



LEGO Technic R 1200 GS Adventure build and road test

By Wes Fleming #87301

WHEN OLE KIRK CHRISTIANSEN started making wooden toys out of his Billund, Denmark, furniture shop in 1932, BMW Motorrad was already well established. The R4, after all, was 1932's hottest motorcycle, pumping out almost 12 horsepower and able to reach dizzying speeds of 60 to 62 miles per hour with its single-cylinder 400cc engine.

Christiansen knew he couldn't compete with BMW at that time, and of course the war set both companies back a few years. The Lego Group started producing its iconic line of interlocking bricks made of cellulose acetate in 1947, but sales didn't really take off until a change in formulation took place in the mid-1950s. Christiansen decided to focus his company on Lego after a warehouse fire in 1960 destroyed most of the company's inventory of wooden products.

By the early 1980s, Lego's Technic line of kits showed that the company was interested in much more than building surrealistic multi-colored houses and trucks that looked like rejects from 8-bit video games. Technic showed that Lego could craft intricate, functional models that took skill and some measure of patience to construct. None of these characteristics

kept parents from throwing out the pieces they found underfoot in the middle of the night, but Lego continued innovating and advancing the art of the model. BMW Motorrad was no slouch in this decade either, releasing both the liquid-cooled K bike and the first functional motorcycle anti-lock braking system.



It was, perhaps, a miraculous coming together akin to chocolate and peanut butter that led to the announcement in November, 2016, that Lego and BMW were set to release their first-ever motorcycle collaboration: a 603-piece Technic kit dedicated to reproducing the R 1200 GS Adventure in a glorious black-and-blue color scheme.

Alexander Buckan, the head of BMW Motorrad Vehicle Design, called the project "exciting" and "outstanding," and stated that "the close and creative cooperation between the two design teams was particularly impressive." BMW motorcycle riders and Lego enthusiasts clearly had a lot to look forward to when the kit went on sale on January 1, 2017.

Early reports of the kit's authenticity were

scattered, but promising. As a dedicated motorcycle journalist and a committed MOA member, I felt it incumbent upon me to seek out this kit and to take advantage of its recommended age range of 10 to 16 to force my teenage daughter to assemble it.

"Six hundred pieces?" she said. "How long is it going to take? I can't waste my whole weekend doing stupid stuff for you." Her precocious comment noted, I reminded her that should she refuse my request, I would not hesitate to have AT&T shut off her cell phone service until she relented.

I will admit that the box was bigger than I expected it to be when the \$80 kit arrived in the mail. "Wow, a package from Germany," my mail carrier exclaimed. "Do you know Angela Merkel?"

After assuring her I had no powerful connections in Germany's government with a curse-filled tirade entirely in Texas German, I informed my daughter that construction would take place on Saturday evening, followed by a thorough road test on Sunday. "But I have homework!" she protested. "Two words," I said. "Cell. Phone. Service." We agreed on a tentative start time of "Okay, after dinner, I guess."

Six hundred and three Lego pieces is a lot more intimidating than it sounds, especially if you used to live with an obsessive-compulsive that did 1,000-piece puzzles of deep space nebulas that he made himself in the basement. In no time at all, our



workbench was covered with a mix of gray, black, blue, red and yellow parts, and it was at that point I realized I was going to need beer.

