

EXPLORING NORTH AMERICA

DISCOVERIES

UP AND BEYOND THE MISSOURI

For those who already played LEWIS & CLARK, of the same author and artist, opening the box of DISCOVERIES means to ... get the feeling of something known. Luckily, the two games are completely different. The historical background is obviously the same, but this time we will deal mostly with the "journals" written by the famous scouts, who were asked to describe non only the geographic sites, but also the native tribes, the flora and the fauna of the locations that they crossed.

(Picture 1 on page 15)

Besides the four rule booklets (in English, French, German and Italian) the box contains one small central board (just for chrome, as its real utility is close to zero), four personal boards, 30 colored dice, 55 "double side" cards (showing "Tribes" on one side and "Discoveries" on the other) and four tiles with the name of the scouts. All the materials are sturdy and of good quality, but I suggest to protect the cards with transparent sleeves to avoid damages, as they are used very much.

The central board (200x400 mm) is placed on the table and 3 cards are discovered on its right (Discovery side up) and 3 on its left (Tribes side up). Then each player takes one scout tile, a personal board and five dice of the same color. In turn, starting with the First Player, all select one of the 3 Discovery cards and replace it with a new card. Finally all roll their dice and place them on the Dice Stock area of their personal board.

THE GAME MAY START

OK folks, lest put our canoes on water and let's start our exploration!"

The game rules are really very simple to explain, as players may either:

- Play some dice from their reserve on their personal board or the central board, or
- Get some dice from different boards.

That's all, really.

But to understand how to use option (1) we have to examine a little better the cards and the dice.

As in Lewis & Clark cards have two different uses:

- Face A is used to make "discoveries" and therefore shows a "path" connecting mountains and rivers, minimum one mountain, maximum seven locations). This path may be straight or forked, so that players can select the one that is closest to available resources (mostly rivers or mostly mountains?). Some of the cards also show some special features: Mammals, Birds, Fish and Plants and the players try to collect them to get extra Victory Points (VP) at the game's end. All other cards have a number on the left side (from 2 to 9) that will grant the same amount of VP.

(Picture 2 on page 15)

- Face B shows some of the Native tribes that the scouts will meet during their travel: besides the very nice drawings (each different from all the others) cards have a symbol that explain if the depicted tribe is "friendly" or "wary" and one to three tents (who has a majority of tents at the game's end will get a "bonus").

The number of cards to use in each game may vary between 30 (with two players) to 50 with 4 players) therefore some of them are always discarded. The players have the right to look at them before starting.

Dice have FOUR different symbols printed on them: 2 "A" (for Journal actions), 2 "shoe prints" (for Walking actions), 1 "horseshoe" (for Ride actions) and 1 "Indian Chief head" (for Negotiation actions): there are 5 dice for each color (yellow, red, blue and white) and 10 grey "common" dice.

(Picture 3 on page 16)

The players roll their dice (plus some eventual "captured" ones) and they use the symbols to make their actions. The "grey" dice are initially placed on a "reserve zone" (10 dice in a 4 players game, and down to only 6 in a 2 players game)

All the personal boards are identical in layout and each shows one of the four scouts: Lewis, Clark, Orway and Gass. They have been especially "cut" to host on the left the

dice, on the right the personality tile and, on the top right, one discovery card.

(Picture 4 on page 16)

On the personal board there are sections depicting the possible "7 standard" actions that each player may do. More actions will be available acquiring new Tribes cards during the game. Some actions require just one turn to be performed, while others need more turns: each action case has an icon

Pietro Cremona*A pleasant game, easy to learn and not too difficult to play*

that shows which die/dice must be used.

Of course the heart of the game are those ACTIONS, and to perform each of them the players need the right dice, so let's look at them:

- Change the discovery card: you place on this case a die of your choice (the case has a question mark printed on it), then you select a new discovery card, discarding the old one. The die that you used is discarded on the central board: right side if you used a horseshoe or a shoe prints symbol and left side if you used the other two.

- Take a Friendly Tribe card: you spend a die with an Indian Chief head and you take the tribe card of your choice, provided that it has a "friendly" icon. The die is discarded on the left side of the central board but you take a grey die from the Reserve: roll it and add it to the personal board as it may be used immediately.

- Take a Wary Tribe card: is like the preceding one, but you need TWO dice. You may take now a wary tribe card and you discard the dice on the left side of the central board. Again you take a grey die.

