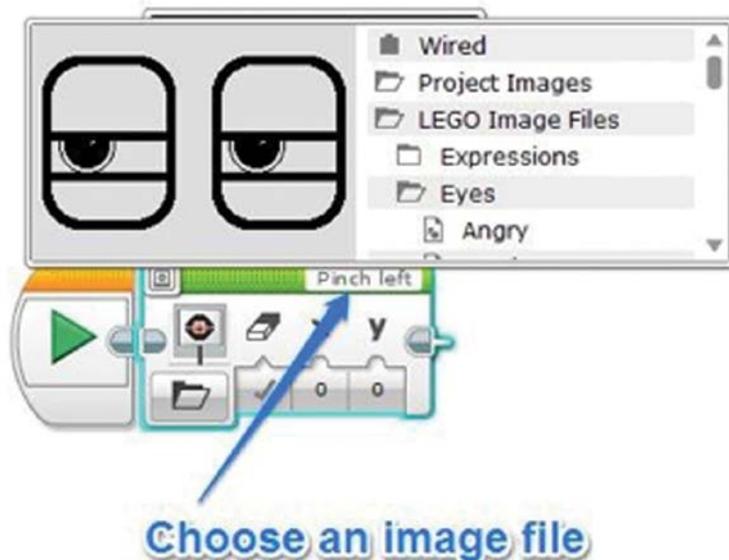


### Display Block/Image Mode:

Select an image file from the list of pre-loaded LEGO Image files.

The Display Block has a set of buttons beside the mode switch. Here are the button functions from left to right:

- *Clear Screen (eraser)*: If set as TRUE (with a check mark), it will wipe anything on the screen before displaying the new image. When set to FALSE, it will overlay the new image on top of any previous image.
- *x*: Sets the left-hand side of the image. Can be from 0 (very left of screen) to 127 (very right of screen).
- *y*: Sets the upper edge of the image. Can be from 0 (very top of screen) to 127 (very bottom of screen).



With this magazine's theme being History, it wasn't that hard for me to figure out a model to build. This is a model that is actually one of the first microscale builds I built, way back in 2001...yipe, this model is older than the magazine!

In any case, I still have this model because it's a simple rendition of an iconic engineering achievement: a moon rocket. It's by no means accurate, but that is one of the challenges of microscale building: what to keep and what to remove in terms of design. I took the basic look of the crawler, tower and Saturn V and used mostly basic parts. With all the new parts that come out in the new sets, it's fun to have something that can be done with only a few types of parts.

Now to build the rest of Kennedy Space Center... 

