

Game Announcement : Control the Oil Fields in Ghawar

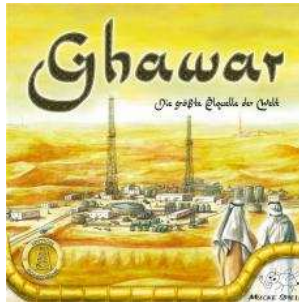
Submitted by [W. Eric Martin](#) on Tue, 2010-09-14 23:55

Game name: [Ghawar](#)
Designer: [Johannes Halbig](#)
Publisher: [Mücke Spiele](#) — October 2010
Featured at: [Spiel 2010](#)

Players: 2-4
Ages: 8+
Playing time: 30-40 minutes
Price: €25
Language: English
German



Here's a brief description of **Ghawar**, another entry in Mücke Spiele's "Edition Bohrtürme" series (details [here](#)):



Ghawar is a tactical game concerning the world's biggest oil field.

Ghawar is the biggest oil field in the world and is situated in Saudi-Arabia. The most influential people in the country are eager not to miss out when the oil is delivered. Who will keep the overview on the mass of oil rigs? Who will manage to claim the most lucrative spots?

Update, Sept. 15, 2010: Turns out that *Ghawar* is also a member of Mücke Spiele's "Edition Läufer" series, which uses the "running" meeples from Kosmos' *Candamir*, along with other wooden bits from that game. Those bits were required elements in a second game design competition from [Spielmaterial.de](#), and even though that contest has yet to be decided as of this date, the bits fit in *Ghawar*, so here they are.

As for the game play, *Ghawar* is a pick-up-and-deliver game with a roll-and-move mechanism on top of a memory element. (I can already imagine some people being knocked back in their seats a bit.) On a 13x13 game board, 36 oil platforms are laid out in a 6x6 square with one empty space between each pair of platforms. Players seed these platforms with 36 colored "oil stones" with nine cubes in each of four colors. (These represent four different types of oil.) Each player is assigned a color and will score a bonus if they collect more of this color than anyone else; the colors are randomly valued at 1-4 coins. Players then take turns rolling two dice and placing one of their five oil wells on the unoccupied platform at this location in the grid; if a player rolls 2-5, for example, she can choose row 2, column 5 or the other way around. Once all the oil rigs are placed, the second half of the game begins.

On a turn, a player either (1) rolls a die to move her truck, her train or both vehicles a number of spaces equal to the die roll or (2) moves one of her oil rigs to an adjacent location, most likely covering an oil stone previously exposed. If a player's truck starts or ends its movement by an oil rig and doesn't already have a load, the truck's owner can lift the oil rig and buy the oil stone underneath it, paying the rig's owner the current value of the oil. (Wealth is tracked on a sliding scale, with players starting with no money and going into negatives as they purchase oil. Obviously you can buy oil from your own rigs for free.) That type of oil jumps to a value of 4, pushing the other types of oil downward in price, then the rig is put back in place. If you try to buy from an empty well, too bad! You can't purchase oil stones that aren't covered as there must be a well in place to bring the oil to the surface. You must bring the oil to your side of the board to deliver it before you can pick up another oil stone with the truck.

When your train ends its movement by an empty platform – that is, one with no oil and no rig – the train picks up the platform so that you can carry it back to your camp (side of the board). At the end of the game, players lose points based on their relative standings in the number of platforms collected.

To move an oil rig, you remove it from its current location and place it on an exposed oil stone, skipping over empty spaces, if any. This action will now make it possible for players to pick up that oil.

The first three times that a player succeeds in acquiring her fourth type of oil, a barrel is placed in the center of the game board, giving players an additional pick-up-and-deliver opportunity.

The game ends once all the oil stones have been delivered. If any player has failed to collect at least one of each type of stone, that player loses the game. Players still in the game score points for each oil stone they possess, for having more of their favored type of oil than anyone else, for collecting barrels, and for having lots of money due to sales. If you have the fewest stones of a type, less money than anyone else, and fewer platforms than someone else, you'll lose points. The player with the high score wins.

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