

for me the dice were not rolling well, either and the prospects were none too good.

The whole this is very restricted, reduced and slimmed down to coins, victory points and a few cards, but on the positive side there is now unnecessary to and fro as often with the converting of resources into this or that or this which in the end results in victory points, after all. As a consequence, gameplay is rather dry and sober, which is a blatant contradiction to Vienna. Anyway, a little bit of tactic cannot go amiss and you should be able to finish a game within half an hour, well, maybe, if one were to be a bit more sober. When the proclaimed and promised 'atmospheric intensity' would really be there I might even acquire the game. Tourists, on the other hand, will be astonished too: A glossary on the location in the game is completely missing - they will never believe that there is really a Café in Vienna by the name of Griensteidl, setting aside the fact that it was demolished in January 1897. And the 'Heurige' has been mixed up with 'Henrige' in Germany." p

Harald Schatzl

INFORMATION	
Designer: J. Schmidauer-König	PLAYERS 3-5
Artist: Michael Menzel	AGE 10+
Price: ca. 25 Euro	TIME 45+
Publisher: Schmidt Spiele 2015	
www.schmidtspiele.de	

EVALUATION	
Worker placement with dice Users: With friends Version: multi Rules: de/en In-game text: no	
Comments: Box size due to board * Backside of the board shows 'Vienna at Night' * Relatively few rules * Symbols easily understood * Of relaxation interest to experienced players Compare to: Kingsburg, Kingsport Festival, Egizia Other editions: Currently none	

COMPONENT LOGISTICS

KANBAN

AUTOMOTIVE REVOLUTION

Vital Lacerda is ... clearly unable to design a simple game and after VINHOS and CO2 his new creation, KANBAN, confirms his attitude for complex games with a lot of "sub-games" routines. And for us, players who like complex games, these are very good news.

KANBAN: I heard of this name when I was young: I had just got my University Diploma as Transport Engineer and I started working in a big Company producing trailers for trucks. Being the youngest Production Engineer of the Company I had to follow some courses and our "teachers" wished to explain how to optimize the "flux" of the materials on the production lines to try to arrive at the concept of a service "just in time". They called this system the "Kanban" (a Japanese word for "Banner" or "board") and it is now deeply used in all the automo-

RetroGemona

A very interesting and engaging game on car manufacturing, but mainly for expert players

tive world. Toyota, for example, was (and it is still) a leader of this system. To explain it in simple words, the responsible of logistics compile a series of Kanban and apply them on all the goods moving between the storage and the production chains, or between suppliers and storages, etc. and once the transport is done the Kanban goes back for registration.

A LONG WHISTLE ADVICES THAT FACTORY DOORS OPEN: LET'S GO

The game hopefully does not use so many banners but give us a close look at an Automotive factory where we are "Engineers" responsible of the different sectors. The materials inside the box are of very good quality, but the set-up is quite long because we have to place a great number of items and markers on the board, so while our workers are doing this job let's make a little trip on the factory (or game's board, if you prefer).

(SEE PICTURE 1)

We see SIX different Departments:

1 - TECHNICAL OFFICE: here we will design our new projects. In game terms we always

have 8 different "project tiles" available, and each of them shows one of the 5 different models of cars that the factory may produce: more than half of them also shows a colored "improved part" for that model (motor, brakes, etc.)

2 - STORAGE: here we will be able to store new parts of the cars and we will pick up the ones that we need for our projects. Those parts are symbolized by six colored cubes (black for the chassis, blue for the transmission, red for the motor, orange for the "turbo", yellow for the suspensions and white for the brakes) and you need a "kanban" card in order to refill the storage, if necessary.

