

For a good time, sink your teeth into Bloodsuckers

IT'S THE RIGHT time of the year, so how about adding some horror to your game table?

There are plenty of good horror-themed board and card games on the market, and Bloodsuckers is a nice new addition.

Released in August, Bloodsuckers is the second game from Fireside Games. I reviewed (and still enjoy) Castle Panic a couple of years back, so I was eager to sink my teeth into this vampire-themed game (sorry).

Designed by Fireside Games' husband and wife team Justin and Anne-Marie De Witt, Bloodsuckers set out to fill a niche.

"The original idea for the game was brought about by the fact that none of the vampire games on the market at the time did what I wanted them to do," said Justin De Witt. "They either had very little theme to them or were based more on the Dracula novel."

De Witt wasn't interested in the romanticized version of the creatures of the night.

"We wanted to touch on the more modern vampire tales that were very action-oriented and get back to treating them as the monsters they were in the original legends instead

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of sophisticated, beautiful creatures," he said.

Bloodsuckers is for two to four players.

One side acts as the vampires and the other takes on the role of hunters.

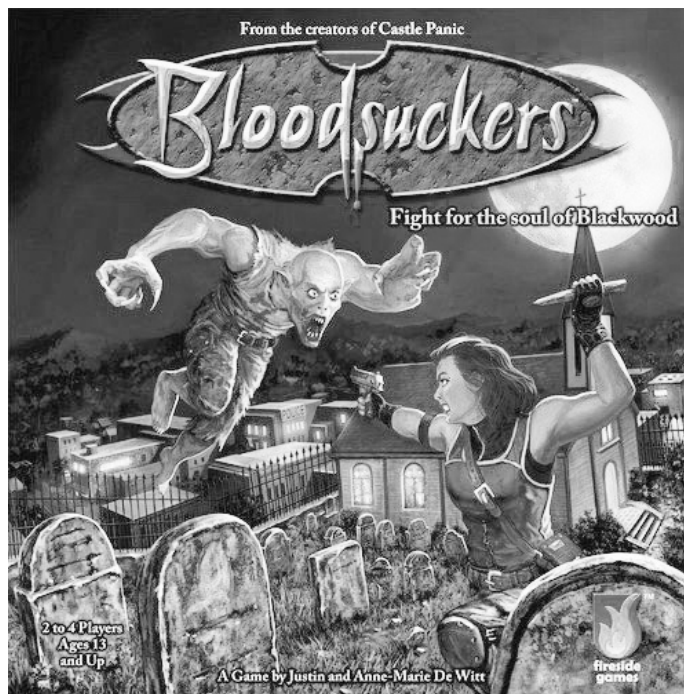
The battle takes place in the town of Blackwood, where players battle over five specific town locations (church, graveyard, hospital, police station and nightclub).

The game has a cool mechanic where townspeople (called bystanders) can join the battle, but they can also be turned into vampires, so both sides can make use of them.

There are also combat and weapon cards to enhance the action.

It all adds up to a fun play experience that is self-contained, meaning no new cards to buy as with other games.

"We wanted to have some of the card combination and strategic abilities that collectible card games offer, but not require a constant financial investment," De Witt



said. "The overall concept of the fight for the bystanders resulted from a desire to have something really at stake in each combat so that the hunters and vampires aren't merely fighting, they're fighting for something."

Bloodsuckers is a lot of fun and doesn't hurt your brain with overly complex rules. You can be up and running in minutes, and being able to play both sides or in teams means the game has good

replay value.

It retails for about \$40.

Fireside Games (fireside-games.com) also has another new game out, the recently released dice party game Bears!

Dice-rolling games have been around for a little while now, and Bears! takes the idea and puts a spin on it by adding a frantic race element.

While other dice-rollers like Zombie Dice have players rolling dice and scoring points separately, Bears! uses

two sets of dice, one for each player and one main pool that everyone uses.

The main dice pool is rolled and then everyone rolls their own dice, pairing up their own with ones from the main pool to score points.

The theme is that you are campers being overrun by hungry bears.

"With Bears! we wanted to emphasize the fun, communal spirit of gaming," De Witt said. "Anne-Marie designed it from the start to be an inexpensive, fast-playing, extremely social game that requires quick decision making."

Bears! is exactly as advertised, quick and fun and also a good game to break out with family members who might not be as interested in deeper games with lots of rules.

With Castle Panic and these two new games, Fireside Games is establishing a brand name that turns out fun, well-produced games in multiple genres.

A Castle Panic expansion called "The Wizard's Tower" will be released in late November.

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