



PS4 PlayStation 4

PS4 Pro PlayStation 4

PlayStation VR

PS VITA PlayStation Vita

PlayStation®

Official Magazine UK

ISSUE 155 DECEMBER 2018 £5.99
gamesradar.com/opm

EXCLUSIVE ACCESS

JUST CAUSE 4™

The weather is your weapon – we play the most destructive open world shooter ever!

FIRST PLAY
FALLOUT 76

We go hands-on with the controversial online RPG

FUTURE

HOT TAKE
SPYRO REIGNITED TRILOGY

Better than Crash Bandicoot, Spyro's got us fired up!

THE PS1 IS BACK

The PlayStation Classic revealed: why you need Sony's mini-console!

PLAYSTATION 4 IS FIVE - THE LAUNCH LINEUP RE-RATED
WHY BATTLEFIELD V IS THE YEAR'S BEST NEW SHOOTER
DIRT 2.0 PUTS US IN A SPIN - WILL THIS BE PS4'S RACING CHAMP?



The Pirate Bay

Future PLC Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA

Editorial

Editor **Ian Dean** @IanDean4
ian.dean@futurenet.com
01225 442244

Art Editor **Milford Coppock** @milfocoppock
Operations Editor **Miriam McDonald** @crinolinerobot
Games Editor **Oscar Taylor-Kent** @MrOscarTK
Staff Writer **Jessica Kinghorn** @KoeniginKatze
Brand Director **Tony Mott**
Senior Art Editor **Warren Brown**

Contributors

Chris Burke, Ian Evenden, Jordan Farley, Malindy Hetfeld, Luke Kemp, Catherine Kirkpatrick, Mitchell Lineham, David Meikleham, Alex Spencer, Justin Towell, Alan Wen, Ben Wilson, Robert Zak

Advertising

Media packs are available on request
Commercial Director **Clare Dove**
clare.dove@futurenet.com
Account Director **Kevin Stoddart**
kevin.stoddart@futurenet.com
01225 442244

International

Official PlayStation Magazine is available for licensing. Contact the International department to discuss partnership opportunities
International Licensing Director **Matt Ellis**
matt.ellis@futurenet.com

Subscriptions

Email enquiries contact@myfavouritemagazines.co.uk
UK orderline & enquiries **+44 (0)344 848 2852**
Overseas order line and enquiries **+44 (0) 344 848 2852**
Online orders & enquiries www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk
Head of subscriptions **Sharon Todd**

Circulation

Head of Newstrade **Tim Mathers**

Production

Head of Production **Mark Constance**
Production Project Manager **Clare Scott**
Advertising Production Manager **Joanne Crosby**
Digital Editions Controller **Jason Hudson**
Production Manager **Vivienne Calvert**

Management

Chief Content Officer **Aaron Asadi**
Commercial Finance Director **Dan Jotcham**
Group Content Director **Paul Newman**
Head of Art & Design **Rodney Dive**

Printed by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd on behalf of Future

Distributed by Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU www.marketforce.co.uk Tel: 0203 787 9001

ISSN 1752210

We are committed to only using magazine paper which is derived from responsibly managed, certified forestry and chlorine-free manufacture. The paper in this magazine was sourced and produced from sustainable managed forests, conforming to strict environmental and socioeconomic standards. The manufacturing paper mill holds full FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification and accreditation

All contents © 2018 Future Publishing Limited or published under licence. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be used, stored, transmitted or reproduced in any way without the prior written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales. Registered office: Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA. All information contained in this publication is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. You are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price of products/services referred to in this publication. Apps and websites mentioned in this publication are not under our control. We are not responsible for their contents or any other changes or updates to them. This magazine is fully independent and not affiliated in any way with the companies mentioned herein.

If you submit material to us, you warrant that you own the material and/or have the necessary rights/permissions to supply the material and you automatically grant Future and its licensees a licence to publish your submission in whole or in part in any/all issues and/or editions of publications, in any format published worldwide and on associated websites, social media channels and associated products. Any material you submit is sent at your own risk and, although every care is taken, neither Future nor its employees, agents, subcontractors or licensees shall be liable for loss or damage. We assume all unsolicited material is for publication unless otherwise stated, and reserve the right to edit, amend, adapt all submissions.

The ABC combined print, digital and digital publication circulation for Jan-Dec 2017 is **25,190**
A member of the Audited Bureau of Circulations



Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR) www.futureplc.com
Chief executive **Zillah Byng-Thorne**
Non-executive chairman **Richard Huntingford**
Chief financial officer **Penny Ladkin-Brand**
Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244

Welcome



GAME OF THE MONTH
Assassin's Creed Odyssey
FAVE OPEN WORLD
Grand Theft Auto V

Open world games are commonplace now, but few do justice to the idea of 'go anywhere, do anything' quite like the Just Cause series. And number four is shaping up to be the best yet. This issue we visit Avalanche Studios in New York to play its new game, and discover why the weather matters in this war-torn sandbox. Read Oscar's hands-on, starting on page 50.

There are more first-hand impressions this issue too, as we go hands-on with Fallout 76 and discover why more people isn't a bad thing (p36). We play Battlefield V ahead of release (p32), experience Devil May Cry V's new Dante gameplay (p6), and see why Days Gone's Freakers will test your endurance as much as your nerves (p12).

Back to open worlds, and one of the year's best is already here: Assassin's Creed Odyssey is reviewed on page 72.

Why not subscribe to OPM and not miss an issue or our gifts? Skip over to page 58 to see our latest games-themed T-shirt offer.

"WE DISCOVER WHY WEATHER MATTERS IN JUST CAUSE 4'S EPIC WAR-TORN SANDBOX."

Ian Dean
EDITOR
opm@futurenet.com
[@IanDean4](https://twitter.com/IanDean4)



THIS MONTH'S GUFFS OF WIND



Oscar Taylor-Kent
GAMES EDITOR
This month Oscar jettied off to New York to see Just Cause 4. Someone stop him playing Spidey to show us where he went.

GAME OF THE MONTH
Hollow Knight
FAVE OPEN WORLD
Spider-Man



Jess Kinghorn
STAFF WRITER
Recently obtaining destructive powers, the team's had to make Jess less angry than usual when chatting Life Is Strange 2.

GAME OF THE MONTH
428: Shibuya Scramble
FAVE OPEN WORLD
Yakuza 6



Miriam McDonald
OPERATIONS EDITOR
Still haunted by the sheer size of Geralt's third adventure, Mim's perfect comedown is playing with those slimy stress balls.

GAME OF THE MONTH
Slime Rancher
FAVE OPEN WORLD
The Witcher 3



Milford Coppock
MANAGING ART EDITOR
Getting too into all the info on Control, Milf is beginning to swear he has psychic powers, glaring at Ian until he gets his coffee.

GAME OF THE MONTH
Control
FAVE OPEN WORLD
Horizon Zero Dawn

Content

September 2018



HIGHLIGHTS

THE BIG 10

006 DEVIL MAY CRY 5

Dante and Nero need to budge up – a third playable character's joining the adventure.

THE BIG 10

014 PLAYSTATION CLASSIC

Discover the teeny-tiny console packed with the biggest retro games!

COVER FEATURE

050 JUST CAUSE 4

It's raining men... er, *man*, as we go hands-on, riding the storm with Rico Rodriguez.

INTERVIEW FEATURE

060 CONTROL

Remedy's Thomas Puha discusses the dev's return to PlayStation with its new title.

REVIEW

072 ASSASSIN'S CREED ODYSSEY

Be a lover as well as a fighter in this Ancient Greek epic.

REVIEW

084 FIFA 19

Can the footie sim deliver the sport to match the licences?



 gamesradar.com/opm
 twitter.com/OPM_UK
 facebook.com/OfficialPlayStationMagazine

SUBSCRIBE NOW!
 Subscribe to OPM and not only will you get a special subs cover, and for less money, this issue we're offering a free T-shirt! Details on page 58.



THE GAMES INDEX

- 048 428: SHIBUYA SCRAMBLE
- 038 ACE COMBAT 7: SKIES UNKNOWN
- 072 ASSASSIN'S CREED ODYSSEY
- 079 ASTRO BOT RESCUE MISSION
- 032 BATTLEFIELD V
- 082 BLACK CLOVER: QUARTET KNIGHTS
- 090 BLIND
- 083 CATASTRONAUTS
- 060 CONTROL
- 080 CREED: RISE TO GLORY
- 012 DAYS GONE
- 011 DEATH STRANDING
- 048 DÉRACINÉ
- 097 DESTINY 2 - FORSAKEN
- 006 DEVIL MAY CRY 5
- 010 DIRT RALLY 2.0
- 036 FALLOUT 76
- 048 FARMING SIMULATOR 19
- 084 FIFA 19
- 019 FINAL FANTASY XV POCKET EDITION
- 082 FISHING SIM WORLD
- 091 FIST OF THE NORTH STAR: LOST PARADISE
- 048 GRIP
- 048 HELL WARDERS
- 018 HITMAN 2
- 092 HOLLOW KNIGHT: VOIDHEART EDITION
- 050 JUST CAUSE 4
- 039 LEFT ALIVE
- 088 LIFE IS STRANGE 2
- 094 MEGA MAN 11
- 095 NBA 2K19
- 016 PROJECT JUDGE
- 090 SLIME RANCHER
- 078 SNK HEROINES: TAG TEAM FRENZY
- 042 SPYRO REIGNITED TRILOGY
- 100 STRANGE BRIGADE
- 048 TALES OF VESPERIA: DEFINITIVE EDITION
- 047 TEAM SONIC RACING
- 046 TETRIS EFFECT
- 078 THE GARDENS BETWEEN
- 040 THE SINKING CITY
- 078 TORN
- 087 TRANSFERENCE
- 086 V-RALLY 4
- 096 VALKYRIA CHRONICLES 4
- 019 WORLD OF FINAL FANTASY MAXIMA
- 090 ZONE OF THE ENDERS: THE 2ND RUNNER - MARS

005

SECTIONS AT A GLANCE

THE BIG 10
 All the hottest news and biggest games

006

PREVIEWS
 Latest info, screens and playtests

031

FEATURES
 To-the-point, detailed analysis

050

REVIEWS
 In-depth verdicts on every big new game

071

NETWORK
 Max out your PS4, online and off

099

RETRO STATION
 Classics revisited

106

Imagine if Reservoir Dogs had been about demon hunters and, well, you get the idea.



006

“ WITH HIS PENCHANT FOR SPEAKING IN VERSE, V SEEMS A LITTLE DIFFERENT TO NERO AND DANTE. ”



10 MUD AND THUNDER
Dirt 2.0 is the sequel we demanded.

14 OLD SCHOOL
PlayStation Classic: a retro delight.

16 PRIVATE DICK
We play Yakuza dev's Project Judge.

The Big 10

STORIES EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT

Getting the DMC party crazy one weapon at a time

Our red-coated hero is back with style, taking on a job from the mysterious V

01

We've met Dante and Nero before - now meet Devil May Cry 5's mysterious new playable

character, V, revealed at this year's Tokyo Game Show.

Dante needs to take a page from Nero's book. Even in this economy, he insists on keeping up the spacious main Devil May Cry office, rather than take his younger version's slayers-on-wheels approach. He even admits he needs to turn the water back on and get flushing toilets when offered a new cash-in-hand gig.

The client? V. (Also the name of Cyberpunk 2077's lead. The name 'V' is clearly the 'Harry' of the future.) At this point, introducing a new character who doesn't have white hair immediately raises suspicion. With a cane, hefty tome, and a penchant for speaking in verse, V seems to offer something different to the all-out action superstar antics

we've come to expect from Nero and Dante, though we'll find out more about him as the game's January launch date looms ever closer.

IT TAKES TWO

The job on offer has to do with the underworld taking over the human world on what seems to be a global scale, and leads to Dante, Lady, and Trish meeting up with Nero and his mechanic Nico as they slay a hefty number of demons in an attempt to push back the legions of Hell.

The two groups will be working together in the fight, and it turns out that Nico's grandmother was the one who created some of Dante's original weapons, including Ebony and Ivory, his classic pistols. New character she may be, but she already has ties to the series' story, and maybe even to Sparda himself.

And just who was it who stole Nero's original Devil Bringer arm? Does it play a part in the hellish ritual that's laying waste to the entire world? Does Dante's brother Vergil, lost to the underworld since Devil May Cry 3, have something to do



The Big 10

STORIES EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT



LIGHT YOUR DARK SOUL

Trish and Lady are both present in Devil May Cry V, after originally butting heads with Dante in the first and third games respectively. There's plenty of room to make friends - but will the new V be a firm ally to the others?

with all this? While the game will be plenty of fun for newcomers, this first return to the main series in ten years is already giving long-time fans plenty to chew on.

TRIGGER HAPPY

We've now seen plenty of how Dante will play, and he still has a distinct combat style from Nero. He has a unique sense of style too, and seems to favour a slightly heavier, more considered approach to ploughing through his devilish foes.

If you're familiar with the series, you will be pleased to see Dante return with the signature combination of Ebony and Ivory, plus his Rebellion sword. With these, combos are as you'd expect - you use the guns to juggle and keep the moves flowing between close-quarters slices. Rebellion still has long thrusts, the million stabs move, as well as launchers and downward thrusts. On a basic level Dante will be far from alien, and it looks like he even has skill options to zip between enemies and dodge incoming attacks at the last second if needed.

Dante's motorbike, the Cavalier, is of course a weapon too. The bike splits into two massive saw-blades which Dante waves around like your uncle when he insists on making you a bed rather than nipping down to Ikea. It's got heavy weapons, which look like they'll pack quite the punch,

and he can even turn it back into a bike and do doughnuts mid-combo. Showboating? More like showbiking.

On top of that, we've also seen Dante strap on Balrog - this game's version of the gauntlet weapons that power up his punches and kicks (like Gilgamesh in DMC4). Balrog, in particular, seems to make use of ducking and weaving, and then laying down close-up smackdowns on demons. The Coyote shotgun makes a return as well; Dante one-hands it, knocking enemies back as he fires, but at a much reduced fire rate compared with Ebony and Ivory. And it looks like Dante's still using the awakened Force Edge (known as Sparda, after his demon father), with the transforming weapon shifting niftily between a scythe and a sword.

Further enhancing Dante's hefty armoury is his Devil Trigger form, which allows him to power up for a limited time, enhancing his weapon movesets as well as making him more powerful.

With weapons like these, Dante's ready to take on a whole army of



darkness, so it's a good job the underworld has one ready and waiting for him. It's great to see his old comrades Lady and Trish taking on the job alongside him. While they'll be present within Dante's gameplay, it's unclear yet how much - both were playable in 2015's DMC4: Special Edition.

BUST A MOVE

Do you like shiny things? Who doesn't? To satisfy our inner magpies, the game's Deluxe Edition, which will give access to some extra content, has been announced. Nero will be able to utilise four bonus Devil Breaker arms, with highlights being the fork-tipped Pasta Breaker, and the Mega Buster - the latter being a replica of Mega Man's signature arm-cannon. It'll also give Dante the Cavaliere R, a red alternative to his standard bike; 12 battle music tracks from the first four games if you want to give demons hell to nostalgic bangers; alternative announcers for the style ranks; and - most intriguingly - live action cutscenes, whatever that means. If it results in us getting to see Reuben Langdon, Dante's voice and motion actor, rocking the natty red coat in the flesh some more, then we just hit the jackpot.

• What weapons would you like to see in Dante's arsenal? Let us know @OPM_UK!

WITH WEAPONS LIKE THESE, DANTE'S READY TO TAKE ON A WHOLE ARMY OF DARKNESS.

It says something about the series when the only way to make it any crazier is to create a weaponised chainsaw bike. Rev it up!



■ Nero's 'armless, except to demons. Then he'll use a laser arm to melt you.



■ With Lady and Trish making a return, the cast of Devil May Cry V is sizeable.



Not all demons are going to be pushovers. Dante will have to use everything he's got to vanquish some.



009

■ How do you keep a combo going? Never stop the hits coming, and what's better for that than guns? *Lots of guns.*



Dante's Devil Trigger is always a great option for powering up in a pinch and laying down the pain.

On the road or off it, rubber's going to fly, and things will definitely get messy.



Racing just got a little dirtier

Codemasters reveals the thoroughly unclean Dirt Rally 2.0

02

Do you like dirt? Does a pool of mud delight you, and make you want to just get into it and roll around until the

wet, brown substance begins to congeal and you become one with the filthy, filthy earth? If yes, then chances are you're already a fan of rally, the motorsport that sees cars cleave through courses both on and off the road – and you'll be thrilled to learn that Dirt Rally 2.0 is coming to PS4 on 26 Feb 2019.

Codemasters already did what it does best with the first Dirt Rally (we gave the sublime racer a 9/10 in OPM #122 if you want to dig the old issue out), so our engines are more

than heating up with an announcement of a follow-up that promises to be an even dirtier ride.

One thing that's certainly not all that grubby about the game is the number of official licenses. These help to recreate the sport in realistic detail, and provide that extra level of immersion for those who already

follow the sport outside the gaming realm. Retaining and building on the licensed material present in the original game, Dirt Rally 2.0 is the

official game of the FIA World Rallycross Championship presented by Monster Energy. You can also expect to see all your favourite rally cars – from 2018 season's modern cars to retro classics – and to mix it up on some official WorldRX circuits

MIX IT UP ON SOME OFFICIAL WORLDRX CIRCUITS.



dev talk

"Rally is incredibly important to Codemasters and the entire team is absolutely dedicated to creating the most authentic experience. [...] We are not afraid to make a challenging game. Driving a rally car down a stage is not easy and we want players to experience that same adrenaline rush."

Ross Gowing
Chief games designer,
Codemasters

too. Where the first game offered a large selection of stages over three locations, Dirt Rally 2.0 is putting its jetsetting cap on to take the racing to six real-world rally locations.

MUD BROTHERS

The sequel is retaining the simulation-style rally racing that was so good in the first game, so you can expect things to feel just as great, if not better, this time around. It's a sport that's really geared around that feeling of physicality as the cars take on different types of road, so the realistic physics are great to see in a game like this, and with Dirt Rally 2.0 not only do the cars and tracks look nicer, but they appear to handle even more viscerally too.

Pre-orders of the game will include a Porsche 911 RGT Rally Spec, and the Deluxe Edition brings with it some extra goodies for the

The Big 10

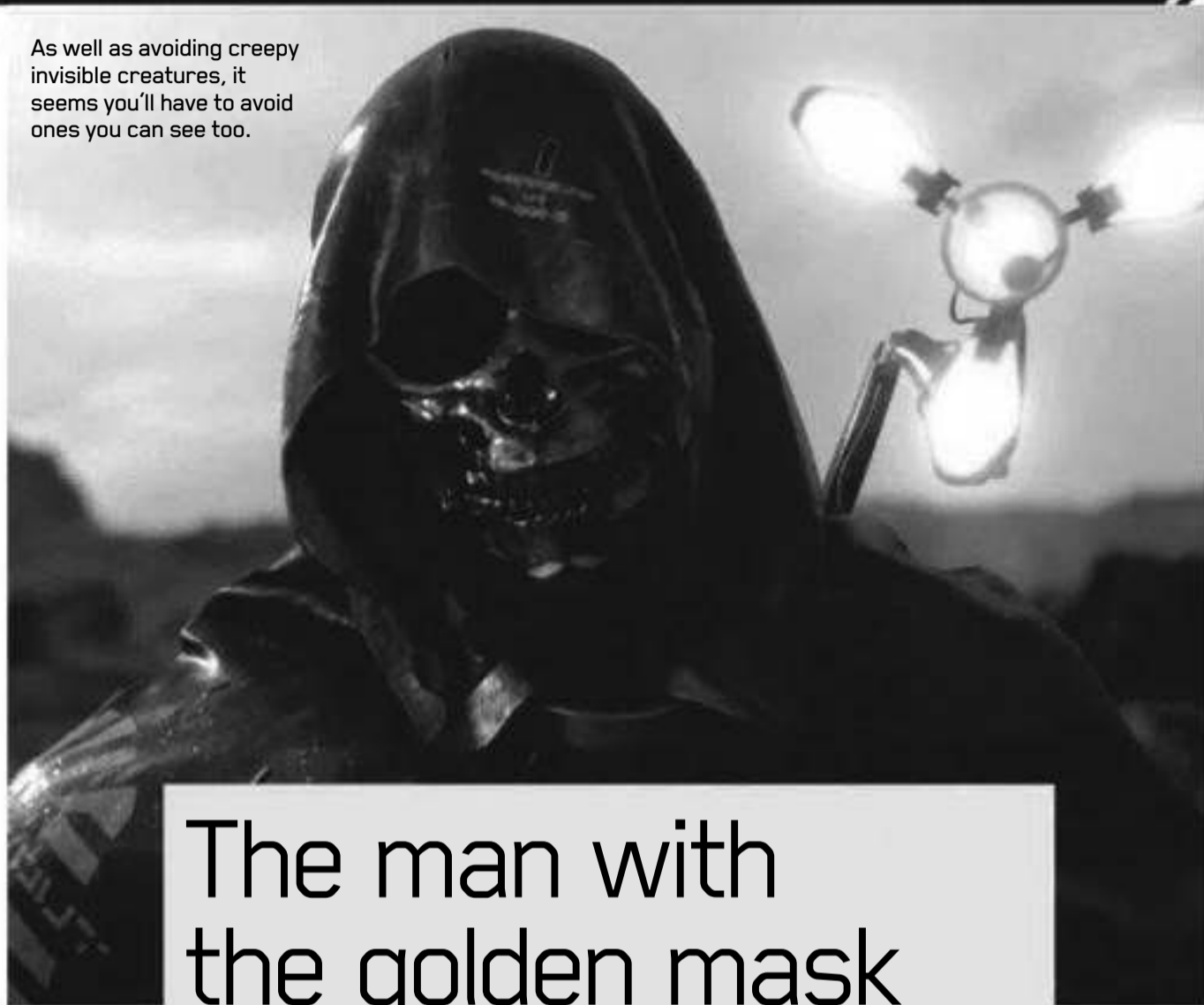
STORIES EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT



SECRET IDENTITY

Troy Baker's character seems to share a skull mask theme with Tommie Earl Jenkins'. Are both antagonists? How many others can summon monsters? Only time (and Kojima-san) can tell...

As well as avoiding creepy invisible creatures, it seems you'll have to avoid ones you can see too.



The man with the golden mask

Here comes a new challenger in Death Stranding

03

If you thought good old Koj had run out of friends, then we're sorry to say you don't know Mr Hideo Kojima very

well. Just when you think Death Stranding's cast couldn't get more interesting, someone else appears. Maybe it's because he was the mastermind behind Metal Gear before leaving to form his self-titled studio Kojima Productions with Sony; maybe it's the purity of his love of Mads Mikkelsen (see his Twitter for receipts). Either way, the auteur's beloved.

Tommie Earl Jenkins joins the cast as an unnamed skull-faced character, alongside Troy Baker (Sam Drake in Uncharted, and Ocelot in MGS V), an also-mysterious man in a golden mask, who was the centre of the most recent trailer. Seemingly an antagonist, he seems to be causing trouble for Sam

Bridges (main man Norman Reedus' character). Sam is interrupted by this stranger while carrying someone on his back, and it seems the golden-faced man wants to get in Sam's way. Taking off his mask, he's able to channel some of the world's sinister dark energy into it to summon some sort of giant, golden-masked ooze lion that, in his

words, "looks hungry". Both the stranger and Sam's suits beep furiously at the monster, though it appears to be different to the invisible creatures we've glimpsed so

THE STRANGER IS ABLE TO CHANNEL THE WORLD'S DARK ENERGY.

far. Just what else hides in this hidden realm just out of sight?

Before he disappears, the stranger tells Sam the only way to survive is to avoid getting eaten. Next, cue some gameplay (we hope) where Sam will do just that - but quite how, we're left to wonder.

Who else could be pop up in this all-star game? Give us your thoughts @OPM_UK.

truly Dirt Rally-devoted. It'll include access to the first two post-launch seasons of Dirt Rally 2.0, which have been announced as including three new locations each, split between rally and rallycross-type races.

On top of that the Deluxe Edition will come with some early car unlocks, in-game bonuses, and better starter cars, and purchasers will get the game four days earlier, on 22 Feb as opposed to 26 Feb. It seems early unlocks for higher value editions of games are becoming more the norm, but if you really can't wait to get muddied up and revel in the sheer dirtiness of rampaging round in a rally car, then it's not one to sleep on.

Expect a full hands-on with Dirt 2.0 in a forthcoming issue.

Get the announcement trailer in front of your eyes here: bit.ly/dr2trailer.



“ WE CAN HEAR THE MURMUR AND SLOSHING OF THE FREAKERS IN THEIR MUDDY NEST. ”



HIGHWAY TO HELL

The new mission we've seen is called 'You Got A Death Wish', and is what director John Garvin describes as "wide-linear". Deacon needs parts for his bike, and runs into a Freaker nest along the way...



The Big 10

STORIES EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT



■ Clearing out Freaker nests will unlock new map areas and missions.



■ The game runs on the Decima engine, like Horizon Zero Dawn, so it looks amazing.



Days Gone gets its Freaker on

013

Sony Bend demos the exhausting nest missions

04

If crowds make you anxious then we'd suggest you turn the page now, as Sony Bend sheds a little

more light on how the Freaker horde fights play out in Days Gone.

Set against the backdrop of the Rocky Mountains, Deacon St John is scurrying from one point to the next in a mud-clogged logging camp, planting bombs as he goes. One against a trailer loaded with logs, another against a fuel truck... Deacon's not exploring the world, he's laying traps.

The Freaker nest missions in Days Gone look like they're going to be a full workout - of your strategies, memory, and gun skills. As things aren't so quiet, we can hear the murmur and sloshing of the Freakers in their muddy nest. To get things going Deacon hurls a Molotov cocktail, selected from a slow-mo radial menu familiar to anyone who's played Spider-Man, into the pit.

The Freakers wake and give chase. This is when you need to remember where you placed your bombs, so you can lead the frenzied mass past the planted explosives and other handy environmental hazards. The truck of logs goes up first, catching some of the throng, then the tanker erupts and more ghouls perish.

RUN FREAKER, RUN

There are 300 Freakers in pursuit in this new demo. The strategy is clear: pause briefly to turn and shoot oil barrels, throw Molotovs, and lead the horde into choke points to pick them off with a rattle of gunfire.

Soon Deacon is running circuits around the logging camp, adapting tactics as he passes destructible objects that can stall or kill Freakers, whittling their numbers down.

These nest missions are a lot of work, but that just makes the final payoff, clubbing the last ghoul to the ground, even more satisfying.

◆ Days Gone will release 22 February. How do you think the game's looking?



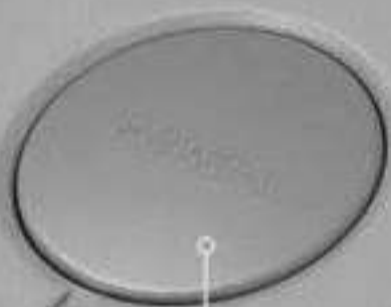
the big shot

eagle-eyed analysis

Want to quit a game and return to the boot-up menu? Then press your fat finger onto this tiny button.



Is the light on? Yep, it's a power indicator. This button turns the console on just like it used to.



014

PlayStation Classic is here

Sony's new mini-console revealed

05

The all-new PlayStation Classic (or mini-Station to its friends) will hit shops on

3 December, priced £90. Almost 25 years after the original PlayStation was released, the new mini-console has stormed to the top of our Christmas wish list.

It's roughly 45% smaller than the old machine, and comes with 20 games pre-loaded. The five titles revealed so far are: Tekken 3, Ridge Racer Type 4, Jumping

Flash, Wild Arms, and Final Fantasy VII. More titles will be revealed, but for now our readers have had their say.

"I love Croc! However, I think a realistic good choice would be the Spider-Man game," says Jay Giurleo. Toby Cruse comments: "Honestly the PlayStation Classic will be entirely worth the price if it just came bundled with every single @OPM_UK demo disc." Aww, if only we could.

