

ANDREW FEDERSPIEL

APOTHECA™

THE SECRET POTION SOCIETY



1-4
PLAYERS



AGES
13+



TIME
30 MIN

OVERVIEW

Match potions in a secret marketplace. Deceive your opponents with hidden potions, and when the right moment strikes, use magical apothecary powers to mix your concoctions. But be careful – your opponents may sniff out your schemes and use them against you! Each match satisfies one apothecary. The first to satisfy 3 apothecaries wins.

COMPONENTS

- 1 Market board
- 45 Potion tiles (15 Red, 15 Blue, 15 Yellow)
- 36 Gems (12 Red Rubies, 12 Blue Sapphires, 12 Yellow Topazes)
- 15 Apothecary cards
- 4 Apothecary Stations
- 4 Player Reference cards
- 3 Decree tokens (for the Master of the Market variant)
- 1 Extra Action token (for 3-player only)



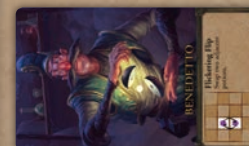
SETUP

1. Place the market board between all players.
2. Choose a start player by determining who the sneakiest player is. Play will proceed clockwise.
3. Shuffle the potion tiles. Deal one potion face-up to each corner of the market board. Deal two potions facedown to the middle of the market board so they are diagonally adjacent. Rotate the facedown potions so their arrows point to the second player.
4. Place the remaining potion tiles in a pile facedown next to the market board. This is the potion supply.
5. Deal one player reference card to each player.
6. Shuffle the apothecary cards. If this is your first game, place the following apothecaries on top facedown, in any order: Benedetto, Corvidus, Imogen, Merten, The Porter King.
7. Deal one apothecary card to each player face-up.
8. Connect the four apothecary stations and place them next to the market board to form Apothecary Alley, as pictured. Deal one apothecary card face-up below each of the two-gem stations. Place the remaining apothecary cards facedown below the three-gem station. This is the apothecary deck.
9. Place each gem supply by its corresponding station.
10. In a 3-player game, give the third player the Extra Action token. They may discard it during one of their turns to take a third action that is different from their first two.
11. The start player takes only one action on their first turn.

APOTHECARY ALLEY



PLAYER 1



PLAYER 2

POTION SUPPLY



ON YOUR TURN

You must take 2 of the 4 actions below. You may not repeat the same action twice in one turn.

REVEAL



Flip over any facedown potion in the market. Gain a gem of that potion's color. You may not peek at the potion before taking the action – you must reveal it for all to see! You may hold any number of gems. In the very rare event that the gem supply has run out, use a substitute.

POWER



Choose one of your apothecaries and use its power. Each apothecary power counts as a different action, so you may use the Power action multiple times in a turn if you select a different apothecary each time. You may not use this action if you have no active apothecaries, or if using this action would result in an unchanged board state.

Powers act on all potion tiles the same way, whether they are face-up or facedown. Potions may move through other potions if they have enough movement to do so, but a potion may never end its movement in the same space as another potion. Powers that swap potions cannot “swap” with empty spaces.

In Apotheca, the word “adjacent” excludes diagonal spaces. The word “orthogonally” means “horizontally or vertically.” See page 15 for info on specific powers.

RESTOCK



You may not use this action if there are already 3 facedown potions in the market. Draw a tile from the potion supply and look at it secretly. Place it facedown on any open space in the market. Repeat this process until there are 3 facedown potions in the market.

When placing a potion, point the arrow towards you. You may peek at potions pointing to you.

Market Overload

If the market becomes completely full and it has no matches, immediately reveal the top tile of the potion supply. Remove all face-up potions of the revealed color from the market, then shuffle the revealed tile and all removed tiles into the potion supply.

HIRE



Hire an apothecary from Apothecary Alley by spending two gems of the indicated color.
- OR -

Pay a topaz, sapphire and ruby to hire any one of the three apothecaries or the top card of the apothecary deck.

Place the apothecary in front of you – it is now yours. You may have any number of apothecaries.

After hiring, if there is an empty apothecary station, refill it with the top card of the apothecary deck.

MAKING MATCHES AND SATISFYING APOTHECARIES

A match is 3 face-up potions of the same color in a row or column. They must be in a consecutive, non-diagonal, straight line. When you make a match, remove it from the market and place it face-up on one of your active apothecaries. You may no longer use that apothecary – they are satisfied with your concoction! Any color match may satisfy any apothecary.

