

SCULPTORS, PAINTERS, ARCHITECTS

FLORENZA THE CARD GAME

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When you open the box Florenza the Card Game, a new release from the Italian company "Placentia Games" you will not be surprised: you will find only cards, and to be precise 220 standard cards (88x58 mm) and 110 smaller cards (68x44 mm). The graphics and the game idea are largely similar to the "big brother" FLORENZA, published in 2011: same Artists, same Buildings, etc. but with this "small brother" you need only one hour to complete a game. You may also easily teach and play it with the family or with occasional players if you have the time to explain it: the best way should be to start the game with them, play a couple of rounds to let the others feel comfortable with the rules and then... start again and play to the end. You will not be disappointed.

COMPONENTS

The standard size cards are divided into four categories:

- Cards FLORENZA (76): these are the real heart of the game and show the buildings of Firenze during Renaissance (houses, shops, etc.) together with churches, palaces, etc. Your task is to decorate as many of them as possible. The deck includes also some Black Friars (whose role will be explained later).

- Cards MONUMENTS (27): if built they give Victory Points (VP) to the players.

- Cards RESOURCES (86): they are used to accumulate the different resources (Wood, Marble, Iron, Cloth, Gold and Spices) in a way similar to Settlers of Catan. You need them in order to pay the buildings and the Artists

- Cards FIORINI (28): they are the money of that time (in values of 50, 100 and 500 Fiorini).

- Finally we have a card CAPITANO and two SUMMARY cards

Most of the smaller cards (85) show the different ARTISTS of that time: Painters, Sculptors and Architects. Each of them is available in more than one card, but each has a different value in VP.

Other 20 cards (called CENTRAL CARDS) are placed on the table at the set-up and will be used by the players to do different ACTIONS. When used those cards are "blocked" until the end of the turn and cannot be selected again. Three of those cards show less famous Artists that can be used to complete

a job but must be returned to the table after being used: they are cheap but they do not grant VP. Finally a card, called CAPITANO DEL POPOLO (people's chieftain), grants the role of CAPITANO in the following turn to the player that takes it.

Artists are necessary in order to decorate palaces, monuments or churches in Firenze and grant VP. But Artists must be paid (and the best of them are not at all cheap...) so you need not only to get the materials for the buildings but also some money income. For that reason during the first and second turn it is very important to purchase shops and artisans, if possible, as they will produce part of the necessary materials and will generate the needed money.

THE GAME

Each player receive a "Family" card (Medici, Strozzi, Pitti, Pazzi), 300 Fiorini and a resource per type (Marble, Wood, Iron, Cloth, Gold and Spices). The 20 CENTRAL CARDS are placed on the table as well as 10 ARTISTS (or less if players are only 2 or 3) that you place in a row under the Central cards. Another row is formed with 7 MONUMENTS. The cards FLORENZA are divided in three decks (marked I, II and III) and you start distributing 5 cards to each player from deck I: the remaining ones are arranged in a drawing deck, putting them over deck II and both over deck III. The First Player is decided and he receive the TURN card.

You may now start the game. On his turn each player has the possibility to perform FOUR ACTIONS to be selected between the following:

- Enlist an Artist: you simply select a card from the available row and put it in front of you without turning it. So you know which kind of artist is (painter, sculptor or architect) but you do not know yet his exact value (that will be one of the possible values printed on the card's back: this is important as you may select an Artist knowing his minimum and maximum value).

- Take a Monument from the table: you keep it in your hand (this is an action you use when you see an important monument but you do not have yet the resources or the artist available).

- Build a Monument: you may play a previously collected card from your hand or take a card from the available row and place it in

front of you. Of course you have to pay the cost (resources and money) and use an appropriate Artist (as indicated on the Monument): the Artist must be one of those that you already have in front of you (so you must pay it now and turn the card over to see the VP granted). As an alternative you may use one of the Central Artists if available: they are much cheaper but you will

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A game for expert players but very interesting also for occasional players or for family play (provided that someone is able to explain it the first time).

not gain any VP from them.

- Place a card Florenza on the table: you must pay the necessary cost in resources and money

- Activate a Central Card: you select it and execute the related action (take a resource, transform a resource in money, change a card with another, etc.) turning the card on the back: it cannot be used again by the other players in this round.

- Take a card Florenza from the deck

- Take 50 Fiorini from the Bank

- Go to the Market: here you may sell a Re-



source for 100 Fiorini or buy a resource for 100 Fiorini or discard two resources from your hand to take a different one of your choice.

Each player, on his turn, may perform ONLY ONE of the available 4 actions. When all players played or passed the CAPITANO calls for possible extra actions. First all players that own a PALAGIO (palace) may perform one action; then the same for all players that owns a CASAMENTO (large building), followed by those who own a CASA (house). Finally all players with a PREDICATORE (Black Friar) may perform an action. In summary each player has available a minimum of 4 actions and a maximum of 8 (as no one may have two identical cards in front of him).

