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Game Time — A **Cottage Tradition**

Elbow-to-elbow with a favorite little-seen cousin or family members too often split by conflicting schedules, nothing much beats a mind-bending Scrabble match, spirited checkers tournament or competitive carrom game played on the screen porch.

Carrom boards have been an American pastime since the late 1800s, when the Ludington-based company first introduced them (carrom.com). Nearly three dozen different board styles have been produced, and along with a variety of pieces, provide hour after hour of nostalgic, strategic fun.

Pictured here: This 09 Carrom Combination "E" game board was manufactured between 1901 and 1914. Measuring just under 29 inches in diameter, the rare early edition red and green board features checkers on one side and Crokinole — a contest in which players take turns shooting discs across the circular playing surface — on the other.

While card games and cribbage also remain timeless, Eastport-based Education Outdoors (EducationOutdoors.net) produces a selection of inviting vacation games, too, including S'mores. Designed for up to six players, the object (of course) is to collect all the ingredients and build the perfect s'more before your brother does.

Looking for more vintage fun? Visit the Grand Rapids Public Museum June 5-Sept. I to learn the history of games and experience countless kinds, both indoors and out - from vintage pinball to giant chess - all free with general admission (grmuseum.org).

- Tai Alexander