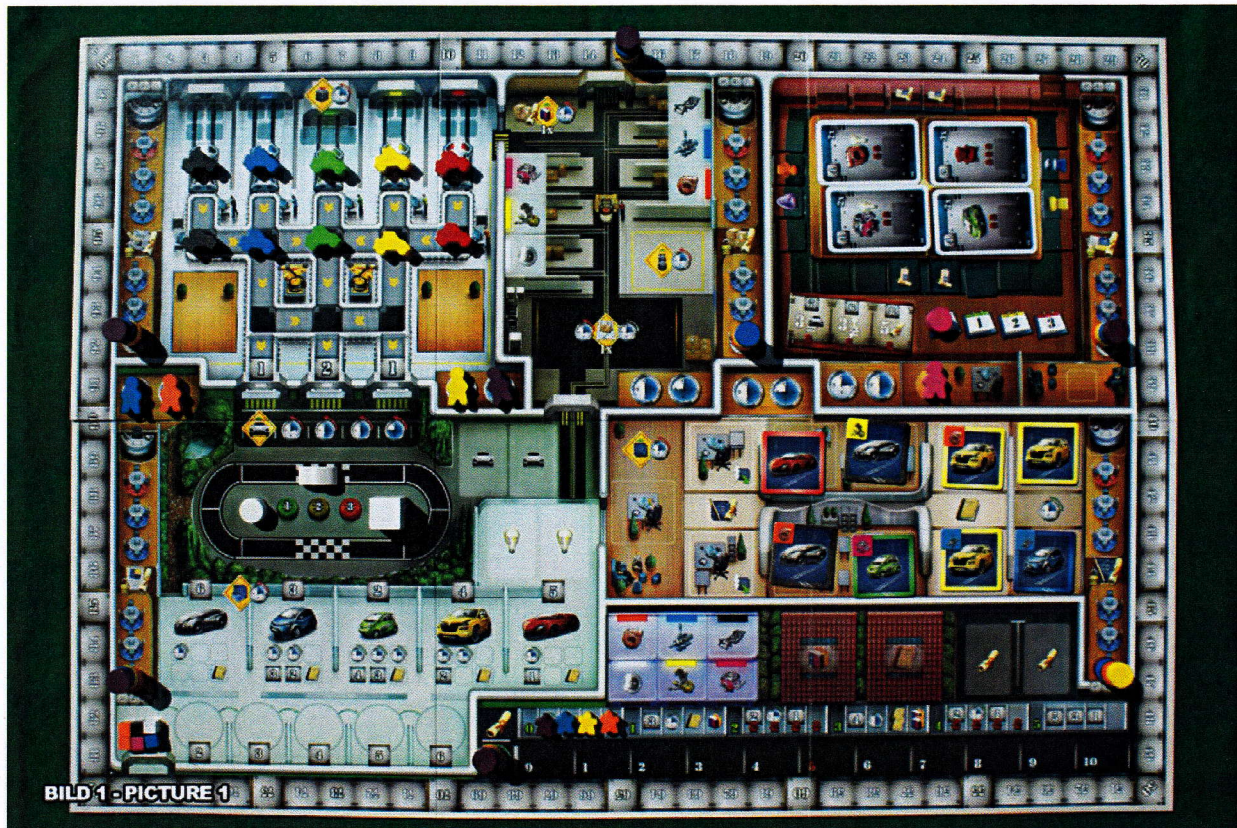
3 - PRODUCTION LINES: here we find 5 production chains, one for each model (red, yellow, green, blue and black) and we have to feed those lines with components (the colored cubes) taken from the storage in order to complete the new cars

4 - TEST and INNOVATION: this department receives all the cars coming from the production chains. They are tested and eventual "improved" if the right designs are appointed. An internal oval track is used to place the new cars behind a white Safety Car.

5 - ADMINISTRATION OFFICES: they are used to take "high" decisions. In game's terms here we may gain Victory Point (VP) at the end of each "turn" if we satisfy the conditions of the four OBJECTIVE cards placed here. There is also a Factory Objective tile (randomly selected during the set-up) that will be used only in the final VP count but that is very important to guide the strategies of the players.

Each of the above five areas has place ONLY for two Engineers (probably the Company's management does not wish that the players lose time discussing and therefore limits their presence) therefore in total we have 10 cases that form a sort of "Action track" where we will move our Engineer to visit the different departments

6 - The SIXT and last sector of the board is used to keep track of the CERTIFICATIONS that each players gain in the different departments and of the TIME BONUS that



players will collect during play

And finally there is SANDRA: our General Manager. Before starting the game the players have to decide if she will be "good" (Sandra Cenoura) or "nasty" (Sandra Vara) and this attitude will influence the game from the beginning. My suggestion is to always use ...Sandra "Nasty" Vara as the game will be more competitive! (And in the following notes most of references to our Boss will be for Sandra Vara).

