

ART NOUVEAU ARCHITECTURE

BRUXELLES 1893

PAINTINGS, PALACES AND PERSONAL MONUMENT

After Troyes (a French City), Tournay (a Belgian City) and Ginkgopolis (a Futuristic City) Pearl Games may be considered a Company really specialized in games about towns and BRUXELLES 1893 is not an exception. The graphics are again from Alexandre Roche and I like very much his style: with Bruxelles 1893 we appreciate even more this kind of graphic as the game is about the "Art Nouveau" (New Art) and is based on the works of the architect Victor Horta who, in 1893, used his personal and new style to design the "Maison Atrique" and the "Hotel Tassel" shortly followed my many other builders who appreciated this style. Let's start saying that a couple of games is absolutely necessary to understand how to play BRUXELLES 1893 because there are

many different possibilities (and strategies), so please excuse me if sometimes I will bore you with a few details, but they are necessary to give you an understandable "picture" of the game before the end of those notes. Opening the box we find an unusual board composed of:
 (1) - a "Bruxelles" board (300x420 mm) that includes the most important buildings of the town (Hotel de Ville, Palais Royal, Tribunal, Marché, Bourse, Parc and Grand Place) and some spaces that I will describe in detail. Around the board is printed the Victory Point (VP) track.
 (2) - an "Art Nouveau" board composed of 6 stripes of hard cardboard: five of them have 5 images each (painter, merchant, store-keeper, builder and public person) while

the last one shows 5 places for the "Bonus cards". Those stripes are mixed and randomly posed on the table to form a variable board with the same dimensions of the first. The cards are always placed on the bottom. (see picture 1)

You also find some cubes (raw materials), coins (1 and 5 francs), cards (Public Persons, Bourse, Bonus), tiles (paintings in four colors and special paintings in black) and a few "special items" that we will discuss later. Your aim? As an Architect you have to purchase good paintings that you may sell in the

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A very interesting game for regular and expert gamers: you have so many possibilities and so few opportunities that every move must be accurately programmed. Interaction is very high and dirty trick... are the norm.

"Atelier" in order to make money to rent the most important Public Persons of the city. They will give support, favors, money, etc. to allow you to build palaces in the town and your personal wonderful "Edifice" ... and eventually win the game.



Bild 1 - Picture 1

OK, WE ARRIVED IN BRUXELLES. WHAT NOW?

Each player receives a personal board, six tiles "Building", 7 colored wooden workers and 4 wooden discs. As you are a "newcomer" in this business you will also get the help of a rich Public Person of the city (Georges Brugmann) who may provide some money during the game. Place his "card" near your board in a vertical position (when you will use him or other Public Persons you will turn them at 90° to show that they cannot be used again in that turn. All Public Persons are turned back to vertical again and thus made available, at the beginning of each new turn).

On the bottom half of the Bruxelles' board are placed four Public Person cards (they are the VIP of the town and are available to support the players, if they take them), 5 tiles "Exposition" (to keep track of the passing turns), the Tile "Atelier" (used to calculate the value of each painting during sales), the "Compass" (that will determine the necessary materials for the new buildings) and the card deck "Bourse".

Five bonus cards are also displayed on the bottom stripe of the Art Nouveau board. The players place 2 of their workers on the Tribunal case and keep the remaining five. The first player takes the "bracket" and place it on the "Art Nouveau" board, following the coordinates, in order to limit the number of available cases. Then he also turns the first card of the Bourse deck: it will show a certain amount of "money" and two "coordinates".

"Compass"? "Bracket"? "Coordinates"? Are you still following? Let me explain that those "terms" are nicely used in this box, together with a couple of cardboard pieces, to give a nice "architectural touch": as an Engineer I used both of them in the old good days of the University, more as a remind of the old systems than for practical work: now computers, software programs and electronic machines have practically cancelled forever this items. But in 1993 the engineers needed them in order to be sure that a new building was erected safely and conform to the design. The "practical" use of the compass in the game is simply to indicate what is needed by the building under construction at that moment. The compass' two arms will move on 6 sectors and each sector indicate a component: wood, stone, iron, money (3 francs), a material at your choice (between the basic three) or... nothing. When you wish to erect a new building you must pay AT LEAST one cube (or money) corresponding to the sectors pointed by the arms of the compass. Example: you need 3 materials for your next building and the compass points on wood and money. You must pay at least 1 wood and 3 francs

and then you decide if the third material will be wood or 3 francs.

