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Do the Twist

Jay Moldenhauer-Salazar
 House of Cards
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PRO TOUR-VALENCIA

When Aaron (the editor of this esteemed site) asked me to write about my favorite **Magic** card my reaction was a long, drooling, vacant look.

"Favorite card? You have *got* to be kidding me," I said grandly, once I had recovered from my initial shock. "I'm Jay M-S! I embrace all **Magic** cards! I've got the deck attention span of a turnip! How can I possibly decide upon a *single* card? One card . . . Ha!"

Aaron sort of stared back, tapping his foot while I ranted. [After Anthony and Mark, I was used to it. -- Aaron]

Panic set in. One card? Is he serious? I have to pick a favorite?! That's like picking a favorite child! How on Earth . . . ?

I looked over at Aaron. He kept staring and tapping, staring and tapping. [I'd heard it all before. --Aaron]



Okay, I decided, I can do this. I can play by the rules. *Somehow, Jay managed to choose a favorite card.* After all, I have a favorite movie (*Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*), and a favorite book (*Birthright*, written by a kick-ass author, if I do say so myself). I even have a clear favorite **Magic** color (green). It probably won't be too difficult to pick a favorite **Magic** card.

A (*stare*) single (*tap*) favorite (*stare*) card (*tap*) . . .

Which is all to say that I truly hadn't considered the idea of a favorite **Magic** card before. So for about a week, I sat down and poured over the Oracle card reference. Then I scanned the non-tournament sets like *Portal*, *Starter*, and *Unglued*. I made a list of a bunch of cards that I'm particularly fond of and had used in multiple decks. I tried to choose cards I not only like to play in individual games, but cards that players tend to shape cool decks around. Then a lot of napkins and red pens followed, with me trying to whittle my list to one card.

And here it is. After much consideration, my favorite **Magic** card is . . .

Desert Twister.

Here's why:

IT'S GREEN

Of the twenty or so cards that were up for consideration as my favorite, about half of them were green. As I'm decidedly a green mage, it stands to reason that my favorite card is green.

But it runs deeper than that. **Desert Twister** is very green. It has **GG** in its mana cost and is too expensive for other colors that lack quick mana acceleration like **Llanowar Elves**, **Werebear**, and **Skyshroud Claim**. Moreover, other colors don't splash green for **Desert Twister** because:

- White and black can splash for Vindicate or cheap instants to shore up their weaknesses.
- Blue is content countering or bouncing threats or splashing white, red, or black to cover what it wants to destroy.
- If red wants green, it wants it for speed, not utility. And if it wants utility, Naturalize is enough, thank you very much.

As a result, **Desert Twister** shows up most often in monogreen decks. I love that. **Desert Twister** isn't quite as green as, say, **Chlorophant**, but it's pretty green.

IT'S EXPENSIVE

As I said during [Green Week](#), I like decks with a lot of land. Playing **Desert Twister** means I'm playing a deck loaded with access to mana. If I can afford to use **Desert Twister**, I'm probably also using **Crush of Wurms**,



Desert Twister
Arabian Nights uncommon;
Revised uncommon;
Fourth Edition uncommon;
Fifth Edition uncommon;
Mercadian Masques uncommon

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Rushwood Elemental, Aladdin's Ring, or Silvos, Rogue Elemental. I am probably playing a deck that also avoids "mana-screw," as it's both monocolored and has access to ridiculous mana development.

IT'S FLEXIBLE

Nothing says utility like **Desert Twister**. It can destroy an opponent's single access to red mana. In many decks, **Desert Twister** is green's only way to kill creatures without flying. It stops anticreature staples like **Worship** and **Ensnaring Bridge**. Best of all: It can be any of these things as needed. There is something incredibly comforting about holding a **Desert Twister** when you have six mana on the table. I get warm and fuzzy just thinking about it . . .

"Oh, look, you played **Pacifism** on my **Thorn Elemental**."

"Egads! **Teferi's Moat**!"

"Hey, your **Shivan Dragon** can fly over all of my blockers and kill me next turn."

"Yep, it's too bad you got out **Gaea's Cradle** before me."

These can be demoralizing events for a green mage -- unless, of course, you're holding **Desert Twister** when you have six mana on the table.

Incidentally, my seething hatred for **Morphling** and **Masticore** may be explained by my love of **Desert Twister**. There is no fuzzy feeling holding **Desert Twister** and staring down a **Morphling**.

