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Fall 2026



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Albi



14+



120+ min



1-4 players



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Editorial

Dear readers

The time has finally arrived! The Essen SPIEL is once again opening its doors, now even larger than last year, with the newly added Hall 8. More than 1,000 new releases are waiting. Awesome!

But let's be clear about one thing: Even if you were to spend all four days (and, ideally, nights as well) in the exhibition halls, you would never be able to see all of these many, many games.

That's where we come in! We are the **spielbox**, the largest specialist magazine for board and card games. Since the summer, a team of dedicated authors for this issue (pictured on the right) sifted through lists of new releases, requesting and reading through game rules – sometimes even before they went to print. And after that, they already played countless novel games.

That's why we are able to make you two special offers here:

Number 1: In this free **spielbox** special, you will find 25 concise, well-informed tips for games you should definitely check out at Essen or soon after at your retailers. In the "Yellow Pages" section in the middle of this issue, we have compiled nearly 200 exciting novelties for you. Of course, we have also included the booth locations – to make it easy for you to find everything.

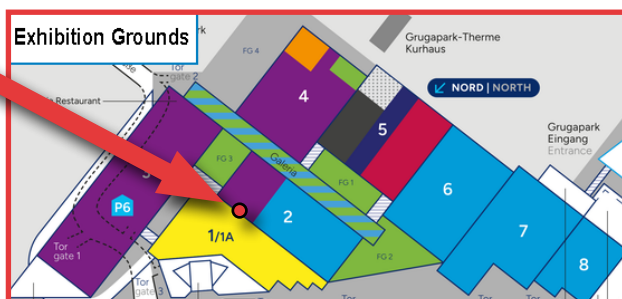
Number 2: In our current **spielbox** issue 5/26, you can find in-depth reviews of many new games showcased here, such as CAR-CASSONNE LABYRINTH, THE PEAK TEAM, NIGHT AT THE ZOO, SHALLOW SEA, HOROLOGIUM or TRASH POKER. Please feel free to stop by our booth – Hall 2, A210 – to take a look at our magazine.

There we also offer you **a little something to take home**: Our columnist Maren Hoffmann and her regular games group have been figuring out how to make their and your trade show experience more enjoyable. You can find the to-do list from her latest column in "Hoffmann's Home Play" on page 18 of this special issue. Come and pick up the little give-away game card at the **spielbox** booth!



And now, let's dive headfirst into the 2026 sea of games! We hope you have a great time gaming, whether in Essen or at home. What a wonderful hobby we have!

Have fun reading!
Stefan Ducksch
Editor-in-Chief of **spielbox**



Photos: Ducksch, Merz Verlag

FIND

spielbox[®]
ENGLISH EDITION

LIVE ON
from
Oct., 15th

KICKSTARTER

The project ends on Nov., 14th

Lots of New Games

Abacusspiele (7 E511)

In keeping with the season, BLATTWERK has us rummaging through the leaves. But in their tactical tile-laying game, Christian Heuser and Tim Hüwe present us with a pretty tidy forest. Leaves, in up to four colors, are laid face-down in eight rows beside each other, with a few more face-up above them in the "undergrowth."



Each player at the table is in charge of one tree species – maple, beech, oak, or birch. You could also just call them "colors."

In your turn, you try to sort the colorful rustling on the forest floor in a way that works for you. So you turn over your own leaves, showing animals, fruits, or both. Either you collect points for animals of the same type on the leaf, or you gamble for more. In that case, place one of your magnifying glasses on your leaf.

Your goal is now to find other matching leaves and get them next to your magnifying glasses, rather than flipping them. This is achieved by swapping your own or other players' face-down leaves with those from the undergrowth. And maybe a neighbor has similar interests, and animals and fruits on their leaves that are just perfect for you? BLATTWERK

comes with only four short pages of rules, and one of them is for solo gaming. Depending on your score, you could end up being ranked anywhere between "Fauna Novice" and "Nature Deity." We're so ready for fall! (sd)

Blattwerk, 1-4, 10+, 45 min.,
announced for October

Albi (4 D400) / BSL Games (3 C300)

With PRAGUE UNSEEN, we take a "Prague mythology" crash course, featuring: a Horned, a Golem, a Robot, and a Vodník. Probably the best-known story is that of the clay Golem. But who are the others? With the Horned, designers Jindřich Pavlášek (also the illustrator), Michal Peichl, and Petr Vojtěch explore the Krampus cult of Prague. The Robot traces back to writer Karel Čapek, who invented it for his 1920 science-fiction play "R.U.R. – Rossum's Universal Robots," thereby coining the universal term. Vodníks are water sprites dressed in tailcoats and top hats. The most famous one is Kabourek, a great beer lover.

Corresponding to the four mythical creatures, there are four districts, where each of them can be placed. In other parts of the city, we collect one of the four resources, among

them beer. If we employ the creatures in their home district, we hear rumors (which can be used, among other things, as a 3:1 joker resource). Once placed, the legends trigger a mini-game associated with that specific district. In the Golem district, we maintain ties with the guilds and build bridges across the river Vltava. In the Vodník district, we sail down the river and obtain resources to invest in building houses, for example. Explaining all the options would go far beyond this small intro. Expert gamers will find a wealth of detailed rules and optional actions, rewards and constraints, and a typical sense of "so much to do and so little time." All in all, it's more high-level engineering than mythical tale. (ab)

Prag Unseen,
1-4, 14+, 120 min.,
announced for October



The Mix

Strategic Cocktail Engine Building

Spiel Essen 2026

Halle 8 8A300

The illustration shows a bartender with a beard and mustache, wearing a green vest and a light-colored shirt with a green bow tie. He is holding a cocktail shaker and pouring a drink. There are two glasses: a martini glass with a green drink and a lime wedge, and a cocktail glass with a red drink and a straw. The background is dark blue.

The box art for 'The Mix' shows a bartender in a green vest and bow tie, holding a cocktail shaker. The title 'THE MIX' is prominently displayed. The box art is colorful and detailed, showing a bartender in a green vest and bow tie, holding a cocktail shaker.

The HABA logo is in red, bold, capital letters.

Gaudí

Discover it at
**DEVIR'S
BOOTH**
3D611
HALL 3

BUILD LIKE GAUDÍ. THINK LIKE A STRATEGIST

Step into the visionary world of Antoni Gaudí in this medium-weight Eurogame by Dani García. Travel through Gaudí's life and work, collecting cards and arranging colourful Trencadís tiles to create your own masterpiece. Develop three pillars that shaped his work: Nature, Catalonia and Religion. Move around Gaudí's iconic chandelier, make the right choices and keep your inspiration in balance. Will your masterpiece stand above the rest?



1 - 4



80 min



+10



devir.com

DEVIR
LIVE TO PLAY



Amigo (7 D110)

We want to get rid of all our tiles and have to add them strategically to the rows on the table. At first glance, RESTART looks like RUMMIKUB – even haptically: Heavy plastic tiles that are a pleasure to handle, with colorful printed numbers, which entice you to pick them up. Whoever manages to get rid of all their tiles wins immediately. If everyone passes, the remaining tiles count as penalty points, and a new round begins. The special tiles – which allow us to manipulate entire rows or even remove them – are meant to add a kick to this accessible, fast-paced tile-laying game. To keep others from seeing what you might have up your sleeve, you hide your tiles behind a screen.

The publisher promotes Younsu Hwang's RESTART as suitable "for a large target audience, including seniors." Combined with the game's short playing time and low entry age, this sounds like an attempt for a polished mass market game – not necessarily a bad thing in itself. For avid gamers, it could be a nice little filler, if you do not expect too much. But thanks to the haptically pleasing components, it might also attract people with very little gaming experience beyond Uno and YAHTZEE, meaning players who rarely seek out games on their own. (mh)

Restart, 2-4, 7+, 20 min.,
already published
(English version 2025 by Lautapelit)



ArsEdition (6 A200)

Little tomcat Yuki was told that his mother is a star in the sky. Overcome

with longing – and being a skilled climber – he sets off to reach the starry sky with a rising tower: CAT AND THE TOWER.

The story is heartwarming, but it takes a cool head and a steady hand to make the tower grow. After all, we are playing cooperatively in paving Yuki's way to the tenth floor.

We choose one of the two laid-out action cards and use it to add side walls of varying heights to our wobbly tower. Or we place Yuki's cat friends inside the tower and

briefly create an illusion of stability. Once we have set up a specific configuration within the tower, Yuki plucks up his courage and climbs it, floor by floor, working toward our shared goal. This climb, of course, also carries the risk of accidentally causing the tower to collapse.

The similarities to RHINO HERO are undeniable. But CAT AND THE TOWER offers more playful decisions and pairs the building process with a touching story. Some action cards require players to pet the cats that have already been placed inside the tower. Surely a game can't get any cuter as well as exciting as this? From a small box, a great experience rises, for both kids and adults around the table. (tk)

Cat and the Tower,
1-5, 8+, 15-30 min.,
already published
(English version 2025
by Arcane Wonders)



CGE (3 V400) / HeidelBÄR Games (6 B200)

The video game *Kingdom Come: Deliverance* is based on historical events in early 15th-century Europe. This is not a fantasy setting with potions, dragons, and the usual generic medieval trappings, but rather a fictional, yet histori-

cally and geographically very accurate, depiction of an era.