The "Art Nouveau" board is a sort of chessboard of 25 cases (5x5) separated by 4 horizontal lines (named 1 to 4) and 4 vertical lines (also named 1 to 4). The "coordinates" of the Bourse's card states which lines must be selected and use the "bracket" to fix them: for example if the card says "3-2" or "2-3" you have to position the bracket on the crossroad between the horizontal line 3 and vertical line 2 (or, at the first player's choice, horizontal 2 and vertical 3). Once positioned the bracket will clearly determine which cases will be available and which one are excluded for that turn.

The first player takes one of his workers and place it in one of the cases of the boards. Then he executes the generated action. All other players will follow in turn with one worker: then the first player will use a second worker and so on until all the workers will be on the boards.

On the ART NOUVEAU board you may do the following actions, provided that the selected cases are empty and you paid at least 1 Franc (place the betted money under your worker until the end of the round):

- On a case PAINTER you may randomly pick up a colored "painting" from the reserve
- On a case MERCHANT you may sell one of your paintings. You will move a special slider in the ATELIER and the final position of the color of painting that you are selling will tell you how many francs and/or VP you will gain.
- On a case STORE KEEPER you will take 2 cubes (materials) of your choice from the reserve
- On a case BUILDER you may erect one of your buildings. You have six "building" tiles on your personal board. The first two cost only 2 materials, the 3rd and 4th will cost 3 Materials and the last two will cost 4 materials. The color of the materials to be used are determined by the compass, as we have

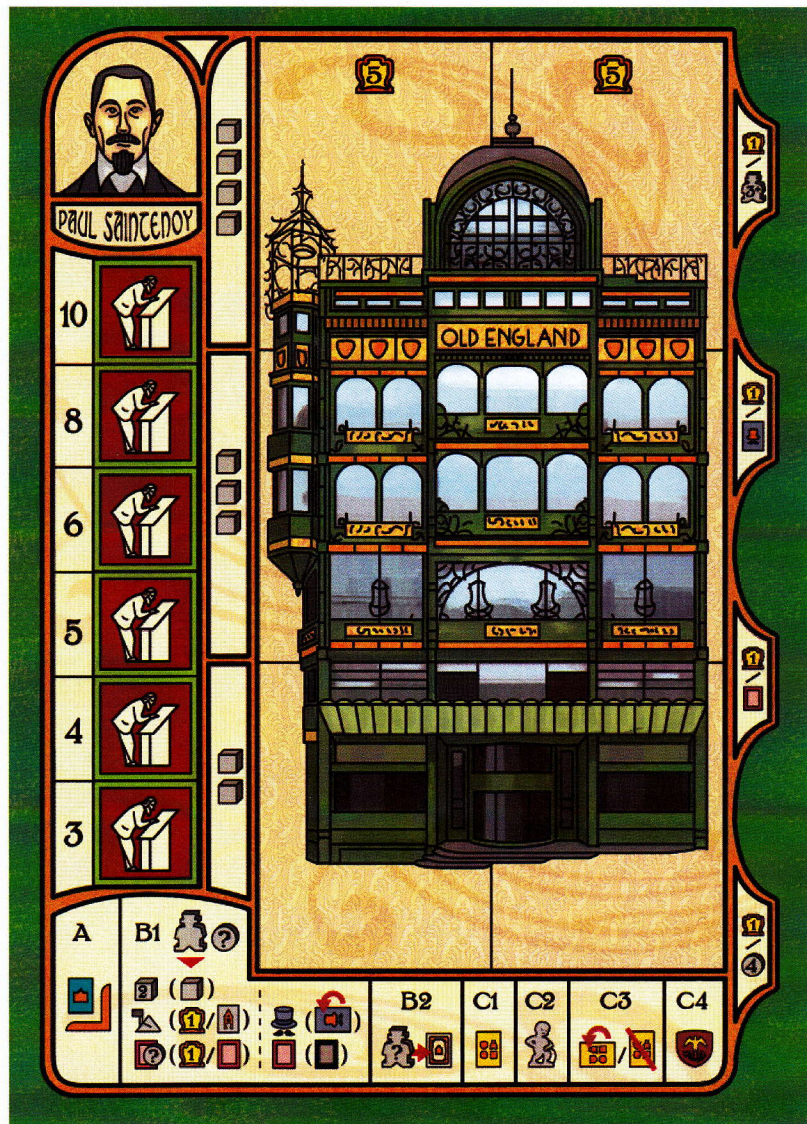


Bild 2 - Picture 2

seen. You pay the requested materials (or money) and you place your building on the Art Nouveau board, in an empty case, getting 5 VP. If you do not have the requested materials you may use the WHITE cubes instead (they are jokers) but you do not mark any VP.

