

# win

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# Jerusalem

INTERNATIONAL EDITION: IN THIS ISSUE WE PRESENT 63 GAMES

# AUSTRIAN GAMES AWARD 2010



## Manimals

A game of collecting cards on demand for 2-6 players ages 4 and up by Bernhard Naegle at Adlung 2010, ca. 30 minutes



## Samarkand

A game of placement and connection forming for 2-5 players ages 8 and up by David Peters and Harry Wu at Queen Games 2010, ca. 60 minutes



## Die Tore der Welt

A game of development and hand management for 2-4 players ages 12 and up by Michael Rieneck and Stefan Stadler at Kosmos 2009, ca. 120 minutes, also **Spiel des Jahres plus 2010**



## PsychoPet

A game of item collecting and placement for 2-6 players ages 8 and up by Christian Fiore and Knut Happel at Goldsieber 2009, ca. 60 minutes



## Schlag den Raab

A medley of mechanisms in a party game for 2-6 players ages 12 and up by Max Kirps at Ravensburger 2010, ca. 90 minutes



## Dungeon Lords

A game of development for 2-4 players ages 12 and up by Vlaada Chvatil at Czech Games Edition 2009, ca. 120 minutes



## VIENNESE GAMES ACADEMY

On August 17<sup>th</sup> 2010 the Viennese Games Academy has announced the award winners for the 10<sup>th</sup> time. The Austrian Games Award is presented annually. Spiel der Spiele is awarded to the game which is considered by the Games Committee to be especially up-to-date and entertaining, every interested player should have played. All our award winners are available from games stores. One is always to be found near you.

The Games Committee chaired by Dipl.Ing.Dagmar de Cassan comprises:

Dr. Gerhard Bergauer, Prof. Samy Molcho, Dr. Christoph Proksch, Gert Stöckl and Kurt Schellenbauer. More information on the game award can be found at: [www.spiel-der-spiele.at](http://www.spiel-der-spiele.at)

**All award-winning games are available from your speciality store, where you will be excellently advised!**

## Our 4 target groups

We sort our award winners into 4 target groups:

**For Children:** Games for children and educational games. Adults may play, but need not play.

**For Families:** Parents and children play on equal footing, all have the same chances to win.

**With Friends:** Young adults and adults play on equal footing, all players are older than 12 years.

**For Experts:** Games with complex rules, a high accessibility threshold and lots of interesting games play, especially suitable for experienced players.

Please be aware that boundaries between groups are blurred. Children who play often and gladly can be ahead of their age group when playing.

„For Families“ is not equal to the classic „Family Game“! Your taste and fun while playing decides what is a game for you.



## Hansa Teutonica

A game of position and development for 2-5 players ages 12 and up by Andreas Steding at Argentum 2009, ca. 120 minutes

# AUSTRIAN GAMES AWARD 2010



## Atlantis

A game of movement and tile collecting for 2-4 players from ages 10 and up by Leo Colovini at Amigo 2009, ca. 45 min

Atlantis is sinking and each player tries to save the islanders and their artefacts. You play a card and move of your men to the next artefact of this colour. If the artefact tile is not empty you play another card and move the man on. If the artefact tile is empty your man stays and you receive the first empty tile behind your man. New gaps are filled with water tiles. Crossing water without a bridge must be paid for with tiles or cards. For each man safely on the mainland you draw one card more per turn. The first player having all men on the mainland ends the game. The other players move their men directly to the mainland and count and pay the total cost for crossing water. Who now has the highest score from all collected tiles wins the game.



## Artistico

A game of dexterity for 1-4 players ages 5 and up, licensed by Michael Kohner Corp., at Piatnik 2010, ca. 10 minutes



## Diego Drachenzahn

A game of dexterity for 2-4 players ages 5 and up by Manfred Ludwig at Haba 2009, ca. 15 minutes, also

**Kinderspiel des Jahres 2010**



## Tipi

A game of agility and observation for 2-4 players from ages 5 and up by Steffen Bogen at Schmidt Spiele 2010, ca. 15 minutes



## A la carte

A game of dice and dexterity for 3-4 players ages 10 and up by Karl-Heinz Schmiel at Heidelberger 2009, ca. 45 minutes



## Dixit

A game of creative communication for 2-6 players ages 8 and up by Jean-Louis Roubira at Libellud 2008, ca. 45 min, also

**Spiel des Jahres 2010**



## Don Quixote

A game of tile placement for 2-4 players from ages 8 and up by Reinhard Staupe at Pegasus 2010, ca. 30 minutes

POWERPLAY IN THE 12TH CENTURY

# JERUSALEM

*Under the reign of the Crusaders!*



Any person, if only marginally interested in history, has lots of associations for Jerusalem. Be it Jesus Christ, Christianity, crusaders, crusades, Israel or Palestine ...

In the 12th century crusaders conquered the City of Jerusalem. They came from all over Europe and each of these "noble" knights and barons wanted to be the sole ruler of the city.

These historical events await us also on the game board. We are those barons rivaling for command and imitate them on the board. Sometimes we fight for the Tower of David, then again for the palace or the city market. But the ruler of Jerusalem will be who builds the highest tower in the fortress. To build one again and again needs influence with the king, with the Knights Templar, with the patriarchy, on the market

and with the nobility.

To construct a floor is paid for with prestige and this can you can get in the royal palace, from the nobility or from the patriarchy and you must be able to control the

**Monika Dillingerova**

*A beautiful game on majorities with a historical background, we get to feel political machinations while at the game board.*

corresponding region by having the most squires there. At the start of each round you receive squires depending on which offices you control and you might have squires left over from the previous round as it is not always useful to place them. Or you might have received squires previously

as income from controlled regions or you could hire new squires for money. Squires are available from the Knights Templar, from the patriarchy and on the market. Money can be had from the market and the nobility.

Each of the five power centres named so far is split into one big and two small parts. The income from the big parts equals the income from the two small ones. With the exception of the market the income in the big part is limited to a maximum of four. The income is depicted by icons on the board, which keeps the game running smoothly as you can never plead ignorance.

The Tower of David is a sixth center of power and consists of only one large region. It only yields a minimal income of one silver



and offers the possibility to move a squire from the Tower of David into another region.

What happens in a round? First we bid for office cards. The officials on the cards have special abilities, yield squires and determine the sequence of play. After bidding in sequence of play we send our own squires into the regions, the Baron may accompany a minimum of three squires. A region with a Baron is taboo for all squire movement during this round. Each player owns a Baron and the baron always returns to him at the end of the round. Already know you get a feeling that it is not an advantage to play first. The disadvantage to be outbid can be balanced by a higher number of squires, winning ties in regions and the chance to choose an action card.

Juraj Dillinger: Everybody tells everybody else what mistakes he made. This is irritating. I think that I was always outmanoeuvred. Next time I will definitely try to direct my efforts on getting the last official? But will I have enough squires left?

There are always as many action cards prepared as there are players in the game. The first one chooses a card from the stack, the next one from the remaining cards etc. Thus the first player has the possibility to take the first card and also knows the cards of his members and can calculate with their effects.

One player after the other makes is one move per round. Then we score, and scoring happens in three parts. First the Tower of David is scored and then privileges are awarded. Privileges are given depending on the majority in the patriarchy, the market and nobility. Each centre gives another privilege. In the 3rd step single regions are scored for money, squires and prestige.

Finally, we have acquired prestige and can build our towers, floor by floor. A floor is paid for with prestige points, the price is 1 prestige point plus the number of floors. If a player is the first to build a floor he first must evaluate the technology of the building for another prestige point. Thus the third floor costs the first builder 5 points, the other players pay only 4 points. Sequence of building is from low-numbered official to high-numbered official.

Marta Dillingerova: I like this game. Shall we play again tomorrow? it is invaluable to be able to play last in the last round with enough money and squires saved! This has won me scores of games.

To avoid make the game run uniformly in

each round, events take place in rounds 2, 3 and 4. These events are drawn at the start of the round and implemented at the end of the round. Events influence the number of squires in some power centres. There are 4 event cards in total and only three are used in a game. This makes every game a little different. In the last round, the fifth, players are rewarded with prestige for their remaining squires, money and action cards. This is followed by a last building round and then the player with the highest tower wins.

Monika Dillingerova: Jerusalem is a game on majorities and take-overs. It reminds me of El Grande, but does not need a tower to gobble up cubes. It contents itself with screens for each player behind which cubes and money are hidden. Okay, you can count cubes on the board and in the general stock, and this renders the screens useless, but I would advise against this. It is not fun to play with such nitpickers. I would play Jerusalem any time again in a 3-player, a 4-player game tends to get a little bit confusing.

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## 40 Lines for Meeples

Dagmar de Cassan, Editor-in-Chief

On May 1st of 1977 my husband published the first issue of **WIN Das Spiele Journal** and so could share his love for games with others

Today, 34 years later, WIN is still published, in August 2010 with issue 412. Now, with its new English edition it will reach even more players than before.

We shared this idea for an English edition with our friends already in the summer of 2009, but it took a year to realize it.

Welcome and please allow yourself to be infected by game-loving Meeples, we love to play games and write about them!

Together we decide what is presented in our WIN. We enjoy new games, we play everything and from as many publishers from all over the world as possible.

WIN is published monthly, 12 times a year (resulting in more than 600 game reviews) and is supplemented by two special editions published on occasion of the Nuremberg and Essen Fairs (presenting more than 1.200 games). Read our Journal regularly!

Finally we would like to state for our editorial office – since this is necessary for some countries – that nobody in our editorial office receives benefits in kind, money, services or other remunerations from game publishers. All games for reviews are provided by the Austrian Games Museum and returned to it. If you like our WIN: The English version is available as PDF for free download under

<http://www.gamesjournal.at>

And we do more than publish a Journal: We are the Foundation Spielen in Österreich. Visit our web-site. Take a look at our Games Companion 2010.

<http://www.spielen.at>

See you next month!

### JERUSALEM

**Designer:** Michele Mura  
**Artist:** Guido Favaro, Eva Villa  
**Distributor:** Abacusspiele / Piatnik  
**Price:** ca. 31,00 Euro  
**Publisher:** Red Glove 2010  
[www.redglove.it](http://www.redglove.it)

### EVALUATION

Majorities

With friends

bid, occupy regions, form majorities

#### Comments

Very attractive design  
 Authentic historical background  
 Some gaming experience necessary  
 Works best with three

**Compares to**  
 El Grande

#### My rating



**PLAYERS**  
 2-4

**AGE**  
 12+

**TIME**  
 90+

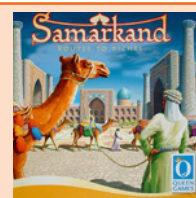


POLYGAMY ON THE ORIENT-EXPRESS

# SAMARKAND

*Camels instead of Steam Engines*

10↑



Train games usually play as long as a train ride from Vienna to Innsbruck, delays included. That this is not a pre-requisite was proved by designer Harry Wu already in 2008 with his game *Chicago Express / Wabash Cannonball*: Buy shares of railway companies, build track, earn dividends and all that in about an hour – provided nobody thought too much in the auction phase. Basically these mechanisms are present too in *Samarkand* – buy shares, extend track and collect victory points by connect your track to the tracks of other companies.

In *Samarkand* all that has been subjugated under an Oriental topic: Instead of railway companies the game features far-away merchant families to which we are supposed to relate by marriage and instead of extending track we enlarge camel caravans on their trade routes. Instead of station we find trade posts and the board

does not show USA, but a part of the Orient between Byzantium, Egypt across Persia to the borders of China.

Anyway, this exotic ambience fits the basic mechanisms very well but makes first explanations rather tedious and not easy to understand. After one game at the latest the few and easy rules are understood, as players can only choose between two actions.

**Marry or acquire camels**

You can either marry into another family or extend the caravan / trading route of a family. 10 families provide two marriage candidates each. Double-sided candidate tiles show a man and a woman, you can be married several times or have registered partnerships, and that not only for men but also for women. For the bride or bridegroom you have to pay the bride price as a proof of your love and receive a dowry of new order/ware cards. On these

cards one of the 33 trade posts on the plan is pictured. To score points for a card the trade post of any fellow player must reach this post. Additional points are scored if the caravan belongs to a family one is a member of by marriage as a son or daughter in law. The maximum of points can be scored with two "own" camels on a trade post.

Track building is simple and reminds me a little bit of *Trans America / Trans Europa*: Place one or two camels to extend a caravan of the same colour, and naturally only within one of your families. One square has only room for two camels of different colours. For building the first connection

**Harald Schatzl**

*Marriages are contracts and marrying is a business deal – love maybe comes later. The love for Samarkand also takes more than one game to grow - will it keep all your life?*



between caravans of different colours you are rewarded with victory points, but other players that are sons or daughters in law of the families involved earn points, too. As two players can be related to each other via one family, part of the allure of the game is due to the possibility that these two maybe want to direct the caravan to different destinations until finally the camels run out.

And that's basically it. The end of the game can come rather suddenly, resulting in strategic deliberations. Does it pay to marry another wife? Or can somebody finish quickly? Not my wife, but the game! Often, on the other hand, one can stretch out the game tactically. Other considerations result from the current situations on the board: If I reach a trade post on my cards with one of my caravans, my fellow player can rejoice in the extra points for the connection opportunity presented to him. A little luck in drawing the ware cards does not come amiss, but the game allows discarding of games in the hope that the next partner brings a more useful dowry.

Furthermore, I can deliberately go looking for a bride in whose neighbourhood the trade posts on my ware cards are positioned. As nearly all information is visible on the table, theoretically I can think my way through all possibilities, but usually

game play is rather fast. Often so fast that the time for play seems relatively short compared to the time necessary for setting up and clearing away the game. Another game is clearly indicated.

The rules and the game components are again – as is usually the case with Queen Games – very good and very well designed. Near the end of the game lots of colourful wooden camels move across Asia reminding me of cute ant tracks. That camels can cross water is a little irritating, but maybe our German expression “Wüstenschiff” = Desert Ship for a camel has more hidden meaning than we know. The question whether the families are well balanced has not been answered yet. The price for marriages into the attractive positions in the middle of the board is nearly double of those at the outskirts, but they yield higher bonuses for connections to other families. For the 2-player variant a few extra rules and even an extra bag is provided. With two players the game should reach its tactical peak, as I need to consider my own revenues from an action as well as those of my opponent.

**wn** Harald.Schatzl@spielen.at

## SAMARKAND

**Designer:** David V.H. Peters & Harry Wu

**Artist:** Jo Hartwig

**Distribution:** Piatnik

**Price:** ca. 35,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Queen Games 2010

[www.queen-games.de](http://www.queen-games.de)

## EVALUATION

Track building

For families

Place camels, change familie affiliations

### Comments:

Interesting, exotic topic  
Relatively few and simple rules  
Tactical potential and quick game flow  
Spiele Hit for Families 2010

### Compares to:

Trans America  
Chicago Express  
other railway games with share holding

### My rating



PLAYERS

2-5

AGE

10+

TIME

60+



## GAMES BUYER INFORMATION SYSTEM - GABIS

### STRUCTURE

Each game review also features an evaluation which can help you to find the game that best suites your tastes. The colour accompanying each game title represents the *Target Group*. The headline also contains information on age and number of players.

The *BAR* in the evaluation box displays colour codes for up to 10 *features* of a game.

### TARGET GROUPS

We have defined 4 target groups (colour accompanying the head line)

#### Children:

Games for children and educational games. Adults can play in guiding function

#### Families:

Children and parents play together, all have the same chance to win and have fun

#### Friends:

Young people and adults play together as equals

#### Experts:

Games with special demands on rules and playing time. Especially for game geeks

Games that are especially eligible for *Solo play* or for *2 players* or *Large groups* of players are marked with an icon. Please note for the target groups Children, Family and Friends: Children who love to play can be ahead of their peers! Please note that our target group “families” does not imply the classical concept of „family games“! Furthermore, our target groups can overlap. The choice of the suitable games always depends on your playing partners and your fun with games!

### FEATURES

Each game targets preferences for different features in a player, therefore each game is not suitable for each player. We have listed 10 features players note when deciding on a game. Only if a player finds his preferred features in a game he will enjoy the game. The colour code marks the dominant features. Educational games train the highlighted preference.

#### ■ Chance:

The game is influenced by dice, cards or any other form of random generator

#### ■ Tactic:

Take decision, short-term planning, planning based on one move

#### ■ Strategy:

Think ahead, long-term planning, planning for several moves

#### ■ Creativity:

The player has to provide words, phrases, images and other creative efforts.

#### ■ Knowledge:

Cultural and educational knowledge, long-term memory

#### ■ Memory:

Remember, learn by heart, short-time memory

#### ■ Communication:

Talk to each other, negotiate, inform

#### ■ Interaction:

Influencing each other, bluffing, auction

#### ■ Dexterity:

Motor skills

#### ■ Action:

Body movement, balance and reaction

### Colours in the Bar

Empty boxes: This feature is not present or minimal

One coloured box: This feature of the game is present, but not essential

Two coloured boxes: This feature is present and important in the game

Three coloured boxes: This feature dominates

CHIEFTAINS FOR MANAGERS!

# GLEN MORE

*Scotsmen, sheep and liquor!*

A game for true Scots or rather something for hard-core thinkers? As possibly already in an earlier Scottish past, one has to stand out as a snob in this scenario.

History tells us that the earlier island Celts only had themselves to use as enemies. That may be as it was, if only until the arrival of the Romans. And since Britannia we know that Scots, Picts, Caledonians and many more did not even set eyes on the Romans.

More than enough reason to occupy one-

self gainfully and not to have to improve the world – from the start on this game only concentrates on victory points.

Who drinks the most whisky (nice name for an evil drink; in Ireland and USA – mostly Irish descendants – it goes by the name of Whiskey), who can assemble the most alpha-animals or can explore the most honour-yielding landscapes?

If you need it, the game offers a lively background story: The player assumes the role of a clan chief and organizes the cultivation

of the local land.

.... But let's keep things in order!

Everybody has to start small! As chief of a Scottish clan you can decide how to develop your land. You start from a single village square holding one clan member and soon develop other regions and get your economy going. You build, produce, buy and sell. Independently from your fellow players you enlarge your domain by



villages, corn acres, sheep or cow pastures, woods, pubs, distilleries etc ... always with the intention to gather as many victory points during the game as possible, especially in the three scorings.

Of course, possibilities are restricted, but that is because we have arrived at the central elements of the game:

#### Game Round:

The designer has decided on simple but effective mechanisms: Landscape tiles are laid out in a kind of nearly circular row. The active player is always the player whose man stands at the end of this row, designated by the empty spot! He chooses

#### Roman Heinzinger

*And now for a direct statement: When can a Scotsman economize? He will never concede a victory point to a fellow player voluntarily!*

one of the landscape tiles before him and must place it into his own domain. He can choose the nearest one or maybe one further away but more effective. The further away he chooses a tile, the further moves his man and the longer he has to wait before it is his turn again. Fair enough, and reminds me a little of "Through the Ages".

#### Placing of landscape tiles:

Tiles are placed according to these rules:

- ) a new tile must border an already placed tile, landscape details must correspond
- ) a new tile must border a clan member in a 9x9 surrounding
- ) in the village only one vertical river and one horizontal road may exist
- ) road and river cannot be interrupted or another tile placed in their stead.

To add to our domain we need our clan members. New tiles can only be placed next to them, albeit also diagonally. Newly placed tiles activate tiles adjacent to them. Activated tiles provide actions that can be used to produce or sell and so – in the end – generate victory points.

But don't worry – your landscape is not without end, you will not lose control! Each tile has special characteristics. All of them provide a one-time use, depicted by a symbol in the right-hand bottom corner, most of them also the activating action. For instance, the distillery demands discarding one grain to get a whisky barrel. So a distillery next to grain field can be rather handy! Later in the game you can allow higher costs for valuable tiles, a stone maybe for a village or a clan member for a special location.

Generally the rule is: Activations can occur in any order, by a first placement and

further placing of a tile in a 9x9 neighbourhood a tile is activated once in your turn. Grain tiles produce yellow resource cubes, sheep pastures white cubes, villages move clan members, even diagonally or over the border of the domain, and convert them to chieftains.

Resource cubes are placed on the tile, up to a maximum of 3, and the stock of resources is limited.

