

# Opening Summary



Athoria Games is for fun people who love all things geek! It is the best place in Arizona for creating a fun tabletop gaming experience.

We started Athoria Games out of a lifelong passion for tabletop games. Tabletop games include trading card games, tabletop war games, role-playing games, and classic board games. All these games test wits, nurture imagination, and, whether relaxing or thrilling, promise a fun time!

But more importantly, they have a special way of bringing people together for real, in-person interactions. Some gather in store for meet-ups and community events, while others exit excited to improve their games at home.

Athoria Games is a space set apart for games and what they can do... and it's a BIG space! We have the biggest gaming store in all of Arizona, filled with great tabletop products, and arranged with pride and professionalism. Our kind staff use their years of first-hand gaming insight to help people find the right game that fits their particular needs.

And in this gaming space everyone is welcome. Whether customer or employee, beginner or life-long hobbyist, we believe all people should be treated with respect. We are not an exclusive club for the "worthy" or "informed", but an open door home for anyone wanting to escape the stress of life for a little while.

So come on in, sit down, relax, and let's play a game!

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# Athoria Games At A Glance

- Tabletop gaming refers to games that can generally be played on a normal kitchen table. This obviously excludes outdoor games, but it also excludes indoor party games and video games.
- Athoria Games has a simple goal: to be the best game store in all of Arizona! We want to be so good people want to travel hours to visit our store... and they have!
- Our primary customers are A) individuals age 18-35 who have played tabletop games for years and B) families looking to disconnect from screens and reconnect over something fun they can play together.
- Our founding value is respect for everyone that walks through our doors; we are not happy unless guests feel welcomed under our roof. We even have additional diversity and equity training so staff can be careful to act in a way that communicates a sense of belonging to each visitor.
- Athoria Games are two of the largest game stores in Arizona (3500 sq ft), which enables us to display more products and offer more gaming space.
- We carry a wide variety of products for the most popular tabletop games like Magic the Gathering, Pokemon, Warhammer 40K, board games, Dungeons and Dragons, Battletech, and more!
- Our resources range from the basics to truly luxury items. We carry beginners packs or basic rules books for every game we support, but also niche miniatures and particularly powerful cards. We also have massive terrain pieces that players can use in store. Our Tempe Location has a Spanish Language section. We also accept and sell Trade-Ins at the Mesa Location, coming soon to Tempe.
- Nearly everyone (including us!) falls in love with tabletop games by playing with friends at home. We see ourselves as an essential resource for players wanting to improve their home gaming experience.
- The staff at Athoria Games is passionate about tabletop gaming, and is as excited to share that passion with fellow players as well as introduce that passion to curious

beginners. One of their primary roles is to listen to customers and help them find something that fits their needs.

- Wizards of the Coast, one of the biggest developers in tabletop gaming, has recognized our quality by awarding us premium status (“Wizards Play Network”). This also gives us access to special events, discounts, and products.



# The Athoria Games Story

In many ways, the story of Athoria Games is a love story!

It starts at a low point, in fall 2016, with Suzanne and Patrick Hug stressed out of their minds. They had spent years working long hours trying to make ends meet. And their jobs that left them...well... let's just say 'less than enthused'. Suzanne worked full time as an insurance executive and Patrick managed a game store.

Or at least, he *had* managed a game store. Long, tedious hours and unreasonable leadership had wiped him out, forcing him to quit in search of a fresh start. Suzanne completely understood... mostly because she felt the same way.

**Both knew this was not a life they loved and not the life they envisioned when they got married.**

One night, after tucking the kids into bed, Suzanne and Patrick had one of the most momentous “date nights” since their wedding. They sat down with a bottle of chianti, shared a thick slice of cheesecake, and by the flicker of the candle light began to talk about the future.

As they ate, drank, and laughed, they agreed that they missed each other and wanted to spend a lot more time together as a family. They realized that if they wanted life to change, it was up to them to make it happen.

**They needed to start their own business.**

Suzanne and Patrick were lifelong tabletop gamers, so immediately the idea of opening their own “friendly local game store” was attractive. They had always loved visiting gaming stores to test their skills against other tabletop veterans or pick up the latest expansion set. But now, they were parents, and wanted a place that was also a good fit for families and gaming novices.

