Pearple's Choice 2017--Your Numbers Are Up!

Talk About Games!
Board Games & Card Games

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clg6000 #1 December 21, 2017, 9:19am

Hello Peartopians!

For many, it's been a year on confusion and upheaval. Institutions that seemed to be foundations for our culture have been subverted, and have changed their meanings and purposes without warning. People we assumed we could always count on let us down, and then suddenly up and disappear, leaving us hanging. Even the foods we eat, on further reflection, become unpalatable. Things that should make sense, that we've been counting on for so long to help comfort and guide us, just don't make sense the way the used to.

…but enough about *The Last Jedi*. We're here to talk about boardgames, and more importantly which games are best. The very best. The best of the year (and in some cases, last year…if you don't like that, well, blame Erik.)

But question remains in boardgames, as in life: what is "best"? (…don't say it. Just don't. Besides, that game came out last year, and the new KS isn't until next year, so it's way off topic this year).

Well–unless you're Plato–"the best" is invariably relative. Let's face it, you like a lot of things other people don't (like folding bicycles, or hand-crafted root beer). And they like stuff that you think is horrible (like white chocolate, or fascism). But that's okay (except if you like fascism. Or white chocolate, let's face it, both are total abominations, really).

Well, that's the beauty of the **Pearple's Choice**, and why it's different than most every other top ten boardgame list that it seems everyone and their brother and sister and dog and 23-and-me-recently-discovered-genetic-relatives seem to be putting out and posting them all over YouTube these days. Hell, even **Cosmo has a list**… and hey, even they got one out of 16 right!

No, the **Pearple's Choice** is not any *one person's* list of the top games of 2017 which is invariably flawed–this is a list of *all of the SUSD community's* top games of 2017, nominated by the SUSD forum denizens, and voted on with all our collective experience and wisdom!

…which is all invariably flawed, too, but hopefully the aggregation of our community's opinions smooths out some of the rough spots, and gives a better idea about what's good.

So, without any more ado–take a look at what you, Peartopia, have wrought, with **hundreds of voters** casting **2800 votes** for **142 games** across **4 categories**.

(oh, and **one more piece of ado** for anyone who cares about the vagaries of ranking, here's a brief explanation of why there's more than 10 items in these lists. If not, just read on…)

Best Kickstarter Delivered in 2017

   10. **Folklore: The Affliction** (*3 votes*)
   9. **This War of Mine** (*6 votes*)
   9. **Sword and Sorcery** (*6 votes*)

9. Item and Bones General True (6 votes)
8. **Massive Darkness** (*8 votes*)
7. **Fugitive** (*17 votes*)
6. **Nemo's War** (*18 votes*)
5. **Spirit Island** (*19 votes*)
4. **Near and Far** (*33 votes*)
3. **Lisboa** (*41 votes*)
2. **The 7th Continent** (*46 votes*)
2. **Sagrada** (*46 votes*)
1. **Gloomhaven** (*159 votes*)

Best Expansion Published and/or Released in 2017

10. **Terraforming Mars: Hellas & Elysium** (*15 votes*)
9. **Champions of Midgard: Valhalla** (*18 votes*)
8. **Tiny Epic Galaxies: Beyond the Black** (*20 votes*)
7. **Android Netrunner: Terminal Directive** (*25 votes*)
7. **Dead of Winter: Warring Colonies** (*25 votes*)
6. **Sheriff of Nottingham: Merry Men** (*28 votes*)
5. **Arkham Horror: The Path to Carcosa Cycle** (*29 votes*)
5. **Cities of Splendor** (*29 votes*)
4. **Scythe: The Wind Gambit** (*35 votes*)
3. **Mysterium: Secrets and Lies** (*38 votes*)
2. **Star Wars: Rebellion—Rise of the Empire** (*41 votes*)
1. **Arkham Horror: The Dunwich Legacy Cycle** (*65 votes*)

Second Annual Erik Tengblad "Best Game of the Previous Year (2016) I Only Got To Play For The First Time This Year (2017)" Award

10. **Clank!** (*34 votes*)
9. **Star Wars: Rebellion** (*44 votes*)
8. **A Feast for Odin** (*48 votes*)
7. **Terraforming Mars** (*52 votes*)
6. **Mechs vs. Minions** (*59 votes*)
5. **Scythe** (*65 votes*)
5. **Burgle Bros** (*65 votes*)
4. **Great Western Trail** (*69 votes*)
3. **Arkham Horror LCG** (*75 votes*)
2. **Captain Sonar** (*93 votes*)
1. **Inis** (*121 votes*)

