

# Tabletop Gaming magazine – Issue 7

## Price £5.25

### Review by Jonathan Aird

I said a while ago that I wouldn't review every issue of *Tabletop Gaming* and I did skip a few but the new issue hints at a new direction and I can't think of another magazine which has changed direction so often. As regular readers will recall, this magazine was originally produced as a one-off survey of the board gaming hobby. At the last moment, the publishers decided to give it a go as a quarterly magazine. After a couple of issues, it was developing a nice secondary role as a survey of the fantasy and science fiction gaming including wargaming area of the hobby. Great! This was much needed. Last issue saw a change of editor, but otherwise the magazine was more or less the same. Now, it seems, it's time for a few more changes.

The first and foremost of these is that the decision has been made to switch to six issues per year with next issue now due to be out in February. Well, that's good news, as there's an awful lot of boardgames and RPGs to cover. It also would appear to indicate a high level of confidence in the magazine's future and

there are a lot of advertisers so that's probably a sound decision.



Alongside the usual news and copious reviews sections, there are a couple of new columns and an interesting looking one is a reassessment of all of the winners of the Spiel des Jahres or European game of the year. This column should keep James Wallis busy as the first award was made in 1982!

Unfortunately, he isn't much of a fan of the winner of that year or a children's game called Enchanted Forest. Having played this, I don't think it is quite as awful as he paints it but it is aimed at quite young children so does naturally lack something for the sophisticated adult player. As this series evolves, it should get more interesting though. More positively, there's a good interview with Cubicle 7 who specialise in franchised games inspired by e.g. the Cthulhu stories, Dr Who, and the Lord of the Rings. Talking of Cthulhu and there's also a four-page review and designer interview for the new game Reign of Cthulhu which is being spun off the popular Pandemic game system. This sounds like a great idea and a great game and

it's the editor's choice to boot! This one is going on the 'to buy' list.

One thing that did seem to be lacking a little this issue was miniatures-based wargaming. There were still articles on figure painting, for example, but not a big tabletop miniatures piece. This has previously featured quite heavily and several issues had in-depth reviews, playtests for various new games, as well as new scenarios for Osprey's very popular Frostgrave fantasy skirmish game. There just seemed a lot less of all this in Issue 7 of *Tabletop Gaming*. Now this might be a one-off, but I do wonder if it is related to the recent appearance in their longer-running sister magazine *Miniature Wargames* of a monthly 16-page science fiction and fantasy wargaming supplement. Is there a long-term plan to boost *Miniature Wargames* by adding a core of F/SF gaming to what has been or mostly, but never exclusively or an historical wargames magazine? Maybe. I sort of hope not though, as the F/SF wargaming had felt like a natural complement to the boardgames coverage of *Tabletop Gaming*, making it a more interesting magazine overall.

As it is, it is still an excellent read and a very useful survey of broader gaming trends and I look forward to issue 8 with a keen anticipation.