The middle of the display board lists the different kinds of resources: At the beginning the spots for 1, 2 and 3 are empty and thus 3 cubes available in each kind of resources. Buying and selling of resources is possible only in your own move. Buying only then when you need one or more resources for acquiring or activating a landscape tile. In the 17th century there was no Wall Street. We bought only what we needed! You pay the price stated by placing the coins on the corresponding square and so buy the resource or sell a resource and take the coins.

#### Scoring:

As soon as the last tile of Phase 1 is placed, the first scoring happens:

Players compute their achievements by counting

- 1.) Whisky barrels;
- 2.) Special locations;
- 3.) Total of chieftains and bonnets

and comparing your total with the lowest value in the category. The display board lists how many victory points you score for what difference.

#### And who wins?

At the end of Phase 3 we compare for the 3rd time our whisky barrels, our special locations and our honour, represented by chieftains and bonnets, and have hopefully achieved a high score. The winner is the player with the most victory points. But there is a BUT: In the end we count all the tiles we placed and compare our count with the count of the player with the fewest tile AND then we deduct three victory points from our score for each of our surplus tiles. Thus: The fewer landscape tiles the better! Scots should be thrifty!

#### Final remarks

Glen More is a relatively short game, the designer planned for 60 minutes. So it would not be fair to expect a complex or substantial game and we are rewarded with a simple rule book. So far so good!

The game for two or three offers thinkers a short, challenging game. The game for four or five is still offering some variety, but gets

progressively unpredictable. Especially in the last phase it can get chancy to grab a good tile. It seems a bit unfair when the last tile in the last round changes the outcome dramatically. So keep cool!

Basically it is a nice idea, this circular row! Good tiles appear at the most unexpected moments and force you to evaluate them on the spot. But you are not alone in this dilemma. Get a good tile once and try to activate it often and use it extensively seems to be a good plan.

To call Glen More a puzzling game would be a bit too strong, despite a player being the sole master of his game. The last round in contrast is luck-heavy and introduces gallows humour like „the one who comes late is punished by life“. But the mechanisms leading up to that resigning remark work well and especially the game for two has a beautiful flow. And there are strategic possibilities to make for differently flavoured games.

 [Roman.Heinzinger@spielen.at](mailto:Roman.Heinzinger@spielen.at)

## GLEN MORE

**Designer:** Matthias Cramer

**Artist:** Harald Lieske, Loïc Billiau

**Distribution:** Heidelberger

**Price:** ca. 22,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Alea / Ravensburger 2010

[www.alea-spiele.de](http://www.alea-spiele.de)

## EVALUATION

economy and development game

With friends

Buy tiles and use them

#### Comments:

Well-working mechanisms  
Little interaction  
Individual game processes  
Well-structured rules

#### Compares to:

Carcassonne, Settlers, Through the ages

#### My rating



PLAYERS  
2-5

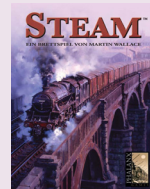
AGE  
10+

TIME  
60+



IN THE ERA OF STEAM

# STEAM

*A classical railway game*

In 2002 the small company Winsome Games, specialising in railway games, published the first version of Martin Wallace's Age of Steam. This was the start for one of the most important series of railway games. Only 18xx can boast a similar amount of variants and additional boards. Age of Steam was followed by numerous additional maps and also the basic game was re-published by bigger companies. But then designer and first publisher fell out. A long and expensive lawsuit followed

fighting over the rights to Age of Steam. I will abstain from any comment, whoever is interested can find lots on the subject on the net, on some sites in English the parties involved have posted several comments. In the meantime Age of Steam had sold out long ago and was only available very expensively via the second-hand market. 2009 brought the long-awaited new edition, at second glance there were two of them as designer as well as publisher marketed new editions, the designer with

Mayfair Games / Phalanx game under the title Steam and the publisher with Eagle Games / Pegasus as Age of Steam.

Both new editions feature reworked rules and newly designed components. For Steam some rules were changed, so that it is rather a new game than a new edition. The basic mechanisms and flair of the game remain unchanged, though. Furthermore Steam features rules for an expert game, which is similar to Age of Steam, and rules for a simplified basic game, that



doppelseitiger Spielplan



136  
Streckenplättchen

10 Markierungs-  
plättchen „Waren-  
ach Schub“



8 Plättchen „Neue Großstadt“



7 Aktionsplättchen  
(dargestellt ist die „Expertenspiel“-Set)

complexity-wise rather reminds one of the Age-of-Steam clone Railroad Tycoon.

This rule abstract describes the expert game:

The game comprises several rules of equal format, their number depends on the number of players. Each round again has several phases:

First, players can amass capital. Players can borrow any amount of money, which is also unavoidable as players start without money. Later in a round players cannot borrow money and must pay interest on their loans, for any 5\$ income 1\$ must be deducted. Therefore calculate your monetary needs very carefully.

In the second phase sequence of play is determined by auction. In turn players must raise the current bid or pass. If you pass you place your marker on the free position furthest in the rear on the play sequence track and pay your own last bid. Only the first two players must pay in full, the last one pays nothing, all others half of it, rounded up. This sequence of play is valid for one full round.

In the third phase action tiles are counted. Each tile is available once and offers different advantages.

In phase four new track can be built. The game board shows a map divided into hexes with cities in different colours. You can place up to three track tiles to connect cities. Depending on terrain the price is different. Each part of track built is marked with your colour disc. A complete track between two cities is called a connection.

These connections can be used in phase five to transport merchandise. Merchandise is symbolized by small coloured cubes, which are distributed randomly on the cities at the beginning of the game. Your goal is to transport the cubes into cities of the same colour. For each owned connection used you score 1 point on the victory points / income track. You can also use other connections, but not more than your own and the points are scored by the owner. The maximum number of connections that can be used for a transport is equal to the upgrade level of your engine, rising from 1 to a maximum of 6. Instead of a delivery - two are possible in a round - you can upgrade the engine by one level. In the last phase the actual income is paid out. From the current amount on the income track maintenance costs for the engine are deducted, equal to the upgrade level. The result can be negative! If the player has not enough money left to pay his debts, he loses one victory point for every 2\$, or one point on the income

track. If you end up on 0 victory points and -10 income, your company is bankrupt and you drop out of the game. In the end the player with the most victory points wins the game after scoring victory points for each connections and income,

In the basic game there is no phase 1, money can be borrowed anytime at the same conditions, phases two and three are combined into one single phase. The bid for the game sequence is missing, instead of it the action tiles acquire an additional function and determine the game sequence. If you choose a weaker action you play earlier.

#### Markus Wawra

*Simply a must for each fan of complex railway/economy games unless you already own Age of Steam.*

The game becomes easier that way. Pre-calculating money is omitted as well as the sometimes tedious auction. At the same time the game somehow acquires more depth due to the more complex choice of action tiles, because sometimes you are well advised to choose not the best action to be able to play earlier.

Steam comes in a big, well filled box. The components satisfy all demands. Lots of wooden pieces, beautifully printed card board tiles and a good, well-structured rule book please every player. The test version even contains a full bag of unnecessary material. There is enough material for six players. Basically Steam can be played with 2 to 6 players, but the two maps in the basic box are only feasible for 3 to 5 players. The rules inform on the necessity of additional boards for 2-6 players. Meanwhile the first official expansion, Steam Barons, has been published. Furthermore you can use the many maps for Age of Steam, sometimes a little adaption are necessary.

All in all Steam offers a lot to fans of complex railway / economics games. All mechanisms have proven their worth over the years, not for nothing year for year expansion boards for Age of Steam are published. No other system has come so close to the king of the genre, 18xx. The allure of the game is enormous, albeit rather more tactical than strategic. The playing time of two hours is absolutely feasible for experienced players, filling an evening, but clearly less than for 18xx.

The expert variant of Steam differs only marginally from Age of Steam. Which one you prefer is first and foremost a question of personal taste. Steam has the small bonus of the basic game, which despite

being simpler still is of interest for expert players and a welcome diversion. The biggest bonuses for the original Age of Steam surely are the many expansion maps already available and geared to the game. To acquire both games can only be recommended to collectors and absolute fans.

wn Markus.Wawra@spielen.at



## STEAM

**Designer:** Martin Wallace  
**Artist:** Miguel Coimbra  
**Distribution:** Heidelberger  
**Price:** ca. 40,00 Euro  
**Publisher:** Phalanx / Mayfair 2009  
[www.phalanxgames.de](http://www.phalanxgames.de)

## EVALUATION

Railway / economy game

For experts

build track and deliver merchandise

#### Comments:

Well-tested sophisticated mechanisms  
 High interaction, planning still possible  
 Well structured rules  
 Rich components

#### Compares to:

Age of Steam, Railroad Tycoon, Railways of the World, 18xx

#### My rating:



PLAYERS  
3-5

AGE/ELT  
12+

TIME  
120+



EXPANSION FOR STEAM

# STEAM BARONS

*More shares, less steam*



Steam Barons is the first official expansion for Steam. Contrary to the basic game it was not published by Mayfair Games / Phalanx Games, but by designer Martin Wallace himself in his own company Warfrog Games under the Treefrog Label.

What do you expect from a good expansion? New maps? Perpetuating rules? More and prettier components? Well, all that can be found in Steam Barons, but still it is not a typical expansion as I would expect to

be.

First, the box offers two new maps. Both maps are playable by six players and thus expand Steam to 6 players, because the maps in the basic game were only feasible for 3-5 players. The maps are absolutely functional but unfortunately not as attractive as the original ones. The new maps introduce a new ware, including the necessary components.

In addition to that there is a bag full of

wooden engines in the six player colours to replace the wooden discs that were used to mark the tracks in the basic games. This makes the game maybe a little prettier but I thought the original more clearly laid out. The box also features a rule book. This offers a few additional rules for the new maps and the rules for the new game Steam Barons. Yes, the new game, because this has not much to do with Steam.

Steam Barons is a game on shares, for 2-6 players. A tableau depicts share values and



some other information and there are company cards for each company. The shares are represented by the discs from the basic game, robbed of their original function by the new engines.

Steam Barons is played over five rounds that are divided into several phases. In Steam Barons there are always 6 companies. Players can buy company shares and control of the company according to the majority rule. Shares are auctioned at the start of each round, separately for each company. Only shares located in the „available shares“ space are offered. In the first round this is one share from each company, later on the number varies. The minimum price is always the current market value. Players in turn can raise the bid or pass. If you win the bid you can buy any number of shares of this company, minimum one share. The other players can buy remaining shares of this company for the same price.

Phases 2 and 3 enable players to build track and to transport wares, according to the rules of Steam, with one exception: You may only use your own connection and there is no limit to the engines. Companies can deliver over any distance. If a company should need more money to build than it has cash available, new shares can be issued. Each share earns the company \$5. The newly emitted shares are placed on „available shares“ and can be bought next round. The number of connections used in delivering is marked on the victory point track. As in Steam you can transport two wares per round and the results are added.

These operating results are the calculation basis for the fourth phase. Using a table you determine how much revenue is paid to players for their shares, how much the company itself has earned and how much bonus is paid to the president. Results of companies are compared and companies are ranked accordingly. The market values of better ranked companies rise, those of lesser ranked companies fall.

In the fifth phase players can sell any number of shares at the current market value. Shares sold end up on the „available shares“ space and can be bought again next round. Companies whose market values fall too low go bankrupt. This happens in phase six. Shares of such a company are valueless and are removed from the game. The company tracks are considered neutral and can be used by other companies, but do not earn them points.

In phase 7 the playing sequence for the companies in the next round is determined. This happens randomly by drawing from a bag. The end of a round also has acquired its own phase. This only consists

#### Markus Wawra

*An expansion for Steam, or maybe not, because the game with the expanded rules has not much in common with the original game but is a classic share holder game with the emphasis on profit. Typical for that genre is the high amount of calculating. Incongruously Steam Barons has a high amount of luck. Even if the new maps and components are functional, I was disappointed by Steam Barons.*

of moving the marker for the number of rounds one position ahead. The richest player after five rounds wins the game.

While Steam is a railway game with a strong economics component which makes it necessary to keep an eye on the long-term development of your company, Steam Barons is first and foremost a game about shares with the aim to make the most profit in each round. Long-term strategies are rather uninteresting. Therefore Steam Barons is much more similar to games like Steel Driver or Chicago Express aka Wabash Cannonball than to Steam, with which it only shares building and transport mechanisms. Also the flair of the game is similar to that of Steel Driver or Chicago Express. It might be fun to play on a gut level, but you can enhance your chances to win drastically when calculating profit and potential beforehand, which demands a high amount of thinking. Auction of the shares does not make gut-level playing easier, as there is an optimum price for each share. All in all I am rather disappointed by this expansion. The flair of Steam is nearly completely gone. A fabulous game like Steam is entitled to something better. I would even go so far as to question the sense in marketing Steam Barons as an expansion for Steam. The only reason for it is that maps and additional components can also be used for Steam.

The fact, that the playing order for the companies is absolutely random and unpredictable, does not go with this otherwise very predictable game. Very often, it is very important who may build and deliver first.

The price is rather steep. Ordered directly from the publisher, the price for Steam Barons is 35€ plus shipping. Rather a high price for an expansion even when allowing for the many wooden engines being rather expensive to produce and that a small company like Warfrog cannot produce a high print run.

Another small point of irritation is the packing. Due to the fact that basic game and expansion come from different companies, maps, boxes and rules have different formats. This makes joint transportation in one box impossible and I think this very irritating for an expansion. You either always handle two boxes or find another solution!

In the end something positive to mention: The rules are easily understandable, the Internet provides – as is common in Treefrog Games, a free download for rules in German.

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### STEAM BARONS

**Designer:** Martin Wallace  
**Artist:** Mark Beeney  
**Distribution:** Heidelberger  
**Price:** ca. 35,00 Euro  
**Publisher:** Warfrog /Treefrog 2009  
[www.treefroggames.com](http://www.treefroggames.com)

### EVALUATION

Railway / economy game

For experts

Buy shares, build track, deliver wares

**Comments:**  
 Well-tested sophisticated mechanisms  
 High interaction, planning still possible  
 Heavy emphasis on calculation  
 Good rules

**Compare to:**  
 Steel Driver, Chicago Express

#### My rating



**PLAYERS**  
 2-6

**AGE**  
 12+

**TIME**  
 180+

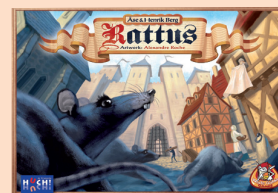


PLAGUE, RATS AND KNIGHTS

# RATTUS

*Fight the Black Death!*

10↑



After a long interval we wanted to have a games evening again at home and try a few new games. After browsing through the new arrivals in the Austrian Games Museum we decided to try, beside some other games, also Rattus.

The topic of the game I thought rather repulsive, rats and Plague are not really agreeable or appealing subjects, but my husband convinced me to try it all the same. Against all expectations I thought the cover of the box rather well-made, it depicts rats scurrying through a town.

After opening the box you find a board, 49 rat tiles, 20 population cubes each in four colours, 6 Class cards and 1 Plague marker. The board shows Europe, divided into 12 regions and with a separate space for the so called „castle“. The 49 rat tiles are divided into 12 starting tiles and 37 normal rat tiles. The 12 starting tiles are set aside, shuffled face down and in a game of four distributed in the 12 regions of the board, 1 tile to a region. The other rat tiles are stacked face down. In a game for two 8 regions of the board are used, 10 regions come into

play in a game for three, and starting tiles are placed only into these regions, the rest is shuffled in with the standard rat tiles. Finally, we determine a starting player.

At the start of the game all place to population cubes into a region. Theoretically all players can choose the same region, but this would be bad tactics. After this first placement round each player, in anti-clockwise order, positions 2 more cubes in a region of his choice.



When all players have 4 population cubes on the board, the starting player begins the game proper. Remaining cubes form a player's population stock. The game is played in rounds and in his move a player can position his population cubes in a region on the board. Aim of the game is to have the majority of population cubes on the board at the end of the game.

In your move you can choose from three actions:

- \* Placing population cubes
- \* Drawing and implementing Class cards
- \* Relocating Plague marker

Relocating the Plague marker must always be the last action of a player and ends his turn. Placing of population cubes is an action a player must do, taking and implementing of class cards is optional. Both actions can be done in any order.

#### Placement of population cubes

A player can position exactly the amount on population cubes in a region equivalent to the number of rat tiles in this region. Drawing and/or implementing of Class Cards

In your turn you can only take one Class card and place it in front of you. But you can use each Class card on the table once per turn, including a card just placed. This gives a player the opportunity to implement several action within this part of his turn.

There are 6 different Class cards: King, Farmer, Knight, Monk, Merchant and Witch giving the player different actions. You can take away a Class card from a player anytime and use it for yourself, theoretically the same card can be used by all players within one round.

But the cards do not only yield advantages. When the pestilence is evaluated after the pestilence marker was relocated cards can be the reason for having to remove population from the board.

The King lets you place one population cube into the castle protect it against the Plague to

The Farmer gives you an additional population cube in a region

The Knight allows movement of the Plague marker over 2 regions and assists in forcing a Plague.

The Monk moves a rat tile from one region into a neighbouring region

The Merchant lets you move 3 population cubes into an adjacent region

The Witch lets you look at two rat tiles and – if you want – switch them

Relocating the Plague marker

The last action of your turn is relocation of the Plague marker into an adjacent region. If you place the marker into a region without rat tiles your turn ends instantly.

If one rat tile is in the new region the player adds another one to a region adjacent to the region with the Plague marker. If two or three rat tiles are in the region with the Plague marker, you add two tiles to adjacent regions, either both into the same region or 1 each in two different regions. After placing the new rat tiles the Plague is evaluated. A plague occurs only if a minimum of 1 rat tile and 1 population cube regardless of what colour are present in the region with the Plague marker. You turn over one of the rat tiles in the region.

#### Maria Schranz

*Somehow Rattus has managed to sit between chairs – it does not have a family-friendly topic but has simple rules but is not easily understood – thus it is not really good but also not really bad – you will have to decide for yourself!*

The number on the rat tile is compared to the number of population cubes. If the number of cubes is equal or higher than the number on the rat tile a plague occurs. If the number is smaller the rat tile goes out of the game.

If a Plague occurs the rat tile becomes important a second time: Besides the number the rat tile shows several symbols and / or the letters M or A. When letters are present they are implemented first. M means majority and players with the majority of population cubes in the region take back one cube into their stock. A means all and in this case all players take back one of their cubes in the region, if any are present.

Symbols on the rat tiles correspond to symbols on the class cards. A player with population in the region and an affected Class card must take back one cube per symbol into his stock.

The game either ends when a player has placed all his population cubes on the board or when the last rat tile has been placed. Then one last round is played counter-clockwise, each player is restricted to the actions available to him from the Class cards he currently owns.

Then in all regions Plague is evaluated one last time and after that the player with the most population on the board wins, in a tie the player who would be the next to play.

The game comprises simple mechanisms and offers little appeal to experienced players. The topic is not really suitable for a typical family with children but would be suited ideally for that target group as

regards to complexity and requirements. So what target group did the designers have in mind?

I consider Rattus to be a rather average game with no special appeal and thus I do not like to recommend it.

In our rounds opinions differed widely. Most players did not want to play again. My husband, however, and some others thought that the game was really suitable as a starting game for newcomers and inexperienced players and that they would play it again. But all agreed to it that it is not really a good game, after all.

The design of game and box is well done, but does not strengthen the appeal.

The rules are short, but not really clear and well structured, this could have been done better.

My conclusion: Unfortunately not a really good game, but I cannot call it bad either, just average. I can't even recommend it for a certain group of players, but the age stated and the simple mechanism destine it for the family or for players with little game experience.

**wn** Maria.Schranz@spielen.at

## RATTUS

**Designer:** Ase & Henrik Berg

**Artist:** Alexandre Roche

**Distribution:** Piatnik

**Price:** ca. 23,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Huch & friends 2010

[www.huchandfriends.de](http://www.huchandfriends.de)

## EVALUATION

Placement game

For Families

Place cubes and tiles

#### Comments:

Simple mechanics  
Simple short rules  
Attractive design  
Topic does not work for the target group  
Cooperation with White Goblin Games

#### Compares to:

Majority game with action cards

#### My rating



PLAYERS  
**2-4**

AGE  
**10+**

TIME  
**45+**



## LAND OF SHIFTING SANDS

**BALA RA***Wood, desert or sea for your realm!*

Bala Ra, Land of Shifting Sands, awaits us! We build our kingdom and attack opposing realms. If you do not have land on the board at the end of a round you have lost and are out of the game. The last player on the board is the new lord of Bala Ra. Straight, simple and confrontational, that's how Jack Hanauer introduces his game.

