

Transcript - Pick Up & Deliver 777: Celebrating 7

Welcome to pick up and Deliver, the podcast. Where I pick up my audio recorder as I step out from the train and deliver an episode to you while I walk home. I'm Brendan Riley.

Well, good afternoon, listener. It's a lovely day here in suburban Chicago. It's actually sort of cloudy, but the weather is beautiful. I'm wearing a t shirt and am very comfortable walking home. It does look like it might rain, but it's not going to rain on me on the walk home, I don't think. If for no other reason than that I have an umbrella. And if you have an umbrella, it's not going to rain on you. That's my experience and I'm sticking to it.

As I was looking ahead at the recordings... you know I record a couple episodes ahead, so I have a couple in the tank ready to be edited and posted. I realized if I'm doing my math right, that this episode I'm recording now is episode seven hundred and seventy seven. I can't recall, and I was too lazy to do the research about whether I've noted any of the other triple digit, uh... triple triple sim... triple sim digit, uh... episodes and whether I did anything related to them. But I thought, what the heck, I should do an episode related to something seven hundred and seventy seven. So I thought about it for a half a second, and I searched 7 on my board game stats app, just the number seven under games played. And what did I find? I found seven different games referenced, six of which...

Whoa! I just saw a guy blast through a stop sign. What a nut. Geez, Louise, lucky he didn't get T-boned. All right, so backing up. Uh.

...six of which I have played and one of which I have on my shelf of opportunity. I also have three sort of honorable mentions games that are that have years in the title that end in seven. So I have a total of ten games in my BGG stats app that have the number seven in them, six of which I've played, one of which I have not played, and three more which are years that include the digit seven. But they are not the number seven.

So I thought what I would do is talk about the games that have a seven in the title and what I think of them. So this is the celebration of sevens. I'd be interested to hear. Dear listener, what do you think of these seven games? Are there other games that have sevens in the title that you would be particularly excited to talk about? Is there a seventy seven game? I'm not aware of one, but I also didn't look on board Game Geek. I just looked in my BGG stats. So here we go. How to start. To start with, I'll pick a new game from the recent years.

This is Flip 7. Flip 7 is definitely near the top in my list of interesting push your luck games. Now, I think I don't like it as much as Las Vegas. I think it's about on par with Dead Man's Draw. I think Dead Man's Draw is really interesting and fun. The gameplay is a little different. The thing I like about Flip 7 is that everybody gets to play at the same time. You go around and you each take hits, and so you're not waiting for your turn for very long, even in a big game. And it's really easy to teach. I love the press your luck element when you get to about five cards in front of you. It's really tempting to go for the seven cards, even though your odds of failing go up dramatically with your sixth and seventh card. You really shouldn't do that. But I almost always do. Once I get to five, because I really want to get seven. So. That's something I am really intrigued by. Is Flip 7. Now if you haven't played it. It is a blackjack style game, at least in terms of how you play.

On your turn, you take a hit or not, and there's a deck of cards, and in the deck of cards are numbered cards that are worth points. There are twelve, twelve, eleven, eleven, and ten tens and so on down to one one. And then there is a zero as well. On your turn, you are choosing to take another card or not. If the number card that you have is not the same as any of the other number cards you already have, then you have passed. You're still in the round. If you ever get two of the same number card, you bust. So the more points you have in your display, the more likely it is that you're going to bust, because you must have one of the high number cards of which there are many others in the deck. Flip 7 is really tight and interesting. It's not particularly strategic. It's a very light game, but really good for a party. Really good for opening or closing of the evening. You can chat while you're playing it pretty easily and you have a good time. That's Flip 7 published by the OP.

Next up, I have The 7th Continent. The 7th Continent is an adventure game in which you are looking at images on cards and reading little story bits, and then deciding what to do in relationship to the card that you have revealed. Uh, this is a game that it's really easy to look at vantage now and see a related pedigree there. Uh, there are some people who found The 7th Continent really good. It's very highly rated, really well enjoyed

by a lot of people. That said, I didn't really it didn't really work that well for us. We played one time, then we tried to go back and play again and we couldn't remember what had happened. And we just it didn't work for us. I liked the art and the general idea, but the flow of it wasn't enough to keep us engaged or sustained. So for us, The 7th Continent was not a win. But there are a lot of people who really like it. I did like the cartoonish style of the art, and the map quality to the cards was really interesting, especially as compared to like Vantage, which uses more painterly images of vistas. But the map quality goes down, although there are map pages that you can see sometimes if you get the right Vantage card. So that's The 7th Continent. My wife and I didn't play it that much, but a lot of people do like it.

