

# Reduced to the Bare Minimum

A railroad game with a track layout and stocks, requiring only two pages of instructions and playable in 30 minutes – that is practically unimaginable. Can something like that work at all?

The scene of events is France – not really the motherland of railroad construction. In the outskirts of Paris, six companies begin to build their route network on a hex-grid-covered map. Each player, on his turn, has two alternatives: either to extend the line of any one company by up to five spaces, or trade stocks.

Extending the line means that the player takes the applicable number of locomotives from a company's supply and places them on the gameboard. There are no specific terrain costs to consider; the only condition is that a city may not be accessed by more than one line. In open country, two lines may share a space, though. After building the line, the company's stock price increases by the value of the cities connected.

## Locomotives = tracks = stocks

Stocks are represented by the same locomotive-shaped playing pieces that you also place on the board as tracks. Before the game begins, each player draws a handful of them from a bag and hides them behind his screen. This way, about 30 of these pieces are put into circulation overall. The remaining ones are properly separated by color and laid out visibly on individual boards, where they are now available as building material as well as stocks. If you trade stocks, you put one locomotive back into the supply and take up to two of another color.

The game ends if there are only locomotives of one color available or if Marseille has been connected to the railroad net-



work.

Then, everybody tallies the value of his stocks. And, of course, the player with the most valuable packet wins. It shouldn't be too thick a packet, though; because you get a penalty if you are too greedy and exceed the stock limit (which depends on the number of players). In the games we played, however, this never happened.

When new players were sitting at our table, we repeatedly made the same observation: They built straight away toward Marseille and thus ended the game – to the other players' displeasure. But this always happened only once; then they got the point: Even though connecting Marseille is an end





### Differences from the original

Originally, at the SPIEL '10, PARIS CONNECTION was published by Winsome Games under the title SNCF, the name of the national state-owned French railroad company (Société nationale des chemins de fer français). In terms of play, there are only marginal differences between the two versions. In the German version, the current stock value is always indicated on a railroad track, which serves as the quotation board. And there is no tie-breaker; according to the original rules, however, the player who is further behind in the order of play, breaks ties in his favor.

these gift shares do not necessarily belong to companies whose expansion and thus quotations you should promote. In order to get more stocks, you have to give up at least one existing one, which must be of a different color. Consequently, exchanging one blue for two blues, for example, is not possible. It occurs time and again that you don't want to part with any of the shares, since all shares in the portfolio are lucrative.

Of course, much depends on the actions the other players do. If the expansion of a certain color is fostered, it can't hurt to acquire a few of the respective shares. If all players follow this example, however, this could dry up the line, because every share that lands behind a screen diminishes the company's chances of expansion and prevents its share price from rising. On the other hand, companies whose materials have completely been used up for building can still increase, if players swap the locomotives of these companies for more lucrative ones, and then bring the offloaded papers onto the board as route extensions.

condition and the city is the most valuable one in terms of stock price, reaching the city doesn't necessarily mean victory!

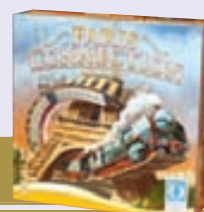
### Trading Blue for Red

The tactics are determined by several factors. First of all, there are the five to ten stocks (depending on the number of players) that each player is randomly allotted in the beginning. Unfortunately,

As easy as the rules are, it is still tricky to bring the game to a successful end. But even in the event of failure, the end comes after half an hour at the latest, and therefore, you often play a second game.

Games that have such a simple set of rules but nevertheless a high replayability appeal are rare. All the more so since the original was published by Winsome Games, a company that is usually known for complex fare. There was once a development similar to the one that PARIS CONNECTION took (see text box at top). In 2001, Franz-Benno Delonge's IRON ROAD was released by Winsome Games; one year later, the German edition, TRANSAMERICA, reached 2nd place at the Deutschen Spiele Preis after almost having become Spiel des Jahres. PARIS CONNECTION has the same potential. The equipment has the quality that we know from Queen Games. Therefore, I give a definite recommendation to buy!

KMW/sbw



Title: Paris Connection  
 Publisher: Queen Games  
 Designer: David V. H. Peters  
 Artist: Oliver Schlemmer  
 Players: 3-6  
 Age: about 8 and up  
 Duration: about 30 minutes  
 Price: about 35 €

Reviewer	Playing appeal
KMW	8
Udo Bartsch	4
L. U. Dikus	6
Stefan Ducksch	5
Oliver Grimm	4
Wieland Herold	7