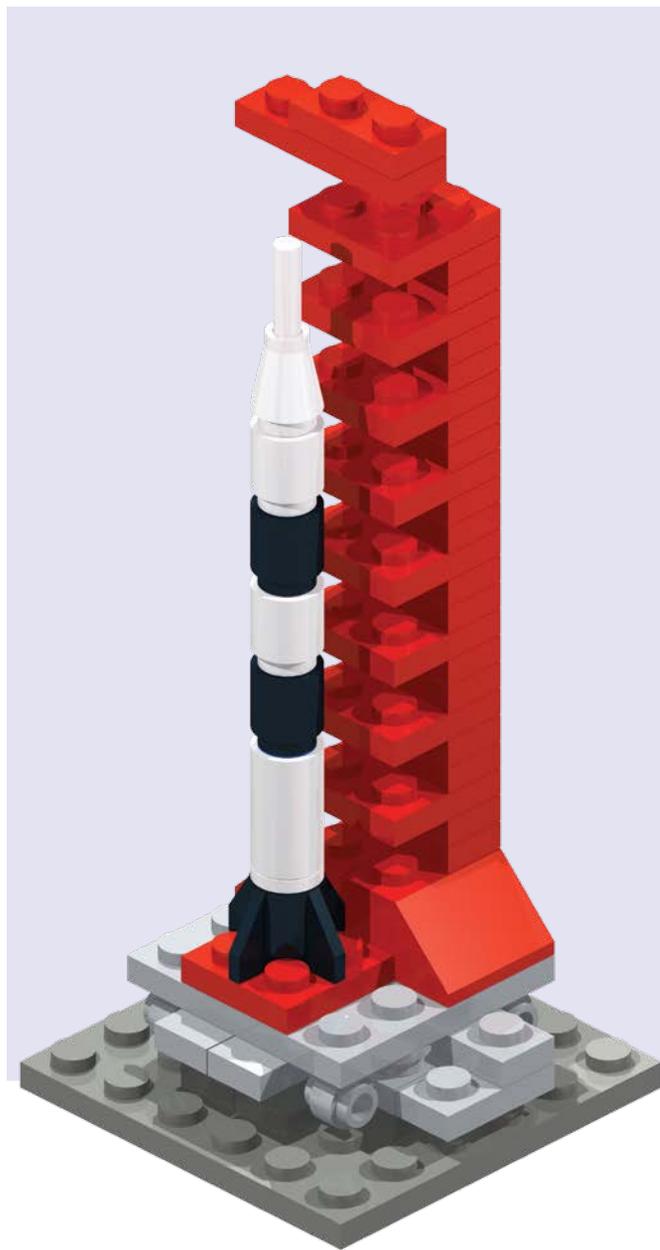
## Parts List

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

Qty	Color	Part	Description
1	White	30374.dat	Bar 4L Light Sabre Blade
2	White	3062b.dat	Brick 1 x 1 Round with Hollow Stud
1	White	4589.dat	Cone 1 x 1
1	White	75535.dat	Technic Pin Joiner Round
1	Red	4073.dat	Plate 1 x 1 Round
17	Red	3023.dat	Plate 1 x 2
1	Red	3623.dat	Plate 1 x 3
9	Red	3022.dat	Plate 2 x 2
2	Red	3039.dat	Slope Brick 45 2 x 2
2	Dark Bluish Gray	3023.dat	Plate 1 x 2
2	Dark Bluish Gray	3794b.dat	Plate 1 x 2 with Groove with 1 Centre Stud
2	Dark Bluish Gray	2420.dat	Plate 2 x 2 Corner
1	Dark Bluish Gray	3958.dat	Plate 6 x 6
1	Black	4588.dat	Brick 1 x 1 Round with Fins
2	Black	3062b.dat	Brick 1 x 1 Round with Hollow Stud
1	Light Bluish Gray	4073.dat	Plate 1 x 1 Round
4	Light Bluish Gray	4081b.dat	Plate 1 x 1 with Clip Light Type 2
4	Light Bluish Gray	3023.dat	Plate 1 x 2
2	Light Bluish Gray	3794a.dat	Plate 1 x 2 without Groove with 1 Centre Stud
1	Light Bluish Gray	3022.dat	Plate 2 x 2
1	Light Bluish Gray	3031.dat	Plate 4 x 4
1	Blue	4274.dat	Technic Pin 1/2

# You Can Build It

MINI Model



## MINI Saturn V on Launch Crawler

*Design and Instructions  
by Joe Meno*

# Launching the First International Robot Mak3r Day!

*Article by the IRMD's founder,  
Vassilis Chryssanthakopoulos*

*Edited by Marc-Andre  
Bazergui and Joe Meno*

*Photography by the IRMD,  
Vassilis Chryssanthakopoulos  
and the Moraitis School.*