SPECIAL MATCHES

If you make a match involving more than 3 potions, gain a gem of the match's color in addition to making the match. The special matches are 4-in-a-row, L match, T match, and + match.



If you make a match but do not have an active apothecary, remove the match from the market and shuffle it into the potion supply. Gain a gem of the match's color. This match does not count towards winning the game.

MULTIPLE MATCHES

If you make more than one match simultaneously, trigger the matches in any order as if you had made them one at a time.

WINNING THE GAME

The first player or team to satisfy 3 apothecaries wins!

4-PLAYER

For 4-player games, split into two even teams. Alternate the sitting positions of teammates: A, B, A, B. Team members may not share gems or peek at each other's facedown potions. The first team to satisfy 3 apothecaries wins. Before starting the game, players should decide whether talking is allowed during the game.



VARIANT: SOLO (1 PLAYER)

SETUP

1. Place the market board in front of you.
2. Shuffle the potion tiles. Deal one potion face-up to each corner of the market board. Fill in half of the remaining spaces with facedown potions in a checkerboard pattern. Point their arrows away from you.
3. Beyond the left and right sides of the market board, create a 2x4 grid of facedown potions (see diagram). Point their arrows away from you.
4. Place the rest of the potion tiles back in the box. They will not be used for the rest of the game.
5. Shuffle the apothecary deck and deal yourself an apothecary. Set up Apothecary Alley as normal.

ACTIONS AND RESTOCKING

Take 2 actions on each of your turns (including your first turn). The following differences apply:

- You cannot take Restock actions.
- You may repeat the same action twice. If you cannot take a second action, your turn ends.
- Hiring costs 3 gems of the same color instead of 2. In addition, you cannot use the alternate method of paying a topaz, sapphire and ruby to hire.

After every 2 actions you take, you must choose a potion outside of the market and place it on its corresponding empty space in the market. For example, the potion in column 2, row 3 outside the market must be placed in column 2, row 3 inside the market. Peek at the potion after you place it and point its arrow towards you. If you are unable to place a potion into an empty space, the game ends.

MAKING MATCHES AND SATISFYING APOTHECARIES

When you make a match, do not remove it from the market. Instead, do the following:

1. Stack the matched potions onto any one of the matched potions' spaces. Treat the stack as you would a normal potion.
2. If you have one or more active apothecaries, flip one facedown to signify it is satisfied.
3. If you satisfied an apothecary, gain 1 point for each face-up potion in the market of the match's color (a stack counts as only one potion). Use any method you like to keep track of your score total.

If you do not have an active apothecary to satisfy when you make a match, you do not gain any points, but instead gain a gem of the match's color.

MARKET OVERLOAD

If the market becomes completely full, do not perform the Market Overload process.

GAME END

The game ends the moment you must place a facedown potion into the market, but cannot do so. If there are no potions remaining outside of the market, gain 5 bonus points. Add up your score and let's see how you did!

0-14: Assistant

15-19: Apprentice

20-24: Adept

25-29: Expert

30-34: Master

35-39: Grand Master

40+: Legend of Apotheca

APOTHECARY ALLEY



PLAYER I



VARIANT: MASTER OF THE MARKET (2-4 PLAYERS)

SETUP

Follow the normal setup, with the following differences:

1. Instead of using completely random potions in the starting market, shuffle together 2 yellow, 2 blue, and 2 red potions, and then deal them to the market board as usual.
2. Choose a player to be the master. All other players are apprentices on a team against the master. Team members may not share gems or peek at each other's facedown potions.
3. The master does not receive a starting apothecary. Instead, set up Apothecary Alley in front of the master. The master has access to all three apothecaries, but must pay each time to use an apothecary power.
4. Give the master the three decree tokens. After the market is set up, the master chooses one of these tokens to activate and stacks it on top of the other two tokens. The master may only make matches of the decreed color, and no other player may make matches of that color.
5. The master goes first, and takes only one action on their first turn. The apprentice players take turns in clockwise order, with the master taking a turn after every single apprentice turn.

MASTER PERKS

- **Potion Color Decree:** The master has three colored decree tokens, one of which is active at a time. The master may only make matches of the decreed color, and no other player may make matches of that color.

As an action, the master may change to a new decree color by spending one gem of that color.

- **Hiring and Using Apothecaries:** The master never hires apothecaries. As an action, the master may use the power of an apothecary in Apothecary Alley by spending two gems of that apothecary's color. When another player hires an apothecary, that player pays the gems to the master, not to the gem supply.
- **Matches:** The master does not use their matches to satisfy apothecaries. Instead, the master just keeps the matches.