HERE WE ARE: OUR OFFICE IS CROWDED AS USUAL WITH PLANS AND PAPERS

I will not bore you with the set-up operations as we will discuss each details along this review: but you have to know that at the game's start you will receive 3 "Objective" and 2 "Kanban" cards. The formers will address your strategy for the turn and the latter will be used (of course) on the storage department when necessary. You have a personal mini-board where you will place your bonus tiles, your projects and your finished cars: at the game's start each of those tracks has one case "closed" by a padlock as you are not yet certified for that task, but during the game you may completely free your board certifying your Engineer and therefore you will be able to use each case.

(SEE PICTURE 2)

The First Player is randomly selected: he will place his "pawn" (a colored wooden minimeepie) on one of the 4 cases in the First Level of the "Certification" track. Each of the SIX levels of this track has 4 cases and most of them show a BONUS. The first three cases of Level 0, for example, assign a bonus to the player that select it: a book or a resource joker or a time marker, while the fourth case will not give bonus but will allow you to be the First player. (Remember: Books will help you in getting new certifications, Jokers may be exchanged for any resource and time markers move one step forwards your marker on the Time Track reducing the penalties that Sandra may inflict to you, as we will see). Finally each player will select a "project tile" and a colored cube of his choice.

Now, in turn order, the players place their Engineers (a standard colored wooden meepie) in one of the 10 cases of the "Action track", knowing that the actions will flow from left to right: the first to play therefore will be the Engineer on the leftmost case of the "Action track" and so on. Each department has 2 cases: the one on the left will give you TWO actions while the other will allow to play THREE actions. So if you want to play first in each Department you have to put your Engineer on the left space and to accept to get an action less. The 2 Administration cases will allow you only 1 action (left case) or 2 actions (right case) but you may

take those "actions" in any one Department of your choice: so if desperately needed an item from a blocked department you may get it from the Administration. Sandra is also moved inside the factory (starting on turn TWO: our Boss likes to sleep a little more in the morning) on the FIRST LEFT-MOST FREE case of the Action track. Sounds complicate? No, it isn't, but before moving your Engineer to a specific Department you have to program your strategy and try to follow it also in the following rounds.

At this point actions are taken, starting with the player whose Engineer is on the leftmost case.

WORKERS ARE LOOKING AT YOU AND YOU HAVE TO PROGRAM THEIR JOB

I will not enter in all the details of the game, as I would like to keep you reading this long article till the end, so I will follow a "logical" path with you. But before we walk inside the factory I need to give some extra information:

(1) - You may use a max of 4 ACTIONS in each Department: I already told you that we have only places with 2 or 3 actions so extra actions are taken using the available time bonus of the TIME track. In other words you may use 2/3 "regular" actions and 2/1 bonus actions in each Department.



BILD 2 - PICTURE 2

(2) - Every Department has a "Certification track" where a colored marker for each player is placed at the beginning of the game. You may use your actions to "work" on the department or to advance the certification marker (each action spent here rises your marker 1 case). When you pass the third case of this track you get a CERTIFICATION and you move your "pawn" on the following block of the certification track, eventually getting the available bonus. Please note that you may also use your collected books to freely advance in the Certification track of the actual department.

(3) - During play you should try to get as many RED SEAT TILES as possible (available in many ways inside the different departments) to be used for the Direction Meetings.

All is clear? OK. Did you already wear your helmet?

Well, so we may enter the factory and starting in the TECHNICAL OFFICE here you may collect project tiles (1 per available action) or advance on the certification track. Tiles of the first (rightmost) column grant you a TIME BONUS (and you advance your marker one case on the Time track), while those on the second row grant you a BOOK (that you place on your personal board for later use). Depending on the Strategy that you

planned you will pick up the tiles with the needed car's color.