• Visit www.playstation.com to pre-order your PlayStation Classic.

Two PS1 controllers come packaged. These are the original designs and not the DualShock pads.



SONY

1

2



The console has a single HDMI port and plugs into a USB power lead. How very modern.



The lid doesn't open, silly, this is a mini-replica. This button actually changes the 'virtual discs'.

number game

we do the maths

962

Million. Total number of games (units) sold on the original PlayStation.

10,000,000

Sales of PS1 was celebrated with a rare Midnight Blue edition.

1994

The year PS1 launched in Japan, on 3 December just like the PS Classic.

2,418

The number of games released for PS1 during its lifespan.

15

Years it took to develop Gran Turismo (Yamauchi-san had the idea as a child).

102

Million original PlayStation consoles have been sold. It's a record breaker.

128KB

Capacity of PS1's original external memory cards. So tiny!

8,766

Days between PS1 launching and the arrival of PlayStation Classic.

A disgraced lawyer turned private eye haunted by his past is cheesy, but it works.



The Yakuza dev bears a judge

Ex-lawyer turned detective stars in the studio's new game

06

The latest project from Ryu Ga Gotoku Studio, the developer behind the Yakuza series, takes a step onto

the cleaner side of the law. Called Judge Eyes in Japan, with the working English title of Project

Judge, the game follows a defence attorney turned private detective, Takayuki Yagami, as he investigates brutal crimes.

You might think it'd be hard for Yagami to top Kazuma Kiryu, Yakuza's strongman with a heart of gold, as a lead character, but thanks to the casting of Takuya Kimura, AKA Kimutaku, it's looking possible. Suffice to say, if that name means

YOU COULD EASILY MISTAKE PROJECT JUDGE FOR AN ACTUAL J-DRAMA.

something to you, then this is definitely the game for you. If not (and you'd be forgiven), rest assured that Kimura is a very big deal in Japan, starring in many TV shows, as well as being a member of the boy band SMAP. He also lent his voice to the titular Howl in Howl's Moving Castle. Kimura has spent a

long time helping to shape his character, and with things like the opening sequence and theme music by rock band Alexandros, plus fantastic graphics,

you could easily mistake Project Judge for an actual J-Drama.

GRUDGE AND JURY

Having gone hands-on with the demo, we can confirm that Yagami is



actor talk

"It's my first time playing a videogame character, so I'm very excited! Since the Yakuza series has always been a big presence for me, I was wondering if I could too enter a world like that, like everyone else in the studio. I was wondering how it would go - my imagination was running wild."

Takuya Kimura
Actor, Project Judge

a character you can immediately get behind. Having been disgraced as a defence attorney when a successful defendant was immediately accused of a new murder, he now works as a private detective, forever haunted by the one case he couldn't crack.

But what he will be cracking: skulls, with martial arts. After all, Project Judge is developed by the team behind Yakuza, so fights still play a big part. They control like a refined version of Yakuza 6's combat, with added style switching making a welcome return from Yakuza 0/Kiwami. Yagami's a brutal and quick fighter, with all sorts of ridiculous moves. While the story might seem much more serious in tone than some of the goofier bits in Yakuza, there are still going to be plenty of out-there moments in Project Judge, with one Japanese screenshot showing Yagami fighting

The Big 10

STORIES EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT

SHIN YAKUZA

Project Judge may flip the script, but a new, Kiryu-less Yakuza is still in the works, though it's not announced for the West just yet. It'll star newcomer Kasuga Ichiban.



Being a detective isn't just about being sneaky. You've gotta rough 'em up too.

Yakuza. While we control Yagami fully, he still has to complete QTEs in certain sections to leap over objects or avoid things being thrown at him. Naturally, the scene ends with us giving the man a vicious beating, and hitting him with a bin.

SAME-UROCHO

In some ways Project Judge feels like a step forward for the studio's Yakuza-type projects, but there's no getting around how close to Yakuza it feels. The game even takes place in that series' main setting, the Kamurocho red-light district in Tokyo. The map is basically exactly the same. Though perhaps that leaves the door open to fun cameos from Yakuza characters?

Given how close what we've played feels to actual Japanese TV, it'll have to make up the difference in tone, and in its characters. And we have yet to see just how deep or complex the investigation elements go. At the moment, Kimura's performance as Yagami is enough to capture our hearts, and we're already invested in seeing where the mystery leads, and what more the studio has in store.

• Project Judge releases in Japan this December, and in the UK in 2019.



Picking locks, donning disguises, spying, and more: detective work is fun.

info patches

update your brain



VRMAGEDDON

PlayStation had a big showcase at Tokyo Game Show, which included a huge amount of upcoming PS VR support for the next year. With Ace Combat 7, Kill X, Everybody's Golf VR, and, most importantly, Space Channel 5 VR: Arakata Dancing Show, PS VR's future is going to be a bright one.



KEYS TO THE KINGDOM

With Kingdom Hearts: The Story So Far releasing as you're reading this - a mega package containing everything released so far on PS4 - the pre-Kingdom Hearts 3 catch up doesn't end here. The Kingdom Hearts VR Experience dropping this winter let's you explore its history in the virtual realm.



NOT SO REMNANT

The Last Remnant Remastered arrives on PS4 in December, celebrating the classic game's tenth anniversary with its PlayStation debut. This Square-Enix-developed JRPG isn't part of a series, and by being standalone has some interesting twists, like its intricate and in-depth battle system.

using a conspicuously shaped "massager" as a weapon, and things like pinball parlours and drone racing making appearances.

Unlike Yakuza, though, which is predominantly fighting, Project Judge includes some refined investigative elements to reflect Yagami's role as a detective. The mission we take on in the demo has us tracking down a suspect. At first, we search for him outside a hostess club, where we must match his features from a checklist against a bunch of people who for some reason look quite similar. After that, we tail him, taking cover behind neon signs and checking our phone to look casual. As we watch him make a shady deal in an alley, we investigate key parts of the scene from a distance. Spotting us, he runs, and the chase that follows feels a lot smoother than similar sequences in

The Colombian jungle presents plenty of stealth opportunities, for you and a rival in Ghost mode.

018

Hitman 2 gets spooky

Beat another player to the targets in Ghost mode

07

There's only one person out there with the skills to match Agent 47, the world's ultimate assassin: himself. Hitman 2's Ghost mode is a brand-new 1v1 competitive mode that challenges you to kill more targets than the other player, in a 'first to five' situation. The marks are the same, but you'll also need to make your kills smarter and cleaner in order to get the leg up.

As you compete, you'll be able to see the parallel Agent 47 interacting with the world

🏠 GHOST MODE IS A BRAND-NEW 1V1 COMPETITIVE VARIANT. 🗨️

as a ghost, so you're essentially operating in different realities. Meaning if you mess up, the only one you're inconveniencing is yourself. You both start in the same location, and you will need to use all the tricks in the book, including ICA drops, weapons,

disguises, and other items, to outwit your rival.

Hitman 2 already experimented with bringing multiplayer to the traditionally solo

series with the excellent co-op in the game's pre-order Sniper Assassin stage, and previous games had players construct assassination challenges for other

players online. It's great to see Hitman continue to experiment with this, and facing off against others to one-up each other with kills is an exciting twist on the simple leaderboard rivalries.

SILENT AND DEADLY

Ghost mode will launch as part of the Miami destination. Post-launch will see it roll out for the other stages. Fans will be pleased to see the environment line-up for Agent 47's latest globe-trotting festival of death includes even more variety than the first, with the most recent announcement showcasing a deep, dangerous Colombian jungle.

• How would you like to try to out-Hitman your friends? Let us know @OPM_UK.



PRELUDE IN VIOLET

New content for FFXIV arrives in the form of a hefty update, Prelude In Violet, which continues the story and adds side-missions too. Stay tuned, and we'll have the latest from Fan Fest.

PlayStation voices

the month in mouthing off

Spidey voice actor **Yuri Lowenthal** loved meeting the web-slinger's creator, Stan Lee: "A dear, sweet, gracious, funny man [who will never know the impact he's had on my life]."



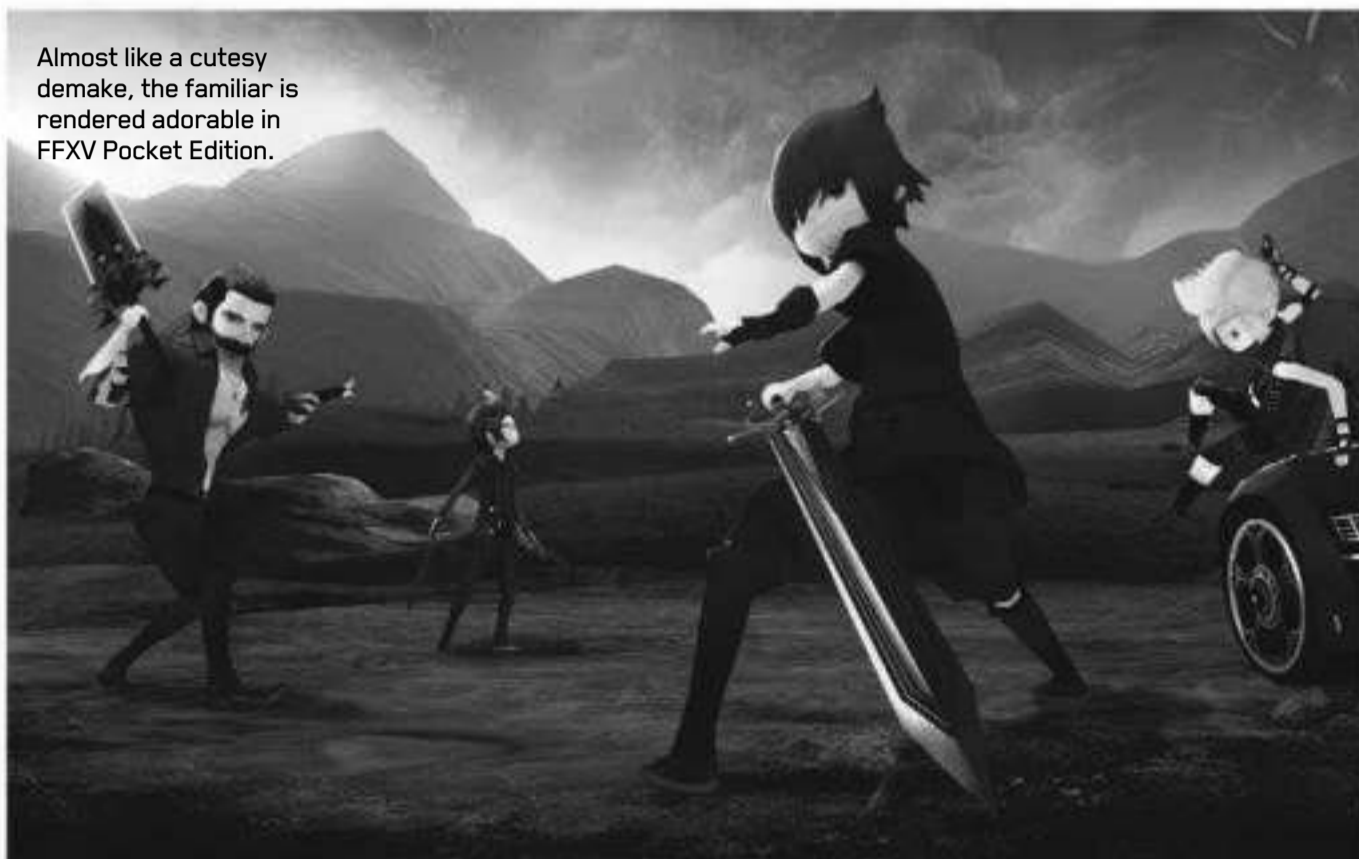
EA's **Daniel Berlin** shares one of his vital Battlefield V tips: "Keep your squad together, and alive!"



"What we're making now doesn't feel like an indie game..." **Fumito Ueda** teases his new studio's first project.



Almost like a cutesy demake, the familiar is rendered adorable in FFXV Pocket Edition.



Is this the remaster; is this just fantasy?

Final Fantasy spin-offs get the PS4 treatment

08

Almost every Final Fantasy is someone's favourite, and even the spin-offs endure. To

keep the legend alive, Square Enix has announced a "Legacy Of Final Fantasy," bringing some of the biggest side-stories to the big screen with PS4 ports.

Already released is Final Fantasy XV Pocket Edition. It's a chibi

reimagining of Final Fantasy XV, complete with voice acting from the original game. Chibi versions of your best boys are, as we've always said, how they get you.

Less of a port and more of an enhanced version is World Of Final Fantasy Maxima, out 6 Nov, which takes the nostalgia-ride original game that looks back at the history of the series and crams in even more champions and mirages.

Chocobo's Mystery Dungeon Every Buddy! is a remaster of the 2007 two-player co-op dungeon crawler in which you play as a chocobo, and arrives this winter. The icing on the cake, however, is Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles Remastered Edition, which brings the super-cute, super-fun four-player co-op game to PS4, with online co-op removing the hassle of the hard-to-play original version.



World Of Final Fantasy is a terrific series celebration, so getting even more is a treat.

• Which Final Fantasy games do you still want on PS4? Let us know @DPM_UK.



instant opinion

strong vs wrong

RED DEAD BETA

Red Dead Online will launch in November, blending narrative, co-op, and competitive multiplayer. GTA Online v.2? Sounds great.

SPIDER-SALES

At the time of going to print, Marvel's Spider-Man is the second-fastest-selling game of the last 12 months, after FIFA 18.

FANG THEORY

Castlevania Requiem: Symphony Of The Night and Rondo Of Blood are on the PS Store... now! They're two classic games you need to play, and are out just in time for Halloween.

POTTY FOR POTTER

A leaked gameplay video of a new Harry Potter game got us very excited, and then Warner Bros cast its Evanesco spell and it vanished. Will we ever see it again? Hmm, we think so.

PARTY POOPER

SIE Worldwide Studios' chairman Shawn Layden confirmed there'll be no PSX this year. That's it, there's no joke. We're too sad to laugh at this news.

VITA R.I.P.

Sony Interactive Entertainment senior vice president Hiroiyuki Oda says there's no plans for a new PS Vita. Oscar's taken compassionate leave to get over the news.

Ancient Aztec and Mayan instruments were used to create the music for Shadow Of The Tomb Raider.



Drumming to a new beat

Why videogame music is a new art form

09

Composer, sound designer, and field recordist Brian D'Oliveira took Shadow Of The Tomb Raider's

soundtrack in a new direction. The game, released last month, featured music that seamlessly blended with the adventure's sound design.

The musician explains: "My aim was to find the perfect balance of Lara's more 'classical' musical influences along with a true and honest representation of the rich Mayan and Aztec musical cultures that have been mostly lost because of the

Spanish conquest, which sadly decimated almost all records of their rich musical culture."

Using a mixture of recordings by archaeologists playing discovered instruments, studying the lost cultures, and his own collection of Mayan and Aztec instruments, D'Oliveira began building the game's unique blend of sounds. This included finding Lara's musical personality.

"I see my work as that of a storyteller and not just a musician, and it's imperative that I express all the subtleties of the characters... My ancient 1780 Baroque cello and flute lend themselves to being her 'inner voice'," says D'Oliveira.

I SEE MYSELF AS STORYTELLER, AND NOT JUST A MUSICIAN.

It took time to perfect the music for Tomb Raider; D'Oliveira spent the first two two years iterating the sound design. During production he even played live in a domed venue while 150 speakers played sampled jungle sounds to immerse listeners.

"I plan to now do this live set, and I am also contemplating doing a dance-floor friendly set," he says.



■ Brian D'Oliveira is now planning a live set - music to our ears.

• Go to www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk to buy OPM #154 and get the music CD.



CHILLOUT GAMES

where games collect

www.chilloutgames.co.uk/Sell

★ Trustpilot



We Pay £££ For Creepy Games!



£22.19



£43.07



£36.84



£32.19



£16.19



£55.31



£24.75



£20.68



£197.97



£21.77



£15.41

**-GET SUPERNATURAL PRICES
-WITH FREE COURIER AND FAST PAYMENT**

Prices valid as at 21st October 2018. Prices subject to change on a daily basis. Chillout Games and retro-games.co.uk are trading names of Chillout Games Ltd. Prices are for shop credit - 12% more than PayPal. T&Cs at www.chilloutgames.co.uk.





The Big 10

STORIES EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT



FORTNITE FOR ALL

Sony has launched a cross-play beta for Fortnite enabling gameplay, progression stats, and purchases to be used across PS4 and other systems. Console gaming just changed, thanks to Sony.

10

just one more question...

the team debate this month's burning issue

Cross-play is a reality – so which game will benefit the most?



IAN DEAN
EDITOR



CROSS-PLAY IS GREAT, BUT WILL IT REIGNITE THE CONSOLE WAR?

It's a bold step by Sony to allow cross-play; it's something Microsoft refused to do when it briefly had the better-selling console (Xbox 360 versus PS3). Whether it will truly catch on is another matter, but given Epic is working with Sony to create a stable cross-play system, we could see future games built using Unreal Engine 4 offering the service, or indeed adding cross-play to current UE4 games. I'd love to take on all comers in Dragon Ball FighterZ, for example. The real question is: does this end the decades old console war or merely shift it online? I'm hoping everyone can get along, regardless of system. ■



JESS KINGHORN
STAFF WRITER



THE FAMILY THAT PLAYS TOGETHER, STAYS TOGETHER.

My kid sister, the young fool, is a traitor. Even after much begging and pleading, she Switched to the dark side. Truly, such a sin from one of my own blood cannot be forgiven and must be paid for, victory royale style. For the mere notion that I could best her at Fortnite, she called me deluded. While it may be true that the battle royale behemoth is something of a young person's game, she won't know what hit her when she enters my domain in my beloved Dragon Quest X... though considering neither of us speak Japanese, perhaps the playing field will be more level than I would like for the Japan-exclusive MMORPG. Let the battle commence. ■



OSCAR TAYLOR-KENT
GAMES EDITOR



WHEN EXPLORING LORDRAN I DON'T WANT PEACE.

One online game, whose sense of community constantly has me intrigued, is Dark Souls'. Almost wordless, you can only communicate properly by messages laid on the ground via pre-written prompts, or by gesturing at one another. And, of course, you can summon players in to aid you in difficult areas, or invade players' worlds to cause them grief. Some invaders will bow respectfully and wait for you to be ready, while in other areas they may sneak up on you and taunt you. But it's always a good time. As the games get older, we need every hollowed warrior we can get across any platform, so that the fire may never die. ■



MILFORD COPPOCK
MANAGING ART EDITOR



THIS TOWN IS BIG ENOUGH FOR ALL OF US...

When Red Dead Redemption 2's online mode launches, there's no doubt that every gunslinger in the land is going to be jumping in to make their dreams come true in the new frontier. The gold experience could be even better if the world was truly open to all. I want to play fast and loose with all comers, no matter which platform they hail from. With such a huge and detailed world, it doesn't feel like it should be one with limitations on who can mosey on down to where. These lands should be bustling with a new kind of civilisation – gamers from the world over gunning down, whoever they want and riding old, broken donkeys. ■

022

INSERT COIN®

www.insertcoinclothing.com

N7

£5 OFF

when you spend £30

USE CODE: SPOOKY5

Code valid until 31/12/2018 and cannot be combined with any other offer or discount. Valid online only and cannot be redeemed on vouchers, bundles or charity items. All codes are one use only.

REPLIES

F facebook.com/OfficialPlayStationMagazine T @OPM_UK W gamesradar.com/opm E opm@futurenet.com



#154 Yeehaw! We went hands-on with the game everyone's talking about.

Virtual gifts

I recently picked up PS VR along with Batman VR and Skyrim VR and loved it. Unfortunately, though, I have had to get rid of it all on doctor's orders thanks to my epilepsy. It's an amazing piece of technology and Batman especially was fantastic so I'm totally gutted after having bought 20+ VR games from PSN.

We need a way to gift/transfer purchases on PSN as I could pass my games on to other people seeing as I won't be able to use them now.

Brian Malcolm via email

We're sorry to hear you've had to give up

your PS VR, Brian. While digital purchases have their benefits, being transferrable isn't one of them. We're guessing enabling people to pass games on doesn't make sound business sense, so is unlikely to happen. Which is a shame.

Classics rock

As an avid reader and a 45-year-old gamer, I would like to say great work on your recent retro gaming retrospectives

WE NEED A WAY TO GIFT/TRANSFER PURCHASES ON PSN AS I COULD PASS MY GAMES ON TO OTHER PEOPLE.

over the past 12 months or so. With so many remakes and remasters currently available for the PS4, it's great that so many younger gamers can participate in some of yesteryear's best games. In regard to this, we have numerous Atari 2600 and Sega Mega Drive remasters in circulation from the past few generations, yet there has never been an Amiga collection available for any of the consoles. I understand that licensing issues or missing/lost game code could be a factor in this. To be able to relive classics such as Sensible World Of Soccer (best football game ever), Cannon Fodder, Elite, Elite 2: Frontier, Turricon 1-4, Uridium 1 and 2, Beneath A Steel Sky, Flashback, Alien Breed 1 and 2, Syndicate, and possibly the hardest game game ever made (dream on, Dark Souls trilogy) Impossible Mission, would be a great nostalgic trip

for gamers of my ilk but also show younger gamers that the Amiga was one of the best gaming platforms in the late '80s/early '90s.

Wayne Dannatt via email

Some games do head to the PS Store, like Another World, but you're right, in a world obsessed with pixel art Metroidvanias, where's Turricon? For more retro, flip back to page 14 to find out about the PlayStation Classic and all its fab games.

Star letter Pure gold

Looking through the free retro magazine [with OPM #153] and reading about all the remakes I noticed that a lot of them are programmed by Bluepoint Games.

If I remember Bluepoint Games made the excellent Uncharted Golden Abyss on PS Vita. Surely it would not take a great deal of work to convert this to PS4. The way that remakes are being done even the motion sensor sections wouldn't be a problem for the DualShock 4. I think if it was put out as a digital edition in the same way as Lost Legacy at the right price all Uncharted fans would buy it.

Phil Hall via email

We're afraid taking a game from PS Vita to PS4 would be a lot of work, Phil - but with Uncharted's sizeable fanbase, it might be worth the effort.

CAN I GET A RT?

The most pleasing tweetings from the @OPM_UK timeline...



@TURBOGEEK421

Love my Vita! Out of the top 5, I've platinumed 3 of them, played 1, and not played 1... the 1 I've not played is your top pick! Might be time to change that!



@NORTHLIGHTFILM

Aim high while the mountain beckons.

[Very zen! - ed]



@DANNYROSAMOND

Embarrassing admission. I've never played Symphony of the Night. Time to correct that.



@MICK_BOSS

had to pick opm even though i read a million red dead redemption 2 previews already getting a physical mag with one is all part of that ritual when a new Rockstar game is on the way for me (also wanted the large poster) #gaming #ps4 #Playstation @OPM_UK

TROLL OF THE MONTH

T



@TONYC6661

Haha boobs I am going to start playing fortnite again now haha



@REALJALLEN1981

If the new PlayStation is to be a real 'classic' then it has to have a Wipeout of some description on it.



@TIMETOSPLITTERS

I can already hear the TS2 Siberia level song in head. *sheds tear* Every time...



@MATTYGAMER73

Red dead 2 comes out the day before my marriage, early wedding gift for me!! Wonder what my bride will think!!



"I don't want a half-assed Joel inclusion. Either make him a decent part of the story or have him have died tragically."

MATT BOOTH WANTS ALL OR THE LAST OF JOEL



"Bring Cayde back. Forsaken made everything worse."

IT DID FOR CAYDE, JERICO KING WOLF

READERS' MOST WANTED

Which games are bleeping loudest on your radar?

1/

Red Dead Redemption 2

Out only a few days after this magazine, you've not long to wait to discover if this open-world western will grab you by the posse.
FORMAT PS4
ETA 26 OCT

2/

The Last Of Us Part II

Like Ellie, we've only the memory of that kiss to keep us going... but we will survive till this one hits our PS4s!
FORMAT PS4
ETA TBC

3/

Kingdom Hearts III

This one should brighten our New Year - but have you got enough time to learn all the convoluted lore first?
FORMAT PS4
ETA 25 JAN 2019

5/

Ghost Of Tsushima

Sneaking onto the end of your Most Wanted list, it's Sony's beautiful-looking samurai adventure. We're going to be drooling over this one for some time yet.
FORMAT PS4
ETA 2019

4/

Cyberpunk 2077

Winter makes us all hanker after long games to cosy up with, and news of The Witcher TV series reminds us of CD Projekt Red's finest work. We want more from that dev, *right now!*
FORMAT PS4
ETA TBC



VOTE NOW!
 Tell us the five games you can't wait to play at opm@futurenet.com

025



EXIT POLL

Our Facebook fans answer a final question

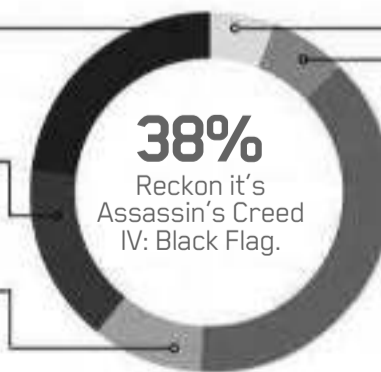
What was your favourite PS4 launch title?*

*See p64 for ours

23% Go for Resogun's arcade action.

16% Decide to troll us and say Knack.

10% - only 10%! - opt for Lego Marvel Super Heroes.



6% Choose the still-respectable Killzone Shadow Fall.

7% Pick 1920s-themed puzzle-platformer Contrast.

NEXT MONTH

Which game would you most like to see remastered for PS4?

Oscar Taylor-Kent

AS GAMES GET DEEPER, THERE'S ONE CATCH-ALL TO ADD SPICE TO ANY LIFE: A LITTLE BIT OF ROLEPLAY NEVER HURT ANYONE.

For better or worse, these days everything's an RPG

But isn't any game where you play as a character an RPG?" That's my dad. He knows damn well that's not what I mean, as I explain to him yet again what RPG is short for, and why I'm playing so many of them. In a sense, he is right. When we inhabit the sneaky, footprint-leaving boots of Solid Snake we are inhabiting his character, but Metal Gear Solid still isn't a role-playing game.

As time's gone on, though, my dad's become more and more right. As technology's moved forwards and things you can do in games have grown deeper, the way you play around with characters in these digital realms has had to get deeper too. Narratives and characters can have much more fidelity these days, but how do you fit this seamlessly into a game and improve a player's connection with that world? What better way to improve your relationship than with a bit of harmless role-play?

Assassin's Creed is a series that's been experiencing some changes lately. What was once a tower-climbing, hay-jumping action adventure has morphed into a more level-driven, RPG-lite experience, especially with all the changes brought to last year's Assassin's Creed Origins. This year, follow-up Assassin's Creed Odyssey is taking the Origins template and doubling down on the RPG elements. On top of the changes



WRITER BIO

Oscar Taylor-Kent made the choice to give himself over to RPGs a long time ago. But the real question is whether he's really Oscar at all, or is he just playing a character? If that's the case, then he really should have thought about his stat distribution a bit harder.

Origins made, Odyssey sees you step further into the sandals of your chosen avatar – Cassandra or Alexios – than ever before. Dialogue choices now affect how missions will progress, and you get the option to pursue romance choices with a ton of other characters. As Mass Effect has taught us, what's more RPG than that?