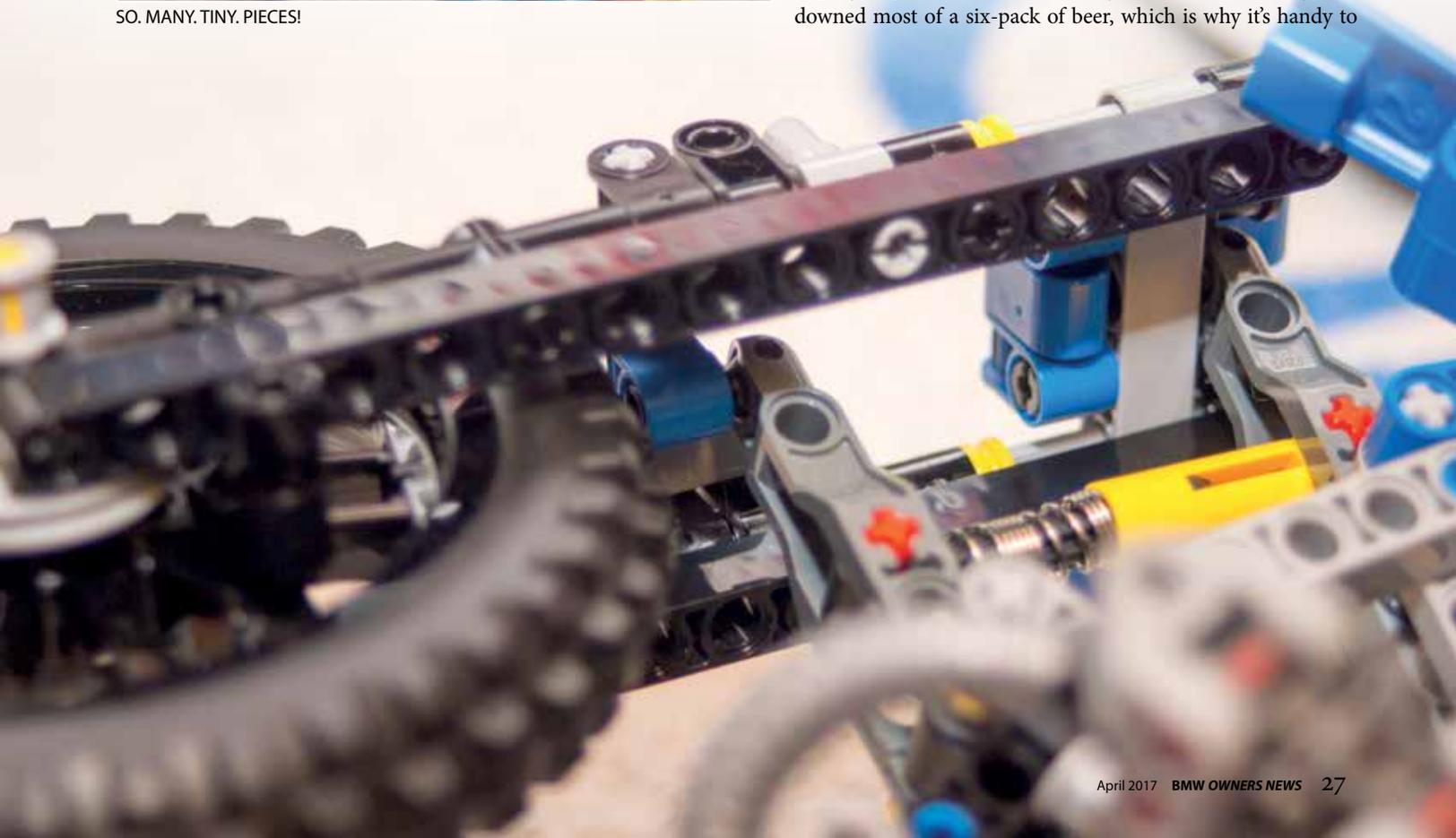
We broke for a quick trip to the grocery store, where I was unable to find either German or Danish beer and settled for a brew with a motorcycle on the can. Why the Uinta Brewing Company of Salt Lake City, Utah, choose to make their “Ready Set Gose” beer with salt and coriander I will never know, but since it cost nine dollars for the six-pack, I committed to drinking it all. At least it’s USDA-certified organic and made with wind and solar power, so even though I didn’t care for this particular beer until the

fourth can, I’m looking forward to trying their other beers and perhaps even visiting the brewery during the “Find Your Crossroads” rally in SLC in July 2017. (uintabrewing.com, tours daily by appointment at 3.30 p.m., love for beer and closed-toe shoes required)

What is even more intimidating than 603 tiny Legos on a workbench is an instruction manual with 200 steps spread out over more than 100 pages. Unlike the owner’s manuals that come with motorcycles, however, the instruction manual that comes with this Lego kit is utterly fantastic and in full color. The step-by-step instructions are easy to follow unless you’ve downed most of a six-pack of beer, which is why it’s handy to



SO. MANY. TINY. PIECES!