**A place where children could be welcomed into the gaming community.**

They had the experience to support their dream: Patrick was knowledgeable in the gaming industry, and Suzanne understood the management and finance aspects of business. It was daunting, but they recognized that if anyone could do it, it was them.

But there was one obstacle that stood in their way: the danger of middle management. They knew how quickly financial concerns can take over and how tempting it is to do whatever it takes to succeed. It was a toxic environment they were relieved to have escaped, and they never, ever wanted to put each other back in that position or put anyone else under that yoke.

If Athoria Games was going to be different, they would have to INSIST on making it so. So they made a promise... a commitment that has never ceased at Athoria Games:

**That above all else, people matter.**

People would come first at Athoria Games. Their kids... their marriage.. their staff... the community... and any potential customer that walks through the doors... all have an inherent dignity that cannot be violated or neglected. It would not matter the circumstance or challenge: RESPECT would dictate Athoria Games more than anything else.

In a few months, a viable business plan was established, money was collected, and the hunt for a location began.

**On April 1st, 2017 Athoria Games officially opened its doors... with 'respect' as its cornerstone.**

It wasn't long before a single part time staffer blossomed into a trained, helpful, and passionate full time team.

It was everything Suzanne and Patrick had dreamed; not only had they built a respectful tabletop gaming home in their community, but welcomed everyone and had a ton of fun! And best of all, they were spending even more time as a family, with many happy hours playing and working together.

**But after three years of amazing business... the Covid 19 Pandemic hit.**

For the first time since opening day, Athoria Games could not make a sale. Health risks and lockdowns had forced its doors closed. Athoria Games, so focused on bringing people together over the shared joy of games, was now just a storage space for products.

In a flash, Suzanne and Patrick had gone from dreaming of an even brighter future to fighting for survival. But as scary as it was, it was going to be ok. They were together in this, loved their work, and loved each other. They could find a path forward.

**Similar to their date night in 2016, Suzanne and Patrick took a short road trip to clear their heads and brainstorm with a fresh perspective.**

Soon the staff was back in the store for an "all hands on deck" meeting. Everyone agreed the pandemic had to be taken seriously, but they also agreed they could not wait on the government to save them. If Athoria Games was to remain a welcoming gaming store after the pandemic had passed, they would have to work to pivot to the new economy.

It was going to be tough, but now more than ever people needed home entertainment. Of course, respect, for the concerns of staff and customers, would still lead the way... that was non-negotiable. But Athoria Games had an advantage: their small size combined with a culture of open staff communication meant they could quickly adapt.

**So they got to work:**

- They reorganized the entire store.
- They categorize their inventory and converted their website to include online sales
- They instituted a strict mask mandate.
- They began offering curbside pick up.
- Working with the city of Mesa, they brought in sanitizing stations and lots of cleaning products.

- They started offering curbside pick up and started a Discord server to keep connected with our players.
- Athoria Games even sold their back stock of toilet paper to customers in need since the store was closed for in store shopping.

### **And it worked!**

This year Athoria Games celebrated its 5 year anniversary and most successful year ever.

Running a business still requires a lot of work, but Suzanne and Patrick approach it with joy and enthusiasm, just as they have in their 17 years of marriage. Not only that, but their sons, now 13 and 11, have begun helping out at the store, turning it into a true family business.

Beyond the basic day to day of running the store, Suzanne teaches Pokemon to kids and Patrick helps customers build Magic the Gathering decks. They both enjoy learning new board games and finding new ways to delight the friendly gaming community that shops and play at Athoria Games.

