



Word Square | *a cryptic puzzle by Emily Cox & Henry Rathvon*

The central shaded area of this grid features a word square, in which the five five-letter horizontal words will be the same as the five vertical words. The 16 six-letter answers with letters intersecting the shaded area are clued in no particular order in the Word Square clues. Their locations in the grid can be found with the help of normal Across and Down answers. Once all clue answers have been entered, complete the word square's partially filled words by adding their central letters. Then deduce the outlined last word, our parting comment.

Across

- 1 Soldier taken in by slicker trickery (5)
- 4 A blog comment consumed defector (8)
- 8 Jot cipher in place to enter a PIN (4)
- 9 Moving LED, a gem shone (7)
- 10 Rather repulsive, to a gossip (7)
- 11 Red wine, in brief, with good punch (4)
- 12 On TV, I changed into expert (6)
- 20 Digestive trouble bug caught by king (6)
- 22 Short letter is not English (4)
- 23 Saboteur of machinery diluted fluid (7)
- 24 Cold, thinner detergent (7)

- 25 Wager with a Greek character (4)
- 26 Put one leg across seat, holding front half of tray (8)
- 27 Accordingly hitched, planted crops (5)

Down

- 1 Figures with capes at a party embraced by mistress (8)
- 2 People who make good senator bad (7)
- 3 Understood about a fall guy (4)
- 5 Easygoing stroll around Iowa (7)
- 6 Keep watch on incline (4)
- 7 Some golf clubs missing the front rims (5)
- 13 Want bit of relish in passing (6)
- 14 Sickly-looking buddy with cap (6)
- 15 Whiner tossed a red shoe (8)
- 16 Searcher snagging a ghost? (7)
- 17 Rounded window mesh bordered with string (7)
- 18 Voice gets lower and harmonizes (5)

- 19 Write about large shock (4)
- 21 Life in Paris with scenic attraction (4)

Word Square

- a Domains regarding charitable gifts
- b Fool guy about Mexican article
- c Gold alongside street in state capital
- d Harpoon-wielding Inuit's waterproof coat
- e Very bad cut on front of ear
- f Shaking a rod, in command
- g A Coen brother connected with chief of Exxon gas
- h Pass inside Indian city's ancient temple site
- i Escort small stack of papers
- j Playing duets, including last of three piano pieces
- k Broadway show organist's first organ
- l In danger, ran daring mission
- m Trendy acupuncturist's force doubled
- n Wound fish in Arabian sea
- o Underworld figure before vehicle at an airport
- p Lost, routed indirect way

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