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### Cosmic Encounter

[http://www.ideabout.com/fan\\_design/in\\_progress/ce\\_emporium\\_page.html](http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/ce_emporium_page.html)



### Fan Designed Cosmic Expansion Set - Current Work

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Before cards are dealt, place a random collection of three cards per player face down in one stack on this sheet. Draw any or all from Deck / Rewards / Techs. You may look at the cards at any time.

## People Who Like This



**Jefferson Krogh**

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**Matthew Scrivner**



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[San Leandro, California](#)

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## Discussion



### Cosmic Encounter

THE EMPORIUM Can Sell Merchandise

#### Game Setup

Before cards are dealt, place a random collection of three cards per player face down in one stack on this sheet. Draw any or all from Deck / Rewards / Techs. You may look at the cards at any time.

You have the power to merchandise. When you are the defensive main player, the offensive player may enter the Emporium in lieu of the encounter. The offense uses the hyperspace gate and may invite allies who can come along to the Emporium. You may invite allies who can also enter.

Following the timing rule, all buyers in the hyperspace gate must make a purchase with their own ships from the hyperspace gate. Cards cost one ship per card, sight unseen. You hold up EMPORIUM cards for random picks. Ships paid to you are placed on this sheet and count to your defense on any planet in your system. Ships not used to make purchases are returned to players normally. If you lose your power, all ships are returned to owners.

You may always have one card face up as an advertisement . . . at a price you set.

After the last purchases, the encounter ends successfully. Note, you may not buy from the Emporium. When the Emporium is empty draw new merchandise as if starting the game.

(Defensive Main Player Only) | (Optional ) | (Launch...Alliance)

#### History

TBD (post your draft for a Emporium history)

#### Wild

TBD

#### Super

You may embezzle one card per encounter from the store

. . . (Destiny)

February 7 at 1:09pm · Like



**Jefferson Krogh** Interesting, but I don't think it's powerful enough. Emporium's actual power is to be very difficult to attack. Why not add Emporium's "cash register" to offense as well?

Does Emporium ever get to buy his own cards? Seems not.

I assume the Emporium cards are off-limits, like Miser's hoard etc.

I'm intrigued by this power. Definitely different.

February 7 at 1:33pm · Like

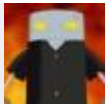
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**Bill Eberle** Thanks. Aliens don't have to super powerful to be great . . . they just have to be . . . really different. And get people interacting in new ways.

February 7 at 1:36pm · Like



**Matthew Scrivner** I guess piggy backing on Bill, my question would be, if I can obtain the emporium cards in other ways (such as through defensive rewards or tech research) what is my incentive to lose a ship to the Emporium?

What about making a prescribed Emporium deck with really powerful / crazy / interesting effects that are unique and do not enter play if Emporium isn't in the game?

February 7 at 2:49pm · Like



**Bill Martinson** But if an alien is not competitive, then players are less likely to choose it and it fails to "get people interacting in new ways" because it is more likely to stay in the box. Most players do not have the same motivations as the game designers.

My response to this concept is that it's too detailed to be quickly grasped by the reader, and seems to either (a) hurt me or (b) hurt me. I will explain:

(a) Assuming my opponents find value in the store and have a reason to purchase cards, then they have all the control. My opponent chooses whether or not the store is open, I can only "sell" cards when I'm the defense, I have no control over what anyone purchases, and my opponent gets first pick and can see what the card backs are. Furthermore, this is a successful encounter for him. If it's worth the other players' ships to purchase cards, then they must be getting value from those cards that *\*exceeds\** the value I get from the ships they pay me. Thus I am losing ground.

(b) But really, my opponents are probably *\*not\** going to find value in the store. The fact that I can never buy from the store myself means I should only put the weakest cards in it. Understanding this, the other players have little incentive to purchase them because they know I will have loaded it with as much junk as possible.

The supposed benefit to me of all this is a defensive power increase, which is not very desirable. It has long been recognized by the player community that being "harder to encounter" is one of the least-useful and least-liked concepts for an alien power.