At the end of each turn you discard most of the Monuments (you keep in play only the two most valuable) and all the Artists that remain on the table. Two new rows of those cards are laid. The players discard all but one of the Florenza cards that have in hand.

The Capitano now pays the "Incomes" to each player: some are fixed (200 Fiorini, 1 Marble and 1 Wood), some depend on the buildings that each player has in front of him and one extra resource is decided by the Capitano himself (he select a type and all players take one).
The game last 5 turns.

THE VICTORY POINTS (VP)

At the end of the game each player sums the VP written on the exposed cards in front of him (monuments, palaces, and artists) and the eventual bonus that he may get from special buildings. Players with most of Fiorini or Resources also get other VP (4 VP to the first, 2 to the second, 1 to the third). Total your VP and subtract the VP printed on the buildings and Artists that remained in each player's hand.

The winner, of course is the player with the higher score.

COMMENTS

FLORENZA THE CARD GAME is simple to explain and easy to play but a couple of games are necessary to have a good idea on how to proceed and which are the best "combo" that you have to try once you know your initial hand of cards. The game does not have special or innovative mechanics but the final result is nice and interactive. Lady "Luck" is a sensible factor, as it happens in all card games, especially on the initial distribution of cards: if you do not receive any building (Palagio, Casamento o Casa) you start with

a sure gap because those cards give an immediate advantage both in resources and in flexibility (they grant you extra actions). During play you may fill this gap with a good strategy, but in the very rare case that you were so unlucky that you initial hand does not contains buildings AND SHOPS your possibilities of victory are really very low (no extra turns, no extra resources and/or money).

Buildings and Shops are included only in decks I and II so you must try to find some of them in turn 1 or 2: at the beginning of the game it is very important to build, if possible, as those buildings will grant you extra actions, resources and/or money for the following 3-4 turns.

About 50% of the Florenza Cards of "Deck I" need WOOD to be activated so you should try to use the two CENTRAL cards that offer this resource, even before deciding to activate your buildings: in effect if you build a Palagio (or Casamento, Casa, Predicatore) as the fourth action you may immediately use their extra action. For that reason one of the best cards in the first turn is the Boscaiolo (woods cutter) as it gives you 1 Wood for free each turn. Another useful card is the Picconiere (pickman) that grants 1 Marble per turn.

Marble is used in 7 of the Deck I cards, but increase to 12 cards from the Deck II so you have to try to collected it from the beginning in order to arrive at the final turns with a good reserve. It is better to avoid to build "light" monuments and concentrate on the most valuable ones, even if you will be able to build them only later in the game. Of course another strategy could be to ignore the "heavy" monuments and concentrate on "many" light buildings. The decision very often depends on the initial hand of cards and your initial position on the turn.

To give you a better idea of the available opportunities let's look at some numbers. In total the 27 Monuments need 125 resources, but not equally divided, as the following table shows:

- 45 Marble (36 %)
- 23 Wood (18,4 %)
- 17 Iron (13,6 %)
- 14 Gold (11,2 %)
- 14 Spices (11,2 %)
- 12 Cloth (9,6 %)

But if we analyze ONLY the 7 most rewarding Monuments (those with 12 to 19 VP) we find a different distributions of the 53 resources:

- 22 Marble (41,5 %)
- 10 Wood (18,8 %)

- 6 Iron (11,3 %)
- 6 Gold (11,3 %)
- 6 Spices (11,3 %)
- 3 Cloth (5,6 %)

It is clear that only with a good reserve of Marble and Wood you will be able to build highly rewarding monuments in the last turns.

Before ending this review let's share a few suggestions: keep an eye since the beginning to the best Monuments (16-19 VP) and take one of them as soon as possible, then try to get also and intermediate monument (8-12 VP) and a couple of high value Artists that may be used on those Monuments. If you have the possibility to make a choice between different building in your hand of turn 1 and 2 select the ones that will help you in your strategy or that give you most money (that you may them use to purchase resources at the market).

As soon as you fix your strategy you should follow it without dispersions because resources are scarce; eventually build something else to get extra VP, but only if you have extra resources that you will not use for your monuments. ☑

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INFORMATION

Designer: Stefano Groppi

Artist: Ivan Zoni und Team

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Publisher: Placentia Games 2013

www.placentiagames.it

PLAYERS:

2-4

AGE:

14+

TIME:

60+

EVALUATION

Play, place, collect cards

Users: For experts

Version: multi

Rules: de en fr it

In-game text: no

Comments:

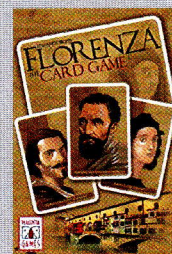
Several possible winning strategies * Scarcity of resources, so keep to one strategy * Good combination of standard mechanisms

Compares to:

Florenza the Board Game

Other editions:

Currently none



My rating: