

Reviews

The Advertiser

★★★★

<http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/entertainment/adelaide-fringe/other-events/adelaide-fringe-review-2017-the-expert-at-the-card-table-how-to-cheat-at-cards/news-story/7fb1060ea36b7014bc9563ee8ea21d07>

ONE part card history lecture, one part cheating demonstration, the Expert at the Card Table is never going to make you a card shark in an hour, but it will show you what sleight of hand can do when wielded by a talented performer.

Based on a book of the same name by a shadowy author which has not been out of print for more almost 120 years and is treated as a sacred text by gamblers, this performance looks and feels the part.

A card table set up in a small dingy room, a soundtrack of saloon piano music and a well-dressed host who knows a lot more than you and occasionally tells you so.

Host Jden Redden takes some time to explain the basics of cheating, gives a brief but fascinating history of the book, then shows why is he better than you will ever be at making cards dance and disappear.

His hand artistry needs to be seen to be believed and the final lengthy display made this reviewer, who likes to think he knows everything, physically annoyed because it defied belief.

The Adelaide Show Podcast

★★★★★ (9.8/10)

<http://theadelaideshow.com.au/reviews/expert-card-table-aka-cheat-cards/>

Based on the bible of card manipulation; "sleight of hand, cheating and legerdemain" the show is part live tutorial from the book of the same name by the mysterious S.W.Erdnase and part "How the hell did he do that!".

Jden starts with an introduction and background to one of the most famous books written on card manipulation with demonstrations of how to fake cuts, shuffles and deals via various means.

His work is smooth and flowing, entrancing to watch and I'm sure is more difficult than he makes it appear.

From early in the show the audience, who are sitting in close around a circular table, literally within reaching distance, are involved.

Some tricks are explained however many are not which lends to the mystery because you have a creeping suspicion you should know a little bit how it is done if you had been listening earlier and not mesmerized.

Jden doesn't use any gimmicks or marked decks, it's all dexterity and skill and very, very good skill at that.

Time passes too quickly however the last setup in which three members of the audience are handling the cards whilst using their "empathy" and Jden is only giving spoken instructions is the masterpiece.

The show flows well, it is very well executed and JDen makes everyone feel right there at the table as he goes through the story, explaining techniques and performing impressive slights of hand.

If you like close up magic and card magic in particular this is the show for you.

The Serenade Files

★★★★★

<https://jennifertrijo.com/2018/02/19/review-the-expert-at-the-card-table-magic-close-up/>

The moment I entered the cabinet room, upstairs at La Boheme, the soft jazz on playback and the vintage ambience provided the perfect backdrop for this performance in the round. Jden Redden was the understated showman and the card table was his stage.

Fringe-goers shook their heads, gasped, and laughed as he took them through a live tutorial of techniques and methods used by masters of card manipulation. His show, The Expert at the Card Table, was inspired by a book of the same title, published over a century ago by the mysterious S. W. Erdnase. It appeared Redden had studied this work well.

Like students drawn to a captivating lecture, patrons were fascinated. The lesson of the hour was How To Cheat At Cards 101, and Redden was truly the expert at this card table.

The background music transitioned into an eerie tune as the mystery intensified, and the sound of card flourishes and tactful shuffling filled the quiet room. Redden explained the mechanics behind a number of sleight-of-hand tactics. His interactions with the audience were effortless and peppered with humour, causing even the most poker-faced patron to manage a smile.

A number of crowd pleasers left the audience slack-jawed and one woman even smirked, "just stop now" after being overwhelmed by Redden's skills. Nearing the hour, the finale

was particularly impressive as Redden demonstrated his ability to control cards without even touching them.

Prepare to be astonished should you attend a production by the creative team at Fascinating Lies. I highly recommend it. Their second Adelaide Fringe offering, Subconscious, will be showing between 6 - 8 March, and 12 - 18 March at the Noel Lothian Hall, Adelaide Botanic Gardens.

This was a refined and sophisticated show led by a talented presenter. Redden held his audience as skillfully as a deck of cards.