Another issue is the lack of decision-making during the game. Once I've loaded the store with goods, the thing is automatic. My "participation" amounts to inviting (not compelling, just inviting) shoppers and then holding up the cards for others to purchase. I am a vending machine.

However, the largest obstacle to be overcome is probably the fact that this is a "permission alien". You get no benefit from it unless your opponents *\*allow\** you to. It didn't really work for aliens like Hertz, Lloyd, and Force, and I'm sorry to have to say it won't work for Emporium either, at least not in its current form.

Suggestions for improvement:

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- \* Let the Emporium player decide when the store is open, not his opponent.
- \* Give the Emporium player access to some of the cards somehow, so he has a reason to put good ones in the store.
- \* Swing the benefit of card purchases in Emporium's favor, not everyone else's favor.
- \* Above all, don't let the other players deny Emporium using his power for the entire game. This is a death blow for any alien.
- \* Give it a name suitable for an alien, not the place where an alien /works/. An emporium is a building or an open lot, not a creature. One suggestion would be Emporos, the Greek word for 'merchant'.

February 7 at 2:58pm · Like · 1



**Sam Connolly** Bill hits the nail on the head once again. Permission alien + only benefit to self is bonus to own total as defense + does nothing during the game + makes all opponents into Kamikaze = bad.

Also, this may just be a pet peeve of mine, but I don't like the phrase "ends successfully" (previously seen on Mite) because it doesn't specify what KIND of successful encounter has occurred - is it a successful deal or a win for the offense? Is it a successful deal, a win, or a loss for the defense? Or is it some weird undefined unnamed uncategorizable third type of successful encounter mentioned nowhere in the rules and only obliquely referred to on a couple of these powers? A number of game effects care about the distinction between these.

February 7 at 3:32pm · Like · 1



**Bill Martinson** Quite right, Sam. Successful/unsuccessful is insufficient. I hadn't really gotten to that level of review yet, since the core concept has so much to address before we drill down.

February 7 at 3:44pm · Like · 1



**Sam Connolly** ^Indeed, and normally I wouldn't bring up what looks like a wording issue at this point, but I do rather hope that emphasizing that every successful encounter must be one or the other will put some emphasis on why the power is bad now - it gives the power's own holder no options and no interaction. At least the Mite only gets its ambiguous successful encounter if the defense agrees, which in a certain sense makes it "deal-ish". Here, the Emporium can neither oppose the offense's move (as in a win) nor is needed to permit it (as in a deal). It feels like nailing down what type of successful encounter is intended here could also help nail down what the Emporium's role is supposed to be (since currently it has neither role and is thus as you note reduced to vending machine).

Here's another question: unless the offense is the Grudge, why would the offense want to invite others to go to the Emporium? The offense would just be helping the invitee (by letting them buy a card) and the Emporium (with the defense bonus) at no benefit to itself.

February 7 at 3:57pm · Like

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**Jefferson Krogh** So about the core concept: does anyone here have fundamental objections to the idea of one alien hoarding some of the cards and selling them to other players? If not, let's think in terms of business. This is a \*business\* alien. Let me channel my inner Donald Trump for a few. \*grabs toupee\*

If I am the Emporium, what do I need from these transactions to make them profitable enough to bother with? Bonuses to my defensive encounter total are not going to be enough for me, I'm afraid. After all, I'm hoping my opponents just don't attack me at all, and go shopping instead! In that case I get very little. No, I want more.

If I am an opponent of the Emporium, what do I need to get to make this deal worth doing? First, I want to know what I'm buying, and I want to know that it's worth losing a ship permanently, plus a whole encounter. In other words, this card better guarantee me a colony on a later turn, or else it's a waste of time.

**Bill Eberle**, this is what I really mean about the alien being not strong enough. The offer just isn't tempting for either side as it stands. That can be fixed. Here are my suggestions:

1) Have Emporium select 1 card per player, similar to Aristocrat. These cards go face UP on his sheet. They're off-limits to all powers blah blah.