*LEGOLAND Florida photos  
by Amber Rabbitt*



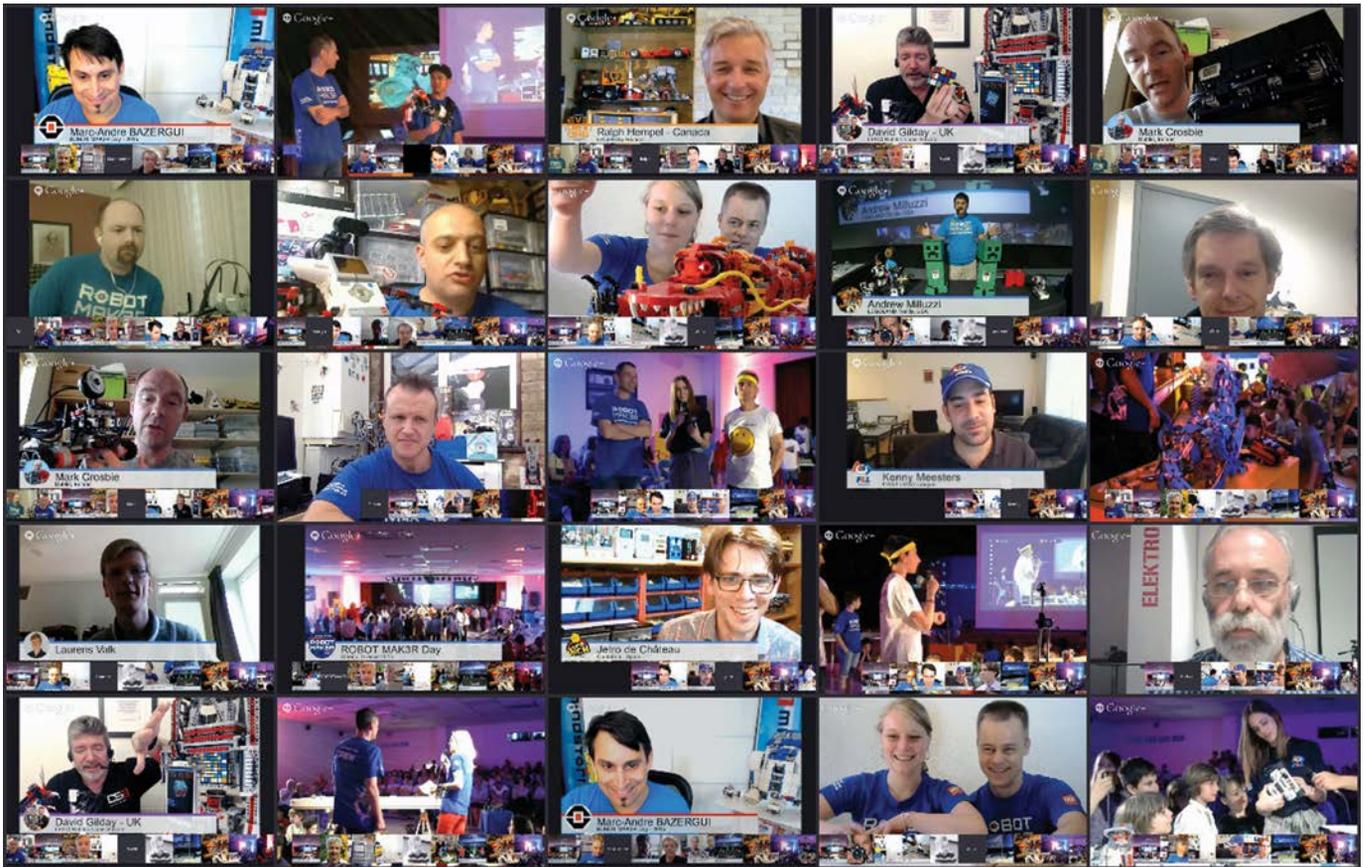
Hi, I'm Vassilis Chryssanthakopoulos, and I am the founder of The International ROBOT MAK3R Day. Our first event was held in Athens, Greece, on May 9th 2015. This live event and mega hangout lasted 2 hours and 48 minutes. I'm honored to be able to share with you here the story of how this event was born and how it has the potential to become the greatest annual party around robotics and LEGO MINDSTORMS makers, educators and enthusiasts in the world.