TEO Magazine

★★★★

[ADELAIDE FRINGE SHOW REVIEW THE EXPERT AT THE CARD TABLE: HOW TO CHEAT AT CARDS | TEO MAGAZINE // BLOG](#)

On Friday night in Adelaide, the evening began as a small crowd of 25 climbed the stairs of La Bohème into the dimly lit Cabinet Room. The audience quietly claimed seats around an old-school poker table placed in the centre of the room. It was an intimate occasion but a relatively comfortable one, with glasses of wine in hand and soft jazz music playing in the background. Before the show began, the audience was spared a few moments to take in their surroundings and admire the red velvet curtains, the art deco ceiling roses and vintage French holiday posters.

The expert at the card table, Jden Redden, quietly entered the room, smartly dressed in a suit and tie. In front of him were multiple decks alongside a forest green book with gold letters. The book was entitled 'The Expert at the Card Table' and happened to be where Jden had sourced his expertise. Written in 1902 by an author under the pseudonym SW Erdnase, the curious book apparently contains every known "manoeuvre and stratagem of the expert card handler".

The show began with a useful line of advice; trust your friends but always cut the deck. The essence of the night was centred on the three Fs: the false cut, the false shuffle and the false deal. If you can master the three Fs, you can cheat at cards because no magic is happening here. The magic lies in forward planning, a good memory and always being one step ahead. In fact, Jden certainly was always one step ahead. When you think you can follow the subtle slights of hand, you quickly realise that experience trumps theoretical knowledge. The audience was frequently left in awe and disbelief, even after the tricks had been revealed.

23-year-old Jden with 11 years of experience acknowledged that some techniques have alluded even the most highly skilled magicians and card holders of our time. Such techniques were attempted, some successful and some only partly so. The most impressive tricks, however, occurred at the end of the night, when Jden put the trick into the hands of the audience. How he did it we're still not sure, but Jden could manipulate which player would win and which player would lose, even when an audience member was randomly distributing the deck!

As any lesson claiming to make things clear, we were left with more questions than ever. One thing we do know for sure; you may know how to cheat at cards but the winner will always be the expert at the table. If your interest has been sparked, you can buy tickets to The Expert at the Card Table and Jden's other show, Subconscious from FringeTix or from adelaidefringe.com.au.

The Upside News

★★★★

[ADELAIDE FRINGE REVIEW: THE EXPERT AT THE CARD TABLE - HOW TO CHEAT AT CARDS, LA BOHEME, 2018 - The Upside News](#)

What you see is what you get - as the title suggests, this show will teach you how to cheat at cards. It's not only that though, as you will get to experience Jden Redden's amazing array of card tricks.

The show gets its title from a book published in 1902 by the mysterious S. W. Erdnase, with Redden explaining some of the history behind it while demonstrating different card tricks.

The set up at La Boheme looked almost like a secret gambling den, with a blackjack table and low lighting setting the mood. Chairs were placed right up at the table, allowing for plenty of audience participation.

Initially, Redden showed us how he performed simple shuffling and dealing tricks. He then moved onto the more complex tricks, and while he says they are based on the fundamentals of what he explained to us, we all sat there amazed. I certainly believe him when he says he had a misspent youth.

Redden as a host was clear to understand and easy-going, making him a perfect teacher. The intimacy of the show made it feel like we were a select group of lucky people learning

some excellent new tricks we could show off in the future. Even if cards are not your favourite thing, I would recommend this show just to see Jden Redden in action. The guy has tremendous skill and is entertaining in equal measure.

Tupla Magazine

★★★★ 1/2

[The Expert at the Card Table - How to Cheat at Cards - Tupla Magazine](#)

As the audience went into the small upstairs cabinet room at La Boheme, I saw a number of chairs organised around the central card table, the atmospheric lights, the cards on the table. The stage was set but with little to no experience in slight-of-hand trickery and the near-magic of card-cheating, I had no idea what to expect.

The show starts with a crash-course in methods of cheating. First the trick is performed for us and then it is broken down to enable the audience to see the process in action. The room is an intimate one and the atmosphere is kept perfectly for the performance.

The tricks become ever more impressive and performer jden redden ensures the audience follows along, dealing with the audience as deftly as the cards. He ensures that even those without a background in poker or cards will be able to appreciate the skill of the performance.