2) When Emporium is a main player, after alliances are formed, he may use his power to open negotiations instead of continuing with the encounter. Normal rules apply, but Emporium can offer face up cards from his sheet as part of the deal. This should be the only way to get those cards into the game. Forget paying with ships; let players decide for themselves if they want to pay Emporium for a great card, or suffer the consequences of a failed deal.

I know this is a near-total rewrite, but I think it's a vast improvement.

February 7 at 4:04pm · Like



**Sam Connolly** "2) When Emporium is a main player, after alliances are formed, he may use his power to open negotiations instead of continuing with the encounter." - careful, we're getting dangerously close to making Emporium a super-Empath.

February 7 at 4:16pm · Like



**Jefferson Krogh** Poor Empath. I feel his pain.

I considered suggesting simply that Emporium could use his power to offer face-up cards during a normal deal, but that doesn't feel like quite enough. That's an alien that will often never get to use its power. He has to be able to force the issue, somehow.

February 7 at 4:28pm · Like

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**Bill Martinson** A near-total rewrite is needed, I'm afraid. It just doesn't work in its current form. Here's another way to think about this: It can be said that the difference between a /toy/ and a /game/ is that the game has clear incentives and/or disincentives that move the action along in the general direction anticipated by the designer. The original proposal lacks those incentives; the action is likely to languish, because it is virtually impossible to fulfill the competing needs for the purchase to be a net benefit for both the purchaser and the Emporium.

Some kind of different approach, perhaps like what [Jefferson Krogh](#) proposes, will be needed. If the Emporium has no control and no way to force the issue, it will become either a non-power or an anti-power depending on whether there's enough incentive for the other players to pillage the Emporium or not.

February 7 at 4:34pm · Like · 2



**Sam Connolly** @Jefferson: Offering cards in normal deals strikes me as something akin to the Zombie's ability to free ships from the Warp in deals: a nice added bonus on top of a mediocre but related power, but a bad power taken on its own. I'd love to see that be part of the power, but that's nowhere near enough to be the entire power.

February 7 at 4:48pm · Like



**Jefferson Krogh** I agree, Sam; that's why I suggested making his power the ability to force negotiations. I concede the similarity to Empath, but I think that it will play quite differently in practice. So much depends on which cards Emporium selects during game setup.

It probably wouldn't hurt to stipulate that Emporium has to have a face-up card on his sheet to force a negotiation.

February 7 at 4:56pm · Like



**Sam Connolly** Perhaps some sort of power to make three-way deals akin to the Diplomat - whenever any deal is being discussed, the Emporium (or whatever name ends up being used, since this version is the shop coming to the shoppers rather than the other way around, so it's more like a traveling salesman) is allowed to offer its wares to the dealing players. As an added incentive to buy from the Emporium, if you fail to deal but buy from the Emporium, you do not lose three ships to the Warp for failing to deal (but your opponent, if they did not also make a purchase and is not themselves the Emporium, still does).

Of course, the price still needs to be one that makes this worth the Emporium's while - a permanent +1 on the defense is hardly worth giving away good cards and saving others' ships from the Warp. But this feels like one natural way of creating an opportunity to sell, since it would trigger when people are naturally discussing exchanging cards anyhow, and since it doesn't depend on Emporium being a main player, it will get a chance to be used.

February 7 at 4:58pm · Like

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**Bill Martinson** We should be looking for something that isn't Empath-with-a-twist or Diplomat-with-a-twist. The power should do something new.

- \* Sell them a card and TAKE their money, whether they want the card or not.
- \* Make them pay a "licensing fee" to play or reveal any card that matches a card you have in your portfolio (you own the IP).
- \* Make them buy ALL of their cards from you (whenever they would normally draw).

Let's get outside the box.

February 7 at 5:08pm · Like · 2



**Jefferson Krogh** Continuing to brainstorm here, before I focus too much on the neat shiny ideas Bill M. just posted...ooh shiny....

- \* The face-up cards on Emporium's sheet are available as rewards, but for each card taken, Emporium gets two normal rewards. (In this case, Emporium should get to reload his store when he runs out; maybe from his hand, maybe not). I know it's Remora with a twist, but I hope it's a very big twist.