- Change face to your dice: you discard one die and you turn two of your other dice to a face of your choice: both must have the same face.

The following three actions normally need two phases to be completed and are used to make discoveries: in the first phase you place 1, 2 or more dice to have the "right" to perform the action, while in a following turn you play the "A" dice (journal action) and you may use the triggered bonus (river moves or mountain moves) to explore your Discovery card. These three actions are:

- Horse Ride: you have to place here ONE horseshoe dice in order to have 2 "river"

steps: when you need to use them you just have to place in this case an "A" die. Usually 2 river steps are not enough to discover most of the cards, so you have to search for more steps (river or mountain) from other sections of your board or from the tribe cards.

- Hike: you use here TWO shoe print dice, one of which is immediately discarded on the right side of the central board. When you are ready you place the "A" die to get 3 river steps.

- Mountain expedition: you need THREE dice with the same face (your choice): one is placed on the case and the other two are discarded in the central board. When you are ready you may use the "A" die to get 2 mountain steps.

Let's make an example: you have in your personal board a discovery card that shows a path of 5 steps, of which 3 are river and 2 are mountain. In order to solve this card you need to activate both the Hike and the Mountain expeditions in the same turn. Therefore you use one or more turns to "prepare" the discovery, playing the right dice on the two sections, and then you need a little bit of luck ... and the necessary two "A" in order to proceed.

Advancing on your explorations (and keeping good relationship with Native villages) you will be able to make more powerful actions or combinations using the cases printed on the tribe cards: in this way you will be able to solve even the most difficult discovery cards (those with 6 or 7 steps). Once you successfully performed a Discovery do not forget to end your turn taking back your dice and selecting a new card from the exposed ones. If you are able to trigger extra steps in the same turn you may even solve a second Discovery card: you spend the necessary steps for the first card, then you select a second one from the 3 cards of the board and you use the remaining steps to solve it. If you are able and lucky to solve those TWO discoveries you also gain a free turn and therefore you may immediately play again.

Using dice for your actions reduces your reserve, so sometime you need to "refill" using one of the following possibilities:

- Take all the dice stored on the right side of the central board

- Take all the dice stored on the left side of the board

- Take the dice of your color, wherever they are, including the central board, your per-

sonal board or the personal board of your opponents.

Taking dice from the central board means that you may collect not only your color or grey dice, but also dice of your opponents: of course you will use them immediately (and for one shot actions) to avoid the risk that the opponents recall them.

If a player cannot refill his exploration zone because there are no more Discovery cards the game is over and the players have to add their victory points (VP) from:

1 - discovery cards: add the numbers of each card

2 - discovered species: 3 VP for just one species and up to 24 VP if you have at least one card for each of the four species (Mammals, Fish, Birds and Plants)

3 - visited tribes: all players add the number of their tents, for the majority you score 12 VP in a game of four, the other ranks score 8-4-0 VP.

Tents are ready and the camp fire is roasting a prey –

TIME TO REST FOR TODAY

Discoveries is a pleasant game: it is easy to learn and not too difficult to play, but if a player wishes to run for victory a certain organization is necessary. He needs to plan its actions enough in advance to be able to perform them in the shorter possible number of turns, knowing that dice sometimes are very nasty (but do not forget the "change face to your dice" action).

Very often Victory goes to players that are able to jump on any opportunity that arise during the turn: if a discovery card with a new specie appears on the board you have to try to get it (24 points at the game's end are the equivalent of 3-4 good discovery cards); if you were unable to get the right combination of mountains and rivers change your card with another that you may already satisfy; do not forget to refill your dice reserve and use immediately the opponents dice for one shot actions; in other words never use opponents dice for long term actions (exploration) because they may be recalled (but you may use them in combination with your own, discarding them instead of yours); finally always look at the available tribes cards because you need them if you wish to explore the strongest discovery cards.

Interactions is quite interesting as there is always competition for the best discovery and tribe cards, and selecting the right moment to recall your dice may produce "problems" to your opponents, especially when they were over confident. In effect sometimes it is better to attack the opponents instead of performing a positive action if this may cause serious problems.