The performance needs to go above and beyond and redden continuously rises to meet the ever-higher challenges he sets himself. He plays with audience expectation and, like any expert at the card table, allows the audience to think he is being bettered.

Taking the first half of its title from 1902 book *The Expert at the Card Table*, by the mysterious SW Erdnase, redden takes us through not only the skills of card cheating but also the potential identity of Erdnase. Along the way, you get wonders, education, and if, like me, you don't have a background in cards, a new appreciation for the skills and history involved.

The performance runs like a perfectly oiled machine and redden gives the audience full opportunity to mess with the process almost as though just to prove the strength of skill and practice. Quickly you become aware that whatever he wants the cards to do, they will do. This could rob the performance of its suspense but ultimately with ever-raising challenges, one cannot help but be drawn into the performance just to see how redden will achieve the impossible.

The AU Review

★★★★ 1/2

[Adelaide Fringe Review: jden redden truly is The Expert at the Card Table - Arts on the AU](#)

Usually a magician likes to keep his tricks a secret for obvious reasons. But jden redden is no ordinary magician. Part of the Adelaide Fringe, over the course of an hour, jden performs card tricks and then explains how they are performed.

The audience is led upstairs at La Boheme Theatre and sits around a card table adorned with four different packs of cards and a book, "The Expert at the Card Table" by S. W. Erdanase (backwards, E. S. Andrews). jden goes into a bit of the history of this well known book amongst magicians which has been in print for over 100 years. Dressed impeccably in a wool suit and wearing glasses he certainly looks the part of a master illusionist.

The three basic moves he teaches us are the False Cut, the False Shuffle and the False Deal. jden performs a trick with each then explains the science behind them. The fascinating thing is that even after explaining the moves, and slowing the movements down, his hand is still faster than the eye. At 22 years old, jden has been perfecting his art for eleven years and is polished and smooth. There were two other magicians in the audience who were clearly impressed with his skill.

Although everyone in the audience was shown how to palm a card, I highly doubt that anyone could replicate this feat without some serious training. That would go for all of the tricks shown actually. The show was well paced and entertaining, with plenty of audience participation. The cards seemed to float in his hands as he dealt from the top, the bottom and the centre of the decks, with dozens of eyes glued to the cards he still managed to draw plenty of gasps of astonishment from the assembled group.

The show culminates in a piece de resistance whereby one audience member is in control of the dealing of cards to four others. Random flips, choices and turns from the audience member still leaves jden coming up trumps. This is clearly not a person to play cards against for money.

Close up magic is one of the more difficult challenges as there is little room for error, but watching jden shuffle cards one handed is like watching a true master at work. A true gentleman of the game and a show that really has to be seen to be believed.

FOUR AND A HALF STARS (OUT OF FIVE)

The Expert at the Card Table – How to Cheat at Cards runs until 18th March at La Boheme. The reviewer attended the performance on 23rd February.

Glam Adelaide

★★★

<https://www.glamadelaide.com.au/main/fringe-review-the-expert-at-the-card-table-how-to-cheat-at-cards/>

The Expert At The Card Table takes place around a small card table. There, Jden Redden shows us the art of card trickery as he divides the skills required into sleight of hand and mental manipulation.

A front row seat offers a great view of the show but Redden is still far too quick to be caught in the act, even when he tells us what he's doing. Throughout we get the feeling that he's always one step ahead of us.

A few tricks don't quite go to plan, and Redden bashfully admits when this is the case. Where a street performer might weave this into the show or crack a few jokes, Redden lacks a showman's flair and concentrates more on the craft of cardistry.

In between these tricks, we learn a little about the seminal text that gives the show its name. Self-published over a century ago by a mysterious author whose identity has never been uncovered, it's been in print ever since and is still treated with reverence by cardsharps and gamblers. It's an intriguing tale, and this storytelling aspect could be developed a little further.

Jdn Redden doesn't do magic. He tells us so several times throughout The Expert At The Card Table as he shows us how to replicate some of the simpler tricks. When he gets to the more impressive feats of prestidigitation, he leaves us to wonder how he does them and I was certainly left short of answers. It may not be magic, but it's still seriously impressive.