February 7 at 5:34pm · Like



**Gerald Katz** This is Hurtz in a non-Lucre environment. I don't like this power because everyone can just ignore it. Why should I give Emporium ships just for a card and an unknown card at that? If I want cards, I'll ally defensively. Doesn't matter what the cards are. With everyone ignoring the power, no one uses the card so I'm not disadvantaged. Maybe my power's Flare is there, but I'm not desperate for it. Philanthropist does this better. Fido does this better.

February 7 at 5:53pm · Like · 2

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**Jack Reda** Perhaps something along the lines of incentives that the alien can put out to make a player do something (like not attack), which if that player passes on, the alien receives them. So for instance, if you draw Emporium (for lack of better name for now), he can show you 2 cards from his stack to not attack and end your turn. If you take them, your turn ends. If not, Emporium gets the cards. He can reveal one good card and one cruddy one. And maybe "not attack Emporium" isn't enough, and there are other (or additional) instances when he can sell you his wares.

February 7 at 7:37pm · Like



**Greg Filpus** You could also remove the consent element by punishing your opponents (or rewarding yourself) for not buying in:  
 \* You choose numplayers cards to put up per sale. Each other player may buy one card. Then, you take any or all of the cards nobody else bought for free. (quasi-Fido)  
 \* Anyone who is invited and doesn't buy in loses something. Maybe a ship of your choice, if the normal fee is two. (quasi-Grudge)

February 7 at 7:57pm · Like



**Greg Filpus** \* You auction off cards, and force a player to make the minimum bid. If nobody else wants the card, your patsy is stuck with it.

February 7 at 7:58pm · Like



**Jefferson Krogh** You could call that alien PUSHER, heh.

February 7 at 9:13pm · Like



**Christopher Aurel Oliveira** Jack's idea sounds like a Pavlov variant, which isn't bad at all. However I don't think aliens like this can EVER work because Lucre as a currency system has no inherent value in itself, as its value is only based upon what it was spent on; whereas cards and ships have inherent value, and cards have varying value depending on how high the attack or how severe the effect of a non encounter card. Therefore to make the purchased item and the currency used both come from inherently valuable things is counter-intuitive and just further



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highlights the need for SOME kind of money system even if it's not an official FFG thing, like Jack's excellent Planetary Profiles for example. Making ships into cash is just sloppy, and would equally be sloppy to discard cards to gain ships, because it would be a from hand-cleanser.

February 7 at 11:42pm · Like



**Bill Martinson** I had to read that a couple of times to understand which direction you were arguing in (I thought at first you were saying Jack's idea cannot ever work), but I agree. If the money is based on an existing component, the commerce mechanic will always be in competition with, and often subverted by, the game's core operations and the normal value of whatever component is chosen. In other words, if we don't make it so ridiculously broken for somebody that they can't help but exploit it, it's likely to get ignored and be even less "well received" than the original Lucre.

And, as you point out, if the unit of currency is based on an existing component which is already loaded with its own intrinsic value and subject to myriad other effects, the highly variable nature of the alien powers destroys this money system's neutrality. Things like Zombie and Symbiote value ships very differently than most aliens; same with things like Remora and Glutton where cards are concerned. So even if it were somehow theoretically possible to precisely tune Emporium so the benefit to buyer and seller was perfectly in balance, the presence of any of the dozens off aliens and other effects that re-value the money component would throw it all out of whack and break Emporium. Imagine the rulebook containing a big, ugly list of Do Not Use Withs.

February 8 at 8:08am · Like



**Jefferson Krogh** I think that's overstating things. Emporium doesn't absolutely need an absolutely valued 'currency' to be effective, usable and fun. Different aliens value ships in different ways, but guess what? So do different players.

Nonetheless, I do lean towards letting the game state dictate the value of things as much as possible. This is why I suggested making Emporium play off of the existing negotiation rules somehow. Give him his special "store" as extra bargaining chips, and some way to trigger more negotiations, and then I think he'll benefit.

February 8 at 10:30am · Like



**Jefferson Krogh** That avoids the "relative value" question nicely, but on the other hand, it probably needs to be differentiated further from Empath. Maybe after coffee I'll have a better idea how to do that...mmmcoffee...