When two big names like Tomáš Holec (SETI, TEA GARDEN, PONDSCAPE) and Vlaada Chvátil (MAGE KNIGHT, THROUGH THE AGES, CODENAMES) take on this smash hit and make it into a board game, it's bound to raise high expectations. Consequently,

they have gone all out: The opulent open-world adventure is combined with many, many Eurogaming elements. We start out as villagers, equipped with a dagger and big dreams – and we can decide for ourselves where this journey will take us, how we will progress, and

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whether we focus on combat, healing, or politics. Ten storylines and fifty-five quests are waiting to be discovered; the sheer abundance of components with an endless array of tiles, figures, markers, cards, and other elements could be attributed to the fact that the game was initially launched by crowdfunding. (mh)

***Kingdom Come: Deliverance*, 1-4,
14+, 90 min./player,
announced for October**

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Devir (3 E610) / Huch! (6 B300)

In essence, Dani Garcia is a native local poet. He has already created a monument to his hometown, Barcelona, and now he's turning his attention to one of Catalonia's most famous artists: architect Antoni Gaudí. "I wanted to make a game about him because he died 100 years ago," says Garcia, "and because his style was so different from that of any other architect."



The active player in *Gaudí* moves along a chandelier and performs either two actions or just one. Garcia has devised a truly Gaudí-esque twist here: The leading player, after their turn, may use both actions. Those trailing behind get only one. So dawdling doesn't seem particularly attractive, especially since there's an additional stopping mechanism: Once someone has already circled a rondel, the round ends for all stragglers as soon as they step onto the second, reddish half of the rondel.

Mosaics, known as *Trencadís*, were also a hallmark of Gaudí's buildings. "Of course, they had to be included here," Garcia points out. On the one hand, shards of specific colors are needed to play cards; on the other hand, groups of shards of the same color in the mosaic earn bonus points. But the true highlight

is the scoring. Gaudí's work was based on three pillars: his love of nature and of Catalonia, as well as his religious devotion. These are represented by three victory point tracks. Garcia's end scoring resembles *Knizia's*: Only the values of the two least valuable tracks are added to the final score. So players need to develop a good feel for how to strike a balance within this triad. (ab)

Gaudí, 1-4, 12+, 45-90 min., announced for October

Edition Spielwiese (6 A300)

Tile-laying games are generally considered family-friendly and relaxed affairs. A landscape unfolds, regions take shape, and animals appear. Quite charming, really. And thanks to the illustrations by Jia-yi Zoe Lu, *ISLE TILES* looks exactly like that. But some of the ideas of designer Benjamin Schwer provide the creation of this island in

gains you points, since the score is based on how high you have stacked the tiles. Provided, of course, that your animal species has not been driven away from the area before the final scoring. All of this promises a short, accessible, yet also confrontational gaming experience. (sd)

Isle Tiles, 2-4, 8+, 30 min., announced for October



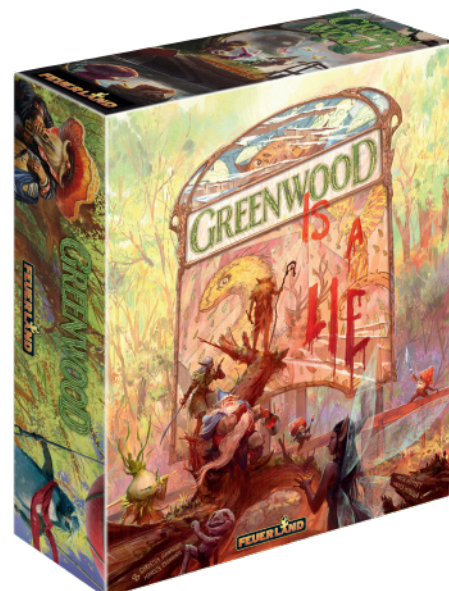
Feuerland (3 Q300)

What is reality? Who decides what is actually true – and how do you find out? With *GREENWOOD*, designer

the blue sea with some features that can drive players up the wall.

At first, everything may seem quite peaceful: The island grows on the ocean spaces, which you cover with the double-hex tiles you draw. There are forests and swamps, lava flows, ice, and deserts. When adjacent landscapes merge, that's awesome, because you want to control them with the animals in your player color. But only one animal species is allowed per landscape, so if you place one of your meerkat tokens there, you kick out other animals – like your opponent's flamingos – if their point value (1 to 6) is lower.

In addition, you can also stack the island tiles on top of each other, which soon results in large areas getting cut off. While the other area rulers may not be too happy about this, it ultimately



Photos: Huch!, Edition Spielwiese, Feuerland, The Game Builders

duo Christos Giannakoulas and Manolis Zachariadis (NORSEMAN) present a game whose basic theme borders on the political: The powerful druids promote their remote peninsula as an idyllic vacation spot and green paradise – but the glamorous facade hides a cruel tyranny which torments and exploits mystical creatures. As clans, we try to free these creatures with our underwater ships before the tourists arrive. That sounds

cooperative, but although we are all ancient spirits with shared goals and ideals, we still compete against each other.

The fairly challenging base game can also be played as an advanced version with customized attributes. We may utilize the abilities of our own or other players' companions and must be on guard for the ever-present threats. To free the creatures, we must also gather knowledge – and see through illusions. The visuals are cap-

tivating, the story text is imaginative, and the components are refined enough to spark longing in any Eurogamer's eyes. A promising strategy board game with many options. (mh)



publisher and co-designer of Andreas "ode." Odendahl answers like this: "It seemed too far removed from us as a theme that affects us very tangibly in the here and now." Originally, the co-designers wanted to focus on the land management practices of indigenous Amazonian tribes. "They created their own fertile soil. The Portuguese called it Terra Preta, black earth," says Hanson. This, in turn, could help with reforestation in Iceland – or so the hypothesis goes.

You only have nine main actions to accomplish this. The worker placement mechanic feels fresh: Depending on which space of an action you place your worker, you gain a different bonus. Around your settlement, you build greenhouses to grow cabbage and tomatoes, and you also herd Icelandic ponies or sheep in the forest. In doing so, you can expand horizontally or vertically – which is more expensive, but increases yields and reputation. Forestry research works similarly, allowing you to unlock steps on the forest track.

The whole experience is enriched by, among other things, research contributions, delivery campaigns, and long-term projects. In short: Everything that makes for a full expert breakfast. There's a lot to try out, but there's also the risk of getting lost in the undergrowth. I recommend starting with the hand-picked project cards. (ab)

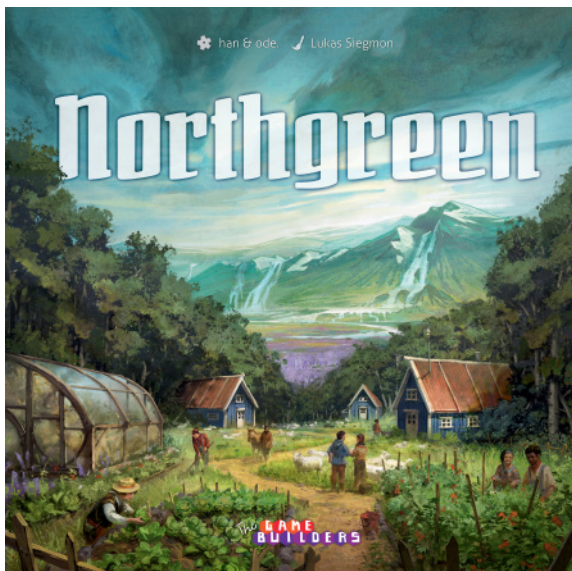
Northgreen,

1-4, 12+, 60-120 min.,
announced for October

Greenwood, 1-4,
14+, 40 min./player,
announced for October

The Game Builders (4 J500)

What we do in Northgreen resembles nature restoration after a catastrophe, set in a Solarpunk world like the one from the Game Builders. Trying to explain why they ultimately chose an Icelandic 21st century setting, Thorsten "han" Hanson,



**Arclight
Games**

**Hall 5
M400**

Giant Roc (at B-Rex 2 E430)

None other than Leonardo da Vinci was commissioned to design a hall in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence. When Michelangelo was also asked to design part of that hall, the mutual animosity between the two turned into an artistic competition with an uncertain outcome. Andrea Robbiani expands on this historical core narrative to create a confrontational team game: da Vinci plus assistant versus Michelangelo plus assistant. However, MAESTRO is not strictly a four-player game. Each side can be played by one or two players.

Both sides take turns in creating works of art and distributing them throughout Italy. In MAESTRO, the struggle for recognition has been transformed into a battle for territories. You can visit the Art Collectors' Lodge to influence the territories' scores in your favor at the end of the round. You can also study and activate bonuses on a track. Improving your hand is particularly appealing here, as cards allow you to trigger the aforementioned actions with varying degrees of effectiveness.



MAESTRO

The card decks of da Vinci and Michelangelo conceal asymmetries, likewise the tableaux that each side controls and manipulates. Ultimately, da Vinci and Michelangelo did not work together on the hall in Florence. And neither of the two maestros ever completed a fresco:

Leonardo used an unsuitable paint mix, and Michelangelo turned his attention to other projects. (tk)

Maestro,

1-4, 14+, 90-140 min.,
already published (English version at
Board & Dice, 3 G200)



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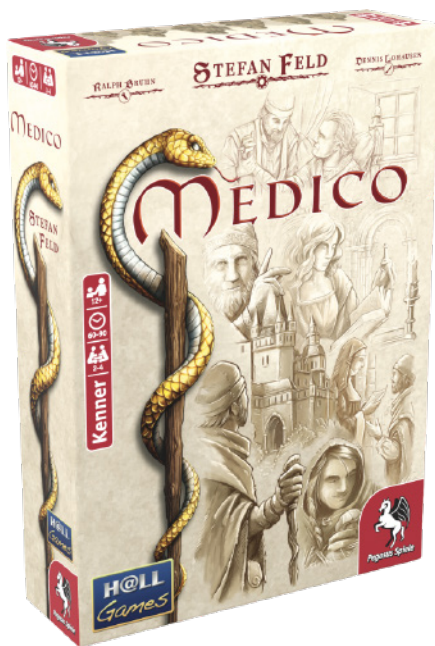
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PANORAMA,
ONE TILE
AT A TIME!