Yewth Magazine

<http://www.yewthmag.com/blog-feed/2017/2/21/fringe-review-the-expert-at-the-card-table-how-to-cheat-at-cards>

A magician never reveals his secrets... or something like that?

In The Expert at the Card Table - How to Cheat at Cards, local magician Jden Redden breaks this fundamental rule - and maybe that is why it works.

Redden's Adelaide Fringe show is held out of Tuxedo Cat, now relocated to the former Telecom-Trust heritage-listed building on Franklin Street. Expect something low-key and

intimate; a small bunch of people summoned to a room and seated around a card table. Here Redden demonstrates spades of card flourishes and dirty gambling secrets, focusing on card manipulation rather than 'magic'. The demonstration is also shuffled together with a lesson in card cheats through history and the mysterious S. W. Erdnase, author of the card-cult-bible, *The Expert at The Card Table* published in 1902.

Whilst modern audiences might not be naive or patient enough for 'traditional magic', there will always be something intriguing about a scam. It's about learning a magic trick when you're a kid just to fool friends in the schoolyard, or watching Rounders one too many times and thinking you have a leg up at poker. This is what Redden's show taps in to, people's desire to know secrets, learn how to manipulate and win. Sure it breaks the magician's code, but maybe it's more entertaining to learn how things work. It's certainly more impressive to be shown where the smoke, mirrors and fishing-line are and still trip. However the show is very informative and at times feeling like an extra-curricular tute, which runs the risk of being a tad dull if cards aren't your thing. There's also the other students in the class wanting to become part of the act: that guy who plays online poker so thinks he's on to it all, that lady who keeps reminding everyone she's only good at strip poker for no apparent reason.

The Expert at the Card Table - How to Cheat at Cards is the kind of small locally produced show to take a risk on, as it keeps the Fringe honest. It'll also keep honest that annoying mate who thinks they can count cards - take them and they're bound to never shut up.

Great Scott Media

★★★

<http://greatscott.media/2017/02/22/the-expert-at-the-card-table-how-to-cheat-at-cards/>

The Expert at the Card Table is apparently the cult bible of the magic and gambling worlds, and has been teaching high rollers and con artists how to cheat at cards for over a century.

Card expert jden redden is clearly a fan of the book, having mastered its tricks and studied its mysterious author, S.W. Erdnase. After a successful debut at last year's Fringe, redden returns with this new show to inspire Adelaide to share his passion.

The audience gathers around a moodily-lit professional card table. Redden joins us, and dives straight into some artful shuffling that keeps a fresh pack of cards in new deck order. He then leads us step by step through each of the moves he used to do it. The artifices that follow come under the category of 'legerdemain' - sleight of hand, or the old 'card up your sleeve' tricks.

With charming names like False Riffing, Palming and Bottom Dealing, the ruses seem so obvious when explained but require a dexterous touch and deceitful confidence to really

pull them off. Redden has both in spades (pun intended).

A dapper nerdy type, Redden knows his stuff and methodically leads us through all his hot tips. Don't expect to come out an instant pro though - these tricks clearly take a lot of practice to master.

Woven through the training session is a slideshow with illustrations from the book and an exploration of the numerous theories surrounding the real identity of its author. With the show in such an intimate space, the slideshow feels a bit clunky, drawing your eye away from the real action. It seems like Redden has tried to squeeze more of a story from the book's origin than exists - or perhaps his mastery of storytelling just hasn't quite reached the level of his cardistry.

His trick delivery is mostly remarkable though, inspiring a series of impressed oohs and aahs from the captivated audience. Redden is an adept teacher and brings in other tidbits about card game rules, the evolving magic scene and the how all decks are not made equal.

Things get really interesting when Redden introduces the concept of intuition, and gets members of the audience in on the act. I was well and truly mystified about how I'd randomly dealt a winning hand, and Redden doesn't reveal his secrets. I somehow doubt it's just my perfect intuition.

How to Cheat at Cards is a rare opportunity to see a magician reveal his secrets. It may not help you win big at the casino to fund your Fringe binge, but with a bit of luck and hard work, you'll definitely learn a new party trick.