February 8 at 10:33am · Like · 1

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**Cosmic Encounter** I think emporium can be a power broker by putting cards up for sale situationally. What if the store is always open?

February 8 at 11:19am · Like



**Bill Martinson** Hurtz put up cards, powers, and moons for sale situationally, his store was always open, he could sell materials that weren't even in the game, he had total freedom to negotiate prices ... Hurtz outclassed Emporium in just about every possible measure, and yet Hurtz simply did not work. The opponents ignored it and thus it was forever relegated to non-power status. It's one of the least-liked official powers of all time.

There's a lesson there about the viability of the core concept here.

February 8 at 12:17pm · Like



**Jefferson Krogh** Coffee consumed...vague ideas forming...trying to make them coalesce...maybe if I reroute power through the holodeck...

After Destiny is drawn, Emporium secretly shows the defense one of his Emporium cards and names a price. Price can be cards from defense's hand, a colony, or X number of rewards. If defense refuses to pay, the card is discarded and he loses 2 (?) ships to the warp. When Emporium comes up in Destiny, he can just move a card from his store into his hand.

This leaves open the questions of how many cards Emporium chooses in game setup. I guess this works best with face-down store cards.

I am determined to find a way to make this power work. My gut tells me it can. We just have to burn some brain cells to go where no alien has gone before.

February 8 at 12:39pm · Like



**Bill Martinson** That's in a good direction, [Jefferson Krogh](#), but I'm not crazy about the ship-penalty in a context where the story we're trying to tell is one of merchandizing (rather than extortion). It seems to say "we know powers that sell things never work, so here's a hammer to the head to force it to work". What if we soften that a bit by making it a benefit for Emporium instead of a hammer on the defense? And what if we let him choose which main player he wants to market to?

"When you are not a main player, after alliances are formed, you /\*may use\*/ this power to show one of the main players one card from your store. You and that player now have 60 seconds to barter, following the normal rules for deals. The deal must include giving the shown card to the other player, and it may include that player giving you one or more ships from his colonies, which you place on this sheet. If no deal is made, there is no penalty but you may take the shown card into your

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own hand."

Second paragraph would explain what happens with ships on your sheet. Or maybe this doesn't even need the ship element any more.

Anyway, now this has an alliance angle: both main players have an incentive to invite you since you can sell them something to help them win.

February 8 at 12:52pm · Like



**Bill Martinson** I'm a little concerned that my suggestion above could devolve into the player always giving his cards to himself by refusing to deal, so here's a variation:

"When you are not a main player, after alliances are formed, you /\*may use\*/ this power to show one of the main players one card from your store. You and that player now have 60 seconds to barter, following the normal rules for deals. The deal must include giving the shown card to the other player. If no deal is reached, there is no penalty but the other player may buy the card from you outright by placing three of his or her ships, from colonies, onto this sheet. If there is no deal and no purchase, you may take the shown card into your own hand."

February 8 at 1:16pm · Like



**Jefferson Krogh** I'm trying to get away from the ships-on-the-sheet thing entirely, in case that wasn't clear. I just don't like that part, and am trying to give Emporium other benefits.

I don't mind moving to the Alliance phase like that; I suggested Destiny to differentiate Emp from Philanthropist and similar aliens. I agree about the "hammer" part. Perhaps instead of the defense losing ships, the Emporium discards the offered card and draws a card from the deck -- in other words, he sells that card to an NPC!

February 8 at 1:27pm · Like



**Christopher Aurel Oliveira** Sorry for the confusion over the prior post, the comment on Jack's idea and the rest of the post were separate thoughts. I am a far better oral communicator than written. However, it seems to me that this is better off as a variant of "The Cosmall" (cosmos + mall) or something where the shop is always open or whatnot, but then again that requires prices and that's where things get sticky.

February 8 at 2:26pm · Like

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**Bill Martinson** Fully support getting rid of ships-on-sheets.

Alliance phase suggestion is to support the invitation incentive.

Offering a card and then drawing from the deck seems an awful lot like Fido.