## **An Idea Hatches Into Being**

The way in which an idea grows in your mind slowly and suddenly explodes to something awesome is a very well known process to all designers. My idea appeared early in 2010, where I had the vision of creating a unique yearly event that would bring some of the stars of the robotics universe to Greece. I remember having countless conversations about that with Steven Canvin and Camilla Bottke, who at the time were heads of the LEGO MINDSTORMS team at LEGO. Needless to say we had numerous crazy ideas but sadly, the critical stumbling blocks were always time and budget.

On a cold morning this past February, the idea of mixing a live onstage event with an online mega gathering and a worldwide live streaming suddenly crossed my mind. Little did I realize this would be the start of a great journey.

Not having any previous experience in organizing an entire event, I realized that the progress stages were similar to designing a new robot: When the idea is first born in your mind, everything seems easy and doable and you start with incredible enthusiasm. As you move to detailed design and implementation, though, things start getting harder and harder. There



**“We’re live!”**

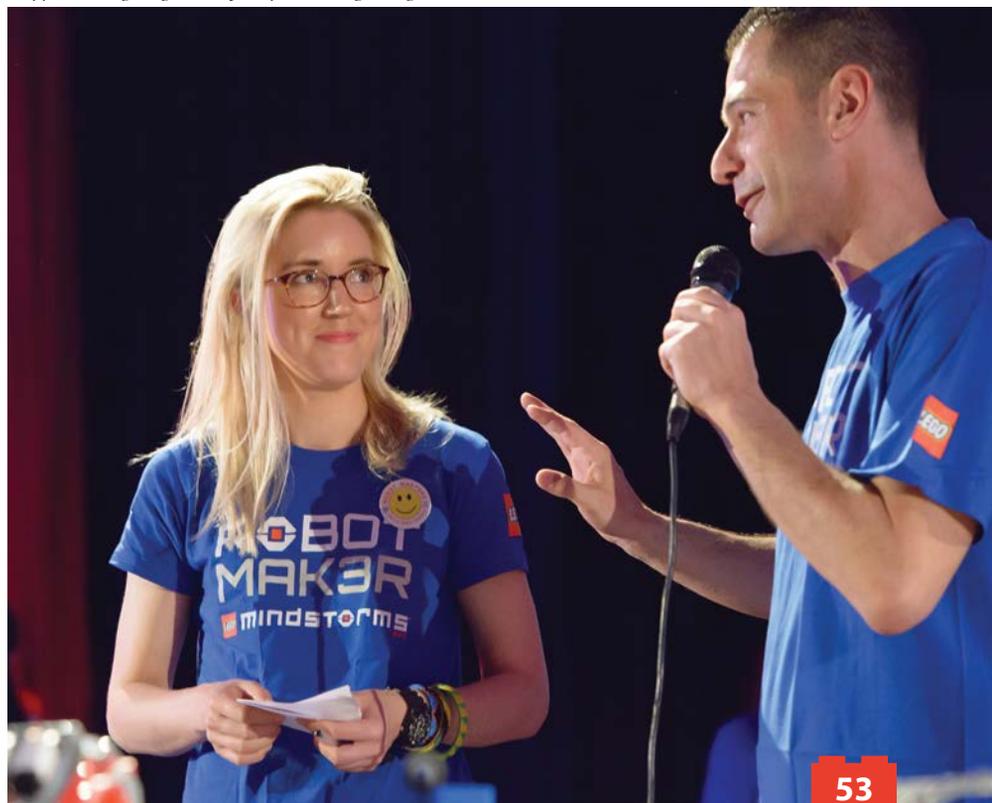
The participants of the International Robot Mak3r Day all online: (from left to right, top row) Marc-Andre Bazergui, Vassilis Chryssanthakopoulos and Lee Magpili, Ralph Hempel, David Gilday, and Mark Crosbie, (Second row) Will Gorman, Martyn Boogarts, Annika and Arjen Brandsma, Andy Milluzzi, and Chris Rogers from Tufts University. (Third Row) Mark Crosbie, Simon Burfield, Vassilis with Antonia Psallida and the Robot Masters, and Kenny Meesters. (Fourth Row) Laurens Valk, Jetro de Château, the Robot Masters and Michael Brandl. (Bottom Row) David Gilday, Vassilis with Filippa Malmegård, Marc-Andre Bazergui.

