

2019's "Board Game of the Year" goes to Just One

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Spiel des Jahres

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Of the many "board game of the year" awards handed out each year, the most prestigious is unquestionably the "Spiel des Jahres" prize. Judged by a panel of German critics, the long-running award earns the winner a boost in profile, increased sales, and the hushed awe of the entire board game community.

This year, the main award, which focuses on lighter, family-friendly fare, went to the party game *Just One*. *Just One* is a cooperative word-guessing party game designed by Ludovic Roudy and Bruno Sautter, the team that brought us the ambitious adventure game *The 7th Continent*. Each round, players write down one-word clues to present to the round's guesser, who has to figure out a secret word. Players need to give a clue good enough to point the guesser in the right direction—but any identical clues are discarded before the guesser can see them, so being too obvious could backfire. The game is simple to teach and play, and a 13-round game is over in a brisk 20 minutes. Also nominated for the Spiel des Jahres were party word game (*Werewords*) and legendary designer Reiner Knizia's *L.A.M.A.* This year's "Kennerspiel des Jahres," the prize awarded to more strategically complex games, went to *Wingspan*, a beautiful engine-building game about birds. Designed by

Elizabeth Hargrave, *Wingspan* quickly became one of the hottest games of the year when it was released a few months ago, and it's not hard to see why. The production is gorgeous (no surprise, as it comes from publisher Stonemaier Games), and the gameplay is simple and satisfying. You can read our full review [here](#) or check out a gallery of the game's lovely components below. Stefan Feld's *Carpe Diem* and Portal Games' *Detective: A Modern Crime Board Game* were also up for the Kennerspiel.

The Children's Game of the Year ("Kinderspiel") went to the barrel-bowling dexterity game *Valley of the Vikings* (*Tal der Wikinger*), by designers Marie and Wilfried Fort. The game beat out nominees *Fabulantica* and *Go Gecko Go!*

For those whose lust for new board games can't be sated by a mere nine titles, the jury announced an additional list of recommended titles in each category. For the Spiel des Jahres, those games are *Belratti*, *Dizzle*, *Imhotep – Das Duell*, *Krasse Kacke*, *Sherlock*, and *Reef* (check out our review of *Reef* [here](#)). For the Kennerspiel, we have *Architects of the West Kingdom*, *Lowlands*, *Newton*, and *Paper Tales*. Seven more Kinderspiel recommendations can be found [here](#).

Congratulations to all the nominees and winners!

- LOOK AT ALL THIS FUN STUFF.

Aaron Zimmerman

- In *Wingspan*, players are bird enthusiasts trying to attract birds to their aviaries. There are 170 unique bird cards in the game.

Aaron Zimmerman

- A game in action.
- The birdhouse dice tower is adorable.

Aaron Zimmerman

- When you pick a die from the birdfeeder, you take a corresponding food token.

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- These are not chocolate eggs, no matter how much you may want them to be.

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- The game comes with these handy plastic trays for storage both in and out of play.

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- Cards are stored in this included box, which reminds me of a baby wipes container.

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- Its lid serves as a card display during play.

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- Player colors are often boring. Not here!

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- Objective cards give you end-game goals to shoot for.

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- (They even show the percentage of applicable cards in the deck. More games need to do this.)

Aaron Zimmerman

- Variable end-of-round bonuses keep you on your toes throughout the game.

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- Here's all you need to play a quick solo game.

Aaron Zimmerman

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