February 8 at 3:38pm · Like



**Jefferson Krogh** You're right, of course. D'oh! Fido is even one of my favorite powers, though I was just thinking last night that I hadn't seen it played in years.

I think I have to concede -- your writeup works better overall, though I still think doing it in Destiny has its merits. Let Emp just put the card in his hand if no deal is struck. But then let Emp choose the cards, Aristo-style, during game setup. That makes the hammer keeping Emp from taking all the best cards for himself as the game goes on.

February 8 at 4:20pm · Like



**Sam Connolly** I'm still kind of worried that "you get to make freeform deals willy-nilly" could make this start to tread on Empath's or Diplomat's territory; it seems like a recipe for allowing the Emporium to make lots of colony-for-colony trades, oh and also a card changes hands I guess.

February 8 at 8:16pm · Like



**Jefferson Krogh** Emp should be allowed only to offer the card, I think.

February 9 at 1:17am · Like

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**Bill Martinson** You guys are probably right ... too many colony-for-colony deals is unbalanced, and detracts from the story of selling merchandise.

Now, if he can only offer the card, then I don't see a lot of deals consummating. The other player probably needs to have more options for things he can give in exchange, or this power will almost always result in Emp keeping the card he shows. That feels like it's bringing us back to the need to use some game component as money that the other player can 'pay' him.

And I still think the other player needs a 'purchase outright' option or Emp can just keep every card and this devolves into the mutant superbaby of Aristocrat and Miser.

February 9 at 7:45am · Like · 1



**Bill Martinson** Now, back to the name ... Emporium doesn't work because that is not an alien, it is a building. Or an open square. It's the venue where the alien works. Cosmic Encounter doesn't name aliens SCHOOL, FIREHOUSE, or TOOLSHED. It calls them TEACHER, FIREMAN, MECHANIC.

Couple of starter ideas: PEDDLER, VENDOR, EMPOROS (that's Greek for merchant).

The real name for this alien, of course, is MERCHANT. It's perfect; the thing even has the power to merchandise! But sadly FFG already wasted that one on a power that has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with merchandise. A MERCHANT has a supply of goods, sells them, earns money, replenishes his shop — exactly what we're trying to do here. FFG's "merchant" does \*none\* of those things; even though I love its gameplay, it is one of the most poorly named aliens in Cosmic Encounter history.

This is why I urge people to keep looking until they find the right name for their alien idea. When you give up early and pick the wrong name, you not only make your own power sound lame but you could be stealing the perfect name from some other alien yet to be designed. It took a few years, but we are experiencing those consequences right now — and this was 100% foreseeable and avoidable.

(Which reminds me ... [Peter Olotka](#) and [Bill Eberle](#), if you are still planning to make that three-card-monte alien, then it is important to save the name GRIFTER for that alien.)

February 9 at 8:00am · Like · 2



**Jefferson Krogh** MART would be a fine name.

February 9 at 11:20am · Like

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**Jefferson Krogh** There are lots of aliens with names that aren't what they do, but what they are -- HUMAN, SPIFF, GENIUS, MACRON, etc. etc.

February 9 at 11:21am · Like



**Bill Martinson** Yes, but Emporium is NEITHER what the alien is nor what it does. Human, Spiff, Genius, and Macron are all names for aliens/things that could be aliens, not \*places\*. We wouldn't name an alien PLAYGROUND or HOSPITAL. We would name it CHILD or DOCTOR.

February 9 at 1:17pm · Like



**Jefferson Krogh** Right. Sorry, that was more about MART not being an occupation like MERCHANT or PEDDLER.

February 9 at 2:46pm · Like



**Peter Olotka** As designers we like to not prejudge how players will react to certain aliens. And comparisons to aliens x y and z to justify or refute a new alien are not too useful unless the new alien is a duplicate of x y or z. With Cosmic Alliance we have 110 aliens. It is a certainty that every Cosmic player will like some aliens over others. And that some aliens will be preferred in greater numbers than other aliens. But as designers we have to remember that most cosmic players play the game according to the rules which direct players to get an alien at random. We were deliberate about having the game played this way because it is a fact that Cosmic delivers surprises to players game after game based on a combination of aliens. Cosmic Encounter is NOT about winning the game because you had the BEST alien. It is about playing the alien you have and making the best use of it, given the opposition. If as a PLAYER you would not like to be a given alien, that should have zero bearing on being able to design it. The design ethos should be "Lets add content that makes playing the game feel different." As for the the strong opinions on new content being so bad that "no one will play it" I have to say that in our design session I can't recall us collectively having such emotionally charged foresight to know what would be great or what would be terrible. Our standard was will this be interesting to someone?

