

HORROR GAME BASED ON LOVECRAFT'S BOOKS

CARCOSA

CARCASSONNE WELL SHAKEN WITH CTHULHU (CARCOSA

Readers that love the romances of Ambrose Bierce and Howard Lovecraft already know this name: Carcosa, the lost city of their books, placed inside the black lake of Hali. Most recently, she was also named in the TV series "True Detective". Let's see together if the game is a good introduction to those books.

who produced it. I just add one note: please find a fabric bag large enough to store all the tiles to facilitate their draw.

To set-up the game you need to place the board (that we will call simply "Yellow Sign" from now on), corresponding to the number of players. Then you prepare on some stacks

of Hastur, completely surrounded by the black waters of the Hali lake.

Pietro Cremona

An interesting variation of the classic Carcassonne, with an eye on Lovecraft's horror books.

Each player takes all the meeples of one color and one card that represents a section of their cult house. She is divided in two parts: on the right the hospital to recover the cultists that become mads after a ritual; on the left the dining room were the cultists try to come back to force to be ready for another task. The last meeple is the "Prophet", to be placed on the Yellow Sign, standing.



The materials of Carcosa are strong and easy to use: only the cards are probably a little too "light", but we do not have to manipulate them during the game so they are fine. Of course, the heart of the game are the 88 square tiles, (Carcassonne like), including the four "starting" ones for the town of Hastur that should be placed in the middle of the table at the set-up. A small board, called "Yellow Sign" (or "Cultist Sheet" if you prefer) is also placed on the table: it has two sides and you decide which one to use based on the number of players (front side for 4 players, back for 2-3). Finally, we have four series of wooden meeples (one "Prophet" and 9 cultists for each color). The box of Carcosa is a good example of "how" to produce a game: small, compact, and exactly filled by the stored components. No waste: compliments to "One Free Elephant"

of tiles randomly extracted from a cup or a bag: again, the number of stacks (4 to 6) depends on the number of players (2 to 4) but all the tiles are always used, and they should remain "covered". See picture nr.2



Finally, in the middle of the table are placed the four "start" tiles that represents the town

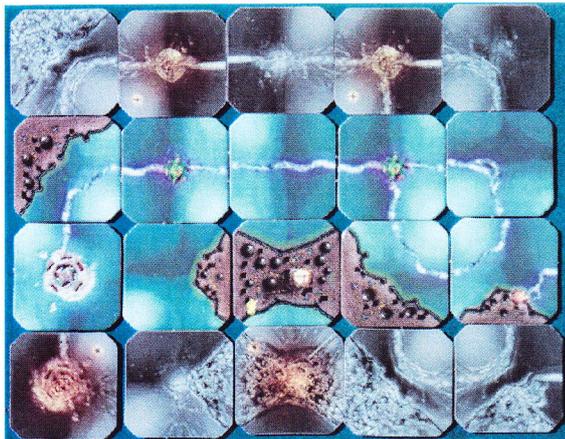
The tiles have the "usual" dimensions of the Carcassonne series, but with a major difference: they are printed on both sides (see also Picture 3). Side "A" shows an "unstable" territory while on side "B" is printed the real "final" territory: some of them may rise special bonus/malus when they are overturned, as we will see later.

The game is played in turns of five phases:

Phase 1: recover a cultist from insanity

Phase 2: select a tile from one stack on the "Yellow Sign" and place the Prophet on top of that stack (blocking it for the following players)

Phase 3: place the selected tile on the table, with the "unstable" side on, following the



If a cultist is in a "Ritual Site" when it is overturned there are two possibilities: (a) The Yellow King (master of this world) is satisfied and the Cult gains as many VP as there are tiles around the Site (ad the cultist becomes insane, of course) or (b) a monster comes up and devours the cultist that is sent then to the "Yellow Sign" (but the player get the VP).

usual "Carcassonne" rules for the connection to already placed tiles.

Phase 4: (optional) take one cultist from the reserve to be placed on that tile

Phase 5: solve the eventual effect of the tile.

As you see this is very similar to a standard "Carcassonne" sequence, but there are some differences that will make Carcosa slightly different from its ancestor, starting from the meeples: instead of knights or peasants we have cultists and they are really unlucky as their Prophet will use them for some sorcery (and they become insane) or sacrifice in the black waters of the Hali lake (to be devoured by a monster).

On the "Yellow Sign" is also printed the Victory Point (VP) track and the players get VP (called here Power Points) when they are able to "stabilize" some tiles (i.e. turning them on the "B" side). If, for example, you have a cultist on a road ... uuups ... on an "Energy Flow" (as they call it) and you close that path all the unstable tiles are turned on the "B" side and you gain as many VP as there are tiles on this flow. But the poor cultist become insane and should be sent to the hospital.

If a player closes a "district" (a series of territory tiles) the Cult with more cultists there gain as many VP as there are tiles, but if some "Theaters" are printed on that district the player may take extra cultists from an

Another difference with Carcosa is the use of the "Ritual Stones" (see also Picture 3): every player gets 6 of them at the beginning but they still do not have "magic" powers: any time that an Energy Flow is completed the player may "charge" a stone that has up to the same number of the VP gained. Therefore, with a 5 tiles Energy Flow you may "charge" one of the stones with the number "II-III-IV-V". When you use a "charged" stone you place it in your reserve, and you need to "charge" it again if you wish to use it later in the game. A charged stone allows the player to make "special" actions: immediately recover an insane cultist; move a cultist from a tile to another; look at the tiles of a stack on the Yellow Sign; move a Prophet; take a cultist from the general reserve; etc.

The game ends when a Cult reaches the case 70 on the VP track, winning the game, or if TWO stacks of tiles on the Yellow Sign are completely exhausted: in this second option all the VP must be calculated (adding reduced VP for unfinished districts or energy flows and some extra VP for the sacrificed cultists). The player with most points is the winner.