Equally simple is how we start the game – our sole resource are 30 units of money, called Ra. There are cards for regions, event cards and protection cards, they are stacked separately. Done! We start! All we now is that there are six different types of landscape = regions, Bala Ra has deserts, woods, mountains, swamps, lowlands and seas.

Each region has its own advantages or strength and yields Ra to its owner. You can use your Ra to buy cards, which you then can use in different ways. Each player faces one side of the board, this is his basis line from where he starts to build land. You can build any type of land, but the regions not share a border and must be separated from each other.

A move comprises: Roll the die, take a card and implement it, calculate income and actions. Actions are build land, buy cards, use cards or attack opponents, in any order and as often as you want.

First you roll the event die, depending on the result you take a sun card or a cloud card or a lightning card and implement the instructions. Sun cards can be kept for later use. Events are always directed at the active player. In the next phase each block of land brings a revenue of 1 Ra.

The next phase is the important one: If you want to build land you pay 2 Ra per block, there is no restriction on how many blocks you build. After 20 blocks in a region the price rises to 3 Ra, after 40 blocks to 4 Ra and so on. If you have land you can buy cards, you pay 8 Ra if you choose a card or 4 Ra for a random card from the pile. BUT: You can only buy cards for regions you own and cards are only valid for this region. If one of your regions is destroyed, you lose all cards for this region. Protection cards are either valid for a region or are for general use. Furthermore, you can only have

a maximum of 5 cards in your hand, sun cards are exempt from this rule, and there is another restriction: You can never hold Farmer cards and Forest Worker cards at

**Dagmar de Cassan**

*An attractive eye catcher and a challenge to play! Experience and a few games for learning are necessary!*

the same time.

Obviously, card management and careful use of cards are essential, you can't afford a big blunder. As a last resort you can discard cards and buy new ones, if the limit is a big obstacle.

To use a card one turns it over and implements it or plays the card as a reaction to an attack. A used card goes out of the game and I cannot re-buy it immediately for use in the next round. Some cards are specially marked, those are kept after use. To conquer opposing land there are two ways: You can directly attack opposing blocks that are directly touched by your own blocks along a side. To do so both roll the die, the higher number wins and changes the opposing blocks into those of your attacking region to expand your region. Or you play cards to attack – these attacks are harder to deflect, as your opponent might not always hold the necessary cards.

Bala Ra is a sophisticated game with seemingly endless possibilities, which players must work at together. If you did not play it before and you meet players that have, you will have no chance. The rule book is the first hint on what to expect – the basic rules are rather short, the rest of the booklet is filled with examples and FAQs, and these should be studied carefully, because in this game the devil is hiding in the details. For instance: I must turn up the farmer one round before I want to use him to generate income, because cards can only be turned up in the action phase and that comes after income.

Bala Ra is a beautiful game, an attractive game, an unusual game which I like because it is I who is in charge of what happens. The better I combine my resources and use them the easier it will be to win. But it might be difficult to find fellow play-

ers, because down time is long and in the first games it will be more like "Oh, darn, I did not know that this card exists, and here goes my swamp" and this is not everybody's cup of tea.

So I end up with mixed feelings on the game itself, but a big bravo for the game idea and the attractive implementation.

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**BALA RA****Designer:** Jack Hanauer**Artist:** unstated**Distribution:** Verlag**Price:** ca. 35,00 Euro**Publisher:** Bala-Ra 2010[www.bala-ra.com](http://www.bala-ra.com)**EVALUATION**

Development

With friends

Build, develop and use land

**Comments:**

Very beautiful design  
Unusual mechanisms  
Game experience necessary

**Compares to:**

All games eliminating other players – Monopoly, Diplomacy, Borderland

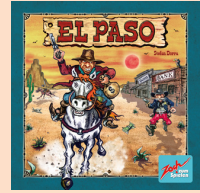
**My rating:****PLAYERS**  
2-4**AGE**  
11+**TIME**  
90+

## LOOTING THE WILD WEST

## EL PASO

Bank, Saloon, Gold Mine or Pasture

10+



It's unmistakable from cover and title, we are transported to the Wild West, we are bandits and loot what we can. And since we band together as a group of three, four or five, we are quite an opposition for the sheriff!

We loot seven towns and rethink in each move what we are going to accept as our haul. The stage is easily set up: the board shows seven towns, Deadwood, Cheyenne, Abilene, Santa Fe, San Diego, Tombstone and El Paso where we finish our raid. We have decided that our preferred crime scenes are bank, saloon, gold mine, pasture, hotel or horse meadow, but not in every city all scenes are available. For each crime scene there is a stack of 8 cards placed face down next to the corresponding mark, each player draws one card from each stack.

Before we start to loot a town 30 loot tiles are drawn from the bag, sorted and placed on the corresponding crime scenes, cheapest on top, most valuable at the bottom of the stack. Loot drawn that is not available in this town is put back in the bag, but not replaced, so there might be less than 20 loot tiles in a town.

And now we start in earnest. Each of us chooses a crime scene card from his hand and puts it face down on the table. Then all cards are revealed at the same time. One of us has been designated the guard. He takes the dice, rolls all five of them and sets all dice that show the sheriff's star onto the sheriff space and remain there till the next town is looted. If there at least one die without sheriff star the town is looted. First, we check for the special cases: If no brand was rolled, the pasture is not looted and if no 6 was rolled, the saloon escapes looting. Bandits who wanted to loot there were unlucky this time, they get nothing. Who is alone at a crime scene, takes the topmost loot tile there. If more than one bandit wants to loot somewhere, they pick up loot tiles in descending order of their card value.

Used crime scene cards are placed face up underneath the stack, when the first dace-up card becomes visible, the stack is turned over and re-used WITHOUT shuffling. A big advantage for those who can remember the order of played cards in six varieties. All players draw cards to replenish their hand

at the same time, and you do not have to replenish with the same crime scene that you did play. Quick draw makes a winner, that is one of laws in the Wild West? Or not?

Dagmar de Cassan

*If you love gambling games and the Wild West, you will have fun in El Paso, dedicated tacticians rather less.*

So far, it was easy – now comes the hard part. Do I remain in town for another haul or do I leave town. If you stay, you can make a better haul, because the lower in the loot tile stack the more valuable BUT the guard only rolls the remaining dice and again each sheriff star is set aside. Then we loot as before and this is repeated until all have left town or 5 stars are set aside or the loot is gone.

If you quit town, you either take your loot away or exchange it for nuggets. The first player to leave town can take with him 1 loot tile, the next one 2, and so on. Remaining loot tiles are exchanged for nuggets: If the loot is to be had in town, one exchanges according to the current exchange rate in town. If not, the exchange rate is 1:1, so taking loot away can pay off! And so might waiting! Or taking the risk! BUT if the 5th sheriff star is rolled, the sheriffs confiscate all loot from the bandits still in town, if it was acquired in a previous round. All they can save are their nuggets. Players who did leave keep their loot tiles. If loot tiles remain in a town that has been quit by all go back into the bag! And we ride into a town again!

When we have looted El Paso, we can exchange remaining loot tiles at the rate 1:1 for nuggets and if you have the highest value of nuggets you win.

A funny and witty foray into a time of smoking colts and boom towns, only purists will comment on there being bronze nuggets, but that is my smallest problem, because I need to decide what to do now. Three stars have been rolled, only one other bandit is in town with me and the 5 on the saloon is still there, and maybe he does not have a saloon card – but if no 6 is rolled I cannot loot the salon and if 2 starts

are rolled I lose my 3-herd and my 5-hotel – what now? The horses champ the bit, my fellow players rattle their colts, what now? Okay, I'll risk it! I stay! My fellow players heave a relieved sigh and 10 seconds later smile happily because the sheriffs got me! An exciting game of luck and dice with lots of ambience, a marvellous family game, all have the chance to get a big haul. I can't leave!

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## EL PASO

Designer: Stefan Dorra

Artist: Stefan Theurer, Victor Boden

Distribution: Simba Toys

Price: ca. 20,00 Euro

Publisher: Zoch 2009

[www.zoch-verlag.com](http://www.zoch-verlag.com)

## EVALUATION

Dice, position, collecting

For families

Choose loot

## Comments:

Topic and mechanisms go well together  
Nice complete rules  
Attractive components  
Down time can be long before decisions

## Compares to:

Diamant, Can't Stop

## My rating:

PLAYERS  
2-5AGE  
10+TIME  
45+

## HANSEATIC TRADE

## LÜBECK

*Cogs sailing from Lübeck to London*

8↑



Lübeck - medieval Hanseatic City and in those time one of the most important trade centres in Europe – players are invited to get rich in Lübeck, too. The first surprise comes with reading the infos on the box – an economics game in 30 minutes – curiosity rises! Preparations are simple: Lay out the board and set out one cog more than there are players and a man for each player on the counting track, the rest of the men go to their owners. Then shuffle the cards and deal three to each player. Which cards? There are Trade Cards cards, showing a city name, the image of a storehouse and a number stating the value of the card, and Extra Cards. Extra Cards are: Trade Trip for the cities Stettin, Danzig, Riga, Visby and Helsingborg to be used as an alternate starting port to Lübeck, x 2 again for the cities Stettin, Danzig, Riga, Visby and Helsingborg and finally the cards Pirates and Change Ship.

We are in the first round and start with forming the display. Cards are laid out in so cold packages, 2 cards to a package, 2 packages more than there are players. Then players in turn chose a package and take it up. The last player taking a package determines whether he himself or another player has the first action. Players have one action in turn until all players have passed.

These actions are the core of the game. You can start a trade trip in Lübeck, use card action, pass or discard a card. To start a trade trip you take an empty cog, place it next to the Lübeck crest and place one your man into the cog. Or you simple take on of your man and place him in a cog already in Lübeck. Or you play the action card Trade Trip and start a cog in the city specified on the card.

The cards yield many more possibilities. You can play a Trade Card when a cog with your man is in this city or in the city but one. If the cog is one city before the city you played the card for, you move the cog into this city. In both cases you immediately score the value of the card played and advance your man on the scoring track. Each player with a man on a cog can move the cog. Special cards x2 are played like Trade Cards, you place them on the table and score double values for each card you play for that city in this round.

The special card Pirates ends the trip of the cog, she goes back into stock and the men are handed back to their owners. The special card Change Ship lets you relocate a man between cogs.

Your last option is to pass. This you may do if you a maximum of three cards left, and cannot do anything else in this round. If you

**Dagmar de Cassan**

*Noble restraint is the name of the game in Lübeck! And full attention for your fellow cog owners and their card selection. Then you can score high with clever card management.*

cannot pass and cannot play a card regularly, you must discard a card and pay for this either the value of the Trade Card or with 1 point for a Special Card, both by moving your man back on the scoring track.

When all players have passed, the round ends. Cogs that stand in Reval, London and Brügge will be unloaded. Men go back to their owners and cogs into stock. At this point each player can - if he likes - take back men from cogs still on a trip. Then the packages for the next round are prepared: Unused packages stay on the table, for each package necessary to fill the display up to the required number of packages (one more than there are players) one card is placed on the table and then one card is added to each package. So, from round 2 on, there are packages with different amounts of cards in the display. If the card deck has been used twice, a card display for the final round is laid out. If necessary for this last display the discard pile is reshuffled to have enough cards available. At the end of this final round all players must deduct the values of cards still in their hands from their score and then the player with the highest score wins.

Designed as a family game by the author, Lübeck absolutely works fine as a family game, rather at the superior end of the range. If you want to succeed, you must think carefully about choosing your packages, plain greed does not help at all. A good memory, on the contrary, can be of good use, because you have one action, then have to wait till other players had theirs before you can play a card again. So look at and remember the packages other players took to make sure that your neighbour will not move the cog out of Stettin before you have played your second card there. Also take good care not to have to discard a card too often, the penalty is heavy and unnecessary. Luck plays a minor role, since all cards are visible. Good card management decides the game, play

the more expensive card first if you have two cards for a city, the ship might not be there for your next card. Also note the different card amounts in the packages and try to plan..

Despite all that, try to plan is the motto, action of fellow players destroy your plans more often than you will like. The game offers interesting details and is a nice family game as regards to playing time. Experienced players find that imponderabilities are too dominant.

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## LÜBECK

**Designer:** Reiner Stockhausen

**Artist:** unstated

**Designer:** Heidelberger

**Price:** ca. 20,00 Euro

**Publisher:** dlp-games 2009

[www.dlp-games.de](http://www.dlp-games.de)

## EVALUATION

Card and placement game, economy topic

For families

Take cards and use them

**Comments:**

Topic nicely implemented  
Simple rules  
Good memory for cards can help

**Compares to:**

Other games with card management

**My rating:**

PLAYERS  
**3-5**

AGE  
**8+**

TIME  
**30+**



CONFLICT AMONG THE STARS

# RACE FOR THE GALAXY

*On the Brink of War*



This is the third expansion for Race for the Galaxy, called *On the Brink of War*, introducing a very well functioning novelty: Prestige points, which bring advantages, especially if you have the majority of prestige points.

A short summary of the basic game: Players are charged with developing the biggest and most powerful Star Empire and thus win victory points. Again and again you must decide whether you want to explore, develop, settle, trade, consume or produce.

All players choose simultaneously which phases should be played and lay out the corresponding action card. Phases not chosen are simply skipped, and there is a bonus for phase chosen by a player. Cards represent developments, but are also used for money and laid out as goods produced.

You try to collect useful cards, which can be deployed for developments or planets and pays for this by discarding less interesting or valuable cards. If you need new cards you must either play a corresponding action card or produce goods. These goods can then be used to sell them for cards or to score victory points.

And now back to *On the Brink of War*: This expansion introduces an 8th action card, which he can use once in the game. This card you can use as a "Search Card" to turn up cards from the draw pile one by one until a card in the category stated beforehand appears. Now you decide if you want this card or not. If not you keep turning up cards until another one of the named category appears. This one you must take. The second possibility to use the 8th action card is to pay a prestige point and use the card as a one-time enhancement for one of the other seven action cards.

Another new feature of this expansion are four new starting planets, so now you can play the „construction“ variant also with six players: You simply separate the starting planets into war planets and trade planets, shuffle them and deal one card to each player. Then each player chooses his hand – each player is dealt a pre-set number of cards, chooses one and hands the rest of

the card on to his neighbour, and so until all these cards are distributed. Then play goes on absolutely regularly, but each player has his own draw pile and discard pile.

**Christoph Vavru**

*Race for the Galaxy with all three expansions remains an ingenious card game with a high luck percentage and lots of excellent choices for a strategy.*

Of course, also five new target tiles have been added, and also of course modification markers for the solo game are included. Furthermore, there are now indication markers for "different military abilities" and "temporary military power".

Finally, we have reached my favorite novelty, the prestige points:

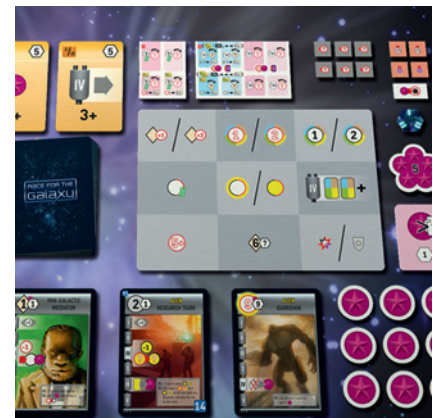
These prestige points are available from certain special cards. They are scored either directly when the card is marked with a dark pink dot diagonally from the victory points, or with certain actions if you have the corresponding card laid out. If at the beginning of a round several players are tied in the majority of victory points, each of them receives a victory point. If one player alone has the majority he lays out the indicator tile „Majority of Prestige“ and places the prestige markers earned in this round on it. From now on only this player scores a victory point at the end of each round and he receives a card from the draw pile when he has prestige markers on the indicator tile, and then the prestige goes into his personal stock. Of course, you could spend your prestige to acquire advantages, but at the end of the game each prestige marker is worth one victory point.

The target tiles still do not really agree with me even if I manage by now to use them rather well in my game. Another feature that I have not really fathomed is the military takeover of opposing planets. But I am really enthusiastic about the prestige points even if they do not influence the game as intensely as I thought at the beginning ... because if my opponent manages to get his really expensive cards into play, even the prestige is no cure for that ... but with the new action card "Search" you can look for specific cards and thus have a bigger chance to see through your

strategy.

Have fun and many hours of ingenious play with Race for the Galaxy and *On the Brink of War*.

**wn** Christoph.Vavru@spielen.at



## RACE FOR THE GALAXY

**Designer:** Tom Lehmann  
**Artist:** Mirko Suzuki  
**Distribution:** Piatnik  
**Price:** ca. 23,00 Euro  
**Publisher:** Abacusspiele 2010  
[www.abacusspiele.de](http://www.abacusspiele.de)

## EVALUATION

Developmentgame

For experts

Collect and apply cards

### Comments:

3rd expansion for Race for the Galaxy  
 Several choices  
 Additional action card  
 High standard of former games kept up

### Compares to:

San Juan, Race for the Galaxy Basic Game

### My rating:



**PLAYERS**  
1-6

**AGE**  
12+

**TIME**  
60+

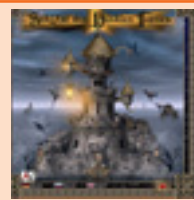


DUNGEONCRAWL EN FAMILLE

# The Treasures of the Dark Tower

Alternate Name: Schätze des Dunklen Turmes

8↑



Games from Eastern European designers are still not easily available (luckily, for the sake of this statement, the Czech Republic is situated north, not east, of Austria) The game "The Treasures of the Dark Tower" provides components and rules in English and German (with some cute translations) and Russian. We did assume that Andrej Volkowskij is Russian, Belorussian or Ukrainian, but the name could be Polish as well. A simple Internet search does not yield information on his origin, and for reviewing this fantasy-themed board game it is superfluous anyway, but Ferdinand de Cassan provided the information: Wolkowskij is Ukrainian.

The background story is quickly told. Up to five adventurers (four male and one female character are provided) prowl through a fortress and search for the keys to a treasure chamber. The paths in this fortress – called labyrinth despite few chances to lose your way – can be loaded with additional traps, because whoever brings the necessary amount of keys – four or six) to the treasure chamber, wins the game. That's it – there is no treasure at the end of the game, but you can put "Honourable Vizier of the magical Tower and Conqueror of innumerable slimy creatures and ridiculous fellow players" on your calling card.

Movement on the board is regulated by six-sided, normal dice. At the end of a move you either stand on a special square and implement the corresponding actions (search for key, teleport to another square, hire a protecting spirit or whatever) or you draw a card to either find an object, experience an event or meet a magic monster. The rule book on the whole is clear and well-structured and illustrated with lots of images. The few not absolutely explicit points are easily cleared up – as the game itself is not really complicated.

A few special features distinguish „The Treasures of the Dark Tower“ from many other similar games. One collects game pieces – despite being spike and rhombic, the rule insists on calling them spheres in all languages („Сфера“, „Sphären“) – in sev-

eral colours, which can be exchanged for mines (traps to drop) or damage markers (additional damage for monsters in battle) or are very helpful in fighting monsters in other ways.

Characters have – besides their individual characteristics (combat techniques) – also Live Points, which are only necessary for

## Martina, Martin und Marcus

*A simple fantasy board game with attractive components, very good as entry into genre, sadly without allusion to Slavic folk lore.*

battle, so basically they cannot die if the lose a fight. The six-sided Battle Die shows the symbols „1“, „2“, „3“, „[1 Point]“, „[2 Points]“ and „Heart“. Numbers denote the use of a special ability (hero characteristics or monster attack depending on who rolls the die), points determine the loss of live points and heart the gain of a live point. Fights among characters are not intended. Furthermore the components feature an Oracle Coin – a cardboard disc showing „No“ (Нет / Nein) on one side and „Yes“ (Да / Ja) on the other side, which is used rather often.