February 9 at 5:13pm · Unlike · 2

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**Peter Olotka** PS... aliens are not driven by Earthly naming customs.

February 9 at 5:15pm · Unlike · 2



**Peter Olotka** To make a name like Emporium work, one only needs to write the history of how it came into being.

February 9 at 5:18pm · Like



**Jefferson Krogh** I enjoy playing new aliens quite a bit. In fact, I can recall only 2 times out of 70+ with the FFG edition where we've picked specific aliens to play, vs. the standard random choice. And, given a choice between an alien I've played before and one I haven't, I will always choose the latter.

With 110 aliens, and more coming in future expansions, the room for each alien to be completely unique in all aspects of its mechanics, description, and theme is really small. I agree that we should worry a lot less about alien X resembling alien Y in some fashion, as long as both are interesting.

Anyway, I think we're having a very good discussion about this alien. (I really want to call him MART. Mart is a guy you'd trust. You'd buy stuff from a guy named Mart. Mart's friendly; he's not out to cheat you, really he's not!)

February 9 at 5:25pm · Unlike · 1



**Peter Olotka** Citadel is a place

February 9 at 5:26pm · Like



**Peter Olotka** MART is nice

February 9 at 5:26pm · Like

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**Peter Olotka** THE CHEAT...power of honesty, no, really

February 9 at 5:27pm · Like · 1



**Bill Martinson** Let's see if that principle is really as absolute as it sounds...

"To make a name like Apple Pie or Pedophile or Popeye the Sailor Man work, one only needs to write the history of how it came into being."

Doesn't sound like it works to me. Sounds like some things inherently have higher quality and higher suitability than others. Why aren't we aiming for the higher quality? Why are we always trying to justify the lower quality? If something can be tolerable, good, or great, why don't we shoot for great? It's pretty hard to remain enthusiastic about aiming for mediocrity.

February 9 at 5:30pm · Like



**Bill Martinson** Back to the earlier comments, your theory about alien selection was applicable to the Eon rule set, which did not allow player choice. But FFG is different; it does *not* force players to pick one alien at random and play it. The FFG ruleset gives you a choice between two. Given the fact that almost all of the FFG aliens are reasonably competitive, then when a player draws one that is "non-competitive but interesting to the designers" it is highly likely that his other choice will be more favorable, and thus he is likely to put the "interesting to the designers" alien back in the box more often than not.

I don't understand this idea that as long as something is interesting to a handful of people it deserves more of a chance of getting published than something that is interesting to a *lot* of people.

What's wrong with designing aliens that are interesting to the designers *and* to the players? Why isn't that the goal? Are we resigning ourselves to saying that we are not capable of achieving both?

February 9 at 5:32pm · Like



**Bill Martinson** And Jefferson, I'm sorry, but MART just sounds wrong to me. As if there were an alien called GAS STATION or something. It just doesn't seem to fit the whimsical artistry of Cosmic Encounter.

February 9 at 5:33pm · Like



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**Bill Martinson** Citadel is a perfect example of a weak name. Just because we can find a bad example in FFG doesn't mean we should repeat it.

February 9 at 5:35pm · Like



**Bill Eberle** EMPATH was a place, a whole planet really. Artists who have created it as a single life form have missed our original "point" about what this alien and it's power are all about. Ditto the ORDER, I envision it as a place also, a sort of cathedral which holds other aliens in its thrall and convinces them to do its bidding (the player playing the EMPATH or the ORDER are acolytes of a sort . . .).

Thus also the EMPORIUM, a certain kind of place where certain kinds of things happen.