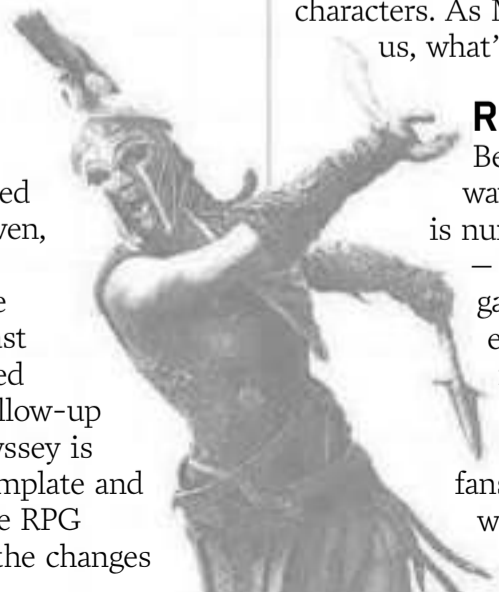
RPG LAUNCHER

Because really, while one way of looking at RPGs is numbers and stat-based – Cyberpunk 2077's gameplay demo had enough digits to make my calculator blush – that's far from what RPGs really mean to fans of the genre. If that wasn't the case, then I would have stuck to

playing Rayman Junior back on the original PlayStation for all my RPG needs (Level 3, obviously).

While the numbers help, the heart of a good RPG is more of a feeling than whether it ticks off a checklist definition. A great RPG pulls you into its world, and allows you to inhabit it. That's why exploring Ancient Greece holds so much appeal in Odyssey, or the streets of Night City in Cyberpunk 2077. Not just because we level up or choose a spicy or mild response to something our friend says, but because they use the language of games to hook us and draw us in, to make us really feel like it's us down there doing the exploring ourselves.

With advancements in hardware, some tricks won't work on us in the way they used to. Switching up to 4K is nice, but it lacked the mind-bending punch of that first move away from the blocky polygons of old to smoother visuals, or the brain-Mentos buzz of getting a high-definition telly for your PlayStation 3 and gaining a new level of appreciation for Nathan Drake's not-so-hidden rear treasure. Big worlds just aren't going to cut it any more. We're already well-travelled enough. What's truly impressive now is how detailed you can make a world. While Red Dead Redemption 2 might not be a traditional RPG, Rockstar's commitment to adding depth to the setting adds a new layer to it as an open-world game, one you explore as Arthur Morgan. It's not what you'd think of as an RPG at all, but if I can feel like I'm Morgan, pottering around exploring cupboards and forging relationships, what's the difference? The future is RPG.





Jess Kinghorn

WHEN ARE WE GOING TO TAKE THE LONG-TERM PRESERVATION OF OUR MEDIUM SERIOUSLY?

There's got to be a better way beyond buying the same games over and over again

This December, Sony will throw its hat into the ring of retro, quarter-sized console reproductions with the PlayStation Classic. As excited as I am to get my similarly tiny mitts on it, I can't help but look far beyond this Christmas and think about the long-term conservation of games.

By their experiential nature, and due to the onward march of tech, games are difficult to preserve, though that doesn't stop not-for-profits such as The Video Game History Foundation attempting the task. Founder Frank Cifaldi cites the example of early film preservation (or rather lack thereof, as so much released before the 1950s is now lost) as the impetus behind the foundation's mission statement. While much of this group's current work covers earlier videogame history, more needs to be done by a number of parties in order to facilitate the preservation of titles released here and now.

It's not a dystopian future for games: between remakes, remasters, PS2 classics on PS4 and also those available for download via PS Now there's

a number of ways to enjoy old favourites regardless of the tech you have to hand. Unfortunately, the current approach leaves massive blind spots in PlayStation's library... and no, I'm not going to use this opportunity to bang on about my Shadow Hearts full remake pipe dream – that's what the podcast is for.

ACTION STATION

I'm not one to turn my nose up at any future consoles-of-gaming-past-reproductions, but it would be wrongheaded to leave the responsibility of preserving PlayStation media solely at Sony's door. In the face of old tech's fragility (and the pulling of repair support for elderly consoles), a reproduction model benefitting from today's parts seems logical, but the lack of integration with modern conveniences such as PSN is a missed trick.

Much as I appreciate having the option to re-experience games, buying the same ones over and over makes me feel the human equivalent of a disc read error. The assertion that backwards compatibility isn't wanted hits the ear as pleasantly as the dreaded grinding of hardware failure.

WRITER BIO

Jess Kinghorn, as a pint-sized gaming machine herself, enjoys similarly petite consoles. Her collection of titles from generations past is anything but compact, and it's best not to ask what other small but mighty tech she has stashed away.



Malindy Hetfeld

I WOULD RATHER PLAY A NEW GAME THAN WATCH AN ADAPTATION OF A CLASSIC ONE.

Films can introduce games to broader audiences, but maybe games work better on their own

Hollywood isn't giving up on getting a piece of the videogame cake, even after several setbacks. We can argue the merits of films such as this year's Tomb Raider until we're blue in the face, but none of these films have achieved (or deserved) critical acclaim or financial success. As Netflix is gearing up for another attempt, I'm asking myself who the desired audience is.

The fact that even a TV giant like Netflix, known for high production values and a hand in changing the perception of telly as a worse alternative to films, is working on a Witcher TV series is a fantastic argument for the production value of games.

That same value makes it hard for me to see TV and film as anything but a copy. Game narratives have made huge strides, now offering "cinematic" narrative structures. Character models and graphics are becoming ever better. This means I have become so attached to iconic characters and their voice actors, I would rather play something by people familiar with the tone of a game than watch an adaptation.

Sure, if voice actors were to take up their characters' roles, that would be similarly unconvincing (and result in Troy Baker being everywhere), but we used to look to films to prove the mass appeal of game worlds and stories to audiences. Since then, more people have grown up with games or started playing. Games have matured, yet make the unbelievable seem normal, and nothing outside of superhero films seems to be able to replicate that sort of juxtaposition and not look weird. Honestly, I just hope Henry Cavill pulls off Geralt's magnificent silver mane.

PLAYING A ROLE

Instead, I'm now enjoying the intersection of both worlds whenever a screen actor appears in a game. Several generations of Japanese stars appear in the Yakuza series. Elsewhere, established actors such as Clancy Brown in Detroit: Become Human gain new fanbases that way. It seems as if games are the place to be. Maybe The Witcher will be the adaptation that combines an adequate budget with a dedication to the source material. Meanwhile, I'll play a game.

WRITER BIO

Malindy Hetfeld believes that games no longer profit from the thrill of 'coming to life' on the big screen, mostly because she's still bitter no-one jumped at the chance to make a film featuring every Mass Effect alien.

IN THE MOOD FOR...

Buddy Cops

Demolishing doughnuts and busting perps with PlayStation's finest police pals

1 FAR CRY 5

With Hope County infested with the followers of evil cult Eden's Gate, your mute deputy isn't afforded many opportunities for bobby-on-the-beat bonding with their colleagues. When your custom character isn't fighting the Seed Family, Sheriff Earl Whitehorse (and his stupendous 'tache) is happy to have a chinwag.

2 TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA

It's a scientific fact that adding Christopher Walken to anything makes it 76% better. This is the case with Luxoflux's so-so sandbox, where Walken's cop George, a kindly desk sergeant, is the only likeable character to interact with Nick Kang. The two share a father/son bond, and we all wish Chris Walken was our pop.

3 MAX PAYNE 3

When he's not off his face on Kong whiskey, Max is granted plenty of time to befriend ex-cop Raul Passos, once the Colombian talks him into taking a protection job in São Paulo. After one of their protectees is kidnapped, the two former NYPD detectives get to share in their love of pithy put-downs, sharp suits, and slo-mo shootouts.



4 TIME CRISIS 2

There ain't no friendship like a friendship that's been solidified with lightgun bonding. Time Crisis 2 was the first game in the series to introduce co-op, allowing you to partner with a chum as you take control of agents Keith Martin and Robert Baxter while the compadres foil a nefarious terrorist plan involving satellites.

5 RESIDENT EVIL 4

Leon receives the most horrid of welcomes upon arriving in Resi 4's rural Spain. Still, though parasite-infected locals try to gouge his face off, at least he becomes pals with ex-cop Luis Sera. The special agent and hunky po-po become Gandos-slaying allies... well, until Luis gets skewered like a sea bass.

6 STREETS OF RAGE

Axel Storm, Blaze Fielding, and ex-boxer-turned cop Adam Hunter all get the chance to grow closer on those 16-bit streets while whupping the collective arse of Mr X's evil forces. Well, provided your definition of 'grow closer' involves never talking to each other, eating chicken off the ground, and kicking an Ultimate Warrior wannabe in the teeth.

7 LA NOIRE

Unlike Raymond, everyone hates Cole Phelps. His patrol unit? Total resentment. The traffic desk? Can't stand him. The homicide and vice desks? All the hate... with extra contempt thrown in. It's not until the elastic-faced 'tec lands on the arson desk that he finally makes a friend in amiable cop Herschel Biggs.

8 DRIVER: SAN FRANCISCO

Tanner and Jones are just like Riggs and Murtaugh from Lethal Weapon. One's a by-the-book lawman, the other's a renegade who can project his consciousness into every car in San Fran via a magic coma. All right, they're sod-all like Riggs and Murtaugh. At least Tanner and Jones share some banter before the former's extended nap.

9 DETROIT: BECOME HUMAN

'Buddies' may be stretching the affection between android cop Connor, and his partner Hank, a jaded alcoholic. Depending on your choices, the pair either bond while trying to stop the robot renegades, or kill each other. For the purpose of this list, we'll choose the police pals option.

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

Ratchet & Clank 3

In the Lombax's threequel, Ratchet joins the Q-Force; a group that more or less acts as intergalactic police.

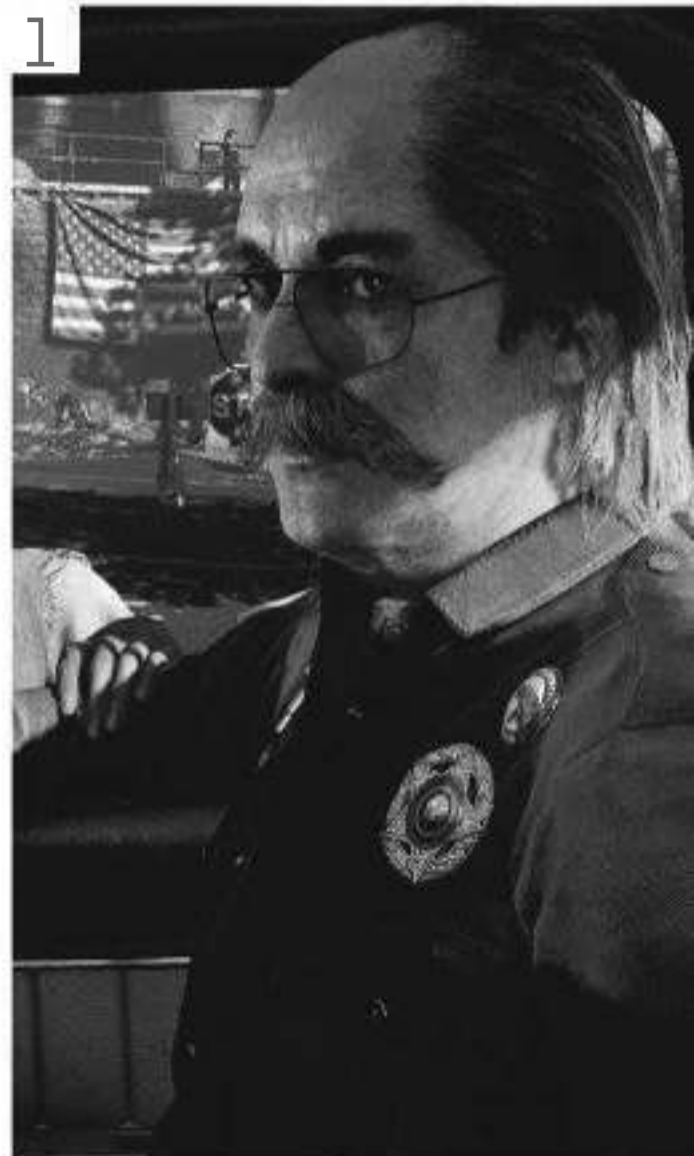
Miami Vice

You know who asked for a shoddy PSP tie-in of Michael Mann's Crockett and Tubbs reboot? Norman Nobody.

Starsky & Hutch

Another rubbish licensed game that couldn't be saved by either its cop companions, nor the superfly Huggy Bear.

Did we miss your favourite buddies? Got a brilliant In The Mood For idea? Show and tell at twitter.com/opm_uk.



4



7



5



6



8

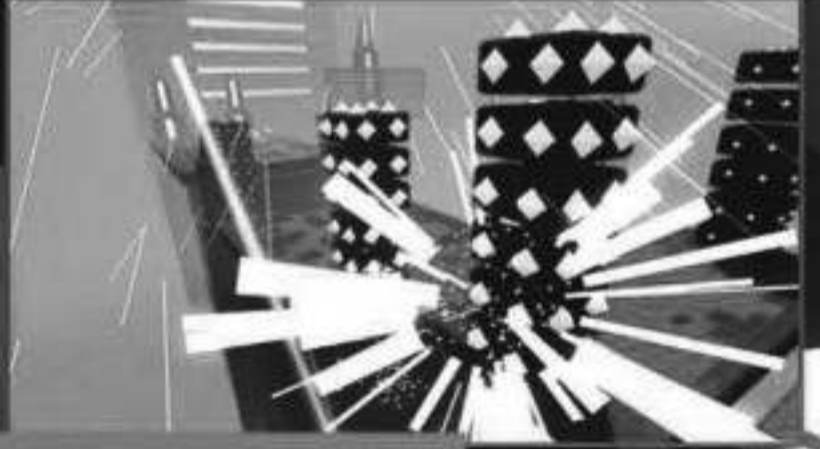


9



INTRO

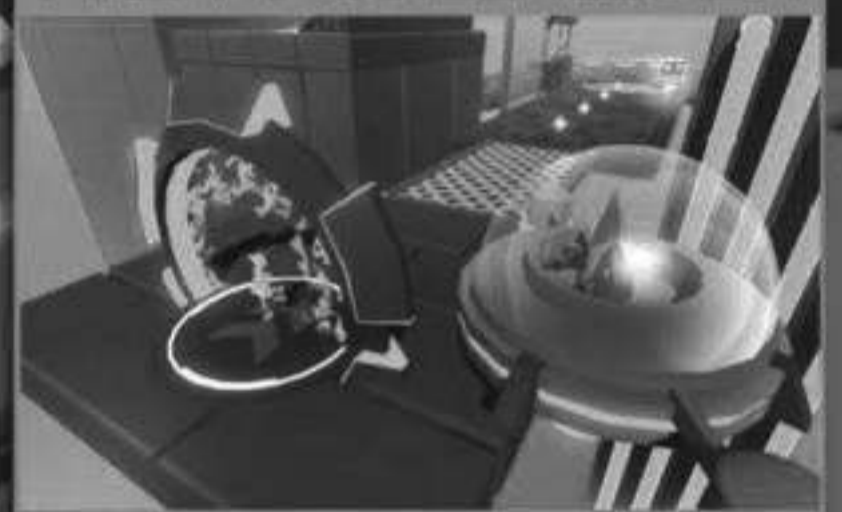
OVER 60 DYNAMIC LEVELS



FUSS-FREE SPEEDRUNNING



FAST PACED RACER



SURVIVAL OF THE FASTEST

COMING SOON TO PLAYSTATION 4

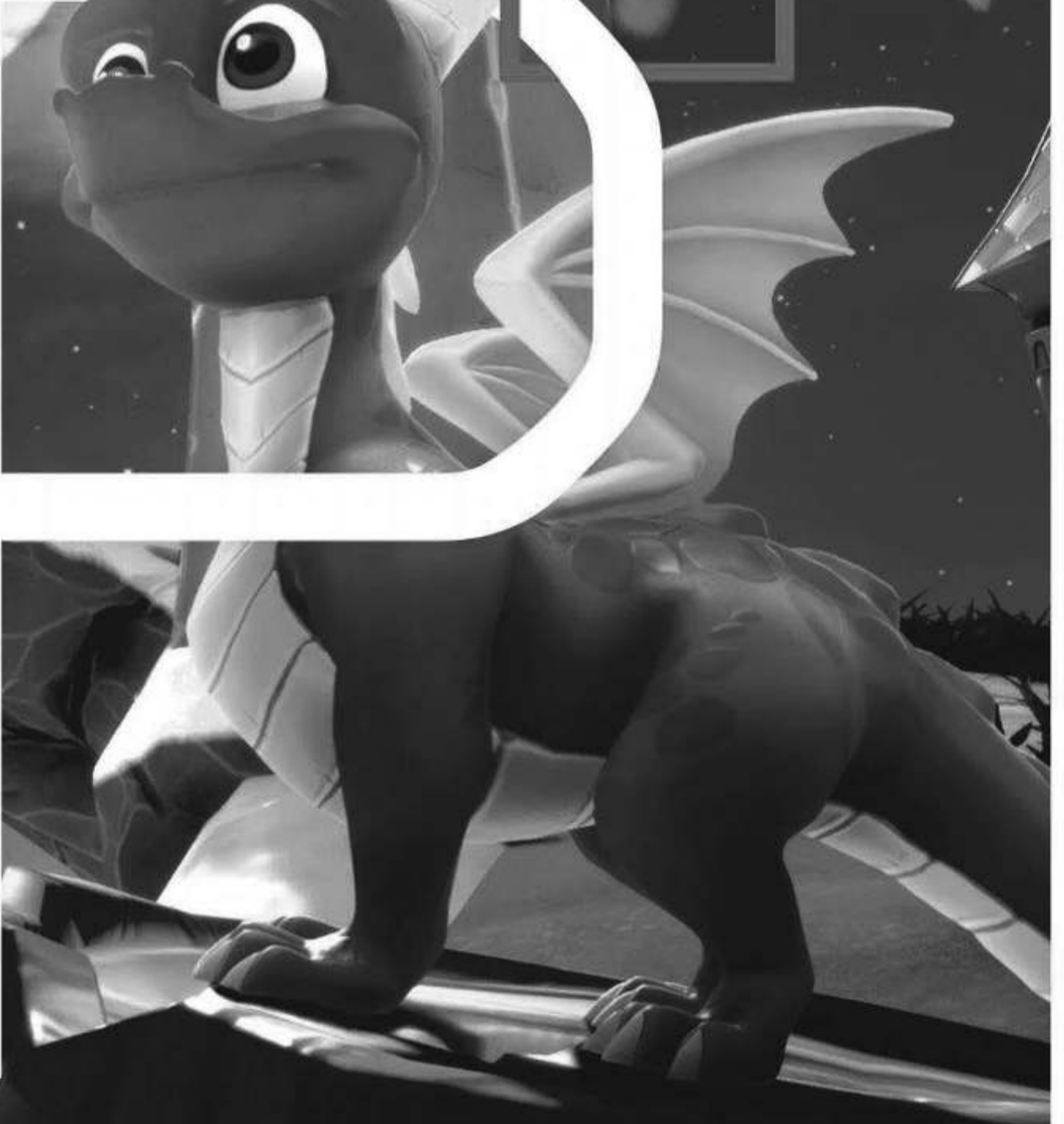
Warpfish | poube

© WARP FISH GAMES LIMITED. PUBLISHED BY POUBE LTD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

PREVIEW

42 SPYRO REIGNITED TRILOGY

We give the little dragon a workout -
and you can really feel the burn!



031

CONTENTS

BATTLEFIELD V 32 | FALLOUT 76 36 | ACE COMBAT 7: SKIES UNKNOWN 38 | LEFT ALIVE 39
THE SINKING CITY 40 | TETRIS EFFECT 46 | TEAM SONIC RACING 47 | DÉCRACINÉ 48
HELL WARDERS 48 | GRIP 48 | FARMING SIMULATOR 19 48



PREVIEW

032

From WW1 with Battlefield 1 to WW2 with Battlefield V, EA DICE is still the master of large-scale historical warfare.

“CONFLICT IS
EPIC, SPRAWLING,
CHAOTIC, AND
ALWAYS DEADLY.”

FORMAT PS4 / ETA 20 NOV
PUB EA / DEV EA DICE

BATTLEFIELD V

We shall fight on the beaches...
over and over again



The heavy, rapid thud of our assault rifle as we take down some unwitting soldiers poking up above cover; scrunching forward through snow as we stay low to the ground; the drone of planes overhead punctuated by intermittent machine gun fire; and the whirr of treads as a tank crashes through a nearby building – friend or foe? Perverse as it may be, all that’s the sound of home.

To clear a capture point we lob a grenade into a first-storey window. It explodes and the interior of the building crumbles piece by piece around the cadavers of the enemies within, the collected snow sliding off the roof as it collapses outward. With enemy soldiers cleared for now we rally and capture the point.

That’s a story of success. But across these huge multiplayer maps tons of these little micro-stories are playing out at once. As we capture this point, just across the way comrades are beaten back. There’s a reason the game’s called Battlefield, after all. Check your quickfire deathmatches at the door – conflict in Battlefield V is epic, sprawling, chaotic, and always, always deadly. Lone wolves will get the team killed, and squad play is the key to that big “V” victory.

TURNING THE TIDES

Our latest hands-on with Battlefield V is played as the game should be – with heaps of other people running amok thanks to the shooter’s Tides Of War mode. With 64 players in a game, it’s the sort of

PREVIEW



Left You'll find plenty of cover in the half-ruined buildings of Battlefield, as dogfights rage above.



Right Vehicles are still a highlight. Driving a tank and raining big-shell death down on enemies is as big a rush as it ever was.

You can hop onto your friend's tank to pilot a mounted machine gun. As long as they stop driving in circles...



The grandest of operations

How two in-game days on a multi-step multiplayer map puts you to the test



1 While you might play a map like Arctic Fjord in several modes, your varied objectives change the way you interact with the spaces immensely.



2 The default spawn points in Airborne are all mobile, with allied planes moving across the map constantly for you to respawn from and parachute back down.



3 Taking down AA guns allows for an easier time during Day 2. A bit like a segmented Conquest, Breakthrough is about capturing and holding points.



4 Vehicles are key to the Battlefield experience. Playable Spitfires dogfight above the map. On the ground you can deliver hot death in a tank.



Above Rotterdam truly feels like a city abandoned in the middle of something. It's haunting, but filled with lovely little shortcuts and tons of makeshift cover.

“WE HOP IN A TANK –
A BIG BRITISH
CHURCHILL CROCODILE
– AND ALL OUR CARES
MELT AWAY.”



Above Going off on your own is a good way to get killed and lose your team's respawns. Squad up to capture points tactically.



Above Nobody's left behind. You can revive your squadmates to keep boots on the ground, and medics can heal anyone.

thing you can only truly experience alongside many fellow online soldiers, where you'll make quick friendships with your comrades, and also forge heated rivalries as you contest points.

The Dutch city of Rotterdam was devastated during World War 2, but here we play through it early in the conflict while it's still fairly intact, navigating wide roads and elevated train tracks, ducking through narrow alleys, and weaving between open buildings around the port. The huge number of different routes through the streets can easily see your team de-synergise if you're not careful. There's a whole new sense of tangibility and physicality to how you scramble over the maps, fighting to control critical points in the city.

We get to play around with each of the four main classes: Assault, Recon, Medic, and Support, with one combat role to try for each (though in the full game, each main class will have several possible roles). With each class having different loadouts and traits, getting a good spread in your team is a must. Assault's Grenadier role is perfect for flushing out points, Recon's Sniper is great for picking off advancing troops, and the Field Medic can use Syringe Revive to recover any fallen ally (regular troops can revive their squadmates – squads are sub-teams of four players that can act as a unit, and provide moving spawn points).

FACTRICK

1. FIRESTORM

This is the title of the new Battle Royale-style game mode that's obligatory in shooters now.

2. TAKE COVER

Bullets can realistically puncture through thin cover, so make sure you're not giving yourself away.

3. WAR STORIES

Single-players, worry not. War Stories mode returns to tell snippets about interesting aspects of WW2.

NORWAY AROUND IT

The Arctic Fjord map, set in Norway, also impresses for other reasons. The snowy setting couldn't be more different to Rotterdam's port city streets, not just because we have to battle the Scandinavian elements, but because it's a wider map that seems to lead to some stricter laning and tighter squad play as a result. Even when you play in Conquest mode, aiming to control key points just like in Rotterdam, it feels quite different. But the Fjords are also the setting for a taste of the new Grand Operations mode – where, in the full game, four in-game day mini-matches roll into the next from one another.

In our two-day taster of the Fall Of Norway operation, we play through Airborne, which sees paratroopers on a night-time raid escorting explosives to destroy anti-aircraft guns, and then a match of Breakthrough the morning after, where two points at a time have to be captured and held before moving on to the next segment of the map, as territory is battled for fiercely and big pushes are made to gain ground.

Things aren't going too well for a while as we tussle for control over the final two capture points. It's a bit of a stalemate, and both teams are nearly neck-and-neck with revives as the clock ticks down. But then we hop in a tank – a big British Churchill Crocodile – and all our cares melt away as we trundle down the hill to the final point, rag-dolling enemies out the way with massive explosions. Our tank is taken down, of course, but it provides just enough of a window for us to get that last capture. And that's just day two of the Grand Operation – with two more days to play through, who knows how it will progress from here? As usual, there's going to be plenty of content to chew on in Battlefield V, but the true war stories are going to be the ones we make ourselves along the way. ■



“THE IDEAS IS THAT YOU ARE THE FIRST HUMANS BACK OUT ON THE SURFACE.”

FIRST COM
Find the Overseer in Flat
MISCELLAN
e World Radio
at Whitespring
pring holotape

FORMAT PS4 / ETA 14 NOV / PUB BETHESDA / DEV BETHESDA GAME STUDIOS

FALLOUT 76

Up and atom in the multiplayer apocalypse



Finally it's time to leave the vault and populate the wastelands of Bethesda's post-apocalyptic MMORPG, but we have some concerns. First, is 25 years really long enough for the nuked, irradiated world to be habitable? And, mainly, are we really going to allow other gamers to trample over our precious Fallout experience?

As we start playing one thing's clear: the game mostly looks and plays like Fallout 4, except for there being other players milling around. You start in a group of four, in instances of up to 24, but if you prefer solo play you can go off on your own at any time. There are no human NPCs – the idea is that you are the first humans back out on the surface, and missions are acquired through interacting with the world (holotapes, robots, and so on) while every human you fight or trade with is a real person, fresh out of the vault.

We still find plenty of mutated creatures, ghouls, and other familiar foes, and running squad skirmishes with super-mutants is a new but logical experience. You can swap out acquired Perks at any time, to balance squad strengths. Aside from missions, there are sporadic events; we fight a Scorch Beast – a massive dragon – that is way too high a level for us. If you thought Deathclaws were brutal, these things are terrifying. The VATS targeting system returns, but in real time. It's trickier too, and will require Perks and practice to make it optimal.

The map is huge, four times the size of Fallout 4. We find a water park, explore a mine, fight ghouls on a golf course, and blow up a mutated bear in a garage. We also pick up mutations of our own. Alongside radiation damage, you have a random chance of *changing*. Having deliberately poked around in radioactive material, one of our group develops the Marsupial mutation, allowing him to leap like a kangaroo.

GOOD GRIEF(ER)

PvP is also a big part of Fallout 76, but the devs have gone all-out to ensure grievers won't ruin your game. Kill another player who's not fighting back and you become a murderer, with a bounty (from your own caps) for other players to claim, and your weapons receive a debuff. It's a great bit of game design that punishes while providing a dramatic wasteland event. Or, if you prefer, a 'pacifist flag' will turn off all human damage.

Despite the multiplayer angle, the single-player promises to be just as gratifying as the previous games, with Bethesda confirming to OPM that there are hundreds of hours' worth of quests outside of the main path. Enough to keep even the most rabid Fallout fan as happy as a bloatfly in radioactive muck. ■



Top The VATS system is back but now plays in real time to accommodate the online co-op direction of Fallout 76.

FACTRICK

1. SCARRED OFF

Your character will change based on how you play. Get into a lot of fights and they'll grow visible scars.

2. CALLING CARD

Fallout 76 has a photo mode, and you can use it to take snaps of your in-game hero for their 'ID badge'.

3. FACE TIME

You can change the look of your character at any point in the game. Handy for us contrary gamers.