ADDITIONAL RULES

- **Making Matches:** Since players must follow the potion color decree, one player might make a match they cannot score. The first player who can score that match does so at the beginning of their turn if the match is still present. For example, if the decreed color is red and there is a blue match in the market at the end of the master's turn, that match will go to the next player when their turn begins.
- **Gem Bonuses:** The master does not receive gem bonuses for making special matches, or for making matches without having an apothecary (since the master never has a hired apothecary).

WINNING THE GAME

The master wins by scoring one match of each color.

The apprentice team wins when they have satisfied three apothecaries total.



PLAYER 2 - APPRENTICE



POTION SUPPLY



DECREE TOKENS



PLAYER 1 - MASTER



APOTHECA STRATEGY TIPS

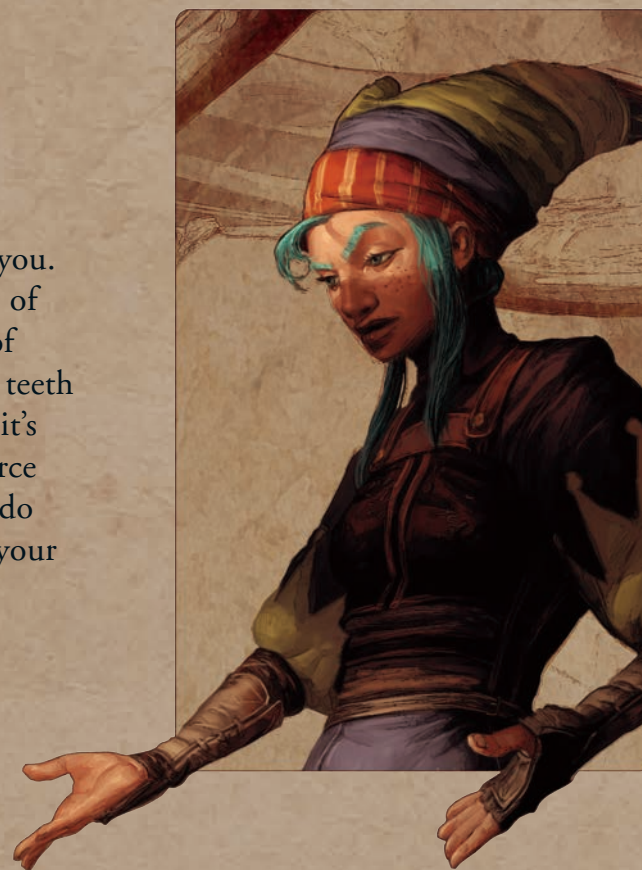
- Don't leave two potions of the same color in a row at the end of your turn (or a color-space-color). You may be giving your opponent a chance to draw and place a tile of that color with their first action, and then flip it with their second to make a match.
- If you are going to flip a facedown potion, try to do it with your first action so that you still have your second action to do something with the potion (or stop your opponent from doing something with it).
- You don't have to flip a potion your opponent put down! Think about what color it might be, and whether your opponent is trying to trick you into flipping it for them.



THE WORLD OF APOTHECA

If you think you are standing on solid ground, the universe has failed you. I am Lain the merchant. I've walked from the green spined mountains of Danziger, which no creature has crossed and lived; to the blue desert of Yandukar; to the Shartusan swamps, with air so foul it will make your teeth fall out. I have seen enough to know: if anyone is master of the wilds, it's the secret potion society. These apothecaries can wield a primordial force that's said to be able to grant any wish, even immortal life. But where do they meet? And more importantly, how can you persuade them to do your bidding?

While I've compiled much information on well-known apothecaries, finding them will have to be left up to someone else.



THE LEGENDARY APOTHECARIES



Afrit

I've never met this creature, and I intend to keep it that way. There's a silly rumor that somehow it might give, but truly all it does is take: your dreams, your hopes and your ambitions. My uncle's best friend's brother crossed the Afrit once. The poor man wasted away in

the most boring of lives — until he was murdered by whirling horse-demons. I'd almost say it was a mercy, after what the Afrit did to him. To dance willingly with the Afrit, you'd be very brave or very stupid.



Benedetto

Benedetto had the hereditary job of court physician to the King of Umbriscol, which mostly consisted of massaging the royal bunions. However, during the Great Dying, and despite Benedetto's most tender massages, all five heirs of the Umbriscan royal line

perished. So the king ejected Benedetto from court, through a window! Because he fell on his mustache, his delicate hands were saved from injury — or that's how it was explained to me. Benedetto now massages herbs for potion-making.