February 9 at 5:40pm · Like



**Jack Reda** I'm okay with a name like Emporium. I find it easy to imagine other kinds of lifeforms that defy conventional tags- Emporium could be steeped in myth- the place aliens heard magical items can be obtained, but in reality it's a living entity that can command ships to conquer the cosmos... and dah dah dah. I'm more concerned that it's an alien that has an ability that feels unique and will be fun to play (without feeling like a nightmare to play against).

February 9 at 5:49pm · Like · 1



**Peter Olotka** Weak is in the mind's eye of the beholder. One could imagine a raft of aliens that were places. Being a place frees up creative possibilities. the RAFT power to drift, the Sewer, power to dispose, The rabbit hole, power to disappear, the Closet, power to conceal. I have my own name prejudice of course. I am not enthralled by names which don't convey meaning ... the Gsuynspid, the tr'oo'vairch...

February 9 at 5:52pm · Like



**Jefferson Krogh** For what it's worth, MART was a completely whimsical suggestion on my part, because it's both a reference to a place, and a very plausible guy's name. And I've known some very whimsical Martins in my time.

I don't think anyone is saying that we should choose random names because the names don't matter. The names do

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matter, but there's not an Official Taxonomy of Cosmic Encounter Alien Names.

Anyway, this all ties into what we were talking about over on BGG, about how different people's lives cause them to react differently to the same thing. MART strikes me as whimsical, but it doesn't do the same for you. That's just because we're different people, that's all. Doesn't mean we should use that name, just that it struck me as funny.

February 9 at 5:53pm · Like



**Jefferson Krogh** If you talk to those who study geopolitics, they will tell you very convincingly that where people live is vital to shaping how they behave. I imagine that would be true not just for humans, but for aliens as well. While humans see themselves as being apart from this planet, more often than not, it's not hard to imagine aliens that see themselves as one with their planet. Or being their planet, as is the case with something like Leviathan.

My main wish for alien names is that I can guess roughly what the power does from the name alone.

February 9 at 6:01pm · Unlike · 1



**Bill Eberle** I like "Mart" because it's funny and a nickname . . . for a place or a . . . funny looking alien

February 9 at 6:25pm · Like · 1



**Peter Olotka** In terms of prejudging what is and is not interesting, it's not designers vs players. Bill Eberle and I have the most experience as Cosmic Encounter designers, but all of the fan designers bring their own impressive credentials as cosmic players as well as their other life experiences - including game design in some cases. What we are expressing is a method of moving ahead that is supportive of aliens that are not stereotypes and are unorthodox. If existing aliens play a major role in determining future aliens, then we will be less likely to break the mold. Amongst the 110 current there are a fir number of "gets x cards, adds y points, has z more ships" aliens.

February 9 at 6:58pm · Like · 2



**Christopher Aurel Oliveira** Maybe the way this alien can work is that the "Market" is a handful of say 4 cards on your sheet. At the beginning of any encounter you may chose to take a card from your sheet and put it in your hand, unless another player wages a ship to the warp for it, and other players can auction for that card. Basically to stop you from getting free cards they have to lose ships. Just a thought.

February 9 at 11:37pm · Like

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**Gerald Katz** In one game I was Hurtz. It was an Eon game but used Mayfair's version where a set array of items was face up. A player had landed on a moon that made the game difficult for other players. Right there in my array was the home made edict Moon Zap. All anyone had to do was pay me a Lucre to zap the annoying Moon away. Despite everyone complaining about the moon, no one would give one stinking Lucre for the Moon Zap. In one encounter where I was an ally, we lost by 1. Lookie here, right in my array was a Reinforcement +2. No one on my side would give me a stinking Lucre for it. That game was not fun for me. I had no power. When players are willing to ignore a power because they can despite how doing so means they lose the encounter, the power sucks.

February 9 at 11:56pm · Like · 2



**Peter Olotka** Depends on the players Gerry

February 10 at 5:51pm · Like



**Peter Olotka** Anyone want to take a crack at a Version.2 for the Beta, based on latest commentary- then, I'll push it into cross check.

February 21 at 2:50pm · Like