Fun in playing the game is low even for rather inexperienced players, but as an introductory game to the genre of fantasy adventure game „The Treasures of the Dark Tower“ might have its use, the starting age can be lowered.

Somewhat disappointing is that the magical creatures have not been gleaned from the rich canvas of the Eastern European / Russian fairy tales. How nice it would have been to meet again with old acquaintances from Soviet films, which sometimes can be spotted today on television, mainly on German stations like Kika or MDR – witch Baba Jaga or magician Bone Man. A missed chance, surely.

Anyhow, the fighting system – different styles of combat, which are chosen by pure chance – brings variety and a certain individual charm into play. A definite positive comment must be made concerning components and rules. All cards and even the Oracle Coin are provided threefold – one

set per language. The graphics are adorably playful with a slightly grim touch, the monsters are sometimes really sweet and yet appear agreeably dangerous. And finally, the pieces are done in a retro design commemorating the games of the genre in the early Eighties. Viewed from this point "The Treasures of the Dark Tower" comes across like a time-travelling predecessor of Steve Jackson's classic "Der Hexenmeister vom Flammenden Berg".

wn Martina.Lhotzky@spielen.at  
wn Martin Lhotzky@spielen.at,  
Marcus Steinwender



## The Treasures of the Dark T...

**Designer:** Andrew Volkowskij

**Artist:** Andrew Volkowskij

**Distribution:** Heidelberger

**Price:** ca. 40,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Andrew Volkovskiy Entertainment  
/ Agentur Vielfalt 2009

## EVALUATION

Adventure quest game

For families

Roll die, draw and implement event cards

### Comments:

Lovingly chosen components  
Only for beginners in the genre of dungeon crawls  
Rules in English, German and Russian

### Compares to:

All simple fantasy board games

### My rating:



PLAYERS  
2-5

AGE  
8+

TIME  
75+



CAMELS, BAKSCHISCH AND BLACK MARKET

# SEIDENSTRASSE

Tea from Chang'an to Byzantium



Tashkent, Amritsar, Samarkand, Palmyra or Byzantium – A hint of adventures and Arabian Nights, the taste of sand between your lips, hot desert winds, camels and silk! We are traders trekking with three caravans along the old legendary Silk Road!

Already before we start we are confronted with a decision: Shall we use the side of the board where actions at locations are pre-set or do we distribute actions randomly – we decided to try the pre-set actions for our first game.

The composition of the caravans is also decided randomly. The camels are set out face down, distributed and then turned up. One is placed in Tashkent, two in Amritsar, three in Chang'an and the remaining four go to the caravanserei. Each of the camels carries a certain ware, so now we have a random distribution of merchandise among the caravans and three caravans on the board, one with 1, one with 2 and one with 3 camels. Finally, each player receives four ware cards, three are placed into the open display and each player gets randomly dealt a camel driver. Gems in the destination cities are yet to be placed, the lay-out demands 1 in Yspahan, 2 in Samarkand and 3 in Byzantium. Thus the destinations for the caravans are set, the 1-camel caravan always to the 1-gem city, the 2-camel caravan to the 2-gem city and so on. Play goes round the table, a move comprises displaying cards, move caravan, take cards, implement action and replenish open display. In your turn you can only play cards of one ware and move all camels of a caravan accordingly, 1 space for each card played. The cards go into your personal display. Squares occupied by other caravans are left out and not counted. At crossroads featuring a pointer for the appropriate target city the caravan MUST take the road to this city.

At the end of the caravan's move the action indicated by the village reached by the caravan is implemented. Kamele (Camels) give you ware cards, Zollhaus (Customs Office) asks non-active players to reduce their number of cards held to 4, Sandsturm (Sandstorm) costs them a card from their display and the Räuber (Robber) enables the active player to take a card from the personal display of another player into his own display. Basar lets you discard 3 different cards from your display and take a colourless gem instead. Bakschisch lets you transfer a card from the open display to your own, the card must be paid for with a card from your hand.

Schwarzmarkt (Black Market) initiates a Little Market Day for the most valuable merchandise in the caravan.

**Dagmar de Cassan**

*A fascinating mixture of luck and your own decisions, the topic has been met precisely*

A Little Market Day is also held when a caravan reaches a place showing the image of a ware that is carried by the caravan. Only this ware is sold, the player with the most cards of this ware in his display may sell, he receives a colourless gem. The details of the sale follow the procedure of a Grand Market Day – details later.

Colourless gems have a special status, if you get the third one, you put all of them back to the caravanserei and receive a victory point marker of value 8, which is added to your victory points at the end of the game. At the end of your turn you draw a card, either from the pile or from the open display. If you did play cards for a merchandise that is carried in the caravan you moved you draw an additional card.

If the caravan reaches its destination, a Grand Market Day is held and all wares are sold. This is the most interesting and attractive part of the game, because rather surprisingly not the player who moved the caravan to its destination sells! All merchandise in the caravan is sold in order of value, most expensive one first. The player who has the majority of cards of this merchandise in his display may sell. A tie is decided by the camel drivers: Who has the more valuable one sells, BUT afterwards he swaps his driver with the player in the tie who owns the cheapest driver. If you sell you discard half of your corresponding merchandise cards and choose a gem from the city. If nobody has cards of the merchandise no sale takes place. Leftover gems go back to stock, camels dealt with go to the end of the queue in the caravanserei. A new caravan of the same size is started beginning with the first camel in the caravanserei queue, new destination is – in clockwise direction – the next empty city in a distance equal to the size of the caravan, the city must be free of caravans or gems and gems are placed there according to the size of the new caravan..

If there are not enough gems left, play goes on until one of the remaining caravans reaches its destination. After market day the last

caravan is moved to its destination, players can place cards from their hand in their display and a last market day is held.

Then sets of coloured gems are scored. A set with all five colours scores 15 points, four colours yield 10 points, three colours 6, two colours 3 and one colour 1 point.

The player owning the highest total from gems owned and victory point markers wins and was the most successful trader on the Silk Road.

A fascinating game with simple rules offering lots of allure, you must always check closely what merchandise you have, what do the others have? Who moves which caravan, can I use my camel driver or should I hold a Little Market Day because this lets me introduce a ware into the caravan that fits a majority in my display ... Lots of possibilities and opportunities, actions in the villages can hit players hard! Take care they do not hit you if you want to win!

**wn** [Dagmar.de.Cassan@spielen.at](mailto:Dagmar.de.Cassan@spielen.at)

## SEIDENSTRASSE

**Designer:** Hanno und Wilfried Kuhn

**Artist:** John Frederick Lewis, Sabine Weiss

**Distribution:** Pegasus

**Price:** ca. 35,00 Euro

**Publisher:** DDD 2009

[www.ddd-verlag.de](http://www.ddd-verlag.de)

## EVALUATION

Trade and position game

PLAYERS  
**2-5**

With friends

AGE  
**12+**

Move caravan, trade goods, collect gems

TIME  
**60+**

### Comments:

Very attractive implementation of the topic  
Interesting caravan mechanism  
Lot of choices available

### Compares to:

Samarkand, Marco Polo

### My rating:



## 22 POMMES

11 RED, 11 GREEN AND NOT ONE MORE!

Alternate name: 11 ÄPFEL

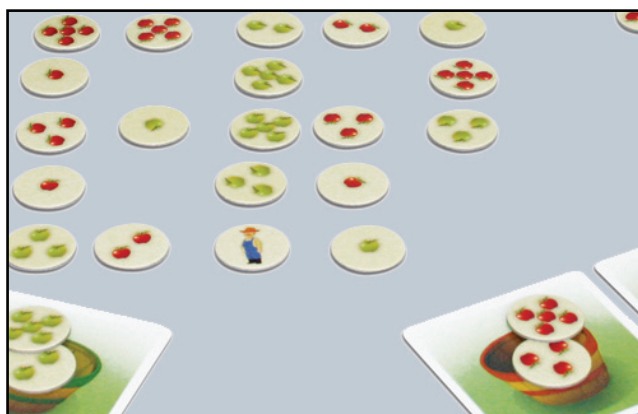


Players collect apples for their baskets, they each receive a green and a red basket card. All green-backed tokens are shuffled face down, set out in a 5x5 grid and turned up.

You take an apple token from the row or column with the picker and place it on your corresponding basket. The picker is moved to the spot from which

you took the apple token. The winner is the first player to have exactly 11 red and 11 green apples on his basket. You also win if you force your opponent to collect more than 11 apples of one kind, or if you have collected the most apples if there are no apples left in the column or row with the picker.

Variant Orchard Dog: The player



who is not the starting player, places the dog on any apple token, this cannot be taken. After taking an apple token and moving the picker you also move the dog. It must be moved and must not be placed on the last chip in the picker's row or column.

For the variant Elongated Orchard the tokens are laid out 3x8 without picker. Then the picker is placed next to a row and all tokens are turned up. Players alternately take one of the 3 chips in the row next to the picker and move the picker accordingly. For the variant Mystery Harvest a 5-apple token and a 1-apple token of each colour are replaced with four randomly selected brown-backed apple tokens.

When playing several games, points are scored: Winning with the exact number of apples scores 2 points, forcing the other player to exceed the limit of apples scores 1 point.

A nice, simple game, the well-known mechanisms offer some tactical possibilities.

### INFORMATION

PLAYER  
2

AGES  
8+

TIME  
10+

**Designer:** J. Carlos Pérez Pulido

**Artist:** Chhuy-Ing Ia

**Distributor:** Hutter /Piatnik

**Price:** ca. 9,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Cocktail Games 2009

[www.hutter.net](http://www.hutter.net)

### EVALUATION

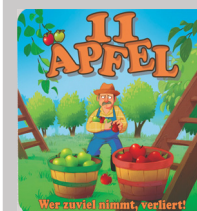
Set Collection  
For Families  
Collect apples, maximum 11

#### Comments:

Handy Package  
Goot Travelling Game  
Simple rules  
Offers several variants

#### Compares to:

Der Herr der Ziegen



## AB IN DIE TONNE

THE CRAZY GARBAGE  
SORTING GAME



Three garbage bins and one broom are fixed to both sides of a wall. 54 cards showing different kinds of garbage – plastic, bio, electro, paper or glass – are shuffled and dealt evenly to all players. Each player has only bins for three of these categories. You hold your cards in one hand and sort the current top card into the correct bin. Cards that do not fit

into any of the bins or special cards, that you do not want to play in that instant, go to the back of the deck.

Special cards can be played any-time: "Mülltonne drehen" = "Turn bins" results in turning the wall, each player now is confronted with his opponent's bins. "Streunende Katze" = "Straying Cat" demands hitting the broom and

thus ejecting cards from the opponent's bin. He must pick them up and stack them at the back of his deck. "Inspector" also results in turning of the wall, you check your opponent's bins. If a card has been sorted into the wrong bin, he must take back the stack. When all bins have been checked, the wall is turned back and the game continues.

NOTE: Special cards that have been played go to the other player, he puts them to the back of his deck. If a player has sorted all his cards but the special cards into the bins, he calls out "Volle Tonne" – "Bin full" and wins, if all cards have been sorted correctly. An attractive game demanding quick reaction and clever hand management, special cards need to be played on time as players have different bins and you need your opponent's bins to get rid of all cards. But do not forget! Every special card that you play might be used against you later on!



### INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2

AGE  
6+

TIME  
2/30

**Designer:** Sharon Galor

**Artist:** unstated

**Distribution:** Simba Toys

**Price:** ca. 20,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Noris Spiele 2010

[www.noris-spiele.de](http://www.noris-spiele.de)

### EVALUATION

Sorting and dexterity game  
For children  
Sort cards fast and correctly

#### Comments:

Attractive topic  
Mechanisms work well with the topic  
Nice décor and gimmicks

#### Compares to:

All card games featuring  
be the first to get rid of  
your cards



# ACHTUNG FROSCH!

KROKO FOUND AND FROSCHIO JUMPS!

3+

Animals have been a topic in many Hasbro games over the years, from Kroko Doc to Elefun, and now consequently all this games have been subordinated under a series title: Elefun & friends. In Achtung Frosch! Players try to collect as many of Froschio The Frog's friends as possible. Among those friends are the animals from the previ-

ous games, Elefun, Hippo and Kroko. The water lily leaves show animals and they are spread out face down on the floor. One of the players turns the butterfly wheel.

As soon as the butterfly stops at an animal, all players simultaneously look for this animal underneath the leaves. Whoever finds it, throws the leaf animal up on

the floor and then jumps onto the bellows. This makes Froschio jump into the air and the player tries to catch him. If he manages to catch Froschio he takes the open-faced water-lily leaf. If not, the leaf is flipped over again and all players try to remember the animal hiding underneath. When all leaves have been collected, the player with the most leaves wins.

For very young players you can lay the animals out open-faced, then turn the wheel and jump on the bellows yourself – the children only try to catch the frog. Who catches the frog receives the animal depicted by the butterfly wheel.

Achtung Frosch! is a pretty and fun combination of known mechanisms, with the added benefit of working without batteries. When the game is set up children can be left alone to play. Another benefit is a secret code on the rule leaflet, which allows access to cartoons and music videos on the Net.



## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2-4

AGE  
3+

TIME  
10+

**Designer:** unstated

**Artist:** unstated

**Distribution:** Hasbro

**Price:** ca. 20,00 Euro

**Publisher:** MB Spiele 2010

[www.hasbro.de](http://www.hasbro.de)

## EVALUATION

Action and memory  
For children  
Memorize animals, catch frog

### Comments:

Series Elefun & friends - Good mix of memory and movement - No batteries - Free space needed to play

### Compares to:

Elefun and other action games



# ARTISTICO

DON'T LET MAMA FALL!



5+

The artists are distributed evenly among the players, colours of the artists are not important. Mama is placed very carefully in the middle of the plinth, her basis should cover all sunken columns evenly. If one of the knobs is turned, the two columns of the same colour rise out of the plinth and an artist can be placed beneath Mama.

You roll the die and the result sets your task: For 1 or 2 one must place one or two artists beneath Mama, for -1 an artist must be removed and if you rolled the star you choose another player who now must place an artist. If the result is 0 you do nothing and your move ends.

If you must place or remove an artist, you turn the knob with

the same colour as the columns supporting the lowest artist in the stack. The columns rise and thus rise the whole stack. When the knob is in the furthest possible position you can just fit an artist underneath, then you turn the knob carefully and steadily back to lower the columns and the stack. When Mama tumbles down, the winner of the round is the player who last successfully placed an artist without letting Mama fall! The winner of the game is the player who has won the majority of rounds after 5 rounds have been played.

A deceptively simply mechanism, an ingenious mechanics and lots of careful movement add up to a fantastic game with lots of fun. It is in your own interest to place the artist as exactly as possible, because you have to lower to columns successfully! It looks easy, but after four or five artists it is a real challenge to keep Mama in the air! A challenge not only for children!



## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
1-4

AGE  
5+

TIME  
20+

**Designer:** unstated

**Artist:** Arthur Wagner

**Distribution:** Piatnik

**Price:** ca. 15,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Piatnik 2010

[www.piatnik.com](http://www.piatnik.com)

## EVALUATION

Balance and dexterity  
For children  
Turn wheel, place artist

### Comments:

Mechanism fits the topic perfectly  
Simple rules - Trains hand-eye-coordination and fine motor skills  
Good apparatus

### Compares to:

Basically all balance and dexterity games



# BIBI BLOCKSBERG

HEXENPRÜFUNG

5+

The young witches Bibi, Schubia, Flaupai and Arkadia need to pass their exams at the end of the year – subjects are Hextrankkunde, Hexwissen, Krötenhopsen and Spinnentanz. For each subject you play a separate game and you can even download a report for the exam and colour in the appropriate number of stars earned in each

game.

**Hextrankkunde** tests dexterity. You receive one straw and 5 ingredient chips and try so suck up a chip with the straw and place it into the cauldron. The first player to place all his chips into the cauldron wins the game.

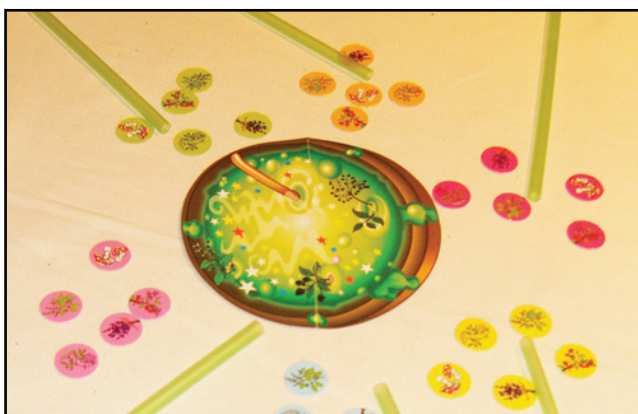
**Hexwissen** tests knowledge. The referee poses the questions and gives three answers – the first

player to call out the correct answer receives the card. The first player who collects four cards wins the game.

**Krötenhopsen** again tests dexterity. You have one try per toad to snip it into the pond with your finger. Each toad ending up in the pond, totally or in part, scores 1 point. If the toad touches the water lily, the score is 2 points. The player with the majority of points after 3 rounds wins the game.

**Spinnentanz** is also a test on dexterity. Two players stand opposite to each other and have a spider fastened to their waistband in the back. Both try simultaneously to place their spider on the card. The first player to do so scores 1 point. When everyone has played against everybody else, the player with the highest score wins.

These four games are a set of very simple and very easy but nice games featuring Bibi Blocksberg and thus of interest mostly for fans of Bibi, also very suitable for birthday parties and similar functions.



# BUSHIDO TANIN

THE STRANGER - THE EXPANSION  
Alternate name: DER FREMDE

Bushido - Power play in feudalistic Japan: Players are Daimyos and rival for the position of Shogun. Being Daimyo you do not head your campaigns yourself but designate another player to be your Samurai who leads your troops into battle and earns bushido for yourself and his sovereign. The attacked assumes the role of Bushi who must defend

himself as best as he can in the name of his honour. Another player must play Sensei and can play resources to end the daimyo move early and de-stabilise a province using ronin. The sensei judges the samurai and advises the daimyo.

This expansion for Bushido is geared to 6 players, the extra bag now enables a player to

draw his tokens from a weapons and a politics bag, this splitting of the draw is expressively encouraged. Other features are new role cards, buildings, landscapes and bonuses for provinces in the form of Small Irrigations, Tori-Shrines, Stakes or Weapons Depots as well as new weapons markers for long distance weapons like Bows or Shuriken and Clan Tokens as new resources. These markers are placed by the active daimyo before distributing role cards. Player screens add Market or Temple of Ancestors as new elements and the rules offer an alternate end of the game, the Council of Daimyos: If after 12 rounds nobody has achieved daimyo honour of value 50, the Council of Daimyos can be evoked and decide jointly if a worthy successor has been found. If not, the game round marker goes back to spot 9 and a minimum of 4 additional rounds are played.

Bushido Tanin is an indispensable expansion for a fascinating game with attractive and unusual mechanisms.



## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2-6

AGE  
5+

TIME  
10+

Designer: unstated

Artist: unstated

Distribution: Schmidt Spiele

Price: je ca. 6,00 Euro

Publisher: Schmidt Spiele 2010

[www.schmidtspiele.de](http://www.schmidtspiele.de)

## EVALUATION

Quiz or dexterity  
For Children  
different ones in each game

### Comments:

4 games under the heading *Hexenprüfung*  
Packed individually, available separately  
Very simple rules and mechanisms

### Compares to:

All other simple dexterity or quiz games



## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
3-6

AGE  
12+

TIME  
180+

Designer: M. Nietzer, O. Wolf

Artist: Hans-Jörg Brehm

Distribution: Heidelberger

Price: ca. 30,00 Euro

Publisher: Game Heads 2009

[www.hds-fantasy.de](http://www.hds-fantasy.de)

## EVALUATION

Complex development  
For experts  
blend of many mechanisms

### Comments:

Expansion, only usable with the basic game - Now for 6 players  
Complex rules and scoring mechanisms

### Compares to:

Bushido



# CHICAGO EXPRESS

**NARROW GAUGE AND ERIE RAILROAD COMPANY**  
*Alternate name: SCHMALSPURBAHNEN & ERIE RRC*

Expansion for the railroad economy game on stocks and railway companies:

In your turn a player must take an available decision/action and move the marker on the corresponding track. He has a choice between capitalizing, development and expansion. Then either a dividend for Chicago is paid or the Wabash Company is started

or a general dividend is paid or the game ends.