### The Idea Takes Flight

Hours before the 18:00 start time, the IRMD mega-hub was already full. The kids from the Moraitis School immediately started gathering at the amazing crash pad we set up with more than 30 robots that all guests could play with. Lee, wearing a very futuristic wearable robotic creation, started to operate his new-born Greek dragon. At the center of the auditorium, the great Greek FIRST® LEGO League (FLL) team ROBOT MASTERS, champions at the 2015 Greek FLL Tournament and 4th worldwide at the Robot Game of the 2015 FLL in St. Louis, demonstrated their robotics skills and their joy of participating in robotics competitions. Everything was in place with lots of action in Athens.

After sharing with the kids my personal story about how I met Steven Canvin and started working with LEGO on several robotics related projects, it was time for Filippa Malmegård to kick-off the first International ROBOT MAK3R Day mega hangout. That’s when the real magic began. LEGO MINDSTORMS

Filippa Malmegård gets ready to open the mega hangout.



# Bruno Todd: A Man with a Passion and a Vision

*Article and Photography by Bill Gowdy*

One thing can be said with certainty if you're a member of SanDLUG (the San Diego LEGO User's Group) or even if you're a member of any of the surrounding groups (LUGOLA, SCLTC, etc.)—you know Mike Todd. But you may not know that you know him, because you know him by his nickname, his handle, his *nom de plume*: "Bruno."

Everyone knows Bruno. Bruno's Bricks. Bruno—Mr. LEGO.

I first met Mike, whom I shall call "Bruno" from here on out, in 2006 while buying items at LEGOLand Carlsbad's Big Shop. Here was a guy loading a cart (borrowed from LEGOLand's back room) with sets about to be discontinued and therefore on sale. Happy to see another adult clearly as obsessed with LEGO as I was, we struck up a conversation. He freely gave advice on how and where to get the best deals, and a brief bio of himself. We exchanged e-mail addresses and corresponded a few times.

Flash forward to 2009 when—thanks to the Internet—I discovered SanDLUG, the San Diego LEGO Users Group. I immediately joined and soon reacquainted myself with Bruno at my first meeting. It was then that I started hearing about his LEGO collection. "His is the biggest," I was told. "You think you have an idea of what to expect before you see it," said one member. "His collection makes all of ours look like nothing," another told me. After having seen a few other SanDLUGger's work areas and seeing that their collections were roughly the same size as mine, give or take a few thousand bricks and elements, I assumed he maybe had two or three times as much as the rest of us. After the first meeting at Bruno's remote north San Diego County abode, I realized just how wrong that assumption was...

*Bruno in one corner of his large hallway, which serves as the nexus of his vast collection of parts.*



# We're looking for the next bright LEGO® idea...



Discover proposals for new LEGO® sets created by fans just like you! Upload your own idea, or support your favorites. Give feedback and share ideas with your friends so

they get noticed. The more active you are the more chance you have of seeing great ideas become awesome LEGO products.



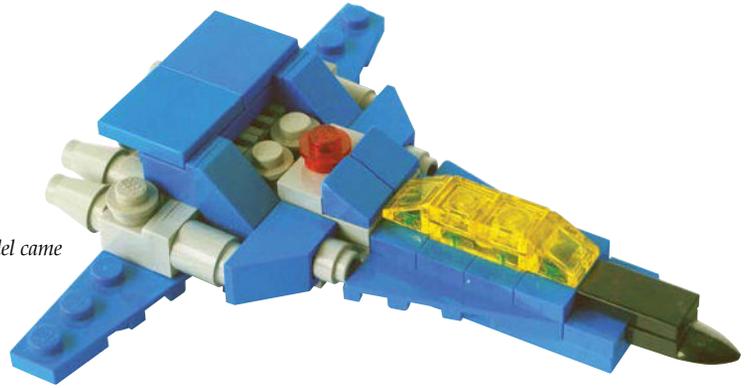
[ideas.lego.com](https://ideas.lego.com)

