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40 Years Celebration

THE
MAGNATES
A GAME OF POWER

UNDERWATER POWER STRUGGLE

ABYSS

TERRITORIES, INFLUENCE AND VOTES

ABYSS is in practice a "Card Game" so its box is really oversized for its contents and the board could have been avoided because its utility is really very, very marginal. But the editor (the French Bombyx) decided to make a marketing operation publishing the game with 5 different box covers. Each cover is different both in shape (all depict a menacing big "face" of one of the habitants of an undersea world) and color (pink, blue, green, yellow and yellow/reddish). Thus customers may purchase the face and/or color that they wish.

But of course marketing and artists cannot transform a bad game in a good one, so, let's proceed and see what we have to expect from this title. The place is somewhere down the deep waters of the Ocean: here some powerful "creatures" ruled the kingdom of Abyss in harmony with all the others races, protecting them from nasty monsters. Unfortunately even in the best kingdom (over or under waters) elections have to be held for the new King and we (players) are the new Candidates.

THE SILENCE OF THE WATERS IS CUT BY

VOICES COMING FROM THE ASSEMBLY
The 440x540 mm board shows the great Assembly of the underwater kingdom with thousands of creatures divided in 5 big sectors, one for each "Allied" race: Medusas (Pink), Crabs (Orange), Hippocampus (Yellow), Nacres (Green) and Polyp (Blue). They are all represented in the game by 13 cards (values ranging from 1 to 5).

(See picture 1)

On the bottom part of the board we see the "Nobles" of Abyss (represented by 35 large cards). The top of the board will host 5 Allied cards during the "Exploration" phase. The game also includes: 1 "Menace" track (63x260 mm); 20 "Territory" tiles (60x215 mm); 20 disc "Monster Points"; 10 "Keys"; 50 "Pearls" (wonderful) and 5 small basins (thermoformed as oysters) to hold the pearls (and you absolutely need them because pearls tend to roll down the table ...); 1 small notebook to mark the final Victory Points (VP).

Set up is quick and easy: each player gets an "oyster" with 1 pearl inside, then the "Allied" cards are shuffled and the deck is po-

sitioned on the top-left part of the board while 6 "Noble" cards are displayed on the bottom part. Finally one Territory tile is randomly taken and displayed.

Each player, on his turn, may bring new nobles on the board, must take an action and, if he collects at least 3 keys, must take a ter-

ritory. If a players collects 7 Nobles or if the Nobles deck is exhausted the game ends.
SPEAKERS TRY TO CONVINCE THE ASSEMBLY TO VOTE FOR THEM
Players start the game with just one pearl and they need to get more of them in order to influence their allies: pearls are collected defeating the Monsters, exploring deeply the Abyss, recruiting Nobles and ... being paid by other players.

The first decision that each player has to take is to RECRUIT or not new Nobles (in games terms, turn new cards from the deck): this will not happens at the beginning of the game, both because the Nobles track is full and ... you do not have enough pearls. But in the "middle" game very often you do not see the Noble that you need on the display so you may try to find one in the deck: you pay 1 pearl and you turn face up a Noble, positioning him on the display. If the

Bild 1 - Picture 1

display is full or if the deck is empty you cannot use this action.

Then players must TAKE AN ACTION selecting one of the following possibilities:

1 - EXPLORE THE ABYSS: you take a card from the "Allied" deck and you show it to everybody. Then you offer the card to the other players (in turn order): if they wish it they pay pearls to you (1 pearls for the first card offered, 2 for the second and 3 for the third) adding the card to their hand. If nobody wants the card you may take it for free or you may place it in one of the five "hosting" cases on the board. Then you turn another card and you repeat the process. If the first 4 cases are now filled (and this does not happens too frequently, for the reasons that we will see later) you have now to offer the 5th card: if nobody wants it you MUST take it (for free) but you also receive 1 pearl.

The deck contains also 6 Monster cards (Morays): when they appear you still offer them as usual, but if somebody takes it a "fight" has to follow (see below). When you take a card, adding it to your hand, your turn ends and pass to the following player and all the cases must now be emptied: monsters are discarded and Allies are placed face down on the Assembly (each color on the related position).

(See picture 2)

2 - RECRUIT ALLIES: instead of exploring the abyss you may take all the cards from one of the five positions on the Assembly. Of course a little memory effort will help you in your decision (you will be happy to takes cards with value from 3 to 5, if they are available) but this is not so fundamental. Allies are necessary later to recruit Nobles, so this action is alternative to the exploring "slow" process (one card per turn) and will save you a lot of time ... if your opponents were kind enough to leave some cards in the display.

3 - RECRUIT NOBLES: this is the most important action of the game, as Nobles will grant you VP, some special "powers" and the

"keys" that are necessary to take control of a territory. Each Noble may have up to four characteristics:

(a) - Cost: this number shows the total value (in Allied cards) that you need to pay to get the noble. Some of them need only ONE TYPE of Allies because they belong to one race only (for example the MASTER OF MAGIC belongs to the Medusa/Pink race), but most of them need 2 or 3 types. This means that you must pay that cost using exactly this number of allies, including the original race of the Noble (the Master of Magic needs 3 races to be recruited, of which one must be Medusa). The total value of each race is not important as long as you use the right number of races and the minimum cost of the noble. You may also use pearls to pay (partly or totally) the cost, but the number of races must be fulfilled in any case.

(b) - VP value: The number of VP granted by the noble at the game's end.

(c) - Power: most (but not all) of the cards have a power that the player may use once (if the card shows one "arrow") or many times in the game. Those powers let you have some advantages (discounts in recruiting new Nobles, pearls, free Allies, attacks, etc.).

(d) - Keys: again most (but not all) of the cards have a key on the top right side. Keys are necessary to take control of new territories. There are 5 Ambassadors (one per race) that have 3 Keys and therefore they immediately grant a new territory to you: but to take control of one Ambassador you need to have Allies of ALL FIVE races (and the usual number of requested points).

After having paid the necessary cost you will put in a Reserve the lowest value Allied card: it becomes one of your faction's ASSOCIATED member.

(See picture 3)

3 - CONTROLLING TERRITORIES: as we have already seen players need 3 keys to get a new Territory. As soon as they have those

Bild 2 - Picture 2

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40 Years for WIN
Dagmar de Cassan, Editor-in-Chief

Yes, International Toy fair is behind us and again we have seen many games, which we would like to try instantly.

But, really, now would be the time to play all those games that we brought home from Essen, because Essen was only four months ago and there were quite a few games there, for instance THE MAGNATES, of which or Markus says that for him it was the best Essen game. How do I make up my mind about a new game? Due to this plethora of games it is not easy to play all games several times, one has to make a preselection.

And this preselection is different for each gamer, the various preferences and player characters meet in the competition on finding the best game. Twice a week, in our games club, we have time and many visitors to try out all games with that purpose in mind.

Here, in WIN, you find our opinions on current games, games that maybe should find their way into your collection and appear on your games table regularly.

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For all information on that check our website.
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Bild 3 - Picture 3

3 keys (both from nobles and/or from defeating monsters) the players MUST select a territory: they may look at the already displayed (face up) territories or they may pick up to 4 new ones from the deck and select one of them, leaving the others face up. All the used keys are sent back on the reserve, while the nobles are placed behind the new acquired territory: thus they lose their powers. Selecting the right Territory is a very important action, in this game, as they will grant you, at the game's end, a "fixed" number of VP and a "variable" number of points if you satisfy certain conditions. For example the SANCTUARY offers 4 VP and 3 extra VP for each Associated member of the Medusa faction that you have collected.
(See picture 4)

I already named the MONSTERS but I never gave any detail on them: we just know that monsters can be encountered during the Exploration action. As usual those cards must be offered to the other players and they can buy it for 1-2-3 pearls. The players

Bild 4 - Picture 4

Color codes, target groups, features, icons and GABIS are explained on page 5 and at the bottom of pages 46 and 47

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who takes the Monster has to fight it: he "kills" it automatically receiving the bonus indicated on the "Menace" mini-board.

This has 6 cases and each case grant a certain Bonus: case 1, for example, let you decide between receiving a pearl OR taking a "Monster Bonus"; the third case will grant you a "Key"; the fifth the possibility to get a Key and to select between 2 pearls, or 1 pearl and 1 Bonus or 2 bonuses. Bonuses are cardboard discs (35 mm) that grant from 2 to 4 VP at the game's end: the players take them randomly from a reserve and keep them secret.

Monsters may also be refused by all players: therefore they are placed on the 5 storage cases exactly as the other cards "Allies". If you ignore a Monster the indicator on the Menace board will advance one case, thus offering a better price for killing one of them in a future turn.

THE ASSEMBLY IS FINISHED: NOW WE HAVE TO WAIT FOR THE NEW KING

This game is addressed to families and casual gamers: the Rulebook is really very well done and easy to read, rules are clear and after a first reading you do not need to go back to them; components are strong a very appealing. For regular players ABYSS is still a challenge. I noticed the difference after having assisted at a couple of games between my younger son and his friends (all 18-19 years old) where they used an aggressive and direct approach. Playing the same game at my club with regular players the strategies changes a lot. Expert players probably will not like this game too much, mainly because of the important luck factor (when you have to randomly sort cards "Lady Luck" is always important). But if you do not disdain to play against luck the game is enough competitive to immediately ask for a "Bis".

What I most like in ABYSS is the proper use of pearls: in effect it will take a couple of games to understand their "real" importance, but then the players will learn when and how many to stock in a "calm" phase of the game, and when it will be time to spend them to acquire GOOD Allied cards (those with 4-5 Points). In a game, for example, I took notes about one player who war apparently ... sleeping until the middle game (but collecting pearls and pearls) when he suddenly "woke up" (while he was first or second to bid), purchasing up to 3 offered cards (6 pearls in total) and immediately acquiring the best available Nobles. Pearls have no role in the VP calculation: they are only used if two players have the same VP total at the game's end, giving the victory to the person with most pearls.

The second "tactical" comment is about the proper acquisition of the Allied cards. You need to "differentiate" since the beginning, and this for three reasons:

1 - With 5 different races you may acquire a (very powerful) Ambassador

2 - All other Nobles just require that you have at least "one "card of their race plus different race cards as indicated. Therefore having a good reserve of different races may help very much when necessary.

3 - Always remember that when you acquire a new Noble you also create an ASSOCIATED member for your faction and this must have the lowest points value between the ones that you spent. Therefore you have to try to acquire cards with 3-4 points and to spend them without using lower numbered ones. In games with expert players this will make the difference.

The WINNER will be the player with most VP and those are collected as follows:

- The "Monster Points" (turn up your tiles and show their contents)

- The "Noble Points" (the number Left/High on each card)

- The Terrain Tiles (fixed VP and variable VP for having performed the other tasks on the tile)

- The "Associated Points": you divide your Associated per faction and then you take the "strongest" of each faction. ☑

Pietro Cremona

INFORMATION

Designer: B. Cathala, C. Chevallier
Artist: Xavier Colette
Price: ca. 70 Euro
Publisher: Asterion 2014
www.asmodee.de

PLAYERS:	**2-4**
AGE:	**14+**
TIME:	**60+**

EVALUATION

Fantasy, cards
Users: With friends
Version: it
Rules: de en fr it pl
In-game text: yes

Comments:
Attractive components * Good rules * Easy enough for casual players, interesting enough for experienced players

Compares to:
Games with victory points acquisition over several intermediate steps

Other editions:
Asmodee, Bombyx, Rebel.pl

My rating: ★★★★★

THE WILD CLIFFS OF ANDOR

DIE LEGENDEN VON ANDOR

CHADA & THORN

Color codes, target groups, features, icons and GABIS are
explained on page 5 and at the bottom of pages 46 and 47

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Arrow-maid Chada and Thorn, the Warrior, got shipwrecked on the shore of the mysterious, curse ridden Island of Silverland. Where once pirates roamed, the two heroes now must find a way to the southern coast. There, they hope, an allied Dwarf people will help them. Because, as the narrative of Legends of Andor goes, Chada and Thorn

Martin & Martina

Finally there is a Two-Player-Version for fans of "Legends of Andor". All those who are rather less enthusiastic about "Andor" should pass on the adventures of "Chada & Thorn" as well, though. These scenarios are even more trying.

want to go to the main continent of Andor to help in the fight for liberty, peace, free admission to museums and other sublime goals.

Like the original game "The Legends of Andor", published by Michael Menzel in 2012, "Chada & Thorn" created by Gerhard Hecht is a cooperative game for two players in the World of Andor. Either the archer and the fighter reach their destination together (and more or less at the same time), or both lose.

Included in the game are the character playing pieces (made of cardboard) and the spooky Curse playing piece (cardboard as well). Once summoned by a legendary king to fend off the pirate captain Callem, this Curse still haunts all strangers who disembark on the island without invitation. Furthermore, there are 36 "Adventure Cards", 60 playing cards and 20 Will points and 3 campfire markers. There is yet another character pawn (Stinner, the Corsair) in the box. Gerhard Hecht uploaded additional one-player rules for him on the internet: legenden-von-andor.de/bonus-material/stinner-solo-variante-fuer-chada-thorn/
"Adventure Cards" serve as the variable game board. For each of the four scenarios provided there is a Starting card, an End card and up to six in-between Trail cards. An entry scenario, the "Get-Started-Adventure" for testing purposes of the game's mechanisms, is printed directly in the rulebook; there are no "Adventure Cards" for this. To lay out the playing area, a Starting card and an End card are placed face up and between them two Trail cards (face down at the start of the scenario). The scenario's flavor text (the chapter of this particular Legend of Andor) as well as additional rules and special cards to be used in that scenario are explained on two additional Adventure Cards, very much alike to the scenarios in the original board game.
The character pieces and the "curse" are being placed on their respective starting spaces. How far they may move depends on

your action cards. These are laid out in three rows, according to the three different character cards for Chada and Thorn, respectively. Moreover, Chada's and Thorn's cards show varying possibilities for action in sunshine or in rain (front side – back side). These weather conditions as well as other action cards may affect the heroes' movement. At the beginning of the scenario, the heroine and hero each have three "Curse Cards" (one for each row of character cards; face down until put into action for the first time). In addition, they may also have "Friend Cards" (only up to one per row of cards). Some scenarios provide Chada and Thorn with additional equipment or Non Player Characters. During the scenario you will inevitably acquire more action cards (called "Mist [Fog?] Cards"). You will have to include them into the currently active row. These often represent opponents that you have to defeat in battle (simply compare combat values; tied or higher score mean the heroes win) or neutralize by performing certain tasks (printed on the card). Only the first card in a row may be the active card. After being activated, put it at the end of the row (or return them to the deck or take them out of the game, whatever is required).

Character cards offer three options: movement (usually three modes of speed at different costs, e. g. lose / spend Will Points or move the Curse piece forward), combat (against opponents being the uppermost card in your other rows, sometimes even in support of the other character, provided that that character pawn is on a neighboring space) or the character's special ability (for example, get a Will Point). By activating a "Curse Card", you will have to either move the Curse pawn, receive a (further) Mist (Fog) Card or lose one or more Will Points. Pretty unpleasant moves, but you can hardly avoid them. Mist (Fog) Cards, equipment cards and Non-Player-Character-Cards must be integrated into the card rows accordingly. This usually means a limitation of possibilities for actions of the characters.
All pawns, character and Curse pieces alike, move along the trail routes on "Adventure Cards". Character pawns have to pay for movement in movement points (or other, even more unpleasant requirements as may be printed on the trails and stops). The common goal is thus to rapidly reach the end-space of the "Adventure Card" and in the long run the end-space of the scenario's final "Adventure Card". Players may, indeed, have to discuss their tactics, cooperate and assist each other. It is important as well to slow down the movement of the Curse figure, because if the Curse reaches or overtakes one of the characters, Chada and Thorn lose immediately.