# Timeline

- **October 2016** - "Date night" conversation... the dream of Athoria Games begins.
- **April 2017** - Athoria Games opens, Suzanne and Patrick handling the day to day with a single part time staff member.
- **March 2019** - The first "Athoria-Con", a mini convention including local artists to meet the community and enjoy all day gaming.
- **March 2020** - During their 3rd anniversary party, the Covid -19 Pandemic hits. Athoria Games closes for a month. Business slowed and we had to reconsider the way we stocked items and served the community. We started offering curbside pick up and started a Discord server to keep connected with our players.
- **April 2020** - Suzanne and Patrick road trip to see a blacked out Vegas. After reconsidering their business strategy, they return and implement operational changes.
- **May 2020** - The Discord Server is started.
- **June 2020** - The hard work pays off. New customers arrive in droves and Athoria Games experiences growth during the worst of the pandemic.
- **May 2021** - Athoria Games begins a Loyalty Card program which increases customer retention significantly.
- **June 2021** - Athoria Games truly becomes a family business! our eldest son starts working as an intern on the weekends, and soon after his brother starts helping on Saturday morning to teach games to other kids.

- **September 2021**- Athoria Games earns Wizards Premium which gives us access to special events, discounts, and products.
- **December 2021** - Athoria Games celebrates its best year ever.
- **April 2022** - Athoria Games celebrates its 5th year anniversary!
- **August 2022** - Athoria Games soft opens Tempe Location.
- **October 2022** - Grand Opening for Tempe Location.

# Staff Bios

## Patrick

Patrick is an Arizona native and long time gamer. He earned a degree in History from ASU and played for many years in the Tempe area. He's excited to be returning to the gaming community of his younger days!

Patrick's love of TCG games runs long and deep. While his first love is the Decipher Star Wars TCG, he is also an avid Magic player. *Warning:* he likes to play Commander and is pretty good at it. Don't expect an easy win if you go up against him.

Beyond TCG games, Patrick enjoys a game of Blood Bowl or any board game as well. He's always down to brew up a strange character for a Dungeons & Dragons adventure.



## Suzanne

You can't have a "Mom and Pop shop" without an active and fun loving Mom!

Suzanne is originally from Salt Lake City, Utah and moved to Tempe to attend ASU. She earned a degree in Economics and fell in love with Arizona, and Patrick too!

Suzanne is a lifelong gamer, playing casual Magic in her high school cafeteria in the late 90s. She still enjoys a pick up game, and likes brewing tribal decks or playing in sealed events. She is a certified Pokémon Professor and



loves to teach the game to new players. Suzanne also runs My Little Pony RPG games, D&D 5e, and loves painting miniatures. She is the master of the Athoria Discord server and a friendly presence in person or online!

Patrick and Suzanne have two sons that have just reached the age to help out around the store! You can find them teaching other kids to play on weekends and during the summer. Beyond the store, Suzanne and Patrick relish traveling to see the world and enjoying a refined wine tasting along the way.



## **Our Staff**

Our staff is a team of fellow gamers and wonderful human beings. Their love of tabletop games have resulted in a level of product knowledge envied by most businesses. Without them nothing we do would be possible!

Never wanting mere retail workers, we developed a proprietary employment application to find staff who also have customer service skills. Staff not only perform basic work tasks (inventory, customer relations, stocking, etc.) but often take turns teaching the games and even sitting down to play themselves!

We strive for low turnover so that we can support one another as a staff and d8 leadership book.

All employees are guaranteed predictable and fixed hours, receive constant product discounts, and full time employees are allowed to join the company's 401k plan. To sum it up, we treat our staff the way we wished we had been treated!



# Mission and Values

## **Vision**

Athoria Games seeks to be the best tabletop game store in all of Arizona. To us, that means a radically hospitable place for all tabletop gamers, providing everything they need to create amazing tabletop experiences.

## **Mission**

Athoria Games exists to meet the needs of its tabletop community. It doesn't matter if the player has decades of experience or is just starting out; we'll have what they need and we'll make sure they find it.

This is accomplished through a large but welcoming store space filled with a vast range of products. We then fill our store with a fun and friendly staff who have personally played these games for years. Their intimate knowledge combined with a respectful attitude guarantees that a visitor will not only get what they need, but feel like they belong, and be excited to play some more.

## **Values**

Our three values of respect, kindness, and fun are the guiding lights that lead all decisions at Athoria Games.

**Respect:** Respect is the founding principle of Athoria Games. People matter and no business goal or operation can change that. Whether staff member or customer, everything at Athoria Games starts and ends with 'respect' for every person we encounter.