This is a good game for regular or expert gamers: causal gamers will find some difficulties in learning how to make the necessary "combos" in order to solve the discovery cards. I do not think that this is a game for families even if I do not agree on the suggested "age" of 14 years or more: I think that even 10 years old young players will be able to learn and play well Discoveries, especially if an adult explain the rules and assist them for a few turns. At least this is what happened here with 10-12 years old boys and girls. ☑

Pietro Cremona

INFORMATION	
Designer: Cédric Chaboussit	PLAYERS: 2-4
Artist: Vincent Dutrait	AGE: 14+
Price: ca. 30 Euro	TIME: 60+
Publisher: Ludonaute / Asmodee 15 www.asmodee.de	

EVALUATION	
Collecting, cards, history	
Users: With friends	
Version: multi	
Rules: de en fr it pl In-game text: no	
Comments: Easy to explain * Yet no family game * Topic has been implement interestingly and well	
Compares to: Lewis & Clarke for theme, other dice/worker placement games	
Other editions: Asterion Press (it), Rebel.pl (pl), Ludonaute (en, fr)	
	My rating:



Bild 1 - Picture 1



Bild 2 - Picture 2

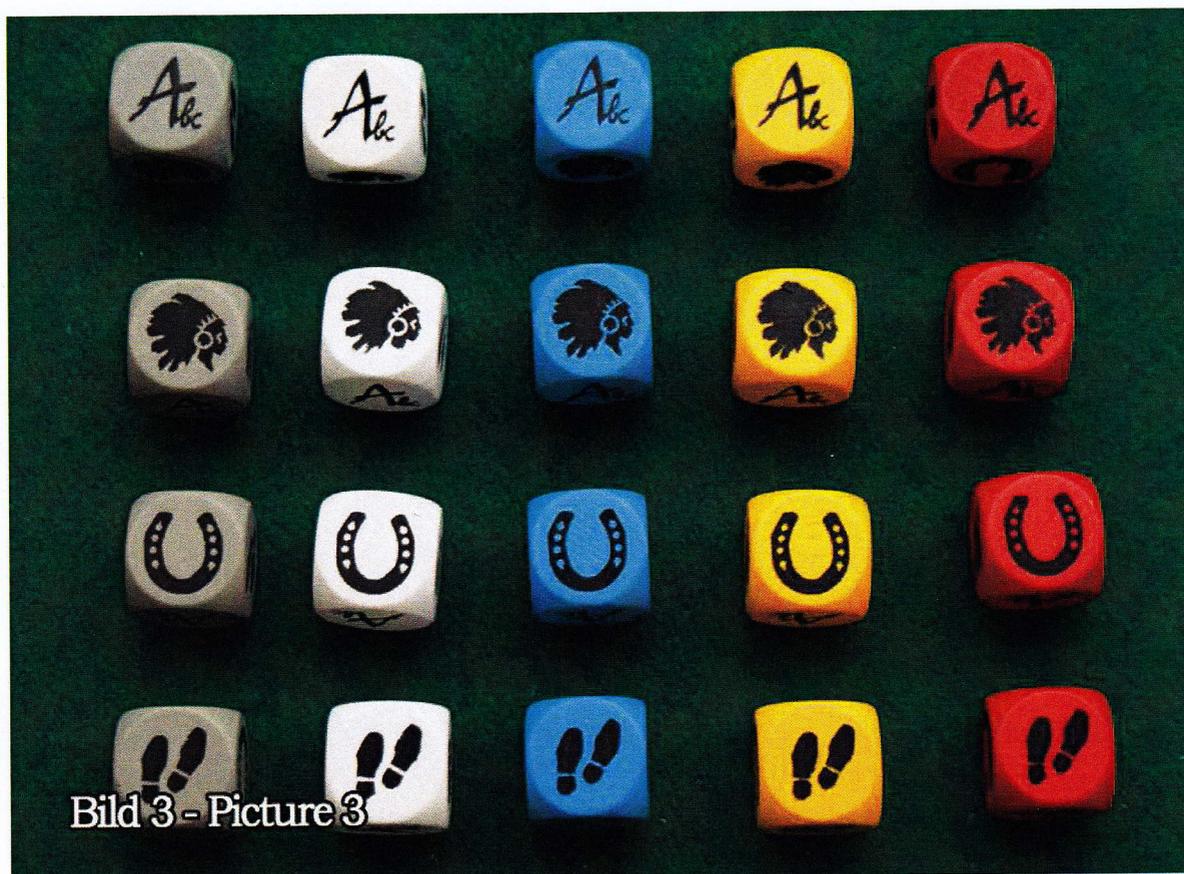


Bild 3 - Picture 3



Bild 4 - Picture 4