Almost like the basic game, this two-player variant is extremely challenging and rather difficult to get to the end space successfully. Chances are pretty slim for the heroes, even when employing the game rule variants (for example, starting with the help of all the "Friend Cards"). Even the "Get-Started-Adventure" is a bit misleading, since only very few action cards are used therein, e. g., not one of the Mist [Fog] Cards comes into play. The rules booklet is rather well written and relatively well structured and therefore easy to understand.

Whoever feels at home in the world of Andor and is well versed in its background stories, will certainly like this two-player version and may regard it as an interesting challenge and entertaining supplement. Even incorporating the two new characters into the board game might represent no problem for Andorians. As an introductory game into the world of Michael Menzel's fantasy adventures or as a stand-alone game, "The Legends of Andor. Chada & Thorn" is not suitable, though, even if text printed on the game box ("This game ... expands ... the Legends of Andor. However, it is not necessary to know the board game.") suggests otherwise. ☑

Martina & Martin Lhotzky

EVALUATION

Cooperative, 2 players
Users: For experts
Version: de
Rules: de
In-game text: yes

Comments:
Good rules * Familiarity with the board game is an advantage * No game for beginners, gaming experience is essential * Introductory game does not mirror the standard

Compares to:
Kashgar for the card mechanism, Die Legenden von Andor

Other editions:
Currently none

My rating:

WIEN 1913

GRAND AUSTRIA HOTEL

WAITER, THERE IS A WOODEN CUBE IN MY CAKE

„What's a Viennese's favorite pastime? Nothing – and only grudgingly!" (Severin Groebner). And yet, the absolute favorite pastimes of Viennese are ranting, grumbling, whining and nagging, despite or maybe just because this is of no use and therefore even meaningless and preposterous. Sometimes, whining can help, after all: My protest over too little Viennese flair in "Vienna" (See WIN 481, issue July 2015), has been noted by the Austrian Games Museum. The museum has published the tactical dice and card game "Wiener Ringstraße", just in time to the 150 Years Anniversary of the official opening of this ring road. The cards of the game – showing images that have been taken from historic picture post cards – are available for free download and are very suitable for a virtual promenade along Ringstraße – the download can be found at www.spielemuseum.at/spieleatelier.

The rules of „Grand AUSTRIA Hotel" too, make the golden heart of a Viennese beam happily: In those rules Waiter Leopold is up to his tricks and keeps commenting the rules with „Küss' die Hand" und „habe die Ehre" (polite Viennese greetings to a lady or gentleman" or even „Sie sind ja nicht deppert" (local dialect for "You are not a fool"). After all, the topic, too, for a start fits the title of the game very well: We are meant to make our fortune - in the guise of victory points - as a hotel owners in Vienna at the start of the 20th century. Our hotels, at the start, have only three guest rooms and must continuously be expanded and upgraded. Alas, there is no „Grand AUSTRIA Hotel" in Vienna, but there is the „Grand Hotel" at Kärntner Ring 9-13, which originally was built for living quarters and 1866 transformed into a hotel; in 1869 a new wing was added. The hotel is also known for the secret meetings of Crown Prince Rudolf and Mary Vetsera under its roof. Just across the road from „Grand Hotel", "Hotel Imperial" at Kärntner Ring 16, was first intended as a Palace for Duke Philipp Alexander von Württemberg and his wife, Arch Duchess Maria Theresia of Austria; before the World Exposition 1873 it was changed into a Hotel. "Hotel Bristol", too, at the corner of Kärntner Straße and Kärntnerring, was first run in a residential building and even before World War I the building hat suffered several reconstructions; and last but not least already at that time "Hotel Sacher" could be found.

Also very atmospheric and fitting are the resources that are used in the game – Cake, Strudel, Coffee and Wine. But, alas, with this we are done with flair and atmosphere. Cake, strudel, coffee and wine look exactly like the little wooden cubes that are used in countless other games for wood, stone, sand, coal and so on. Of course, one cannot expect cute little wooden pieces of cake in a game with a rather small print run, but with a little bit of imagination one could have improved a lot on the ambience. In fact, the cake is here represented by a wooden cube (I suppose this color is meant to represent whipped cream?) Why did they not choose pink and baptized the cube Punschkrapferl, for which the cube shape would have been an excellent simulation. And for coffee and wine, that is for cup and glass, discs would have been a much better simulation than cubes, especially as the drinks are acquired by another action than the sweets. Unfortunately, the symbols are also used on the character cards. Not even on those cards the resources are represented in "real" graphic symbols, there are again only images of the cubes, which in this case comes with the additional disadvantage of red and brown cubes being not easily distinguishable on the cards in case of non-optimum lights. After all, even the clearly less complex "Da Luigi", which uses the same basic concept – dared to "translate" the little wooden cubes into pictures of the food they are meant to represent.

Furthermore, most of the customer cards are, unfortunately, only identified by the name of a profession, even if the „Portrait Painter" was clearly inspired by Gustav Klimt. Concrete use and naming of persons from this period (as, for instance, in Café Melange) would have done the game a lot more good. At least there are – on the green tourist cards – a few amusing allegations and name giving; as regards to graphics the cards and the game boards are very beautifully designed and painted, something we can always expect from Klemens Franz. It remains a sad pity, that the efforts of design and components and the energy invested in it have only been sufficient halfway and did peter out.

The depicting of the „Neue Burg" on the central board must be called a historical er-

ror; it is meant to get Emperor Franz Joseph into the picture, but the building of „Neue Burg" was for the most part completed in 1913, and the rooms were never used by the Emperor (today the building is used by the Austrian National Library and the Museum of Art History). In its final stages, Emperor Franz Joseph lost interest in the project and transferred the overseeing of the building to the heir to the throne, Franz Ferdinand. The illustration is also missing the two rider monuments in front of Hofburg, despite those monuments being el-

Harald Schatzl

„Grand AUSTRIA Hotel" uses a nice basic dice mechanism in a way that leaves very nearly only extreme puzzlers to enjoy the game; a little less would have been a little more here. As regards to Viennese flair one would well wish for more, because this is only implemented very rudimentary.

der by decades that the "Neue Burg". Instead of the "Kaiserleiste" – Imperial Track" connected to "Neue Burg", on which the playing pieces move to and fro – it might habe been better to use a graphic implementation of the so-called „Ringstraßenkorso", the Ring promenade. The then so named Kärntner Ring was at that time a favorite hotspot and meeting point to see and be seen and for promenades of the „gentle folk". In this way there would have been created not only a harmonious context with the real hotels and the hotels of the other players, it would have made a lot more sense to invite the customer cards into your hotel from the "Ringstraßenkorso" instead of luring them away from a kind of garden part in front of "Neue Burg".

Finally we can direct our attention to the game itself: The names and the former oeuvres of the designer duo (Egizia on the one hand and Tzolk'in and Auf den Spuren von Marco Polo) are very promising references. The basic mechanism here, too, is dominated by dice; but contrary to "Marco Polo" they are not used in a worker placement mechanism, but all dice are rolled again at the start of each round and thus form a dice pool for all players. In your turn you choose and take one die and implement the action connected with it; each dice result is assigned one of six possible action options, with the Six being a joker for the other five actions. The more dice are placed at the chosen action the stronger and more powerful the action is. The advantage for the starting player that arises from this mechanism, is – similar to the starting phase of Catan – balanced by reversing the turn order, that is the starting player is first and then last player of a round.

Elegant and fair as that implementation may be, it can be experienced as least as tedious due the down time for the other players. A player turn in this game can easily take several minutes, as we are playing a game that demands "painstaking diligence, accurateness, expertise and a certain delight in the solving of logic puzzles and brain teasers", as the Constitutional Court or Tribunal has stated, albeit in another context altogether. And as there is no indication, how many dice will be available in one's second turn, the starting player cannot really plan his next action well in the waiting time. A game of "Grand AUSTRIA Hotel" should therefore only be started with four players, when all of them are already sufficiently familiar with

the game. Probably the game works best for three players, because if you play only with two player, you use only a total of 10 dice, so that you can rarely expect more than two dice at a certain action – after all, the main allure of the game lies in a dice distribution that deviates from the normative distribution that can statistically be expected.

At the same time, when reading the rules, one would be inclined to expect a rather quick game, as each player has only 14 turns in the game. And the individual actions, too, do not come across as being very time-demanding: For a result of One you acquire strudel and pieces of cake, for a result of Two you acquire wine and coffee. For a result of

three pips you expand your hotel with additional rooms; for a result of Four you get money and/or steps on the "Kaiserleiste"; for a result of Five you may play a personnel card from your hand; and a result of six pips works as a joker for any of those five options, because there are fewer dice or none at all for that result.

The time-consuming reason for the down time, on the one hand, comes from the personnel cards: At the start you either are dealt six random cards or you can also – in case all players are already familiar with the game – choose six cards by drafting. When those cards are played they give various advantages, which can be unique, permanent,

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valid for the round or become effective at the end of the game – comparable to the Minor Improvements and Occupation cards in "Agricola".

It is only logical that you want to use this advantages in an especially effective way. This decision on when which card is played to best advantage already, on its own, demands a certain amount of reflection, but the effect is definitely enhanced by the customer cards: To wit, after a customer card has been "filled" with the respective combination of food and drinks in demand, it moves into one of your own hotel rooms, which remains occupied to the end of the game, and yields, besides victory points, also a certain bonus.

In the final outcome this can open a can of worms of bonuses and consequences: For instance: I have two customers on display. One of them is lacking one glass of whine, which I acquire with the personnel card "barkeeper" that I did play earlier. So no the customer is "finished" and goes to one of my rooms. As a bonus I receive one strudel from this customer which I can use to make my second customer happy, that is, complete him. Thus, he also wanders into my hotel and presents me with a second bonus, which of course has to be considered carefully beforehand. Furthermore, the filling of rooms in my hotel can give me an additional bonus or even several bonuses, always when a closed region of the same color on the hotel board is completely filled – the rooms are available in red, blue and yellow colors. And, at long last, in this way I maybe manage to complete one of three general orders on display, which earn me the more points the earlier I can meet the requirements stated on it. And all those individual actions have resulted from my one free bonus action and I would now begin to implement my main action.

But, of course, the game does not usually "run away" in the way I have described just now, but the demand of the selection of new customers, the expanding of your own hotel with additional rooms, the timely acquisition of hotel bonuses and the earliest possible meeting of orders result in more and more reflections and pondering; the more personnel cards you have on display, the easier you can overlook an option, so that you need to reflect more and more at the start of your turn. In this game all players should be especially tolerant and allow belated corrections – albeit, of course if they are comprehensible, which is in their own interest as this might, maybe, reduce the waiting time for their own turn, hopefully. Favorite mistakes can be: Forgetting to take a customer card before your main action or

to mark an order that was completed.

At long last the fact that the chance element inherent in the game play, can, despite all the pondering and planning, destroy all the best plans of mice and men. It is not so much the random selection of dice and their results in a round that is experienced as disturbing, as this is not only a nice core mechanism of the game and you can react to it in several ways. On the one hand you are allowed to add a virtual die to your selection and thus strengthen the chosen action somewhat, albeit at the cost of one of the rather rare Kronen. And on the other hand you can pass the taking of a die for the moment, wait till the others have done their turns and can then roll the remaining dice again, minus one that is placed into the "garbage can". This can be repeated several times, without any guarantee that the desired result will appear.

The random distribution in the display of customer cards is felt to be much more disturbing or worse, because their respective bonuses can, by pure chance, fit your own concept, or maybe not. The distribution of the customer cards and the hotel rooms into the three colors of red, blue and yellow can have even more decisive consequences, whereby the green customer cards work as a kind of joker and can be put into any room. If I desperately need a yellow guest and the display offers only red or blue customer cards, the very best tactics will be to no avail. This effect is enhanced by the "Kaiserleiste": You should have moved a certain number of steps on it after every two or three rounds in order to be rewarded with victory points and an additional bonus. If you cannot manage to achieve this, you have to suffer a rather steep penalty. This might be considered to be fair, if you could accept this penalty deliberately, because other considerations seemed to be more important. But when the lap goal cannot be achieved only because there has been no chance at all to fill a yellow room on time, the resulting damage hits twice as strongly and unmerited, objectively and subjectively considered. The consequence will usually be that in the following rounds – maybe even for the rest of the game to the very end – the game will play worse for you than for the imperially rewarded fellow players.

Those color distinctions are open for questioning for the customer cards and the hotel rooms in more than one point: Why for heaven's sake should an artist (= yellow customer card) insist on moving only into a yellow room, that is into a room with a yellow door. It would be more logical if guests would prefer a certain level of the hotel. The

current concept is not only inconsistent, it also reduces the flair of the game and makes "Grand AUSTRIA Hotel" give off the flavor of an abstract placement game. Furthermore, players potentially interested in the game are rather frightened away than enticed to another game, and only extreme puzzler will have real fun with „Grand AUSTRIA Hotel." In certain ways the game is remindful of "Bora Bora", in which a positively ingenious dice using mechanism has been showered with so many options, also including bonuses here and bonuses there, that in the end you had a mental overload. The dice mechanism in "Grand AUSTRIA Hotel" is not ingenious, but alluring enough so that it is a pity that the designers did not reduce their obvious plethora of ideas to a better manageable amount. This reduction might have resulted in a reduction of variations – at the moment there are 56 more or less different customer cards and 48 different personnel cards, and also as regards to the general orders and the rewards/penalties on the Kaiserleiste plenitude is part of the concept – but also in games that would be played faster and more often. ☑

Harald Schatzl

EVALUATION

Resources management, action choice via dice pool
Users: For experts
Version: de
Rules: de en
In-game text: no

Comments:
Prone to extreme puzzling * Chance element can provoke frustration * Long down times with four players * Nice graphic design

Compares to:
Da Luigi, Panamax, My Village, Agricola

Other editions:
English edition, Mayfair Games

My rating: ★★★★★☆☆

ISLAND OF RARE SPECIES

LA ISLA

A_LLE L_IEBEN E_S A_NSPRUCHSVOLL

ALEA and Stefan Feld is the story of a co-operation between designer and publisher over many years. It began with RUHM UND EHRE (2006), went on with IM JAHR DES DRACHEN und NOTRE DAMES (2007), MA-CAO (2009), DIE BURGEN VON BURGUND (2011) and BORA BORA (2013).

What awards did this cooperation bring? Well, whatever you may think about rankings – for some players a good game only starts if it features 20 pages of rules and is a strategy game filling an evening with several ours of play, while some others are tasked too hard with a one-minute explanation of a game. Thus it is difficult to make comparisons. But one does not have to be conceited to be happy about awards, as, besides having an impact on one's ego, they usually have a noticeable impact on one's

bank account.
Well, to my knowledge, ALEA has managed 1. Place in Deutscher Spielepreis three times: In 1999 RA achieved second Place, but already in the second your of the publisher being in business TADSCH MAHAL did win the award in 2000. In 2002 came PUERTO ROICE and in 2005 LOUIS XIV.
And how did Stefan Feld fare with Deutscher Spielepreis? Well, he has been really unlucky there. In 2007, NOTRE DAME was worsted by SÄULEN DER ERDE, and in 2011 DIE BURGEN VON BURGUND again only landed in second place, beaten by 7 WONDERS; in 2012 his game TRAJAN was beaten by VILLAGE and in 2013, a really strong vintage, the excellent BRÜGGE was only ranked third behind TERA MYSTICA and TZOLK'IN. Here, at last, the Austrian Award Spiele Hit Für Freunde provided a bit of consolation.