Check out the
highlights



Hall Games (at Pegasus Spiele 3 M120)

Stefan Feld is on a run. At least in terms of game mechanics. In 2025, there was the forest run of THE DRUIDS OF EDORA, and this year, the barbers' circuit run in MEDICO. Why now? Total coincidence. MEDICO is actually the older game design, and according to Feld just happened to be released now (see interview with Ralph Bruhn). So it isn't going through a "running" phase. "The game's origin was the geometry of the board, which is divided into seven locations. Because of this, there's always a shorter or a longer path."



Since doctors were few and far between in the Middle Ages, sick people often sought help from traveling barber-surgeons. In addition to their mobile wellness services, these people possessed rudimentary medical expertise. Anyone familiar with Stefan Feld's work knows that's not really what this game is about – it's about mechanical elegance. "In addition to the unique geometry, I also wanted to incorporate a form of interaction in which assessing the moves of the other players plays an important role," says Feld. "I firmly believe that anyone who can't 'read' the others properly will have a hard time winning here."

Since the goals are secretly chosen, the game is all about anticipation. When barbers meet in the same location, a duel for prestige ensues. The prize: another main action. With only eight actions in total, this should not be underestimated, even if what we do

on the spot seems rather unremarkable: taking money or a favor card, training an apprentice, buying medical instruments. It's also important to get a lot done along the way: collecting or selling remedies, dropping off a letter at the clergy's office, acquiring a recipe book.



As Confucius says: Roads were made for journeys, not destinations. (ab)

Medico, 2-4, 12+, 60-90 min.,
announced for October

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"I have high standards"



Ralph Bruhn (60) is a freelance games editor for various publishers. Since 2009, he has also run his one-man publishing house Hall Games.

This year, he will release game number eight, MEDICO – his fifth from Stefan Feld. Ralph Bruhn lives in Bornheim, near Bonn.

Finally, a new game from Hall Games! It doesn't happen very often.

Ralph Bruhn: I have high standards in that regard. A game has to excite me so much that I'm sure: I definitely want to play this for three years. I like new mechanics, but for me, it's all about having a great feeling when I play.

You once said that you spend up to 100 hours working on the rules of a game. That sounds like rather a long time.

For me, the rules are the most important thing in the box. I attach great importance to everything being well explained and structured. I'm overly meticulous about this and keep making corrections. But I know not everyone likes every set of rules.

What makes working with Stefan Feld so special?

We are on the same page and have the

same taste in games. And we have often found that we collaborate well when we develop games. He shows me his ideas at a very early stage, and they will still change significantly after that.

You are spending a lot of time on a project like that?

I actually handed MEDICO back to him twice. Some things just didn't work for me, and the game was picked up by other publishers in the meantime. But two or three years ago, we finally found the right way forward together. And now it's ready.

In MEDICO, I secretly decide where to move, but I only get eight turns in the entire game. That sounds pretty minimalist.

I know, right? It sounds strange, and it still surprises me. I don't normally like games where you have so few turns. In MEDICO, you only get to take a main action eight times, but ideally, you can carry out a whole series of secondary actions – if you have planned your moves well. And you need to keep an eye on what the others are doing, because their turns affect you, too. (sd)

Listen to the full interview with Ralph Bruhn on the **spielboxcast** (German):



HeidelBÄR Games (6 B200)

There's got to be a little something extra, even in card games. So after picking up the ALEBRIJES cards, turn off the lights for a moment and lo and behold – they glow in the dark! Quite fitting for the

"Alebrijes," those colorful

fantasy creatures from Mexico. But even though they look so beautiful, we want to get rid of them as quickly as possible. Because you get penalty points for any remaining cards in your hand.

The previous cards must always be outbid. The cards

have values in four suits, as well as jokers. The jokers range from 1 to 5. The goal is to play the same number of cards with a higher value – or a combination with a higher suit value. Alternatively, you can pass and drop out of the current round, in which case you may discard up to two worthless cards from your hand and draw new ones. In addition, the other

players at the table must draw new cards whenever you play a card with a special symbol. This fast-paced climbing game by Joel and Rafael Escalante lasts only three rounds, offering players the opportunity for an immediate rematch. (sd)

Alebrijes, 3-6, 8+, 20 min.,
announced for October
(English version by Fractal Juegos)

Kosmos (7 E311)

Until early October, no details about BATMAN: GOTHAM CITY CRIMES were leaked. The reason being that publisher Kosmos entered into a partnership with US giant DC Comics for this project. Companies of this caliber tend to restrict the flow of information to the point of a complete drought. Add to that the fact that this board game is a cooperative, story-driven adventure game. So, there's always the danger of spoilers.

By the time this issue went to press, we had at least found out that players in BATMAN: GOTHAM CITY CRIMES can take on the roles of Batman, Batgirl, Batwoman, and Nightwing, to gather clues on the map of Gotham City, track down supervillains, and tackle threats. Designer Michael Menzel – who is primarily known

as an illustrator – was given the freedom to create the game board, while the appearance of Batman and friends, as well as the box cover, were naturally strictly supervised by the licensor. What Michael Menzel did reveal to us (see interview) was that we will navigate the city over the course of five scenarios, and we will be able to move around quite freely. And just like it is customary in Menzel's ANDOR games, there's no need to spend time reading rulebooks as the game has a quick start guide. (sd)

Batman: Gotham City Crimes,
2–4, 12+, 60 min.,
announced for October



"It is quite an honor!"



Michael Menzel (50) has been illustrating board games since 2004. In 2012, he released his first own game, THE LEGENDS OF ANDOR, which immediately won him the "Connoisseur Game of the Year" award. After numerous expansions for ANDOR, BATMAN is just his fourth game. Michael Menzel lives in Neunkirchen-Vluyn.

You had pitched a cooperative game to Kosmos; the publisher thought a Batman theme would be a good choice and approached DC Comics.

Michael Menzel: That definitely was a perfect match. The most important thing was not simply to make just another licensed game, but to make sure it really felt like Batman. As it is now, it feels like you open a comic book: The Batman symbol appears in the sky, Commissioner Gordon asks for help, and together we have to solve the case.

Usually, you illustrate your games entirely yourself, but here, licensing issues made that impossible. Any regrets?

No. The fact that I'm designing a playing card and it then features an original DC image – quite an honor! The same goes for the box cover. It didn't work that way for the game board, though, because DC didn't have a reference image with the slanted view from above

that we wanted. So I got to illustrate that one, and they approved.

Have you ever sketched Batman just for yourself?

I have, and a thousand times! I went to see the movie in the theater in 1989, and right after that, I painted a two-meter Batman on my bedroom wall. My mom thought it was, well, average. Today, I'd love to travel back in time to meet 12-year-old Micha, who read comic books instead of doing his homework. Just to tell him, "Keep it up dude – you're on the right track! That's valuable research, you'll need it later on."

Do we play through the game only once, or multiple times?

The five adventures come in different variations. We have a new movement and combat system that's never been done before. And it's all very thematic. We have the press in the game, who are constantly trying to unmask us. We might get caught in a camera flash in the street, and too much of that is no good. We're safer on the rooftops, which is why the map needs visible elevation changes.

There's detective work, action – basically everything you'd expect from a Batman game. Including the Batmobile. (sd)

Listen to the full interview with Michael Menzel on the **spielboxcast** (German)



Lookout Spiele (3 V300) (and at Asmodee 7 C111)

So it's the Smoky Mountains now. Following three expansions of the successful neoclassical game **FOREST SHUFFLE** by designer Kosch and the standalone **FOREST SHUFFLE: DARTMOOR**, we are headed to the southeastern United States. There we will encounter many animals that like to spend time in and around the water – from raccoons to green-sided darters to hellbenders. They are the reason why, if we are willing to spend an extra card, we may place our trees along the riverbank. Anyone familiar with **FOREST SHUFFLE** can trust that the well-established basic principle has remained the same. You will get into the game right away, but also encounter some exciting new scoring mechanisms and bonus actions. If you are new to the **SHUFFLE**, you find an atmospheric, immersive, and accessible set-collection game with a great variety of cards, a positive overall vibe, and an enjoyable theme. Animal, tree, and terrain cards (180 total) invite you to build a biotope in your dis-



play to score as many points as possible. As always, the game ends immediately when the third winter card is revealed. And as always, the final scoring is a challenge in itself, because the card scoring mechanisms are so intricately linked. (mh)

Forest Shuffle: Smoky Mountains,
2-5, 10+, 60 min.,
announced for October



"You just have to be able to let go of good ideas"



Kosch (49) made his debut as a game designer in 2022 with **FYFE** (Edition Spielwiese). Prior to that, he worked as a zookeeper and computer scientist. In 2024, he won the "Deutscher Spielepreis" (German Game Award) for **FOREST SHUFFLE**. Kosch, who is known only by his pen name, lives in Berlin.

Why do we need yet another forest? What is different about the Smoky Mountains?

Kosch: Different habitats make a difference in gameplay: A German mixed forest feels different from the American Smoky Mountains or Dartmoor. The new setting allows us to experiment with game mechanics. The rivers add a new layer – and finally we have fish, which were missing in previous games and expansions.

So is SMOKY MOUNTAINS more of the same or a completely new game?