PRODUCT REVIEWS

have a surly teenager doing the heavy lifting.

In what was likely the last time I'll ever be able to impress a 14-year-old girl, my daughter marveled at my comprehensive knowledge of the motorcycle's subsystems as she assembled them. "That's the drive-shaft!" I slurred. "That's where the pistons will go!" I continued. "Shut up, old man!" she cried. "And get out of my light!"

Four and a half hours later, we emerged from the basement workshop, our completed R 1200 GS Adventure in hand. Lego fans with short inseams are not going to be happy, but most of the rest of us cannot help but be impressed with the kit. Turning the rear wheel turns the driveshaft, which spins the crank, which moves the visible pistons. The kit comes stock with Öhlins shocks, a pricey surprise that is sure to please the most jaded GS rider. The six twin-spoke wheels are shiny and sure to resist brake dust buildup, especially since there are no brake calipers included. (I understand ABS is a \$25 upgrade, but adds a full pound to the curb weight of the motorcycle.) The



Each participant had his or her beverage of choice. Overconsumption led to one of them being more useful than the other.

windshield is adjustable with one hand, but it is semi-opaque and difficult to look through.

After a good night's sleep, we took the Technic R 1200 GS Adventure on a road trip to test its rideability. The big adventure bike had a mind of its own, taking us directly to the nearest Starbucks location, where we enjoyed the oohing and aahing of the baristas on duty. By the time we left, three female baristas had thrown their panties at me, exhorting me to "give Jack Riepe our love!" My daughter collected the phone numbers of two male baristas, and I circled back to let them both know that should either of them call, I would return to their coffee

counter every day for ...well, forever, or until they stopped calling my daughter.

A passing eight-year-old boy exclaimed that the kit was "the coolest thing I've ever seen," and his mother gave me the stink-eye as she sighed, "We'll tell Santa Claus about this, too."

When queried about the Lego Technic R 1200 GS Adventure, Paul Guillien, CEO of Touratech USA, said, "Our development team in Germany got a prototype of the Technic R 1200 GS Adventure a few months ago and wasted no time developing a complete range of accessories to provide crash protection and improved ergonomics for this lightweight traveler. The biggest challenge for our engineers was how to power up the Touratech heated seat on a bike with such an under-sized alternator. Whether you are planning a weekend ride or a trip around the toy room, the Touratech product line for the Technic R 1200 GS will ensure that both you and your bike go the distance."

The Lego Technic R 1200 GS Adventure kit is proving to be somewhat difficult to find in retail outlets in the USA, so online resources are generally best for a quick purchase. Prices vary, but try Amazon and eBay.

PROS: Great fun for kids from 10 to 100; authentic reproduction; bouncy suspension; knobby tires.

CONS: 603 pieces, approximately 590 of which are tiny; lacks electric or kick starter; kickstand not up to handling gusty winds.





Make/Model LEGO Technic BMW R 1200 GS Adventure
Year 2017
Engine Horizontally opposed two cylinder
Capacity 0.9 cc
Bore x Stroke 8 x 9 mm
Cooling System Air cooled
Compression Ratio 2.24:1
Exhaust Upswept 2-into-1
Induction Naturally aspirated
Max Torque Braaaaaap!
Final Drive Shaft
Frame Acrylonitrile butadiene styrene
Front Suspension Spring strut

Front Wheel Travel 13 mm
Rear Suspension Spring strut
Rear Wheel Travel 17 mm
Wheels Black, cast plastic, 65 x 15 mm
Length 340 mm
Max Width 95 mm
Max Height 194 mm
Seat Height 126 mm
Wheelbase 236 mm
Wet Weight 0.47 kg
Ground Clearance 44 mm
Rake 26 degrees
Trail 56 mm