And there is pretty much the same picture for „Spiel des Jahres". In the year 2006 when THURN UND TAXIS won Spiel des Jahres, REVOLTE IN ROM made the list of recommended games; in 2007 with ZOOLORETTO winning, NOTRE DAME also made the list, as did IM JAHR DES DRACHEN in 2008, and KELTIS won, with a similar result for DIE BURGEN VON BURGUND and LUNA in 2011, with QWIRKLE winning. From then on, when we take a look at recent nominations, Stefan Feld's games are probably no longer really suitable for the players targeted by Spiel des Jahres Award. But the Award Kennerspiel des Jahres has been created for exactly that kind of games. In 2011 STRASBOURG was nominated, but lost against 7 WONDERS; 2013 the same thing happened to BRÜGGE against DIE LEGENDEN VON ANDOR, in 2014 AMERIGO made the list of recommended games, and the winner was ISTANBUL. Luck really did not favor Stefan Feld in that respect. If you look at the range of his game over the years he is, in my opinion, second to none in accumulated "points". So, after this retrospect, what can we expect from LA ISLA?

www.gamesjournal.at

The cover of the box in the GLEN MORE size shows nearly extinct animals in a cut-out section, animals that must be explored and caught in the game. The board itself consists of a 10-cornered board to which 10 „teeth" are added in random selection. This ensures that each game is different due to the varying arrangement of the board parts. On the completed tableau in a jungle design you distribute 35 tiles featuring five different types of rare species. There is the Dodo

Rudolf Ammer

A Stefan Feld game that is simpler than what we are used to, nicely designed and featuring very clear rules.

Bird, The Giant fossa, The Golden Toad, the Sardinian Pika and the Owleth Moth. All of these animals are real, but are deemed to have been extinct for a long time. There are eight tiles of each kind, one was thoughtfully provided as replacement tile, probably to avoid being pestered by replacement demands from careless players.

Eight explorers each in colors red, white, blue and black, represented by small, wobbly plastic figurines set out to search for those animal species. There are also four cardholders with three options for placement, which play in important role in the game, together with 180 cards. 120 cards can be categorized as easy, 60 need to be rated difficult. The rules recommend an introductory game with the easy version. In addition to the main board there is also a board with Kramer track and five tracks for the various animals, with five purple markers to indicate position. Five double-sized animal tiles and 60 cubes, representing resources in 5 colors, supplement the straightforward components.

The board, that is the island jungle, is interrupted by various single colored cases, which are marked with tent, water bottle, rope, backpack and Stetson. This produces segments of values 2, 3 and 4, depending on the boarders. This is also indicated by numbers with the segments.
At the start of the game each player is dealt one of the large animal tiles, which provide a small starting advantage for the respective species, and one resource of each color.

Each of the following rounds begins with a card phase and then four action rounds are played. In the card phase each player draws three cards from the pile, each of those cards offers three options: First of all, a bonus, if you decide to place the card in your card holder – the bonus can be an additional resource, a color for a joker or additional advancement on the animal track. A

second option is to acquire a resource in the color indicated on the card or, as the third option, to advance the animal marked on the card on the track. You place each of the three cards beneath one of the slots marked on the cardholder with A, B and D.

Now, the action phases are implemented. In Phase A you take the card that you assigned to slot A and put it into the card holder, the card shows now the bonus that you chose and take. The bonus is now valid – maybe even over several rounds – until replaced by another later in the game. Identical functions are not allowed.
In Phase B you turn over the card under slot B and take the resource indicated on the card from general stock. The card is then discarded.
Phase C is used to place an explorer on the jungle board. This happens in turn, beginning with the starting player. Explorers are placed on the colored cases and you pay two corresponding resources of this color. IF you have now explorer left, after five rounds the earliest, you can relocate one of your own on the board. If you cannot place an explorer or do not want to do so, you may take a resource of your choice instead. If your explorers have surrounded a jungle segment with an animal you take the animal. Then you advance on the Victory Point Track according to the number of explorers involved.
In Action D the last remaining card is revealed and the animal, that is depicted in the bottom right-hand corner, is advanced one step on the corresponding animal track. Furthermore, the player advances one step on the Victory Point track for each animal tile of this kind that he owns. The big tile represents two animals.

The end of the game is triggered by the numbers at the edges of the animal tracks. Depending on the number of players, the game ends instantly at 7 to 11 points as soon as all animals together result in this total sum.
The final scoring awards 10 points for each complete set of five animals. Furthermore, each animal is multiplied with the number that it has reached on the track and the value is marked for points. Finally, you get 1 point for every two resources that you own.

My opinion: The game is chance-dependent due to the three cards that I draw at the start of a round. If the combination fits my strategy and if they correlate with my special abilities is out of my control. Each round the same dilemma. Which special ability do I replace with a new one, which resource do I need in phase 2 to have two of the same color or to be able to place the explorer on a ter-

ritory of my choice? Which animal do I force in phase D. Will I stay with the animal that I was randomly assigned at the start of the game (is equal to two animals in scoring) to achieve as high a multiplicator as possible at the end? But this decision might trigger the end of the game faster than I would like it to happen. Those criteria make for a varied and interesting game.

As regards to components: The board with the animals tracks is made from very thin card board. I would have expected the same quality as used for the island parts. The explorer figurines also come across as cheap. Really bad, however, are the summary cards, made from thin cardboard. They are simply too small and very hard to read, they could easily be twice their size.

But enough complaining, LA ISLA was welcomed by my fellow players as a good game and that is the most important thing, after all. A nice touch is the small box size, which suits me and my scarcity of space very well, for my collection of more than 2000 games. I would recommend the game to families who have gaming experience and for games among friends and, of course, for all fans of Stefan Feld. ☑

Rudolf Ammer

INFORMATION

Designer: Stefan Feld
Artist: Alexander Jung
Price: ca. 25 Euro
Publisher: alea/Ravensburger 2014
www.Ravensburger.com

PLAYERS:
2-4

AGE:
10+

TIME:
60+

EVALUATION

Set collecting
Users: With friends
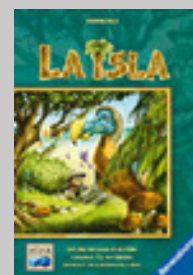Version: multi
Rules: de en fr
In-game text: no

Comments:
Variable board * Varying use of cards * Lots of fun to play

Compares to:
Set collecting games with collecting via several preparation steps

Other editions:
Currently none

My rating:

CONFLICTS WITHIN AND OUTSIDE POLAND AND LITHUANIA

THE MAGNATES: A GAME OF POWER

THE POWER OF CARDS

I would call my self a died-in-the-wool frequent gamer. I have played a lot of board games, have attended quite a few game fairs and have had many games explained to me at those fairs. Usually those explanations follow pretty much the same procedure: You sit down at a free table, wait for the explanation and then play the game. Sometimes we did not finish a game. Big surprises did not come up on those occasion over the last years. Why do I start a review with such intrinsically trivial sentences?

Because I was very much surprised at this year's SPIEL in Essen. This surprise happened at the booth of Phalanx Games, which is a Polish company with a preference for historical games. As usual, I did sit down at a table with the intention to try out The Magnates: A Game of Power. So far, so good. But then the surprise happened: Despite a lot of protests from some players the lady who did the explaining refused to explain the complete game. She only did explain the current phase as the game. I have to add that the game is played over a maximum of four rounds, and that each round is split into five phases, whereby phases 1 and 5 are happening automatically. The other phases 2 to 4 are very similar. All players have a set of 13 cards of their family for each round, players represent the heads of those families. Those sets are equal as regards to games mechanisms. Each card shows a value of 2 to 14 power points. Over the course of three phases those 13 cards must be distributed to 14 cards, and that must be done face down and simultaneously.

In Phase 2, the Senate phase, the four Senate cards are distributed. Players must bid on three of those four Senate cards by placing one of their family cards face down next to it. Who bid the highest power card, gets the Senate card.

In Phase 3, the Sejm phase (Sejm was the Estates Parliament of the Polish-Lithuanian Nobility Republic) five cards are revealed. No each player must place one family card next to each Sejm card. Again the player who placed the highest power card receives the Sejm card.

In Phase 4, the Conflict phase, five conflict cards are revealed. Again, each player places one family card next to each conflict card. Then, for one conflict card at a time, the family cards placed next to a conflict card are revealed. If the total of the family card values is higher than the Threat value depicted on the Conflict card, players have won the Conflict together and the player who did play the highest card earns a bonus. Should players lose the conflict, something very bad happens according to the information on the conflict card, usually the player who contributed the lowest card is hit the hardest. Conflict cards that were won are taken out of play, the other remain on the table and you turn up fewer cards accordingly in the next round.

Furthermore, the conflict cards are assigned to the big neighboring realms of Poland-Lithuania – Austria, Prussia, Sweden, Russia and the Ottoman Empire. When there is a minimum of one lost conflict on display face up in front of three of those realms, Poland-Lithuania is split and all players have

lost the game: Historical facts on this: The real Poland-Lithuania was split in 1795 between Austria, Prussia and Russia and thus disappeared from maps of the world for more than 100 years, at least as an independent sovereign state.

Most of the cards, regardless if Senate, Sejm or Conflict cards, allow you – when you win them – to place estates of your family into one of the five provinces marked on the board, or to remove estates of your opposing players. Other cards can raise the number of power points on family cards that you bid, or manipulate the game in other, but similar ways.

At the end of the game there is a scoring, players receive wealth for their family estates and majorities in provinces and you win with most wealth.

But now back to the lady explaining the game who kept refusing to explain the complete game. In hindsight I am forced to agree with her; this method definitely works with The Magnates. So we players had now idea what we had coming to us and therefore had to more or less randomly distribute our cards in the first round, which did not make a big difference, after all. Because I also distributed my cards randomly in the following two rounds when I already

did know what would happen. I admit that at this point my actions were also a bit governed by frustration, due to the rather limited options to actively shape the game.

In Round 4, to my surprise, something like tension or thrill occurred, due to the manipulation options due to the Sejm cards collected so far and also due to the looming final scoring. In this round, for the first time, I did place my cards selectively and finally had the feeling that I was actively shaping the game.
In the end I did win the game very clearly, despite the fact that the other player s at the table did not follow my strategy of distributing my family cards over three rounds completely randomly.

Well, what opinion can I have of an alleged strategy game that you can when by playing your cards randomly? And I am firmly convinced that selective placing of the cards would not have resulted in a noticeably better result. Maybe the result would have been even worse, due to the psychological effect of the ostentatious shuffling of cards before playing them.
My first impression was bad, really bad! That bad that I did hope that we might lose three conflicts in Round 2 so that the game would end really quickly.

Well, and at the end of the day the game was not really that bad, two of my three fellow players even had a positive impression and declared that they would want to play again. Well, I wouldn't go that far, but I have

Markus Wawra

At first glance a strategy game, at least as regards to design and components. But that it is not. It is a simple auction game, with a hidden" auction as a basic mechanism) in an opulent historical setting. For me personally it offers too few option to actively influence play. Therefore it is not my game. But at least I learned something about Polish-Lithuanian history.

played a few worse games, albeit also a lot of very much better ones.

If you want to have fun with The Magnates: A Game of power you must have a preference for the historic Polish setting, because this historical context is the great strength of the game. At least from my non-historian point of view the game seems to be a very well made and very accurately researched simulation of the then current political system and of the circumstances that led to the downfall of the Polish-Lithuanian empire. The historical details are stated on each card. If you are interested, you can learn a lot about the Polish-Lithuanian history. ☑

Markus Wavra
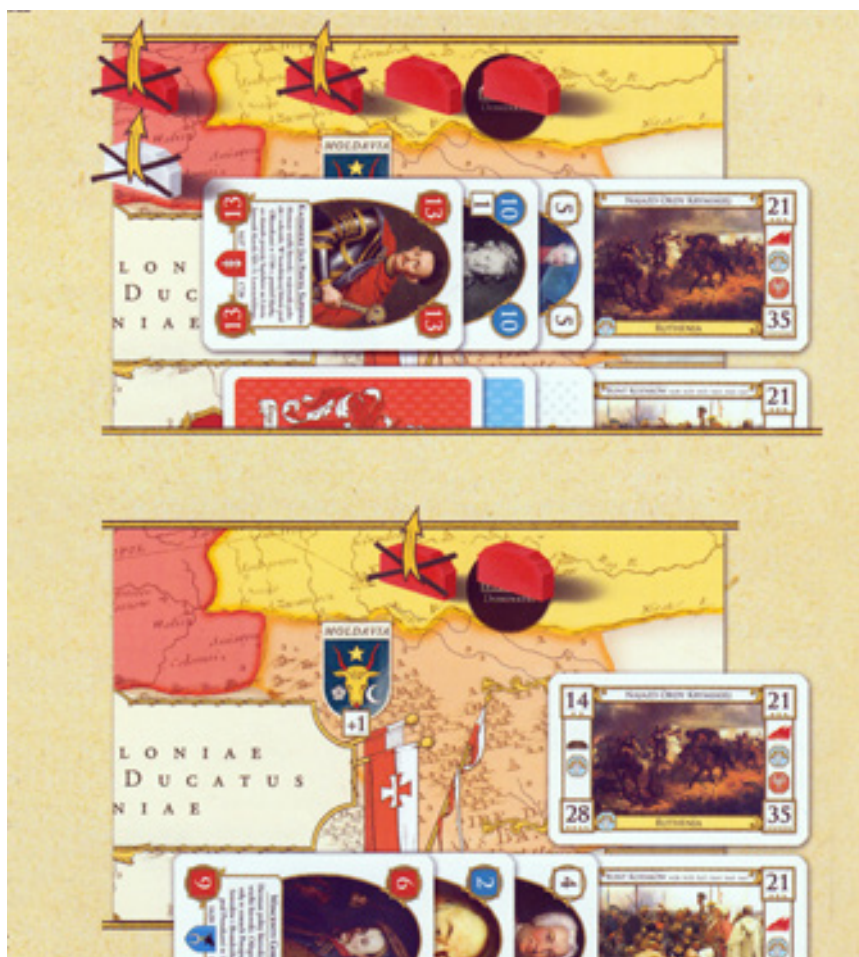
INFORMATION

Designer: Jaro Andruszkiewicz + Team
Artist: Jarek Nocoń, Piotr Słaby
Price: ca. 40 Euro
Publisher: Phalanx Games 2015
www.phalanxgames.pl

PLAYERS: 2-4
AGE: 14+
TIME: 60+

EVALUATION

Auction
Users: With friends
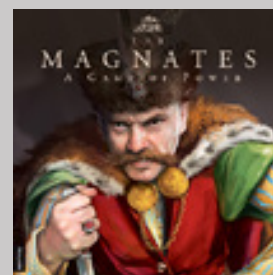Version: en
Rules: en pl
In-game text: yes

Comments:
Simple basic mechanisms * Beautiful components * Not very predictable

Compares to:
Friedrich, Maria

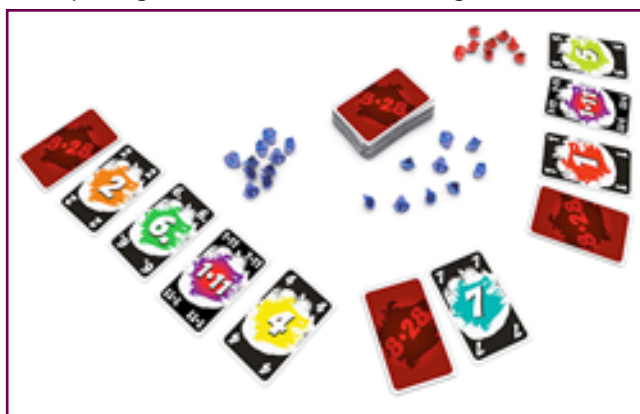**Other editions:**
Polish edition, Phalanx

My rating:

8 * 28
FORM SUMS, EARN GEMS

8↑

You want to get as near as possible to 8 or 28 with your collected cards and can earn gems each of those values. Should you manage to make up both sums exactly at the same time, you win all gems of the round. Cards are shuffled and stacked face-down. Then each player takes a card, looks at it and puts it down face-down. The active dealer puts a gem from stock in the middle – at first a blue one, later on a red one – and then offers a face-down card to all players in turn and, finally, to himself. If you accept a card, you put it down open-faced. When the total of your open cards tops 28, you are out of the round. In turn each player is active dealer, until nobody accepts a card anymore. Then the gems in the middle are given out: First the player whose cards come nearest to 8, takes half of the gems, the rest goes to whoever is nearest to 28. Should an undividable rest remain, it stays for the next round. 1/11 can be used as 1 or as 11.