IT'S IMPRESSIVE

One of the things to love about green is the look on an opponent's face as you tap six lands. Although your opponent might not blink back tears at the sight of **Desert Twister** as would be done with **Nemata**, **Grove Guardian**, it's still awfully impressive that with enough mana, green can literally blow anything off the table. In a match, I once untapped **Rofellos**, **Llanowar Emissary** with nine forests on the table and proceeded to **Desert Twister** my opponent's **Iron Maiden**, then his first **Indentured Djinn**, then his second **Indentured Djinn**. (Imagine what would have happened with **Mirari** on the table!) In my mind, **Desert Twister** is a good example of green's very Hulk-like philosophy: With determination and enough power, anything is possible.

IT'S COOL

When I was younger and slightly more obnoxious, I liked to whip my hands around in the air before slapping **Desert Twister** onto the table. And I would even sometimes yell "WHOOSH!" I just love the image of a mage drawing lots . . . and lots . . . and lots . . . of primal energy into his or her body to summon a mighty twister. When the dust settles, the threat is simply nowhere to be found. For me, **Desert Twister** brings to life a battle between mages, in much the same way that **Earthquake**, **Rod of Ruin**, and even the **Circles of Protection** do. For me, it's cool that I can conjure a tornado during a card game.

Truly, I have only two complaints about **Desert Twister**. The first complaint is about flavor. What exactly does a **Desert Twister** have to do with forests? Unfortunately, **Savage Twister**, **Tornado**, **Hurricane**, and **Whirlwind** are already green **Magic** cards or I might lobby for a renaming of my favorite card. Don't get me wrong. Like I said before: I love the idea of waving my arms around and summoning up a tornado to do magical battle. It just seems weird to draw on the power of the forest to create a twister. In the desert.



Gale-force winds has always been a small subtheme of the color green, since it is a "natural" form of destruction.

My second complaint is that **Desert Twister** is currently not Standard legal. As I've said numerous times, Standard is my favorite format, even when playing casual games. I like **Creeping Mold** a lot, but it's no **Desert Twister**.

Still, I feel comfortable saying that if I *need* to pick a single favorite **Magic** card, right now it would be **Desert Twister**. Just next time be sure to ask me about my *hundred* favorite cards instead, okay?

Speaking of a hundred cards, join me next week when I try a wee little experiment I hope you'll enjoy.

Until then, enjoy the Twister decks below that I, um, whipped up. They contain a lot of rares, but I figured today was a day to let my proverbial hair down.

Green Smoke

Extended-legal Desert Twister - Smokestack deck



Main Deck 60 cards

1 Dust Bowl	4 Deranged Hermit	2 Crop Rotation
18 Forest	4 Llanowar Elves	4 Desert Twister
2 Gaea's Cradle	3 Rofellos, Llanowar Emissary	4 Fallow Earth
2 Wasteland	4 Werebear	4 Greener Pastures
23 lands	15 creatures	4 Plow Under
		4 Smokestack
		22 other spells

Tribal Twister

Extended-legal Desert Twister Elf deck



Main Deck 60 cards

16 Forest	1 Eladamri, Lord of Leaves	4 Desert Twister
2 Gaea's Cradle	1 Elvish Lyrist	2 Repopulate
3 Wirewood Lodge	1 Elvish Scrapper	2 Riptide Replicator
21 lands	4 Elvish Vanguard	8 other spells
	4 Elvish Warrior	
	2 Heedless One	
	4 Llanowar Elves	
	4 Multani's Acolyte	
	4 Priest of Titania	
	1 Rofellos, Llanowar Emissary	
	3 Voice of the Woods	
	2 Wirewood Herald	
	31 creatures	

Robo-Glade

Extended-legal Desert Twister artifact deck



Main Deck 60 cards

18 Forest	0 creatures	3 Aladdin's Ring
4 Treetop Village		4 Bind
22 lands		3 Centaur Glade
		4 Desert Twister
		4 Eladamri's Vineyard
		4 Grim Monolith
		2 Hurricane
		3 Jalum Tome
		1 Mirari
		3 Moment's Peace
		2 Planar Portal
		1 Predator, Flagship
		4 Skyshroud Claim
		38 other spells

A Bad Twist

Extended-legal Desert Twister land deck



Main Deck 60 cards

11 Forest	3 Crater Hellion	3 Burning Wish
4 Ghitu Encampment	3 creatures	4 Clear the Land
7 Mountain		2 Crush of Wurms
4 Treetop Village		4 Desert Twister
4 Wasteland		4 Exploration
30 lands		4 Horn of Greed
		1 New Frontiers
		1 Restock
		4 Wake of Destruction

Jay may be reached at houseofcards@wizards.com.



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