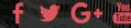


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## 8 Reasons To Check Out OSRIC

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The OSRIC RPG, short for Old School Reference and Index Compilation, is a fantasy role-playing game system. OSRIC is what is known in the Old School or OSR (Old School Renaissance) movement, as a retro-clone, in that it is a faithful, as much as legally possible, recreation of the First Edition of the world's most famous role-playing game, Advanced Dungeons & Dragons.

It's recently been a topic on social media, and unfortunately not in a good way, because of a kerfuffle regarding some negative comments by one individual, not formally associated in any way with the authors or creators of OSRIC, regarding the laudable and evolved decision by Wizards of the Coast, current creators of Dungeons & Dragons, to foster and encourage inclusion and diversity in the game. It is an ideal that we should all embrace, and one which, as a four decade long player, I heartily support. Our game should reflect the wonderful depth and variety of humanity, and I am happy that the time has come where people of previously underrepresented groups can now see themselves in the game.

In the aftermath of the unfortunate social media incident, a lot of folks were hurt, angry and upset, justifiably so, but in their confusion some began to condemn OSRIC for the comments of a lone individual with no official standing. They began to confuse that one person's comment with what the game stood for. Some began to wrongly think OSRIC supported and was based on an intolerant or non-inclusive ideology. All of these things are inaccurate.

It was all very unfortunate because OSRIC is a great system. Full disclosure here, I am a GM and author of OSRIC content, so I am a big supporter of the system. On the other hand, it also means, I know of which I speak! The owners of this site reached out to me after the kerfuffle, for my sort of "expert opinion" on OSRIC, as they liked my work and felt people were getting the wrong idea about the game; I was asked if I'd like to explain what OSRIC is, what it isn't, and why you all should like it. Frankly, there's no reason not to, and with this list I am going to show you 8 reasons why you should check out the OSRIC RPG!

## 8) OSRIC was one of the earliest and most successful retro-clones.

For this reason, there is a lot of content for this particular game system. Looking at current content, the last time I checked DrivethruRPG.com (a mainstay of mainstream and indie RPG content, such as my own) there were nearly 400 OSRIC titles currently for sale. Lulu.com has nearly 280 OSRIC titles for sale. In addition, looking at legacy content, there are thousands of BECMI (which stands for Basic, Expert, Companion, Master, Immortal rules, i.e. "Basic" D&D), Advanced Dungeons & Dragons (aka AD&D or 1E), and AD&D 2nd Edition (aka 2E) publications to choose from which are compatible with OSRIC (Although separate from 1E, the BECMI and 2E rules are compatible enough to make their materials useable). So if you are looking for a game that has a lot of support, with tons of compatible legacy content and continually developed new content, OSRIC is a great system to choose.

## 7) Did I mention it's free?

That's right folks, OSRIC itself is completely free! In fact go and download it right now, here's a [link](#). But wait, there's more! Not only is the game system free, but so is its version of a "Monster Manual", which you can download via this [link](#). But wait, it's version of the "Player's Handbook" is also free as well; download the OSRIC Player's Guide directly from its author via this [link](#). Now go back to the aforementioned DrivethruRPG and Lulu and search for "OSRIC" and you'll find a tonne (because one of the creators is British) of free content alongside the paid content discussed above. Don't get me wrong, I love Wizards of the Coast and their content, and as a content creator myself I strongly encourage you to support creators active in your gaming interests! However, if you're like me, you have a lot of gaming interests, and isn't it kind of nice to have a game you can check out and play for free? Heck yeah!

### Embedded links:

<http://www.lulu.com/shop/stewart-marshall/osric-a5-pdf/ebook/product-20697767.html>

<http://www.lulu.com/shop/the-first-edition-society/monsters-of-myth/ebook/product-17452854.html>

<http://www.vanquishingleviathan.com/2012/12/get-osric-players-guide-pdf-for-free.html>

## 6) OSRIC is accessible.

It made me sad when people mistakenly thought OSRIC was somehow mean or cruel or anti-anyone, because one of my favourite things about OSRIC is that it is very accessible in a democratic way. As I mentioned above, the basic game is free. Go online and use a dice roller and download some free minis and you are ready to play! You can teach people to role-play via OSRIC for free. This is incredibly inspiring and democratizing! When I was a poor kid growing up, Dungeons & Dragons changed my life by offering a wonderful outlet into a dream land of magic, like Middle Earth and Narnia, but I actually got to go there and not just read about it! The books were expensive back then as well, but my friends and I scraped together the money, over a long time, and we eventually bought a set of books to share. We took turns reading them, grudgingly turning them over when our week was up. Before we got books it was really embarrassing when the rich kids would tease you about not being able to afford the hobby, as bullying kids are wont to do throughout time. It makes me weep tears of joy to know that poor kids and adults today have access to a completely free retro-clone of the game I grew up loving, and there is no more fretting or worrying about how to pay for it.