**Kindness:** Here customers are noticed, heard, and helped by people with kind hearts. As soon as they step through our doors, a visitor should feel accepted as they are and reminded that they belong. After all, an invitation to a game is an invitation to friendship!

**Fun:** Athoria Games is owned and operated by people who have many happy memories playing tabletop games, and we intend to pay it forward! Games are meant to be fun, and the methods, rules, and behaviors we promote should encourage and protect everyone's right to have fun playing tabletop games.

# Who We Serve

**People who walk into Athoria Games are looking for A) entertaining tabletop games to play with their friends and family and B) accessories to make those games better.**

Such broad needs create a diverse customer base, which we treasure as one of our primary business strengths. Among that population there are two general demographics:

A large portion of our customers are seasoned gamers; people that have been playing some of the most classic tabletop games for decades. Many of these customers appreciate that our staff and leadership share their passion and can both play and discuss the games they love at their level.

The other significant group of visitors are families: parents and children curious about the hype surrounding tabletop gaming. Many of these families are looking for new ways to reconnect with one another, and to use games as a fun tool to develop important skills as their kids grow up.

Athoria Games joyfully exists in the midst of these two groups, and it is our privilege to join them together into a funny and cheerful community! Every week we get to share the enthusiasm with a fellow tabletop veteran, and a moment later witness a young player discover the joy of tabletop gaming for the first time.

Every game is a shared experience that naturally builds relationships, and often these relationships extend outside of the store. Beyond making new friends, we are honored that some customers include us in the highs and lows of their lives, coming to the store to celebrate a promotion or seeking comfort following a tragic loss.

# The Stores



One reason people play tabletop games is to momentarily escape the chaos and anxieties of life. Nothing like a quick game for a little rest and relaxation!

We designed our stores with this in mind so that whether people enter the store to shop or play, the atmosphere would reflect and encourage their ideal gaming experience.

Many game shops are small, dark, and cluttered, but not Athoria Games! All of our 3500 sq ft stores are spacious, clean, tidy, and yet packed with gaming products. The aisles are comfortably spaced apart and the store is painted with soft, calming colors. And once we fill the space with our accepting community and helpful employees, the result

is a tabletop paradise that is bright, inviting, and fun!

Throughout the pandemic, we wanted to make sure players could focus on the game and not on the risks of infection. So we had plenty of disinfectants and insisted on masks while indoors.



# Events

While we specialize in helping people improve their home games, lots of people would rather play in the store itself. And since everyone's schedule is different we offer events every day of the week, including weekends! These events tend to focus on Dungeons and Dragons, Magic the Gathering, and Pokemon. Each event has a small entry fee and registration begins 30 min before the event begins. We also run special events like Magic and Pokemon pre-release events, Commander Party Nights, Free RPG day.

## **Athoria Games Mesa Summer 2022 Weekly Event Schedule**

Monday: 5pm-8pm Magic Commander League \$14.99/mo

Tuesday: 5pm-8pm D&D Adventure League \$7.99 entry

Wednesday: 5pm-8pm Pokemon Standard Play \$4.99 entry

Thursday: 5pm-8pm MTG Commander pods \$1.99/game

Friday: 6pm-10pm FNM MODERN \$4.99 entry

6:30pm -10pm Magic Draft \$14.99 entry

Saturday: 12pm-2pm Pokemon Youth Play (ages 6-15) \$4.99 entry

4pm-8pm MTG Commander pods \$1.99/game

Sunday: 12pm-4pm Sunday MTG Commander League \$14.99/mo

12pm - 4pm Digimon Learn & Play \$4.99 entry

# Our Products

**Athoria Games sell the products necessary to play tabletop games, which includes miniatures, rule books, terrain pieces, dice, painting supplies, boxed games, and trading cards. We only work through verified distributors to make sure all our products are genuine.**

**While we carry a variety of tabletop games, below is a survey of our most popular products.**

### **Trading Card Games (TCG's)**

Also known as "collectible card games", TCG's involve no board or pieces other than uniquely drawn and designed cards (approx the same size as baseball or the cards found in a standard deck). Unlike all the other tabletop games, TCG's technically do not require a table: players could easily play on the ground, but a table sure is handy!

