

Tabletop Gaming Magazine – Issue 13

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Review by Jonathan Aird

Tabletop Gaming Magazine goes from strength to strength ó from a one-off survey of the best games, it has progressed through quarterly to bi-monthly and now a new monthly schedule in a very short time. What's more, there's the promise of a two-day Tabletop Gaming convention at Alexandra Palace in September next year. Not bad for what must have looked like a niche magazine ó and a tribute to the growing size of the general gaming hobbies. This latest issue also highlights the importance of miniatures wargaming within this larger hobby ó although the focus is very much on fantasy and science fiction settings, many of them culled from TV and movies.



The big news ó and the big article ó is a look at the new Star Wars Legion game which offers squad level battles. It's from the same designers as X-Wing, which bodes well for the future, but unlike X-Wing it won't have pre-assembled and pre-painted miniatures, too expensive apparently. Which is slightly odd ó as Star Wars Miniatures (from Wizards of the Coast) used pre-painted 25mm miniatures ó although Star Wars Legion does promise far more detailed figures. In quite an odd discussion with the game designer, there's lots of positivity ó with hopes that it could be a game that grows to WH40K size ó but no acknowledgement of all the many Star Wars-based miniatures games that have gone before!

There's a two-page spread on War Room ó from Larry Harris who gave the world Axis & Allies. His new game looks at the whole of World War II from the grand strategical view ó and is played on a board which is 42ö in diameter. Truly the return of the mega-wargame ! The new fourth edition of Twilight Imperium is also given a detailed examination over half-a-dozen pages. This is something *Tabletop Gaming* does really well, and the new monthly edition will offer more of these per

year, which is really useful when trying to navigate the ever expanding (and ever more expensive!) boardgame market.

Elsewhere, there are the usual in-depth game reviews, a good painting guide for the giant figures from the game Blood Rage, and a short Frostgrave scenario in the new Ghost Archipelago setting which is sure to be popular. There's a rundown of the 10 best games of the year ó well, this is the December issue. Several of the regular columns seem to be taking a break ó unfortunately not James Wallis's continuing play through of every Spiel des Jahres winner. This was a really good idea for a series of articles as it will, over 30 issues or so, reflect the changes in game design and popularity of topics over the years: it's just a shame that James Wallis hates so many of them! This time it is Barbarossa (the plasticine moulding game) which gets a drubbing. It's a shame that this series of reviews of historical winners can't be a little more positive as there are still another 29 games to go and there are only so many ways to say "this game is rubbish." A much better approach to looking at old games is the Tabletop Time Machine column where a writer discusses a game from years gone by ó this time it is the abstract shape creating game Amoeba from 1975 ó which they really like to play.

Overall, a good mix of articles and a good split between miniatures and boardgames, with a little bit of Role Playing Game news and reviews as well. *Tabletop Gaming* remains the best ó and really the only ó magazine for those looking for a wider view of gaming in general.