Corvidus

Matter, location and time are central in the mind of the apothecary. With those three concepts grasped, all the building blocks of the universe unfold: the right thing in the right place at the right time. It's no wonder then that a former mail carrier would make such a marvelous

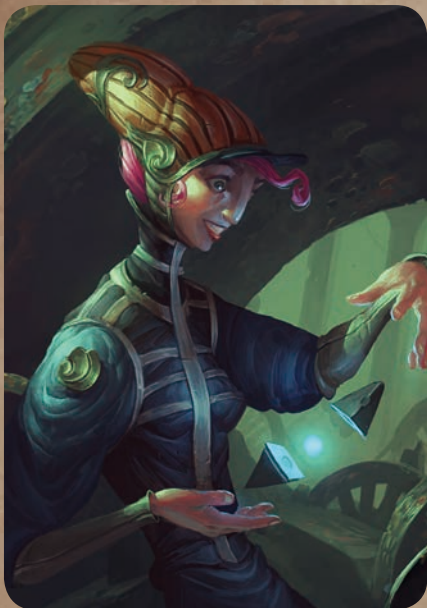
apothecary. Raised by swallows and educated by rooks, Corvidus has both airspeed velocity and weight ratio to make the world his playing board. And crafting potions pays much better than delivering packages.



Giada

There's an old Danzigi phrase that says, "A rock is harmless until it isn't." I don't believe it was written with Giada in mind, though it fits her perfectly: an unassuming package, yet such destructive power. She is banned for life from Taros, wanted for mayhem in the Cape of Fair Wind

and was formally denounced by whirling horse-demons. Or so we believe. Nobody knows how to speak horse-demon, but you could tell they weren't happy with her.



Imogen

Love has a certain kind of smell, and Imogen finds the quintessence of these old underground workspaces to have the loveliest smells of all. As a child, Imogen was bullied for her nose, but the professional world loves her for it. From the must of rotted paper in the Library of Oblivia to

the famous green reek of the old wainhouses in Catalaya, their treasures open to Imogen, merely for her willingness to smell them... then bottle them, so nobody else has to.



Karinne

Some materials are beyond the reach of even the most skilled apothecary. They can dig down, fly high, or sail in every cardinal direction. But to find the things beyond reality, Karinne is door-builder, key-master and gate-keeper. It's unclear from whom she learned the forgotten art of stone-

laying, but her singular role has made her into something of a holy figure. Many have lined up begging to be her apprentice. To date, all have been sent away.



The Masked Woman

The Masked Woman knows the power of identity, and that's why she has five of them... that we know of. A secret and transformative beauty, a whole new you, bottled and released by her command. Who could resist such a thing? Who could resist putting a price

tag on it? No, the Masked Woman is beyond petty ideas of "good" or "bad." She does not judge, she does not care.



Master Carbuncle

Master Carbuncle remains an outlier among the quiet toil of the Lizardfolk of Yandukar. They mostly dig tunnels out in the deserts west of Umbria, yet he is always traveling between tradeposts, politely flashing that jagged smile. After a deal is struck you might

wonder if you lost something more valuable than you gained. No doubt his insights as an apothecary have made him a master of the haggle. Parts in motion, that's all it is, and the one who can keep track is the one who wins.



Merten

At the edges of compassion and charisma, there's Merten. That is to say, he is the gentlemanly soul, but those legs and that face were not meant for gentlemanly acts. Merten can't hop to your aid or shake your hand without giving you warts. He's mastered how to say

“sorry” in thirty-eight languages, even in the language of the Torongi, who speak only in wiggles of the eyebrow. Yet Merten still believes if your heart is open, then beauty — and fortune — will find you. He hasn't been wrong yet.



Ooki & Oogi

It would be your first impression that Ooki does the heavy lifting while Oogi does the heavy thinking, but both are accomplished apothecaries in their own right. Oogi created several semi-successful vessels to house a universal solvent, while Ooki discovered not even a

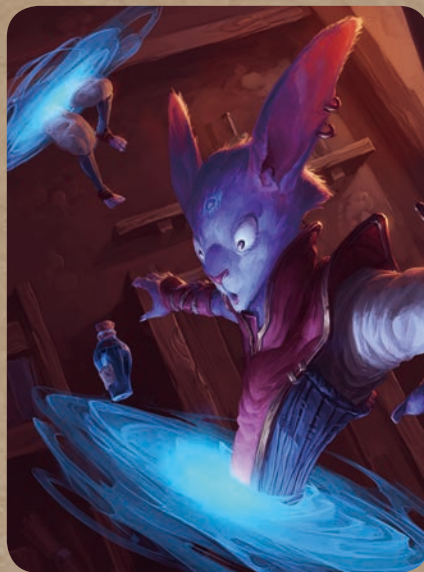
“universal solvent” could harm his gigantic hands. That's all nitpicking as they always publish their experiments together. Ooki always insists his name goes first. Oogi claims not to mind.