Fallout 76 can look good, and you'll forget it's an online MMORPG.



Play nice

We discover it pays to play well with others in Fallout 76



1 Our group finds a public crafting station and starts tooling up using resources we gather, making armour, knives, and handy pipe-revolvers.



2 After skirmishing with ghouls, we head to The Whitespring. This former luxury resort is still being serviced by robot butlers and mechanical security guards.



3 One of our group starts shooting up the robots. They respond with extreme prejudice. Man down! Time to help out our buddies...



4 A full-on battle with Protectrons and Assaultrons ends in a lot of scrap metal, and plenty of XP to share among the group, to level us all up.



Left Exploring the typical wasteland towns and shacks with other players feels better than we'd anticipated.

Above You can play the game solo like classic Fallout, but Bethesda is clear online is the way to play this new addition in the series.



"IN PS VR THE WHOLE THING BECOMES MORE PERSONAL."

The game's near-future sci-fi look adds to the spectacle.

■ **FORMAT** PS4, PS VR / **ETA** 18 JAN / **PUB** BANDAI NAMCO / **DEV** PROJECT FORCES

ACE COMBAT 7: SKIES UNKNOWN

Takes our breath away



It's a celebration that may slip under the radar, but *Ace Combat* is about to mark its 23rd anniversary. It's a date worth toasting, though, as the jet fighter series has been a PlayStation stalwart worth savouring. This seventh edition ticks all the boxes you'd expect from the series: impressive visuals, bonkers plot, simcade controls, poetic subtitle, and oodles of things to explode.

It's also doing something new to the series. *Ace Combat 7: Skies Unknown* embraces PS VR. In many ways the franchise was destined to be a virtual reality trailblazer. After all, what better game suits the new immersive tech than a flight sim?

This is no afterthought either. *Ace Combat 7*'s PS VR support has been developed in tandem with the main game's story mode. From the title menu you can choose the PS VR option, which opens up an entirely new roster of missions, set within the world and timeline of the main game.

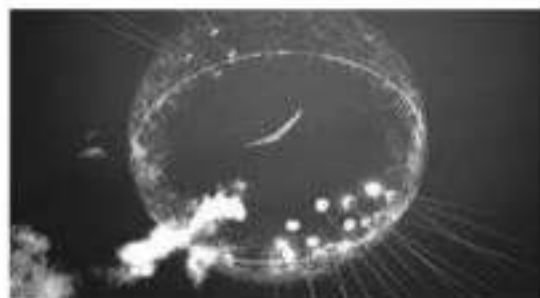
FLIGHT CONTROL

Impressively, the plane controls have been designed specifically for virtual reality, so everything is one-to-one ratio and even the dials and buttons work. Just sitting in this cockpit gives us goosebumps, and then the mission begins in earnest. From the off the game lays the spectacle on thick. As our plane taxis down the runway enemy fighters and bombers swoop over our head; some are caught by our side's AA guns and explode across the runway. We peer over our shoulder to get a good look at the burning wreckage and wonder if that'll be us very soon.

Once in the sky, those dials and digits become useful, enabling us to check altitude and air speed, toggle weapons and rockets, and generally get set for the fight that's coming.

While outside VR the main game can feel a little clinical, essentially lining up and shooting blinking targets in the HUD, in PS VR the whole thing becomes more direct and personal. Targets are tracked with line-of-sight, so turning our head and actively looking around, up, and even down the outside of the plane reveals enemy aircraft. Once locked on you need to maintain eye contact until the missiles explode in puffs of fire and smoke trails. In virtual reality *Ace Combat 7* offers fast and giddy dog fights, far removed from the long-range fire and forget of the main game.

After nearly a quarter of a century, *Ace Combat* has evolved. ■



Above Missions end with a classic boss fight; this beast releases waves of drones.

on
the
box

judged only by
their covers



WRECKFEST

Puzzler in which you need to stack your broken cars one on top of the other without the whole caboodle toppling over. Rival players can team up to slam their cars into your precariously balanced stack. *Wreckfest*? *Wreck-feast* more like.

FORMAT PS4 ETA 20 NOV



PILLARS OF ETERNITY II: DEADFIRE

RPG set in a land where men can wear skirts to work, birds fly around uncaged, and LARPing isn't laughed at. Welcome to *Deadfire*.

FORMAT PS4 ETA 31 DEC



METRO EXODUS

Fed up with rising train fares and being nudged under tall people's armpits, in this walking sim everyone's leaving the underground, where they discover they could have walked to work all along.

FORMAT PS4 ETA 22 FEB

"THE MAIN DRAW IS TAKING ON WELL-EQUIPPED ENEMIES WITH VERY LIMITED RESOURCES."

The wanzer (mech) battles make a difficult game even more challenging – expect to die often.

FORMAT PS4 / ETA 28 FEB / PUB SQUARE ENIX / DEV SQUARE ENIX

LEFT ALIVE

Ha ha ha ha staying alive, staying alive



Front Mission is a long-standing Japanese franchise that, despite offering a blend of turn-based tactical roleplaying and a strong narrative, never really found a Western audience. Front Mission: Evolved heralded the series' transformation to a third-person shooter. Left Alive, set in the same universe, follows the pattern.

We start our trek through Novo Slava, an occupied Russian city, as a soldier hiding from enemy forces. She is crafting a molotov cocktail while trying to sneak around a warehouse undetected.

"The main draw of this game is how you take on very well-equipped, militarised enemies with a very limited selection of weapons and ammunition, forcing you to think on your feet," game director Toshifumi Nabeshima explains. You start on the battlefield with nothing and need to gather the materials necessary to construct weapons, smoke grenades, and sensors for detecting enemies.

BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT

The objective of Left Alive is to make it out of the city as three characters: a soldier, a police officer, and an escaped convict. Nabeshima-san emphasises

you need to pick your battles wisely: "Resources are scarce; you may run out before defeating someone. If you do, that person may leave something new for you to use, however."

Sometimes a wanzer, Front Mission's version of a mech, may spot you. Once that happens, you need to engage it in a mech battle. Due to their hulking, slow nature, this will be one of Left Alive's toughest challenges.

It's not all about you – there are civilians to rescue. Sometimes you need to convince them to follow you first, either with words or actions.

Unfortunately, Left Alive looks visually rough for a game due to be released early 2019. It's grey and jagged around the edges, not yet showcasing the full potential of the great designers on the project, such as Metal Gear designer Yoji Shinkawa. There's still little detail available about the overall narrative, but what we have seen looks like standard fare that could use more tension. ■



Above Since the game is all about survival rather than confrontation, stealth is encouraged but not absolutely mandatory.



FORMAT PS4 / ETA 21 MAR / PUB BIGBEN INTERACTIVE / DEV FROGWARES

THE SINKING CITY

Tide is high for Cthulhu games – could this be your number one?



Where Cyanide's Cthulhu mythos game (a call we answered last issue) plays it close to the page, Frogwares' game offers another take. In its titular city, the Lovecraftian monsters and the streets are drawn closer together every day as the flood waters rise. But the city in question, Oakmont, isn't really a stand-in for Innsmouth.

As Frogwares' community manager Sergey Oganessian explains in a recent developer diary, "Lovecraft was really good at exploring these really intricate philosophical concepts, like our place in the universe, fear of the unknown, and fatalism and all that. But when it comes to details and descriptions he was surprisingly vague, which actually works great for us as it gives us a lot of freedom."

Oganessian later goes on to state that the game is not an adaptation of any of Lovecraft's work, but rather 'an expansion'. Familiar monsters may appear, but the story itself, while borrowing ideas, will be original. Playing as traumatised soldier Charles Winfield Reed, a man drawn to Oakmont after a supernatural event in his past, you'll need to talk to residents, gather evidence and cross-reference clues to fully uncover this mystery.

ON THE CASE

One stepping stone on the path to the bottom of things comes in a note from a librarian named Joy. She asks you to come to her place of work but when you do, you get a sense of what she's been through already. Between lips sewn shut (disturbing in itself), she hisses, "Her. In my apartment. Again."

The apartment building doesn't look like it would be anyone's home sweet home, with broken walls and detritus strewn around. Not frightening, but unsettling. With Joy's key in hand, her flat looks like she's done her best to make the most of a bad spot. A melted camera on the floor is out of place but a well-used rug and dog bowl suggests a not entirely miserable life was led here... well, that's what we think until we find the dog.

The sight of what remains of the dog is almost too much for Reed to bear. Things tip from unsettling to

horrible. He gets double vision and for just a second the world around him is unrecognisable – it's almost like his wartime trauma is happening again – but Reed returns to himself to further investigate the scene. Not too far from a bloody sewing machine, we see the intruder left a sick gift behind.

WHAT A PICTURE

Having explored the room, Reed reveals his superpower: the ability to see snippets of a selected space's past. Slowly things click into place. A raspy old woman enters the apartment, she gets the attention of the dog, the dog is killed, and she begins to sew. Then a neighbour apparently familiar with the woman gets a picture of Joy's visitor but the camera flash draws her attention. The neighbour is definitely someone we need to visit.

After getting no response to our knocking, clearing a cellar of cosmic horrors, and retrieving the neighbour's key, we let ourselves in, only to discover the neighbour in much a similar condition to Joy's poor pup – there's that seesawing between dread and dreadful again; the game racking up the tension before a horrible release. But he leaves a clue behind, a harried note about his recent – and apparently last – photo opportunity with the raspy older woman, also known as Granny Weaver.

Back at the library, Joy is too scared (and presumably pained) to say much else about her unwanted guest. Thankfully there's a lot we can discover on our own now we have the information in the neighbour's note. Turning to the library shelves, we quickly discover more about the local myth of Granny Weaver and highlight another address worthy of investigation. We can't wait to see how the plot will thicken, and our nerves be strained, from there. ■



FACTRICK

1. TELLING TALES

Frogwares has made games based on literature, such as the Adventures Of Sherlock Holmes series.

2. NUMBERS GAME

The Holmes series has sold over seven million copies, and The Sinking City is being made by a team of 80.

3. TOP TEN

Since opening in 2000, the Ukrainian developer has released ten games across multiple platforms.



■ Oakmont is a submerged open world, meaning you'll need to travel across parts of it by boat just as frequently as you will on foot.



“REED REVEALS HIS SUPERPOWER: HE CAN SEE SNIPPETS OF THE PAST.”

041

The Old Great Ones heavily influence the lives of Oakmont's citizens. Perhaps they'll even pay a visit.



Above There are many horrors lurking in Oakmont... and we're not just talking about the fleshy creatures we encountered in the demo.

PREVIEW



“THE REMADE
SPYRO’S LEVELS
AND ANIMATION
LOOK IMPECCABLE.”

FORMAT PS4 / ETA 13 NOV
PUB ACTIVISION / DEV TOYS FOR BOB

SPYRO REIGNITED TRILOGY

Dragon up the past



Not for the first time, Crash Bandicoot changed everything. Last year’s remake trilogy is still riding high in the charts, proving we can’t get enough of the warm, burbly nostalgia that comes with replaying games from our childhood. And just like on PS1, Spyro is following in the orange furbal’s boardies. Can the dragon set the charts alight like PlayStation’s other mascot?

Of course he can. Spyro Reignited Trilogy, a remade collection of the first three Insomniac-developed games on PS1, is shaping up to be another sharply recreated slice of nostalgia. Created using Unreal Engine 4, the remade Spyro’s levels and animation look impeccable. The tiny dragon scampers and dashes around the colourful open-ish worlds like a manic splash of purple fun. But the charm lies in the details, such as the way Spyro preens himself and stretches, cat-like, if you leave him idle. There’s an air of Penelope Pussycat about how Spyro springs from platforms, his little feet dangling in mid-air.

PURPLE REIGN

Part of the draw of these remade games is seeing how the developer can fill in the gaps the aging PS1 technology couldn’t – 20 years ago our imaginations papered over the polygonal cracks.

This remake is awash with juvenile charm: breathe fire near small Rhynoc fodder, and rather than stand

While the level design is identical, the rest of the game has been remade from the ground up. We love the ‘90s.

PREVIEW



Left Christmas has come early... the second game's remade Winter Tundra world looks like something out of Harry Potter, and it's just as magical.



Right Tutorial realm Sunny Villa from Year Of The Dragon is one of those worlds that showcases Reignited's visual vibrancy.

Proud to be back on PS4, Spyro could be the year's sleeper hit, given the power of nostalgia.



Proof is in the revisiting

Think Spyro was a beautiful game? Just look how it's improved...



1 The second world from Spyro: Ripto's Rage!, you probably remember Autumn Plains as a brown-and-red hued world with subtly drawn down sky...



2 ...In the newly remade version on PS4 it's as good as you wanted it to look. The devs have added the detail your imagination had to create.



3 Sheila's Alp is home to the first playable character other than Spyro in Year Of The Dragon. Sheila The Kangaroo is a mess, but don't tell your younger self...



4 ... In Spyro Reignited Trilogy we finally get to see her how Insomniac intended. Look at her big eyes, bobbing hair, and cute jacket. Brilliant.



Above Look at his little face. You'd have to have a heart of stone not to click pre-order. Right. Now. [Milf, that means you - ed.]

“WE WANTED TO CREATE A LOVE LETTER BACK TO THE FANS WITH THIS REMASTER.”



Above Before Kratos got there, Spyro was doing the Norse myths thing. Cloud Spires returns and looks stunning.



Above Volcanic world Magma Cone looks fantastic rendered on PS4. Surely a dragon's not scared of a little heat?

and fight, they run in panic. Watching these big bads lose their cool, charge around like headless chickens, and collide comically like two Looney Tunes characters always raises a smile. And that's the heart of Spyro, right there. Of course, enemies vary in size and tactics; while smaller Rhynocs can be rammed larger ones need to be burnt to send them scurrying away. But now remade on PS4 everything feels more alive, like a moving cartoon. It's how our grey cells remember the game.

SCALED UP

If the animation and vibrant visuals are Spyro's immediate hook, it's the level design that stands the test of time, regardless of visual splendour. Perched high on a ledge in Sunny Villa we can see all around. Shiny gems tease us for collection; dragon statues and eggs can just be made out. But how do we get there? The world building perfected on PS1 is back, and playing in it as addictive as ever.

If you think Spyro is 'for the kids' then remember how tricky some of the worlds were. Peter Kavic, senior producer at Toys For Bob, points us in the direction of Tree Tops, the level found in Beast Makers Homeworld from the first game. "It's known as one of the more challenging levels in the game and it just looks beautiful," he says. "Set in a village built high up among massive trees, Spyro must use supercharge ramps to make his way around the various huts, all the while at risk of falling into the abyss below."

FACTRICK

1. KENNY CAN

Tom Kenny, Spyro's original voice actor from games two and three, returns for the Reignited Trilogy.

2. LOADSA LEVELS

All three games combined offer over 100 levels of dragon scampering fun. That's a lot of game.

3. EGG-STATIC

All of the collectibles are in the same places as they were in the originals. How good's your memory?

Aided by reworked controls, these remade worlds feel like they were designed for PS4. Spyro is dynamic and responsive. He turns and spins with a new-found agility, the camera easily keeping pace with the titular dragon's on-screen antics.

Whether running or gliding through the Dragon and Avalar Realms, the game plays with the kind of modern flourishes that you'd expect from a new PS4 release. It certainly makes the endless exploration, collection, and discovery pitch of the trilogy as enjoyable as your old head remembers.

There's a clear passion for the source material that breathes fiery life into these remade classics. "We wanted to create a love letter back to the fans with this remaster and unleash the dragon in a significant way that reminded fans why they fell in love with gaming in the first place," explains Kavic.

HOT TUNES

This passion feeds through into every aspect of the game. Even the music has been re-recorded, with ex-The Police drummer Stuart Copeland hitting the studio again. Tiger Train is a new title track for the trilogy that "blends recognisable musical motifs from the first three games into a memorable, orchestral-rock score," says Kavic. But like much of the game, the fun is in the detail. If you tire of the new music you can switch between the remastered and original Copeland soundtrack as you play.

All the ingredients are here for another retro takeover, and if the success of Crash Bandicoot N. Sane Trilogy is a foreshadowing of what's to come, we'll all be fans of the purple dragon come November. Kavic is willing to go a step further for his love of Spyro: "I would dye my hair purple if we go to number one," says the developer with confidence. His embarrassment is in your hands. ■



“AFTER REMOVING THE PS VR HEADSET WE FEEL ZENNED-OUT.”

FORMAT PS VR / ETA NOV 2018
PUB ENHANCE, INC. / DEV RESONAIR

TETRIS EFFECT

Virtually the same game



The Tetris effect: a psychological phenomenon whereby people visualise the shapes, colours, and patterns of the perennial block-building game to help create a sense of geometric order in the real world. It's a fitting name then, for a PS VR title that makes Tetris fill your entire visible reality.

Not that Tetris Effect envelops you in tetrominoes, or sends you on a nauseating first-person plummet from a block's perspective. It's still 'classic Tetris'. There are a couple of new mechanics, such as the time-freezing Zone meter, but that shouldn't stop anyone slotting right in.

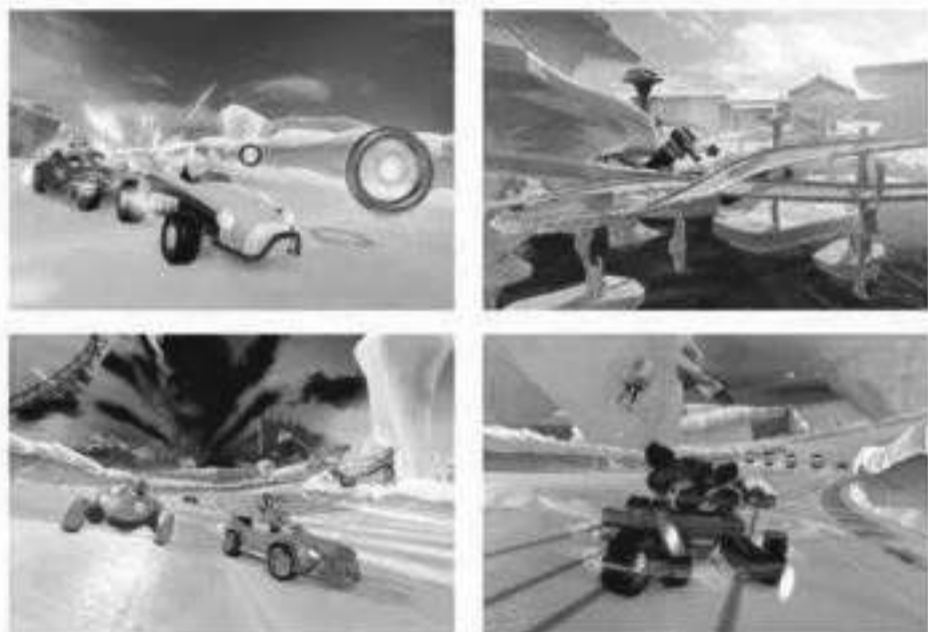
The game's director, Tetsuya Mizuguchi (of Rez and Lumines fame), makes his mark with vocalised electronic music and sparkly visuals that sprinkle down after each placed block and completed line. On the levels we play, this gives the Tetris Effect a satisfying sense of impact and rhythm. The areas surrounding the relatively small Tetris column in front of us range from endless astral fields to abstract geometries. As we play on, experiencing a second level, these pretty visuals get distracting at times, but for the most part they heighten the meditative nature of the timeless task at hand.

After removing the PS VR headset, we feel zenned-out: this is the most immersive variation yet on one of gaming's most familiar experiences. ■

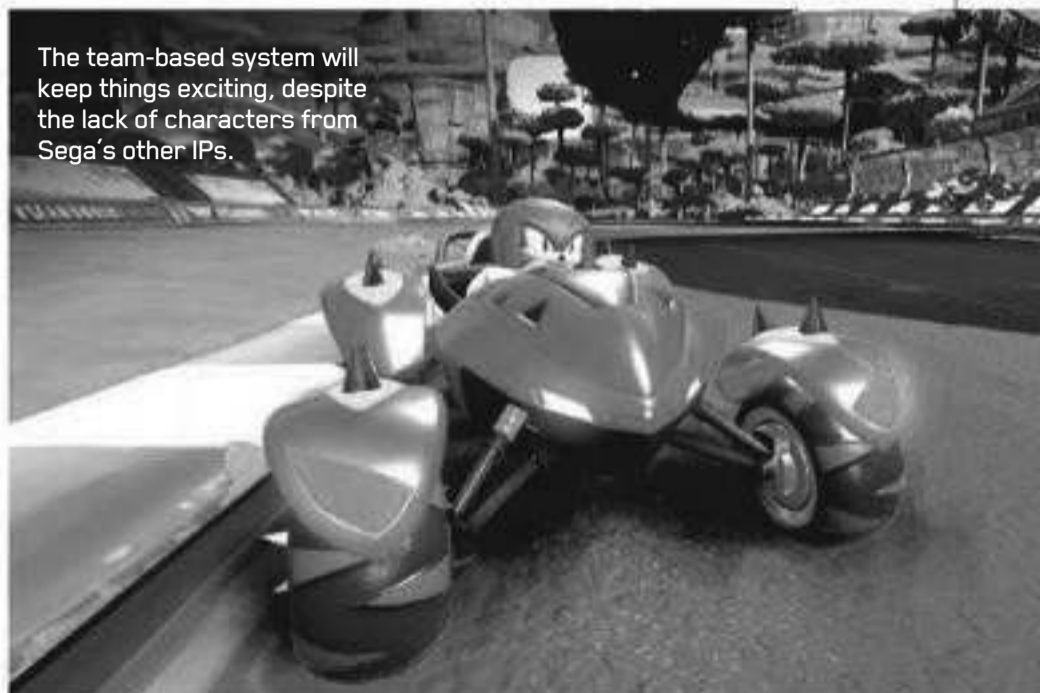


Above The natural immersion of PS VR, paired with a smooth soundtrack, makes Tetris Effect feel like a cerebral massage.

When you clear lines, prepare for a beautiful, sometimes distracting shower of visuals.



Above The teamplay is a welcome twist on the traditional formula, encouraging communication beyond the usual screams associated with battle racing.



The team-based system will keep things exciting, despite the lack of characters from Sega's other IPs.

"PULL OFF ENOUGH TEAM MOVES, AND YOU CAN EXECUTE AN 'ULTIMATE BOOST' THAT HURTLES YOUR TEAM FORWARDS."

Why is Tails the slowest? Because he's only one Miles Prower! (Hey, where are you going?...)



Above You can't create characters, but you can customise existing ones.

FORMAT PS4 / ETA DEC 2018
PUB SEGA / DEV SUMO DIGITAL

TEAM SONIC RACING

Sega's latest battle racer pulls into position, but without the supporting cast



Sonic & All-Star Racing Transformed was one of the few decent kart racers on PlayStation, a mechanically sound battle racer spanning land, sea, and air, set across wildly themed tracks from IPs as varied as Sonic and Golden Axe.

Sumo Digital's latest Sega-themed racer, Team Sonic Racing, focuses on Sonic and his companions, and restricts the action to kart racing rather than competing in more outlandish vehicles. In place of the eclectic madness of the last game is a new hook: each race is team-based, as you and two other players share items, speed boosts, and points. The team with the most points at the end (in other words, the highest combined finishing position) wins.

It's an interesting idea, giving a rare twist to a traditionally staid genre. Closely follow in a teammate's slipstream, for example, and you get a speed boost. Or if you're leading the pack, why not send your buddy that projectile power-up you don't need? Pull off enough team moves like these, and you can execute a powerful 'Ultimate Boost' that hurtles the lot of you towards the finish line.

This feels fine in action, and could really flourish in the 12-player four-team online multiplayer. But what we've seen so far – just two tracks – lacks the absurdity and unpredictability of its predecessor, leaving things feeling bland, a little grounded, with only the cast of Sonic for company. Here's hoping more mayhem is just round the next corner. ■



Above The tracks we played in the hands-on felt a little rote.

PREVIEW ROUND-UP

This issue we finish up in the grasp of a retro-influenced racer, embrace an underworld throng, and explore ye spooky olde boarding school in PS VR. Life's more varied on PlayStation...



DÉRACINÉ

FORMAT PS VR
ETA 6 NOV / **PUB** SONY
DEV FROMSOFTWARE,
 SIE JAPAN STUDIO

Fans of the developer should feel a delightful shudder when hearing of a completely new game from FromSoftware and its lead creative genius Hidetaka Miyazaki, responsible for the Soulsborne genre. But if you're expecting anything familiar, don't. Miyazaki is full of surprises yet. The team's virtual reality debut is a much slower-paced experience, where you play an invisible faerie exploring a Victorian-looking boarding school. As time is frozen, you're free to explore, uncovering clues to a larger mystery, and learning more about the school and the children within it, immersed in PS VR. ■



HELL WARDERS

FORMAT PS4 / **ETA** WINTER 2018 / **PUB** PQUBE
DEV ANTI GRAVITY GAME STUDIOS

Part hack-and-slash and part tower defence, you have to fight back wave after wave of hellish monsters as they seek to overwhelm your forces and shatter your crystal. To do this you'll need to build up your forces on each map, from soldiers to archers and mages, to hold them up at choke points. You're the sort of commander who likes to get stuck in, though – and your forces are going to need your assistance. To get the job done you can take control of a sword-wielding knight, a gun-toting hero, or a big lad with a hammer. ■



TALES OF VESPERIA: DEFINITIVE EDITION

FORMAT PS4 / **ETA** 11 JAN
PUB BANDAI NAMCO
DEV BANDAI NAMCO

Ten years from its original launch, this fan-favourite entry in the Tales series heads to PlayStation in this PS4 definitive edition. The cel-shaded visuals have been given a revamp, and new playable characters, costumes, new music tracks and extra story elements have been added. The plot follows former Imperial soldier Yuri Lowell as he forms an independent guild, the Brave Vesperia, which becomes embroiled in the mystery surrounding Aer energy, and the Blastia devices that harness that power for the Empire. ■



GRIP

FORMAT PS4 / **ETA** 6 NOV
PUB WIRED PRODUCTIONS
DEV CAGED ELEMENT

We've already got to grips (pun intended) with this topsy-turvy car-'em-up's speedy race tracks and battle arenas, so what more could surprise us? How about "carkour", a hefty game mode set to challenge even the most patient of petrolheads, and to turn lovely limited edition DualShock 4s into dust in frustrated palms. "Reach the end," they say when we try it for ourselves, but these devious obstacle courses make even that a challenge, forcing us to employ all sorts of flips and jumps. But that high when we succeed is bliss. Our handler shrugs: "I've seen it done 35 seconds faster." ■



FARMING SIMULATOR 19

FORMAT PS4 / **ETA** 20 NOV
PUB FOCUS HOME
DEV GIANTS INTERACTIVE

If you've skipped the last few iterations on the series, then now might be the time to hop (yes, like the crop) back in. This year's edition features a complete graphical upgrade. Simulated farming has never looked so good. When it comes to farming, it's all about the licences, so this year agriculture fans will be pleased to see the franchise add legendary tractor marque John Deere to its ranks of fully licensed vehicles and machinery, alongside the likes of Challenger and others. With new farms in European and American regions, we're ready to blossom. ■



★ WAD ★ THUNDER



PLAY NOW FOR FREE
WARTHUNDER.COM



12
www.pegi.info

JUST CAUSE 4

050

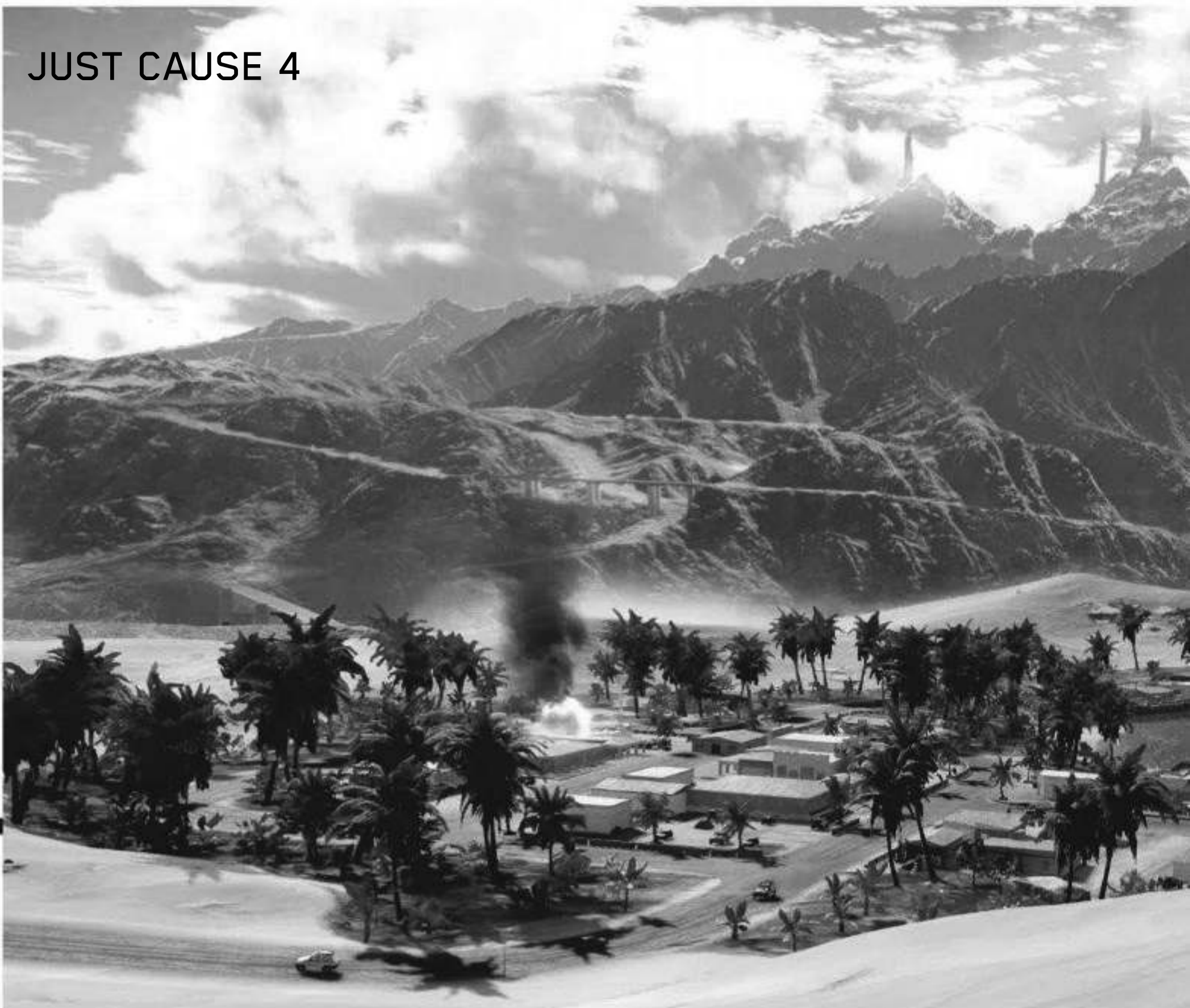
WEATHERING THE STORM

Francesco Antolini
explains how Avalanche
Studios is blowing winds and
minds with the latest Just Cause

JUST CAUSE 4



JUST CAUSE 4



052

Weather-beaten is a phrase that takes on a totally new meaning for Rico Rodriguez, the smooth super-spy in Avalanche's long-running open world series. He takes the fight to the next level in Just Cause 4, thanks in no small part to Avalanche Studios' Apex Engine.