If you have cards that would enable you to participate in both hand-outs, you decide on one of them. If you manage 8 and 28 exactly – which, for instance, is possible with cards 1/11+1/11+6 – you take all gems of the round. In case of a tie in sums you split the gems among those involved in the tie. For the next round all cards are shuffled again. When the first red gem is put into the middle, the game ends at the end of the round and then each blue gem is worth 1 point and each red gem 2 points, and you win with most points.

8*28 is an attractive fast gambling game, a lot depends on how early and if you get a 1 or a 1/11 card, if at all. Nice family game! ☑

EVALUATION

Sum formation with a limit
Users: For families
Version: multi
Rules: de en fr it
In-game text: no

Comments:
Simple rules * Quickly explained * Nice risk/gambling element

Compares to:
All games with limits on sums

Other editions:
Currently none

BANG! DODGE CITY
SHOOUTOUT FOR EIGHT

Dodge City is the second expansion for the card game Bang! The setting of the game is a satirical version of the Wild West. Each player secretly chooses a role (Sheriff, Deputy, Outlaw or Renegade) and a character with special abilities; only the player of the Sheriff is known to other players. You draw two cards and use a card to either assist yourself or you attack other characters within range. With "Bang" cards you shoot and you can deflect hits with "Missed" cards. If you are out of life points, you are out of the game. You win if you eliminate others: The Sheriff needs to eliminate Outlaws and Renegade, Outlaws the Sheriff and the Renegade needs to be the last one on the game.

The expansion now allows games for three players and also for up to eight players, introducing 15 new characters and 40 new cards, as well as eight new role cards for a game of eight players; those role cards replace those from the core game and introduce a second Renegade role. The two Renegade characters play independently from each other and each of them can only win if he is the last one in play.

Cards with a green border are played as usual, the card effect cannot be used in the same round in which the card was played, and the card is discarded after the effect was used. In a game of three the roles of Deputy, Outlaw and Renegade are used, with victory conditions of Deputy eliminating the Renegade, the Renegade eliminating the Outlaw and the Outlaw eliminating the Deputy. The winner is whoever achieves that goal first.

Bang! as we know it, the expansion varies and intensify play with new details, the three-player version is very clever. ☑
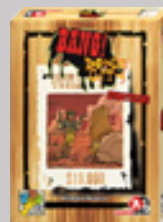
EVALUATION

Cards, Wild West
Users: With friends
Version: de
Rules: de en es it pl
In-game text: yes

Comments:
Rules of the basic game, a few changes * Now works for three and for eight players * Eight new role cards

Compares to:
All other editions of Bang!

Other editions:
dV Giochi, Italy; Edge Entertainment, Spain; Korea Boardgames; Bard Centrum Gier, Poland;

BELLZ
COLLECT COLORFUL BELLS

6↑

A pretty colorful pouch opens to form a game board shaped like a circle, made from soft cloth. On this board you spread 40 Bellz in four colors, there are 20 small, 12 medium and 8 big bells. Each player selects one color and tries to be the first player to collect all ten bells of his color.

The active player takes the magnetic stick and decides if he wants to use the thick end of the stick with a strong magnet or the thin end of the stick with a weak magnet, and then collects bells of his color with the selected end. The collected bells can adhere to the stick or hang on other bells. Within a turn you cannot change the end of the stick. You may go on collecting until you either collect another player's color or when bells fall off the stick.

In both cases you must put back all bells that you collected in this turn back onto the the game board and your turn ends.

If, on the other hand, you are happy with the number of bells you managed to pick up so far in your current turn, you can voluntarily end your turn. In this case you take the bells off the stick and set them aside outside the playing area. If you thus are first to have collected all ten bells of your color, you win.

Bellz is a visual pleasure, a game that is pleasant to look at and pleasant to handle, very beautiful and attractive, for the whole family. The idea, the rules and the mechanism are all very simple, and yet it is a challenge to collect your own bells and find the right mix of risk and caution to make sure that the turn does not end without any bells. Due to the pouch function of the game board the game is also ideally suited for holiday and travelling. ☑

EVALUATION

collecting, magnetism
Users: For families
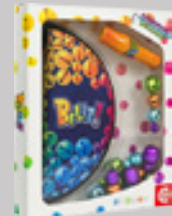Version: multi
Rules: de fr it en
In-game text: no

Comments:
Attractive, simple game
* Good mix of caution and risk * Ideal game for holidays

Compares to:
Other magnetic collecting games

Other editions:
Wiggles 3D, dV Giochi

BOSS MONSTER
RETRO DUNGEON CRAWL

An evil card game in the retro style of 8-bit video games, you want to be the ultimate villain and boss of your own dungeon. Your goal is to entice heroes into your dungeon and to win them for souls, but you might also have wounds inflicted by surviving heroes.

You build rooms and use their effects and also spells. At the start you are dealt a random boss monster and also room and spell cards und build your first room by displaying a first room card and implementing the effects. Rounds comprise the phases start of round, building, attracting, adventure and end of round. At the start of the round heroes equal to the number of players are laid out. In the building phase you construct one room, either on a free position or over an already existing room; you should carefully consider interactions and effects of rooms, they are the core element of the game. Then all players – for each hero on display – count the number of the hero's treasure symbols present in their dungeons; whoever has most of them, takes the hero. In the adventure phase the heroes attack: Each hero moves from room to room, takes damage and you can use room effects or spells against him. If he takes more damage than he has life points, you turn him over for a soul that you acquired. If he reaches your boss monster, you put him down openly for wounds received. At the end of a round you win with ten or more souls or lose with five or more wounds.

A bit of Munchkin, a bit of Hero Quest, nice retro design, cute flavor text and witty reversal of topic – an all-out attractive game for fans of the topic, albeit a lot chance-dependent. ☑

EVALUATION

Cards, fantasy, adventure
Users: With friends
Version: de
Rules: de en pl
In-game text: yes

Comments:
Good mix of mechanisms *
Cute reversal of topic * Very attractive retro design *
Easy and quick to learn

Compares to:
Pixel Tactic for graphics
Munchkin and other belt-the-opponent games

Other editions:
Brotherwise Games, USA; Trefl, Poland; Fever Games, Italy (announced)

BUTTONS
ROLL FOR THEM!

`8↑`

Buttons for stars! The game comprises four boards with different front and back sides, each board shows a grid of 36 colorful buttons and one vertical row of white dice symbols from 1 to 6 and a horizontal row from 1 to 6, so that each button has a unique position coordinate. You are randomly dealt a button color and in your turn decide to roll dice or to quit for the round.

If you roll, you use all currently available dice and all players can use the roll – non-active players can only use dice with golden pips – and place a button on their board on the bottom with the row and column coordinates of one white and any of the black dice. The active player must place a button, but you can never put button next to button orthogonally or put a button on a star. If you cannot place a button as active player, you discard all buttons on your board and set aside one die; you are out for the round as is the die, it cannot be rolled anymore for the round. If you quit voluntarily, you also set aside a die. When all players have set aside a die, the round ends and you get a star for quitting on time plus one star for each color with three covered buttons and another star if you covered three symbols in your own color. Then you place the stars on symbols with buttons, and remove all buttons for the next round. If you have collected five stars in an orthogonal row or 12 stars in total, you win the game.

Buttons is a very nice and well-working gambling game, which even allows a bit of tactic, especially for non-active players as they need not place, but can place a button. Quitting the round on time is also essential! ☑

EVALUATION

Dice, placement
Users: For families
Version: multi
Rules: de en fr it
In-game text: no

Comments:
Very pretty components *
Plays fast and easily * Tactic
is possible

Compares to:
All gambling games with
row formation over interim
steps

Other editions:
Currently none

CAPITAN FLINT
THE PARROT CAN LOSE YOU BOOTY

`8↑`

Capitan Flint's treasure has been found and you must calculate accurately how big a share you claim for yourself and you must be done before the parrot of Capitan Flint appears or maybe even his ghost. 85 loot cards showing jewels, pirates and Capitan Flint's Ghost are prepared and placed face-down into the treasure chest. 24 sack cards showing jewels and colors are shuffled and each player receives four cards; you keep reshuffling and dealing until each player has at least three different kinds of sack cards.

As active player you draw a card from the treasure chest. For a chest symbol you draw another card, and maybe another on, etc.; the pirate hook has no effect. When a hat appears and there are then three hats on display you take all cards from the middle if you are first to put your hand on Parrot Parche. If a pirate appears, all cards showing his jewel are removed from the middle. After implementing the card you can use a sack card or draw a second card and deal with its effects. If, at that point a pirate's hook is drawn, the turn ends. Otherwise, you can use a sack card after dealing with the second card's effects. If you use a sack card you show it to all players and take all cards from the middle corresponding to the sack card, which is discarded. When Capitan Flint's ghost appears or all are out of sack cards, you win with most points on your loot cards.

Yet another pirate's treasure to loot, in a very nice version of the topic, offering a good mixture of reaction speed and risk – do I add another loot card and risk pirate or hat, or do I take my pearl sack card and grab the three pearls currently on offer? ☑

EVALUATION

Pirates, treasure, reaction
Users: For families
Version: multi
Rules: ca de en es fr it
In-game text: no

Comments:
Standard topic, nicely
implemented * Nice family
game * Simple rules * Good
mix of mechanisms

Compares to:
All pirate treasure games
and games with reactions to card
symbols

Other editions:
Currently none

CARCASSONNE
STAR WARS EDITION

7↑

In a Galaxy far, far away … Carcassonne! Duels over asteroid fields or planets in the Star Wars universe, Carcassonne as we know and love it and yet very different.

76 tiles show trade routes, asteroid fields or planets. There are character cards for Yoda and Lude Skywalker with the symbol of the Rebel Alliance, Boba Fett with the Bounty Hunter symbol and Stormtrooper and Darth Vader with the Empire Symbol, plus five small and one big meeple for each character. You choose a character, place a tile per turn as usual and can place meeples for traders, explorers or conquerors. When I place my tile next to an already occupied planet, I can place my meeple there, too. When areas are joint and have several meeples, each of them fights with one die per meeple + one die for their own faction symbols in the area, up to a maximum of three dice. For each player the highest result is considered, the highest result of all wins the confrontation. The loser gets one victory point per die he used and the winner takes the area. In case of a tie, all those involved score one point and roll again, all others are out. Includes a team version for four players.

The dice fights do not really profoundly change Carcassonne, it remains a rather chance-driven game, that has an additional element of chance now, albeit one that brings a wind of change, but with loss of tactics. The missing meadow mechanism is very much absent, and a lost fight for a big asteroid field does really hurt. All in all the game provides a nice trip to the stars for anyone who likes dice; in any case, a good introduction to Carcassonne. ☑

EVALUATION

Tile placement, dice
Users: For families
Version: multi
Rules: de en fr it
In-game text: no

Comments:
Even more chance-driven than Carcassonne * Easier to play due to missing meadows * Well suited as an introduction to Carcassonne

Compares to:
All other editions of Carcassonne

Other editions:
Currently none

CARD 'N' GO
USED IN SCHOOL AND CAN BE RECYCLED

👥 7↑

Similar to the game Soqquadro you race across the house and search for items named on cards – but it is up to each player to interpret the cards. Something sweet could be chocolate or your beloved old teddy bear from childhood days. There are task cards in three colors, and also special cards and joker cards that can be used for any of the three colors. The special cards give additional tasks that must combined with the normal task card.

All cards are shuffled together and for a round you turn up one card less than there are players in the game. Special cards that appear are set aside, they do not count towards the necessary number of cards, but are read out after cards are turned up and need to be combined with the task card so that you can claim a card, for instance "something sweet" with "from the kitchen". When the cards are revealed all race off and try to find something that corresponds to one of the cards. Whoever is back first with something suitable for a card, claims the card – if someone arrives later with another item for a card already taken, he is out of luck and must find something suitable for another card.

A player can only claim one card in any round and a round ends when all cards have been claimed/taken. As there is one card less than there are players, there will always be one player who does not get a card in any given round. The winner of the game is whoever has won three cards of the same color or one card in each of the colors.

A known mechanism has been varied and introduces action into the game; it is probably necessary to agree on limits about what can be taken or where players can search. ☑

EVALUATION

Search for given items
Users: For families
Version: de
Rules: de en
In-game text: yes

Comments:
Known mechanism with new details * Nice movement and agility game * Limits need to be agreed

Compares to:
Soqquadro, Cranio Creations

Other editions:
Card 'n' Go Seek, Mattel USA

CUBINGOS

FUR AND MIEN NEED TO CORRESPOND

Cubingos are cute little beasties with a fluffy fur coat, but they are temperamental and keep changing the color of their fur and their miens. 13 Cubingos cubes show a Cubingo at each edge, one half on one side of the cube, the other half on the other side. So you can form a complete Cubingo at the edges by setting two cubes next to each other. 16 cards show differ-

ent Cubingos. The blue starting cube is set out in the middle, the other Cubingo cubes are stock. A card is revealed and each player takes any Cubingo cube – they are all identical – and tries to make up the Cubingo depicted on the card by placing his cube next to the starting cube. The cube can be rotated any which way for this. In this starting round you may only place

your cube next to the starting cube, in all following rounds you may place a cube on top of a cube, that is, stack them. This can result in Cubingos formed at a right angle, one half on the bottom cube, the other one on the cube on the second level, shifted by one position.

If you think that you have formed the Cubingo on the card, you call "Cubingos". The round stops, nobody can place a cube any longer. Then your Cubingo is controlled. If You achieved the correct one, you take the card and take a new cube from stock.

If your Cubingo does not match the one on the card, you take back your cube and pass until the Cubingo is formed. When all cubes have been placed or all cards have been won, you win with most cards.

Cubingos is an attractive spotting game with a 3D component, exactly right for the targeted age group, visual appearance and degree of difficulty suit very well. ☑

INFORMATION

PLAYERS:	AGE:	TIME:
2-4	5+	15+

Designer: Bergman, Concept
Artist: not named
Price: ca. 21 Euro
Publisher: Piatnik 2015
www.piatnik.com

EVALUATION

Placement, pattern
Users: For children
Version: multi
Rules: cz de fr hu it nl pl sk
In-game text: no

Comments:
Cute characters * Simple rules * 3D component exactly right for the age group

Compares to:
Spotting games on combinations of parts

Other editions:
Lautapelit, Finland

DER HERR DER RINGE DAS KARTENSPIEL

DAS VERLORENE KÖNIGREICH

Players are a fellowship of heroes encountering dangerous adventures in Middle Earth. The card types used in the game are called hero cards, player cards, encounter cards and adventure cards, In turn you now either put down a fellowship card from your hand in one of your own groups and then maybe lead that group into combat or you draw a card from the deck

of ring cards. When symbols on your own fellowship cards correspond with symbols on enemy cards on display, you can lead the group into combat and use special abilities of fellows within the group. Defeated Enemy cards go to the winner, fellowship cards used in combat are discarded. Mordor cards result in loss of cards from your hand or from a group on display

or even an enemy card that you defeated. When at least one player survives till the last stage of the adventure deck has been mastered, all players have won together.

Das Verlorene Königreich / The Lost Realm is the fourth deluxe expansion, featuring 165 cards, on the topic of Dúnedain Rangers versus the followers of the Dark Lord. There are nine Encounter sets for three new Scenarios - Eindringlinge im Chetwald, Die Wetterberge and Der Totendeich – as well as two new Dúnedain heroes and allies, rules and new terms are Time X, Encounter und Side Quests, with rules for Encounters Side Quests, player Side Quests and Side Quests in play.