## 5) OSRIC is community driven.

Since the creation of the OSRIC game system and its companion manuals it would seem the gracious founders and designers Matt Finch and Stuart Marshall (our OSRIC version of Gygax and Arneson) essentially stepped back and let the world have at their creation. What that means is that the content being put out is coming primarily from the community of players and it has fostered, in my opinion, a renaissance of imaginative fantasy art and writing. I myself am an OSRIC creator, because I can be: it was just that easy. I had always wanted to send a dungeon off to TSR's "Dungeon Magazine", or an article to its "Dragon Magazine", as a youth, but I was always afraid it wouldn't be good enough or people would tease me for being a geek (those darn bullies again!). There was an editorial board and a big fancy company deciding who and what got published (or so I assumed) and it was very intimidating. Flash forward a few decades and the internet and self-publishing have reshaped our society. I found OSRIC, I was inspired to write, and I did it. There are tonnes (lol) of people like me doing this (and so can you!) and it is a great community to be a part of!

## 4) OSRIC is kinda British.

OK this is a quirky reason, I know, but bear with me. If you love Tolkien and C.S. Lewis and cut your teeth on that style of high fantasy, chances are you might be just a wee bit of an Anglophile. If you are, then why not play a game where the programme running in the head of one of the creators, Stuart Marshall (editor in chief), was a British view of RPGs? I feel a little twinge of glee deciding what my favourite colour of cloak might be, and I can take a fortnight deciding what armour to purchase or calculating my saving throw against petrification! A silly reason perhaps, but it made me immeasurably happy to write, in one of my modules, of a sword composed completely of ice: "However, extended exposure to extreme heat (38°C) may damage or destroy it."

## 3) OSRIC is fairly easy to learn.

I don't want to stir up even more controversy (i.e. Edition wars!), so just hear me out. Being a fairly stripped down, retro-clone of a forty year old game means there are not endless pages to read before you start playing. For example, an average race description in OSRIC is about half a column long. The average character class description is about one and a half pages long. The entirety of the equipment list takes up two and two thirds pages. The average monster description is maybe half a column. Part of this may be because most of the OSR folks are coming to OSRIC with a very good understanding of how to play RPGs and possibly a lifetime of rules floating around in their heads. However, if you are a new player, the rules light approach means there is not a huge amount to learn and memorize and you can fairly quickly get down to learning how to role-play. Which is the focus of all good games, in my opinion. While the rules can actually get quite complex and detailed, as anyone who has played 1E knows, OSRIC "feels" light and can be played as simple or complex as you want it to be. I have taught several people to play RPGs, who were previously scared of the "stacks of books", by using OSRIC. As the adage says, KISS (Keep It Simple, Stu! -- remember I said OSRIC is not mean!)

## 2) OSRIC is flexible.

The upside to what I consider to be a “rules light” approach is that the game is very flexible and open to what you want it to be. As an example, in my very first module (“The Corrupt Temple”) I had a section where players might fall into the water and drown. So I looked in my trusty OSRIC manual for drowning rules and found...nothing. So I made up my own rules for this situation based on researching past rules and present rules and then threw in what sounded logical and reasonable to me. There are many unanswered questions in OSRIC, as in life, and I like that about it. It makes me more inventive, creative and it challenges me!

## 1) OSRIC is for all of us!

The last and final reason to try OSRIC is because it is for all of us, not just grognards! It is a great opportunity to see what gaming was like in the past and to get to know the roots of modern Dungeons & Dragons, an activity that seems increasingly popular with the release of Wizards of the Coast’s “Tales from The Yawning Portal”, for example. I read a great quote about OSRIC once, which stuck with me because it exactly summed it up: “OSRIC is a love letter to First Edition.” Those of us who played the game when it first came out were entranced, as are those of you who are just discovering the game now, and to us 1E is just our happy place for that reason, and likely always will be. It’s not a criticism of 5E or the progress of gaming or of our society since the 1970’s. It’s just what makes some of us feel the old “buzz” of gaming excitement, and that brings us lots of happiness.

Now before I close, I feel like I should also deal with the elephant in the room: grognards. It seems the term grognard has taken on a very pejorative meaning lately, and that is a shame. For I am here to tell you that not all grognards are the angry grumbling complainers or potentially racist, homophobic, transphobic, able-centric, and mean trolls that online slang dictionaries or some blogs or social media posts would have you believe.

I have met and known a lot of folks over the years that have played a long time, for decades, and they all have one thing in common with newer players: a love of the game. Our love of the game is what binds us all together. Grognards are just folks who have a wealth of experience in a hobby we all love, who for the most part may enjoy playing the games of their youth (we tend to grow nostalgic as we get older), and who still have a lot to offer to the RPG community. Are there jerks and wing-nuts in the grognard and Old School community? Certainly, as there are in every walk of life, but I believe they are the exception and not the rule. I think many of us are kind, gentle, understanding souls who are happy to share a table with anyone who is like-minded and wants to enjoy some communal role-playing fun! So if you encounter us in the wild trying to play 5E, as we stumble on unfamiliar ability checks or look bemused as you try to explain spell slots...again, please try and be patient! Or if we invite you to try out our OSRIC game, take us up on it to see what it’s like!

Most importantly, though, I hope your take-away from this article is that OSRIC and its practitioners are no different than the modern game and its players; it’s simply another way to play one of the most exciting and inventive hobbies ever created!

*Louis “sirIou” Kahn is an avid OSRIC and Dungeons & Dragons game master, role-player, and author. When he’s not creating fantasy role-playing content through **Starry Knight Press**, he’s spreading love & unity with **The English Beat!**  
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