

HUGO KASTNER RECOMMENDS

OLD TOWN

RECONSTRUCTION OF A GHOST TOWN

Dear Reader! Surprises in the world of games seem to get rare! The more pleasing it is that the nearly unknown designer Stephan Riedel has managed to get notice at the start of the last decade in the German games market and community with his game of logic and combination. After achieving second place in the Italian Games Award "Premio Archimede" in 2002 this little jewel was made available for German players, too, albeit only in a very small and limited print run in the small publishing company of Clicker Spiele. As Stephan Riedel mentions on his homepage, the first inspiration for the game came in 1996 during a holiday in New Zealand, where he visited sites showing remnants of an old cemetery.

What is now the topic of this then newcomer? Very simply, you need to reconstruct a derelict ghost town that did reach the end of its tether sometimes at the end of the 18th century. Together but still competing against each other, two to four players try to determine the exact location of sixteen formerly flourishing buildings. Those reconstructions are based on an old site map which is clearly structured by a typically American orthogonal grid of roads, one railroad track and different landscape elements. For each information that more clearly specifies the site for a building or even determines it for good, you score points, and the final results decides which player achieved the best archaeological performance. Lots of questions are piled high for each dog on the archeological sent, once they have found their way to the Austrian Games Museum at Leopoldsdorf.

Website: www.spielen.at

Our usual lamp at the start lights up a dreary, derelict old Western Town, which each player tries to reconstruct with the help of a total of eighteen building tiles. The core mechanism of the game is directed by three different kinds of information cards. The most simple type of cards shows

four possible sites for buildings. When one of those cards is placed, e.g. "the school is adjacent to the buffalo pasture", the corresponding marker is placed on the sites mentioned. There and only there the corresponding buildings could have been located in the prime time of the town. Markers that were not used earn victory points for the player immediately. The second type of cards is a bit more complicated to handle: Those cards name relations between two buildings – presented with texts like "The Hotel was located on Main Street opposite my building". The sites for the Hotel on Main Street are clearly recognizable, but "my building" means one of the two buildings laid out in front of each player. And this can be chosen entirely to your liking. The last kind of cards, too, uses the rather indefinite term of "my building" and shows eight potential sites for a building, e.g. "my building was situated at the northern or southern edge of town". Those cards come into play a bit later, at a time when the number of free sites has been already narrowed down a bit. And that was all there is, at least in theory.

To keep the game going and also to cover any imaginable constellation for „Old Town“ a number of special rules come into play. It is important to know that cards which do not chance the current situation on the board or which are contradiction buildings or markers already placed are dead information only. Other special rules each "Old Town" connoisseur must work out personally in detail for himself, this cannot be avoided! The game ends with a marvelous view of the reconstructed Western Town. If you contributed most to the reconstruction you may proudly call yourself Master of Building Archeology.

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TIP #84**Designer:** Stephan Riedel**Artist:** Stephan Riedel**Price:** ca. 20 Euro**Year** ca. 1999**Publisher:** Clicker Spielewww.clicker-spiele.de**PLAYER:**

1-4

AGE:

10+

TIME:

10+

**Tactic****Info±****Chance**

The permanent re-considering which tactical opportunities are offered by the town layout is intensely alluring, albeit with a small restriction: In the end phase of the game sometimes forced moves cannot be avoided, so that the chance element upsets balance a bit too much. But then again, high praise for the solo version: Eight scenarios for solo play in three different levels of difficulty are provided in the rules book, using rules that are slightly different to those of the basic game. Tough to crack, especially in the higher levels of difficulty.

Hugos EXPERTENTIPP

Take care! „Old Town“ offers paltry rules. Reading them for the first time leaves even experienced players with a problem to play the first game correctly. Stephan Riedel has realized this and presents "New Rules" on his homepage, because, naturally, "Old Town" should be played as the designer intended it to be played. As soon as the mechanism is clear, one should use the professional rules presented on the homepage, too: Choose zero to two cards!

Hugos FLASHLIGHT

One to four experts are sitting with barely suppressed excitement around the foundations of a derelict ghost town. And with the same excitement winners and losers leave the site of their work. The important thing is the finished Western Town, with its land mark buildings, Saloon, Church, Bank, Drugstore, Stage Coach Station or Barber. And happily congratulations are offered for the newly achieved archeological master piece following patterns familiar from „Logic Trainer“ and other such games. Cheers!

VORANKÜNDIGUNG:**RAJA**

Palace building in India

**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, Internet: www.spielejournal.at - www.gamesjournal.at - Chefredakteur: **Dipl. Ing. Dagmar de Cassan**

Blattlinie: Die Blattlinie ist die Meinung aller Redakteure, freien Mitarbeitern und Gastautoren. Die Spiele zur Erstellung der Rezensionen stellt das Österr. Spiele Museum für die Dauer der Arbeit kostenlos zur Verfügung. Niemand erhält Sach-, Service-, Geldleistungen von den Verlagen. (Alle nicht namentlich gekennzeichneten Rezensionen/Artikel zu den Spielen sind von Dagmar de Cassan) English Edition Version 1.0

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