**Narrow Gauge:** If a company expands its track into a town with orange engine, this engine is placed on the board and can be used to start a narrow gauge line. The construction of the track is free of charge and earns no revenue for the player. Narrow Gauge track on forest and mountain



terrain blocks other companies and enhances building costs in the plains. Victory conditions are those of the basic game.

**Erie Railroad:** If any company reaches Cleveland, Youngstown, Wheeling or Charleston the Erie may be opened by any player during an auction. Erie Railroad opens in Buffalo, the brown Erie cube is placed on the income track and an Erie engine is placed on the Buffalo hex. Erie Railroad may build in New York for 6\$ and the income from building in New York is 8\$. New York Central earns no revenues in New York and New York cannot be developed. If Erie Railroad is in play the game ends when all shares of 4 or more companies have been auctioned.

An ingenious first expansion to the much appreciated Chicago Express, the Narrow Gauge tracks are an interesting tactical alternative and the Erie company is a tidbit for a player who loves to play for himself and enjoy high risk possibilities.

## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2-6

AGE  
12+

TIME  
60+

**Designer:** Harry Wu

**Artist:** unstated

**Distribution:** Piatnik

**Price:** ca. 9,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Queen Games 2009

[www.queen-games.de](http://www.queen-games.de)

## EVALUATION

Railroad and economy  
 With friends  
 Blend of several mechanisms

### Comments:

2 separate, combinable expansions  
 Usable with basic game only

### Compares to:

Chicago Express, Age of Steam,  
 18xx u. a.



# CUBIKO

**BALL THROWN, MARKER PLACED!**

6+

Some game principles are so deeply rooted in the general awareness that they are continually relaunched and varied – X in a Row is one of these principles. Cubiko is a very attractive and interesting new way to achieve a number of playing pieces in a straight line.

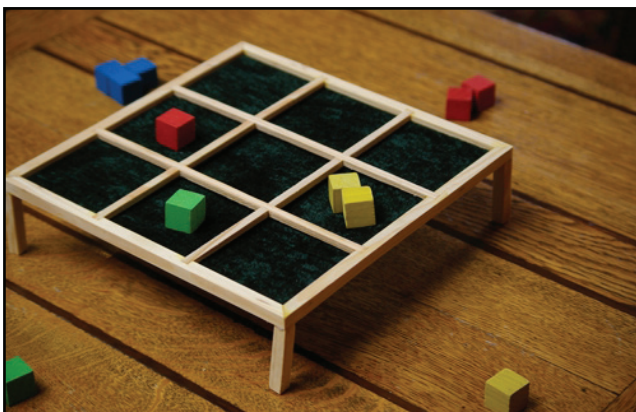
A wooden frame holds a piece of cloth showing 3x3 squares.

The frame is resting on 4 legs to achieve a trampoline effect for the cloth squares. You throw a ball, that must bounce once or several times before landing on one of the squares. If the ball lands in an empty square, you can place one of your markers there. If the ball lands in a square occupied by other markers, you place your marker and remove

the other markers. If the ball ends up in a square with your own marker, you can move this marker to an empty or an occupied square, other players' markers are not removed. You can pass up your move anytime. If a marker is moved to another square by the ball, he stays in this position. If the marker is pushed off the board he goes back to its owner.

If you manage to form a diagonal row of 3 markers you score 4 points, for a straight middle row the score is 3 points, for straight rows of 3 markers in the outer squares of the board 2 points and for 3 markers in the same square 1 point. The first player to reach a pre-set score wins the game.

Cubiko presents pretty variation of a familiar game concept, adding a dexterity component. The game is available in wooden or metal versions, a handy game for summer, sun and garden as well as for your living room.



## RATING

PLAYERS  
2-4

AGE  
6+

TIME  
15+

**Designer:** Gavin Birnbaum

**Artist:** unstated

**Distribution:** Publisher

**Price:** ca. 15,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Cubiko 2009

[www.cubiko.webs.com](http://www.cubiko.webs.com)

## EVALUATION

Dexterity  
 For Families  
 Throw Ball, place cube

### Comments:

Well-known basic principle of x in a row - Successful application of this principle to a new mechanism  
 Attractive décor in wood or metal

### Compares to:

TicTacToe for x-in-a row;  
 Hüpf, Hüpf, Hurra for  
 throwing of the ball



## DAS KOSMISCHE NETZ

THE 7 WORLDS



Das Kosmische Netz, aka The Cosmic Net, is a new role playing system, in a fantasy background based on European Middle Ages, supplemented by magic and witchcraft. The basic rule book offers all rules and a first adventure, Die Trollbande. The mechanism used in this new system are basically all well-known, the feature of the Cosmic

Net is a new and promising details. The story can take place anywhere in the universe of the net, the planets are magically connected. But not all routes are equally accessible and some regions are self-contained. One of these self-contained region is the Region of the Seven Worlds. Players can move freely between planets, but the rest of the galaxy



is closed to them. Cosmic roads connect the seven wolds, these roads are accessible by gates and are known as yellow, blue, green, white and red roads depending on their lighting.

Game play only uses D6, the creatures of those worlds have life power and in addition to that a magical energy status called Rahjthumaan. Other characteristics are dexterity, muscle power, intelligence and psychic/soul power.

As any other good system the Cosmic Net, too, gives experienced players enough room for their own ideas and creativity and at the same time takes newcomers firmly by the hand and leads them through the game. The web site provides an introductory adventure, The Fortress of the Dwarves.

An ambitious new role playing system, firmly based in well-tested structures and mechanisms, but with new ideas for background and details. One may look forward to see more of the Cosmic Net.

### INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
4-7

AGE  
14+

TIME-  
var

**Designer:** Philipp Lenk

**Artist:** Frerichmann, Fritz, Schuster

**Distribution:** Publisher

**Price:** ca. 35,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Verlag Lenk 2010

[www.daskosmischenetz.com](http://www.daskosmischenetz.com)

### EVALUATION

Fantasy role playing  
With friends  
Use, develop abilities, quests

#### Comments:

Well-known mechanisms - Lots of new and creative details - Easy to learn for beginners - Free download of beginner adventure

#### Compares to:

DSA, D&D and other fantasy role playing games



## DAS SUPERSCHLAUE WÖRTER-KROKODIL

5+

The "word crocodile" gobbles up all words it finds in its path, but cannot digest them and gives them back again letter by letter. A non-playing referee slides a card into the crocodile. At the beginning only the tip of the crocodile's tongue is visible and the first letter of the word. Now all players guess which word the crocodile is spitting out and call

out words. Each player may only call out one word for each new letter, if you call out more than once you are disqualified for this word. If somebody manages to guess correctly, the card is shown to all players and is given to this player. The referee enters a new card. If the word was not guessed correctly after the first letter, the next letter is slid out and all



guess again. If you do not want to guess you need not do so. If the word is not guessed before the last letter appears the card goes to the player who reads out the complete word first.

At the end of the word a little picture clarifies and explains the meaning of the word and allows control if the guess was correct. The playing time can be varied by the number of cards used. When all cards have been played, the winner is the player who collected the majority of cards. The "word crocodile" is a nice idea, but one must great care with the seating arrangement to ensure that all players have equal sight of the letters on the crocodile's mouth – as the cards use different types of letters and mix the spelling, some are printed in capitals only, others in upper and lower cases to train shapes of letters and their quick grasp.

### INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2-6

AGE  
5+

TIME  
10+

**Designer:** Michael Rüttinger

**Artist:** J.-A. Czech, S. Levers

**Distribution:** Simba Toys

**Price:** ca. 10,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Noris Spiele 2010

[www.noris-spiele.de](http://www.noris-spiele.de)

### EVALUATION

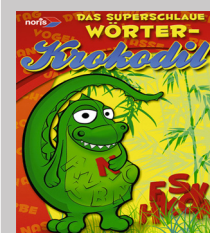
Educational game  
For Children  
recognize words by letter

#### Comments:

Simple basic mechanism - Control by picture - Mixed spelling, upper cases only or both upper and lower case

#### Compares to:

Other learning games on reading and letters



# DEUTSCHLAND

FINDEN SIE MINDEN?

10+

The big family game now has a little brother, the „small“ edition to take along or give to somebody. Topics of the game are cities, sights and regions in Germany.

The game is played in rounds. In a round cards are laid out, selected and – maybe – switched, then players place their tips and score them.

At the beginning of a round one card per player is laid out with only the name showing, blue specialist cards are only used for a variant. The player in last position on the scoring track begins and selects a card, which he must not turn over. When all players have a card, they each place their markers on their personal board to guess at exact position



of the location on the card. The first marker is placed on East or West according to the vertical white line on the map, then one can choose with a second marker between North, Middle or South according to the horizontal white lines on the map. A third marker determines a grid square and the fourth and last marker determines a sub-square within the chosen grid square. Scoring also starts with the player in last position he turns his card over and checks the position of his markers. For each correctly placed marker one scores one point, but if one marker is placed wrongly, the score is 0. Depending on the colour of the card and the number of correctly placed markers one may keep the card for a bonus in the final scoring.

This is a fantastic game for the family, regardless of its size, with a well-working mixture of tactic and risk. If you own the „big“ version, the 90 cards of this small version add to the fun.

## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2-4

AGE  
10+

TIME  
30+

**Designer:** Günter Burkhardt

**Artist:** Sensit

**Distribution:** Kauffert

**Price:** ca. 8,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Kosmos 2010

[www.kosmos.de](http://www.kosmos.de)

## EVALUATION

Geografie-Suchspiel

For families

Locate

**Comments:**

Special topic

Witty mechanism

To win one has to risk answers

**Compares to:**

Ausgerechnet Buxtehude,  
Europa Wissens



# DIE EXORZISTEN

GO TO HELL, SATANAS!

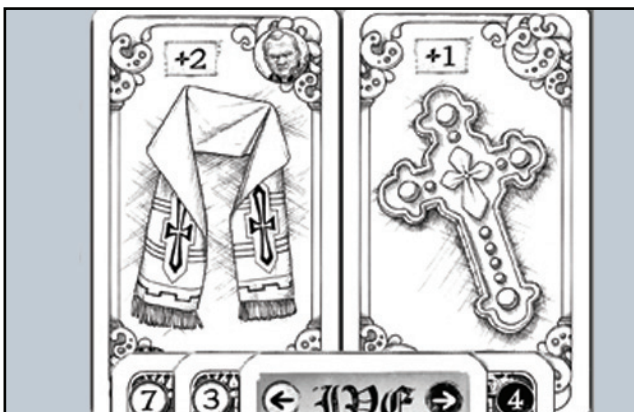
16+

Six different characters stand ready to exorcise the possessed. But each of them has a different opinion on what would be the best way to help. There is the radical course of the exorcist, who wants to chase Evil back into hell and at the other end the voodoo priest who thinks being possessed is good. So players have lots of choices, but

whatever the choice it will not be easy, because in the body of the possessed there is a plethora of demons, Judas, Cain, Hitler, Nero, Mephisto and of course Satan. A round comprises: play actions, evaluate actions, play reactions, evaluate reactions and maybe exorcise. This is followed by checking victory conditions, acquiring of objects and taking

back used action and reaction cards.

The possessed is exorcised till one of the characters has achieved his personal victory condition. Successful exorcism can earn a character divine power, failure enhanced the power of Evil: Depending on their victory condition the different characters aim for success or failure of an exorcism. For instance, exorcist and psychologist can influence demons, or the expert for horror movies can escape participation in an exorcism by watching a home video, not roll the die and thus influence the outcome. Die Exorzisten is a game with a very special topic, graphics, material all is absolutely excellent, mechanisms are standard, but nicely combined to make characters use special capabilities and tools.



## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
3-6

AGE  
16+

TIME  
75+

**Designer:** Henning Poehl

**Artist:** Markus Bülow

**Distribution:** Heidelberger

**Price:** ca. 16,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Sphinx Spieleverlag 09

[www.sphinxspiele.de](http://www.sphinxspiele.de)

## EVALUATION

„Black“-themed card/dice game

With friends

Use characters and cards

**Comments:**

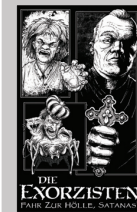
Décor harmonizing with the theme

Super graphics - Only for aficionados

Good combination of standard mechanisms

**Compares to:**

Soul Hunters, Apocalypse  
and other „black“ games



# FUZZY TIGER

TEAR OUT WHISKERS,  
ACHIEVE LEADERSHIP

8+

The monkey gang needs a new leader, they will choose the one who is the most apt in tearing out a tiger's whiskers. But all tricks are useless when the tiger wakes up! Then he bites or frightens the monkeys! Each player plays an action card face down on the table, then all are turned up and cards are resolved according to card number and

score points when appropriate. Card actions are: taking cover, hypnosis, throw stones, swing, walk, run, attack, lasso or think. Thinking means you get back cards already played. Successful actions change the tiger's depth of sleep. If you move to the positions 1 or 2 on the track, you must tear out a hair from the tiger's whiskers, but

even this does not necessarily wake up the tiger. If at the end of the round the tiger has not woken up, all players choose another card and resolve it.

If the tiger wakes up, he instantly bites the player(s) who are next to him and have not taken cover. The affected players take damage from being bitten, others in the vicinity can be damaged by being frightened.

If a player has scored more points than indicated by the position of the time marker, the game ends. The player with the most damage drops out, the others deduct their damage from their score. Whoever now has the highest total of points wins the game.

Fuzzy Tiger is a funny family game with an unusual topic. The mechanics of the game and the background story go together uncommonly well! Cards are self explaining and the rules are simple, so even with only a little English the game can be easily played.



## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2-5

AGE  
8+

TIME  
30+

**Designer:** Shao-Ying Chen

**Artist:** Jing Li

**Vertrieb A:** Heidelberger

**Preis:** ca. 22,00 Euro

**Verlag:** TwoPlus Game 2009

[www.swanpanasia.com](http://www.swanpanasia.com)

## EVALUATION

placement with cards

For Families

Play cards, adjust position, score

### Comments:

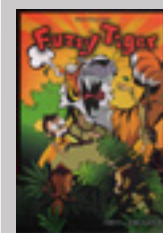
In English

Funny topic

Nicely implemented

### Compares to:

All games where cards determine movement of pawns and/or scoring



# GANGSTA

GET YOUR HAUL BEFORE THE POLICE ARRIVES!

Members of different mafias haul in their loot, but in the end justice prevails. Gangsta is a trick-taking card game. Tricks are placed in a 5 x 5 grid defined by so called Zone Cards showing letters and numbers. Four mafias are divided into gangsters giving orders (strong cards) and gangsters following orders (weak cards). Players are dealt 10 or 12

cards, turning over the top card of the remaining draw pile determines the trump gang of the round. The starting player leads with a card, the others must play the same gang if possible, and can play a card of the same or of different power, but also 2 cards of equal power. If one cannot follow suit, one can play another mafia or trump mafia. The high-

est card of the leading mafia or the trump mafia wins the trick. The trick is laid out in the grid card by card and scored! So pay attention to the sequence of laying out the cards. A pair scores 1 point, 2 pairs are worth 3 points, a trio scores 5 points, a quartet 4 points and a quintet 10 points. When a row or column is completely filled, the police arrives. The top card from the police ambush deck is turned up and all gangster cards marked on the police card are taken out of the grid. When all players are out of card the player with the highest score wins.

Basically one could say, nothing new, but Gangsta is a fun little card game with nice details. These details comprise the police ambush deck, the scoring of the tricks in the grid and a special rule in case you run out of cards because he played two cards in a trick. Another well-made game from the Chilean company!



## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
3-6

AGE  
12+

TIME  
30+

**Designer:** Juan José Fernandez

**Artist:** Ignacio del Real

**Distribution:** Publisher

**Price:** auf Anfrage

**Publisher:** Aldebaran Games 2010

[www.aldebarangames.com](http://www.aldebarangames.com)

## EVALUATION

Trick taking card game  
With friends  
take and score tricks

### Comments:

Standard topic

Unusual scoring system

English Rules only

### Compares to:

Other trick-taking card games, scoring system new



# GEISSLEIN, VERSTECK DICH!

## THE CARD GAME

Alternate name: *Little Kids, hide!*

5↑

The kids have been very careful, but the wolf got into the house nevertheless and the kids must hide from the wolf. Six cards showing hiding places – bed, table, bathtub, cupboard, dresser and stove – are in play, and 26 kid cards featuring between 1 and 5 kids.

All kid cards are shuffled and six cards are turned up and laid

out in a circle. All players try to memorize the number of kids on each card. Then all kid cards are covered with a hiding place card and the wolf is placed on one of the hiding places.

You roll the colour die. If the wolf stands on the hide-out in the resulting colour, you have been unlucky and you only may chase the wolf away to another hiding

place. If the wolf does not stand on the hiding place determined by the die you name the number of kids on the card beneath. The hiding place card is lifted and the number of kids on the card beneath is checked. If you stated it correctly you receive the card. Then the top card is drawn from the pile, the number of kids on it stated and then the card is covered by the hiding place. The first player to collect six cards wins the game.

The card game is a nice variant of the board game and a very good training game for introducing numbers 1 to 5 as well as for training observation and memory abilities. Who is the first to spot that there is always only 1 kid in the bathtub and always five in the cupboard? Due to the small amount of material and space needed to play the game is a very good game to be taken on a trip. Telling the story of the Wolf and the Seven Little Kids is of course the ideal introduction to the game.



# GIRO D'ITALIA

## CYCLING RACE WITH BOARD AND CARDS

2008 the cycling race game Leader 1 caused a stir with all fans of sport simulation games, it was deemed by all to be worthy successor of Um Reifenbreite. Now Leader 1 has been republished with a licence for Giro d'Italia, both as a board game and a card game. The board game has been thoroughly reviewed as Leader 1, therefore

this review concentrates on the card game:

Two teams consist of 3 cyclists each, depending on the number of players 1 – 3 cyclists are used by each player. The cyclists in a team have different abilities as team leader, climber or rouleur. The track is laid out with cards and features the territories Plains, Mountain pass and Downhill.

The game uses all challenges: Territory, sprint, breaking away, falls, punctures and cracks. The starting energy for all cyclists is the same and depends on the chosen track cards.

Your move comprises: Moving racers that broke away, breaking away, announcing peleton pursuit, peleton movement, movement of racers dropped by the peleton and handing over the peleton token. The move of a racer results from a basic move modified by abilities, his position in the race, events and trace characteristics, all determined by the cards currently in play. The peleton is controlled by a separate card deck. The first racer to cross the finish line wins the game. A stage race simulating the actual Giro d'Italia can be played.

These game mechanisms also work excellently in the card game and present a complex and fascinating simulation leaving nothing to desire. All features of the board game have been transferred to the card game.



## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2-4

AGE  
5+

TIME  
10+

**Designer:** C. + W. Lehmann

**Artist:** Silvio Neuendorf

**Distribution:** Publisher

**Price:** ca. 7,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Haba 2010

[www.haba.de](http://www.haba.de)

## EVALUATION

Memory game  
For children  
remember, name number of kids

### Comments:

Successor game to Geißlein, versteck dich! - On the basis of the fairy tale Game can be combined nicely with telling the story

### Compares to:

Little Kids, Hide! and other memory games



## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2-6

AGE  
14+

TIME  
45+

**Designer:** A. Ollier, C. Leclercq

**Artist:** Tony Rochon

**Distribution:** Heidelberger

**Price:** ca. 10,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Ghenos Games 2009

[www.ghenosgames.com](http://www.ghenosgames.com)

## EVALUATION

Cardgame, cycling topic  
With friends  
Manage races

### Comments:

Card game based on the board game - Topic and racing feeling excellently transferred  
Components: Cards only  
Rules in English and Italian

### Compares to:

Leader 1



# GREEDY KINGDOMS

BUILD A PALACE USING LAND AND GOLD



Players reign in their kingdoms and rival for resources – honour, gold, food and land. If you have collected enough resources, you build a Royal Palace for the sake of honour. The first player who builds his second Royal Palace wins the game.