Geared specifically around simulating an open world environment, the engine creates all the detail you need to have fun in a crazy sandbox world. Even down, in this instalment, to the vicious side of Mother Nature as she hurls some nasty weather your way. But that weather can be Rico's friend or foe, depending on how prepared you are for it.

Happily for us, the weather in New York City couldn't be nicer as the game's director, Francesco Antolini, takes us around the studio. Proudly he shows us the

large map of Just Cause 4's world that's pinned up on the wall, alongside early concept art and a swathe of graffiti designs that will feature in the game. He chuckles as he introduces us to the team members, a grin on his face as he tells us about the "destruction designers" whose sole purpose is to make blowing stuff up fun.

THE BIG GRAPPLE

The New York office is personal to Antolini, because joining the studio from Ubisoft to work as lead designer on Just Cause 3 also meant helping to establish the NY office. And he's proud to be here.




No series does wingsuits like Just Cause - soaring again is going to feel fantastic.

"It was kind of a dream," he tells us of being offered the job. "Those were the guys who made Just Cause 2, my favourite open world game so far at the time."

Open worlds have always been a passion for Antolini. He's the kind of person who will tell you all about his thesis project on The Elder Scrolls II: Daggerfall ("It was one of the first open worlds where you could really just go around and do whatever you want. I was mesmerised, taken away by that."), and check off an impressive list of his favourite open world games through the years.

What was it that drew him, along with so many others, to that second game in the Just Cause series? "The freedom," he answers confidently. "The system where your destruction was meaningful everywhere in the game, and really it didn't matter how or where you'd destroy things. I've tried a lot to go back to that feeling with Just Cause 4



We can't wait to start calling in Supply Drops of vehicles - this one looks ripe for causing fast-paced mayhem.

more than in 3.”

The idea of checking things off a list doesn't hold as much appeal as going around and experimenting for yourself. “In Just Cause 4 what happens is that destruction is always meaningful wherever you destroy stuff, and it doesn't go [...] into this concept of location completion, it rather accrues your chaos that works a little bit like notoriety.”

FRONTLINE FROLIC

As your chaos increases, the game's actual front line moves, as Rico's army gains more control

over the country. This isn't just about liberating regions, but a large, always-ongoing war that's constantly playing out in Solís. It's all about context.

“That's the philosophy that I try to keep in all my games - that the world explains itself,” Antolini tells us. “What you do has actual consequences that you see as part of the world, right?” He grins and goes off on another tangent, this time about Far Cry 2, laughing about how awesome the map was.

He pauses as he talks about another game he won't name,

and how he stopped playing after it wouldn't let him cross a bridge in the world until after he'd completed a mission. “I was just like ‘why?’” he says. “You know that's the point: let's make things so that they are actually real and it makes sense, rather than just being an obstruction from a design standpoint.”

We get hands-on with the game as Antolini is happy to sit back and see what we get up to, messing with physics objects on a bridge, before diving down to do battle on the front line. Soon

“THIS ISN'T JUST ABOUT LIBERATING REGIONS, BUT A LARGE, ALWAYS-ONGOING WAR.”

JUST CAUSE 4

enough we're herding a tornado and flipping through the wind. It's a thing of power, but not so deadly to Rico that we want to stay away. Instead, we soar dangerously close, looking for ways to turn it to our advantage, and use it to suck our enemies up into the sky.

"SOON ENOUGH WE'RE HERDING A TORNADO AND FLIPPING THROUGH THE WIND."

"You see this battle and you know that if you stay on this side it's a lot safer, if you go on the other side you are behind the enemy lines," Antolini explains about the front line.

Needless to say, it makes a great spot to pick up some nifty new equipment and cause some chaos. The idea is born of some of the missions in Just Cause 3 where the rebels and military are in an all-out conflict.

"It was gorgeous to see the whole world in a battle," Antolini reminisces. "That was so cool, I don't want this to happen in just

15 minutes of an 80-hour playthrough. [Could] we add this as a persistent thing in the world?"

Thankfully, with improvements to the open-world-specific Apex Engine, proprietary to Avalanche, the answer was yes. Everything makes sense within the world, even to the point where challenges

scattered around Solís have a purpose — the wingsuit challenge courses, for instance, are to help make a stunt film. Points earned through this can then be spent to customise your loadout how you see fit and play it your way.

Every Supply Drop (when you call in a delivery of weapons or a vehicle) is the same. You always know what you're working towards and have the option to

peel back layers of customisation — though the systems are designed in such a way that they're just as playable without having to wade in too deep.

FREEDOM FIGHTER

But that's just one aspect of the huge sandbox that makes up Just Cause 4. As Antolini says, it's about freedom. Playing as Rico, with his multi-purpose grapple hook, and combination of both a wingsuit and a parachute, we wreak havoc wherever and however we please, punctuated by plenty of laughter.

Between all three grapple modes — retract, booster, and airlift — and the different modifications you can give all those abilities, Avalanche promises a mind-boggling four million or so possible combinations. You can switch between three active loadouts that define what each mode does, or which ones to do at once, how powerfully, or what (if anything) to automatically deploy,



Rico's phone book is filled with three things: allies, enemies, and explosions. And this time around, it's ringing off the hook.

or do when you tap the grapple button, or do when you hold it.

There's so much, but it never feels too confusing to get the hang of. We spend most of our time just playing around, seeing what is possible, and the answer is: pretty much anything. Put balloons on a tank and boost around in rockets? Check. Attach yourself to an explosive barrel and stay aloft using a wind gun? Absolutely. Putting booster rockets on every horse on a carousel to create a spinning wheel of death, and then attach several people to said death wheel to break their bodies? You'd better believe it.

DIGGING THE BOX

But just what is it that makes the game a sandbox? "First of all I would say the physics itself, and the ability that you have to actually manipulate these physics in the world," Antolini tells us. "Second, the fact that things based on physics, namely exploding objects, the chaos objects and other stuff, are actually what you need to do to



Jet fighter versus twister - which one do you reckon will last longest?

progress in the game - if you want to progress into the game. If you want to, because another big aspect of the sandbox is that you have plenty of opportunity to experiment and just fool around for no purpose, but doing it. Not many games do that."

It's the kind of game where huge explosions can turn the world into fire, and now with the extreme weather, natural disasters can quite literally shake the world.

"The last thing is very important, about the opportunity to experiment, it's important that also from a design perspective

MAKING A HERO

The master grappler only exists because of experimentation. Avalanche's founder and chief creative officer Christofer Sundberg and narrative designer Omar Shakir explain...

OPM: Have you been surprised to see players latch on to the grappling hook since the first Just Cause?

Christofer Sundberg: It's about getting over that mental hurdle that it's believable. From JC1, where it was a grapple gun you had to equip, to JC2, where we attached it to his arm, and now see where it is today with millions of combinations of modifications. The grappling hook is such a strong character in itself and that's what it's become. The grappling hook came up from one of our programmers as a test. He was just bored of having to climb stuff. So he'd just [ba-ding] shoot this little thing that was a pink line.

Omar Shakir: It was a debug line that would connect to another point and allow him to quickly traverse a space.

CS: And then that led to that parachute. Because you fell once you were attached to something that was way high up, and then you fell and you died and it was like "this is boring, let's just give him a parachute that will come out of his back in this little pouch."

OS: It's just a series of challenges and then solutions. It actually speaks to the nature of Avalanche Studios as a team. It's a very inclusive and a very collaborative environment. So, the example of the

parachute and the grappling hook - we identified an issue that we didn't want to ignore. It wasn't necessarily part of the plan originally but it made so much sense for what we were trying to pull off. In a development environment often times those decisions get overlooked because everybody's so focused on the plan. But when you look at the nature of the franchise, and the nature of its avatar - there's never a plan with Rico, right? There's an action and then a consequence. It kind of speaks to the development of the IP as well. It's sort of "it doesn't make sense for Rico, he would do it this way."

It's funny to watch the maturation of the franchise, for the game to be developed in that same abstract of: "It doesn't make much sense for us to fall and die, let's do it our way." And that's the birth of the parachute, that's the birth of the grappling hook, and it just constantly evolves from there.

OPM: We guess to make an experimental game, you have to be experimental yourself.

CS: Absolutely. A lot of stuff in our games has come about through experimentation, like the grappling hook. [In Just Cause 4] the tornado came out from Demo Days. We have one day where the team can just do whatever they want and we have certain themes. There's been so much stuff, like the mech [in Just Cause 3's Mech Land Assault DLC].

Weather is inherently chaotic. But that's okay, because so is Rico Rodriguez.

JUST CAUSE 4

you give players invitation and opportunity to experiment. It really boils down to not punishing them for doing so," Antolini explains, giving us the benefit of his years and years of thinking about the fundamental building blocks of open world design.

"So there is nothing in Just Cause that kills in one shot. Even when you are struck by lightning, you're not gonna die. You go down, so you understand that's bad, but you don't die. Why? Because if you were to die then you see it a second time you'll flee away, and you do not experiment any more, and you will never discover how that actually works and so on right? I don't want you to be afraid of explosions, I want you to marry explosions. To go into them and

make chaos. And then that chaos goes back into the game."

WEATHER WIZARD

"The question, it's basically one of the classic questions, it's probably the question you start a sequel with is, 'what's the new thing? What are we doing as a new thing?'" Antolini begins as we ask him how the weather system that defines this new entry in the series came about. "I thought that Rico had actually had more or less enough added to him. [If we gave] him more abilities, then you'd really need to be able to play piano to do all those things."

While in Just Cause 4 Rico's grappling hook has more modes and functions that work together than ever before, the team simply

felt items like the parachute and wingsuit had reached their limits. The fundamentals of movement already feel so good, so there's no incentive to overdo it with Rico. "So let's try to experiment, let's try to add a new layer to the physics," says Antolini. Why upgrade Rico when you can upgrade the world around him? "We did brainstorming with different things. I think a certain point that was getting traction was 'let's do oil; because people had this image of shooting a fuel tank, seeing oil dripping away, making the puddle, and then you shoot at the puddle, and then you see the oil track act as a fuse. But yeah, in Just Cause, I have a bloody rocket launcher in my hands, I'm not gonna shoot at the puddle, I'm gonna shoot at the thing directly, so oil didn't live a long life," he laughs.

"I DON'T WANT YOU TO BE AFRAID OF EXPLOSIONS. I WANT YOU TO MARRY EXPLOSIONS."

“Then what we did was wind, because with wind, whereas in other games when it’s mostly cosmetic, just something to make vegetation sway, in Just Cause you spend most of your time either in a parachute or in a wingsuit.”

WINDS OF CHANGE

It’s true. From the very first time we wingsuit in Just Cause 4 it feels like Rico has mastered the air like never before, able to bob, zip, and soar almost effortlessly.

“With wind you are creating gameplay literally out of thin air, so it was quite exciting I think. We started with wind, and it was a nice feeling getting the wingsuit and going into the wind, or being carried along a military base built inside a canyon, so you could just shoot, not having to think about navigation.”

The very fact Avalanche can even model the effects of wind in this way is impressive, and all thanks to the Apex Engine’s power. “However it was calm. It was not over-the-top. It was not Just Cause,” says Antolini. “So then we question ourselves, we wondered ‘How do we make wind over the top?’ From there extreme weather came. So it was kind of an organic process, nobody woke up one morning thinking about a tornado. [...] Once that was there, we built a narrative around it.”

WEATHERED WORLD

That question’s important for a reason. Despite all the other tweaks that make this the best realisation of the core Just Cause promise yet – essentially to blow stuff up and have fun – it’s the weather that’s the biggest takeaway. Each of the four biomes has extreme weather to call its own: you’ll face tornadoes, sandstorms, blizzards, or storms, depending on which biome you’re in. While all four can obstruct Rico in certain ways, you can also learn how to use them to his advantage – and they’re all active all the time, moving around Solís.

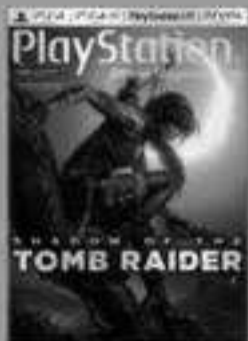
Like everything else in Just Cause 4’s Solís, these storms make sense, and you can master them. You’ll discover how to manipulate wind, dodge sandstorms, and bring the thunder. Rico is the master of his grapple, and Mother Nature the latest tool in his arsenal. ■

READER
OFFER

SUBSCRIBE TO
PlayStation[®]
Official Magazine - UK
& SAVE MONEY

058

EXCLUSIVE
SUBSCRIBER
COVERS



Every issue delivered to your door with exclusive
subscriber-only covers each month.

SPECIAL SUBSCRIBER GIFT!

FREE gaming t-shirt from Zavvi when you subscribe. **268 different designs to choose from!** See the full list here:

www.zavvi.com/clothing/geek/t-shirts/gaming.list



SUBSCRIBE TO OPM TODAY

ONLY €17
every three months

ONLINE ► myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/Zavvi18

TERMS AND CONDITIONS This offer only available to new UK Direct Debit subscribers. Gift is subject to availability. Please allow up to 60 days for the delivery of your gift. In the event of stocks being exhausted we reserve the right to replace with items of similar value. Prices and savings quoted are compared to buying full-priced print issues. You will receive 13 issues in a year. You can write to us or call us to cancel your subscription within 14 days of purchase. Payment is non-refundable after the 14-day cancellation period unless exceptional circumstances apply. Your statutory rights are not affected. Prices correct at point of print and subject to change. UK calls will cost the same as other standard fixed line numbers (starting 01 or 02) or are included as part of any inclusive or free minutes allowances (if offered by your phone tariff). For full terms and conditions please visit: www.bit.ly/magterms. Offer ends 14/12/2018.

Remedy takes back Control

Thomas Puha talks to OPM
about Remedy's return to
PlayStation with **Control**

Remedy last released a game on PlayStation 15 years ago – the rather excellent *Max Payne 2: The Fall Of Max Payne*. But during that time the studio's been far from quiet, working on many other projects, and perfecting its style – not to mention working away on developing and refining its very own Northlight engine. So it was a pleasant surprise when, at E3, the announcement trailer for *Control* was one of the highlights of Sony's excellent showcase.

A bit of a departure for Remedy, *Control* is much more open-ended than its usual offerings. Taking inspiration from the 'new weird' genre (think the books of Jeff VanderMeer and China Miéville), it sees lead character Jesse exploring a twisted and surreal New York building, The Oldest House, and facing off against the supernatural using some impressive paranormal skills of her own. We sit down with Remedy's Thomas Puha to get the latest on the studio's PlayStation comeback.

OPM: Games like *Max Payne*, and *Alan Wake* on PC, are all pulpy feeling, clearly based around certain genres. What was the aesthetic idea behind *Control*?

Thomas Puha: We talked a lot about it with Sam [Lake, the game's creative director] like what a 'Remedy game' is, and Remedy games tend to be based in reality. [...] In *Control* it's set in the present day, and all the styles, the building, the game takes place in is in New





It's Jesse's first day at the Bureau Of Control and she's already director. Smash that glass ceiling, girl!

THE OPM INTERVIEW

“ THERE’S A LOT LESS HAND-HOLDING FOR THE PLAYERS – IT’S A MUCH MORE GAMEPLAY DRIVEN EXPERIENCE. ”

■ York. We again, like, rule things into reality but then we have that layer of supernatural and a lot of craziness. I mean, the term we use is ‘new weird’ – that’s kind of been used around at the studio quite a lot to describe the atmosphere of the game. It’s definitely a lot darker than our previous games, and there’s a lot less hand-holding for the player – it’s a much more gameplay-driven experience.

OPM: So what is the thinking behind making it more contained within *The Oldest House* versus some of the more sweeping locations of previous Remedy games?

TP: *The Oldest House* is this transforming building. [In the trailers] you’ve seen that the house really is a lot bigger on the inside than what you’re led to believe from the outside. So when you get in there it’s this transforming really kind of open-ended place, and the Federal Bureau Of Control has been there for quite a while and are trying to control *The Oldest House*. So there’s these control points that were visible in the trailer and in the demo. It’s a very, very unique setting. The kind of core of the building is stable, so let’s say you get out of the elevator and everything kind of looks like an office but still weird, but the deeper you get into the office [part of the] house the crazier it gets. It gets very otherworldly so we want to make sure absolutely that there’s going to be enough variety, especially visual variety and in terms of locations.

OPM: Given the shifting world, how does the more open-ended approach used here compare to previous, more strongly structured, Remedy games?

TP: Compared to Remedy’s past, which has been super-linear, this is a lot less linear. We throw around the word ‘Metroidvania’, which I think most people are not expecting from a Remedy game. We have a lot of interconnected spaces in *The Oldest House* – so as you get



Thomas Puhá’s been in the industry for 20 years, but Remedy’s his home now.



Middle “The Janitor did it” is quickly becoming the new “The Butler did it”. Left Levitation is but one of Jesse’s powers. Right Boo, hiss – it’s the Hiss!

abilities like Levitate that you’ve seen in the demo you’ll be like “Hmm, maybe a couple of hours ago when I saw those different locations, maybe I can now get there”. There’s a lot of that, a lot of things like that in the game. It’s also a gameplay-driven experience and what that means is players can kind of play at their own pace. So, yes, there is a main storyline and the story missions attached to that, but then there’s a bunch of side-missions as well, and all of that is – this being Remedy – all of those side-missions are very much tied to the lore and they give you a lot more background information on the characters as well. And then on top of that there’s some other really challenging content.

NEED TO KNOW

2001
MAX PAYNE

■ This seminal shooter introduced the gaming world to bullet-time dives, and the titular ultra-pulp detective. Most modern shooters owe a lot to the sheer invention of this one.

2010
ALAN WAKE

■ It never came to PlayStation, but this PC evolution of a Remedy Game took a lot of inspiration from Stephen King and Twin Peaks, and was about a writer whose books seemed to be coming to life in a creepy American town.

2016
QUANTUM BREAK

■ Remedy's take on sci-fi made the controversial choice of adding in full-length TV episodes that were of questionable quality. Thankfully the return to PlayStation with Control won't have this.

to make sure that everything is connected and that people who want to know more can do it if they want. That whole worldbuilding is something that's really key, and what we're trying to do is not take away control, and you're going to have to stop and listen, but say like "Hey, something interesting is happening here, if you want you can go see it, you can go listen, you go find out more." It's more sort of layer-driven.

OPM: It's interesting to see things like side-quests in a Remedy game, especially as you say they'll tie into the lore! Considering that, what are some of the main themes that all of that will be tying into?

TP: There's the clear sort of... we're using brutalist architecture. If you look at The Oldest House it's straight lines, it's very sparse, very clean. Then you have the Hiss [the enemy] – it's not like a single person or anything like that. So there's order and chaos, and that's the two sorts of conflict in the game.

OPM: At one point in the demo Jesse clearly says "I walk between two straight lines", is this her explaining the world of Control is not as orderly a place it looks?

TP: Yes, so it's very much about order and chaos, and control and losing control. Having an agency that kind of deals in very volatile things that are hidden from the public eye and not really knowing what they're dealing with. So on a thematic level that's definitely something that's deeply, deeply in there. I think fans of Remedy expect that there's going to be a pretty deep story and there's a lot more going on. But on a very, very high level it's like, okay you became the director, and you've got to

OPM: What is Jesse Faden's main goal in exploring The Oldest House?

TP: It's very much Jesse's journey – the main character's journey – that's what the story is very much about. Jesse becomes the director of the Bureau right at the beginning of the game. All of that gets explained, so it's important to realise that the mission of the game is not to become the director, you become the director very, very early on. But it's about then accepting the responsibility and figuring out Jesse's mysterious past and the sorts of things that drive her.

OPM: If you start off being the director, does that kind of get you into the plot and action quite quickly then?

TP: We had a lot of back-and-forth on Quantum Break's beginning, which was very slow-paced, and had a lot of setting up. Which was very deliberate. This gets to the point a lot faster.

OPM: At one point in the demo we saw someone watching a fridge, which seemed to hint at a side-quest. How do those things tie in to the broader picture of Control?

TP: Suffice to say, even though Control is a very gameplay-driven game, a lot more of a systems-driven game than what we've done before – at the end of the day it's gameplay that keeps people playing, but then the story and how everything connects... we can be confident that we can get that right, yeah. We know how to do that stuff so we can kind of talk about it less, but Anna [Megill, narrative lead], Sam [Lake], and the rest of the writing team... we're making sure that everything is connected so when you do play the side-missions they're not just gonna be random stuff like pick up this and that and it doesn't tie into the greater theme of things. We definitely want

learn, and you've got to take on the Hiss. On a very high level that's what it's about. But then there is something pretty abstract [too], so yeah it's a very interesting juxtaposition.

OPM: Max Payne introduced the bullet-time dive to the gaming world. Remedy's always adding new twists to combat in its games. What are some of the unique aspects of fighting in Control?

TP: Early on we talked about how the gun is always the easy choice, right? Like, sure it's not easy to make a headshot feel really good – like in Destiny no matter how many times you shoot a Cabal head, the pop just feels really good. We really wanted to challenge ourselves [with Control's combat] – let's make the abilities really impactful, and getting the abilities to feel really good. Like Launch, where you grab objects and throw them – you have to get the physicality right. How does it work when I look at objects, do you have to kind of point at what you pick? – which kind of goes against this being an action-driven game. A lot of work has gone into that. You kind of look around and you see the object that you kind of feel you want, but we should be able to predict that too – and then you grab it and then you get to throw it, and that has to feel right when it impacts the possessed Bureau troops or the Bureau agents you're gonna fight against, that has to feel really good. People really like shooting guns in games, so we really want to challenge ourselves so that the abilities would give you that same sort of a powerful feeling. We're still working on it for sure.

OPM: We really enjoyed the variety of Hiss. There's the basic Hiss you can use a shield and fling things at, then you have the Hiss that do pirouettes in the air, and then obviously the boss Hiss at the end of the demo in particular.

TP: And that's like kind of a mini-boss! We're going to go very crazy with actual bosses. When we built the demo I was like okay, the take away for people will be like "That's a boss fight." It is and it's not. They will be a lot bigger-scale and epic than what you saw there. That was kind of to give you sort of a taste.

OPM: To those who loved the look of the Control gameplay demo, what would you highlight for them to expect with the finished game?

TP: It's just great that, you know, Remedy's company strategy is to be multi-platform, so it's just great to be out on a PlayStation platform [again]. That especially is great. It was definitely fun to have the trailer in the Sony briefing [back at E3], which was very, very cool. The demo's a demo – it showcases certain aspects of the game but it's far from being a finished product. It's very fun, so once you get to play the final product you'll probably be surprised at how different it ends up being. And how sort of more open-ended and less linear than what we've done in the past. ■

LAUNCH DAY REVISITED



LAUNCH DAY

REVISITED

Five years ago on 28 November
Sony launched PS4 in the UK. In
anticipation we're replaying some of
the key launch-day games to find out
which stand up to the test of time

LAUNCH DAY REVISITED



Killzone Shadow Fall still has an active – albeit small – online community half a decade after launch.



Launch-day lineups have always been a hard sell, but hidden away are gems that never dull. PS1 shone with *WipEout* and *Ridge Racer*, PS2 wowed us with *SSX* and *TimeSplitters*, and PS3 had *Resistance: Fall Of Man* to promote its

online features and power. When it came to PS4 we had a broad mix of shooters, sports sims, racers, and, well, *Knack*.

The OPM team settles down to replay a selection of the key titles from launch – so do they all still hold up five years later?...



KNACK

GET IT NOW: PS STORE, €15.99

“Why Knack?” questions Mim as we settle onto the OPM sofa.

Knack was the pet project of PS4’s creator Mark Cerny, and was devised to be a mascot in the same way Crash Bandicoot was for PS1. The message was clear: PS4 is not just about first-person shooters, it’s also about a weird creature made from randomly jiggled-together bits and bobs.

“Knack’s got attitude, he’s like a mid-’90s PlayStation mascot. In another era he would have been voiced by Bruce Willis,” quips Oscar as we start playing.

“It does look quite cute. He’s not the *cutest*, but he’s kind of cute,” confirms Jess.

The game is a simple platform adventure with the titular Knack able to change size by losing or adding ‘bits’ of himself. Doing so means he can squeeze

into small spaces or go big and take out waves of enemies. He’s Ratchet *and* Clank in one body.

With attacks on the face buttons and dodge-roll on the right thumbstick Knack is a trickier game than its cartoon style suggests.

“It’s punishing,” moans Oscar as a tiny troll knocks half of Knack’s health bar down in one go. “It’s almost like Mega Man.”

“Looks like you’ve not quite got the *knack* of that,” teases Jess.