## Community

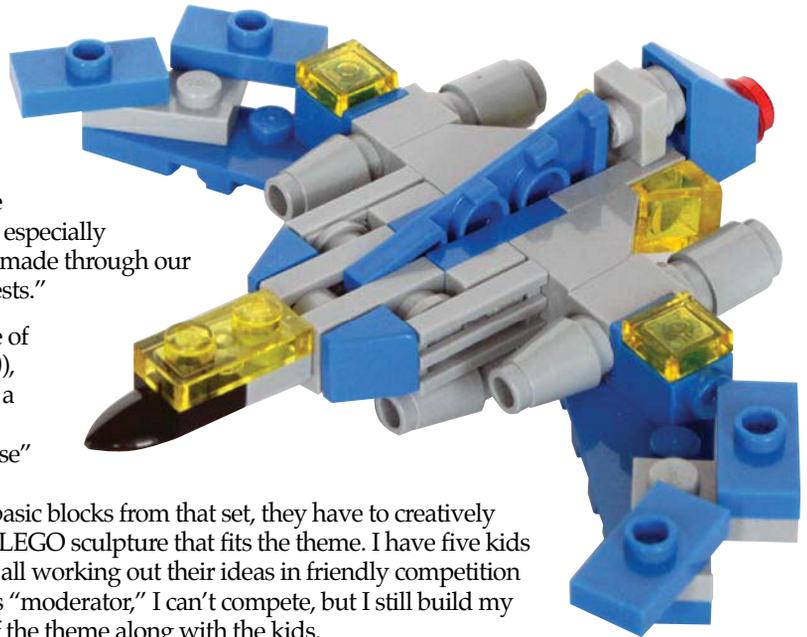
# Family Time with LEGO: Building Contests

*How many ideas can you make from a limited palette of parts?*

*Article and Photography by Gerry Kulzer*



*From this custom model came many alternate ideas!*



My whole family enjoys LEGO, but there have been some especially great memories made through our "Building Contests."

Using the Statue of Liberty set (3450), I'll give the kids a building idea or theme like "house" or "nature", etc.

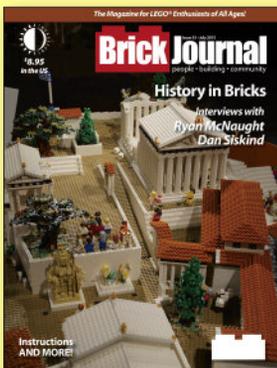
Using only the basic blocks from that set, they have to creatively come up with a LEGO sculpture that fits the theme. I have five kids and to see them all working out their ideas in friendly competition is wonderful. As "moderator," I can't compete, but I still build my interpretation of the theme along with the kids.

It amazes me how, even though my children range in age from 6 to 15, it is not always the older builder who comes up with the most interesting creation. LEGO can be a great equalizer, in that one person's vision is just as valid as another's when built in LEGO blocks.

At the end of the specified time, a vote is cast as to whose creation was the winner. Winners get special LEGO pieces from my collection—sometimes a minifig, sometimes a polybag set, or some other treat. This facilitates more building contests until every one of my kids gets a prize.



**IF YOU ENJOYED THIS PREVIEW, CLICK THE LINK TO ORDER THIS ISSUE IN PRINT OR DIGITAL FORMAT!**



### BRICKJOURNAL #35

History in LEGO Bricks! LEGO pro RYAN McNAUGHT on his LEGO Pompeii and other projects, military builder DAN SISKIND on his BrickMania creations, and LASSE VESTERGARD about his historical building, JARED K. BURKS on minifigure customizing, step-by-step "You Can Build It" instructions by CHRISTOPHER DECK, BrickNerd DIY Fan Art, MINDSTORMS robotics lessons by DAMIEN KEE, and more!

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