Best Game Published and/or Released in 2017

10. **Rhino Hero Super Battle** (*32 votes*)
9. **The 7th Continent** (*35 votes*)
8. **Ethnos** (*36 votes*)
7. **Sagrada** (*38 votes*)
7. **Unlock! Series (10 titles!)** (*38 votes*)
6. **Magic Maze** (*41 votes*)

4. **Azul** (*49 votes*)

3. **Pandemic Legacy: Season 2** (*58 votes*)

3. **Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective: Jack the Ripper & West End Adventures** (*58 votes*)

2. **Twilight Imperium: 4th Edition** (*78 votes*)

1. **Gloomhaven** (*132 votes*)

There you have it, people of the piriform pearsuasion. If you don't like it…well, you can take a long hard look at yourselves in a mirror…and…well, you've got a little bit of toothpaste. By your mouth. Yeah, just there…yep, you got it.

…

…Hey, wanna play **Gloomhaven**?

13 Likes

Triangulate #2 December 21, 2017, 9:14am

I'm so early to this thread it is changing before my very eyes!

Great to see so much love for **Sherlock Holmes** on the best game published list, that it's so high up on the list is really a testament to the quality of the box, it's just lovely.

I'd just like to say a massive well done to **@clg6000** for making this happen and a little pat on the back for all of us for being good sports and taking part. As much as I hate stating my own personal top 10, I do like seeing what's out there that is popular and deemed to be good. What a good year for games!

4 Likes

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clg6000 #3 December 21, 2017, 9:20am

So, just to be clear on the ranking system: again this year, I made an editorial decision to use **dense ranking** as the method for displaying the top 10 ranked games in each category–which ends up with more than 10 games in most cases.

Why? Because it gives more information, to you, the list reader. If you prefer to use another ranking system, you can just ignore the last few titles, and restrict each category to the top ten games. If you'd rather see more of the games that our community is interested in, well you can do that too! This way, everyone wins.

Well, except for the games that didn't make the top ten slots–but actually, there's a good argument to be made that the bottom end of these lists is just as interesting as the top–there, you might just find a hidden gem for gamers of a more particular and discerning taste… Check out the voting threads **here** if you want to see the complete lists.

2 Likes

Scribbs #4 December 21, 2017, 9:19am

...echoing the thanks to @clg6000 for taking the time to organise this for another year. Maybe not too surprising to see the winner for most categories, but the other games on the lists are really interesting to see.

4 Likes

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bruitist #5 December 21, 2017, 11:58am

> clg6000:
>
> (except if you like fascism. Or white chocolate, let's face it, both are total abominations, really).

As a lover of white chocolate, I am offended. Though not as offended as I was by that Cosmo list. What kind of monster includes three versions of Monopoly?

2 Likes

SirAdrian #6 December 21, 2017, 12:15pm

My opinion is 100% validated in 3 categories! And the 4th category is clearly ill-conceived balderdash with a cabal of ill-mannered poltroons rigging the voting.

3 Likes

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alyniana #7 December 22, 2017, 3:28pm

Thanks for doing this **@clg6000** . Definitely some interesting lists.

3 Likes

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caleb #8 December 22, 2017, 6:19pm

I think the Erik Tengblad 2016 award list is really interesting compared to the best overall list from last year; Scythe dropped from 1 to 5, and Inis went up from 3 to 1, as well as some newcomers like Burgle Bros and Great Western Trail. I think that says a lot about the staying power of some of these games vs. maybe just the hype from last year? And also theres maybe 4-5x as many votes this year, so perhaps its just a change in this years demographics. Who's to say.

2 Likes

KIR #9 December 22, 2017, 6:51pm

It could be a lot of things. Scarcity is a big thing - sometimes the first run is quite small, the hype picks up and a lot of people pick it up the next year in a larger subsequent print run. It's also impossible to subtract the SUSD effect - Inis is easily one of the most mentioned games on the site/podcast, while Scythe has barely had a mention since the non-plussed review. Maybe this has driven people to try it out?

It's difficult to extrapolate any meaningful analyses from such data.

caleb #10 December 22, 2017, 6:57pm

Well I thought it was interesting :'(

1 Like

UllinBethalto #11 December 23, 2017, 3:37am

Huzzah!
Now we have the knowledge: Gloomhaven=Buy???