The dominant theme of the game is obviously the "Horror", including the rules booklet, graphically very well done. Unfortunately, this complicates a little the study as you have to separate the real rules from the "chrome" of the narrative contents. The



initial general reserve. Of course, all the cultists in the district become insane and must be placed on their hospitals.

authors were probably conscient of this as they created a special section in the booklet (called "Arcane Knowledge") where the



My lines for WIN

Dagmar de Cassan, Editor-in-Chief

Welcome to the first edition of WIN, published in the new bimonthly rhythm, issue WIN 525/526 in the 43rd Volume of WIN. We are pleased that we can already present the first new releases of 2019! Slowly but surely we begin the testing of games for our Austrian Games award, we look forward to test-play and try many many wonderful games up to our final decision. We are also very pleased to welcome a new member in our jury, Thomas Bareder, publisher of Frisch gespielt! Welcome, Thomas!

Of course, we will inform you about potential winners and actual winners. Please stay with us and continue to read our WIN and ti inform yourself about the newest games and trends.

Current issues of win can be found on

<http://www.gamesjournal.at>

and for Games Companion Game by Game see

<http://www.gamescompanion.at>.

wrote specific questions and the related answers. It is strongly suggested to read this section BEFORE starting with the rules. You will avoid becoming confused, even if this is the real scope of the Yellow King, of course.



The rules also include three variants: the first two ("Criminal", who adds 8 grey coloured tokens, and "The Stranger" that adds a special yellow token) are used to vary a little the rules, while the third one (The Investigators) is written specifically to play "solo", with special rules to use the cultists of the other factions against your own.

Surely the game has a particular "soul" and the setting will greatly please to the players that like the "Horror", the dark drawings and the ... human sacrifices. One thing is certain: we are still in the path traced by Carcassonne. ☑

Pietro Cremona

INFORMATION

Designer: Nigel Kennington
Artist: Campos, Briggs, Reginskis
Price: ca. 30 Euro
Publisher: Spiele-Offensive 2017
www.spiele-offensive.de

PLAYERS:
1-4

AGE:
12+

TIME:
60+

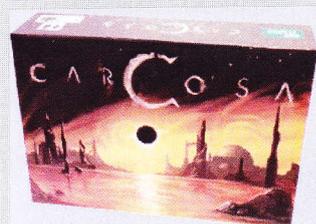
EVALUATION

Tiles laying, horror setting
 Users: With friends
 Version: de
 Rules: de en it
 In-game text: yes

Comments:
 Reasonable playing time * Good interaction among players * Rules should be better written * Of course, the Carcassonne base is evident

Compares to:
 Carcassonne

Other editions:
 One Free Elephant (en), MS Edizioni (it)



My rating: ★★★★★

WHERE MORTAL DICE COOPERATE

TEOTIHUACAN
 CITY OF GODS



Essen 2018 – as every year, a lot of new games are published. To stand out from the masses is not that easy. A game that managed to do this quite well in 2018 and one that was very high up on my a-have-to-take-a-closer-look list is Teotihuacan – City of Gods.

Published originally by the Rumanian publisher NSKN Legendary Games and localized in German by Schwerkraft-Verlag, this game by the Italian/Hungarian designer team Daniele Tascini and Dávid Turczí is a good example for the nowadays very frequent international cooperation in the board game community.

The name of the game comes from the Mexican city of ruins, Teotihuacan, that has been over many centuries the center of one of the most important civilizations in Middle America and about which today, unfortunately, there is not much knowledge. The game board shows, prominently, a pyramid that is constructed by players during the game. Surrounding the pyramid, you find some temple tracks and action cases. As to topic, the game is strongly reminiscent of Tzolk'in, especially as one of the designers, Daniele Tascini, has also been one of the designers of Tzolk'in. At this point, at the latest, my interest was pricked, as Tzolk'in is one of my all-time favorite games.

Up to four players can sit around the table to contribute to the construction of Teotihuacan. Whoever acquires most fame while doing this will win. The game comprises up to three eras with a scoring of the end of each era, called an Eclipse. The game also ends immediately when the pyramid is completed. This end is absolutely feasible and can result in the loss of one complete scoring!

Around the pyramid, eight action cases are depicted. Each player begins with three workers, who are represented by dice, and are placed on three different action cases.

Beginning with the starting player, every player has one move in turn, until the game is finished.

A move/turn always begins with moving a worker. To do so,, you select a die and move

it in clockwise direction up to three action cases. At the target case you have two or three option from which you must select one:

- The main action of the case
- Harvest cocoa
- Worship

Markus Wawra

I am a fan of Tzolk'in and was very curious about Teotihuacan. The fantastic mechanism had me enthralled at the beginning, but after a few games the allure to play was quickly gone.

To select a main action for implementation you must pay with cocoa – one unit of cocoa for each dice color already on the case. So, an action can, in a game of four players, cost you from 0 units of cocoa, if you are first on that case, to four units, if all player colors are already on the case. If you cannot pay the cost, you cannot select the main action. The main action is also related to the action case – you can collect building resources, develop technologies, construct parts of the pyramid or build houses. The power of the action is usually related to the number and strength of your own workers. So, it makes sense to plan actions across several turns. After the main action, usually one or two of the workers are strengthened by raising the dice value by 1. When the value of a die arrives at 6, the worker rises, or dies, that is. The owner of the worker receives a nice bonus, turns the die back to 1 and puts it on the #1 action case.

Harvesting cocoa is the only action that you can do at any time. The strength of the action is, however, dependent on the dice colors already present on the action case. You harvest the number of colors + 1 cocoa units.

Worship is not possible on each of the ac-