TCG's involve two elements:

1) Players construct a deck by buying card packs, individual cards, or trading with other players. Each card has specific rules printed on them that describe how they uniquely impact the game. The abilities of cards can influence one another, giving players innumerable combinations to choose from when forming their particular strategy. Each game has rules that limit the size of a player's deck and the type of cards they can put in their deck. Each player constructs their deck from hundreds or thousands of approved cards, making no two decks the same!

2) Using their deck, players face off against a single opponent (usually) with their opposing uniquely constructed deck. Players draw cards from their assembled decks and strategically play them against the other player. Cards come in varying power and ability: certain cards enable cards to be played, others can enhance or block abilities; some are played on your cards and some against the opponents cards. Players must be conscious of how they play and when they play, balancing their resources so they always have the advantage.

### **Popular TCG: Magic the Gathering**

The first trading card game developed in the early 90's, Magic the Gathering (or MTG) involves players acting as wizards in a duel, casting spells against one another until they reduce their opponents points from 20 to 0. For a spell to be cast, a "land" card must be played, providing the "mana" for the spells to be cast. Each spell summons creatures, enhances creatures, or blocks abilities. Often the opposing player can play cards during the others turn, creating a labyrinth of moves. The cards are based around 5 colors, each with attached to different metaphors and strategies: red (passion), black (self interest), white (righteousness), blue (intellect), and green (nature).

MTG was the first trading card game and it got popular quick! Within its first year of publication (1993), it sold 1 billion cards. At the height of its popularity it sold 20 billion cards in a single year; stores literally could not keep them on the shelves. Though its popularity ebbs and flows, it always has a widespread and devoted following. At this point, the game has literally tens of thousands of cards for players to choose from when constructing their decks. New card releases are a big deal at every game store, and there are hundreds of regional annual conventions and tournaments across the country.



### **Popular TCG: Pokemon**

Rather than through magic and spells, Pokemon stands for “pocket monsters”, and theorizes a world where people can catch and train wild creatures to fight in one on one duels. The creatures are fantastic and are themed around elemental abilities, creating “fire” types and “water” types, and so on. It is a simpler game than MTG, and thus is often used as a great introductory game to TCGs.

Unlike MTG, Pokemon’s huge popularity was largely gained outside of the original trading card game. It exploded in popularity with the wildly successful “Pokemon: Blue and Red version” on Nintendo’s Gameboy color. Its most popular character, Pikachu, has been adopted as one of the most beloved characters in all of Japan. The game spun off into a popular animated TV show through the early 2000’s, has released multiple animated movies in theaters, and recently released a live action film with Pikachu (voiced by Ryan Reynolds).



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## Role-Playing Games

Table Top Role-Playing Games (TTRPG) are the most unique form of tabletop game. TTRPG's blend "improv acting", "imagination", "cooperation", "rule following" and "turn based action" to create a seemingly lived experience. It requires an immense amount of creativity and teamwork from all the players, and is aided by an understanding of character growth, plot, and storytelling. And yet, literally anyone can jump in and get the hang of it relatively quickly. Some players emphasize the narrative over the gaming elements, giving some TTRPG's their unique "shared storytelling" aspect.

Usually the game is led by a single "Game Master" who is the arbiter and adjudicator of everything that takes place in the game, as well as the person who prepares and describes the entire world for players to explore. Players take turns "role-playing" (think "improv acting") their character and/or describing what they do, and with a combination of rules and dice rolls the outcome is determined. There are rules for just about any situation you can imagine, and players are aware that they can literally choose to do ANYTHING they want... there just might be consequences! Together, GM and players string their actions along to create a single adventure.

TTRPG's mostly take place in each player's imagination, and are usually played by groups of 3-6. Though the game can now be played online via programs such as Roll20, traditionally it is played at a table with a few miniatures, a mat/map of an area, and a filled out character sheet. Sometimes the map is enhanced with 3D terrain features as well.