It's a mix. The core mechanics remain the same. It was exciting to discover new synergies and different ways of card interactions. There's no need for a new mechanic just for the sake of it. What matters is what it does with the cards.

Which promising idea did you regret to let go?

Originally, there were supposed to be snow-covered trees and trees undercut by the river. The map was divided accordingly: snow at the top, river at the bottom. In the end, only the river remained. I thought it a shame to lose the snow. But I could understand the need for streamlining: An additional layer needs to add value to the game without making it unnecessarily complicated. You just have to be able to let go of good ideas.

Have you ever been to the Smoky Mountains?

Unfortunately, no. I suffer from fear of flying, so getting there would be tricky. But I have many biologist friends who help me out with their experiences and insights.

As a designer, has the success of FOREST SHUFFLE given you more creative freedom or put more pressure on you?

I have more freedom to choose how to spend my time on the things I want to do. Ever since **FYFE**, my main job has been game designer, and I'm now able to make a living from it. **FOREST SHUFFLE** has given me even more independence. But I also work on other projects, sometimes with co-designers.

What's your favorite animal?

Clearly the raccoon. I'm a bear person anyway, but raccoons have something so mischievous and endearing about them. One night in a friend's yard, a raccoon suddenly appeared in the flashlight, holding a few nuts. When it was spotted, it tossed the nuts aside and ran off. That mix of curiosity, cheekiness, and charm has stuck with me. (mh).

Checklist. Fall Preview 2026

Publishers	Game	Designer(s)	Players	Age
1 More Time Games (7 B111)  / Pandasaurus Games (2 E330) 	Fadenfroh	Jordy Adan, Alexander Pfister	1-4	8
25th Century Games (6 B201) 	Observatory	Chris A. Williams	1-5	10
2F-Spiele (3 G215) 	Flixo	Friedemann Friese	2-5	8
2Tomatoes Games (6B 400) 	Bonbon	Eloi Pujadas, Eugeni Castano	2-5	8
Abacusspiele (7 E511) 	Blattwerk	Christian Heuser, Tim Hüwe	1-4	10
Adam's Apples Games (4 H120) 	Gnomeville	Björn Lindberg	2-4	10
AEG (3 B200) 	Cascadia: Alpine Lakes	Flynn, Johnson, Melvin, Stankewich	1-4	10
Albi (4 D400)  / BSL Games (3 C300) 	Prague Unseen	J. Pavlásek, M. Peichl, P. Vojtěch	1-4	14
Alion Games (3 F120) 	Timespan	Kristian A Østby, Kenneth Minde	1-5	12
All or None Games (3 E500) 	Furruits	Tobias Hall	1-5	8
Alley Cat Games (3 F400) 	Foxglove Farm	Aya Taguchi, Shun Taguchi	1-4	14
Allplay (8 D200)  / Ostia (4 J500) 	Mountain Goats Legacy	Alex Cutler, Michael Mihealsick	2-5	7
Amigo (7 D110)  / Lautapelit (2 C520) 	Restart	Yonsu Hwang	2-4	7
Anzen Spiele (8 C111) 	Codewords	I. & M. Brand, K. Arendt, D. Dudek	2-8	12
Arcane Wonders (2E 200)  / Pegasus (3 M120) 	Raas: A Dance of Love	Mihir Shah, Shaleen Halalka	1-6	10
Archona Games (3 U215) 	Guilds of Thokaia	Thomas Nielsen, Kai Starck	1-5	14
Arclight Games (5 M400) 	Double Nine	H1RO	2-4	8
Armillary Games (4 A115) 	AstroNavigators	Vincent Verhoeven, Diego Sanchez	1-4	14
ArsEdition (6 A200) 	Cat and the Tower	Masakazu Takizawa	1-5	8
ATM Gaming (6 F325) 	Pili Pili Spicy Edition	Ben & JB	2-8	8
Batusaki (2 D631) 	Cena	Masafumi Mizuno	3-5	12
Bezier Games (2 B510) 	Warp 99	Reinhard Staupé	1-4	10
BGNations (5 H400) 	The Final Heir	Zong-Ger	3-6	10
Bieberstein-Spiele (4 C215) 	1902 Méliès	Eloi Pujadas, Ferran Renallas	2-4	12
Bitewing (4 H400) 	Seagrass	Trevor Benjamin, Brett J. Gilbert	2-4	10
Blackrock Games (6 K400) 	Near	Matthieu Podevin	2-4	14
Blue Orange (6 F300)  / Pegasus (3 M120) 	Next Station Berlin	Matthew Dunstan	1-4	8
Board & Dice (3 G200)  / Frosted Games (3 G300) 	Entropy	Simone Luciani, Nestore Mangone, Tommaso Battista	1-4	10
Board Game Circus (2 C130) 	Stonesaga	Max Brooke, Luke Eddy	1-4	14
Boardcubator (4 C120) 	Shapemash	Patrik Chleboun, Jan Soukal	2-8	8
Bouvier International (2 B630) 	Road Master	Jan-Christophe Bouvier	2-6	7
Bright Horizon Games (4 E110) 	Shrine: Duel of Light	Richad Amann	1-2	10
Capital Gains Studio (2 A435) 	Hungry Hungry Ghosts	Steve Ng	2-6	10
Captain Games (3 Q600) 	Tea & Rum	Fabien Gridel	2-4	14
Catch Up Games (6 K400)  / AllGo-Games (5 D100) 	Red Notice	Gautier de Cottreau, Baptiste Laurent	2	10
CGE (3 V400) 	Kingdome Come: Deliverance	Tomáš Hlek, Vlaada Chvátil	1-4	14
Chilifox Games (3 F120) 	Wild World	Åsmund, Eilif & Viljar Opdal Svensson	1-4	14
Combo Games (3 U210) 	Queen Alice	David Heras Pino, Héctor Carrión	1-4	14
Correctiv (4 J600) 	Projekt G	Fee Wedepohl, Sebastian Haupt	2-4	14
Corax Games (2 E440/B-Rex) 	Trash Poker	Rico Besteher, Frank Noack	1-4	12

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Publishers	Game	Designer(s)	Players	Age
Cosmoludo (6 G400) 	Kumata	Claude Leroy	2-6	8
Cozy Games Studio (8 D235) 	Tiny Toe Beans: Ultimate Mischief	Marco Zannini	2-4	10
Cranio Creations (3 T400)  / Pegasus (3 M120) 	Minikin City	Simone Luciani, Matthieu Verdier	2-5	10
Crime Cases (2 B300) 	Cover Up	Dennis Burfey	3-5	14
Cwali (2 A445) 	Bloooooom	Corné van Moorsel	2-4	8
Daimon Play (6 B201) 	Good Fortune	Jean-Louis Roubira	2	10
David's Games (4 D125) 	Ashes & Amber	David Falla de Acebo	1-4	14
Deep Print Games (3 B300) 	Rooms & Roomies	Juri Alexander	1-5	10
Delicious Games (4 A210) 	Chronocritters	Tristan Geereart, Vladimir Suchy	1-4	12
Denkriesen (8 B300) 	Soundcheck	Colin Valière, Camille Verrier	3-16	12
Devir (3 610)  / Huch! (6 B300) 	Gaudí	Dani Garcia	1-4	12
Didact Games (5 G115) 	FangFrage	Daniel Hitzing, Erik Robert	6-36	12
Dlp Games (3 C115) 	Underwood	Remo Konzadori, Andre Mainini	2-4	14
Dragon Dawn Productions (5 M515) 	Quantum Tricks	Ren Multamäki	3-5	12
Dranda Games (3 H400) 	Crispy Critters	Matt Ding	2-4	7
Dream Alley Games (5 J400) 	Hidden Thieves	Abdulaziz Aljazzaf	2-4	14
Dutchgames (2 A610) 	Math Masters	Bart-Willem van Huizum	2-4	6
DV Games (3 P500) 	Raindrops	Fernando Cunha	2-4	10
Edition Spielwiese (6 A300) 	Isle Tiles	Benjamin Schwer	2-4	8
Elab Game Design (5 J400) 	Hizabr	Yusuf Bohadi	2-4	12
Elnir Games (2 B110) 	Roxane	Daniele Ursini	2-4	12
Engames (2 B400) 	The Travels of Isabella Lucy Bird	Isao Mukai	1-6	10
Explor8 (4 D515) 	Oshaka Trick	Keita Kasagi	3-4	8
Feuerland (3 Q300) 	Greenwood	C. Giannakoulas, M. Zacharidis	1-4	14
Fox Troll Games (4 D115) 	Boktor	Ludovic Adam	1-6	10
Fractal Juegos (4 J300) 	Word Buffet	Andrea Mancini, Simone Luciani	2-4	10
Franjos (6 H125) 	Funsis	Leo Colovini, Dario De Toffoli	2-5	15
Frosted Games (3 G300) 	Horologium: Die Orloy von Prag	A. Sanchez Hermida, P. Pascual	1-4	14
Funtails (3 M215) 	Whacktown	Daniel Piechnick	2-4	14
Gam'inBIZ (2 C115) 	Leaflings	Andy Hopwood	1-4	8
Gamdow Business (2 D410) 	Harvest Business	Foreza Zhang	2-5	12



