

BERNALO

Vintage Collection Knowledge — Collectables & Games

Pavilion “To Sink Ships”

A Collector's Guide

Identification • History • Dating • Collectability • Preservation

Compiled August 2026

This guide accompanies a single factory-sealed example catalogued on the Bernalo Vintage Collection Knowledge site. Findings marked as the collector's own assessment are kept clearly separate from independently documented facts, in line with Bernalo's seven-point verification standard.

Contents

1. Identification

This guide covers a single factory-sealed copy of Pavilion “To Sink Ships,” a Battleship-style strategy game. Because the box has never been opened, everything below is drawn from the box itself — its artwork, printed text, licensing marks and retail codes — rather than from the contents inside.

What's on the box

Both large faces of the box carry the same diagonal illustration of two angled pegboards with ships and pegs in play, the Pavilion logo (a stylised column crest), and the game's title in five languages, each on its own coloured tab:

- To Sink Ships — game of strategy (English)
- Bataille Navale — jeu de stratégie (French)
- Schiffe Versenken — strategiespiel (German)
- Hundir los Barcos — juego de estrategia (Spanish)
- Combate Naval — jogo de estratégia (Portuguese)

A red “6+” age badge appears in the top right corner on both faces. One face additionally carries a printed panel with the Toys “R” Us logo, multilingual customer-information text, a CE mark, a recycling symbol, a small-parts choking-hazard icon, a barcode and a reference number.



Illustrated face — artwork and five-language title stack.



Second face — Toys “R” Us safety/distribution panel, barcode and CE mark.

Marks on file

Trademark licence	© 1998, 2000 Geoffrey, Inc.
Canadian licence	© 1998, 2000 Toys “R” Us (Canada) Ltd.
Made in	Spain (stated in English, French, German, Spanish and Italian)
Barcode	0 040004 370938
Reference	Ref. 37093
Regulatory marks	CE mark · recycling symbol · small-parts choking-hazard icon · “6+” age badge
Distribution addresses	UK, Germany, France, Spain and Austria — consistent with a European-wide retail run

Note: This section matches the fuller identification entry for this item on the Collectables & Games hub. Completeness (whether all pieces are present) is left unconfirmed here by design, since opening the box would end its factory-sealed condition.

2. History: What “Pavilion” Actually Is

It's easy to assume “Pavilion” is an independent toy company competing with Hasbro for shelf space. The evidence points to something different — and, for a collector, more interesting.

Pavilion is a trademark used by Geoffrey, Inc., the corporate entity behind the Toys “R” Us mascot and brand licensing. Rather than an independent publisher, Pavilion functions as Toys “R” Us's own house label for classic and family games — the retailer's equivalent of a supermarket's own-brand product line, sitting alongside the name-brand games on the same shelf.

Secondhand listings and retail archives show the Pavilion name used across decades and a wide range of classic games: chess, checkers, backgammon, cribbage, Rummy-O, multi-game “100 Classic Games” sets, and Battleship-style titles like this one. Dated examples turn up from the early 1990s through to Toys “R” Us’s own in-house games well into the 2010s and beyond, which tells us Pavilion wasn’t a one-off release but a long-running, continuously refreshed house brand.

Note: *This section draws on general reference and secondhand-market sources rather than an official Pavilion or Geoffrey, Inc. company history, since no such published history was found. Treat it as the best available reading of public evidence, not a confirmed corporate record.*

3. Dating This Copy: First Releases vs Reissues

Because Pavilion operated as a long-running house brand rather than a single limited release, a given title like “To Sink Ships” could plausibly have been printed more than once over the years, under the same basic box design. That makes dating an individual copy a matter of reading its marks carefully rather than assuming “Pavilion box” means one fixed date.

Clues on this box

The licensing line on this copy reads “© 1998, 2000 Geoffrey, Inc.” — a dual date. The dual date is consistent with an earlier copyright or design date followed by a later production, licensing or packaging revision; however, the box alone does not establish precisely what each date represents. Read together, that places this particular copy’s print run at or after 2000, built from a design dating to 1998 — consistent with an early Toys “R” Us print run of this title rather than a much later reissue.

A general dating method

For Pavilion titles more broadly, the same approach used elsewhere in this collection applies well:

- Licensing-date text (as above) — the clearest single anchor when present
- Barcode format and prefix, which can shift between print runs
- The importer/distributor address list, which changes as a retailer’s European operations change over time
- The era of the Toys “R” Us logo and Geoffrey mascot artwork used on the box
- Which language set is included — European runs were trimmed or expanded as markets were added or dropped

Note: *Without a published Pavilion catalogue or a comparison set of other dated boxes, an exact first-release-versus-reissue determination can’t be certified from a single copy. Treat this section as a working method, demonstrated on this box, not a definitive census of every print run.*

4. The Toys “R” Us Connection

Geoffrey, Inc. takes its name from Geoffrey the Giraffe, the Toys “R” Us mascot, and functioned as the retailer’s trademark and licensing arm. Its name on this box’s licensing line is the direct link between “Pavilion” and Toys “R” Us — not a coincidence of shared wording, but the same corporate entity.