The everlasting fascinating topic is cleverly continued and uses minor locations from the Lord of the Rings epic tale in thrilling narratives, as usual you need to use your cards cleverly and save cards using special abilities, the mechanism is still set collecting. ☑

INFORMATION

PLAYERS:	AGE:	TIME:
1-4	13+	60+

Designer: N. French, C. Grace
Artist: Brian Schomburg + Team
Price: ca. 20 Euro
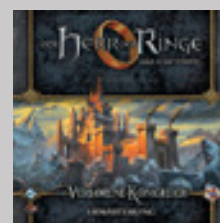**Publisher:** Heidelberger 2015
www.heidelbaer.de

EVALUATION

Fantasy, LCG, set collecting
Users: With friends
Version: de
Rules: de en fr it pl
In-game text: yes

Comments:
Well-made continuation of the saga * Three new scenarios * New rules and keywords

Compares to:
Other Living Card Games

Other editions:
Fantasy Flight Games, Edge Entertainment, Giochi Uniti, Galakta

Color codes, target groups, features, icons and GABIS are explained on page 5 and at the bottom of pages 46 and 47
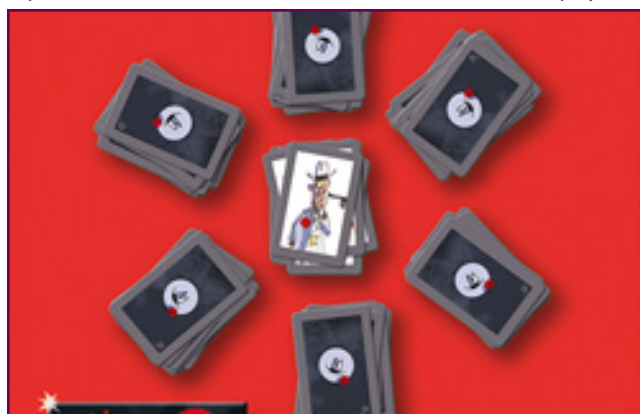
www.gamesjournal.at

DIE FIESEN 7

SILENT RACKETEERS COUNT, TOO!

8↑

Nasty racketeers, seven nasty racketeers are sitting in the back premises and gamble for their loot share, while whispering, talking on the phone or simply remaining silent.

110 cards are dealt evenly to all players – an eventual rest is set aside – and all hold their stack of cards face-down in their hands. The active player reveals his top card – he sees it last. For a racketeer he calls out the current number of racketeers – you start counting at 1, count up to 7, back down to 1, up to seven again, and so on. When a racketeer with a mobile phone appears, you must harrumph and should a racketeer with a pistol appear, you have to keep silent. When two racketeers are depicted you correctly count two of them and the next player in turn passes. When two racketeers with phones appear, you harrumph twice and the next player has to pass. But take care! Counting goes on all the same! So, for instance: Player 3 – Racketeer 2, player 4- Racketeer 3, player 5 – mobile phone ->, player 6 – Racketeer 5, when the card shows a plain racketeer. If you make a mistake or hesitate too long, you take all cards. When someone doubts the number you name, you simply count through the discard pile; whoever was wrong, takes the stack. Whoever is out of cards first, wins. IF you use the Nasty Rule, the first player revealing a double card determines a new noise or word for use till next round.

A typical Jacques Zeimet game, simple rules but witty, cute came play that is offering a lot of fun, all this counting is far more difficult than you would think at first glance. You need to concentrate and keep your wits about you! ☑

EVALUATION

Reaction
Users: For families
Version: multi
Rules: de en fr it nl
In-game text: no

Comments:
Cute drawings * Simple rules * Huge fun to play * Concentration is necessary

Compares to:
All games needing player reactions to card images

Other editions:
Currently none

DIE PEKING AKTE

DETECTIVES HUNTING CULPRITS

8↑

Players choose one of 75 cases in the "Filing Cabinet", that is, the rules booklet and place the cards indicated there for the case on the board. Then all are giving a briefing on the case with starting clues. Then players roam the streets of Peking searching for clues by interrogating witnesses. Those witnesses have different abilities - the Spy knows the hideout of the culprit, the Wise Man always tells the truth and can tell if a citizen is lying, and a citizen may lie. The active player rolls a die and moves his marker accordingly; several markers on a case are possible; Dragon markers are possible hideouts of the culprits and act as blockers. On a fortune cookie case you implement an event card, those cards can also result in relocating Dragon markers. A rickshaw case gives you additional movement regardless of Dragons and in a building you can interrogate witnesses by reading the local card using the mirror, the mirror or the decoder or by warming the card in your hands. If you think you have identified the culprit, you check the accusation on the respective Dragon case with the Whodunit card control card and either win the round or are out of the game.

Sounds a bit like Guess Who? for older children and families, is a lot of fun to play and children especially love the decoder and the writing that appears when warmed, they also find the names of witnesses and culprits very funny. All in all Die Peking Akte is a game with a large chance element as regards to your chosen sequence of visiting buildings and the clues you thus learn, but it is a felicitous family game with a nice design and good rules. ☑

EVALUATION

Detection, roll & move
Users: For families
Version: de
Rules: de en and others
In-game text: yes

Comments:
Comes now with 75 cases * Good rules * Components do not suit the game, paper quality is very bad * Gimmicks are loved by children

Compares to:
Earlier editions of Die Peking Akte, other games using clues and decoders

Other editions:
Currently none

EL CAPITAN

CAPTAIN IS TESTING HIS CREW

`6↑`

The old pirate captain is looking for a successor and tests his crew for quick reactions and good memory. A stack of Captain's cards including three special cards is prepared. Each player shuffles his set of 12 Pirate cards and displays them openly in a 3x4 grid. All have one minute to memorize the grid, then the cards are turned over.

In your turn you reveal the top Captain's card and all put their ship as fast as possible on the card in the grid that they think corresponds to the Captain's card. When the ship is placed you put your hand on the stack of Captain's cards. When all are done, the fastest one - his hand is at the bottom of the stack – the rank card "First", the next one the card "Second" and the slowest – his hand is on top – gets the rank card "Last". All others do not receive a card. Then cards under ships are compared to the Captain's card. All that did not manage a match must discard a gold coin. All others get gold coins in relation to their rank: three for „First", two for „Second", one if you did not get a card, and if you got „Last" you get no coin. When the card "Storm" is revealed, all take up their grid, reshuffle it and lay it out again. After one minute the cards are turned over again. For the ""Spyglass" you may look at a card in your grid and for the "Pirate Flag" you may switch two cards in another player's grid. When all Captain's cards have been revealed, you win with most gold coins.

Nothing new, but a super mix of memo and quick reactions, spruced up by the special cards, and as usual in a game by Gigamic, you can enjoy the very pretty components. ☑

EVALUATION

Memo, reaction
Users: For families
Version: multi
Rules: de en fr languages
In-game text: no

Comments:
Variants listed * Nice components * Good mix of mechanisms * Very nice family game

Compares to:
Memo and reaction games

Other editions:
Currently none

FLYING KIWIS

BOARDING BY SNIPPING

`5↑`

Kiwis want to go on holiday somewhere other than New Zealand. As they cannot fly, they want to travel in kiwi fruit boxes to reach other destinations. But they also want to sit together in certain formations according to their preferences, preferably in a square.

The box bottom is used to simulate a kiwi fruit box with the help of cardboard strips combined into a grid. Each player takes a ramp and 10 kiwis of a color in the guise of cardboard discs. All play simultaneously and try to snip their kiwis into one of the 16 slots in the grid, using the ramp and the rubber string. Kiwis are allowed to end up in slots that are already occupied and can cover kiwis already in such a slot. Kiwis that land outside the box grid can be taken back and snipped again. Should someone manage to arrange four of his kiwis anywhere on the board in four slots that form a square, this player calls "Flying Kiwi" and wins instantly.

If nobody manages such an arrangement before all kiwis have been snipped into slots, the stacks in slots are scored: Each player counts the kiwi discs in those slots where one of his kiwis is on top. If you have collected most kiwis in this way, you win.

As regards to target age and graphic design the game is clearly intended for children, but the arranging to order of the travel-loving birds turns out to be entertaining fun for the whole family which is usually tried several times. Ramps and kiwis are sturdy and well suited for multiple use. Another try? It must be possible to achieve that square – well, at least I'm hitting the box now and can claim one or the other stack, at long last! ☑

EVALUATION

Snipping , dexterity
Users: For children
Version: multi
Rules: de en fr nl pt se
In-game text: no

Comments:
Cute topic * Very good, sturdy components * Simple rules

Compares to:
All snipping games with target configuration

Other editions:
Currently none

GAÏA
A WORLD EMERGES

👥 8↑

Together you create a world, you populate it with people, cities and animals and cultivate it. The stack of Landscape tiles, Nature cards and Life cards are prepared, three Nature cards and two Life cards and Objective cards - depending on the number of players - are on display.

In your turn you have two actions - options are drawing a card or playing a card, in any order and you can also do the same action twice. A Nature card is put down and a corresponding Landscape tile is added to the joint landscape display. If you can complete an Objective card with Nature cards you collected, you place one of your markers on the Objective card and discard the Nature cards. For a Life card you put four animal markers on the

corresponding empty landscape. A City Card is placed on an empty landscape with corresponding symbol; two needs of the city must be met by the four surrounding landscape tiles. If you later meet additional needs of the city, you put a marker into the city. Needs can also turn unfulfilled if a new city covers a landscape or animal markers are all used up, if necessary a city is removed. At the start of your turn you must supply cities with your markers my removing one animal token per marker.

If you have all markers on the board, you win. In the advanced game you can take over cities of other players, or place two markers when all needs of a city are met and also draw and play power cards.

A small world, quickly created and managed – the topic is nicely and neatly implemented, using few rules and few mechanisms. Gaïa is a good family game and plays very well for two players, using the advanced version. ☑

EVALUATION

Development, placement
Users: For families
Version: multi
Rules: de en fr
In-game text: no

Comments:
Special edition 2015 with improved components
* First edition 2014 * Fantastic graphics * Topic neatly implemented * Nice family game * Also good for two players

Compares to:
City building games, landscape placement games

Other editions:
Standard edition, Tiki Editions 2014; Asmodee, Germany; Lucrum, Poland

GALAXY TRUCKER MISSIONEN
CAMPAIGN MODE IN SPACE

You are a galaxy trucker and you build a spaceship to reach the Edge, for profit or loss. You start with the basic port of Spaceship 1, choose face-down parts to add to your ship or for interim storage and can check the stack of flight cards for suitable constructions. Then you undertake your flight with eight cards, by assembling and implementing them, abortion of a flight can

happen.

Missionen has been designed as an implementation of the successful App and the campaign mode available there – players are now truckers with the corporation. You discover planets and space stations, acquire new ship models, meet characters and fly missions for them. Sixteen missions are in play, represented by mission cards, which

explain the rules and rewards for each mission. There are also five new types of ship parts, this time freight parts, which usually earn you special awards in missions if you deliver them. There is Explosive Cargo, Fragile Cargo, Heavy Cargo, Radioactive Cargo and Artifacts, all with their own special characteristics and effects. In some missions you also encounter Super Cards, which basically work like standard adventure card, but with clearly much more devastating effects – but usually you know before you start your mission what you will encounter on such a card. They concern all players, carry now reward and many have cumulative effects in relation to the level of the flight.

Once again a tasty titbit to get your teeth into, if you are a fan of galactic transport facilities. The board game version keeps the promise given by the App. Absolutely fantastic and a must for each galactic trucker! ☑

EVALUATION

SciFi, tile placement
Users: With friends
Version: de
Rules: de en
In-game text: yes

Comments:
Fantastic conversion of the app * Sterling example for the interrelations of media * Can be combined with all other extensions

Compares to:
All other editions of Galaxy Trucker

Other editions:
English from CGE, Polish from Rebel.pl and French from Iello are announced

HATTU MÖHRCHEN?!
MUTTU AUFESSEN!

`8↑`

Munching carrots is the motto, you need to get rid of carrots on cards and at the same time hold on to your carrot chips and lose as few as possible. You begin with six cards and in your turn play a suitable card, that is, a card corresponding to the top card on the stack in color or number; when a special card is played, color or symbol must correspond. The special card "Muttu Möhrchen abgeben!" can be played on any card. When a special card is played, its action is triggered: For „Muttu aufessen! The active player chooses another player who must give the active player one of his carrot chips; but when the chosen player can play the same card, he transfers the loss of a chip to another player, who must now give him two of his carrot chips, and so on. For „Muttu aufstehen!" all players but the active one stand up or remain standing. „Muttu Möhrchen abgeben" can be played anytime, but only when at least one player at the table is standing, and each standing player gives one carrot chip to the active player. If you can't play a card, you draw a card and stand up. If you stand, you remain standing if you can play again; if you are out of chips, you must quit the game. If you are out of cards, the round ends, all others discard a carrot chip for each card in hand; if they have not enough chips they are out of the game. All remaining players begin a new round; the last player still having chips wins the game. In a short game over three rounds you win with most chips.

UNO with carrots, so to say, but all in all a very nice variant of the shed-a-suitable-card-or-draw-a-card mechanism, the carrot chips are a cute additional detail. ☑

EVALUATION

Card shedding
Users: For families
Version: de
Rules: de
In-game text: no
Comments:
Cute variant of the card-shedding mechanism * Möhrchen-Chips are a nice detail * Good family game with simple rules

Compares to:
All card shedding games like UNO and others

Other editions:
Currently none

KERFLIP!
FLIP LETTERS, FORM WORDS

Searching for words using double-sided letters, with a white background on one side and a purple one on the other side.
At the start you draw letters in relation to the number of players, then all put them on the playing board simultaneously and turn them over to the white side. Now all look at the letters – touching is not allowed! – and make up a word with them; if you find a word you name it and must stick with it. When all but one player have named a word, the last player has the runtime of the timer to name a word. Each word can only be named once.
Then words are assembled in the order they were named; the first word is all white and scores ten points per letter. Then this word is turned over to the purple side. The next player now again uses all letters to form his word, but scores only five points for each letter on purple that he must use. When his word is scored, letters on white are turned over to purple and the next player forms his word, and so on. Some letters earn bonus cards for the first user. If you cannot form the word you named, you do not score. When all words were formed and scored, letters with purple background go out of the game, white ones go back into the bag and a new round begins. When the Lightning marker is on the board, the first word that is named scores 25 bonus points. When there are not enough letters for a round, you win with most points from words and bonus cards.
Speed and vocabulary are on demand in this fabulous extension for the word formation genre of games! The faster you are the more letters you can devaluate for your opponents, so quick words with standard letters might be best. ☑

EVALUATION

Word formation
Users: With friends
Version: de
Rules: de en gr
In-game text: no
Comments:
Speed enables you to devalue letters * Good new scoring method * Simple rules

Compares to:
Cross word and word formation games

Other editions:
Creative Foundry Games, Kaissa Chess & Games

KRIBBELN
*QUICK * FRESH * TRICKY*

`8↑`

Six different scoring sheets are available for selection and determine the tasks that have to be met by rolling six Kribbel dice. Those dice show the standard number of pips from 1 to 6, albeit in a different color on each dice. All players in turn complete the task in the first row of the sheet, then in the second row, and so on. In your turn you have three rolls to achieve the color combination in demand in the current task – for instance "no yellow" or "any color three times" – and, at the same time, as high a total value as possible. Colors of dice not needed to complete the task can show any color. If you manage to achieve the results according to the task template, you add the values of all six dice and mark the sum in the current row on the sheet. If not, you put an "x" into the task case. As an alternative you can enter the total in the next free "Kribbel" case – the values in those cases must be ascending – and can try to complete the task again. Kribbel case rows are filled in their turn according to the rules by players who did not previously fill them, you disregard colors and aim for a high total.