We may now move on the STORAGE/LOGISTICS department: here you may select one of your "Kanban" cards and use one action to put it down and refill the storage with cubes of the displayed colors. For an action you may then pick up all or part of the cubes of one color, placing them on your personal board. Again you may also spend actions to improve your certification.

In the PRODUCTION LINES we may use the cubes (remember, each color is a "part" of the car) to feed the "chains". For any cube that you place (only one per color is allowed on each chain) you introduce a new car from the reserve inside the chain and you PUSH the other cars towards the exit. Each car that exits the department grants 1 or 2 VP.

The TEST and INNOVATION department is the most complicated to explain. Cars that exit the production lines are placed on an "oval" circuit behind a white car. They are now available for purchasing. To purchase a car you need to spend a project of the same color (that is discarded) and pay 1-2-3 actions (this depends on the positions behind the white car). This is simple, but in this department you may also IMPROVE a car with better components to do that you need a project tile with the same color of the car

that you decided to improve and which has an icon printed on it (motor, brakes, etc.) and you have to pay a cube of the same color (black for motor, etc.). Your project is not discarded, but is inverted and placed on side of your board to immediately give you 2 VP. When you improve a car the colored cube that you used is placed on the board and may grant you a few extra bonuses (time, books, jokers, VP) so this should be the initial aim of the game: you absolutely need to get at least 2-3 improved designs by the end of the third turn.

(SEE PICTURE 3)

If you also purchased (or if you will purchase later) a car of the same color of an improved design you become the lucky owner of a TESTED DESIGN. Having a good number of tested designs is important to gain extra VP during the administration meetings, but it is vital to win the game.

Sandra is a very hard to be pleased and therefore during the first turns of the game the players should be prepared to take penalties (loss of VP). The last player(s) on each certification track of the department visited by Sandra may lose VP if he/she cannot meet certain conditions (penalties are not committed to players who reached case 5 on the time track). When Sandra comes back on his/her players may receive some



BILD 4 - PICTURE 4

two players. The Factory Objective has three cases and each one grant a certain amount of VP to ALL the players that are able to meet the requested conditions (have a certain number of cars, or Certifications, etc.); you have to try to meet at least two of those conditions, and possibly all three, because you may arrive to gain 15 to 20 VP.

(SEE PICTURE 4)

Certifications are also important: they allow you to eliminate some or all the locks of your board but they also give you some extra bonus each time that you pass on the related department.

Do not forget to take as many "books" and "red seats" as you can: the books will allow you to advance quickly and FREE in the certification tracks and each red seat will free one of your seats in the administration office.

But the real big VP makers are the TESTED DESIGNS if you performed regularly in all the others sectors but you have 4-5 tested designs (car in garage + improved design on your board) you will normally win the game.

We know that Sandra always moves to the first empty case (from the left of the board) so in the first turns it is important to try to

act before her in the same Department: to do that you need to place your Engineer on the first case of the department, losing one action but ... playing BEFORE Sandra and thus moving your marker on the Certification track in order to leave someone else at the last place ... ready for penalties!! In the "middle game" usually all the players reached the fatidic "quote 5" and therefore Sandra will not be a problem anymore, but at the beginning of the game is not rare to see players losing 10-15 VP because of Sandra, so take care of her.

Of course this is a game for expert players and absolutely NOT for families or casual gamers: I haven't purposely touched all the aspects of the game to avoid to bore you ... but be prepared to spend a couple of "test" games before being able to understanding all the subtleties of KANBAN. If you do that I can ... certify that you will be surely rewarded.

Retro Cremona

NEW: <http://www.bigcream.it/>

INFORMATION

Designer: Vital Lacerda
 Artist: N. Robinson, V. Lacerda
 Price: ca. 55 Euro
 Publisher: Giochix.it 2014
www.giochix.it

PLAYERS: 2-4
 AGE: 14+
 TIME: 180+

EVALUATION

Worker Placement
 Users: For experts
 Version: it
 Rules de en it
 In-game text: yes

Comments:
 Set-up is very elaborate * Complex rules *
 Flexible strategy is a must * Lots of interaction * Attractive topic

Compare to:
 Other complex worker placement games

Other editions:
 Stronghold Games, Schwerkraft Verlag

My rating: ★★★★★