A private-label brand like Pavilion made commercial sense for a toy retailer: it let Toys “R” Us sell its own versions of evergreen family games — chess, backgammon, Battleship-style strategy games — without paying a name-brand licensing premium, while filling shelf space with affordable classics exclusive to its own stores.

The importer and distributor addresses printed on this box — spanning the UK, Germany, France, Spain and Austria — reflect Toys “R” Us’s European retail footprint at the time this copy was printed, and explain why the box carries five languages rather than one.

Toys “R” Us itself was a global retail chain founded in the United States that expanded across Europe through the late twentieth century. Its main US business closed following bankruptcy in 2018, and the brand has since reappeared in limited retail forms under new ownership. That closure is useful context for this item — but as Section 7 sets out, it isn’t the main reason this copy is desirable.

5. How to Play

“To Sink Ships” follows the same core mechanic as Battleship and its many historical predecessors: two players each secretly position a fleet of ships on a personal grid, then take turns calling coordinates to try to locate and sink the opponent’s fleet.

- Each player arranges their fleet on their own grid, out of the opponent’s sight, typically using a folding pegboard case.
- Players alternate turns, each calling a single grid coordinate at the opponent’s fleet.
- The opponent reports a hit or a miss; hits are usually marked with a red peg, misses with a white peg.
- A ship is sunk once every square it occupies has been hit.
- The first player to sink every ship in the opponent’s fleet wins.

Note: *This describes the standard mechanic the box art and genre imply. Because this copy is sealed, the exact ship count, sizes and any Pavilion-specific rule variations printed on the enclosed rules sheet haven’t been confirmed against this particular box.*

6. Pavilion vs Hasbro Battleship

Grid-based naval guessing games pre-date Milton Bradley’s Battleship, with earlier pencil-and-paper versions documented before the familiar plastic game appeared. It traces back to Salvo, a pencil-and-paper game commercially published by the Starex Novelty Company in 1931, with further paper variants from other publishers through the 1930s and 1940s. Milton Bradley popularised the familiar plastic pegboard format under the Battleship name in 1967. Pavilion’s To Sink Ships represents a separately branded interpretation of the much older grid-based naval guessing-game concept.

That distinction explains why so many Battleship-style titles exist: manufacturers and retailers were always free to commission their own “sink the fleet” game, so long as they didn’t use the Battleship name or Hasbro’s specific trade dress. Pavilion’s “To Sink Ships” sits in that long lineage, alongside earlier examples like Combat, Broadships, Sink It and Convoy.

Brand identity	Hasbro/Milton Bradley: Battleship-branded commercial game. Pavilion:
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	separately branded “To Sink Ships” interpretation of the grid-based naval strategy format
Publisher type	Hasbro: a mass-market toy and game company. Pavilion: a Toys “R” Us house label via Geoffrey, Inc., not an independent studio
Distribution	Hasbro Battleship: sold through mass retail worldwide. To Sink Ships: distributed specifically through Toys “R” Us's own European stores
Packaging	Hasbro Battleship: typically single-market packaging per region. This copy: a five-language box covering multiple European markets in one print run

7. Collectability & Rarity

It's tempting to lean on “Toys “R” Us doesn't exist anymore” as the headline reason this item is collectable. That framing overstates the case — plenty of products sold through Toys “R” Us remain common and inexpensive, since the retailer's closure alone doesn't make everything it once stocked scarce.

The stronger, more specific case for this copy rests on a combination of factors:

- Factory-sealed condition, which trades verified completeness for a materially stronger unopened/collector-grade claim
- Pavilion/Toys “R” Us private-label distribution — a narrower print run and retail footprint than a mass-market Hasbro release, sold through one retail chain rather than globally across many
- An early, dateable print run, anchored by the 1998/2000 licensing line
- A complete five-language European box, reflecting a specific, identifiable distribution run rather than a generic reprint
- Dual appeal as both a playable strategy game and Toys “R” Us retail memorabilia

Note: No independent sales-history or population data (how many sealed copies are known to survive) has been checked against this claim yet. This section documents the reasoning behind the item's collectability, not a verified market rarity figure — consistent with points 5 and 6 of Bernalo's seven-point standard remaining open on this item's own catalogue entry.

8. Preservation & Storage

Sealed board games are vulnerable to the same slow damage as other vintage cardboard packaging — warping, fading, and shrink-wrap degradation — all avoidable with reasonably simple storage habits.