The checklist does not claim to be complete

Publishers	Game	Designer(s)	Players	Age
Game Factory (6 B110) 	Die vier Pforten	M. Leacock, M. Riddle, B. Pinchback	1-5	10
Gameplay Publishing (6 F115) 	Mole Racing	Jenny Holl, Tomas Falerno	2-6	8
Gamia Games (2 A430) 	Underhaven	Svavar Björgvinsson	2-4	14
GDM/Atomo Games (3 G120) 	Cagones	Antón Vega, Jose Carlos Carmona	2-6	8
Giant Roc (2 E430)  / Board & Dice (3 G200) 	Maestro	Andrea Robbiani	1-4	14
Gigamic (6 K300) 	Odysseus	Johannes Goupy, Matthieu Verdier	1-5	8
Giochi Uniti (3 K515) 	All You Can Chili	Dario Massa	2-6	8
Giochix.it (3 H315) 	Disfida	Michele Quondam	1-4	14
Godot Games (3 N400) 	Yokai Forest Duel	Stefan Godot	2-8	8
Goliath (6 B401) 	Pyramiez	Reiner Knizia	2-4	8
Good Games Publishing (2 D530) 	Skyward Republic	Brendan Evans	2-4	14
Grand Gamers Guild (3 E400) 	Under the Leaves	Trevor Benjamin, Brett J. Gilbert	2-4	8
Guntower Games (2 E311) 	Carta Imperia: Rise of Rome	Mike Ibeji	1-6	10
Haba (8 A115) 	Kilauea	David Bernal, Ferran Renallas	2-4	10
Hall Games (3 M120/Pegasus) 	Medico	Stefan Feld	2-4	12
Hans im Glück (2 B210) 	Cardia: Flut & Sturm	Mathieu Rivero, Faouzi Boughida	2	8
Hape (2 E325) 	Reactor Rescue	Arta Shehu, Fiona Shehu	1-4	10
HeidelBÄR Games (6 B200)  / Fractal Juegos (4 J300) 	Alebrijes	Joel Escalante, Rafael Escalante	3-6	8
Helvetiq (8 D300) 	Fugu	Flavio Foches, Riccardo Foches	1-4	8
Hobby Japan (3 D120) 	Magnet Club	Satoru Kitano	3-5	10
Hobby World (6 H110) 	Outremer	M. Alexandrov, S. Krasnov, O. Ilchenko	2-4	12
Hodari Spiele (3 H300) 	Wikingerschafe	Kai Starck	2-4	8
Hopeful Games (4 G200) 	Neon Hope	D. Schönleben, F. Grothe, T. Ratzlaff	1-4	14
Horrible Guild (6 B115) 	Drops of Evil	Hjalmar Hach, Lorenzo Silva	2-4	12
Huch! (6 B300)  / Moaideas Game Design (5 D115) 	Jiangnan: The Art of Influence	DuGuWei	1-4	14
Hungarian Board Game P. A. (2 B345) 	Aquapark	Dávid Nagy	1-5	8
Iello (6 F200)  / Pegasus (3 M120) 	Fragments: Fungatai	Yohan Servais	1-4	12
InPatience (2 D411) 	Karnivorous	Markus & Inka Brand	1-4	10
Inside Up Games (3 R400)  / Pegasus (3 M120) 	Kalypso	Gilles Turbide	1-4	14





- ☐ Let others choose to be the starting player.
- ☐ Leave the player color you would also like best to someone else.
- ☐ Explain a game to others even if you don't intend to join in.
- ☐ Praise someone for a move that has sealed your own defeat.
- ☐ Let someone get ahead of you in line.
- ☐ Take a few extra bags to the fair with you and hand them out to people who are carrying heavy stuff.
- ☐ High-five someone who has bought the same game.
- ☐ Stick a few Post-it notes with nice messages where people can find them.
- ☐ Bring a few small bottles with beverages and treat someone to an apple juice – just like that..
- ☐ Give a game explainer a sincere compliment.
- ☐ Secretly slip a card into a game box, reading: "YOU ARE AMAZING (playable anytime)" – so that someone will be thrilled in the next round.

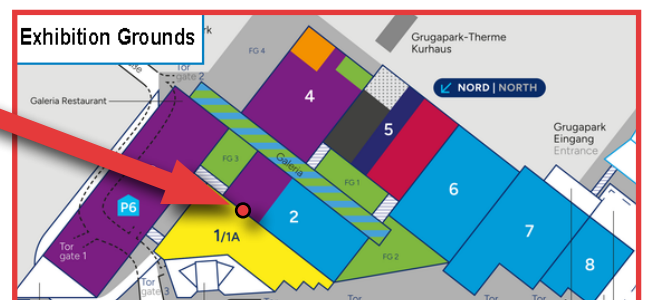
Tips for a Great Trade Show

Eight exhibition halls, over 50,000 visitors every day at the SPIEL: It's going to get pretty crowded! But if everyone shows a little consideration for others, it can work out.

In the latest issue of **spielbox**, our column writer Maren Hoffmann has published a short list entitled "Be Nice!", offering tips for bringing effortless joy to other trade show visitors (see right).

We have turned her concept of a fun playing card hand-out into print. Anyone who visits the **spielbox** at booth 2 A210 can pick up our "DU BIST GROSSARTIG (jederzeit spielbar)" give-away card – "YOU'RE AWESOME (playable anytime)" – card only in German, while stocks last. Feel free to sneak it into a game with nice people, or just hand it to them!

Have a great time at the fair!
The **spielbox** team





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spielbox



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Publishers	Game	Designer(s)	Players	Age
InstaPlay (6 B201)	Shimoda Perry Road	Juwah Le, Giung Kim	2	8
InterHuman Games (3 C411)	Jure Grando the First Vampire	Damir Debanic	1-4	14
Invedars (3 U200)	Cthulu Rift	loi Pujadas, Ferran Renalias	1-4	14
Itten (6 B301)	Music Nonsense	Yoshiaki Tornioka, Mandy Tong	3-5	10
Japanime Games (5 H600)	HackClad	Kaku	1-4	12
Japon Brand (5 K415)	Shiba Goten	Aki Watakabe	1-4	10
Jolly Dutch (6 F110)	Snowy Tricks	Dent, Jacobsen, Kneepkens, Trouerbach	2-5	8
Juegorama (3 Q115)	The Last Squadron	Jose Muñoz	1-4	10
Jumbo Spiele (8 C110)	Match my Beat	David James	3-8	17
Jumping Turtle Games (2 D130)	Rival Seas	David Ausloos	2-4	12
Kagu Spiele (2 C315)	Kirlo	Lukas Zühl	2-6	6
Kampfhummel Spiele (5 B110)	Road Rage	Angela Vögtli	3-6	14
Karma Games (3 M517)	Wildscape	Sebastian Bleasdale	1-4	14
Keen Bean Studio (2 D450)	Almighty	Malachi Ray Rempen, Kevin Privalle	1-4	10
Kendi (6 B415)	Wendo	Jannik Walter	2-5	8
King Raccoon Games (4 H325)	Gangs of Trash City	Felix Mertikat	2	10
Koalla (4 A425)	Aridnyk	Y. Kifor, V. Kuznietsov, A. Yanovskiy	1-4	10
Kokorin Games (4 G110)	Sitting Bull	Perepau Llistosella	2-4	12
Kosmos (7 E311)	Batman: Gotham City Crimes	Michael Menzel	2-4	12
KTBG/Burnt Island Games (3 D400)	Treeline	Christopher Chan	2-4	8
Lirius Games (3 F600)	Timeless Journeys	Nestore Mangone, Andrea Robbiani	1-5	14
Locomuse (3 F120)	Apocalypse	Yoriyasu Harano	3-6	10
Lonny Games (4 F120)	1880 Romania	Leonhard Orgler	2-6	13
Lookout Spiele (3 V300/Asmodee)	Mischwald: Smoky Mountains	Kosch	2-5	10
Looping Games (3D511)	1953 Everest	Xavier Violeau	1-4	12
Loosey Goosey Games (2 E620)	Mad Cat Sad Cat	Andreas Preiss	2-5	8
Lucky Duck Games (6 B401)	Oakspire	James Newman	1-5	12
Lucrum Games (3 H500)	Ant Gravity	Pawel Siemek	2-4	10
Ludicatessen (2C 500)	Landis	Rafael Prado	2-4	8
Ludit (4 C110)	Go Big	Antony Proietti	3-6	7
Ludolux (2 D541)	Padventures	Günter Burkhardt	2-4	6
Ludonova (3 F115)	Green Gold	Toni López	1-4	14
Mandoo Games (6 B201)	Blood Hunt	Maxime Rambourg, Théo Rivière	2-4	10
Mattel (8 D110)	Odd Logic	Quentin Weir	3-6	12