When a row is complete, you score it in relation to the number of players and values entered – the player with the highest value scores points equal to the number of players, the next one one point less, and so on. In case of a tie all involved in it score the points of the next lowest rank.

The thrill in this very nice family games comes from being tempted to roll again, despite having achieved the necessary colors, to get more points, and risking or hoping for the Kribbel case as a safe haven. ☑

EVALUATION

Dice
Users: For families
Version: de
Rules: de
In-game text: no

Comments:
Easy rules * Kribbel case is risk and safety net at the same time * Very cute family game

Compares to:
All dice game for color combinations

Other editions:
Currently none

LIFE IS LIFE
SWIM FOR YOUR LIFE ….

`8↑`

You swim for your life, because if you are out of lives you are out of the game!

There are 60 animal cards of different values, the number of cards for an animal is equal to its value. You have five lives, represented by cards, and ten animal cards on hand, ten more cards are laid out in four rows of 1-2-3-4 cards.

The active player swaps cards or knocks, but you need to have swapped cards at least once before you are allowed to knock. If you swap you take a row from the display and replace it with the same number of cards from your hand; the cards you took and the cards you place must differ by at least one card.

When you knock, all other players have one more turn and then your hand is scored for majorities in animals. If you have the sole majority in a type of animal you score the animal value for points. In case of a tie nobody scores this animal. When all majorities have been determined, all players add their points: If you have most points, you do not lose a life; if you have fewest points, you lose two lives and all others lose one life.

Instead of being triggered by knocking, the end of the round can happen by Sudden Death – if you swap and then hold four cats, five rabbits or five pigs, you win the round instantly without any scoring; all other players lose one life. If you have no life left, you are out of the game; the last one in play wins.

In an advanced version you can achieve sudden death only with five rabbits or five pigs and receive one life, all other players lose one life.

A quick game, a nice game, lives are gone fast, and five rabbits are harder to acquire than nine giraffes. Cute filler entertainment. ☑

EVALUATION

cards, set collection
Users: For families
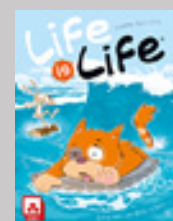Version: de
Rules: de
In-game text: no

Comments:
Nice topic * Enchanting illustrations * Easy-to-learn rules

Compares to:
All set collecting games for majorities

Other editions:
Currently none

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ISSUE 490 / FENRUARY 2016 win 25

MEXICA
BUILDING TENOCHTITLAN

As a Price of Mexica – the name the Aztecs gave themselves – you build the legendary city of Tenochtitlan. You create city = calpulli boroughs bordered by canals, connect them bridges and fill them with temples.

Eight Calpulli tiles are randomly drawn and determine the size of the Calpullis. In your turn you can spend six action points, can spend them for actions and also make use of free actions, number and order of those actions are up to your choice. Action options are: Build a canal (1AP); found a Calpulli, you own Mexica must be in place and you place a Calpulli tile of the corresponding size in it, now the size cannot change anymore (0 AP); build or relocate a bridge (1 AP); set up a temple in a borough with your Mexica (1-4 AP); move your Mexica (1/5 AP); buy an action chip or use an action chip for an additional action.

Founding of a Calpulli earns you the corresponding prestige points instantly, other Mexicas in the borough score half the number of points. When all borough tiles were used and one player has set up nine temples, the game is scored: You add up the number of temple levels in each borough and score for most, second and third most levels = spiritual value of the borough. When someone has built all his temples and possible boroughs were founded, the spiritual value is again scored at the end of the round and you win with most points.

This edition is a fantastically pretty came with marvelous components, and it is still a good game, with familiar mechanisms and sequential play, thus you can not plan your turn beforehand. The game was published in 2002 as third game in the series after Tikal and Java. ☑

EVALUATION

Placement, majorities
Users: With friends
Version: multi
Rules: de en pt fr
In-game text: no

Comments:
New edition * Marvelous components, stone temples * Played in turns, thus little pre-planning * Limited number was available from Abacusspiele

Compares to:
All games with majority scorings for buildings

Other editions:
Iello, France

MINERVA
CITY BUILDING IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

As a regent in a Roman town you want to increase the city's prosperity and status and try to equal the importance and the wealth of Rome. You build military facilities to achieve military fame, develop cultural facilities to assist in cultural activities and build temples on the basis of a city development that is worthy of those temples. Those building activities cost resources and gold, and to be able to use the facilities you need population and living quarters.

Each of six rounds comprises four phases: 1) Main phase with player turns in rounds; you have four options: You build a facility or you build living quarters and activate the effects of facilities already in your city or discard an assistant chip to use those effects or you pass. 2) Acquire an assistant for fame points or money (in rounds 1-5): In reverse turn order you acquire an assistant, the costs for which raise with the number of assistants you previously acquired. 3) Fame tiles for the round are laid out, players add up their fame chips and receive fame tiles accordingly. 4) Prepare next round (rounds 1-5). After round six you add your victory points from culture tiles, fame tiles, temples for which you met the conditions for victory points and also points from money and resources - each group of three money units ore resources is worth one point - one point for three units, and win with most points.

Minerva is a beautiful and nice placement game with a good mxi of mechanisms and enough interaction; you need to keep an eye on military action and the current arts activities to not lose victory points, and you also must balance facilities and population. ☑

EVALUATION

Resources, tile placement
Users: With friends
Version: multi
Rules: en jp
In-game text: no

Comments:
Non-optimum components * Good rules * Very good mix of mechanisms * Not a multiplayer-solitaire game despite one can play

Compares to:
Glen More and other placement games on areas

Other editions:
Currently none

Color codes, target groups, features, icons and GABIS are explained on page 5 and at the bottom of pages 46 and 47

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MOTTO

YOUR GOAL IN LIFE: BE HAPPY

`8↑`

Happiness as a goal for your life, to be achieved with the optimum combination of love, passion and financial means. Cards in the game carry symbols for those three values, in different numbers, and indicate the stage in life with their background color – youth, adulthood and old age. Aim of the game is to collect most victory points, the card combinations are meant to represent harmonic combinations of the three values. You begin with two cards and four cards are laid out face up on the table. In your turn you can take one of the four open cards on the table or one from the draw pile and play cards – three cards with one or two characteristics in common – symbol, number of symbols or color – and take victory points accordingly.

Those victory points are available in the guise of 27 tokens, three large, three medium and three small ones for the characteristics of symbol, number of symbol and background color. Whoever, for instance, lays down three red cards and each of the card carries two symbols, receives the largest available victory point token for the characteristic "red" and the largest available victory point token for "2". He does not get a token for symbols, as the types of symbols are different.

When someone takes the last of all large and medium victory point tokens, all other players have one more turn and then you win with most victory points.

As regards to rules and mechanism the game is absolutely suitable for the targeted age group, the topic seems a bit idiosyncratic for eight year olds. The game itself works well and plays quickly, key element is the luck in getting suitable cards. ☑
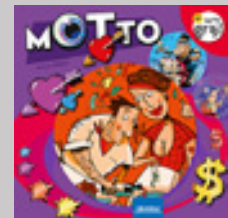
EVALUATION

Set collecting
Users: For families
Version: multi
Rules: en pl
In-game text: no

Comments:
Rules and mechanisms fit the target group, but topic is unusual * Cute drawings * Simple rules

Compares to:
All kinds of set collecting games

Other editions:
Currently none

OHNE MOOS NIX LOS!

MANAGE YOUR MONEY FOR A MONTH

`8↑`

A game about income and costs! You start with a savings account and 1.55 € starting capital, all players agree on the number of months that will be played. The active player rolls the die, moves his marker and resolves the case he reaches, On a "Post" case you draw the indicated number of cards and set them aside until "Kassensturz". On the "Kaufen" case you draw a card, can pay the indicated amount and keep the card, or you can discard it. If you want to buy and do not have enough money, you can get money from your savings account or take out a loan; when you access your savings account you pay 150 € fee to the bank. On the "Verkaufen" case you can sell things you bought earlier in the game, all players roll for the commission on the sale. "Was steht an?" triggers an event, on cases Lottery, Happy Birthday, Radrennen, Extra-Moos etc. you can receive money or lose money. On the "Kassensturz" case you must make a mandatory stop, receive 1.500 € from the bank and interest for your savings. Then you pay interest on your loans, if necessary, and can pay back loans, if you want. Then you read your mail and pay bills from it, and put your marker back to start. When, after the agreed number of months, all players have resolved "Kassensturz", all add up their assets from cash and savings and deduct loans. If you now have most money or the fewest debts, you win.

A classic game is back, which made its first appearance in the 70ties of the last century, even then the game was rather chance driven, but buy/sell options and savings account/loans introduce a bit of tactic. Still a very nice family game for beginners. ☑

EVALUATION

Roll & move
Users: For families
Version: de
Rules: de en
In-game text: yes

Comments:
New edition, earlier editions at Parker Brothers * Classic family game * Rather chance-driven, a bit of tactic from buy/sell and savings account

Compares to:
Earlier editions of Payday, Game of Life

Other editions:
Payday, Hasbro USA

PANDEMIE IM LABOR
LABORATORY STEPS TO A CURE

Four deadly plagues threaten mankind. Players fight as specialist in various regions of the world against those infections and search for cures. In a round you have four actions for travel, healing, research and construction. New outbreaks and epidemics speed up the spreading of the plague.

The expansion introduces four new roles - Chefaufseher, Virologin, Pilot and Informantin – and can be used with the core game and the expansion „Auf Messers Schneide". For Module 1 from this expansion there are two new epidemic cards. For Module 2 „Mutation" you now take 24 plague cubes and two mutation cards from the new expansion, and in the stage "infect 9 cities" as with mutation cards you add additional purple cubes. In the new Module 4 "Im Labor" with a separate laboratory board, Forscherin, Epidemiologin and Informantin have additional laboratory actions. New rules apply for: After "Forschungszentrum errichten" you can now do an additional laboratory action. Laboratory action options are characterize plague, test cure and sequence plague. Laboratory actions can only be implemented in cities for research centers. In the step "Krankheit behandeln" you can now place a removed cube into one of the entry dishes at the laboratory. "Heilmittel entdecken" can only happen when the research line in the laboratory has been completed.

„Im Labor" is an attractive expansion, which works especially well when combined with the first expansion; the flair and flow of the game is explicitly changed and you need now plan for more actions, which in turn enhances challenges and tension in the game. A must-have for friends of Pandemic. ☑
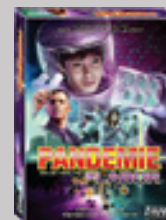
EVALUATION

Cooperative development
Users: With friends
Version: de
Rules: de en fr it pl
In-game text: yes

Comments:
Good expansion * Best in combination with Expansion 1 * Attractive components * Well-structured rules

Compares to:
All other editions of Pandemic

Other editions:
Z-Man Games USA; Filosofia, France; Asterion, Italy; Lacerta, Poland;

PI MAL PFLAUMEN
A DIFFERENT KIND OF FRUIT BASKET

8↑

75 fruit 1-cards featuring eight kinds of fruit and also plums are divided into 25 cards 1-15 each for laps I, II and III. Other plum cards, Pi cards and the watch dog are set out, the cards for lap I are dealt evenly to all. For each round/trick in the lap you play one fruit card, maybe together with one or more Pi cards – each Pi card adds 3,14 to the value of the card you played. Whoever played the highest card of the round, is first to choose a card from those, it can be the one you played yourself, and sets it down. Then you may use the special action of the card you took – take the watch dog, steal a card or take Pi cards – and complete a mixture stated on a card in your display by letters in a wreath of laurel, using cards from your display, the card naming the mixture can be used for the mixture. Letters of the mixture denote the number of cards for a type of fruit; if you want to complete mixture AABBCC you need to set aside face-down two cards each from three different types of fruit.

This is then repeated in descending order of cards played for each player, the last one must take the remaining card and takes one of the plum cards, for use in mixtures. When all cards of the first lap have been played, you play two more laps using the respective stacks of cards. When the last card is played you may complete mixtures and win with most points from cards in the mixtures that you completed.

This is an unusual, attractive game offering a nice mix of planning and riling over a stolen card or the Pi card of the last player, which lets him now choose a card before I can choose. Here goes my mixture! ☑

EVALUATION

Card game, tricks, collecting
Users: For families
Version: multi
Rules: de en
In-game text: no

Comments:
Very beautiful retro design * Interesting trick/draft mechanism * Felicitous mixture of planning, chance and riling elements

Compares to:
Trick-taking games with distribution of trick cards for later use

Other editions:
Polish edition announced

PIRATOONS
TREASURES UPGRADE SHIPS

8↑

A legendary ship must be achieved, so get you hands on the booty. As a pirate you begin with six crew members, three doubloons and a boat of two parts, bow and stern.

Each of the eight rounds comprises 1) Treasure supply – The treasure chest is filled with one stack of six equipment tiles and three boat parts. 2) Treasure plundering – the starting player = the captain of the round opens the chest and all simultaneously place crew members on equipment and boat part tiles, until the timer runs out and someone calls "stop" (this call only ends the plundering phase!) 3) Unemployment pay – You receive one doubloon for each crew member you did not place on tiles in the plundering phase. 4) Loot distribution – First, everyone removes their crew members touching two tiles or the chest. Then all crew members are removed that cancel each other out, that is, the same number of members of different crews on a tile. Then you take those tiles where you have a majority. 5) Auction – Simultaneous auction of all tiles in the chest plus all that remain from previous rounds; you make one hidden bid and choose tiles in descending order of the bids. 6) Tiles connection and placement – you place acquired tiles into your boat.

After eight round you score majorities, correct connections and sets of equipment, empty spots in the boat and wrong corrections deduct penalty points.

Bluff, planning, hectic in plundering – a nice, well-working and yet rather simple mix for all the family, pirate flair included, thanks to the amazing graphics. But keep an eye on the timer, it might help to keep a majority on a tile. ☑

EVALUATION

Placement, auction
Users: For families
Version: multi
Rules: en fr nl
In-game text: no

Comments:
Amazing design and components * Hectic in plundering * Money can get scarce * Attractive family game

Compares to:
Pirate games for topic, Nauticus (superficially) for acquisition of ship parts

Other editions:
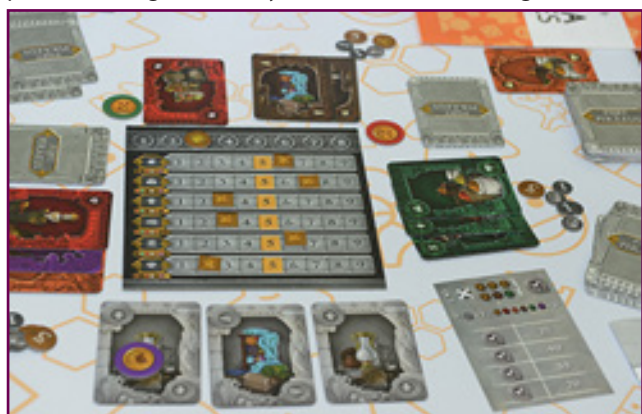hobbitty.eu, Poland; Abba Games, Spain; Stronghold Games, USA (announced)

PORT OF PIRAEUS
BUY, SELL, BID

In the harbor of Piraeus players are merchants from foreign countries who want to earn money by buying and selling goods. The game comprises eight trading days and on each day you choose if you want to buy or sell, prices fluctuate.

In the phase Start of the Day three Greek goods are placed beneath the price table. In the phase Planning of the Day all players secretly choose the Buy or Sell side of their marker and reveal them simultaneously. No prices are adapted accordingly – for more sellers the price per goods unit drops by 1 Drachma, for more buyers it increases, in case of a tie the prices of goods on offer increase, those of other goods fall. In the phase Displaying the Goods each seller chooses maximum two goods of his country and places them face-down above the price table. Then goods are revealed and prices again adapted, they drop by 1 Drachma per good on offer and increase for each good not on offer by one Drachma per seller! In the Phase Negotiating and Selling each buyer places his marker in one of the trade rows on the price table. When only one marker sits on a card, the owner buys it for the current price. When there are several markers, all those involved make a bid. In case of identical bids the card is not sold. In The Phase End of Day all remaining foreign goods are sold to the bank, Greek goods go back to storage.