By far the most popular TTRPG is the classic "Dungeons and Dragons", which takes place in a medieval setting filled with magic and monsters and involves the players as heroes on an epic



quest. D&D is currently in the midst of its wildly successful Fifth Edition, which launched the game into the mainstream. Other notable TTRPG's include "Shadowrun" and "Call of Cthulu".

### **War Games**

While TTRPG's blend combat with role playing, tabletop war games are 100% combat. On a large table riddled with terrain pieces, players take turns moving dozens of miniatures across a board, rolling for attacks, and using abilities to slowly widdle the enemy army down until victory is achieved. Each wargame carries a wide variety of armies players can choose from each with unique abilities that favor a variety of different strategies.

The fun of wargames is three fold: 1) the strategy of understanding each piece/unit and putting together the perfect army (similar to TCG's), 2) the art of painting each highly detailed miniature, and 3) using a combination of tactics and dice rolls to fight another player.

Far and away the most popular war game is "Warhammer 40K", which takes place in space and across the galaxy in the bleak, distant future. But there are dozens of wargames out there, involving fantasy, superheroes ("Heroclix"), Star Wars ("X-Wing"), and even historically based games like those rooted in the Napoleonic Wars or Ancient Rome.

Our selection of minis and armies is on the smaller side compared to exclusively wargaming stores like Games Workshop. But Athoria Games still carries more than enough officially licensed material to get started, as well as large, detailed gaming tables with one of a kind terrain pieces (including a massive ship!)



## Board Games

By far the most familiar tabletop game to most Americans! A board game is any game that takes place on a unique board and involves the moving of pieces across said board. Because each game is a self contained unit, the styles, goals, and elements of board games vary considerably. There are hundreds of board games for people of every age, ability, and interest.

More than any other tabletop game, board games are all about the challenge. While some board games rely on dice rolls, many do not, and in those cases the best player usually wins. A good player knows the game, knows how all the pieces work, and plays those to their advantage. Whether players play “against the game” or against one another, there is a “me vs them” mentality and a social atmosphere of friendly competition as players perform mental gymnastics against one another.

This is the category people generally think of when you say “tabletop games”. Includes ancient board games such as “Go” and “Chess”, classic games like “Monopoly”, “Sorry”, and “Clue”, and more modern board games like “7 Wonders”, “Settlers of Catan”, and “Wingspan”.

# FAQ

## What is a “friendly local game store”?

A “friendly local game store” (or “FLGS”) is a term used to describe stores like ours: small businesses that serve the local tabletop enthusiasts by providing the tools they need to play and (oftentimes) the space to play it. Not every community has a FLGS, but every large town will have one, and every city will have multiple!

## What makes tabletop games so fun?

- **Social Interaction:** Tabletop gaming is one of the most social aspects of “nerd culture. Unlike video games, which are often single player, tabletop games by their very nature involve multiple players and require social interaction. And even when the game is not being played, players gather to discuss rules and lore, or even just to get together to laugh and paint their miniatures! Tabletop gaming gathers geeks together.
- **True Leisure:** Ultimately tabletop games “do not matter”. They are an affordable luxury that, for nearly all players, don’t put food on the table or keep the lights on. But just because they “do not matter” does not mean they are not important! Life is more than survival and work, and while games do help us grow and develop, they explicitly exist for one reason: to have fun and entertain! Games are the ultimate form of leisure, a task that exists for its own sake, and leisure is part of what makes life worth living.

- **Creative Outlet:** Most games have multiple ways to win and do not force players to fit into a mold. Every player is unique, and takes their unique perspective and personhood into the game with them. For example, in TCG's players look for creative ways to arrange their deck. And for games that involve painting (wargames) or imagining (Role-playing), tabletop becomes THE main artistic expression in a person's life.
- **Brief Escape:** For eons games of all kinds have been a way to escape the mundane anxieties of life, and modern tabletop is no different. Whether the strategy, collecting, lore, or immersion, tabletop games allow people to briefly leave the normal world. Players can take a break from responsibilities and enter a reality full of wonder, magic, battle, and... energy organization? ("Powergrid" board game joke).
- **Mental Challenge:** Whether pitting opponents against one another or united players against the game itself, a lot of our games test the wits and wiles of players to the limits: do you have what it takes to overcome...to win?! Even when dice play a roll (*pun intended!*) in a quality game the good player can always find a way to overcome, and enjoys the immense satisfaction as a victorious reward.
- **Beautiful and Delightful:** We like pretty things: we identify with them, are captivated by them, and are inspired by them. For humans, aesthetics are important! Nearly every tabletop game has an aesthetic component as one of its main attractions: D&D has gorgeous rule books... every Magic card is detailed with artwork... Warhammer 40K miniatures are meticulously painted by players... even board games often live or die based on the artistic style and design!