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Publishers	Game	Designer(s)	Players	Age
Mazaza Games (6 F101) 	Scavengers	Mat Brown, Zara Reid	2-5	8
Mebo (6 G225) 	Âmbar	Nunos Santos	2-4	8
Mighty Boards (3 M300) 	Fot the Gods!	T. Benjamin, B. Gilbert, D. Thompson	2-4	10
Mindclash Games (3 G115) 	Revenant	Allan Kirkeby	1-4	14
MM-Spiele (6 B300/Huch!) 	Tornado Splash	Moyuki Adisawa	2-5	8
Mojito Studios (3 N120) 	All You Can Eat Buffet	Bruno Faidutti, Théo Rivière	3-6	8
Moou Games (2 B525) 	Noah	Elam Agam	1-4	14
Moses (6 F400) 	Das Cliquenquiz	Jürgen Heel, Nicola Berger	2-6	12
Mozaic Games (2 B410) 	Totally Normal Langurs	Phalgun Polepalli	2-8	14
Murdoc Games (1 D320) 	Rumian	Viktor Kadziolka, Andreas Kobari	2-4	10
Nanox Games (3 C115/dlp Games) 	-60°	Peter Prinz, Alexander Pfister	1-4	14
Nerdlab Games (5 B700) 	The Beat: Rockstars of the Galaxy	Morten Blaabjerg, Christian Kudahl	2-4	8
Never Enough Board Games (3 C300) 	No Risk, No Tower!	Jochen Knittel	2	8
Nice Game Publishing (6 D320) 	Faust vs. Mephisto	Geonil	2	8
Noctis Verlag (3 E300) 	Rank My Denk	I. & M. Brand, L. & V. Wiechens	2-8	10
Noris (8 C200) 	Brabbelkrabben	Die 7 Bazis	3-6	8
NSV (6 B410) 	Lightning City: Tokyo	Jannik Auth	1-12	10
Oink Games (6 C310) 	Aufgeflogen	Ali Mussell	3-8	9
Origame (6 G102) 	The Purple House	Daryl Chow, Nicanor Valdez	1-5	8
Ostia (4 J500) 	Wendepunkte	Martin Thiele-Schweiz, Michael Geithner	3-8	12
Outset Media (6 K110) 	Zombie Days	Gareth Edwards	2	6
Ottavio & Ulisses Spiele (1 F915) 	Drachenelfen: Himmel in Flammen	B. Hennen, P. Baas, J. Kaub	3-7	10
Panic Zones (4 G115) 	Panic Zones: Arctic Edition	P. Saber, R. Chedrawi, A. Attieh, E. Rizk	3-6	10
Paverson Games (4 B200) 	Class of '89	Kory Jordan	1-4	14
PD-Verlag (8 C100) 	Das violette Schwert	Johannes Lorenzen	1-6	14
Pegasus (3 M120) 	Dorfromantik: Südsee	Michael Palm, Lukas Zach	1-6	10
Perdix Spiele (5 G115) 	Häää!?	Ralf zur Linde	2-5	10
Perro Loko Games (3 U115) 	Nijar	David Bernal	1-4	14
Phalanx (3 L500) 	Saga: Vikings vs. Anglo-Saxons	Maciej Stepien	2	14
Piatnik (6 G200) 	Nuancen	Scott Brady	3-10	8
Pink Troubadour (4 G515) 	Carl von Linné	Michael Peichl	1-4	12
Play With Us Design (2 E510) 	Leaves	Shi Chen	1-4	15
Portal Games (3 J120) 	Robo Run	Eryk Nowak	2	10
Pythagoras (2 B355) 	Caribe	Orlando Sá	1-4	10
Quango Games (6 K201) 	The Plank	Magnus Karlsson	2-6	7
Queen Games (3 K400) 	Palace Quest	Dirk Henn, Emanuele Ornella	1-6	8
Ravensburger (7 D311)  / Hans im Glück (2 B210) 	Carcassonne Labyrinth	Klaus-Jürgen Wrede, Max J. Kobbert	1-4	8
Red Cat Games (6 H110) 	Festburg	Gary Kim, Hope S. Wang, Yohan Goh	3-6	8
Red Glove (3 T200) 	Maya Run	Francesco Testini	1-4	8
Runner Games (6 C108) 	Dribble 'n' Dice	Ralf Vanpey	2	10
Saashi & Saashi (6 C300) 	Railway Porters	Saashi	2-4	10
Salt & Pepper Games (3 A400) 	The Glasgow Train Robbery	Eloi Pujadas, Ferrán Renalias	2	10
Sand Castle (8 B100) 	Time Walkers	Alexandre Aguilar, Benoit Turpin	2	10

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Publishers	Game	Designer(s)	Players	Age
Schmidt Spiele (7 E111)	Secret Museum	Werner Schmidt, Matthias Cramer	2-4	10
Seajay Games (3 M110)	Era of Atlantis	Channing Jones	3-5	14
Simon & Jan (8 B110)	Verlegt	Rudi Biber	2-6	7
Simplexity Games (4 J400)	Knights of the Pond Table	Dixon Block	2-4	8
SkelligGames (3 C300)	Tinctura	Jürgen Then, Franziska Stürzenhofecker	1-4	12
Skjald Spil & Events (5 G125)	Ladybird	M. Blaabjerg, M. L. Andersen	1-4	10
Skytear Games (3 P111)	Dicequest	Jochen Eisenhuth	1-4	10
Sorry We Are French (6 K400)	Greylune	William Attia	2-4	14
Spiel das! (2 D430)	Wild Tiled West	Paul Dennen	1-5	13
Spielefaible (3 G515)	Wireless	Marco Canetta, Stefania Niccolini	1-4	14
Spielworxx (3 B300)	The Old King's Crown	Pablo Clark	1-4	14
Squink Verlag (2 E451)	Roter Norden	James Dickinson	2-4	10
Stonemaier Games (3 R400)	Duel of Meloch	Jamey Stegmaier	1-2	14
Strohmann Games (3 T600)	Railway Boom	Hisashi Hayashi, Simone Luciani	2-4	14
Studio H (6 K300/Gigamic)	Bella Vista	Bruno Cathala, Andrea Mainini	2-4	8
The Game Builders (4 J500/Ostia)	Northgreen	Thorsten Hanson, Andreas Odendahl	1-4	12
TillSam Games (3 S200)	Faultopia	Marcel Dehlinger	1-4	8
Tlama Games (2 C145)	Bologna	Martin Holeksa, Robert Milicka	2	10
Topp/Frechverlag (6 H200)	Geschickt gefädelt	Cami Muñoz Villar	2-5	8
Treeceratops (3 Q400)	The Dawn of Pangea	Thomas Franken	1-4	10
Unfriendly Games (6 K400)	Terraces of Kanoa	David Carmona, Karen Nguyen	1-4	10
Van Ryder Games (2 E210)	Food Truck Fury	Ryan Jorjorian	1-4	14
Wonderbow Games (3 Q120)	Ironwood: Stahl und Geist	Maël Brunet, Julien Chaput	1-2	12
Wulfhorn Games (3 H225)	Council of Serpents	Joeri Hessels, Wouter Moons	1-4	14
XOXO (8 A300/Haba)	Pow Mau	Thade Precht	2-5	10
Yaofish (5 G215)	Sherlock Squad	Chen Qiang	1-4	14
Zilverspar Games (3 T125)	Orbit Master	Jason Gamber	3-6	10
Zoch (8 C200)	Pocket Pisa	Christoph Cantzler, Anja Wrede	2-4	8




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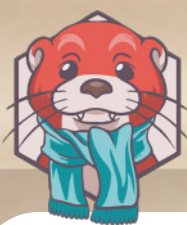
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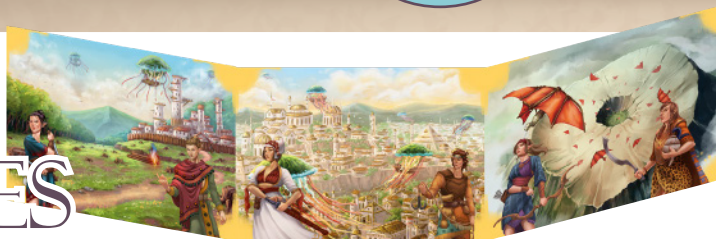


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- Advertorial -

PLAYING ADVENTURES



Following its debut at SPIEL 2025, this year's new releases by Ottavio once again demonstrate the publisher's great strength: games that tell stories. With **DRACHENELFEN**, a new **ADVENTURE IN A BOX** is set in the popular novel series by Bernhard Hennen. The **BIBI & TINA ADVENTURE GAMES** invite players to play exciting stories with a magic twist on a horse farm as their favorite heroes.

Bernhard Hennen is one of the best-known German fantasy authors. His epic „Drachenelfen“ series is now coming to life as a game: **ADVENTURE IN A BOX: DRACHENELFEN** lets three to seven players aged ten and up take on the roles of elite elfen warriors who must work together to hold their own in the war against humans. Only those who tactically and skillfully infiltrate the Golden City on varied battle maps will find the hidden secret weapon of their adversaries, turning the tide of this conflict. Each



character evolves over several chapters, learning new abilities. One player acts as the game master controlling the enemies.

As is typical for an **ADVENTURE IN A BOX**, the game requires no preparation and plays out like an RPG. Anyone who's always wanted to try out this genre will find **DRACHENELFEN** a particularly atmospheric introduction.

No less magical, but aimed at a slightly younger audience, are two new **BIBI & TINA ADVENTURE GAMES** coming in November: As the young

witch Bibi Blocksberg, her best friend Tina, and other characters like Alexander or Freddy, three to five horse fans ages eight and up race against each other at the Martinshof. Along the way, they experience enchanted stories that unfold differently each time, as players influence the plot during the game.

Here, too, one of the players acts as director, while the others work as a team to make decisions and come up with creative solutions using skill and a bit of luck with the dice. Will the friends work together to find the missing calf Käthe? And who will win the big Christmas race?



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Nanox Games (at dlp Games 3 C115)

A meteorite has crashed in Antarctica. And off goes our intrepid team – in the name of science! And to gain victory points, obviously. At the start of each round of *-60°* (pronounced: Sixty Below), we prepare our expedition. We draw cards from our own deck and place them on our tableau. The deck contains important items, but also storms. They provide us with energy, but interfere with the efficiency of our base. That's the weather for you!

At any time, we can stop drawing more cards to trigger the effects of cards we have already drawn and the storm-free areas of our base. During the main phase of the game, we can then expand our base, hire experts, and improve our deck. What was that about the meteorite again? Right – it's in the center of the table and can be explored by any player. To do this, we place explorers and stations in the not quite so perpetual ice and thus explore the path to the meteorite and its surroundings. As a result, the display gets larger, and new action spaces for our researchers pop up.