The real let-down is Knack’s visual design. For a game on a new console with, at the time, unheard-of power, Knack just feels a bit kit-bashed. It’s like characters from five different iOS games have been fudged together.

“As a launch PS4 game it’s quite nice, but it’s just tech,” moans Ian. “If it had stronger art design it would have been good. The problems this game has aren’t because it’s a launch game, they’re because it has an uninspired design.”

“It’s technically very good... but it looks like for every



1.88

The total worldwide sales of Knack, in millions.





decision they made regards the art design they rolled a dice," adds Oscar.

"Wait!" shouts Jess. "Does Knack have triangular nipples?"
Yes, yes he does.

STILL WORTH BUYING? NO



KILLZONE SHADOW FALL

GET IT NOW: PS HITS, €15.99

On that note, it's time to play **Killzone Shadow Fall**. The **Killzone games have always been visual spectacles wrapped around bare-bones gameplay, and to its credit Guerilla Games tried to tip the balance with Shadow Fall. Adding open-ish maps, stealth, and touchpad controls to call in the OWL combat drone, it's a first-person shooter with a distinct personality, even five years on.**

"So I'm a kid being led from a burning city by my dad? That's going to end badly," says Ian, just as said dad is gunned down in front of us.

"It does still look good, there's a sheen and polish to it some games don't even achieve now," says Oscar. "I mean, it opens up with rain splashing on a window. What's not to love?"

"It was about justifying your purchase," says Milf, a day-one PS4 owner.

The real surprise after booting up **Shadow Fall** now is finding the servers are still up and gamers are eagerly shooting one another in the face. But there's a nagging feeling the eight players we meet online are *the* **Shadow Fall** community, or Guerilla Games employees unable to give it up. Either way, it's impressive the game's still being played.

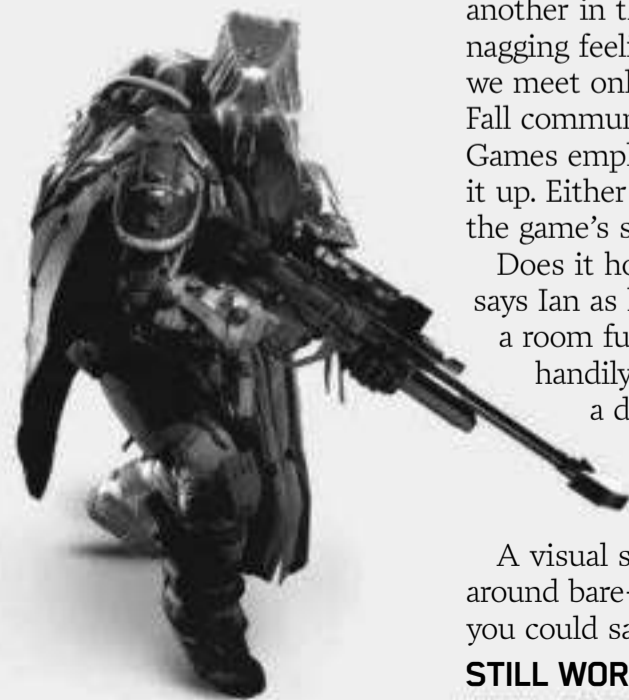
Does it hold up? "Just about," says Ian as he empties a clip into a room full of Helghast, who handily all group together in a doorway. "It's not the best shooter on PS4, but for its age, it still looks good."

A visual spectacle wrapped around bare-bones gameplay, you could say.

STILL WORTH BUYING? YES

17.8

The average time, in hours, it takes to finish **Killzone Shadow Fall**.



RESOGUN

GET IT NOW: PS STORE, €9.99

PS4 was the indies' console, so Sony's pitch went at launch. King of the indies was **Resogun** from Housemarque, a studio that made its name with well-crafted retro shooters.

"Best game at launch," proclaims Ian as he hands the DualShock to Jess, a first-timer on **Resogun**.

It's a deceptively simple shooter. Your little ship flies around a cylinder blasting aliens and collecting humans and spiriting them away to safety. Weapon power-ups add extra bang and buzz, alien bosses fill the screen, and a completed level turns into an explosion of small colourful voxels.

"You can't go wrong with an arcade game, and it uses PS4 to create a really smooth experience," says Oscar.

"I'm quite scared," whispers Jess as the first boss appears, filling the screen and suggesting a path into its inner core. "I keeled him," she yells as the screen erupts into sparkling dust and blocks, and her tiny ship does a lap of honour.

"Everything explodes in this game," adds Milf.

"I wanted a game that put me in the action so I could shoot stuff, so here you go. I'm into it," confirms Jess, a convert.

STILL WORTH BUYING? YES

ASSASSIN'S CREED IV: BLACK FLAG

GET IT NOW: PS HITS, €15.99

"Do you like pirates, Jess?" asks Oscar as **Black Flag** loads.

"Eh, only if they're lady pirates," she replies. Don't we all?

Black Flag was not a PS4 exclusive, coming to the console a month after its PS3 release.

"I enjoyed it at the time but I bet it's not aged well," says Ian. "That said, I think it has some of the best characters and story of all the **Assassin's Creed** games."

Seeing it now, **Black Flag** still plays well. "I think it's aged better



800

Million - the score you need if you want to top **Resogun's** leaderboard.





Battlefield 4 got us into the action quickly, and you can't beat a bit of Bonnie T.

068



than Unity, but maybe I'm just a fool, a fool in love," says Oscar.

With a cast of famous pirates and the whole of the Caribbean to explore, how could you not still love Black Flag?

"Look at that water! Ah! I want to be there," exclaims Oscar as he leaps from a cliff and down into the azure seas. Black Flag still looks stunning.

"The Welsh accent does all the work. It's brilliant," says Jess picking out Matt Ryan's performance. "I love that moment where he's told 'all you English are the same, and he replies, 'I'm no Englishman, I'm Welsh!'"

For all the love we're giving it, Ian points out it commits one of the greatest crimes of all the Assassin's Creed games: "It has pirate ship stealth. You actually have to navigate quietly past ships in the night. Terrible idea."

STILL WORTH BUYING? YES



NEED FOR SPEED RIVALS

GET IT NOW: PS HITS, €15.99

A cops-versus-not-cops game carrying the DNA of the Need For Speed series, Rivals still has enough street smarts to hook us.

"The problem at launch is everyone went racer and no-one went cop," quips Oscar.

"Go cop," insists Jess, as if trying to redress the imbalance

five years too late. Oscar's not totally convinced.

It's a racer that feels like the amalgam of all the dev talent involved. With a mix of open world racing and the unique AllDrive system that enables you to go from solo racer to online speedster seamlessly, plus slow-mo crash porn, Criterion is all over Rivals. But then there are the upgradable gadgets of the former Blur dev, and rain-drizzled photoreal cars of the ex-Forza Horizon team.

It's more than the sum of its parts, just. But it takes time to get up to speed. Showing its age, you need to complete a checklist of tasks before the roads open up.

"This is stressing me out," moans Oscar. "I just want to do a race; instead I need to get a bronze on a thing and earn XP."

It doesn't help that the narrator feels half-bored as she details your next task.

"It's one of those ones where they've gone for the most cold narrator possible," suggests Oscar, pondering: "What if there was no emotion?"

"Calm down, David Cage," shouts former OPM staffer Jen Simpkins from across the office.

Once the races and events start in earnest Rivals proves a lot of fun. It still looks polished and controls smoothly, with some great changing weather patterns.

But every now and then Rivals reminds you of its vintage.



139

Cars in Need For Speed Rivals. That's a big garage.



“It’s Linkin Park!” shouts Jess as the music rises. “I grew up listening to them.”

Ian asks: “Did they have a rapper or something?”

“Yeah, Mike Shinoda... Oh god, I know his name,” mutters a red-faced staff writer.

STILL WORTH BUYING? YES



CALL OF DUTY GHOSTS

GET IT NOW: AMAZON, €16.49

“The dog! It’s the one with the dog,” grins Oscar.

At a time when Call Of Duty fatigue was taking over, we only really remember Ghosts because of its beautifully mo-capped German Shepherd. In-game he still looks great.

Getting our first glimpse of Ghosts’ gun dog comes after we’ve shot our way through an orbital space station, plummeted to earth, and caused armageddon. Still, the upshot is we get a *real* doggy pal to accompany our shooter fun.

“It’s not as pretty as Killzone. It looks like PS3 COD,” says Jess.

“I don’t hate this,” comments Ian as he shoots through an orbital space station. “But there has been a lot of time here where I’m not doing much.”

“That’s always been the case with COD openers,” reflects Oscar. “It feels like I’m watching a film rather than playing a game. I really am just holding forward.”

“I think this is one of the better CODs of recent years,” adds Milf. “I think it suffered because people were getting sick of the modern-day CODs, but now it feels surprisingly good.”

It’s a testament to how Call Of Duty has made small changes rather than sweeping ones over the years that Ghosts still plays well. Shooting feels snappy and even just an hour in we’re pushed from one explosive set-piece to the next.

“Oh it’s the dog! That is a good boy,” says Jess as the on-screen pup wags his tail.

“Shall I shoot the dog, Jess?” asks Ian, grinning.

“Don’t shoot the dog, you monster,” shrieks Jess, wrestling



the pad from his hands. “Protect the dog at all costs,” she giggles.

It only takes a realistically rendered canine to finally get OPM’s staff writer to play an FPS. Ghosts has a purpose.

STILL WORTH BUYING? NO

BATTLEFIELD 4

GET IT NOW: PS STORE, €15.99

The other tentpole shooter released at PS4’s UK launch was DICE’s elegant team-based FPS. It was seen as a transitional title in the series where the single-player story was given more attention, and has a similar near-future setting to Ghosts.

“15 minutes earlier, really? Is that what they took from COD’s single-player campaigns, the old timey-wimey switcheroo?” says Ian.

“This feels super-smooth to play, though, it’s really nice,” adds Oscar. “It’s still all brown but it looks great, much better than Ghosts, and it’s *really* responsive.”

“It’s opening with Bonnie Tyler’s Total Eclipse Of The Heart... so I’m in,” smiles Jess.

Five minutes into Battlefield 4 we’re already doing more than we did the first hours of Killzone and Ghosts combined. The single-player mission riffs on Battlefield’s sandbox map design, using jeeps, boats, and tanks to traverse the environment.

“Killzone looks nicer but in terms of how it feels to play in 2018, Battlefield 4 is the best of the launch-day shooters,” argues Oscar.

STILL WORTH BUYING? YES

A clear favourite among the team is Resogun, the best game at launch and the brightest light five years on. But there were surprises: Killzone Shadow Fall is still popular, AC IV: Black Flag holds up due to its smart pirate world-building, and Battlefield 4 remains one of PS4’s standout shooters. All can be bought secondhand or found lurking around the PS Store sales, and you can also buy them as part of Sony’s PlayStation Hits range. ■

#01

The map most played online, five years on, is Siege Of Shanghai.





ELITE AUDIO-UNCONTESTED

Raise your play with the headset engineered for high-resolution gaming.



+ **GAME AUDIO DIAL**
3.5MM CONNECTOR + VOLUME CONTROL

LIGHTWEIGHT EXOSKELETON

TUNED ACOUSTIC CHAMBERS

50 MM DRIVERS



plantronics.com

XBOX ONE® PS4® PC COMPATIBLE



Available at Argos

Dolby Atmos® requires an Xbox One or Windows 10 compatible device, and a Microsoft account and login. Activation for one device only. ©2018 Plantronics, Inc. Dolby Atmos and the double-D symbol are trademarks of Dolby Laboratories. All trade names and trademarks are the property of their respective owners. 8.18 240347



88 LIFE IS STRANGE 2

Getting to safety is no walk in the park for Sean and Daniel.

REVIEWS



OPM SCORES

GOLD AWARD

PlayStation
Official Magazine UK

GOLD AWARD

Awarded to a game that's brilliantly executed on every level, combining significant innovation, near-flawless gameplay, great graphics and lasting appeal.

EDITOR'S AWARD

PlayStation
Official Magazine UK

EDITOR'S AWARD

Not at the very highest echelon, but this is a game that deserves recognition and special praise based on its ambition, innovation or other notable achievement.

10 INCREDIBLE

The kind of phenomenal experience rarely seen in a console generation.

9 OUTSTANDING

Unreservedly brilliant - this should be in every collection.

8 VERY GOOD

A truly excellent game, marred by just a few minor issues.

7 GOOD

A great concept unfulfilled or the familiar done well, but still well worth playing.

6 DECENT

Fun in parts, flawed in others, but more right than wrong.

5 AVERAGE

What you expect and little more, this is for devotees only.

4 BELOW AVERAGE

Any bright ideas are drowning in a sea of bugs or mediocrity.

3 POOR

A seriously flawed game with little merit on any level.

2 AWFUL

Disgraceful: the disc would be more beneficial as a coaster.

1 HORRIFIC

Own this and you'll be swiftly, justifiably, exiled from society.

CONTENTS

ASSASSIN'S CREED ODYSSEY 72 | ASTRO BOT RESCUE MISSION 79 | CATASTRONAUTS 83
FIFA 19 84 | V-RALLY 4 86 | FIST OF THE NORTH STAR 91 | HOLLOW KNIGHT 92
MEGA MAN 11 94 | NBA 2K19 95 | VALKYRIA CHRONICLES 4 96 | DESTINY 2 - FORSAKEN 97



GOLD
AWARDPlayStation.
Official Magazine UK

AN OLYMPIC GAME

@lanDean4

ASSASSIN'S CREED ODYSSEY

Doh! Not *that* Homer...


INFO

FORMAT PS4
ETA OUT NOW
PUB UBISOFT
DEV UBISOFT QUÉBEC

When you have a grand sprawling adventure fringed with role-playing ideas where dialogue choices affect the world in a material way, all you really want to know is: can you smooch your way across Ancient Greece? Of course you can. You can't walk 500 yards on one of the game's many idyllic islands without receiving a coy wink or, indeed, an upfront proposition for a good time under the toga. It's the Greek way, we're told. Hashtag MeToo? More like hashtag *MeQuoque*.

Of course everything *is* consensual, and when and if it's not, like the moment I stumble into an illegal sex dungeon, you can right the wrong with a slice of your sword. Ultimately it's in your hands (NOT THAT), and that's the real difference Assassin's Creed Odyssey holds over its predecessors.

This world is your playground and how you act impacts it, not simply in monumental narrative ways but in small, incremental causes and effects.

Your first big decision is whether to play as Cassandra or Alexios. That's right, Assassin's Creed finally has a fully-fledged female lead, even if it's fudged and the decision is given to you, the player. Cassandra is, according to the dev, the canonical hero of Odyssey, so she's our gal. 

"YOU CAN'T WALK 500 YARDS WITHOUT RECEIVING A COY WINK, OR, INDEED, AN UPFRONT PROPOSITION."





Kassandra is the series' first proper female lead. She's also one of the best to date.



Above Kassandra knows how to party. Make the most of Athens; the goat is optional.



074



You can disarm an enemy once the move is unlocked, then stab them with a dirty great big spear.



Above left The Nation Battles are epic, but whiff of Dynasty Warriors.

Above right Battle royale comes to Assassin's Creed in the Hundred Hands storyline.

Left The world is full of unusual sights, like this prehistoric snake.

Right Dialogue choices have genuine effects.



Starting small on the island of Kephallonia, Cassandra is a character who skirts the line between good and bad. She's a rogue who's fallen in with surrogate father figure Markos and is pushed from one dodgy deal to the next.

How much of this life you choose to revel in is down to you over the course of the first few missions – rescue a family from being killed as a plague spreads, steal the eye from the 'Cyclops', and flirt with an adventuress with a hot Greek lineage. You can begin to lead Cassandra along the good path, or double down on the bad. But that's actually doing the branching choices a disservice, as the dialogue options you choose are more nuanced than a good/bad divide. Choices affect how characters behave or view you, they alter the world in real ways, and ensure, for the first time in the Assassin's Creed series, you can define *your* hero.

LOVE LIFE

Anchored by fun, frothy writing Cassandra is a bold and expressive lead. Just watching her reactions to some of our choices is a metagame in and of itself. There's wide-eyed disgust, shock, laughter, and a brightness to her delivery that

Origins' Bayek could never muster. Of course, they have different drives – Bayek was a traditional Assassin's Creed hero pursuing revenge, whereas Cassandra is an explorer, a warrior seeking her place in the world, on a quest to find her parents after her father, Spartan King Leonidas, threw her and brother Alexios off a cliff (or vice versa, depending on your choice of sibling) and all four family members separate into the world.

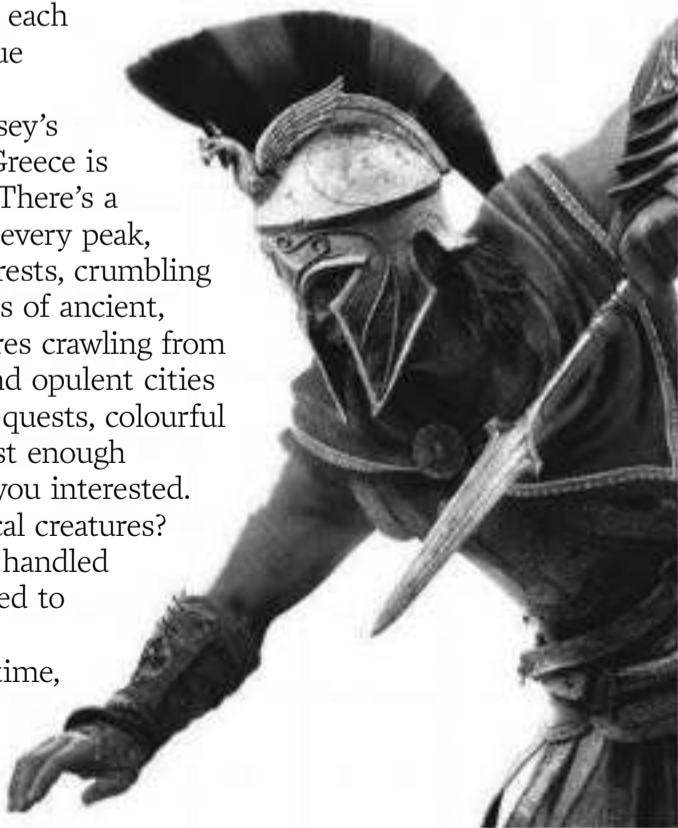
Kassandra's a hero who knows how to push her enemies' buttons, too. Remember that stolen eye? She shoves it up a goat's bum to get a rise from the 'Cyclops'. He's not the villain from the legend but a local criminal who needs teaching a lesson.

Before long you'll outgrow Kephallonia and want to explore the map, which is where the game really begins to show its true colours, and the scale of this poetic journey becomes clear. The map is enormous, littered with dozens of islands, each crafted with unique personalities and tales to tell. Odyssey's take on Ancient Greece is an addictive one. There's a beauty shot from every peak, mist-shrouded forests, crumbling temples, the bones of ancient, foreboding creatures crawling from mountainsides, and opulent cities layered with side-quests, colourful characters, and just enough romance to keep you interested. And those mythical creatures? They're here, and handled perfectly. Compared to Origins this is a more colourful time, in both tone and application.

If you had any concerns

"THE WORLD FEELS MORE ALIVE THAN ANY PREVIOUS ASSASSIN'S CREED SETTING."

Below Choose to play as Cassandra or Alexios.



Odyssey would just be an expansion of Origins then put them aside. While it shares many systems with last year's entry, Ubisoft Québec has taken the time to iron out any shortcomings making adventuring in Ancient Greece more accessible.

For example, there's only one place in a town or village to upgrade gear and weapons. Bows now only come in one 'type', but by upgrading your skill tree you can set up the multi- and sniper-shots of Origins. Likewise, fall damage can finally be eradicated through levelling your hero – you can even cause area affect

damage by holding **R2**.

Your actions have consequences now: steal too much loot and mercenaries will be put on your trail. Coupled

with the impact of dialogue choices and the addition of Exploration mode, which removes direct guides, icons, and goals, and Odyssey's world feels more alive and eventful than any previous Assassin's Creed setting.

Odyssey is to Origins what Black Flag was to AC III, not simply because full-blown sailing (which we'll get to) has been added, but because the best bits have been expanded, rough edges smoothed out, and the whole thing wrapped in a story worth pursuing with characters who always raise an eyebrow or a smile.

We've flirted with teasing priestesses, and uncovered the Cult Of Kosmos that threatens all of Greece, which in turn dovetails with Cassandra's search for her mother, father, and brother. We've partied in Athens with Protagaros, Socrates, and Thrasymachus, naturally taking time out for an orgy. This party is a microcosm of Odyssey's hidden mechanics – wear your armour and the guests fear you, refusing to talk; dress the part and you can charm your way into new quests. At every turn there's choices that lead to new opportunities or dead ends. At no point do you feel cheated out of a narrative path, because there's so much happening there's little time for regrets.

Of course, when smooth words fail your sword does all the talking. It's here Odyssey really differs from Origins. Where Bayek relied on shield defence and parrying to whittle down an enemy's health one-on-one, combat in Odyssey focuses on attack and dodge, often against two, three, or even hundreds of enemies at a time. It's a setup that puts you on the front foot, forcing you to launch melee combos. Even the abilities unlocked as you level up lean towards attack over defence, with the famed 300 Spartan kick being an early upgrade. Later moves enable you to imbue blades with fire and poison, and throw a knife for linked silent kills.

The decision to go 'full Spartan' on the combat has many knock-on effects. For instance, it makes defeating higher-level enemies harder than in Origins. Where in Egypt you could patiently shave health of an opponent from the safety of a shield, in Greece you need to rely on timed rolls from danger (this boils down to quickly tap-juggling between dodge on **□** and attack on **R1** to jiggle around an opponent). The upshot is you're forced to take on side-quests and explore the map to earn the XP needed to reach higher levels and open up the world more. Odyssey is a game that wants you to experience its setting, and it'll twist your arm to make sure you do so.

SPARTA FOREVER

The real reason for the switch in combat style, however, is the introduction of Conquest Battles, large-scale military skirmishes between Sparta and Athens with over 300 soldiers on screen at once, all swinging at one another.

To unlock a Conquest Battle you first need to weaken a side's Nation Power by undertaking some traditional Assassin's Creed doings, such as assassinating a nation's regional leader, or demoralising their army by killing soldiers, burning villages, and pillaging a nation's treasure.

Being a mercenary you can roll up and fight for either side. Being on the winning side rewards you with XP, rare weapons, and gear, plus cold, hard cash. It's a riff on Dynasty Warriors, with the two armies'



woken
 Enter the mysterious structure
 Structure is located on the island of
 western part of the Abandoned
 or protects the entrance

Above If you played Black Flag then you'll feel at home on these seas.



Left You can recruit new crew members, who bring their own skills when in battle.

■ 'health' meters decreasing as soldiers are killed. Taking out a commander leads to a faster victory.

These battles aren't essential, and can become a case of button-mashing your way through lower-levelled throngs, but like much of Odyssey they are one part of a broader whole. Odyssey casts its net wide and catches more good than bad. The world is the draw, and dipping into its many treasures feeds a constant need to explore.

While you can run or ride (horses have personalities; some are courageous, while others love scrambling around mountains) across the map, sooner or later you're going to need to embrace the return of ship warfare. This is proper oceanic sailing, none of that pootling about in rowing boats from Origins. Like in Black Flag these seas are large and deep, and littered with wrecks to explore, sunken temples to plunder, and aggressive ships to sink. Depending on the colours you're flying, some ships will pass without a care or turn for attack.

You can launch flurries of arrows and spears on **R1** and **R2**, and now ramming an enemy ship

can splinter it in half. Boarding a ship results in more loot but there's always a risk, and it takes longer than a swift barrage of arrows. There's very little that's fundamentally new if you played Black Flag, except now you can recruit people met in the world to your crew, which adds a new degree of personalisation. My first flirt Odessa, who proclaims she's descended from Odysseus, agrees to join my crew but others may require money or threats. Each comes with buffs to improve areas of the ship, so recruiting new mates soon becomes an obsession.

Sailing from island to island could become a chore if it weren't for the tease of hidden treasures, new stories to uncover, and unusual characters to seduce and assassinate. Like much of Odyssey your time on the ocean is anchored by snappy dialogue from the charismatic Barnabas. It's like going to sea with Peter Falk

retelling the greatest Greek myths and legends. He's a rumpled narrator spinning wild tales on the tides.

SALTY TALK

You'll be spending a lot of time with Barnabas, too, as you settle into Odyssey's core grind of uncovering the identities of the many members of the Cult Of Kosmos. You need to discover and dispatch them all before they find and kill your family. With each kill you collect an Isu artefact to take to The Forge, an ancient temple where your inherited weapon, the Spear Of Leonidas, can be upgraded. For a game called Assassin's Creed it's the only genuine nod to the wider series but there's so much happening from island to island you'll rarely miss the Assassins/Templar lore that has, in the past, cluttered too many games in the series.

In fact, the triumph of Odyssey is how it touches on

"SOONER OR LATER YOU'RE GOING TO NEED TO EMBRACE SHIP WARFARE."



Above Bows are simpler now, with new shots accessed on **L2**.



Right There are so many Cult Of Kosmos targets. Who's the big bad?



Above Even side-quests take the time to present cinematic moments.

moments of Assassin's Creed lore while weaving through its own epic narrative, and finding time to make every side-quest feel Homeric.

Each island has a story to tell and they're all worth taking your time over. Washing up on the Delos islands you'll begin by helping a rebellion against the Athenians, before being spun through a story of lust, murder, and political intrigue; you'll make love on the beach and duel in the sand against a rosy-fingered dawn.

GREEK GRINDER

While underpinning everything is the prescribed Assassin's Creed grind for targets, loot, and collectables, there's such a desire to tell compelling stories you'll rarely notice the cracks in Ubisoft's tried-and-tested formula. And while some may get frustrated by the levelling linked to the main story missions, forcing you to play through side-quests and

explore the world to earn XP, such thinking neglects the fact this is a joined-up world where decisions in a minor narrative thread tie into the wider world, and your emotional connection to the main story.

It's that central plot that hooks you in, and it'll take you on a journey of love, loss, and regret, but do so in such a breezy manner you can forgive any open-world shortfalls. Coupled with one of the series' best leads, and the sense every inch of this world has a story to tell, and playing this game feels like a celebration of storytelling – it's by no coincidence it's called Odyssey.

VERDICT

So big The Witcher 3 wants a rest. This is an epic told with flair, coupled with one of the liveliest open worlds on PlayStation 4. Odyssey is not just the best Assassin's Creed in years, but one of the finest action RPGs you'll play. **Ian Dean**

THE OPM BREAKDOWN

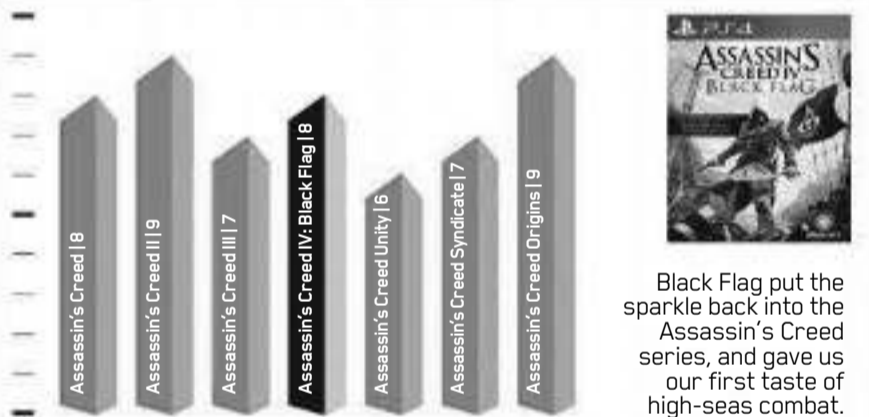
WHAT YOU DO IN... AC ODYSSEY



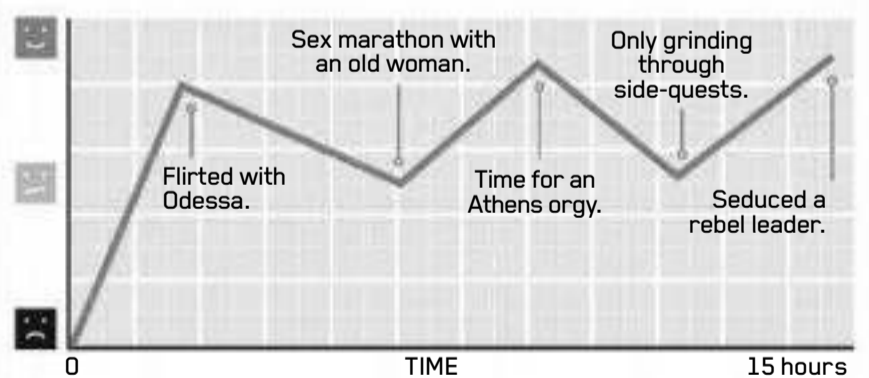
STAT PACK



SERIESOGRAPHY



COMPEL-O-GRAPH



IS IT BETTER THAN?