Next up is Gen7: A Crossroads Game This is another one I played once. I'm not sure if my friend Paul still has his copy or not. I was more intrigued by the possibilities of the game than the actual gameplay. Plaid Hat has been, ever since Dead of Winter, wrestling with the best way to capitalize on the mechanism. Forgotten Waters is a really interesting approach in which you are on an adventure and you are telling a story, and there are some revelations that occur based on randomness, but the it's driven through an app. In dead of Winter, there are cards that if a particular thing happens, then you read the card and that one works pretty well. And then they did a number a number of other crossroads games that have worked less well. There's Gen7, which wasn't very well received. I don't know if Stuffed Fables is, or Cosmonauts, excuse me, are Crossroads games or not, but I feel like the mechanisms are in the same ballpark. I liked our first play of Gen7 as I recall it. Okay, I think the potential for the story sounds really interesting, but as I recall in the first play of it. We didn't really get to see much of it. It was mostly about learning the game, and the game wasn't that interesting. It's hard to have a narrative game where the game part is not that interesting, and you don't get into the cool narrative in the first play. I could be misremembering. It was a long time ago, but for us, Gen7 was a miss. All right. That's three of our seven games so far.

The next one is the only one of the Level 7 games that I have not played, although I do have it. And this is Level 7: Escape. Level 7 and Level 7: Escape are games that are focused on this sort of dungeon or high tech, uh, dungeon in which people are trying to get away from various enemies. And I believe it. I think it's there's a competition element to it as well. Like, you're on a game show and you're trying to escape while the other players are not. I haven't played this one and I honestly haven't even looked at the gameplay. I know that there are rooms that you reveal as you play, and that those rooms have different kinds of obstacles and terrors in them. When I read about the game originally, I was reminded of the movie Cube, which is a horror movie where a bunch of people are stuck inside a Cube full of small cubes, which have various kinds of murderous traps in some of them. And the goal is to find your way out of the cube. And there's an elaborate math problem that you can solve to try to find your way out. It's a movie about sort of teamwork and betrayal and suspicion. It's pretty good. An interesting film. Very tense. Uh, it's an indie darling. If you haven't seen cube, it's worth watching. I don't recall that cube two or cube three hypercube were very good, but it's possible that they were. So Level 7: Escape, I believe, is kind of in that realm. But like I said, I haven't played it and I didn't do the research here.

So it's possible that if you go look up this game, you'll discover, hey, Brendan, you don't know what you're talking about at all. All right. I'm gonna take a moment to do an interlude and talk about the three honorable mention games. These are games that have seven in their title, but it's as part of a four digit year, and they're the ones I've played. And I'm going to go played from least to played. Most least played is Tortuga 1667. I played a couple of games of this on board game arena. I was invited to them. Uh, I will confess, although I read the rules, I didn't really understand the game very well. So you'll recall I didn't even review the game. I don't think in a board game espresso episode, because I didn't feel like I got enough of a grasp on it to really be able to say whether I like it or not. Often board game arena games are that way, but it is a sort of social deduction team game where you are trying to get the most out of being a pirate in Tortuga in 1667.

Then there's Hollywood 1947. This is a social deduction game I have played a couple of times, and I do feel more confident about my ability to explore it in this game. You are either a patriot or you're a communist, and you are trying to make the movies in the forties be influenced your way. I think the game is interesting in that it doesn't really have a clear narrative element that suggests one side is better than the other, but the communists are secreted and the patriots are not. So the element of which team is the baddies seems to be leaning on the idea that the communists are the baddies in the movie. In the game, although the game doesn't really enact that very well, it is again a social deduction game, very similar to Secret Hitler, except that everybody has roles that can influence how the game goes. I didn't like the level of influence that it had,

because it felt like sometimes you didn't get to do anything because somebody because your dice came up wrong. So you didn't get to vote. Um, and the level at which people could interfere with the cards was annoying to me. So, uh, Hollywood 1947 was not my favorite.

And then there is the Vladimir Suchy game, Messina 1347. Messina 1347 is one of my favorites of his games. It's hard to say, though, because I definitely don't like it. As well as Underwater Cities or Praga. It might be my third favorite of his games. I'd have to think about it a little more. Or we could go look at my top fifty. It's probably in there in order, uh, or at least where it was at the beginning of this year in Messina 1347. You are a noble person trying to help the citizens of Messina when the Black Plague arrives, by inviting them to come live in your estate if they come from a part of the city where the Black Plague has not arrived, they can come straight into your estate where they will help do things for you. If you if you recruit them from a place where the Black Plague was, then you quarantine them for two rounds and you can just they can just be there, or you can give them stuff to do and they'll help you from their quarantine hut. The game has interesting combo mechanisms, and I really like the variety of different levers you can pull. It's not quite as interesting as Praga Caput Regni, but I do really like the different overseers board that allow you to set up different kinds of combos and lean into moving those around in interesting ways. It's very reminiscent of the technology board in revive, although I do think that I do think revive is a better game. So of the asides, the games that have four four digit years that end in seven. Messina 1347 is my favorite of those three. All right.