What's interesting here is that our explorers trigger the actions and remain on the action spaces for the rest of the game. Would that be an effect of the cold? But it's also about maintaining a presence so



-60° by Nanox Games

we can place increasingly better stations on the ice. Peter Prinz and Alexander Pfister have combined worker placement with clever deck optimization. It's a challenge in which we must keep a cool head to brave the extreme cold. (tk)

*-60°, 1-4, 14+, 120-180 min.,
announced for October*



LIGHTNING CITY: TOKYO

NSV (6 B410)

Thunderstorms are raging outside, but we're home and dry, right? Think again! In the dice game *LIGHTNING CITY: TOKYO*, we build skyscrapers, over which dark clouds gather as the game progresses. We should make sure to finish our construction work by adding a roof. Otherwise, lightning might strike and destroy all our rooms.

The game's designer, Jannik Auth, hands us six dice: With the four different "space dice," we build restaurants, shops, arcades, and karaoke bars into our skyscrapers. A joker die gives us free choice, while a color die blocks one type of building in each round. We'll likely play about nine, though that also depends on how often lightning strikes.

We add up the numbers on two dice and mark the shops corresponding to their colors in the appropriate column on our personal score sheet. With the joker, we can add a roof, but after that this tower is finished. After each round, the thunderstorm rumbles, again with two d6: First, the cloud over the tower turns black; next, lightning strikes there. Will the roof be added in time? We also score points here at the end, based on the laid-out scoring cards and our personal goal. (sd)

*Lightning City: Tokyo,
1-12, 10+, 30 min.,
already published*

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Pink Troubadour (4 G515)

Charles Darwin is always a safe bank. Almost like a law of nature: biology, history of science, Darwin. And now game designer Michal Peichl introduces **CARL VON LINNÉ**. Who was that? Attention, advanced-level course material: Von Linné was a Swedish biologist in 18th century Uppsala. He is credited with inventing the naming system for living organisms by a Latin double name. "He was very important for Darwin, as he focused on cataloging and classifying species. But his work also includes philosophical reflections, for example on the origins of all living things," explains Peichl.

On our table there are five areas of research that are closely integrated. Of course, we conduct fieldwork. In Sweden, where researchers dig up plants to study them later. Then there are colleagues traveling the world and collecting exotic species. In Uppsala, we also keep the botanical gardens. Last but not least, corresponding with the leading experts is part of our daily routine. We decide which action to take by using lenses that we insert into various instruments, such as a magnifying glass or a microscope, and depending on that device, actions are performed at various times.

When it comes to the technical terms, some expert players (and this game is targeted at them) might be reminded of **DARWIN'S JOURNEY**. Peichl understands: "The feel of the game may be similar, but the game mechanics differ greatly," he emphasizes. As of the editorial deadline for our special issue, it was still unknown which German publisher would pick up **CARL VON LINNÉ**. (ab)

Carl von Linné, 1-4, 12+,
60-120 min.,
announced for October

Queen Games (3 K400)

Some things you just cannot invent by yourself. It's been over a quarter of a century since designer Dirk Henn developed a concept for what would later become **ALHAMBRA** (Game of the Year 2003). Since then, a large number of expansions, big boxes, and variants have been released. But only when an e-mail arrived from Henn's Italian fellow game designer Emanuele Ornella



Photos: Pink Troubadour, Queen Games



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in winter 2024, it made Henn realize that ALHAMBRA might also be playable in cooperative mode.

Together, the two of them developed PALACE QUEST, in which we still build the Alhambra and currencies play a role. But those are the only overlaps. PALACE QUEST is a completely new game and slightly more challenging than the original ALHAMBRA. Everyone works together to build the palace complex, and card luck is a factor.

Each player has their own face-down

deck of building cards in four different colors and values. If you draw a card that doesn't match the buildings to be constructed in this round, you can discard it. But be careful: Once your deck runs out, the game is lost! Also, don't put off the building tiles for too long, because once the storage area is full ... So the group discusses whether to keep the cards that allow them to place buildings on spaces of the same color on the construction tableaux in the center. If they have the exact change, lay out additional tableaux, and collect bonus tiles from there, then they advance in the scoring. After almost every round, however, they must also complete specific tasks. If they fail to do so, it will cost them more cards – or even the game. (sd)

Palace Quest,
1-6, 8+, 60 min.,
announced for October



PALACE QUEST

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Current. **Fall Preview 2026**

Ravensburger (7 D311) / Hans im Glück (2 B210)

Na, it's not a joke, it works perfectly well: From now on, play both classic games LABYRINTH and CARCASSONNE at the same time. In the new CARCASSONNE LABYRINTH, we shift the paths on the game board with a tile and then, hopefully, move our pawn along them to the finish. That's the old LABYRINTH. Then we pick up the tile we pushed out, plus our task tile, provided we've reached our goal. Both of these we integrate into our own CARCASSONNE landscape. The intention is to complete roads and cities within ten turns, as this earns us bonus markers. The player who collects the most of these and stacks up the tallest tower out of their components wins.

This may sound like a casual little game, but even experienced gamers find themselves puzzling over it after just a few moves: There's got to be a better way! Of course, the new tiles can also be used with a CARCASSONNE variant. The current issue of **spielbox** (5/26) features a detailed review of CARCASSONNE LABYRINTH, and includes the bonus tiles "Dragon's Treasure". (sd)

Carcassonne Labyrinth,
1-4, 8+, 30 min.,
already published

Schmidt Spiele (7 E111)

And here we go again: In SECRET MUSEUM, nerdy art collectors are the stars of the show. The museum is "secret" insofar as it will never open to the public – because it deals in hot goods. Works of art, freshly acquired on the black market, are appraised and, if valuable enough, added to the collection.

The idea for SECRET MUSEUM came from Werner Schmidt and Matthias Cramer. They have us manipulate six differently colored symbol dice, which we take turns selecting. One is employed on the black market to acquire new goods and transport them to our warehouse – with the goal of lining up three exhibits of the same color or three with the same symbol next to each other. Alternatively, we use the selected six-sided die to have our previous exhibits evaluated by the Society – depending on the

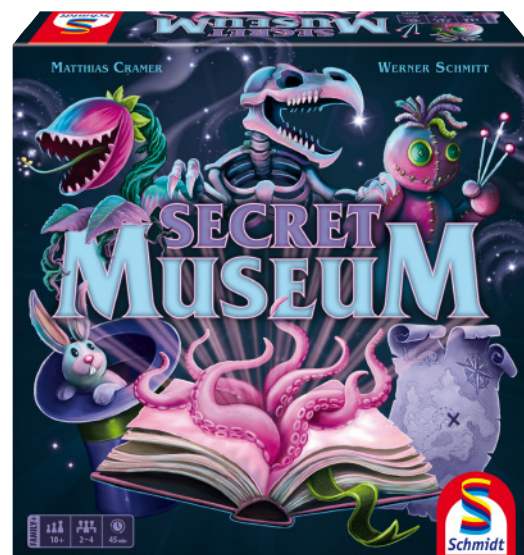


symbol or color of the die. Now the labels located on the right and left below the artwork, at the edge of our tiles, come into play. If we have previously managed to assemble complete symbols from the two halves of adjacent pieces, we now receive victory points, contracts or additional exhibits from the bag. This can lead to chain moves, which is, of course, exactly the intention. Once you have the eighth artwork in your collection, usually after three-quarters of an hour, the secret art trading ends. You earn points if you can now match the exhibits from the display cases in your collection to the colors on your contract cards. (sd)

Secret Museum,
2-4, 10+, 45 min.,
announced for October

Spielworxx (3 B300)

The old king is dead – disappeared? On vacation? In any case, his crown is looking to adorn a new, dignified





ger one in future rounds. In summer, we find ourselves in a direct conflict. We all place one face-down card in each of the three regions. After the cards are revealed and their effects resolved, whoever has the highest value in a region gains influence and other rewards. In fall, we can place one card from our hand to trigger effects in the Council or travel to the Underworld to gain knowledge. With knowledge, we can improve our card deck. Winter is a time to pre-

head. Over several rounds, we try to position ourselves as heirs to the throne, by amassing great influence. The old king's crown will not be handed to a new ruler for several years to come. So we cycle through the seasons multiple times and through skillful card management, try to steer the course of events in our favor.

In spring, we use our hand cards to bid on improvement cards. From then on, our bid card protects the acquired card, but can be displaced by a stron-

pare for the coming year.

The elegant framework of the game-play is expanded with numerous customization options and tactical possibilities, by means of asymmetrical factions and various card effects. THE OLD KING'S CROWN is enhanced by atmospheric illustrations that – like the game concept – come from Pablo Clark. (tk)

The Old King's Crown,
1-4, 14+, 60-120 min.,
announced for October



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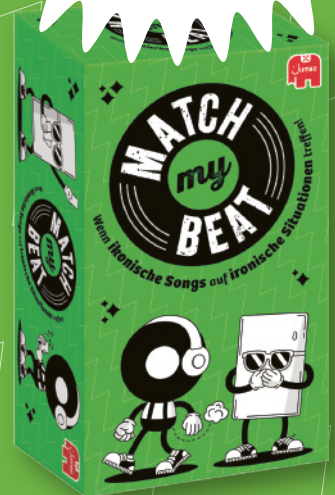

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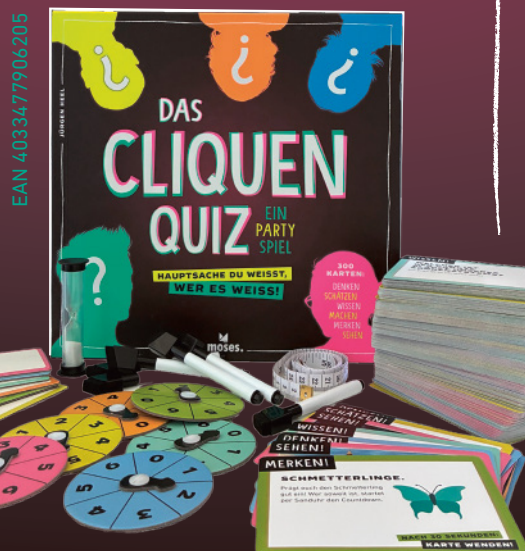
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Current. Fall Preview 2026

Studio H (at Gigamic 6 K300)

Bruno Cathala from France and Andrea Mainini from Italy invite us to a city that initially seems pretty flat. The goal is to develop the best lots in BELLA VISTA and ultimately enjoy a place in the sun. There's only one currency that counts: points! At the same time, points are also much-needed change for bidding on the best lots in each round.