INFO FORMAT PS VR ETA OUT NOW
PUB ASPYR DEV ASPYR MEDIA



PS VR REVIEW

TORN

A Myst opportunity

As Patterson, a vlogger out for a morning stroll, you stumble upon a dilapidated mansion in the woods. Your vlogger instincts and deep sense of entitlement encourage you to nose around, and soon you're on the trail of a story that unravels at a steady pace, teasing nuggets of weirdness to keep you interested.¹

Your guide through the house is a floating ball of 'posh' light with perfect diction. Each room in the house is a large circuit board: hidden wires lurk behind the walls and under the floor, and using an acquired torch gizmo you can follow the lines and plug in furniture and ornaments to connect the circuits. The physics-based puzzles are fun, if not demanding, and any time you get to push, pull, and throw things around in PS VR is a joy.

Connect the electrical dots in each room and a machine whirrs into life. This sends your consciousness to another realm where you meet Dr Lawrence Talbot in the 'flesh'. The more puzzles you solve, the more 'memories' you collect, and the more of the house's history the Doc reveals.

While Torn occasionally adds new conundrums to the mix, they're little more than moving pattern puzzles, and it's incredibly slow – originally released on Oculus last year, the game is a step behind newer PS VR releases.² That said, visually the house is a beautiful place to explore, and Garry Schyman's soundtrack is impeccable.

The real issue is there's no sense of tension. You're trapped in an abandoned mansion hidden in the woods, surrounded by 'dark science', at the beck and call of a mysterious imprisoned being, yet at no point do you feel threatened. Torn? More like slightly frayed. **Ian Dean**



FOOTNOTES 1 The script is co-written by BioShock's Susan O'Connor, so expect quirky '50s-style sci-fi. 2 Even the teleport movement setting is slow, only beaming you a foot ahead at a time.

INFO FORMAT PS4 ETA OUT NOW
PUB NIS AMERICA DEV SNK



SNK HEROINES: TAG TEAM FRENZY

All tag, no drag

This crossover fighter where female SNK favourites have been kidnapped and forced to fight in a mysterious pocket dimension wearing compromising outfits¹ shouldn't work. But, like a burlesque show, there's a huge amount of craft on offer here that results in a fighter that really has no right being as good as it is.²

Casual is the name of the game. The joy of SNK Heroines lies in how far it leans into being a more approachable take on a fighter, all put together by the veteran hands at SNK. Your two fighting gals share a health bar, but have separate special bars. With **□** you have a weak attack you can combo easily, **△** is a stronger attack, **○** can be modified for a range of basic specials, and there's a grab on **×**. **■** blocks, and moving during it results in your heroine pulling off a classic King Of Fighters-like evasion. There's no crouch. Repeat: *there is no crouch*.

With everything pared down so much, competition revolves around simple exchanges, reducing human players down to trading off the fundamentals in a delightfully pure fashion. Adding interest are things like items that you can unleash with the right thumbstick. All matches must end with a Dream Finish, achieved by hitting **R1** once your opponent's life is in the red. The tension of pulling these off can lead to some great recreations of the sort of hype stakes the bigger fighters get at high-level play, but reachable by all players.

Content here, like the fighters' costumes, is slight, and mechanically it only goes so deep. But that's sort of the point, and it pulls off the look it's going for very well indeed. **Oscar Taylor-Kent**



FOOTNOTES 1 In a twist, some of the unlockable outfits are much less revealing than the defaults. 2 The bizarre story is bare-bones, though it does justify the crazy outfits in a strange way.

INFO FORMAT PS4 ETA OUT NOW
PUB THE VOXEL AGENTS DEV THE VOXEL AGENTS



THE GARDENS BETWEEN

Friendship grows like a flower

On a dark and stormy night, two friends, Arina and Frenndt, are sheltering from the rain in their shared treehouse between their two houses. Mysteriously, they end up transported to a surreal world of islands akin to something out of a pop-up book, populated by giant recreations of their shared memories. It's an imaginative journey told wordlessly, as the two friends ferry from one diorama-like island to the next in their treehouse.

You don't control either of the pals directly – instead you've got a handle on time. The camera follows the girls around as they make their way from their makeshift boat to a gate at the end of an island's path, and you either fast-forward or rewind them on their route using the analog stick, D-pad, or **L2** and **R2**.¹ Beyond that, you'll only be using **×** to get them to interact with objects. The ultimate goal is for one of them to carry a light in a lantern to the gate at the end, while the other can activate things like switches.

The islands move as time progresses,² and often you'll be switching between multiple states, or controlling lines of time slightly differently, to make everything come together. Some puzzles use this ingeniously, getting you to mess with the order of inputs, or align objects in certain ways. For the most part they're intuitive and just the right level of taxing, with only a couple of particularly tricky leaps of logic. While a simple concept, the game itself is just the right length to stop the idea spreading too thin. With a beautiful ambient soundtrack, and a warm story wonderfully told, it's one that will stick with you for a while. **Oscar Taylor-Kent**



FOOTNOTES 1 Sometimes you'll find yourself scrubbing backwards and for wards too often, and wishing you could change the speed. 2 Every island is beautiful, filled with the pair's shared experiences.



Astro Bot and his buds would be worthy PS VR mascots.



PS VR REVIEW

EX MACHINA

@KoeniginKatze



ASTRO BOT RESCUE MISSION

Embrace Sony's virtual space oddity



INFO

FORMAT PS VR
ETA OUT NOW
PUB SONY
DEV SIE JAPAN
STUDIO

Astro Bot's most endearing quality is its perseverance. Whether it's death from gravity or the improbably explosive termination resulting from too much roughhousing, the teeny bot gets right back up again, as eager as ever to save its friends. All without a word of sass to you about missing that same jump five times in a row.

You first encounter the bot in a spaceship full of similarly micro machines, as their craft is torn apart by a grabby alien that never learned not to snatch. Its friends sent hurtling into space, it's up to you and Astro Bot to hunt each of them down across a number of strange planes. From simple, plastic beginnings to a world underwater, and even a level that gives way to an annoying slot car section, you'll want to take in your surroundings.

In PS VR, you glide through levels along a track, requiring you to fully inspect your surroundings, leaning, peering, and looking behind yourself. Unlimited lives and generous checkpointing neuter any frustration that may arise from this

3D platformer's somewhat fixed perspective. This does make the odd jump difficult to judge, especially as you can't backpedal in a level, which becomes heartbreaking when you realise you've left one of Astro Bot's buds behind.

A PLACE IN SPACE

Astro Bot is adorable, always keen to wave to you from platforms on high. The way its friends are hidden around levels, attempting to blend in as a cactus in one instance, and relaxing on the beach in another, keeps things cute, though the ship you're trying to fix and fill with the stragglers you find lacks the same level of personality. The main point of interest on board is a gacha machine – pour the coins you gather across levels into it for even tinier dioramas of enemies and levels. While these are detailed, this side content is pretty surface-level. Still, between the main levels

and the unlockable challenges, there's plenty to enjoy.

While occasionally frustrating, levels are seldom tricky to traverse. Enemies are easily dealt using Astro Bot's right hook, rocket boots, and arm cannon. For one so small, the bot packs quite the arsenal. While your buddy jumps, glides and tightrope-walks, you'll be headbutting through obstacles, dousing slimes with water, and deploying hook shots. Mercifully for the more self-conscious, the game doesn't demand exaggerated gestures from you. Bosses bookend worlds, feeling familiar but shining in their presentation, and there's a joyful, nostalgic tone throughout.

VERDICT

There's nothing scaled-down about this family-friendly PS VR adventure. A delightful romp for both PS VR veterans and the pint-sized adventurers in the family. **Jess Kinghorn**

"ASTRO BOT IS ADORABLE, ALWAYS KEEN TO WAVE TO YOU FROM PLATFORMS."

The game looks great, and KO punches light up the visor.



PS VR REVIEW

080 BODY BLOW

lanDean4

CREED: RISE TO GLORY

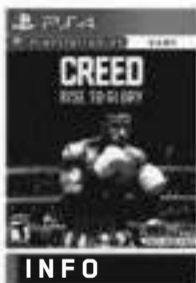
A fight night worth the virtual entrance fee?



After a mere ten minutes of play, this game delivers the Rocky thrills you are hoping for as you're pushed into a training montage ahead of your first fight. The stirring strings and helium vocals of Gonna Fly Now rise as you punch the bags and hit the treadmill, with your surly coach egging you on to give more to the cause. Inside the PS VR headset, it feels great.

The artsy right side of my brain is having a smashing time wallowing in the Rocky atmosphere, but my logical left side has to barge in and break up the love-in: "Can Creed: Rise To Glory stay the course?" it questions. Oh fudge, no, no it can't is the reality.

The main career mode lasts around two hours, but can go a little longer if you play on a higher difficulty setting. While it lasts, like much of Creed, it's brilliant fun. The story puts you in the gloves of raw amateur Adonis Creed and sets you on a journey to the top (just like in the film of the same name). Getting there has some fun twists and creative moments: for example, there's a flashback to a back alley fight against 'Mad Dog' Pono after Creed is kicked out of a club. Best of all is a brilliant montage fight against 'Pretty' Rick Conlan in which you need to go the distance (again, just like in the movie); rounds crash into one another with no break leaving you physically



INFO
FORMAT PS VR
ETA OUT NOW
PUB MGM (US
VERSION TESTED)
DEV SURVIOS

exhausted by the final bell. As the song goes, "It's getting hard now".

But it's all over far too soon, and these moments are too few. The bulk of the story drifts between training montages and fights, and after six of these the credits roll, leaving you feeling a little deflated. The game took me so high, promised so much, and left the ring leaving me wanting more.

DOWN, NOT OUT

That's not to say Creed: Rise To Glory isn't fun while it lasts. It offers a great virtual reality boxing experience. The game uses what Survios calls its 'Phantom Melee Technology' to deliver a genuinely physical experience. When punches land

you can feel them in the PS Move controllers, and there's a real sense of achievement when you dodge a combo and successfully counter with a flurry of your own. The faster your swings, the harder your punches, but learning combos is essential to success on higher difficulty settings.

Advanced controls enable you to move slowly around your opponent by holding the PS Move controllers' buttons and waving your hands one over the other like Daffy Duck demanding you 'put 'em up'. (Honestly, it feels better in PS VR than it sounds.)

While mechanically Creed delivers a solid-feeling VR boxing sim, it does lack the deeper tactical play of,

"ROUNDS CRASH INTO ONE ANOTHER, LEAVING YOU PHYSICALLY EXHAUSTED."



Right Learning to block is vital, particularly against Balboa who can take the hits.



Below Rival on the canvas? Wave your arms to get the crowd pumped.



Above left Fights begin when you bump gloves with your opponent.

particularly, rival PS VR punchfest Knockout League, which presents rival fighters as brawling puzzles that you need to memorise and counter. By comparison Creed's opponents lack real variety. While on paper one may be a speed fighter and another a slugger, in the ring they can feel the same and lack the tells Knockout League sold so well.

GLASS JAW

Post-story you can dip back into fights in free play mode, adjusting settings and rules to increase the challenge. The biggest time soak, however, is the option to replay sets of training exercises. The mix is good and includes pad training sessions with Sly Stallone, dodge bag tests, and the chance to hit a hanging slab of beef – a Rocky staple.

Again they're not as fun or as challenging as the minigames offered in Knockout League, which had you punching trash

as it was thrown at you. The drive to present a vaguely realistic boxing sim has sucked some of fun out of the events.

Just as Creed looks down and out, however, it pulls itself up and plays a wild card – PvP. Taking your boxing skills online in 1v1 fights against other Rocky fans not only delivers the challenge the main game lacks, but forces you to hit the training exercises to improve. These PvP fights last longer than those of the story mode, forcing you to go the distance. You'll puff out your cheeks and build a sweat as you box, and wins feel physically exhilarating. In the last round, Creed pulls it back.

VERDICT

Less a rise to glory and more a stumble towards modest success, Creed feels good but lacks the depths of its closest rival, Knockout League. It's good fun and a visceral experience, but it's over too soon. **Ian Dean**

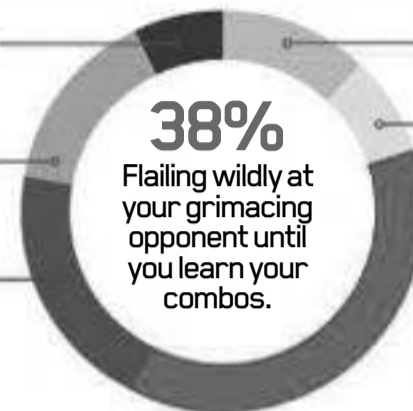
THE OPM BREAKDOWN

WHAT YOU DO IN... CREED: RISE TO GLORY

7% Staring out your rival and refusing to touch gloves to start.

15% Replaying the training exercises to git gud.

20% Testing your skills online against the best of the best.



12% Replaying the 'Pretty' Rick Conlan montage fight because it's so good.

8% Trying to get that darned title song out of your head.

STAT PACK

9

Fighters to choose from in Free Play mode, including Rocky Balboa in his '70's prime.

7

Training montages to play through, all with *that* theme song. It'll burn into your brain by the end.

15

Number of rounds you need to last against 'Pretty' Ricky Conlan. Live out the movie!

3

Gyms to unlock and train in, including Mighty Mick's – as much part of Rocky as Stallone himself.

HOW TO... KNOCK DOWN AN OPPONENT



It's not enough to pummel your opponent, you need to watch for openings, then strike. A good combo will break his defences, leaving you to hit pin-point punches into his weak areas. Land the hits while he's vulnerable to send him to the mat.

THE FIRST FIVE HOURS...



1 You're on the road to greatness, but first you need to get fit. 2 Time to get in the ring and show what you can do. 3 You're a superstar in the ring but outside you're getting drawn into back-alley drama. 4 Back to training, now Sly Stallone himself is in your corner and the title fight is coming. 5 Story complete, all that's left to do is train and match your skills against real people in PvP and the CPU in free play.

TROPHY CABINET



BRONZE

Rile up the audience, after knocking out your opponent, by waving your arms around. You rotten show-off.



SILVER

Block all punches from a rival's combo with one hand. You really rather impressive show-off.



GOLD

Get the maximum star rating on every training montage. S'pose you've earned the right to show off now...

INFO FORMAT PS4 ETA OUT NOW
PUB KOCH MEDIA DEV SPIKE CHUNSOFT



428: SHIBUYA SCRAMBLE

The city never sleeps

There's a kidnapping gone wrong, a mysterious crime syndicate, a deadly virus, and, of course, a dedication to recycling the right items in the correct bins. 428: Shibuya Scramble finally gets its English release, ten years on from its Japanese debut - it's unique, and still one of the best visual novels out there.¹

It begins with a ransom hand-off, where the victim's twin sister is handing over a large sum of money for her return at the crowded Shibuya crossing. You follow Shinya Kano, one of the detectives assigned to the case. Things quickly go awry, and both the money and the sister go missing. As you hop between a selection of other characters, the narrative web becomes increasingly complex.

Even though the plot is a rollercoaster ride of things constantly getting out of hand, it never feels too complicated. The writing is witty, sharp, and easy to follow. Each hour block of the day is played separately, and you have to switch characters to follow their stories, making choices and jumping between them as they pass one another to make sure all their tales go smoothly.² It's all very dynamic, and even the bad endings feel like ones you'd want to see through rather than just annoyances cutting scenes short.

As you can jump around the timeline easily, the game never feels punishing. If you're curious about visual novels, this is where to start. At times, this is one of the funniest games you'll ever play as you follow these quirky characters through this stressful day, but thanks to their humanity, the emotional moments hit home all the harder. **Oscar Taylor-Kent**



FOOTNOTES 1 Part FMV game, 428 uses real actors and photos of Japan. 2 A choice in one route might not matter for that character, but could have disastrous consequences for another.

INFO FORMAT PS4 ETA OUT NOW
PUB DOVETAIL GAMES DEV DOVETAIL GAMES



FISHING SIM WORLD

All 'bout that bass

Brace yourself, because this is the perfect place to indulge OPM's terrible habit of making codawful puns.

This game aims to offer you the reel thing, licensing deals with the likes of Bass Cat and Sonik netting the developer hundreds of recognisable rods and accessories. Add in a variety of lakes from Europe and the USA (and our own Grand Union Canal, in case you've ever fancied catching anything other than typhus in a river in London), and there's potential for a fishing sim on a grand scale.

Fishing's not the activity for everybody, and the controls and systems may initially seem a little intimidating; but there's no need for newbies to be koi. There is a small number of video tutorials, which we strongly recommend you watch. They'll help you learn the basics inside and trout.¹

There are two different control systems for casting your line. The easier method involves holding then releasing a button to determine the distance of your cast, and if even *that's* too difficult, this isn't the game for you. The other, Total Cast, method is set up as difficult to master, but the combination of flicking the right stick and holding then releasing **R2** is actually pretty simple. The real challenge comes when you take up a perch and start fishing.

Fish bite much more quickly than they do in real life, allowing you to tackle them with pleasing regularity... *if* you learn how to keep up with all the systems, that is. The core fishing can be surprisingly compelling, but tournaments are unlikely to keep you coming back.² Let's cut the carp here: Fishing Sim World is great for fishing fans, but unlikely to attract salmon hordes of new people to the sport. **Luke Kemp**



FOOTNOTES 1 C'mon, that pun's pretty good. 2 Though there are competitive online modes, and yes, *people are playing*. You could theoretically have boat races if anybody was up for it, too.

INFO FORMAT PS4 ETA OUT NOW
PUB BANDAI NAMCO DEV ILINX



BLACK CLOVER: QUARTET KNIGHTS

Never giving up, but we wish it would

Here in a world where everyone uses magic, you play as a young boy without it. Well, that's not strictly true; Asta can use anti-magic, the rock to many wizards' magical scissors. Black Clover's a hugely popular manga and anime, and this tie-in delves into the past of Asta's fellow Black Bulls Magic Knight, Captain Yami.

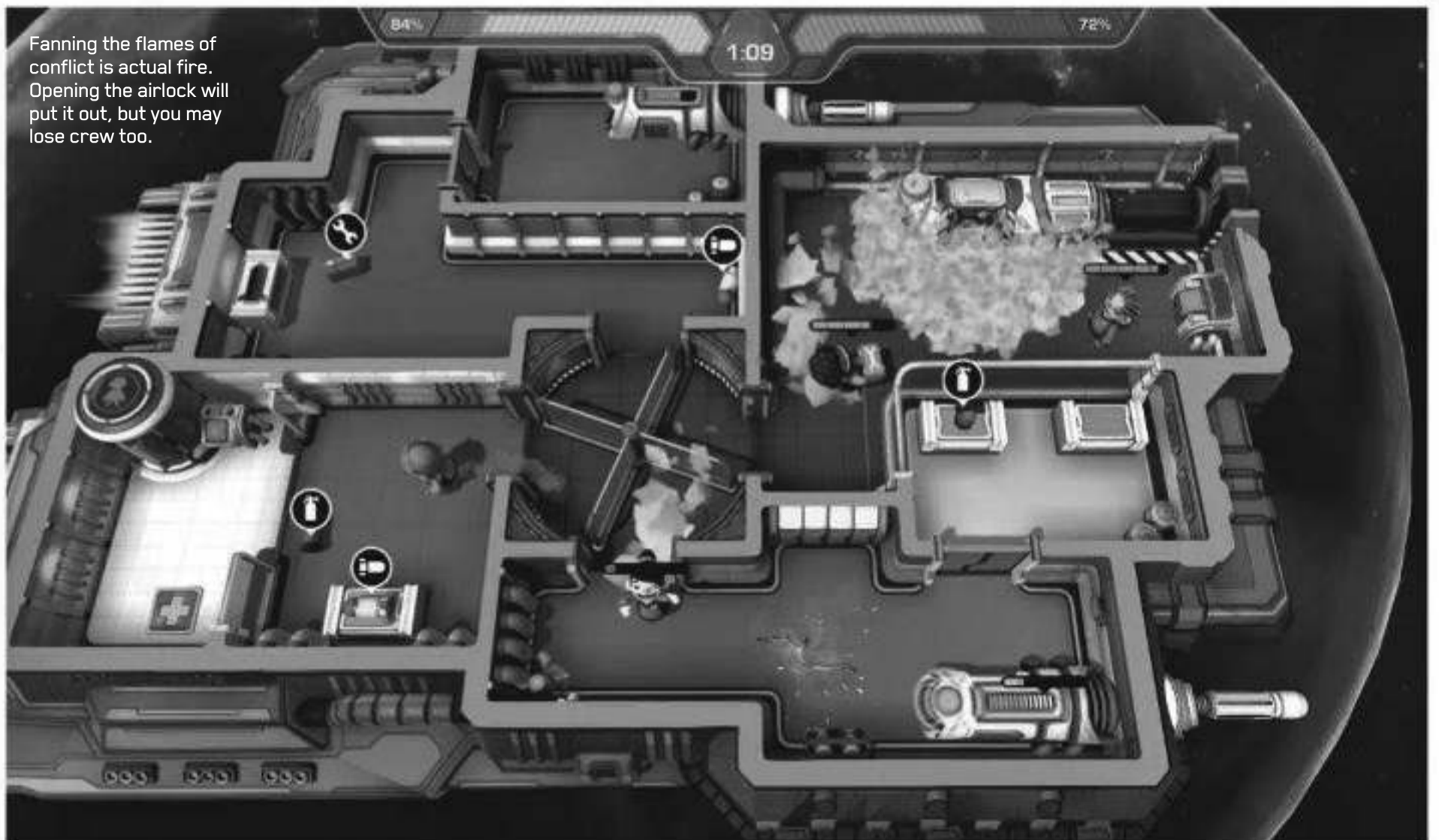
You'll slice your way through golems and other characters in wave-based battles, three-on-one arena fights, and even a bit of capture the flag. Story mode is brief,¹ with much of the gameplay found in replaying the small selection of story missions as different characters or under set conditions. The optional challenge missions are even more bare-bones. While there's a number of new animated scenes, these aren't to the same standard as the show, and the game's presentation is fairly flavourless.

Combat itself is more mashed than I like my potatoes. You'll be hammering shoulder buttons no matter who you play as, though you can occasionally co-ordinate with your team mates for a Link Magic attack. Unfortunately, despite the flashy fanfare these special attacks are about as interesting as a plain baked potato, the damage they deal also being on the same level as a damp squib.

Playing as different Magic Knights, many of whom are more interesting than Asta,² spices things up but it isn't tantamount to bacon bits, and fights never graduate to anything impressive, not even when the J-Pop theme song kicks in. Much like a baked potato, it's all perfectly serviceable but not very interesting unless you're a carb fiend. **Jess Kinghorn**



FOOTNOTES 1 Including the timey-wimey twist after clearing the main story that offers another character's perspective. 2 Noelle's water magic is a fun diversion though functionally similar.



Fanning the flames of conflict is actual fire. Opening the airlock will put it out, but you may lose crew too.

MOONING AROUND

KoeniginKatze

CATASTRONAUTS

Keep these remixed dishes spinning – in space!



083



INFO

FORMAT PS4
ETA OUT NOW
PUB INERTIA GAME STUDIOS
DEV INERTIA GAME STUDIOS

Stop us if you've heard this one before: an up-to-four-player co-op game featuring diminutive avatars in timed stages, desperately trying to not be burned by the flames of failure while they attempt to grapple with the 'quirks' of each level environment. You'd be forgiven for thinking we'd already reviewed this game back in OPM #153 but, let us tell you, a spaceship is completely different to a kitchen.

For starters, there's generally more firepower aboard such a vessel. The task you'll be tangoing with aboard the USS definitely-not-a-standard-Starfleet-ship is avoiding the destruction of said ship at the hands of a sneering, scaly alien race. It's blast or be blasted as you run between guns while trying to patch up the damage to your ship. Unfortunately, the person who designed the vessel had apparently never had to pilot such a craft, or indeed had much involvement with one, as the onboard layout is part of the challenge you'll need to contend with. For starters, who thought it was good idea to put a revolving door slap-bang in the middle of a spaceship? Or decided to assign a single fire extinguisher

to a segmented shuttle? To say nothing of the shoddy airlock system!

Catastronauts metes out new obstacles like this regularly, balancing its pacing against an engaging level of challenge. You're not overwhelmed by new mechanics, as each introductory level will take a few tries to get right, but your failures seldom frustrate. Deaths are almost as entertaining as your victories, and the cloning stations aboard each level mean at worst they're only an inconvenience.

STAR-CROSSED

It's certainly a novel approach to team building, chiefly because it so thoroughly destroys friendships. Communication is key, but this isn't everyone's strong suit, so if you're antisocial, you will be pleased to hear that you can also put both of your hands on deck alone, tapping the shoulder buttons to switch between two crew members. Score margins are incredibly forgiving when playing this

way, and generally it feels much more sedate than full-on four-player co-op chaos. While the option of a solo mission is appreciated, the game simply isn't at its best here.

So pull your buds out of cryosleep, you've got a ship to save! If you can manage to extinguish fires before the red shirt turns a truly incandescent shade, or resist the urge to fling the hapless twerp out of the airlock, you may just have a shot at saving yourselves. And if they really are that useless there's no need to be aggressive, because the end-of-level award ceremony will tell them what's what. With this goofy tone, and even managing to up the difficulty level compared to other officers of its rank, it's got all the makings of a much-loved party classic.

VERDICT

Between the starboard immolation and occasional, rapid decompression aft, it's silly fun, boasting a bubbly personality that's hardly stern. One to pull into port. **Jess Kinghorn**

"YOUR DEATHS ARE ALMOST AS ENTERTAINING AS YOUR VICTORIES."



It won't cause diehard PES fans to switch, but FIFA 19 is a fine football sim in its own right.

FIFA 19

Answers its critics with a glittering display



The wealthiest competition in club football French-kissing the richest name in digital sports was never likely to sit well with more rabid sports gamers. On which note: welcome to FIFA 19. After prising the Champions League licence away from PES, EA's latest kickabout offers comprehensive implementation of the big boys' favourite mid-week pursuit. For those open-minded enough to look beyond preconceptions, this perceived match made in hell provides numerous heavenly moments.

Before getting to those, let's make something clear: on-pitch gameplay is paramount. It's why, for all their presentational excellence, MLB: The Show and NBA 2K have maintained their status at the top of the sports pyramid for close to a decade. Tweaks made to FIFA 19 put it in the same league. Fundamentals such as passing, shooting, and dribbling haven't been transformed, but from a physical standpoint this is much different from its predecessors.

For instance, pace attributes are lowered across the game, making the on-pitch action more considered. Meanwhile the introduction of contextual 50/50 battles, as players slam into one another to contest loose balls and crosses, instils a sense of physicality befitting elite sportsmen doing battle. There's still room



INFO
 FORMAT PS4
 ETA OUT NOW
 PUB EA
 DEV EA CANADA

for zippy passing and balletic dribbling, but those who prefer their football more industrial are catered for too. Indeed, heading is the one fundamental element revolutionised by these changes, with powerful goals off a striker's bonce and imperious forehead clearances enjoyable like never before.

