





MEET THE FAN DESIGNER

"Of course LEGO[®] collecting, building, and designing have been on my activities list since grade school till now" says Mark Smiley, 36 year Engineer from Plano, Texas.

When building his own designs, he finds LEGO bricks to be similar to a puzzle: "You have a picture of what you want it to look like in your head, but you have to test and tinker to find the best solution you can with the parts available."

Mark's inspiration for the Space Rocket Ride came from real retro coin rides and a previous model of his:

"The actual inspiration came from old retro rocket rides that used to be out at storefronts and in malls. I originally found a small spaceship I had been making on my desk and thought about ways to spruce it up for the contest.

I decided on making it into a coin-operated ride. I was looking at pictures of real retro coin rides and saw the original rocket styles. I decided to switch my spaceship for a space rocket at that moment.

The colours of LEGO were just right for the classic rocket rides."

For Mark, the development of the Space Rocket Ride was not without challenges: "I spent a good deal of time revamping the rocket to try and make it look more curved and sleek. I could not use the exact colour scheme I originally wanted because of part availability. I spent most of my time trying to find ways to keep the mechanism as simple and small as possible because in real coin rides, the gizmo under the hood is actually quite small and short. I kept tinkering with the design even after the contest ended, especially once I found the little crank piece that orbits at 1 half step rather than a full step, in my Technics bin."

"Having my design be adapted into an official LEGO set is amongst the highest honours I can conceive of, so I am over-the-moon thrilled!"

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