The early bird pays a higher price, but also gets to choose from a wider variety of available building lots. Each round, you play one of your hand cards. The higher the number on your card, the taller the house you place in BELLA VISTA. Preferably next to the lower houses of your competitors, because then you can collect a coin of envy tax from each of their pathetic buildings. If your own is not overshadowed by a taller building in the adjacent neighborhood, you receive another three coins.

There are also objectives to be completed: Two at the end and four during the game. These, of course, also generate points. The designers made sure to

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select mechanics with a forward-looking approach and avoided rule workarounds.

Does it make sense to spend points to take an earlier turn, or should you save them? This is precisely the dilemma you face and must turn to your advantage. Just as the view of BELLA VISTA ultimately tightens up, so do the decisions during this short game. (tk)

Bella Vista,
2-4, 8+, 30-45 min.,
already published



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Timing without a clock: Four hidden hourglasses keep changing places. Judge their running times correctly and challenge at just the right moment to stay ahead.



DER TURM

Memory with a twist: Gems disappear inside a tower whose floors are constantly rearranged. Keep track of their shifting hiding places and be the first to get rid of all your gems.



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Current. Fall Preview 2026

Topp / Frechverlag (6 H200)

Weaving is an art form. Anyone wanting to create thread patterns in artistic designs must be able to think three-dimensionally – even if the final result is flat. Chilean designer Cami Muñoz Villar hands each player their own loom and leaves them to it. This is more challenging than the colorful components might suggest, even if they somewhat resemble preschool arts and crafts. The strings are “drafted”: The active player draws five from the bag, chooses one, and passes the rest on until each player has four. You then thread them onto your own loom – a board with holes along the edge – and try to imitate the weave of the laid out patterns, after which you decide on the scoring one. WARP & WEFT requires some fine motor skills and, despite the simple rules, a kind of strategic thinking that is rarely used in everyday life. You will usually overlook something in the first few rounds, but then make rapid progress. The game is more suited to quiet tinkerers looking to unwind than to people who expect lively interaction and a steep rise in suspense. (mh)

Warp and Weft,
2–5, 8+, 30 min.,
already published

XOXO (at Haba 8 A300)

It’s not enough that Haba localizes games and is a major player in the family games sector: The company from Bad Rodach announced no fewer than 50 (!) new releases for the SPIEL. Now they are also indulging the idea of launching a whole new game series, the XOXO brand, featuring snappy comics and black boxes (see interview). You couldn’t get much further from the classic Haba yellow and children’s games.

XOXO is launching right off the bat with three new card games. Pow Mau is an elaborate MAU-MAU variant with a power twist, in the words of the

publishers. In terms of gameplay, this means that in addition to playing single cards after MAU-MAU rules, you can also lay down a stack of cards with the



German Edition of WARP & WEFT

same numerical value all at once, provided that the bottom one matches at least in color. Furthermore, when the values are the same, you need to keep track: The “second 2” or the “fourth 4” in a row “activate” the stack, and the next player may then only play the matching number. Pow Mau contains the jokers, direction-changers, and skippers, but the variant also has the unplayable black 6. Acting as a sort of “Old Maid,” it prevents players from triggering an intermediate scoring by discarding the last card. (sd)

Pow Mau,
2-5, 10+, 20 min.,
already published

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"Just like a sitcom or a daily soap opera"

Thade Precht (45) is Visual Lead Games and designer at Haba, and in his spare time just launched the new game brand XOXO. It's kicking off with three games in Essen, and, of course, made and distributed by Haba. Thade Precht lives in Coburg.

The XOXO games look so different: They feature slightly wacky graphics that seem to carry over from the "XOXO's Ludomatic Universe" series. What's the story behind that?

Thade Precht: The games have a cohesive storyline because their characters keep reappearing in later games and evolving. It's a journey through Asian pop culture.

Does that mean all the games are fairly similar?

On the surface yes, with a playing time of about 20 minutes and aimed at players ages 10 and up. In addition to Pow Mau, among the first

games we'll be showcasing in Essen are SALARYMAN MADNESS, a fast-paced real-time game, and YOKAI YEN?!!, a climbing game. From 2027 onward, two more are released each year.

Will I only understand this if I play all the games in exactly the right order?

No, of course you can also play them all individually. But the story the games tell continues beyond the short introductory comic at the beginning of each ruleset. And I recommend taking a close look at each box!

It sounds a little like a TV series?

That's exactly how it was meant – just like a sitcom or a daily soap opera. And we are currently referring to it as Season 1, with the card games. Maybe Season 2 will feature dexterity games? Who knows? In any case, I'm very grateful that Haba entrusted me with this project. (sd)





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Zoch (8 C200)

At Zoch, they're quite daring: The Tuscan city of Pisa has recently fallen into disrepute in Germany, through no fault of its own. This is because the Europe-wide educational assessment test PISA consistently highlights just how poorly students in the German school system perform by comparison. But in **POCKET PISA**, designers Christoph Cantzler and Anja Wrede draw our attention to the fact that Pisa is also home to the Leaning Tower. That's far better and more fun to play with.

In **POCKET PISA**, a thick column stands on a base, and next to it lie 14 odd-looking wooden pieces, somewhat similar to those of the legendary Zoch BAUSACK game. Cards determine which of these pieces the next player

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must use to build – always placing it on top of the last piece already stacked on the tower, right at the top. Anyone starting to feel queasy may pass. If an unlucky or ham-fisted player knocks the structure over, the round ends. Players

who pass or knock over receive nothing; everyone still in the game, in turn, receives the cards already built. If a player has five of those, the scores of the three best ones are added up. Otherwise, the game continues, and since the order of the cards still in play never changes, you will soon know which piece comes up. And choose to pass in time. Or not. (sd)

Pocket Pisa,
 2-4, 8+, 20 min.,
 announced for October





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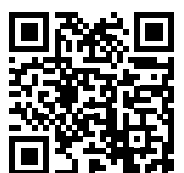
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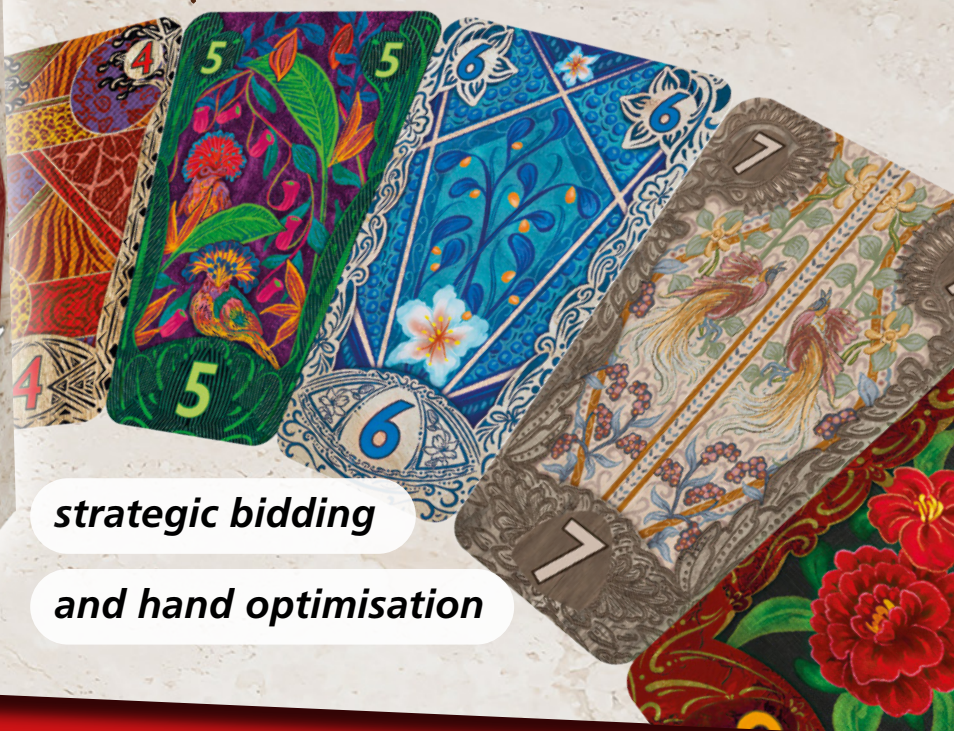
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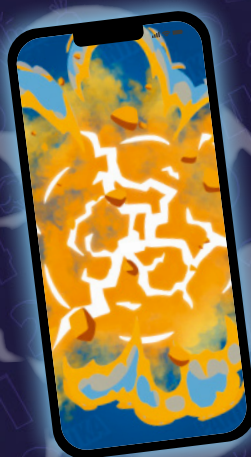


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