The Porter King

It's said that the Porter King was in line for the throne of Erdavia. The story goes: King Gustav's first born son, Gustav II, died of the spotted fever. The second, also Gustav, also spotted fever. The third, Lucius, poisoned by the fourth, Rictor, hung for regicide. The fifth son fled from his

duty to take the crown and, as punishment, was cursed with encumbrance: though he may travel wherever fancy takes him, he must do so at a grueling pace. Of course, Erdavia was sacked by whirling horse-demons a year later, so it turned out to not be such a bad deal.



Qwixly

Accuracy has never been a primary concern of the impatient, and Qwixly has not been known to wait for anyone — or anything. He has a reputation for being in the wrong place at the right time, much before anyone has realized it, including Qwixly himself. Where

does the guidance come from: Did he sip from the Moon-Chalice? Is he the secret son of Longtoe, God-Among-Rabbits? When asked, Qwixly told me: a little of column A, a little of column B.



Solas

To the untrained, her appearance might seem unorthodox. But the phrase “bird-brained” is taken as quite a compliment by Solas. You see, her early years were occupied at the Unibirdsity, collecting diplomas in all manner of studies: religion, jewelry and also bird-law, which is not

unlike human-law, when you get down to it. However, all scholarly pursuits, they say, lead to the apothecary — and you won't find one more accredited than Solas.



The Strega

There was an inquiry brought in when a poultry farm started hatching geese. A nearby goose farm believed the chicken farmers were stealing eggs, but the inquirers found no signs of egg theft, even after detecting a false door that led to a cache of illegally imported

wine. The investigation was discarded after the goose farmer discovered chicks in his gosling nursery. For the life of me, I couldn't tell you the how or why — but a year later the chicken farmer married his son to the goose farmer's daughter and now everyone's happy.



The Tidemaster

Best never to cross paths with the Tidemaster: he might literally take your breath away. And I don't mean a chance encounter with your destined love, but the rather fatal experience of being deflated like a waterskin. Yet, in our world of sailors and oceans and distant

trade, the man who can speak the wind is perhaps a necessary evil.

CREDITS

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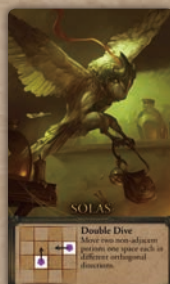
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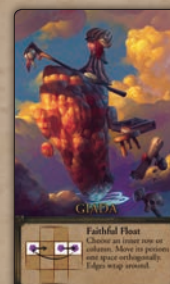
APOTHECARY POWER REFERENCE



Chained Charge
Choose two adjacent potions. Move one to an adjacent space, and the other to the space the first was in.



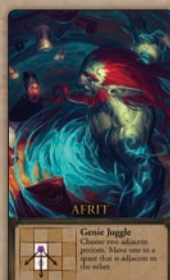
Double Dive
Move two non-adjacent potions one space each in different orthogonal directions.



Faithful Float
Choose an inner row or column. Move its potions one space orthogonally. The potions must move within that row or column. Edges wrap around.



Flickering Flip
Swap two adjacent potions.



Genie Juggle
Choose two adjacent potions. Move one to a space that is adjacent to the other.



Gully Glide
Move a potion one or more spaces orthogonally. It may move through other potions.



Lucky Leap
Move a potion two or three spaces orthogonally or diagonally. It may move through other potions.



Portal Pounce
Move a potion three spaces away in an L shape (or reverse L). It may move through other potions.



Reptilian Rush
Choose a diagonal line. Move its potions one space diagonally. The potions must move within that diagonal line. Edges wrap around.



Shadow Swap
Swap a facedown potion with a face-up potion.



Sorceress Spin
Swap two potions that are two or three spaces away orthogonally or diagonally.



Spirit Switch
Swap two potions that are three spaces away in an L shape (or reverse L).



Tetratwist
Choose a 2x2 group of four spaces. Move all potions in that group clockwise one space.



Wandering Waltz
Move a potion one space orthogonally or diagonally.



Wizards Winds
Choose a side of the market. Move all potions towards that side as far as possible.