Thus ends the aside and we return back for the final three games that have seven in the title that I want to talk about. And this some of you might find this a cheat, but here it is. All three of them are 7 Wonders, there's 7 Wonders, 7 Wonders Duel and 7 Wonders Architects. And once again I will go in reverse order talking about my favorite one last, and you probably know what it is. If you're a regular listener, go ahead and take a moment to reflect for yourself which one you think it is, and I'll start by revealing it. It's not.

My favorite is not 7 Wonders Architects. 7 Wonders Architects is from a couple years ago. It is Antoine Bauza's attempt to make a family friendly, very easy to learn and play version of 7 Wonders. In the game, you again play one of the ancient civilizations and you're trying to build your wonder, and you do so by taking a card either from the left or the right, and then applying that the results of that card to your tableau. It's a pretty simple game that I did not find particularly compelling. I mean, I like the attempt to make a different way to engage with these same sets of mechanisms, and I like the approach of trying to make a simpler version of the game. But for me, the simplicity was so drastic that it didn't feel like there were any meaningful decisions at all, just felt like same old, same old. So I found that pretty unconvincing or uninteresting as a gaming experience. That's 7 Wonders architects. The art, on the other hand, is beautiful. And so then the big question is which of the other 7 Wonders games do I like better?

Now, if you're again, if you're a regular listener, if you've been paying attention, you would know I far prefer 7 Wonders to 7 Wonders duel. So 7 Wonders Duel would be the next one I'll talk about. This game is a really interesting reimagining of how seven Wonders should work, and I like it fine. Uh. It is. It started the dual trend that we see in a number. I mean, that's not true. There were plenty of games where they took a game system and made duals. Rosenberg's been doing it for years with the like. There's the Agricola, All Creatures Great and Small and Caverna Cave versus cave. Right. So he's been doing two person versions of his games for a while, but I feel like Seven Wonders Duel was so popular that it led to a variety of other duel games, often co-designed between the original designer and Bruno Cathala, who helped with 7 Wonders Duel. Now, in this game, instead of passing hands back and forth to draft, you're drafting from a pyramid of cards. And this makes for a really interesting choices, because sometimes you have to decide between taking a card you don't really want and prevent, and thus controlling what possibilities your opponent has. Or maybe taking a card you do want more. But when you do so, opening up, revealing some cards that your opponent might really want, so there's a gambling element to it that makes for really interesting play. The alternate win conditions of science and military are both interesting and compelling. Although military is very hard to win with, frankly, so is science. But they provide enough extra juice that you have to keep an eye on what your opponent is doing in that regard. And if you take your eye off the ball, they could sneak in a victory. So I think there's a lot to be said for 7 Wonders Duel, but ultimately it's not my favorite.

My favorite is 7 Wonders. Now, this isn't a surprise. It's in my top fifty. I play it regularly. It's been a couple of months, but I play it on the table surprisingly often. I think 7 Wonders is a really smooth, compelling game. I love the mechanisms of the different drafts. I love the flow of the game. I think it is very compelling in all of its

aspects. Um, I have occasionally played with expansions, but I don't have any of them. We just regularly play with the base game, and it's fun every time. Often, you know, what possibilities are there if you've played a few times. So part of the challenge is figuring out how to make the most of whichever cards you have in a bigger player count. There's always the problem of you never know what you're going to get, so some games you just aren't going to win. But that's true of any game with randomized distribution of cards. Overall, I think 7 Wonders is a very compelling experience with excellent nuance, immense replayability, and a cool theme. So that seems like a really viable end to my 7 Wonders conversation. And it brings me to the end of my walk. So, dear listener, what is your favorite seven game. Do you have one that I did not mention that you think should be on the list, and I should make sure to play. Toot sweet. Head over to BoardGameGeek Guild three two six nine and share your thoughts there. You can send me a direct message. Wombat nine two nine is my username on BoardGameGeek. Or you could email me Brendan at rattleboxgames.com. Well, I hope that I hear from you soon and that you have been playing some seven games in celebration of episode 777. In that regard, I want to say thanks for joining me on my walk today. I hope that your next walk is as pleasant as mine was. Bye bye.

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