- On a case PUBLIC PERSON you may rent one of the four cards that are displayed on the Bruxelles board. The right most card will cost 0 Franc, and the others 1-2-3. You have now to decide if you wish to use the "power" of this Public Person immediately (thus positioning the card horizontally near you board) or if you keep it for later use. There are different "powers" available and you have to select the ones that better follow your strategy: taking back one worker from the Tribunal case, advance on the Palais Royal, advance on the Hotel de Ville, improve your Architect ability (on your personal board), take cubes, take VPs.

On the BRUXELLES board you have the following possibilities:

- At the MARCHE you take 3 "white" cubes (to be used as Jolly materials, as we have seen)

- At the BOURSE you get the amount of money printed on the displayed Bourse card (4 to 8 francs)

- At the PARC you will make an "Art Nouveau" action without paying any money and even if all the cases are already occupied.

- At the GRAND PLACE you may use as many of your Public Persons as it is your influence on the Palais Royal (from 1 to 7). Of course the Public Persons already used before can-

not be used again. All your Public Persons will be overturned again at the end of each round so having the opportunity to use 3-4 cards each round is very important.

As you see, the Bruxelles actions seem more interesting than the others, but there is a penalty for the player/s with most workers on this board. One of their workers has to be sent to the Tribunal at the end of the turn, so you will have less actions available. When the cases in Bruxelles are occupied the following players may still use them, but they are obliged to place 2 or 3 workers all together in order to use that specific action. This increase the danger to be the one who will send a worker to Tribunal, but sometimes is absolutely necessary for your strategy.

When a player place a worker on a case that contain a building of an opponent he takes his action normally, then the owner of that color will have a special "free" action: if the building is in a painter space the player will take a BLACK painting; in a merchant space he will take 1 VP per painting in his possession; in a store-keeper space he will get a free cube; in a builder space 1 VP per building already placed and on the Public Person case you may activate a Public Person card still inactive. Those "free" actions are a good bonus and therefore each player must try to build 1-2 buildings in the first rounds in order to get their advantage as many times as possible.

AFTER SO MUCH WORK IT IS TIME TO TAKE SOME REST AND BENEFITS

The round proceed in this way until the play-

ers, one after the other, pass their turn: the first to pass will receive the top most Exposition tiles that shows two miniaturized copies of the famous bronze fountain sculpture Manneken-Pis (a baby the urinates in the fountain basin) a symbol of Bruxelles popular as the Little Mermaid for Copenhagen.

The game pauses and the players look at the bets that they placed on the Art Nouveau board: the player who bet the most money on each column takes the bonus card placed on the bottom of that column. Each card is divided in three zones: on top you may have 0-1-2 Manneken-Pis icons; in the center you have the BONUS granted by the card; in the bottom part you have 0-1-2 VP multipliers. When a player gets a bonus card must decide if he wants to immediately use the "bonus" or if he prefers to keep the card on his personal board in order to increase his VP points at the game's end.

The available bonuses are similar to those of the Public Persons but they may be used only once: you may free 1 or 2 workers from the tribunal, advance 1 or 2 cases on the Hotel de Ville, advance 1 or 2 cases on the Palais Royal and/or advance 1 or 2 cases on your Architect ability. If you do not wish to get the "bonus" you keep the card and you place it under the right side of your personal board leaving only the bottom part of the card that shows 1 or 2 VP multiplier (more on this shortly).

The player with most Manneken-Pis icons (those printed on the bonus cards or the 2 of the Exposition tiles) will be the first player on the next round and receive a special disk



with the icon of the statue.

Now the players have to calculate the VP gained on the Art Nouveau board: each cross of vertical and horizontal lines has a "BLASON" (shield) of the Hotel de Ville. Therefore each shield is surrounded by 4 cases and the player who has the majority of workers will get as many VP as he has influence Points on the Hotel de Ville track (1 to 4 VP). This means, for example, that if you have 5 majorities in the available "shields" and your influence in the Hotel de Ville track reached 3 VP you will get 15 VP at the end of the round.

Once that the Round's VP have been assigned all the workers come back (but do not forget that the players that used the most workers in Bruxelles board must send one of them to the Tribunal) and a new round starts. At the end of the fifth round the game is over with a special VP count.

As we said before each player has his own "personal mini-board"

(see picture 2)

Each board is dedicated to a different Architect of that time and shows a special palace of this designer. Initially the palace is covered by six building tiles, but the main effort of each player should be to place all those tiles on the Art Nouveau board as soon as possible in order to immediately gain as many bonus actions as possible and also some VP (5 VP each when you build the final two tiles).

On the left side of the board there is the Architect's Ability track (6 cases): each case has a number (from 3 to 10) that will be multiplied by the number of erected buildings. If your Ability reached the case "8" and you build 5 tiles on the Art Nouveau board, for example, you will receive 40 VP. If you reach the last case and you build all the tiles you get 60 VP, and so on. Very important !!!

