



Best escape game

The Crystal Maze Manchester, UK

Why'd it win?

The original Channel 4 TV show introduced us to the idea of escape games before they were even a thing, and this live experience is better than we could have hoped for. It's much bigger than its London cousin (there's a

huge Aztec temple and a spaceship) – intrepid contenders have loads of tough new games to try, riddles to solve and crystals to grab.

Who's to thank?

The 6,952 people who gave their hard-earned

cash to help smash the £50,000 crowdfunding target and raise a mindboggling £933,798 to open the first one in London. Oh, and the legendary host of the original show Richard O'Brien for recording the sassy message that

greeted you at the start of the game.

Where is it?

Fittingly, it's in the Old Granada Studios between the Science and Industry Museum and the new St John's Development.

How'd we find it?

Escape games were one of 2018's biggest hits, and we went to Amsterdam, Budapest, Milan and more places besides to try the best of them. But nothing beats the scale and theatre of The Crystal Maze. It gets even better: the London one is doubling in size when it moves to the West End next year.

Need to know

In the grand finale in the dome, whatever you do, don't be tempted to pick up any tokens from the floor – that's an instant disqualification. Yikes.

Chosen by Sonya Barber, who might well still be stuck in the dome.

HONOURABLE MENTION

SECRET ROOMS, MILAN

In the Sabotage room here, you're charged with preventing WWII by infiltrating a military base. No pressure.