### **What practical steps does Athoria Games take to be so welcoming?**

It happens naturally... we're just kind people! But beyond that, we go above and beyond industry standards in our diversity and equity training during new hire orientation. We teach gender neutral greetings as standard procedure, and our staff is familiar with helping neurodivergent customers. We are committed to ADA accessible aisle width.

### **Why would someone shop at Athoria Games instead of Walmart, Target, Amazon, etc.?**

Big box stores often have a very limited selection, only carrying a handful of products of the most mainstream games. Their prices are often the same or higher than ours.

Online stores tend to appeal to more casual purchases, and while the prices are often lower, it can be hard to know if you are actually getting a good deal or not.

Both of these shopping experiences are extremely different than Athoria Games for a simple reason: they don't care! They don't care about tabletop games and they certainly do not care about their visitors like we do.

The people and staff at Athoria Games are what set it apart. Our staff understand our games intimately because they play them constantly; they know them inside and out, able to speak the same language as devoted fans and explain them simply to a curious observer. They will guide you to whatever product is in YOUR best interest. Or, if there is nothing that is a perfect fit, they are happy to just be excited with the visitor about something new coming out, or just discuss nerdism and lore until the sun goes down.

### **What are the downsides to tabletop gaming?**

As we discovered during the pandemic, most tables are inside, so unless it's a sunny day and you find a nice picnic table, you'll probably have to play inside!

Another downside can be difficulty of entry. A lot of games have a unique set of rules you have to learn in order for them to be competitive or fun. And since most people use games as a source of leisure, it can be hard having faith in delayed gratification as you devote the time and energy to learning a game.

We ourselves are constantly learning new games, have experienced this barrier and frustration, and can empathize with any beginner intimidated or overwhelmed. We go out of our way to help people and listen to their concerns so we can find them a great gateway game that will be fun even as they learn.

### **What does it look like when you help someone that walks into your store?**

When someone new walks into the store, curious about tabletop gaming, we follow a certain pattern:

- We always greet them and welcome them to the store before offering to help them get what they need.
- We will practice active and engaged listening; hearing their concerns as we get to know who they are and what they are interested in.
- Then we can lead them to different parts of the store, showing them products that, from our expert and intimate knowledge of tabletop games, we think will work best for them.
- And once they make the choice, we will either sit down right then and there and help them learn the game or invite them to one of our events designed to teach games.

- Finally, we reassure them that if they run into any obstacles and confusion at home, they can always call us during business hours and we'll resolve their issue as quickly as possible.

### **Are tabletop games still only for white male nerds?**

Yes... and no! For whatever reason there has always been a nerdy and geeky side to tabletop games: theater nerds love role-play, high brow nerds love classic board games, and the more "typical nerds" love wargaming. Or super nerds, like us, love them all!

But thankfully... "nerdy" is cool now. With nerdism no longer having the stigma of social male exiles and mainstream culture embracing a diversity of lifestyles, more and more female, LGBTQ, and minority players are joining the table top community.

Athoria Games has built its culture around welcoming ALL demographics into the joy of the hobbies. We are continuously (and wonderfully) surprised by the diversity of our community and customers!

### **Can people purchase your products online?**

Yes. The challenges of the pandemic compelled us to offer an online shipping experience as well as store front pick up.

### **Any perks for repeat customers?**

In May of 2020 we launched our Discord Group which we will announce store information. It is also a great local network of local gamers to connect to. In May 2021 we started a Loyalty Card program that kicks back discounts to frequent store visits!