Port of Piraeus offers a surprisingly challenging and realistic simulation of buying and selling, using very simple rules and offering quite some tactic and strategy, all in all a compact, attractive and very well-working game, easily accessible and with lots of in-game depth. ☑
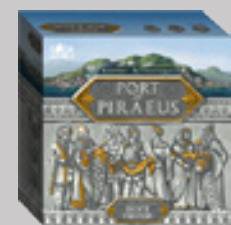
EVALUATION

Economics, trade, auction
Users: With friends
Version: multi
Rules: en ru
In-game text: no

Comments:
Attractive components * Simple, concise rules * Lots of in-game depth * Excellent trade simulation

Compares to:
All economics games with variable prices and auction

Other editions:
Currently none

PRONTO

FAMOUS SIGHT BEGINNING WITH B

The game board shows a track with four lanes. All of seven cases in the lanes carry one letter each, those seven cases carry three letters each, four times XYZ and three times CJQ. The topic cards give two topics each, a more easier one on green and a more difficult one on an orange background. You place your marker and the starting block at the start.

If you are the active player you reveal a topic card and choose a topic, another player is Guardian of Time and turns over the timer and covers it up. Now you search for words that suit the chosen topic and begin with the next available letter on the track. If you find a correct word you move onto this letter. Available letters are those reached in a move of one case sideways or forward. You can jump over occupied cases and can choose if there are several possibilities. You as active player decide when you stop your turn and reveal the timer. If it is still running, your move is valid and you move the starting block forward to your marker. If the timer has stopped you take your marker back to the starting block. The joker can be used once in the game to jump over cases or choose a new topic. There are four dark Pronto barriers as end of a lap; you move across them and can choose any of the cases behind it.

Pronto is a very nice variant in the find-a-word-with-a-given-starting-letter-and-category game, good as a family game as you can balance differences in vocabulary or age by using the team variant or by having each each group using only the topics on a green or on an orange background. The covered time is a challenging new detail for all players! ☑

EVALUATION

Word finding
Users: For families
Version: multi
Rules: de en
In-game text: yes

Comments:
Includes a team version
* Two levels of difficulty allow balancing of age and vocabulary differences *
Time factor is an entrancing detail

Compares to:
All games on finding words for given starting letters

Other editions:
Currently none

RUMMS

ICE DICE FREEZE YOUR OPPONENT!

In the Kingdoms of Dragon Knights and Lion Knights you win the confrontation of dice troops if you are first to snip the opposing king off the mat.

Three playing mats are placed next to each other, showing two realms with castles and a border line in the middle.. Each faction commands 12 trolls, 4 robber barons, 2 spies, 2 ice cubes, 2 hearts, 2 dragons or lions and 1 king, all with special abilities. You can play with the suggested selection – 1 king, 4 robber barons and 12 trolls – or choose your own selection, up to a maximum cost of 40 for all. The deployment of your troops is also up to your choice, with two limitations: The king must be in the castle or in contact with the castle and at deployment you cannot touch or cross the border in the middle. You always snip one of your own dice to push opposing dice off the mat. One of your own die that is in enemy territory and shows the "captured" side can be rolled once – if is then shows "free", it goes to your castle. If not, it is out of play. Dice that show "captured" in their own realm are simply turned to "free".

A die outside the mat is defeated and is taken out of play. A foul – touch an opposing die or move it with arm/hand, snip several dice at once or push dice instead of snipping them – is penalized with an extra turn for the opponent. IN tournament mode you win if you are first to win three games.

Rumms is pure fun, already when selecting your dice, and especially when snipping where practice makes a fighter! To dose your strength takes a few snips! Great fun for in between, using heart dice for revival or ice dice to freeze an opponent's die. ☑

EVALUATION

Dexterity, snipping
Users: For families
Version: de
Rules: de en
In-game text: no

Comments:
Nice entertainment * The fun starts with selecting dice * Cute special dice abilities * Attractive fun for any age group

Compares to:
Dexterity Games with snipping

Other editions:
Cube Quest, Gamewright

www.gamesjournal.at

SCHNAPP DIE SCHÄTZE
GRAB NICE THINGS QUICKLY

`5↑`

The best of all his Viziers will be rewarded by the Sultan with the magical silver pedestal. The treasure tower is set up – a golden Magic Lantern, a treasure chest, a Flying Carpet, a pillow and precious gems wait on the silver pedestal.

The task cards are shuffled and you draw a task card and put it down secretly, the rest of the task cards is draw pile. You play

ten rounds, a round ends when all tower elements have been grabbed.

At the start of a round the active vizier rolls the dice, using the dice cup on the Bazaar board. He lifts the cup and all check the result quickly – when at least three dice show the color of a task card, it's owner grabs the silver column. When the dice show six different colors, all players

may make a grab for the silver column. As soon as someone grabs, all others may try to grab one or two treasures, too. When the result does not allow a grab for the silver column, you roll again. Only dice on the Bazaar board count towards the result and if dice are on top of each other, you roll again. Whoever grabbed the silver column cannot take anything else. All are rewarded with gold bag cards in relation to the treasures they grabbed – five bags for the silver column for six colors, four bags and a new task card for the task card colors, two bags for magic lantern or treasure chest and one gold bag for ruby, carpet or pillow . If you grabbed the silver pedestal by mistake, you must discard a gold bag card. After ten such rounds you win with most gold bags on your cards.

A pretty game, a simple and quick game; you need to look closely and react fast to get the correct and most valuable treasures. ☑

EVALUATION

Reaction, collecting
Users: For children
Version: multi
Rules: de en es fr it nl
In-game text: no

Comments:
Standard mechanisms, very nicely combined * Very pretty components * Simple rules * Good reaction training

Compares to:
Reaction games featuring grabbing of items

Other editions:
Currently none

SLY DICE
## *ROLL DICE AND BLUFF FOR POINTS*

You roll dice for combinations and points. A "higher/lower" card and three cards with dice combinations are laid out. The starting player rolls three common dice for the round which can be used by all players. Then players roll three dice behind their screen and can re-roll two times, but must set out a die for each re-roll in front of the screen. Then all players in turn name

the combination they achieved, bluffing is possible. After his announcement the currently active player can be accused of bluffing. If he is accused he must reveal all dice. If he did not bluff, the accuser takes a card "Wrong accusation". When the player did bluff, his turn ends and he does not score.

When the active player was falsely accused and his combi-

nation was correct, he puts a token on the card and scores the points. If nobody accused him, he does not have to show his dice and scores. If he bluffed successfully and decides to reveal his dice, he takes a card "Successful Bluff". You can name and score each combination only once in a game. When all players have announced and scored their combinations, all take back their dice and a new combination is revealed. After 8 or 9 rounds the "Wrong accusation" and "Successful Bluff" cards are scored for penalty points and additional points and you win with most points.

Nothing really new, no, but standards nicely re-invented. The idea of those "Successful Bluff" and "Wrong Accusation" cards for positive or negative points are a cute idea that make the game interesting, as do the special abilities of some combinations that you can use once in the game if you scored the combination. ☑
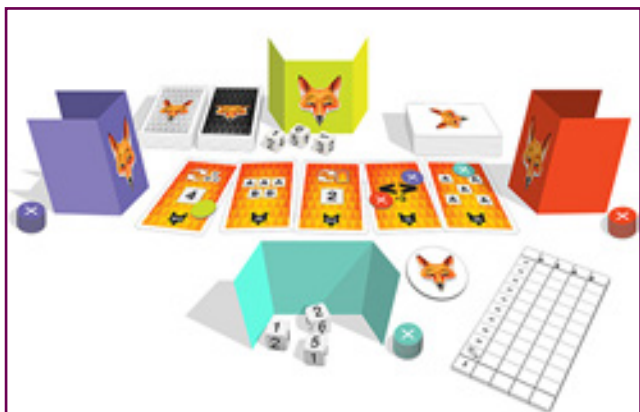
EVALUATION

Dice, bluff
Users: With friends
Version: multi
Rules: de ee en fr lv lt ru
In-game text: no

Comments:
Nicely varied standard mechanisms * Cute details like cards and special abilities of combinations * Targeted age group seem a bit high

Compares to:
All dice games for combinations

Other editions:
Currently none

SPOOKIES
MUTPROBE MIT WÜRFELN

`8↑`

A test of courage for four friends and their dog – they want to cross all levels of the house and go all the way to the top, that is, dice themselves up, and collect Spookies.

All friends and the dog start at the garden gate. The active player rolls the Friends die for the character that is moved, the question mark gives you free choice. Then you roll number dice – for a step forward you need to reach minimum the number of the target spot, but can only use the two highest dice results to achieve it. You decide if you want to use two, three or four dice for your roll – the fewer dice you use the more Spookies you earn if you succeed. If you managed the necessary number, you receive Spookies as marked next to the spot, face-down, and decide if you continue or stop. If you stop, you keep the Spookies. If you continue, you use the same character as in the first turn. If you fail to achieve the necessary result, you put the character on the result you achieved with the two highest dice and pay one Spookie penalty for each spot the character moves downwards. Those Spookies are placed on the spot that the character vacated and whoever manages to reach this spot with two dice, gets those Spookies, too. When all Spookies have been given out, you win with the highest total on your Spookies.

Spookies is one of the three games released by Haba to go back to the range of family games again, and it is a good game! Spookies is a simple dice game using the stop/go on dilemma mechanism; free choice of the number of dice to use adds additional thrill and tactic. An attractive game for beginners. ☑

INFORMATION

PLAYERS:	AGE:	TIME:
2-5	**8+**	**30+**

Designer: Stefan Kloß
Artist: Michael Menzel
Price: ca. 20 Euro
Publisher: Haba 2015
www.haba.de

EVALUATION

Dice, risk
Users: For families
Version: multi
Rules: de en fr nl
In-game text: no

Comments:
In the new range of family games * Very nice components * Simple rules for stop/go on mechanism * Good game for beginners

Compares to:
All dice games using stop/go on mechanisms

Other editions:
French/Dutch edition from Haba

STAR WARS DAS KARTENSPIEL
ÄRGER MIT DEM IMPERIUM

Rebels versus Empire, using two types of cards - Objective cards with missions and Player cards, each Objective card is accompanied by five Player cards. The Objective cards provide missions, ideologies, strategies and story lines – players try to implement those missions, to defend them and to destroy the objectives of the opposing faction. Player cards provide units, events, reinforcement and fate – you choose your objectives for you current game. You display cards, attack opposing objectives, defend your own and play cards for the fight for power. A player turn comprises the phases balance, refresh, draw cards, deployment, conflict and power/force. In the balance phase the player of the Dark Side can – if he is the active player – advance the Death Star Marker by one or two steps; when the player of the Light Side is active he can damage or even destroy a Dark Side objective. When the Death Star Marker reaches 12, the Empire wins instantly; the Rebels need to destroy three objectives of the Dark Side to win.

Ärger mit dem Imperium / Imperial Entanglements is the fourth deluxe expansion with five Objective sets each for Imperial Navy as well as Smugglers and Spies plus one Objective Set for each of the other factions. There are also two new fate cards and powerful characters and vehicles, for instance Lando Calrissian and TIE Phantoms. The expansion contains Objective Sets 171-184.

This expansion again provides a well-made extension of option for the game, focusing on Smugglers and Spies versus the Imperial Nave. Attacking objectives instead of opponents or their units remains the most interesting feature of the game. ☑

INFORMATION

PLAYERS:	AGE:	TIME:
2	**10+**	**60+**

Designer: E. M. Lang, E. Dahlman
Artist: Schomburg, Tan, Carey
Price: ca. 22 Euro
Publisher: Heidelberger 2015
www.heidelbaer.de

EVALUATION

Acquisition and use of cards, SciFi
Users: With friends
Version: de
Rules: de en fr
In-game text: yes

Comments:
Features Objective Sets 171 – 184, 12 of them twice * Can be combined with all other sets * Challenging new details

Compares to:
All other Living Card Games

Other editions:
Fantasy Flight Games, USA; Edge Entertainment, France

Color codes, target groups, features, icons and GABIS are explained on page 5 and at the bottom of pages 46 and 47
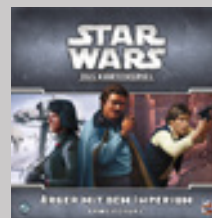
STAR WARS
DIE GROSSE WÜRFELREBELLION

`8↑`

On planets Yavin 4, Hoth, Dagobah/Bespin, Tatooine, Endor and on Death Star 2, all represented by varying numbers of rows of imperial symbols on a total of three double-sided game boards.

You choose one of the rebel figures and, in your turn, roll all four dice. Then you can place none or up to four dice on corresponding spots in the symbol rows, in any order and also in different rows. If you rolled victory point symbols, you set them aside for a victor point each at the end of your turn. The Empire symbol is a Joker for each other symbol, too. When you have unused dice left, you may roll them a second time and again place dice on symbols. After that, you replace each die with a rebel marker. In a turn

you must – by rolling and playing dice and then rebel markers – cover at least two symbols. If you only manage one symbol, you must take Darth Vader and use only three dice next turn, if you could not use any dice at all, Imperator Palpatine blocks two dice in your next turn, but with a bit of luck another player has to take the figure before that. If you cover the last symbol in a row, you win victory points and/ or an ally. You can use those allies and your own rebel figure to cover symbols, too. An ally used for that is given back to stock. When all planets have been completed, you win with most victory points from completed rows and victory point symbols on dice.

The mechanism used in Risk Express has been very nicely varied for this game, not to have to complete a row in one turn reduces the annoyance element and allows you, together with your rebel and allies, a very small amount of tactic. ☑

INFORMATION

PLAYERS:	AGE:	TIME:
2-4	8+	45+

Designer: Reiner Knizia
Artist: Paul Windle Design
Price: ca. 29 Euro
Publisher: Ravensburger 2015
www.ravensburger.de

EVALUATION

Dice, SciFi
Users: For children
Version: de
Rules: de
In-game text: no

Comments:
Simplified version of Risk Express * Very chance-driven * Attractive components * Also nice family game

Compares to:
Risiko Express, Zeitalter des Krieges

Other editions:
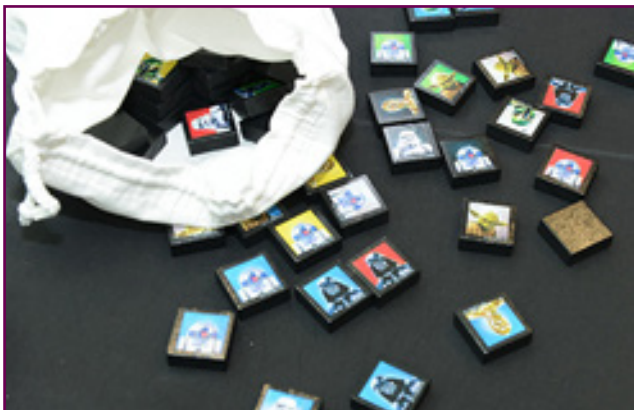Currently none

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STAR WARS QWIRKLE
DARTH VADER IN SIX COLORS

`6↑`

Qwirkle as you know it – you form and extend rows of blocks which show either the same color or the same image, in order to score the highest possible total of points. In this version of the game the 108 blocks do not show six different geometric shapes in six colors, but six different characters from Star Wars - Yoda, Boba Fett, R2-D2, C-3PO, Stormtrooper und Darth Vader, in six colors and each character 3x per color. You draw 6 blocks from the bag and if you have the most correlations in either character or color you place the starting-row. As the active player you place one or more blocks into one row and refill your hand from the bag or exchange 1-6 blocks for new ones.