Cards are laid out as stated in the rules, 3 palace cards and 4 upgrade cards, each player

holds 8 Ordinary Workers and both choose one marker from gold, food or land in the order defender-attacker-defender. Players are attackers alternately. A move comprises the phases start, development, battle, development and end of turn. The attacker begins his move with the effects of his upgrades, then – if necessary – he replenishes the



Upgrade Area and chooses one resource. Then he can choose an upgrade and pay for it with resources or promote an Ordinary Worker to Special Worker by exchanging the cards and discarding the appropriate resources.

The Battle Phase is played by both players simultaneously, both choose three Ordinary workers, the attacker compares the numbers on the cards: Each of his card numbers that also exists on a card played by the defender has failed. These cards must be paid for. All other cards have attacked successfully, he pays the cost and receives income from these card. Then the attacker plays another development phase and after that his move ends.

Greedy Kingdoms is an interesting little game for the end of an games evening, with some clever details imposed on common basic mechanisms and absolutely playable for non-Japanese speakers. Rules and Card texts are in English also, and on the web one can find German rules and card translations.

## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2

AGE  
10+

TIME  
20+

**Designer:** Hayato Kisaragi

**Artist:** Keita Kamiyama

**Distribution:** Publisher

**Price:** ca. 12,00 Euro

**Publisher:** One Draw 2009

[www.one-draw.jp](http://www.one-draw.jp)

## EVALUATION

Card game  
With friends  
play cards as needed

### Comments:

Rules in English and Japanese  
Card texts in English and Japanese  
2 decks needed for 3 and 4 players  
First expansion Treasure

### Compares to:

All card games using cards for resources and improvements, TCGs,



# GUT GEFRAGT IST HALB GEWONNEN



A somewhat different quiz game, you read out the answer and must find a corresponding question. The cards are shuffled and then cards are drawn, depending on the number of players, and stacked. In your move you turn up the top card, roll the die and read out the answer with this number. All players including you write down a possible

question fitting the answer. Then all questions are read out loud and players score points for correlations. Each player scores the number of correlations between him and other players. If the question is identical, an extra point is scored. So, if three players have written down an absolutely identical question, they score 3+3 points each, e.g.

What is your favourite jam for the answer strawberry. When the pre-prepared stack of cards has been used up, the player with the highest score wins.

So far so simple and rather funny, but as usual the devil is in the details. First one has to be aware of grammatical differences, so you can ask what do you use to eat your dinner? when the answer is fork and knife, but not how do you eat your dinner because the answer to that would be with fork and knife. On the other hand – for the answer only with cream both do you like coffee and how do you drink your coffee are considered to correlate. Heated discussions seem to be intended by the designers! And keep in mind – Original thinking is not aim of the game, keep it simple and basic, because otherwise you amuse your fellow players, but do not score. Definitely an interesting addition to the party-game range!

## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
3-8

AGE  
12+

TIME  
45+

**Designer:** Peter Wichmann

**Artist:** Bernd Wagenfeld

**Distributor:** Kauffert

**Price:** ca. 16,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Kosmos 2010

[www.kosmos.de](http://www.kosmos.de)

## EVALUATION

Party and communication  
With friends  
invent questions, score

### Comments:

Funny reverse of a well-known mechanism - Discussions might occur over what correlates

### Compares to:

Nobody is perfect and others featuring text correlation



# GYMKHANA LE DRAGON

SPRITE AGAINST DRAGON

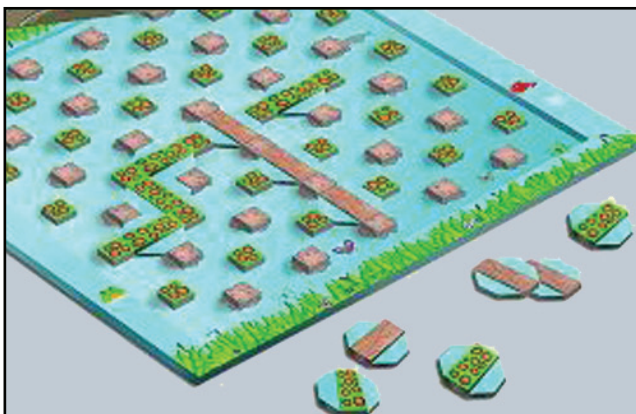


1958 the mathematician David Gale presented the game principle, 1992 Tom McNamara from New Zealand published a game using the principle as Connections, later also as Gymkhana and caused quite a stir with it.

You place hexes onto a board between fixed small squares and thus build a connection from one side of the board to

the other. The first player to do so wins the game. A second way to win is to close in pieces of an opponent.

Gymkhana Le Dragon now presents the game with a topic fit for children: A little sprite wants to cross the river to get home and Gymkhana the Dragon wants to play and tries to cut off the sprite's path.



Players alternate in placing their tiles and try to either connect both sides of the board either as sprite using the rocks or as Gymkhana using the tail pieces of the dragon. You can place a tile anywhere on the board and need not connect to tiles already placed. If four people play, they form two teams and play alternately, but must not discuss their moves.

Gymkhana has very simple mechanism with very clever possibilities, offering lots of interesting strategies to children and grown-ups. The rules offer examples for possible winning strategies and states that there are approximately 51000 ways to win the can.

Anyhow, Gymkhana Le Dragon is a felicitous revival of long known and very good game, the topic disguises the abstract mechanism very well and enforces together with the attractive components and graphics the allure of the game for children. And yet it is a game not only for children, but for the whole family.

## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2, 4

AGE  
4+

TIME  
20+

**Designer:** Tom McNamara

**Artist:** unstated

**Distribution:** Publisher

**Price:** ca. 29,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Sentosphere 2009

[www.sentosphere.fr](http://www.sentosphere.fr)

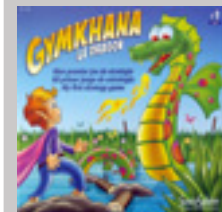
## EVALUATION

Placement game  
For families  
place tiles to connect

### Comments:

Nice story superimposed on an abstract mechanism  
Very attractive illustration  
Rules in 9 languages  
Family game despite topic

**Compares to:**  
Connections



# KAMÉN–ZBRANĚ–PAPÍR

ROCK SCISSORS PAPER

Vlaada Chvatil appeared on the scene 2006 with a vengeance, and 2007 a small game called Rock – Weapons – Paper, only published in Slovak/Czech language.

Despite the title this game is not an unconditional betting game. Each player has his own small board and builds a castle out of wooden blocks, the castle

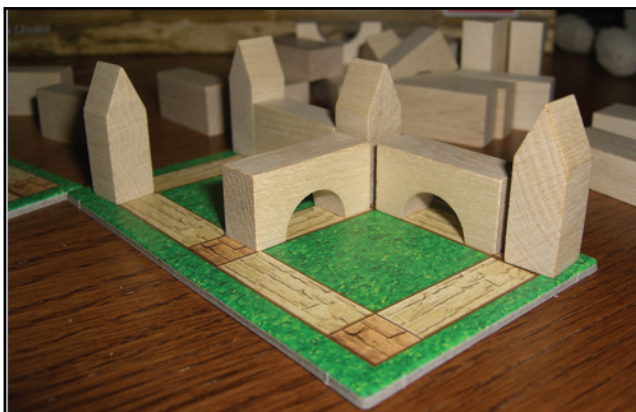
must have 6 towers, 5 walls and 2 gates, one entry gate and one connection gate between the courts.

Rock, scissors, paper are resources – rocks are used to build the castle, paper buys economic improvements and weapons assist against fellow players.

At the start of a round you receive a fixed amount of resource-

es, to get more of them one has to fight. Battle cards are turned up, each player has to play the attacker once and the defender once in a round of Rock-Weapons-Paper. The winner receives the resources depicted on the card with which he won from his losing opponent. If rock wins against weapons, you receive rocks – so one has to bet selectively. To win with rock is quite useless if your opponent has no rocks. After battle players build for cards, bidding for card combinations is possible, too. For weapon cards 1-3 action cards are available to be used in battle. The player winning a bid must implement the card exactly. If necessary, one can tear down a wall for the cost of one Rock. After card implementation it is your neighbour's turn to bid for remaining cards. The first player to complete his castle wins the game.

This is a rather tactical game despite the seemingly very high amount of luck, with surprising turnabouts and lots of excitement.



## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2-4

AGE  
10+

TIME  
45+

**Designer:** Vlaada Chvatil

**Artist:** D. L. Ferreol Papety

**Distributor:** Publisher

**Price:** ca. 25,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Dino Toys 2007

[www.dinotoys.cz](http://www.dinotoys.cz)

## EVALUATION

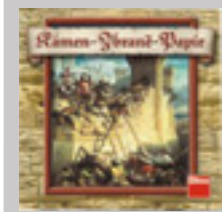
Building/Auction/Betting Game  
With friends  
Bet for resources, bid for cards

### Comments:

Only in Czech/Slovakian  
Beautiful components  
Exciting game with lots of interaction

### Compares to:

New in this combination



## KINDER SEQUENCE

PANDA, SHARK, CAMEL, FOX ....

5+

Sequence is a game featuring sequences or series or rows of markers. You play cards and mark squares on the board corresponding to these cards with your own marker. You want to be the first to form a row of four markers in your own colour, either horizontally or vertically or diagonally, the row must be

straight and uninterrupted. Kinder sequence uses the same game mechanics, but with animal motives instead of playing card motives.

The board features 2 x 19 squares with animal motives: Tiger, ostrich, whale, elephant, lion, panda, turtle, raccoon, shark, kangaroo, zebra, penguin, rein-

deer, crocodile, giraffe, hippo, fox, camel and gorilla. Each animal is pictured twice, the corner squares are free of motives, these squares are free squares for all players.

You play a card and mark a free motive of this animal with a marker of your colour. If no motive is free, the card is discarded. Besides the animal cards there are two kinds of special cards: Dragon cards and Unicorn cards without squares on the board. If you play a dragon card, you can take an opponent's marker off the board. With a unicorn card you can place a marker on a free square of your choice. The corner squares are free for all, every player can use those squares as part of his sequence. The first player to form a straight uninterrupted row of four of his markers, calls out "Sequence" and wins the game.

Kinder Sequence is a very nice and pretty version of Sequence. Fun in playing the game is huge, mechanics are identical, all in all a full-fledged member of the Sequence family.



### INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2-4

AGE  
5+

TIME  
15+

**Designer:** unstated

**Artist:** unstated

**Distributor:** Piatnik

**Price:** ca. 20,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Winning Moves 2010

[www.winning-moves.de](http://www.winning-moves.de)

### EVALUATION

Placement with cards  
For children  
Play cards, mark squares

**Comments:**

Variant of Sequence for Children  
Animals instead of Playing card motives  
Simplified Sequence-Rules

**Compares to:**  
Sequence



## LIEBESGEFLÜSTER

OH-LA-LA

16+

Liebesgeflüster is the sequel to Paartie, with an even more specific theme and explicitly and exclusively aimed at adult couples. The wish cards are laid out, and so are the answer cards. In each game each player has one wish. He chooses the wish and hands it to his or her partner – the partner answers with his decision and then gives information to

the details of where, when and how. Each of these answers / informations is given with cards from the corresponding decks. The answers are placed into the heart-shaped card holder. The player tells his partner the syllables on the front of the cards. This is called the wish-code. The complete procedure is repeated for the second player.



Both card holders with wish and code are placed somewhere in the apartment, the wish must be fulfilled in the way determined by the chosen cards before the next game starts.

The game was designed in cooperation with a well-known partner therapist. The rules recommend to play the game once in every season as not to lose sight of one's secret wishes in the daily routine.

If you do not want to delve head over heels into the game, you can use the cards to expand a game of Paartie using the rules provided for this variant. Paartie is a game for talking to each other, also a game for couples and the prequel to Liebesgeflüster. Both are no games in the real sense of the word, but wonderful opportunities to discover your partner new. If you do not shy away from disclosing hidden parts of your personality and look forward to discover them in your partner, you have a wonderful instrument at hand.

### INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2

AGE  
16+

TIME  
var

**Designer:** Guttman, Scholles

**Artist:** Justo G. Pulido

**Distributor:** Heidelberger

**Price:** ca. 15,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Aktuell Spieleverlag 09

[www.aktuell-spiele-verlag.de](http://www.aktuell-spiele-verlag.de)

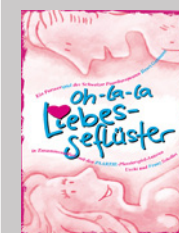
### EVALUATION

Relationship games  
With friends  
Choose cards

**Comments:**

For adults only  
Distinctive separate game  
Also playable as expansion of Paartie

**Compares to:**  
Paartie



# MEMO EXTRA

PACK A SUITCASE, ROLL THE DIE

3↑

Memo extra – three games in uniform design and the identical „memo extra“ logo, based on the memo mechanism, with some interesting features.

**Ich packe meinen Koffer** – I pack my suitcase: 48 cards are distributed among the players and stacked face down. You choose a card from these, says „I pack ...“ and names all mo-

tives stated so far and adds his own new one. For each motive the corresponding card is turned face up and adds the new card. Then all cards are flipped over again. A player making a mistake is out of the game, the last one remaining wins.

**Trio:** A memory game with 3 motives that go together. The tiles do not show the same motif, but

things belonging together or complementing each other, for instance a knight, a horse and a castle. You may turn up 3 tiles, if the fit together one can take all three tiles. The motives of a trio show a border of the same colour, which can assist in determining motives belonging together. A list of motives can be found in the rules.

**Würfel Memo** - Dice memo: The motif tiles are laid out, covered with the grid and then covered with the sliding cards, blue back upwards. The motif discs are stacked face down, the top one is turned up, this is the motif to be found. You roll the die and can slide cards that often. If you find the motif within these moves, you receive tile and disc and may turn up the next disc and roll and slide again. If one does not find the motif, the turn ends. The player who has collected the most pairs when all pairs are found wins the game.

A very attractive change in the daily memo routine, hand, small and good for small children.



## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2-4/6

AGE  
3+

TIME  
10+

**Designer:** unstated

**Artist:** unstated

**Distribution:** Gubic

**Price:** unstated

**Publisher:** Jumbo 2010

[www.jumbo.eu](http://www.jumbo.eu)

## EVALUATION

Memo games  
For children  
memorize and find pictures

**Comments:**

Nice memo variants  
Uniform design  
Good for smaller children  
Stable, easily handled material

**Compares to:**

All memory games



# MONOPOLY

FREE PARKING

8↑

Yet another application of the Monopoly brand for an entirely different game – again a dexterity game, more specific, a balance game. A wobbly board consisting of a board on a hemisphere is placed between players. Depending on the number of players each player receives 5, 6 or ten taxis. You roll the die: If the result is a car, you place a taxi on the

board on a spot of corresponding colour. For the question mark you choose your spot and for the policeman one has to accept a taxi from each player.

**Placement of taxis:** The cars may face any direction, cars can be placed next to each other, on top of each other or wheels up, but two wheels of the taxi must touch the spot of the colour

rolled. If taxis fall off the board when placing a car one has to pick them up. The first player to place all his taxis wins the game, even if he got rid of his last taxi because another player did roll the policeman.

As well as Monopoly im Gefängnis / Jail this game Monopoly Frei Parken / Free Parking can be combined with Monopoly the Board game: If a player ends up on „Free Parking“ he must safely park 5 taxis. If the policeman is rolled or taxis fall off the wobbly board the move ends and the pawn remains on Free Parking. If the 5 taxis are parked successfully the player can move his pawn to any square on the board. Monopoly Free Parking is a distinctive funny little game well worth playing and at the same time a wonderful accessory for Monopoly the Board game. Another demonstration how to keep a brand interesting with ideas and commitment and at the same time attractively expands a game principle.



## RATING

PLAYERS  
2-4

AGE  
8+

TIME  
20+

**Designer:** unstated

**Artist:** unstated

**Distribution:** Hasbro

**Price:** ca. 9,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Parker 2010

[www.hasbro.de](http://www.hasbro.de)

## EVALUATION

Balance game  
For families  
roll die, place taxi

**Comments:**

Series Minigame - Attractive double use as separate game and gimmick for Monopoly the Boardgame  
Clever use of the Monopoly Brand Game Components storable in the „board“

**Compares to:**

Other balance games



# OUPS

## MON TRESOR

7+

Oups is a lovable cartoon character signifying friendly communication and dealings among people – here Oups is used for a dice and movement game.

Each player is given a pawn and a treasure chest, the cards are sorted by category and stacked ready for use. You roll the die and move your pawn accordingly. If you end on a spot with symbol

on the path, you must complete the task set by this spot. You might have to do gymnastics, or answer a question or think up a good deed and write it down to be executed later – the promise must be kept! If you receive gemstones, you place them into your treasure chest. There is no winner in this game, only an end. This happens when the last

player has reached the "Gate to Us" with a direct roll.

At first glance this looks like the umpteenth variant of all other creative and communication games, but it is a game not aimed at winning but at emphasizing good deeds and respectful relations between people. Especially the categories "do a good deed" and "let your heart speak for you" heavily emphasize these aspects. Tasks are to explain why your voice has a friendly sound or the task cards states a sentence that you have to read out in a very friendly way to a fellow player. Other cards demand a good deed like donating your small change to a good cause or to visit somebody or give him a long-overdue call. These good intentions are noted down and players are expected to do what they promised.

A lovable and friendly conversion of standard mechanisms coupled with a detailed and loving design as well as good intentions.



## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2-6AGE  
7+TIME  
45+**Designer:** Warnung, Klünsner**Artist:** unstated**Distribution:** Publisher**Price:** ca. 49,00 Euro**Publisher:** Verlag Oups[www.oups.com](http://www.oups.com)

## EVALUATION

Communicative game  
For families  
playful communication

**Comments:**

Empathy character Oups  
Combination of common elements  
Aim of the game is not to win  
Adult Game direction necessary

**Compares to:**

Activity and other games  
with creative and communicative elements



# RAUS DIE MAUS!

## WAND - HAND - HANG - BANG

6+

Raus die Maus is a word game featuring looking for minimal pairings. Players are asked to recognize and name small differences in letter sequences and resulting meanings of words.

Depending on age and knowledge level of the players the picture side or the letter side of the tiles is used. Tiles are distributed among players who stack them

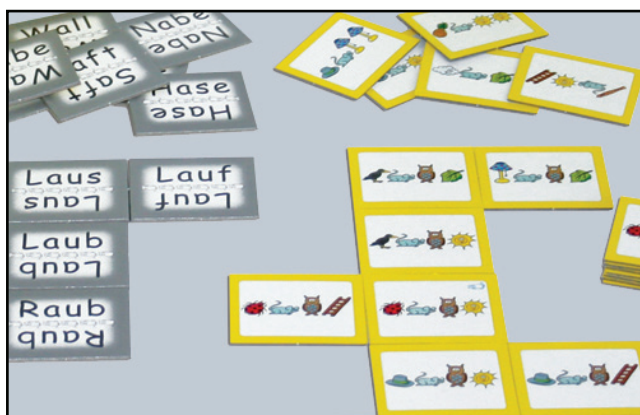
unused side. The starting tile is placed on the table showing the word "Maus" or a small picture of a mouse in the top corner. You use only one hand to search his stack for a suitable tile to add. A tile is suitable if it differs in exactly one letter or motive in exactly one letter or motive from the previously laid tile. Possible sequences are e.g. Maus- raus or Maus – Mais

or Maus – Laus or Maus – Haus.

The new tile can only be added orthogonally, never diagonally. The optimum way to place tiles is to form only one row, but if necessary one can lay out rows and columns – if a newly placed tile would then touch two others, only a correct difference to one of these tiles is necessary.

Simultaneously with you your left neighbour searches his stack. If he finds a suitable tile he calls „Raus die Maus – Off goes the mouse“ and takes over the role of active player. Now his left neighbour starts to search. Special rules are provided for a game of two and a solo variant.

Raus die Maus offers a very simple game principle that perfectly trains reading as well as pattern recognition and differences in meaning and thus also the vocabulary of the child. The picture cards train observation and correlating words and images.



## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
1-6AGE  
6+TIME  
15+**Designer:** Susanne Galonska**Artist:** A. Mangold, M. Schlegel**Distribution:** HutterTrade/Piatnik**Price:** ca. 15,00 Euro**Publisher:** IQ-Spiele 2010[www.iq-spiele.de](http://www.iq-spiele.de)

## EVALUATION

Language learning game  
For children  
Place tiles correctly

**Comments:**

Simple rules - Variants depending on knowledge level and age - Can be played alone - Trains recognition and understanding of differences

**Compares to:**

Duden einfach Klasse in Deutsch, ABC Das Memo Spiel, Das superschlaue Wörter-Krokodil



# SCHATZ-ALARM

THE MAGICAL SEARCH FOR THE MONKEY TREASURE

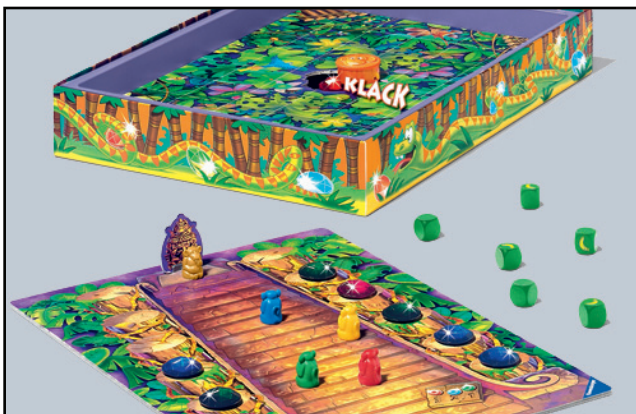
5+

Snake Shira has stolen the monkey treasure and hidden it in the jungle. The monkeys search for the treasure and want to return it to the monkey king.

All monkeys are placed on the first step of the stairs. The treasure gems are distributed in the box bottom and covered with the jungle board. The treasure hunter begins his search in one

corner of the board.

You roll all banana dice and may move the treasure hunter as many steps as bananas are visible. This you may do three times in your turn. If you hear a distinctive "klack" you have found a treasure and call "monkey alarm". If you have steps or dice rolls left after picking up the treasure you can move with the



treasure towards the bolt-hole. If you manage to reach the bolt-hole you take out the treasure. The treasure hunter is placed in a corner for the next player and the treasure is placed on a log beside the stairs. Depending on the colour of the salvaged treasure gem you score points and you may move your monkey that number of steps up the stairs. But if you lose the treasure on the way to the bolt-hole, you must shove it back into the jungle and your move ends. The next player now rolls the die and moves the treasure hunter. If your turn ends before you reach the bolt-hole the next player carries on from where you left.

When all logs beside the stairs hold a treasure you win if your monkey is nearest to the monkey king. If you reach the king before all logs hold a treasure, you win instantly.

In Schatz-Alarm! clever use of magnetism and very attractive game components team up for a fantastic family game with simple rules.

## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2-4

AGE  
5+

TIME  
20+

**Designer:** Heinz Meister

**Artist:** Dynamo Limited

**Distribution:** Ravensburger

**Price:** ca. 19,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Ravensburger 2010

[www.ravensburger.de](http://www.ravensburger.de)

## EVALUATION

Magnetic collection game

For families

Pick up treasure and move

### Comments:

Very nice combination of topic and mechanism - Simple rules - Good for children as well as for families

### Compares to:

Das magische Labyrinth, Schloss Schlotterstein and other games with magnetically moving the pieces



# SHAUN DAS SCHAF

KUCHEN-CHAOS

5+

Shaun wants to bake muffins using his ingenious muffin machine! The bag holds 24 pink and blue wooden cylindrical pieces representing muffin mixtures, ready-made mixtures that need to be topped up with a few ingredients. These ingredients are depicted on the slides of the muffin machine as well as on the 10 double-sided ingredi-

ent chips. Those chips are laid out and the slides pulled out alternating on both sides of the machine. You draw 2 mixtures from the bag and put them into the holes of the same colour on the machine. Then you relocate your pawn onto a free ingredient chip and push the slide showing this ingredient into the machine. Then you turn over the chip and



push the corresponding slide in, too. You can only place your pawn on an empty chip and must move the pawn. Pushing the slides into the machine so that one comes out at the other side makes the wooden pieces fall down one level. Wooden pieces coming out at the base of the machine represent baked muffins and you may pick them up. If you own 8 muffins or own the most muffins, when no mixtures are left in the bag you win the baking event!

Cake Chaos is fun! The baking machine is compact and stable, the pushing of the ingredient slides is fun, too, and baked muffins often surprise you by dropping out unexpectedly. If you have a good memory, concentrate and remember which ingredients have been chosen you can get muffins out of the machine by choosing the right ingredient yourself to push the right slide!

Cake Chaos is a nice variant of a memo game, which is also working if you let chance alone decide.

## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2-4

AGE  
5+

TIME  
15+

**Designer:** Steffen Bogen

**Artist:** Bluguy

**Distribution:** Kauft

**Price:** ca. 20,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Kosmos 2010

[www.kosmos.de](http://www.kosmos.de)

## EVALUATION

Memory and set collection

For children

Choose ingredients, remember

### Comments:

Attractive combination of topic and mechanismGelungene Kombination aus Thema - Sturdy apparatus, simple to handle - Simple rules

### Compares to:

Slotter and other games with mechanic passage mechanism



# TANTO CUORE

LORD OF THE MANOR AND HIS SERVANTS

The mechanism used in Dominion is one of the most innovative game concepts that came up in the last few years, and so it is not surprising that the idea is picked up and varied by other designers.

Tanto Cuore features Manga style illustration and places us in the role of lords of the manor who hire servants for an optimal

service crew. 16 maids are available, 10 are chosen for a game, supplemented by decks for the Head Maids Marianne and Coletto as well as decks representing Bad Habits and Sickness.

Icons replace the descriptions, you immediately recognize whether a card yields new cards or hearts or if you can play an additional service. Hearts re-

place money in Tanto Cuore and service is the name for actions. So called Private Maids are very expensive, but remain on the table when played there and yield their effects permanently. Other maids can be played onto the table for a single effect and a bonus at the end of the game. The cost/effect relation in Tanto Cuore has clearly shifted to the cost side, 6 cards featuring 6 victory points cost 9 hearts, the 1-point cards cost 3 hearts. Minus cards can be bought and passed to another player and the game also features cards which can be used to destroy maids in a player's display on. When two maid stacks are empty the game ends and the player with the most victory points in his deck wins.

Despite being clearly a derivative of Dominion, Tanto Cuore is a distinctive independent game with a completely different feeling to it. Linguistic problems make for a difficult entry, but is worth the trouble for specialists, collectors and manga fans.



# THE CASTLE OF THE DEVIL

IL CASTELLO DEL DIAVOLO

Passengers in the carriage are members of two powerful rival Secret Societies and are looking for their allies! Information on that point and on the objects hidden by the passengers you gain solely through objects changing their owners. You hold a known character card and a secret profession card, information is available from Secret

Society cards and object cards. The active player can spy, trade an object or challenge another player to a duel. To spy you choose a player and draw an object cards from his, looks at it and hands it back. To trade you offer an object face down to a player, if he accepts, he gives an object of his choice back to the other player who must accept

the trade. In a duel players secretly choose whether they support the attacker or the defender. Then attacker and defender can use characteristics of professions and objects, the attacker scores points for each sword, the defender for each shield, the higher total wins. The winner learns profession and secret society of the loser or checks the luggage of the loser. Depending on their society members must own either 3 keys or 3 goblets or 2 keys / goblets and the Bag of Secrets. If you think that your society has collected the necessary objects and owns one of them can announce victory. If he correctly names the owners of all objects, he has won with his team. The Castle of the Devil is an interesting game, nicely re-edited, with a good mix of mechanisms in a very attractive design, at the moment available in an English and Italian edition from dVGiochi.



## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2-4

AGE  
13+

TIME  
45+

**Designer:** Masayuki Kunuo

**Artist:** Team

**Distributor:** Publisher

**Price:** unstated

**Publisher:** Arclight 2009

[www.arclight.co.jp](http://www.arclight.co.jp)

## EVALUATION

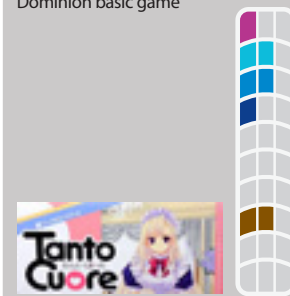
Card game  
With friends  
buy, display, use cards

### Comments:

Manga-style  
Unusual topic  
Similar to Dominion

### Compares to.

Dominion basic game



## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
4-8

AGE  
10+

TIME  
60+

**Designer:** M. Palm, L. Zach

**Artist:** Freytag, Zach, Derossi

**Distribution:** Publisher

**Price:** ca. 20,00 Euro

**Publisher:** dV Giochi 2010

[www.dvgiochi.com](http://www.dvgiochi.com)

## EVALUATION

card game  
With friends  
collect informations

### Comments:

Re-edition of Die Kutschfahrt zur Teufelsburg - In English language  
Playing experience necessary

### Compares to:

Das Geheimnis der Abtei  
Alibi



# THE WITCHER

GERALT FOR YARPEN

The Witcher card game is based on the computer game The Witcher, each player should defeat as many dangerous monsters as possible and gain fame. To achieve this you must use the characters from the computer game and their special characteristics and effects and also hire Geralt the Witcher and send him on possibly lethal missions.

The game features cards for attack, monsters, characters, Geralt, events and objects. In your turn you chose a character, use its special characteristics and actions, bid for the Witcher, fight monsters, bid for events and end your turn. After using the special effect of a character you can draw gold from the bag or draw an open or face-down at-



tack card. The actual fight against a monster in the front row of the display is Geralt's job, he uses the cards given to him by the player who did win the bid for Geralt – to win the fight you need to display the card combination depicted on the monster card. If a monster is killed, you receive the card, the stated points of fame and a bonus according to the card text. Event cards are important for a successful monster chase. One must win them also in an auction, they yield gold, jokers and other useful objects. If a player successfully fights his forth monster, he ends the game. All players add their points of fame on their monster cards and event cards, the player with the highest total wins the game. The Witcher is an attractive card game with a standard fantasy topic, the graphics have been taken from the computer game. All friends of the genre should have no problem with cards and rules in English.

## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2-4

AGE  
12+

TIME  
90+

**Designer:** Madej-Reputakoska ao

**Artist:** unstated

**Distribution:** Heidelberger

**Price:** ca. 19,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Kuznia Gier 2009

[www.kuzniagier.pl](http://www.kuzniagier.pl)

## EVALUATION

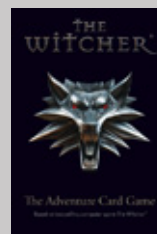
Card game  
With friends  
Use card effects

### Comments

Based on the computergame  
English rules -Very attractive design  
Rather simple rules

### Compares to:

Other fantasy adventure  
games featuring bash-the-  
monsters



# THUNDERSTONE

ADVENTURES IN THE GRIMHOLD DUNGEON

Thunderstone is another game in the rapidly growing genre of deck-building games. Aim of these games is the best possible Deck at the end of the Game. In Thunderstone players look for the thunder stone in Grimhold Dungeon.

Each player has his own deck, in this game a team of adventurers with skills and equipment. Gen-

erally you draw from your own pile and put played, bought or defeated cards into your own discard pile, only destroyed cards are removed from the game.

A card display containing Hero cards, Monster cards and Village cards is prepared, either following the suggestions in the rules or using the Randomizer cards. Added to this are 80 basic cards,

which are used in each game. Sickness cards and CP cards are further stacks in the display. Each player starts with the same combination of basic cards, 6 Militia, 2 Dagger, 2 Iron Rations and 2 Torch. Then in your move you must visit the village, enter the dungeon or rest. In the village you can improve heroes, play cards from your hand or use cards from your hand or buy cards from the display. In the dungeon you show your hand to the other players and attack a monster. Defeated monsters go into your discard pile! If you rest you can destroy a card in your hand and switch your hand for new cards. If the Thunderstone card appears at a fixed point in the display, the player with the most victory points in his deck wins the game.

Somewhat more complex than Dominion, and at the moment only available in English – therefore this is a short introduction only, the well-earned detailed review will follow for the German edition published by Pegasus.



## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2-5

AGE  
12+

TIME  
90+

**Designer:** Mike Elliott

**Artist:** Jason Engle

**Distribution:** Pegasus

**Price:** ca. 40,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Alderac 2009

[www.alderac.com](http://www.alderac.com)

## EVALUATION

Card game building up a deck  
With friends  
Buy, use and collect cards

### Comments:

More complex than Dominion  
Playing experience necessary  
German edition announced by  
Pegasus

### Compares to:

Dominion



# TIMESTREAMS

TIME TRAVEL IN ALL ERAS



Time Travel – if it exists then in all eras at the same moment – this is the assumption of this card game. Players are inventors of the time machine in the era of their choice and travel along the time lines to ensure dominance of their own time line by depositing inventions of their own time in the different ages that favour their own time line.

Each player chooses an era, at the moment from the versions Stone Age vs. Future Tech and Medieval vs. Modern Day. In the first part of the game players influence the course of history by playing inventions and actions into the display. Then the eras are scored and points scored are used to gain additional influence. At the start



of the game era cards for Stone Age, Medieval, Renaissance, Industrial Revolution, Modern Day and Future Tech are laid out, the so called „Days“, beneath those era cards played cards are laid out. You have one of three actions: You can play an invention from your hand into the current day or play and use an action card or pass. When all players have passed the day ends and all keep their left-over cards. The next day starts with drawing cards from your own draw pile into your hand. Only the first 6 cards placed in a day are scored and earn points, but you can play additional inventions into a day to destroy other inventions or relocate them. When all six eras have been scored, the player with the highest score wins. An incredibly beautiful and attractive game win an fancy topic and mechanisms similar to trading card games, definitely of interest for fans of unusual games.

## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2-6

AGE  
8+

TIME  
45+

**Designer:** S. McLaughlin u.a.

**Artist:** Stephen Wood u.a.

**Distribution:** Publisher

**Price:** ca. 18,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Bucephalus Games 09

[www.bucephalus.biz](http://www.bucephalus.biz)

## EVALUATION

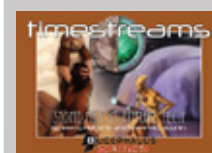
Card game  
With friends  
Display and score cards

### Comments:

English language edition only  
Unusual topic  
At the moment 2 boxes with 4 eras available

### Compares to:

Trading card games in the broadest sense



# TIPI

EASYPLAY KIDS

5+

60 cards feature six different images from the Indian culture. At the start of the game a village is made up from 6 tepees consisting of two cards each! Pay attention to the outer and inner sides of the cards! You roll all dice for three symbols. All players try simultaneously and as fast as possible to find a tepee that shows as many of the symbols as

possible. You may rise and walk around the table and look underneath the tepee, but must never touch a tepee! If you think you have found a good tepee, you place your Indian in front of it and start to run around the table once. While you are running the other players may go on looking and placing their Indians. Attention! Only one Indian is allowed



in front of a tepee. When you have finished your round, you call out „Tepee“ and searching and placing ends. If a player has not now placed his Indian, he cannot do so anymore. Players in turn now show the tepee of their choice to the other players. If you found the majority of symbols you win the tepee. If one of the dice shows a cross, we play a special Taboo round: All players look for a tepee that does not show any of the symbol on the two other dice. For the next round we fill up the village with tepees so that there are again six tepees in the circle. The first player to collect five tepees wins the game. If all cards have been used before that, the player with the most tepees wins the game.

An absolutely fabulous game! It is definitely the best in the new Easyplay Kids series – especially notable for the combination of concentration and exercise.

## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2-4

AGE  
5+

TIME  
15+

**Designer:** Steffen Bogen

**Artist:** Gabriele Silveira

**Distribution:** Schmidt Spiele

**Price:** ca. 13,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Schmidt Spiele 2010

[www.schmidtspiele.de](http://www.schmidtspiele.de)

## EVALUATION

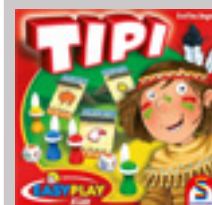
Search and movement  
For children  
Find images quickly

### Comments:

Serie2 Easyplay Kids  
Simple Mechanism  
Needs space  
Rules in four languages  
Spiele Hit for Children 2010

### Compares to:

First game with this combination of mechanisms



# TOHUNGA

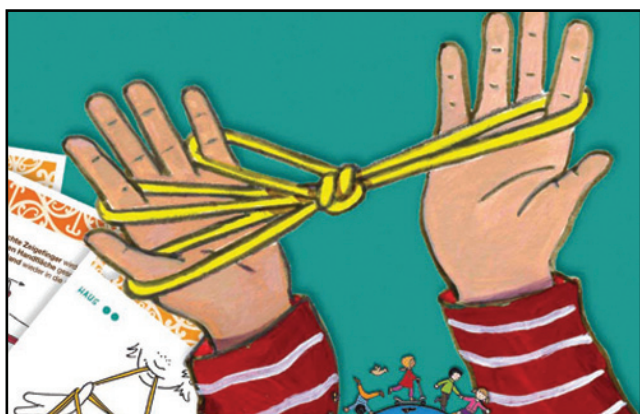
THE MOST BEAUTIFUL CAT'S CRADLES



Cat's Cradle is the name of the game in English, Fadenspiele in German, or also Faden abheben = Thread lifting, as you lift the loops over fingers, especially when playing in pairs. This edition within the series Edition SOS –Kinderdörfer Spiele aus aller Welt assigns cat's cradle games to Tahiti and gives basic rules for all cat's cradle games: The

loops are named for the fingers they are looped around and the threads are named for the finger they belong to. One example: front thumb thread. The length of threads used should be adjusted individually to each player and should be twice the length of an outstretched arm.

Possible ways to play are to give figure to do to each player, the



fastest one to finish the task is the winner of the Round. Or each player in turn forms the same figure, the fastest player wins the round .... And of course there is no limit to your own creativity, you can invent your own creations or chance the ones shown in the game or expand them. The tasks have a different difficulty rating and offer lots of fun with a classic mechanism. As all other games of the series Tohunga is based on a well-known, classic games mechanism that was painstakingly and attractively adapted even if the reason for assignment to a certain country is not always clear.

The set of instructions is easily understandable and easily followed. Thanks to the punched cards that can be easily held together all can play easily and the game is ideal for journey and holidays, not only for children. All in all a very pretty game in a very pretty and recommendable series of re-launched classics.

## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
1-4

AGE  
6+

TIME  
var

**Designer:** unstated

**Artist:** Anette Röder

**Distributor:** Heidelberger

**Price:** ca. 15,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Grubbe Media 2010

[www.grubbemedia.de](http://www.grubbemedia.de)

## EVALUATION

Dexterity  
For children  
Form images with threads

### Comments:

Familiar mechanisms, well combined and adapted  
Good on the road and on holiday  
Also interesting for adults

### Compares to:

First boxed edition of the traditional game



# UFO ATTACKE

COLLECT RAW MATERIALS,  
START ROCKET

6+

Rockets are started to bring raw materials to Earth, extraterrestrial Ufos can help or hinder procedures.

You roll the die: If one of the colours signalling raw materials appears one takes this resource from the stock and placed it on the rocket. If you place the third raw material of the same colour on the rocket, you get a bonus

raw material of any colour, but only if the three pieces sit directly next to one another. If no resource of the colour rolled is available, one was unlucky and the turn ends. If the Ufo symbol is rolled, one aims the laser at the rocket of a fellow player and rolls again. If the die shows raw material colours, you take the raw materials of one of these colours



from the other player's rocket and put them on your own. If he does not have that specific material, you miss out. If you roll the attack symbol again, your attack has failed.

If you have a minimum of seven resources on your rocket you put the top part on the rocket. If you lose resources you must take it off again. If it is your turn again and the top is still on the rocket you roll the die: If you manage to roll the UFO symbol, your rocket has started successfully and you win the game.

Variants introduce an Alien into the game or the rocket starts more often and you score points for raw materials collected and successful starts.

Again, a Lego game presents a well-made combination of toy and game with a lot of room for your own ideas! It is amazing what a lot of fun is packed into such small box with few components. And the adaptable die still is the most fascinating component!

## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2-4

AGE  
6+

TIME  
15+

**Designer:** unstated

**Artist:** unstated

**Distributor:** Publisher

**Price:** ca. 9,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Lego 2010

[www.games.lego.com](http://www.games.lego.com)

## EVALUATION

dice- and collecting game  
For Kids  
Roll die, collect resources

### Comments:

A lot of game in a small box  
Topic nicely executed  
Variants listed  
Also good as a family game

### Compares to:

Other games in the Lego series



## VERFÜHLT NOCH MAL!

GROSS UND KLEIN

Alternate name: Fiddlesticks! Big and Small



The mischievous gremlins have created chaos and hide the toys in their magic bags. If you can work out what is hidden in the bag by touch the gremlins will give back the toys. This tactile game trains motor skills, concentration and reaction time.

The rules offer three ways to play, you always use all 15 wooden pieces in three sizes, the relevant

image tiles and the board.

The variant **Magic Elves** lets the players be elves and look for hidden toys. You turn up a card in your turn and try to find the object in the correct size, this is repeated while the hourglass runs. When it has run down your move ends and you move your counter as many points as you have found correct objects. For



the next player all objects are put back and the cards are re-shuffled.

For the variant **As Big as a Giant, as Small as an Elf** the cards are sorted by size and laid out face up. You roll the die and try to find an object of the size shown on the die. If you manage it, you can roll and try again, if not the move ends.

In **Elf Memory** players are again deemed to be little elves. Six cards are turned face up and turned over again when the hourglass has run out. Whoever manages to memorize most shapes and find them in the correct size scores the most points and wins the game.

You also can play all three games on your own and try to improve your best score!

This edition of Fiddlesticks! again provides a marvellous training for tactile abilities and a sense for size and proportion, the five objects are easy to distinguish and yield high scores for a positive feedback.

### INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
1-4

AGE  
4+

TIME  
10+

**Designer:** Wolfgang Dirscherl

**Artist:** H. Wiechmann, M. Bieber

**Distribution:** Publisher

**Price:** ca. 12,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Haba 2009

[www.haba.de](http://www.haba.de)

### EVALUATION

Educational tactile game

For children

Identify shapes and sizes

#### Comments:

Sequel to Fiddlesticks! - Very simple mechanism - Can be played alone Trains motor skills, concentration and memory

#### Compares to:

Verfühlt nochmal, Blinde Kuh and other tactile games



## WO IST MAUSI?

HIDIND BEHIND GANDER ROGER OR PIG BORSTL?

3+

A yellow star with a bright red nose goes by the name of Der Kleine Amigo and is the star character and identification character for a new series of games for children with the subtitle Spielspaß für Klein & Groß. The series features quick, simple, little games of high re-playing appeal. All the games in the series are easy to pack, they can be played any-

where and Der Kleine Amigo is enclosed as a cuddly toy.

Wo ist Mausi? is a dice and memo game. Mouse Mausi is visiting her friends, Gander Roger, Rabbit Mümmel, Cow Elsa, Horse Ferdi and Pig Borstl – as they are all so much larger than Mausi, players must find out where Mausi is. Each player receives a set of cards showing all five friends and

places them face down in a row on the table before him. In the middle of the table five Mausi cards showing "Mausi kommt heim" (Mausi is returning home) are laid out in a row.

You roll the die: If one of the friends appears you turn over one of your cards: If you have found the animal on the die the card remains face-up and you can roll again and turn over a card. If you have found another animal you turn it face down again and your move ends. If you roll an animal that's already visible, your move ends. If the moon is rolled one of the Mausi cards is turned to "Mausi schläft" (Mausi is asleep). A player who has found all five friends wins instantly. If all Mausi cards show Mausi sleeping, there is no winner.

A very good children's game, simple, easily and quickly explained and does not need much supervision during play. A game and a series under a lucky star!



### INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2-4

AGE  
3+

TIME  
10+

**Designer:** Haim Shafir

**Artist:** Doris Matthäus

**Distributor:** Berg Toy

**Price:** ca. 10,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Amigo Spiele 2010

[www.amigo-spiele.de](http://www.amigo-spiele.de)

### EVALUATION

Dice and observation game

For children

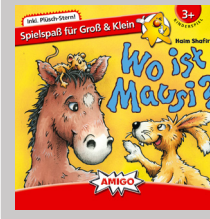
roll the die, turn up card

#### Comments:

Series: Der kleine Amigo Spielspaß für Groß & Klein - Simple mechanism Handy package - Very attractive graphics

#### Compares to:

All observation and memory games turning up cards on demand



# X610Z EXISTENZ

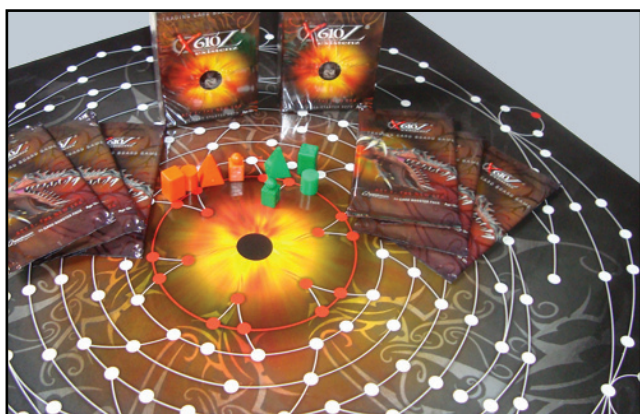
ACT I: THE NEW ERA



X610Z: The name is a pun on Existenz (Existence) and is a trading card game combined with a board and pieces. The background story features a New Earth with all technology destroyed and all DNA shifted to completely new life forms. 333 years after that cataclysm an Unknown Objects crashes into New Earth and all players must

escape to safety with their space pod called Life Base.

The playing pieces are called Summons, each player has four of them; His Life Base, a Dragon, A Vessel and a Beast, all move on the board. All effects, all activations and also Summons are directed by cards, the cards themselves are activated by different forms of energy. Life Bases of all



players start in the centre of the board and each player has his own deck of cards.

Your move comprises reactivation of cards, drawing of a card from your own pile, action phase with use cards, activate permanent effects and attacking/moving Summons in any sequence and as many times as you want and finally the end phase, where other players play and activate cards against you, which you can answer with you cards.

There are four ways to win: You are the first to reach one of the end points on the board or you destroy an opponent's Life Base or your opponent cannot draw a card or an opponent cedes the game.

Somewhat familiar, with roots in games from Magic to Space Quest, but then again somehow new! If you manage the better deck, you can do more with your Summons on the board. Expansions ACT II: Spoils of War and ACT III: Soul Rage are in the making. A tidbit for fans of the genre.

## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2-6

AGE  
11+

TIME  
45+

**Designer:** Patrick Ruedisuli

**Artist:** E. de Brouwer, P. Coolen

**Distribution:** Publisher

**Price:** ca. 10,00 Euro pro Starter

**Publisher:** Quantum 2010

[www.x610z.com](http://www.x610z.com)

## EVALUATION

Trading card game with board  
With Friends  
Use cards, move pieces

### Comments:

Unusual combination of mechanisms - Rules only in Dutch  
English rules available as download  
English card texts

### Compares to:

Trading card game, also  
SciFi adventure games in  
the broadest sense



# ZOMBIES!!! 6

CANALE MORTALE

16+

Last stop: Zombietown! The sixth expansion for Zombies!!! features the subway and the canalisation of Zombietown. The expansion follows the rules of the basic game, the new city tiles and cards are shuffled into the basic game.

In your move you draw a city tile and place it according to the rules. Then you fight zombies in

your path, draw cards when applicable, move your man, move zombies and discard a card when applicable. If you draw one of the special city tiles, they are furnished according to the rules. Event cards can be played anytime. You cannot play cards with references to other players unto yourself. Combat results are determined by dice rolls, they do

not interrupt movement, and you fight till you have won or are dead. If you did die, you begin anew in the centre of town. You cannot attack or fight another player, movement follows exact rules, and markers on board tiles free of zombies you may pick up and take with you. On the helicopter landing pad you must be alone or own the card "Another Food Source" to win.

The subway allows direct movement between station according to detailed rules. The canalization markers represent entries into and exits from the canalization. Each player can place two markers in the roads of the city, they can be used by all players. To remain in the canalization costs one live marker or courage marker per turn, and no zombies must be fought in the canalization.

As the basic game and all other expansions this game is only good for fans on zombies and related horrors. If you like to bash zombies, Zombietown is the place to be for you!



## INFORMATION

PLAYERS  
2-6

AGE  
16+

TIME  
60+

**Designer:** Todd Breitenstein

**Artist:** Dave Aikins

**Distributor:** Pegasus

**Price:** ca. 13,00 Euro

**Publisher:** Pegasus 2010

[www.pegasus.de](http://www.pegasus.de)

## EVALUATION

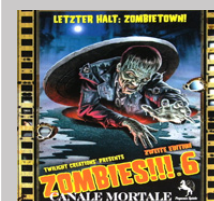
Horror Board game  
With friends  
use cards, fight

### Comments:

Only for fans of horror movies and  
„black“ humor  
Satiric, „black“ topic  
Only playable with the basic game

### Compares to:

Zombies!!!, Last Night on Earth



**BANG WILD WEST SHOW**

Publisher: dV Giochi

Designer: Emiliano Sciarra



Expansion for the card game Bang! featuring 10 Wild West Show cards and 8 character cards. The character cards are shuffled into the basic game, the Wild West Show cards are stacked separately, the special Wild West Show card placed as last card in the stack. Whenever one of the special Diligence or Wells Fargo card is played, the top Wild West Show card is drawn and its instructions are carried out. The card remains in play until the next card is drawn. The last card in the stack remains in play to the end of the game.



Expansion for the card game Bang! for 4-7 players from age 7

**DAS WEINQUIZ**

Publisher: Piatnik

Designer: Sommelier Egon Mark



16+

From the vine to the glass – 55 cards with 3 questions each on the subject of wine, without categories for the questions and with a choice of four answers per question. The correct answers are given on the back of the cards. At the start of the game players select the number for the question to be read out from each card. The first player to answer correctly receives the card. If nobody answers correctly, the card goes out of play. When all cards have been used, the player who has collected the most cards wins the game.



Quiz game with cards for 2-10 players from age 16

**GELB GEWINNT!**

Publisher: Kosmos

7+

In his turn a player plays a card. If it has the same value as any one card or the total of several cards on the table, the player sets aside these cards and his own card. If he cannot take a card or cards, he puts his own card on the table. Taking all cards from the table earns the player a chip. If a player is out of cards he is dealt new cards. When all cards have been dealt and played, the "yellow 7", the "majority in yellow cards" and the "highest total of cards" win their respective owners one chip each. After a fixed number of rounds the player with the most chips wins. New edition.



Card game for 2-4 players from age 7

**HUI BUH DAS SCHLOSSGESPENST**

Publisher: Kosmos

Designers: Inka and Markus Brand

6+

The Cursed Secret Passage Game. You close your eyes, the others hide Count Morticor behind a wall segment. Then you pull out a wall segment. If Count Morticor is not behind this segment, you may take out another one or end the turn by carrying out the actions for the collected wall segments. Possible actions are moving 1, 2 or 3 steps on the path, taking a key and the Secret Passage action. To use the secret passage you need a key and move to an empty space with the same symbol as shown on the current position of your pawn. The first player to reach the Inn wins.



Movement game for 2-4 players from age 6

**LUZIFIX**

Publisher: Haba

8+

Luzifix presents a series of brain teasers for 1 player, all based on well-known principles, but featuring hellish details. The 150 pieces of the jigsaw puzzle are all of identical shape and smaller than half an inch, the parts of the 300 piece jigsaw are even tinier. The tile puzzle where all sides must correlate has 16 squares. All puzzles have a solution and are attractively packed into a tin. Titles include: Teufelseinerlei / Devil's Confusion, Teufelspuzzle / Devil's Jigsaw, Teufelstanz / Devil's Dance, Teufelszauber / Devil's Magic and Teufelswürfel / Devil's Dice.



Set of brain teasers for 1 player from age 8

**RATZ FATZ AUF DEN BAUERNHOF**

Publisher: Haba

Designer: Hajo Bücken



3+

Based on the Ratz Fatz concept of story-telling and object identification, this theme box contains wooden pieces and cardboard tiles featuring farm motives. The material can be used for games following the included rules, but the game also invites players' own ideas on search games and narrative games. One adult is needed for directing the game and telling the story. Aim of the game is to recognize the objects named in the story and to find these objects on the table and grab them as fast as possible. Also available in the Ratz Fatz series: Nursery and Fairyland.



Learning game for 1-6 players from age 3

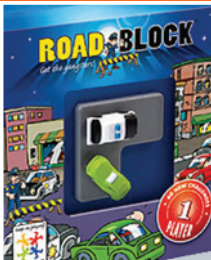
**ROAD BLOCK BOOSTER PACK**

Publisher: Smartgames

Designer: Raf Peeters

7+

The gangsters' escape vehicle must be stopped. The 6 puzzle tiles showing police cars must be placed on the board in a way that closes all escape routes for the gangster car. The gangster car cannot pass by a police car or through a building and cannot move diagonally. There is only one solution and all police cars must be placed, though not all of them would be required. The board must be completely filled. The booster pack features a new tile with one police car and one special green car to be placed and blocked. 60 new challenges.



Expansion for the logic puzzle for 1 player from age 7

**SPONGEBOB SCHWAMMKOPF MENSCH ÄRGERE DICH NICHT**

Publisher: Schmidt Spiele

6+

Ludo variant under the Spongebob license, including large 3D-pieces featuring four characters from the series. A pawn starts when a 6 is rolled. Pawns are moved according to the results of a die roll, occupied spaces are skipped but still counted. If the move ends on an occupied space, the arriving piece throws out the other piece, which goes back into to its owners stock. The first player who moves all 4 pieces into the finish area wins the game. The spots in the finish area must be reached with exact dice rolls.



Dice / Movement game for 2-4 players from age 6

**STRAW**

Publisher: Alderac Entertainment

Designer: Richard James

8+

Players collect points from number cards still in their hands when "the camel's back breaks". On your turn, play one card onto the camel and call the new total. If by playing a card a player reaches or surpasses 50, he breaks the camel's back and all other players score the total value of the cards left in their hands. If the camel's back is broken by the special "Straw" card of value 0, only the player using this card scores his hand. Special cards change the total value of cards on the camel or the sequence of play.



Card game for 2-6 players from age 8

**TOP TRUMPS SPECIALS FÜR IMMER SHREK**

Publisher: Winning Moves



8+

Choosing your card's best attribute, beating (trumping) your opponent's card, and winning the cards played in the round – already a Classic! Cards are dealt evenly to all players. The active player chooses an attribute on his top card (no shuffling of the deck!) and calls out the corresponding value – all other players check their cards for the value for this attribute – the player with the highest value gets all cards of this round. In case of a tie cards go on the table and the winner of the next round receives those too. Many theme sets, this edition: "Shrek Forever After".



Card/Quiz game for 2 or more players from age 8

Colour codes for target groups (Colour accompanying the headline)

For children  
For families  
With friends  
For experts

Colour codes for features (Bar next in Evaluation box)

Chance  
Tactics  
Strategy  
Creativity  
Knowledge  
Memory

Communication  
Interaction  
Dexterity  
Action

HUGO KASTNER RECOMMENDS

# THE HIGH KINGS OF TARA

## Project Kells

Dear readers! A game from Ireland – somewhat incongruous in our known games universe, dominated by a few publishers from Middle and Western Europe. What an elegant and challenging idea on top of that! In the middle of this decade a version was published under the name “Project Kells” combining “High Kings of Tara” that was already published in 1998 as well as the more simple of the two more current versions of “Sacred Hills”. Designer Murray Heasman, a trained archaeologist, tries to trace the fascinating history of the Irish High Kings. The project was expanded by and by with another game, called “Poisoned Chalice” as well as with double variations of earlier editions, which promise a special treat for experienced strategy players. If you want to experience interactively the World of the Irish High Kings, I do recommend to check out the excellent home page of Tailten Games with their so called “animated rules”. You will be rewarded with an outstanding strategy game with a historical background that lets you enter the depths of Celtic culture step by step. [adapted from WIN Issue July 2005] But you need not travel to Ireland to get acquainted with the game, a visit in the Austrian Games Museum in Leopoldsdorf is sufficient

Website: [www.spielen.at](http://www.spielen.at)

The history of the ring fortresses of Tara, many centuries old, is interlaced with strategic game elements. I have stood a few times myself reverently in the focal point of this circular hill fort and have mused on the puzzling significance of these constructs. Many aspects concerning the time of the Irish High kings must be deemed speculation, much is mirrored in Celtic Continental Europe, but Murray Heasman's game illustrations have managed for the first time to project the topography of the Tara landscape into the small and at the same time boundless world of board games. The centuries seem to have shrunk into a single moment. The board is framed by the no less impressive

knot patterns from the „Book of Kells“, the probably oldest gospel script (7th to 8th century) that each year fascinates hundred thousands of visitors in the Trinity College of Dublin. This paramount example of medieval illumination was probably created in the Monastery of Iona on the West Coast of Scotland and has found a new home in the heart of the Irish capital by many roundabout paths. The captions in this book are extremely elaborately executed and decorated with extreme fine detail. The capital letters are partly formed from very tiny patterns in luminous colours, often supplemented with gold. Very typical are the spiral and knot patterns that cannot be explained even today, as well as ornamental images of men and animals. But back to our game! Especially these ornaments from the Kells gospels not only decorate the frame of the board and the box cover, they are mirrored in the pattern that forms during the game on the 45 hills of the board. Tara and Kells are joined by these traditional Celtic Knot ornaments in an inimitably beautiful way. [adapted from: Win Issue July 2005]

Responses to: [Hugo.Kastner@spielen.at](mailto:Hugo.Kastner@spielen.at)

Homepage: [www.hugo-kastner.at](http://www.hugo-kastner.at)



## RECOMMENDATION #53

PLAYERS

3-5

Designer: Murray Heasman

Price: € 35,00

Year: 1998/1999 (inkl. Sacred

Hill / Poisoned Chalice)

Publisher: Tailten Games

[www.tailtengames.com](http://www.tailtengames.com)

AGE

8+

TIME

60+



Strategy

Info

Luck

All variants are empowered by tactical and strategic elements, which place circular hill forts in a first phase in a way that later on kingdoms as big as possible can be formed. On the other hand, a sufficiently high number of hills should remain occupied by those hill forts, so that the opponent is forced to besiege them and finally conquer them. Winning condition in this Irish network game in the end favour the player who owns fewer kingdoms. But take care! In case of a tie the territorial advantages can decide the outcome of the game. Each easily handed over hill fort can cost you dearly in this phase.

### Hugos EXPERT TIP

Be sure to make your first steps into the world of the Irish High Kings with the assistance of the animated rules on the home page of the publisher. Game and thought patterns are so much easier to grasp this way than by studying the rule book. Do concentrate first on one of the many game variants, maybe on „Poisoned Chalice“. I especially recommend to try out any of Murray Heasman's ideas first with the help of the variant “Kingdoms” which is understood intuitively and much easier than the complex play on knots.

### Hugos FLASHLIGHT

This Irish Project has the depth for a classic game, due to the wealth of ideas as well as from the optical realization and connection to historical events. For a long time no abstract game has reminded me so forcefully of a work of art as this game when placing the loops and rings to form unexpected Kells ornaments. Even more fascinating and exceedingly beautiful is the deluxe edition of the „Royal Game of Kells“. An aesthetical box made from brown leather, playing pieces made from clay that magic a three-dimensional landscape in muted colours onto the board, as well as elegant silk bags for the ring and bridge pieces resurrect the long gone days of and culture of the Celts. Easy to learn, yet taking a lifetime to master!

### PREVIEW:

#### TROIA

Digging through 5000 years

## 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, Telefon 02216-7000, Fax 02216-7000-3, mail-to: [office@spielen.at](mailto:office@spielen.at), Internet: [www.gamesjournal.at](http://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- oder Geldleistungen von den Verlagen. (Alle Rezensionen zu den Spielen in ALLES GESPIELT und in NEU EINGETROFFEN sind von Dagmar de Cassan) ENGLISH EDITION Version 1.1

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Icon explanation



Solo Play



Two Players



Large Groups



Recommended Minimum Age

# Samarkand

KARAWANE ZUM REICHTUM