### **I see you buy and Sell Trade-Ins, How do I sell my gaming items?**

Call or come into the Mesa location to have your items looked at. Availability, inventory, and demand are always changing. We must inspect an item in order to price it. Coming soon to the Tempe location.

# Testimonials

“Love this place! Doing everything they can to keep customers safe during COVID! Thank you for keeping us safe and providing amazing service!!” - Dan Chamberlain, June 17th, 2020 (facebook)

“Very friendly and welcoming staff. Wide open areas for gaming and large selections for a bit of everything to appeal to everyone”. - MacGyver March, Jan 19th 2020 (facebook)

“Athoria games has that old game store feel according to my eldest daughter. The one that welcomes you in and asks you to feel right at home. I know she loves it for the Magic the Gathering section and card section. I love it for its open space, plentiful gaming tables and lots of gaming products. I really love the mini's wall. Athoria offers a wide range of minis for my D&D games. And there are no lack of D&D books, tiles and cards of all types (from magic item to magic spells). I was also wonderfully surprised to find minis for Star Trek. I love that Athoria is there for me, my family and our love of gaming. Check them out. I am sure you will love it as much as I do.” - Richard Moreno, March 16th 2019 (facebook)

“Favorite game store to attend. Staff is always personable and friendly, and they're always willing to get something set up to make sure the players have the best experience they can have.” - Gabe Dewitt, March 2nd, 2018 (facebook)

“I recently got back into MTG and Athoria has been so helpful and wonderful getting me back into the game. My boyfriend made me a mermaid commander deck and I happened to see a beautiful mermaid play mat. They held it for me till I was able to buy it. Then last week a group of new players came in and they were so helpful explaining the game and types of decks. They even got a free basic starter deck! How amazing! They truly take care of their customers.” - Erin Boelter, February 2018 (facebook)

“I really enjoyed meeting you and visiting your store for the first time. It was a fun event and looking forward to your next one. 🙌👍😊 Thank you for having me.” - mace1017, April 1st 2019 (instagram)

“Teachers and owner very personable. Well set up and organized for a first time class. Great information. Hands on and excellent guidance. Looking forward to the next one.” - Kelly Pc, July 16th 2017 (facebook)

# Quotes

**All quotes below are from Suzanne Hug, owner, and are usable for reprint.**

“I love that our business makes people happy.”

“It’s amazing how tabletop games bring people together, help them learn about themselves, and form lifelong friendships.”

“A visitor will never question their place or worth. Everything and everyone you need to have an amazing tabletop gaming experience is right here, reinvigorating old hobbies and creating new ones.”

“Athoria Games believes gaming is for everyone and therefore everyone is welcome to come game!”

“Our customers know they never have to feel bad about asking a question. Our workers will listen and personalize their suggestions, even if over the phone.”

We consider ourselves an inclusive store: Athoria Games is an accepting place for people from all walks of life and with varying levels of gaming experience.

“Our commitment to creating a welcoming environment is second to none.”

“The desire for in person interactions is high and Athoria Games is the perfect answer.”

*(What benefits/solutions/achievements are they seeking?)* “They want it to be easy and consistent to find the latest items, and get suggestions for improving their at home gaming experience.”

“We see people celebrating promotions and mourning losses, all coming in for a moment away, to enjoy their hobbies and see friendly faces.”

“We believe gaming is for everyone and that a broad and diverse customer base is one of the strengths of our business.”

# Contact

If you'd like to get in touch with Athoria Games, please email us at [gm@athoriagames.com](mailto:gm@athoriagames.com). Just like we do with any of our tabletop gamers, we'd be happy to answer any of your questions!

## Address

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Mesa, AZ 85205

Athoria Games  
3136 S McClintock Dr. Ste 11  
Tempe, AZ 85282

## Store Phone Number

Mesa: 480-300-9957  
Tempe: 480-875-9777

## Social

Website: <https://www.athoriagames.com/> , <https://www.athoriagamestempe.com/>  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AthoriaGames>  
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/AthoriaGames>  
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Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/AthoriaGames/>  
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# Images, Video and Branding



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