Two or more blocks next to each other form a row, either with blocks showing the same character or the same color. In rows of the same color each character may only occur once, in rows of the same character each color is only allowed once. Therefore, each row has a maximum length of six blocks.

Newly placed blocks must be in contact with blocks already placed, you can add blocks at the beginning and the end of a row, but only into one row in each turn. If you cannot place a block you must exchange blocks. At the end of your turn you score 1 point for each block in the row you have formed or extended, you can score twice for a block if the block belongs to two rows. If you complete a row of six blocks, this is a Qwirkle and you score six bonus points.

So far so familiar; if you do not know Qwirkle and love Star Wars, you should grab a game, this edition, too, is an elegant, quick placement game for all the family. ☑

INFORMATION

PLAYERS:	AGE:	TIME:
2-4	6+	45+

Designer: Susan McKinley Ross
Artist: not named
Price: ca. 30 Euro
Publisher: Schmidt Spiele 2015
www.schmidtspiele.de

EVALUATION

Tile placement, combinations
Users: For families
Version: multi
Rules: de fr it
In-game text: no

Comments:
Basic game with a license topic * Rules unchanged * Purely abstract game despite the topic

Compares to:
Qwirkle and variants, also games with group formation using color or symbols

Other editions:
Currently none

THE PIED PIPER

RAT OUT YOUR NEIGHBORS!

`8↑`

Rat infestation in Hamlin, you want to chase the rats into your neighbors house with the help of the Pied Piper. One house per player is laid out, each player has a rat marker. Rats with colored tails sit between the houses, next to the Pied Piper sits a second rat. The stack of character cards holds rat cards in tail colors and Pied Piper cards, four rats and one Pied Piper are on display. Each player is dealt four action cards.

The active player places two action cards at two different cards in the display of rats and Pied Piper. The second card placed next to a card activates this rat or Pied Piper. The activated character moves accordingly. If a rat moves through a house, the rat marker of this house rises by one level. When the Pied Piper moves through a house, the rat marker falls by one level. When the movements according to the action cards have been implemented, the character card is replaced by a new one from the stack. The active player draws two action cards. When the rat marker in a house reaches the roof, the owner of the house is out of the game and the active player gets his rat marker or markers.

When only two players are left in play, the winner is the player whose rat marker is on a lower level. In case of a tie, the tie-breaker is the number of rat markers owned. Variants with only one card for activation or face-down placement of an action card that is revealed when the character is activated.

A very nice implementation of the topic with a well-working mix of tactic and luck in drawing of the cards; despite the fairy tale topic this is not a game for children only, but an attractive family game. ☑

EVALUATION

Fairy tale, placement for damage
Users: For families
Version: en
Rules: en fr
In-game text: no

Comments:
Series Tales & Games *
Attractive book-like box *
Pretty components * Nice implementation of the topic * Good family game

Compares to:
Other games in the series for topic, otherwise placement games featuring causing and limits of damage

Other editions:
French edition, Purple Brain Creations

UNTER SPANNUNG

7 AUF 9

`8↑`

73 cards show a white number between 1 and 10 in all four corners and in the middle in circle a ± number between 1 and 3. The background color of each card corresponds to the ± number, cards with ± 1 are green, ± 2 cards are yellow and ± 3 cards have a red background.

All cards are shuffled, one is revealed to start the discard pile and the rest is dealt evenly to all players. All play simultaneously, but always only one card. You draw cards one by one from your stack into your hand and can play each suitable card instantly, even two cards back to back, but never two cards at the same time. There is no limit to cards in hand, but you must draw cards one by one!

Suitable cards are played on the joint discard pile, the top card of the pile determines the next card: You modify the value of the top card by the middle value by adding or subtracting the middle value and play a corresponding card – on a 5 with a middle value of ± 3 you can play either a 2 or an 8. When you place a card you name ist value. A card played correctly but more quickly than another card was named correctly comes first. When the total tops 10, an 11 turns into a 1, a 12 into a 2 and 13 becomes 3; in analogy, the 0 turns to 10, -1 becomes 9 and -2 becomes 8. If you have only one card left, you discard it face-down and win the game. This is a nice, cute card shedding game, unfortunately the pun of the English title „7 Ate 9" cannot be translated, but you are really tense, to mistreat the German title, while trying to calculate and draw cards quicker than your fellow players. ☑

EVALUATION

Card shedding
Users: For families
Version: de
Rules: cn de en nl ru
In-game text: no

Comments:
German edition of "7 ate 9", out of the Box * Simple Rules * Quick to play

Compares to:
Uno and all card shedding games using number values

Other editions:
As 7 Ate 9 at Out of the Box, 999 Games, Swan Panasia

Color codes, target groups, features, icons and GABIS are explained on page 5 and at the bottom of pages 46 and 47

www.gamesjournal.at

WORTBLITZ
FIND WORDS QUICKLY AND WIN!

Words are supposed to assist alien being Teo to familiarize himself with planet Earth. In order to achieve this he needs to hear as many different terms on many different subjects.

The game comprises a game unit, featuring six blue letter dice and one category die in the middle; all dice move in their holes. For a game you choose one of three category dice –

each of them features twelve categories – and place it into the unit, the so-called Letter Tornado. Then you shuffle for category and letters of the round by rolling the Tornado over your hand and then you place the Letter Tornado on the table, ensuring good visibility for all. Now all players try quickly to find six terms in the given category and starting with the six letters

visible on the letter dice. The starting player of the round can end the round for all by calling "stop", even if he has not written down all answers. All stop and read out their words and you score one point for each of your answers that is unique. For answers made up from more than one word with the same starting letter, for instance Donald Duck, you score one point per word. Personal names are allowed. After four rounds you win with most points.

Stadt-Land-Fluss can now boast a huge family of variants and versions of the game, this new version, too, is a nice extension for the range of games on "find words corresponding to letters and categories". The Letter Tornado works well and provides quick play. The selection of 36 categories in combination with six letters per letter die is big enough and the option to end a round early introduces a nice element of tactic. ☑

EVALUATION

Word finding
Users: For families
Version: multi
Rules: de en fr it
In-game text: yes

Comments:
Good selection of categories * Practical game unit * Nice version of a standard game mechanism

Compares to:
All games on finding words for given categories and starting letters

Other editions:
Currently none

ZIRKUS LEO
„LEO" FOR THE ORANGE LION

Six action cards and the Circus Flea are laid out around the ring next to the stars, the Circus Flea sits next to the black star. Each player is dealt twelve or – in case of more than six players – nine circus card as a face-down stack. The active player puts his top card face-up into the ring, so that he is the last one to see it. When then two identical actions – regardless of their back-

ground color – are visible in the arena, the corresponding action is triggered. This can be, among others, to call "Leo" for the orange lion or put your hand on the ring, raise an imaginary top hat or put your hand-cards face-down on the table.

If you make a mistake or are the last player to implement the action, you take all cards from the ring and the black star of the

ring is rotated to the next action card. If someone did play his last card or the ring reaches the Circus Flea card for the third time, you score one point for each card in hand, but only maximum 10 points, and after three such rounds you win with fewest points.

In the version for children of ages 5+ you use only four action cards. The rules also lists a few variants, for instance the player who hat to take cards may turn over one action card which is no longer triggered, or he can replace an action card with another one from the stack.

The game was created together with Kinderkrebsnachsorge – Child Cancer Aftercare, more versions for it can be found on the website: **www.kinderkrebsnachsorge. de**.

Zirkus Leo is a fun game, and the cards are very nicely illustrated. But you need to familiarize players with the actions before the game starts, so that all have the same chances. ☑

EVALUATION

Action, reaction
Users: For families
Version: de
Rules: de
In-game text: no

Comments:
Topic and mechanism go well together * Nice illustrations * Knowledge of card actions is important

Compares to:
Zuma, Jungle Speed

Other editions:
Currently none

ACTIVITY SPORT
Publisher: Piatnik
Designers: Paul Catty, Ernst Führer

For this version you need to form two to four teams, of equal size, if possible. 110 cards show six terms each and are sorted by the numbers on their backside, these numbers indicate the level of difficulty. The active member of the team draws a card and rolls a die for the method of explanation - drawing, explaining with words or pantomime. When the team guesses the term within the time frame, it takes the card. When a term is printed in red, you play an "open round", in which all players can guess. After eight rounds you add the card values on the backsides of the cards you did win. Activity Sport can be used to expand other editions. *Version: de * Rules: de * In-game text: yes*

Creative communication game for 4-16 players, ages 12+

ANDROID NETRUNNER SANSAN-ZYKLUS
Publisher: Heidelberger Spieleverlag
Designers: Richard Garfield, Lukas Litzsinger

Runner versus Corporation. Both have their own deck of cards and goals. The Corporation can spend three Clicks per turn for actions; to install server protection or to trace the runner. The Runner can spend four Clicks; for instance for a Run – a hacker attack on Corporation with different targets; when he manages to get into a server he might find something valuable or just destroy the Corporation project. If you collect seven points, you win. SanSan is the fourth cycle of data packs comprising packs The Valley, Breaker Bay. Chrome City, Underway, Old Hollywood and The Universe of Tomorrow
*Version: de * Rules: de en es fr * In-game text: yes*

Data pack cycle for Android Netrunner for 2 players, ages 14+

BLACK STORIES DARK TALES
Publisher: moses. Verlag
Designers: Corinna Harder, Jens Schumacher

The story teller is called the arbiter, he reads the story on the front of the card. The other players are his people and may pose any questions, but must pose them in a way that the arbiter can answer with yes or now. The arbiter can give hints or deviate players from totally wrong assumptions. The answer on the back of the card is the only correct and acceptable solution. This edition tells 50 black stories from the realm of myths - we encounter horrible worms, snarling zombies and malicious, back-stabbing witches and many more creatures that populate the realms of myths, legends and folk lore. Creepiness at its best!
*Version: de * Rules: de * In-game text: yes*

Narrative deduction game for 2 or more players, ages 12+

BLINDES HUHN MAUS & HABICHT
Publisher: Ostia Spiele
Designer: Heike Risthaus

10↑

You want to win chicks in auction and avoid Blind Hens. Three cards are auctioned as a package. You pay the auctioneer for the highest bid with cards you already own; if the auctioneer wins the bid he pays one card to each player. At the end you score for color majorities and card values in three colors as well als Blind Hens and Golden Corns.
Maus & Habicht – For Mouse or Hawk symbols on won cards you take a corresponding card from the stack. At scoring hakws eat first mice and then Blind Hens; remaining mice eat golden corns or half of a Double Courn. Orders are filled with remaining cards after those effects. *Version: de * Rules: de * In-game text: no*

Expansion for Blindes Huhn for 3-5 players, ages 10+

DINO ZUG ALLES EINSTEIGEN!
Publisher: Kosmos Verlag
Designers: Inka and Markus Brand

4↑

Each player is given an engine card and the tickets are shuffled face down, each player begins with four tickets in hand. You roll the die and move the Dino Train to the next spot of this color. Any player holding a ticket with the dinosaur next to the train can discard it. When the train holds next to the time tunnel, you turn the top wheel until the train is next to a dinosaur of your choice. Again all who have that dinosaur on hand can discard the card. When the train stops next to the station the active player names another player who has to draw an additional ticket. Whoever is first to be out of tickets, wins.
*Version: de * Rules: de * In-game text: no*

Roll & move game for 2-4 players, ages 4+

EVOLUTION VARIATION
Publisher: Rightgames
Designer: Dmitry Knorre

You breed your own species and must cope with different amounts of food. Each round comprises the phases of development, climate, feeding and extinction. To develop you play cards, either as an animal or as a new feature or to raise the population in a species. For climate you roll dice and determine food, parasites and shelter for the feeding phase. When all cards have been used, you score for surviving animals and each of their features as well as for features that raise the amount of necessary food. Variation introduced 18 new cards for Evolution and 6 new cards for Evolution Random Mutation.
*Version: en * Rules: en ru * In-game text: yes*

Mini expansion for Evolution for 2-4 players, ages 12+

IMPERIAL SETTLERS: NACHBARSCHAFTSHILFE
Publisher: Pegasus Spiele
Designer: Ignacy Trzewiczek

55 new cards - 10 people cards each for Barbarians, Japanese, Romans and Egyptians, plus 13 general cards and 2 people cards for the neutral player in the solo version - can be shuffled into the base game or be used to compile your personal people deck. New card types: Open production locations deliver immediately after being set up and also in the revenue phase and enable you send a worker into an open production location of another player. Production & Ability Locations - they influence revenue and clean up phases with stores for the next round. Instant cards can be played immediately for effects or advantages and also uses as basement. *Version: de * Rules: de en pl * In-game text: yes*

Expansion for Imperial Settlers for 14 players, ages 10+

ROX
Publisher: Haba
**Designer:** Günter Burkhardt

7↑

In the Druids Tournament the stream of elements need to be sorted. Number of players minus one point cards are laid out, the element cards are spread out open-faced and randomly. You take on random card and then quickly search for a card that you can place next to it. For a suitable card you count the symbols around the edge and search for a card that shows the symbol in its middle that is the most frequent at the edge. If you have six cards laid out, the round ends and whoever has - after checking with the magic eye – the longest correct sequence, takes the highest available points card. When all point cards are taken, you win with most points. *Version: multi * Rules: de en es fr it nl * In-game text: no*

Spotting and card placement game for 2-4 players, ages 7+

ZOOLORETTO WÜRFELSPIEL AFFENSTALL
Publisher: Abacusspiele
Designer: Michael Schacht

7↑
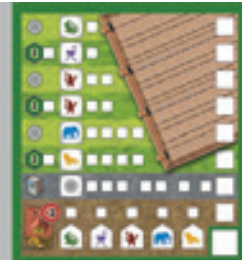
You must fill enclosures with animals by taking transporters. In your turn you roll 2 dice out of 6-10 dice – depending on the number of players – and distribute them on the transporters. On each transporter is room for 3 dice. Instead of rolling two dice you can take a transporter and mark the symbols on your sheet. Then the transporter is free for new dice. When each player has taken a transporter, the round ends. Affenstall is a new scoring sheet; if you fill the first, third or fifth enclosure first, you take a coin and mark a cashier case. New monkeys are needed only when both monkey enclosures are filled.
*Version: de * Rules: de * In-game text: no*

Dice game for 2-4 players, ages 7+

Color codes for target groups (Headline Color)
- For children + learn
- With friends
- For families
- For experts

Color codes for features (Bar in Evalution box)
- Chance
- Strategy
- Knowledge
- Communication
- Dexterity
- Tactic
- Creativity
- Memory
- Interaction
- Action

(Photo: Kati Knoll - Spiele Kreis Wien: Murder Mystery Dinner at Go7)

IMPRESSUM

Offenlegung nach dem Mediengesetz: Medieninhaber, Eigentümer, Verleger und Hersteller: Verein „Österreichisches Spiele Museum", vertreten durch Obfrau Dipl. Ing. Dagmar de Cassan, Raasdorferstrasse 28, 2285 Leopoldsdorf im Marchfelde, Österreich, Telefon 02216-7000, mail-to: office@spielen.at, Internet: www.spielejournal.at - www.gamesjournal.at - **Chefredakteur: Dipl.Ing. Dagmar de Cassan**

Blattlinie: Die Blattlinie ist die Meinung aller Redakteure, freien Mitarbeitern und Gastautoren. Die Spiele zur Erstellung der Rezensionen stellt das Österr. Spiele Museum für die Dauer der Arbeit kostenlos zur Verfügung. Niemand erhält Sach-,Service-, Geldleistungen von den Verlagen. (Alle nicht namentlich gekennzeichneten Rezensionen zu den Spielen sind von Dagmar de Cassan)

English Edition Version 1.0

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Icon explanation   GABIS explanation on page 5

Solo Play   Two Players   Large Groups   8↑ Recommended Minimum Age