- Store upright rather than flat where practical, to avoid the box warping under its own or other items' weight over time
- Keep in a stable, moderate environment — avoid attics, basements, garages, or anywhere prone to temperature and humidity swings
- Keep out of direct sunlight and away from strong artificial UV light, which will fade box colours over time

- Avoid stacking heavy items on top of the box, even in storage
- Handle the shrink wrap as little as possible — it becomes more brittle with age and repeated handling
- Maintain stable moderate humidity; where humidity control is necessary, use appropriate archival humidity-management materials rather than allowing desiccants to contact the box
- Photograph and document the item's current condition periodically — useful for insurance, provenance, and tracking any change in condition over time

Appendix: Naval Strategy Basics

A short taste of strategy for the grid-based “sink the fleet” mechanic that To Sink Ships shares with Battleship and its many historical variants — general genre knowledge, not a transcription of this specific edition's printed rules, which remain unconfirmed while this copy stays sealed.

- Probability targeting: rather than guessing at random, track every position each remaining ship could still legally occupy and fire where the most possibilities overlap.
- Checkerboard search: probing roughly every other cell is enough to guarantee crossing every possible ship placement, since the smallest ship usually spans at least two cells.
- Hunt-then-target: search broadly until a hit lands, then probe the adjacent cells to find the ship's orientation and finish it off along that line.
- Defensive placement: avoid predictable edge/corner habits, symmetric layouts and evenly spaced ships — all of which make a fleet easier to find.

Note: For the full technical treatment — worked examples, the probability maths behind each method, and deeper defensive analysis — see the companion *Advanced Naval Strategy Guide*, available as a separate download alongside this guide.

Notes on Sources

Primary material for this guide is this item's own box photography, catalogued on the Bernalo Vintage Collection Knowledge site under Collectables & Games. Background history and general game-history context (the Pavilion/Geoffrey, Inc. relationship, and the pre-1967 history of the Battleship-style mechanic) draws on public secondhand-market listings, board-game cataloguing references, and general game-history reference sources, summarised and paraphrased here rather than quoted directly. Where a claim reflects the collector's own reasoning rather than an independently verified fact — principally in Sections 3 and 7 — that distinction is stated explicitly in the text.

Selected References / Research Sources

Primary Evidence

Pavilion “To Sink Ships”, Ref. 37093 — factory-sealed specimen

The physical game and its original packaging are the primary source for this guide. Box markings examined include the © 1998, 2000 Geoffrey, Inc. licensing line, Toys “R” Us customer-information panel, European distribution addresses, “Made in Spain” statement, barcode 0 040004 370938, Ref. 37093 and regulatory markings.

The specimen remains factory sealed; consequently, the enclosed components and Pavilion-specific printed rules have not been independently examined.

Geoffrey, Inc. / Toys “R” Us

United States Patent and Trademark Office — Trademark Trial and Appeal Board records

USPTO records identify Geoffrey, Inc. and its successor Geoffrey, LLC in connection with numerous Toys “R” Us trademarks. These records provide independent evidence of Geoffrey's role in the Toys “R” Us trademark and brand structure.

The Pavilion connection in this guide is additionally supported by the © 1998, 2000 Geoffrey, Inc. licensing statement printed directly on the examined game packaging.

History of Naval Grid Games and Battleship

The Strong National Museum of Play — “Battleship” / National Toy Hall of Fame

The Strong documents the development of naval guessing games from earlier games including *Basilinda* (1890), through Starex Novelty Company's *Salvo* (1931) and Milton Bradley's *Broadsides* (1943), to Milton Bradley's publication of *Battleship* in 1967.

This source supports the historical context in Section 6 and establishes that grid-based naval guessing games existed before the familiar plastic Battleship edition.

Toys “R” Us Corporate History

HISTORY — “Inside the Rise and Fall of Toys ‘R’ Us”

HISTORY documents Charles Lazarus's development of the business from Children's Bargain Town in 1948 to the Toys “R” Us name and big-box toy-store concept in 1957, its subsequent international growth, and the financial difficulties that ultimately led to bankruptcy and store closures.

This source provides background context for the Toys “R” Us history discussed in Section 4.

Comparative Evidence

Secondhand listings, archived sales material and surviving Pavilion-branded products have been consulted when comparing packaging, product types and approximate production periods.

Marketplace listings are treated only as **comparative evidence**. They are not regarded as authoritative sources for manufacturing dates, production quantities or rarity unless independently corroborated.

Research Limitation

No comprehensive official Pavilion product catalogue or published corporate history of the Pavilion games range has yet been located. Conclusions concerning Pavilion's wider history therefore remain subject to revision if stronger primary-source material becomes available.