But it is sooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo heavy… :-/

2 Likes

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clg6000 #12 December 23, 2017, 1:40pm

I think its definitely interesting, and the year-to-year trend is maybe one of the most interesting about this project so far…though it's also certainly true that finding a clear reason for the shift is difficult to impossible.

Some points to consider though: the Erik award got nearly as many votes as the Best of 2017 category; there were a number of folks who commented that they hadn't even had a chance to play any of the games on the 2017 list. So, one could assert that votes for the Tengblad were more "ripe" (i.e. had more time to be informed votes) than the best of 2017.

And the number of voters for this year's Tengblad far outstrips the number of votes for last year's best of 2016–so anytime you increase your sample size, you're likely to get more accuracy, so it's possible that this year's Tengblad is the most reliable poll we've had.

Still, the rank changes could be due to a lot of things–hype fading, lack of quality emerging, new competition… it's hard to say for sure, but fun to speculate about!

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webs #13 December 24, 2017, 9:23am

I mostly agree with **@KIR** and think the most likely explanation for most of the positions in the polls are the site's coverage and recommendations of games. 7 of the Tengblad Top Ten Games have been recommended by SUSD, and Scythe is actually the best positioned game explicitly not recommended here. If you want a more solid take on staying power based on statistics, I'd recommend a look at the bgg ratings for games, which are sorted by month per default. And a quick glance there suggests that new players still like the game a lot (personally, I think Scythe will keep being a staple of thematically enhanced Euros for years to come).
Looking at the actual Pearly Top Ten of 2017, basically all games there but 7th Continent have either been recommended or talked about favorably here.
Which makes perfect sense - games liked by SUSD are more likely to be tried by viewers of the site, and considering people-who-check-here-regularly's preferences are likely to align quite a bit with Quinn's, Paul's and Matt's, the chance that they also enjoy the games is high.

SirAdrian #14 December 24, 2017, 10:22am

> clg6000:
>
> so anytime you increase your sample size, you're likely to get more accuracy, so it's possible that this year's Tengblad is the most reliable poll we've had.

People are liable to do odd things with numbers. My work allows for free health checks every year, and then reports on the data.

Unfortunately they also report on the data in comparison with the previous year and try to draw conclusions from that. The potential problem with this is exposed when you consider that we managed to get 2 years younger over the course of the year, which is a pretty impressive health result I am sure you'll agree.

So long as we bear in mind that these numbers are interesting, but not rocket science, we can have all the fun that's fit to Tengbald.

1 Like

KIR #15 December 24, 2017, 1:18pm

I'm curious as to how the mighty Tengblad award will run over time. We're bound to see the same games pop up that were considered the best of their year by many (e.g. Inis, Feast for Odin, and Great Western Trail), but then once someone's voted them one year they're not eligible to vote the same the following year (if they follow the rules!!!). I imagine the influx of new blood who haven't yet played these games will be enough to keep them consistently polling high, but then are the polls predominantly decided by the regulars who have already played those games?

I would love it if Inis won every year though.

1 Like

clg6000 #16 December 24, 2017, 1:50pm

> SirAdrian:
>
> The potential problem with this is exposed when you consider that we managed to get 2 years younger over the course of the year, which is a pretty impressive health result I am sure you'll agree.

Dang!..is your company hiring?

Yes, we should all be aware that there are famously three kinds of mistruth: lies, damn lies, and internet polls. There are all sorts of biases, both discernable and not, that influence the results. The biggest of which, honestly, is that there's no way to guarantee anyone voting knows a single thing about what they're voting for–just like the Academy Awards…and modern democracy in general.

But hopefully, some of that noise averages out across all votes, and diminishes with a higher n. Obviously, there are limits to what we can claim–but making assertions about the results and aefuing them here is half the fun! At

COMaestro #17 December 24, 2017, 2:55pm

Well, if the rules are followed, the game should be a game released the previous year that the person first played in the current year. So no game should be able to win consecutive years because they are not eligible, unless a newer edition is released, bit that should have a pretty sizable gap between the years in that event.

KIR #18 December 24, 2017, 4:03pm

Oops, missed the full title. Thought it was any previous year rather than THE previous year. Burgle Bros should be disqualified then… 2015 game (and appeared in the 2016 Tengblad awards).