



COMICS . CARDS . MINIATURES

# KEEP IN TOUCH

## A Look Back at 2009!

Here at Hidden Keep we have had a great year! We are getting more and more players out to all our events and are very appreciative to all our players for their support. Our guild winners for last year are:

Magic Guild—Shawn Meyer; Shawn played more tournaments than most of our other guild members combined in 2009 and was a run away winner. This upcoming year he will have a lot of competition because a couple of players are determined that he will not win this award again.

Warmachine/Hordes Guild—Adam Blakeslee; Adam was consistently at the top of every tournament that was run and because of that came out on a close race for first. With our core of 8-10 consistent players it should be a hotly contested guild once again in the upcoming year.

Warhammer/Warhammer40K Guild—Gavin Beaton; Gavin was at every tournament that was run for 40K this last year and his consistency at appearing overcame his lack of wins to give him the most points in the guild.

Congrats to all our winners in the past year!

Keep Gaming!

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### Hidden Keep Special Pricing

- Collectible Card booster packs are 3 for \$10 every day, and they become 4 for \$12 if you participate in a tournament. Visit our website for the gaming calendar.
- Become a member of your local playing group and receive great discounts at the Hidden Keep.
- Comic book hold boxes receive free service of bags and boards.
- Free tables and chairs for the use of cards, miniatures, and role-playing.

# The Magic of Magic

By: Magicgeek

Has it really been a year since the Conflux prerelease? It seems like just yesterday that I was opening packs hoping to pull a Noble Hierarch or a Nicol Bolas, Planeswalker. I never did. But I did buy Nicol, and am content to play good ol' BoP in my Bant deck until a playset of Hierarchs makes their way into my collection.

Alara Reborn, M2010, and Zendikar all released in 2009, along with Wizards of the Coast's gifts to the Magic community: Divine vs. Demonic duel deck, Garruk vs. Liliana duel deck, From the Vault: Exiled, Planechase, and Premium Deck Series: Slivers. There were so many ways to spend our money, some of us skipped a few lunches to feed our cardboard addiction. The accompanying weight loss was yet another 'gift' from WotC.

So, in an end-of-the-year retrospective, I decided to highlight the ten best additions 2009 brought to the Magic community. Let the debating begin.

10. Berserk. Okay, I know this has been around since Alpha and therefore wasn't a new addition in 2009.

But it deserves to be on this list for one important reason: Hope. With the reprinting of one of Magic's more expensive, and more desirable cards, Berserk's inclusion in the FTV: Exiled set deserves a spot on the Best of 2009 list because it allows us to continue our hope that WotC will reprint other cards from the 'never to be reprinted' list. I know some collecting purists cringe at the thought of a reprinted Library of Alexandria, or a foil Mana Drain, or, dare I even type it, foil P9! But Berserk's return opens the possibility that one day we, too, will be shuffling a deck full of Magic's most powerful cards without having to have sacrificed our college tuition to pay for them.

9. No more white borders. Originally I held this spot for the entire Magic 2010 (M10) set. With a great new cycle of lands, reprinted Planeswalkers, and some of Magic's best creatures ever (foreshadowing), it was hard to open an M10 pack and not equal or exceed your monetary investment. I will admit that I am still a little disgruntled that they reprinted Nightmare and didn't use the original Melissa Benson art, but unless you're an overly critical jerk like me, you'd have to admit that this set was fantastic. But even as great as the cards were, what really made the set special for 2009 was the return of classic core cards with their original black borders!

8. Great Sable Stag. A 3/3 for 1GG is good. Make it so it can't be countered and it becomes great. Give it protection from *both* of its enemy colors, and well, now you're bordering on ridiculous. But what sets the Stag apart from other great creatures born in 2009 is both its artwork and its Elk creature type. This is not some generic beast or mundane elemental. The Great Sable Stag is an *ineffable and incorruptible* Elk protector of the forest that looks like it came right out of a Hayao Miyazaki film. Gaea could not ask for anything better.

7. Enemy Fetch Lands. Ummm...build the deck you want, with the colors you like, and get the land you need. What is not to like here?

6. Bloodghast. Vampire Nocturnus (M10) almost made this spot, but creature lords have been around before. Zendikar's Bloodghast is different in that this vampire comes back from the graveyard to the battlefield every time you put a land into play. Sure, he can't block, but that's not what a 2/1 blood-sucker is for.

5. Baneslayer Angel (a.k.a. Marsha Brady). Like Jan Brady, Serra Angel never got tapped (did I really just type that?), but Serra's older, more attractive sister gives up her vigilance in exchange for first strike, lifelink, an extra point of both power and toughness, and protection from both demons and dragons. Meh, okay that last ability is not so good. If you listen carefully, you can almost hear Jan, err...I mean Serra, lamenting, "Marsha, Marsha, Marsha."

4. Bloodbraid Elf. I suppose the *cascade* ability could just as easily have filled this spot, but the Bloodbraid Elf's four mana cost and ideal color combination made it the quintessential cascade card to blend with Jund and wreak havoc on the Standard environment.

3. Maelstrom Pulse. One more reason not to invest in a Relentless Rats deck, Maelstrom Pulse provide one of the few reasons to buy Alara Reborn, and became one of the best removal cards from 2009.

2. Landfall. Better than *Cascade*. Better than both *Domain* and *Trap*. Better than *Unearth* and *Devour*. Better than *Intimidate*. Better than the return of *Cycling* and *Kicker*. Landfall is the best ability of 2009, and may prove to be the best ever.

And finally, 2009's best addition to the playing community...

1. Path to Exile. Kind of a Swords to Plowshares minus the life gain, Path to Exile not only introduced us to the re-named *Exiled* game mechanic, but for just one white mana, it can spot remove threats forever. No need to worry about that 3/1 beatstick being unearthed. He is exiled from the game. Indestructible Darksteel Colossus headed your way? Path him and exchange the 11 trample damage for a tapped land. Path to Exile can also be used to trigger your own landfall or allow you to search your library and fix your mana base. There is little doubt of Path's impact in 2009, and it seems likely that this card will be a Standard staple until it rotates out.

Here's to hoping 2010 will be just as kind <raises Mt. Dew can>.

Until next time, Keep gaming.

-magicgeek

## KEEPIN' IT REAL

by DAYBED, MAGICGEEK, & MOOKA