On the bottom of the board you have a summary of the possible actions that you may do on the boards.

On the right side you find FOUR places where you may add the bonus cards: each of them already has 1 VP multiplier, but adding more VP multipliers with the bonus cards you may quickly increase your points. When the games arrive to the end of the fifth round you make the usual VP calculation and then you add the special VP gained on your personal board as follows:

- The first place will give you 1 VP for each set of 4 Francs and for each VP symbol.
- The second will give 1 VP per symbol and per painting
- The third will give 1 VP per symbol and per Public Person in your possession
- The fourth will give 1 VP per symbol and per worker (with the exclusion of the first two)

Finally you subtract 5 VP for each Public

Person that you are not able to pay (oh, yes, those Public Persons want to be paid at the end of the game: the amount vary between 1 and 5 francs !) and the player with the Manneken-Pis disk will add 5 VP to his score. The player with most VP wins.

BRUXELLES is a demanding but rewarding strategy game: you have many possible actions to do but interaction is very high and you will be unable to get ALL THAT you wish. So usually the first turn is very important to decide your strategy.

In general we found that there are three main directions:

(a) - Buildings: you will try to build your six tiles as soon as possible, so your initial strategy will push you to search for as many materials as you can and for the MARCHE (in order to get white cubes). Then you will start to place your building in the middle of the Art Nouveau board where it is much more difficult to be "cut" by the placement of the "bracket" (the cases on top, bottom right and left are those more frequently excluded). Obviously you also need to get as many advances of your Architect's ability as you can in order to arrive to the top of your track: this means 70 VP assured (included the 5+5 VP of the last two tiles). Usually 2-3 players will be able to build all 6 tiles, but on our game a maximum of TWO succeeded in arriving also on top of the Architect's track.

(b) - Public Persons: you try to rent as many Public Persons as possible in order to get money and VP every turn. The most remarkable of them are therefore Maurice Maeterlin (who gives you 5 VP each time, that means 20-25 VP at the end of the game), Georges Brugmann (5 Francs per turn: it is free for all at the beginning of the game), Prince Albert (that increase by one case per turn your Influence on the Palais Royal track giving you the opportunity to use more and more Public Persons every turn), Charles Buls (increase by one case per turn your Influence on the Hotel de Ville) and possibly Emil Vandervelde (that take back from the Tribunal 1 worker per turn). In order to get more VP you have to place also 2-3 buildings on the board, obviously on the Public Person cases, in order to get 15-20 VP from the other players (each time that they use this case you get as many VP as you have Public Persons). Try also to win a few bets in order to place extra VP Multipliers on your personal board near the Public Person place.

(c) - Shields: this is a strategy that may surprise your opponents. You try to place most of your workers in the Art Nouveau board in a manner that will leave you have the majority of 4-5 shields every round. Of course you usually take Charles Buls and Emil Vandervelde and you visit the Bourse case in Bruxelles in order to get as much money as possible to strongly bet on the Art Nou-

veau board and to win the Bonus cards that will increase your Hotel de Ville track (or bring back more workers from the Tribunal). This strategy will grant 10-12 VP on the second turn, 12-15 VP on the third and 15 -20 VP on the last two turns.

Of course having a strategy does not means that you do not have to try to get extra VP with other "tactical" actions at the right moment: remember that the other players are always ready to occupy "that" space that you needed or to take "that" noble that you wished. Therefore if you decided a direction follow it straight ahead and place your workers on the right space since the beginning: then, if possible, you may try to get "something else" if the occasion arise to do it (a good painting sold at high price and for 6 VP, for example).

There are two big clubs in my area and therefore I was able to play BRUXELLES 1893 many times and with different partners. They were all very happy of the game and willing to play it again... next time.

But it is not a family game: it was created for regular and expert gamers and in my opinion the target was reached ☑

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INFORMATION

Designer: Etienne Espreman

Artist: Alexandre Roche

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SPIELER:
2-4

ALTER:
13+

DAUER:
120+

BEWERTUNG

Worker placement, building
Users: For experts
Version: de
Rules: de en fr it
In-game text: no

Comments:

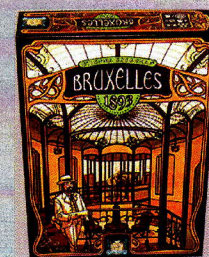
Very nice components * Lots of intense interaction * Good planning ahead is essential

Compares to:

All worker placement games with high interaction

Other editions:

Uplay.it, Z-Man Games



Meine Einstufung: ★★★★★