PERFECT OFF-PITCH

Those incremental-yet-wholesale improvements on the turf are bolstered by the pizzazz of the Champions League off it. Available as a standalone tournament, or within the reconfigured Kick-off mode, career mode, third instalment of The Journey and/or Ultimate Team, EA cannot be accused of bunging the ball-shaped

logo on the box and watching the cash roll in. This colossal licence's infiltration of said modes brings mixed results – it's the only major change to career, which is disappointing – but it certainly drums up a vibe of completeness.

Uniqueness, too, partly because of the OTT features that go hand-in-glove with the tournament: players emerging through the makeshift arch as if attending a royal wedding, that glorious operatic theme booming out as they line up. And partly because of a new commentary team in Derek Rae and Lee Dixon. Emphatic in delivery and unconventional in pronunciation thanks to his Scots burr, Rae is a revelation, while Dixon – despite some

“LET'S MAKE SOMETHING CLEAR: ON-PITCH GAMEPLAY IS PARAMOUNT.”



Right Goalies are more alert to danger, but still imperfect. (For realism, says EA.)



Below There are more than 700 teams, with Dinamo Zagreb a newcomer.



Above left 'Player pick' packs add a degree of choice to Ultimate Team.

wonky first-timer moments – shows more enthusiasm here than he ever has on ITV Sport. Demonstrating a natural chemistry, the pair make the mode sing.

The CL's integration into Ultimate Team is understated. There's sadly no option to use Rae and Dixon, but sports gaming's best mode doesn't go untouched. A key new feature is the pack-opening tool that maps everything to a single button or stick nudge: up to transfer list, down to quick sell, **R2** to send all cards to your club. Division Rivals, with weekly rewards for your online performances, are a fantastic supplement to offline Squad Battles, while Squad Building Challenges – in which you submit teams to unlock fresh packs – are one of the most addictive mini-games on PS4 ever. I've lost entire evenings to them without playing a match.

A word, too, for The Journey: Champions, the final chapter in

Alex Hunter's interactive story with cameos from Neymar and Kevin de Bruyne, to name two. Once more showcasing likeable characters and the better kind of B-movie writing, it uses that new licence smartly, and the ability to switch between Hunter, sister Kim, and pal Danny Williams at any time creates variety and some fun surprises – such as a passing practice in a hotel corridor. It's an appropriate send-off to a fictional character FIFA diehards have become surprisingly attached to. So good, you wonder just how the series will evolve in his absence. Rae and Dixon across all modes would be a start.

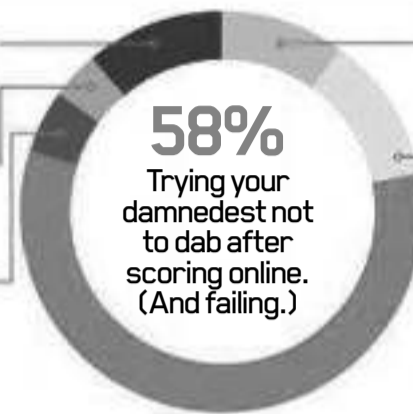
VERDICT

The best FIFA's been on current-gen in the purist's sense, with Champions League implementation strengthening the game's grip on the genre from a casual's perspective too. **Ben Wilson**

THE OPM BREAKDOWN

WHAT YOU DO IN... FIFA 19

11% Loving the icon showing who you'll switch to with **R1**.
4% Sampling the return of Oscar via the Chinese League's debut.
5% Playing piggy-in-the-middle in the Real Madrid dressing room, thanks to The Journey.



10% Cursing the comeback AI in Squad Battles, one of few Ultimate Team weaknesses.
12% Marvelling at new player faces such as Milinkovic-Savic, Kolasinac, and Rudiger.

HOW TO... EARN FAST ULTIMATE TEAM COINS



1 Don't buy packs. Most of what you find inside is worthless junk. Instead work the market by picking up cheap silver cards from popular leagues, which will ultimately be required for Squad Building Challenges. **2** As an example, search for silver Premier League centre-backs priced under 300 coins. Bid on them all, but don't go over 300. **3** Relist any you win at 700 'Buy Now' and watch your coins more than double. Then use this template for La Liga, Serie A, and so on.

STAT PACK

64 Leagues and cups playable as standalone competitions, outside of career.	16 La Liga stadiums added this year – giving you the complete set, other than Barcelona.	400 Cost, in FIFA Points, of a basic Bronze pack. You know what not to do.	25 Years since the first FIFA was released. There's no mention in-game though.
---	--	--	--

MULTIPLAYER



Online and sofa-based play are transformed by being able to change match parameters beforehand. You can make only headers and volleys count, double the value of long-range goals, or switch rules off entirely. It's cheaty, swearsy, and magnificent.

TROPHY CABINET

THE HISTORIAN BRONZE Score a left-foot volley against Coventry City in The Journey... as Alex's footballer granddad Jim.	PERFECTIONIST SILVER Win a penalty shoot-out without missing. Computer naughtiness makes this one tricky.	WHAT A SHOT! GOLD Score from more than 25 yards out with a defender from open-play. Leighton Baines, come on down...
--	---	--



Different disciplines are available if you fancy a break from the loneliness of traditional rally driving.

TANKED ENGINE

Jim_Crikey



V-RALLY 4

The legendary series returns, hoping to turn a corner



INFO
 FORMAT PS4
 ETA OUT NOW
 PUB BIGBEN
 DEV KYLOTONN
 RACING GAMES

When rally fans buy a game emulating their motorsport of choice, they expect the wheel deal. They're tired of arcade experiences, and want to get as close to the real thing as possible. This is a challenge for Kylotonn because, although it (mostly) gives arcade sensibilities the boot, it hasn't snagged licensed drivers, tracks, or championships. Okay, we'll belt up with the car puns. It's getting exhausting anyway.

All the cars are licensed, mind you, and there's even a little in-game advertising (um, yay?). The previous V-Rally is now old enough to buy a lottery ticket, but in some ways, it's like the series never went away. The first three games are remembered fondly by many rally fans, and much of what they did right is present here.

One of the most important things to get right in a rally game is the feel of each road surface, and V-Rally 4 captures this pretty well. Keeping control of your car while hurtling over gravel is a constant battle, and the difference when you transition to tarmac is as enormous as it is welcome. The snowy wastes of Siberia arguably offer the greatest challenge and, therefore, the

most satisfying payoff when you take a corner at speed and somehow don't wreck your vehicle.

GRAVEL AND BLOCK

The mud and sand of the Kenyan plains, the tight streets of a Japanese town, an American national park: it's all excellently designed, and constantly nail-biting stuff. The graphics are nothing very special (in fact, they'd look at home on PS3), but the framerate is exceptionally smooth at all times, both off-and online. The physics aren't entirely realistic, especially when it comes to steering, but they're unforgiving.

The core experience is solid, then, but the game built around it is not. The career mode is a mess. You start off with enough money for one vehicle, and then you need to earn cash from races. The problem is, you need money not just for new cars, but also for entering races, and staff who need paying every in-game week (and their rates go up according to their

competence). Everything from repairs (damage is visible, and also gradually affects performance) to upgrades is a constant drain on your resources, and it's even possible to end a race or tournament with less money than you went in with. The career should be the main draw, but progression will test your patience.

Quick races give you access to everything immediately, and the inclusion of offline split-screen is to be applauded. Online, I'm shocked (and more than a little disappointed) to find that nobody's playing buggy racing, which is great fun. I never find a lobby with more than four people (including me) on the occasions where I can find or connect to one. Like most of V-Rally 4, online's stuck in first gear.

VERDICT

The rally fundamentals are there, but so is a disappointingly shoddy career mode. Genre fans will find a lot to love, but this is far from taking pole position. **Luke Kemp**

"THE CORE EXPERIENCE IS SOLID, BUT THE GAME BUILT AROUND IT IS NOT."



This is one of the best-looking titles on PS VR, from character models to environments.



PS VR REVIEW

HOUSE OF MEMORIES

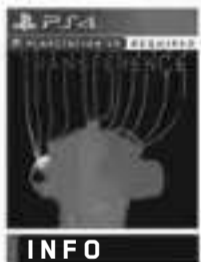
@KoeniginKatze



TRANSFERENCE

Home is where the horror is

087



INFO

FORMAT PS4
ETA OUT NOW
PUB UBISOFT
DEV SPECTREVISION,
UBISOFT MONTREAL

Rather than describing the act whereby I leave an after-image of my full face of makeup on the OPM PS VR headset (sorry team), *Transference* explores the popular sci-fi idea of backing up human consciousness to storage hardware that's less squishy but, if anything, more likely to fail in the long run. A brilliant scientist has cracked the formula but can't secure the funding to take his research to the next step. Deciding to go his own way in proving his hypothesis, he looks to his young family...

The process was not a smooth one, and you find yourself exploring the corrupted result. The full horror of the family's downfall is hinted at through a polished blend of video diaries, audio logs, and environments surreally transformed by each member's subjective experience. Hitting light switches allows you to swap between each relative's side of the story, transferring key items between their various visions.

Surfaces and objects glitch in and out of existence, hinting at the instability within the home. The various ghosts in this machine whisper cryptically in your ear when you inspect

their possessions. Virtualised phantoms datamosh through intense but half-forgotten scenes. Helped by some spooky sound design, the rooms you walk through are plagued by claustrophobic unease, and there are more than a few solid scares. You quickly sense there might be something else trapped inside this simulation, and the initial reveal had us hammering at virtual door handles, while another late-game 'boo' left us instinctively covering our face.

DIGIT-HELL

The story follows familiar horror tropes – obsessed patriarch, troubled wife, neglected son – but, picking through the detritus of the family's life, there's a demonstrable awareness of these stereotypes. You won't find yourself saddled with pages of a diary, as *Transference* attempts to use its chosen clichés efficiently. For example, you'll only ever see the first two lines of an emotional letter to a sister,

while the video logs seldom outstay their welcome, suggesting the corners of the bigger picture. This willingness to let you fill in the gaps yourself makes heavy-handed moments particularly baffling, especially when it's to tell you to find something you're already looking for.

While you can play with the DualShock 4, this might actually be one you'll want to dig out your PS Move controllers for. Even as the family flat warps into nightmarish doubles of itself, these halls have been designed with such attention to detail that they demand you reach out and at least mime touching them. That said, your journey through these corridors is far more satisfying than the place they'll leave you in by the end.

VERDICT

Short and horrifying, it's worth coming home to your PS VR headset for this family reunion. These walls talk, and you'll want to immerse yourself in what they have to say. **Jess Kinghorn**

“THE INITIAL CREATURE REVEAL HAD US HAMMERING AT VIRTUAL DOOR HANDLES.”

It's Sean and Daniel – and his unpredictable special abilities – against the world.



LIFE IS STRANGE 2 – EPISODE 1: ROADS

Welcome to the Wolf Pack

Dropping everything and starting afresh is never easy. Whether that be Dontnod closing the door on much-loved characters or this season's tale of two brothers on the road after a traumatic event, it's challenging to face such uncertainty. With Chloe, Max, and time travel left behind in Arcadia Bay, what has season two stuffed into its suitcase as it rushes out the door, and how well prepared is it for the road ahead?

Protagonist Sean isn't super-powered himself but his young brother Daniel is, in possession of telekinetic powers he doesn't have full control over. With no direct command of this force, Daniel's powers are used to punctuate the drama rather than as tools for you to wield, forming part of the incident that puts the brothers on the road in the first place. Unfortunately Daniel's memory of this event lacks crucial details that Sean simply can't forget, and the gap between their recollections drives conflict this episode.

Much of the action revolves around how you interact with Daniel. Your AI sibling's presence informs not just story decisions but also exploration; rather than passively observing the world around you both, you'll have the option to



INFO

FORMAT PS4
ETA OUT NOW
PUB SQUARE ENIX
DEV DONTNOD ENTERTAINMENT

engage with Daniel through it. For example, traipsing through woods, do you decide to point out the wildlife and teach your brother about trail blaze signs? Do you help him over a fallen trunk or leave him to trip and fall unaided? What lessons are you trying to impart about the world through your actions? In many ways, Sean's superpower is responsibility, with tried-and-true choices given new life through the context of Daniel witnessing them; the question is no longer 'is this the right thing to do' but 'what example am I setting for Daniel... and how will that come back to bite me?'

Daniel himself presents a complementary blend of moments that are scripted to varying levels, leaving him far from a frustrating AI partner. Your brother has a mind of his own, subtly guiding you through more open areas as he peels off to make his own observations about the world, even occasionally disappearing from view. You're able to call him back to you, but we'd be lying if we said that we didn't experience even a hint of panic the first time he went out of our sight, and we really started to worry the first time he didn't respond to our call. This first episode's major success is

"WHAT EXAMPLE AM I SETTING... AND WILL THAT COME BACK TO BITE ME?"



Right Sean's sketchbook gives you a compelling peek at his inner life.



Below Will you set a good example or teach Daniel a lesson?



Above left We'll be keeping an eye on pup Mushroom and Daniel from now on.

just how protective you become towards your new brother.

HOME GAME

While Arcadia Bay is in the past, it's far from a distant memory. Much of the series' identity persists visually, tonally, and audibly... though the spectre of season one is something of a clumsy ghost. We won't spoil it but there's a key pit stop replete with musings about moving away from the past that feels not unlike a metatextual brick through your screen. But since we're talking about season one, this follow-up's first outing is notably more consistent and sure of itself than its predecessor. Even as it tries new things, it carries forward plenty of lessons learned.

Taking place just before the end of 2016, tensions are high and the characteristic tackling of weighty themes returns to add another recontextualising layer to your choices. Part of

the way through, the brothers come across a shop. You can steal from it but then what will Daniel think? So we part with our measly funds for food and grab a somewhat decent bite to eat for the first time in two days on a bench just outside. We did the right thing but we're accosted by the belligerent proprietor of the store, accusing us of stealing; you can do everything 'right' but there will still be racist gits. While an interesting refashioning of a limitation of the branching narrative into a strength of the story, it remains to be seen where this or any wider discussion of racism in America will ultimately lead.

VERDICT

A consistently strong introduction to the Diaz brothers and their plight. We only want the best for them but know full well things are going to get worse over the course of the season. **Jess Kinghorn**

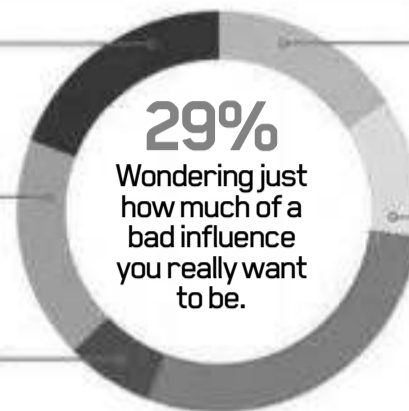
THE OPM BREAKDOWN

WHAT YOU DO IN... LIFE IS STRANGE 2

19% Hoping nothing awful happens to Mushroom the puppy.

18% Thinking how far you've come from plastic faces and wooden lip syncing.

7% Wincing less than you'd think at the teen dialogue.



16% Poring over Sean's sketchbook and texts.

11% Keeping one eye on Daniel in more open areas.

FRIENDS & ENEMIES



Sean's baby brother... but he doesn't know why they've left home.



Sean's best friend. Daniel has a crush on her.



Sean and Daniel's neighbour. His bullying starts everything off.

STAT PACK

3

Complete US states lie between Seattle, Washington and Puerto Lobos in Mexico.

104300

Weeks ago, in 2016, is when this episode is set. We were playing Mafia 3 back then...

2

Sean and Daniel travel this far - give or take some miles - in this first episode alone.

The wolf is this season's prominent animal motif, compared to season one's blue butterfly.

LOVING/HATING



SCRAPBOOKING

The presentation has received an upgrade over season one, and the places you'll go are all worth taking a moment to sketch.



WELL-TRAVELLED PATH

The story relies on familiar, well-worn pegs for its setup but it remains to be seen what new vistas it'll bury them in.

IS IT BETTER THAN?



YES

Certainly an interesting beginning back then, here and now this episode is far more consistent.



YES

Compared to an enjoyable, pulpy romp, we find this opener's earnestness slightly more appealing.



YES

While this first episode doesn't try to reinvent the illusion, its presentation is far more confident.

INFO FORMAT PS VR ETA OUT NOW
PUB KONAMI DEV CYGAMES



PS VR REVIEW

ZONE OF THE ENDERS: THE 2ND RUNNER - MARS

Retro recall

As it's a remaster of a remaster of a 15-year-old Hideo-Kojima-produced mech shooter you'd be forgiven for ignoring this one. But closer inspection reveals a tiny **A** in the bottom corner of the main menu, which, once clicked, turns this game into a PS VR mini-masterpiece. You can now play the entire game in virtual reality, sitting inside your mech's cockpit.¹ Better still, you can swap between traditional and VR modes at any point in the game.

Whether in VR or playing traditionally the action is identical and 'of its time'. Each mission is a simple corridor filled with cannon fodder and shows its age; the eventual boss battles, however, are brilliantly inventive. These grand puzzle fights demand you discover the villain's exploitable weakness, and they're worth wading through the fodder for.

Your mech comes with homing lasers and a giant sword, and an auto lock ensures you never need to track enemies. As the game progresses you earn sub-weapons, special upgrades that include shotgun-like blasts, homing rockets, and machine guns.

It's fun and twitchy, and it really shouldn't be as good as it is in VR. The game runs at a chaotic pace (this remaster in traditional mode is 60fps in 4K) as you zip around the screen and zoom up close for melee strikes. But it *does* work, as it's effectively teleporting you from enemy to enemy if using melee, and playing out like a classic arcade shooter if using homing lasers.² If you've never played the series, it's time to start; if you have, then there's no better reason to own PS VR. Ian Dean



FOOTNOTES 1 The anime story unfolds via video chats in the heads-up display, maintaining the illusion of being in a mech. 2 Lock on using line of sight and fire and forget.

INFO FORMAT PS4 ETA OUT NOW
PUB MONOMI PARK DEV MONOMI PARK



SLIME RANCHER

A good slime to be had by all

He who corrals the slimes, corrals the universe. On the Far, Far Range, that's the name of the game as you feed slimes and farm the 'plorts' they drop. The entire economy is based on this resource, with prices for each variety of plort fluctuating daily. The money you earn can go into new ranch facilities for holding new types of slimes, unlocking new parts of the Range, or upgrading your gear so you can Hoover up even more plorts, slimes, and resources alike.

Beyond the odd offworld email offering delightful crumbs of a story, there's not much more outside of that. You quickly get into a relaxing rhythm, spurred on by the cutesy chirps of the chubbily appealing slimes you Hoover up with your vacpack. The world itself is suitably colourful, each new zone visually distinct from the others (as well as offering new slimes, resources, and farming opportunities), mitigating the lack of a minimap and the confusing layout of the world map.

Not every slime you encounter is happy to be a plort mule¹ and not every new area you venture into will be a walk in the park, however, with feral slimes and environmental hazards stalking new parts of the Range. While it's surprising the first time you come a cropper to such a threat, all are easily ousted when you're packing the right tools or resources. But danger is generally fleeting² on the Far, Far Range, plorts are plentiful, and the slimes are never not adorable... though we wish our inventory was just a few slots bigger. While gameplay isn't super-deep, you'll still find yourself returning to the slime ranch again and again. Jess Kinghorn



FOOTNOTES 1 They're probably none too happy about the corral conditions. 2 Feral slimes are just hungry, carnivorous Tarr slimes dissolve in water, and environmental hazards are easily avoided.

INFO FORMAT PS VR ETA OUT NOW PUB FELLOW
TRAVELLER GAMES DEV TINY BULL STUDIOS



BLIND

Cane and able

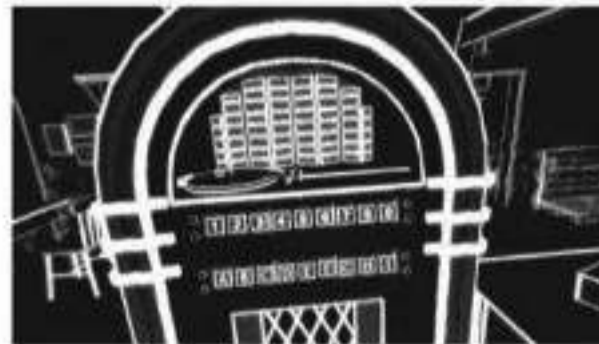
This isn't the first time we've found ourselves relying on echolocation, but while Stifled (reviewed OPM #143, 7/10) pushed our horror buttons this take on the technique focuses on solving puzzles.

The setup is the same: you're placed inside a dark world whose details are only revealed by sound waves bouncing around the environment. Why are you here? After a car crash you wake in a mansion, and need to problem-solve your way to freedom, rescuing your young brother along the way.¹

While being inside a pitch-black room, deprived of one of your senses, will always be alarming, the game soon settles down into a cosy parade of echo-tapping conundrums. Any sense of unease is jettisoned as you slip into a rhythm of tapping your cane to uncover a room's secrets, then using your wits to solve a puzzle and open a door to venture further into the mansion.

Without any real horrors Blind doubles down on its puzzles. Starting with simple mazes and switch combos the complexity soon ratchets up, driving you to use echolocation to see inside walls to juggle water flow through pipes, or visualise musical notes.²

While the story sheds light on why solving these brain-teasers matters so much, it lacks the sense of unease the premise warrants. Devoid of any threat, Blind loses its way and you're left to stumble from one (albeit good) puzzle room to the next with little tangible danger to spur you on. You're not so much fumbling in the dark for a sense of direction as you are coerced towards a not-so-subtle twist. But you will have fun getting there. Ian Dean



FOOTNOTES 1 Naturally it's not that simple, and there's a supernatural twist to the tale. 2 Recordings found in the rooms have physical effects on the game's world.



While you can't grab objects as weapons, you can batter foes with their own death cries.

ALREADY DEAD

@DaMisanthrope

FIST OF THE NORTH STAR: LOST PARADISE

The cult manga goes Yakuza crazy



091



INFO

FORMAT PS4
ETA OUT NOW
PUB SEGA
DEV RYU GA GOTOKU
STUDIO

You wait for years for a Yakuza game, then they all come at once. Whether you'd count *Lost Paradise* among them is another matter. Stick with the English voices, and you could assume this is just the latest game adaptation of Buronson and Tetsuo Hara's cult manga. But switch to Japanese and you'll instantly recognise that muscle-bound protagonist Kenshiro shares a voice with the *Dragon Of Dojima*.

Both men share a tough exterior and unshaking drive to protect the vulnerable from the villains of the world. *Lost Paradise's* chapter-based structure also unfolds mostly in a single city hub, complete with side-quests and other distractions, while you're occasionally assailed by ruffians who have no idea who they're starting on.

The stark difference is that whereas Kiryu's brutal lessons for his assailants are non-lethal, Kenshiro's mastery of the deadly Hokuto Shinken martial art means he's effortlessly murdering mohawked punks within seconds of the game's opening, and the bodies keep piling up – or rather, exploding into a messy shower of gore.

If you find Yakuza's slapstick brawling its least appealing aspect, this gleeful ultra-violence can be offputting. Even as a guilty pleasure, once you've popped a hundred heads with the same few QTE channelling techniques, it quickly gets

old, though timing **○** presses just right to insta-kill enemies with a 'perfect channelling' is the more efficient way to go.

WHAT A WASTE(LAND)

Yet while your overpowered character can make combat a walkover until you reach the bosses with ridiculous guard resistance, it's not without irritations. In crowded battles, there's an awful tendency to swing at the wrong person (frustrating when you're trying to target someone susceptible to channelling), while often a strike prompt appears, only to vanish. Despite running at 60fps, there's a sluggishness to Kenshiro's movements, not helped by the game running on an engine that feels ancient coming after *Yakuza 6* and *Kiwami 2* in the same year.

But what's really missing from *Lost Paradise* is Yakuza's charm. It does have its wacky moments, particularly when Kenshiro puts on a tux to mix

cocktails at the bar, which requires you to shake your DualShock furiously, or if you decide to put your Hokuto skills to healing people at a clinic via a frankly bizarre rhythm game. But you only need to walk a block around Eden's drab environments to see that it's no Kamurocho – and nuclear fallout's not entirely to blame.

Things get even more forgettable when you roam beyond the city walls in a dull wasteland, driving a beaten-up dune buggy that's only worthwhile if you fancy listening to music from other Sega games. It's a reminder you could be playing far better games instead.

VERDICT

The best game adaptation of the manga yet, though that's not saying much. Save for a few eccentric moments, it plays like a forgettable and outdated side-story. **Alan Wen**



1110

092

BUGGED OUT

@MrOscarTK



HOLLOW KNIGHT: VOIDHEART EDITION

This bug's life epic is far from a small adventure

Every time you think you reach the edge of Hollow Knight's large, sprawling world, you realise there's more to see. The world design always has an answer to your attempts to explore and eke out more about the ruined, ancient bug-city of Hallownest. Not just what hides within the mines one early corridor hints at, but what lies above The City Of Tears with its ever-dripping rainfall, or what's beyond the Failed Tramway.

In broad terms, Hollow Knight is a Metroidvania. You explore, discover new areas, and find upgrades and power-ups, some of which let you access locations you couldn't get to before. But what's fantastic is while the game works as a whole with these components, each area feels like its own microcosm of the loop it excels at delivering. This means each time you begin to master an area, you're again put on the back foot by unearthing a new environment. You always feel like you're venturing into the unknown.

WHAT A CHARMER

Each area has breathtaking new twists, visually and mechanically, and you find yourself without a map of the area when entering for the first



INFO

FORMAT PS4
ETA OUT NOW
PUB TEAM CHERRY
DEV TEAM CHERRY

time. Cornifer, just one of the helpful bugs you encounter throughout the course of the game, will sell you a map. Even then, it's bare-bones, and only updated when your little bug knight adventurer takes a rest at one of the game's benches that act as save points and allow you change your loadout.

Like everything else you stumble upon in Hollow Knight, the benches feel like epic discoveries as you forge out into the unknown. Fast travel points like the dilapidated Stag Stations, between which you ride The Last Stag, feel vital because of their scarcity. After all, if you

die, you need to reach that point again to recover your lost soul (and precious Geo, the game's currency).

Purchasable charms tweak how you play, giving buffs like extra reach for your nail (your sword, because you're a tiny little bug person), or a little swarm that pick up loose Geo around you. You only have a limited number of slots, with more useful charms taking up more slots, so you'll often need to think what you afford to spend the slots on for a given situation. Deviously, even the compass charm that marks your location on the map takes up a notch. Do you really need

"EACH TIME YOU BEGIN TO MASTER AN AREA, YOU'RE PUT ON THE BACK FOOT."



Right Every new area presents things out to squish your bug. Like green poison water.



Below The Fungoons' gas attacks are nasty. What do these guys eat?!



Above left As you gain mastery over the world, the world evolves to kill you.

to know where you are in these sprawling labyrinths?

NAIL BITING

Fighting your way through the Hallowest caves feels like it has a lot of weight. Your nail strikes by default knock you back, which works excellently as you get used to it, creating distance as you read enemy attacks. You can even pogo-stick your way over enemies by doing this, and some platforming challenges reward this sort of creative thinking. How you interact with this world has a delightful physical context, alongside the things like the maps and charms – everything makes sense within the game's own world rules.

Bosses are hard, though the order in which you'll have to fight them – or whether you have to fight them at all – is open from early on. You often have the option to search instead for new charms, or more upgrades to your skillset

or nail. It's a world you explore at your own pace. And with all four content packs already included in this PS4 debut, that's a lot to explore.

While it's challenging, you always feel like you're in control over how you move with the D-pad, or like you can change up your approach with your loadout. Soul powers let you restore health after a small charge, built up by hitting enemies, so you can find an opening to make a comeback, even in the hardest of fights. Again, everything feels built around the world in a way that makes sense, and is a joy to explore, however frightening that unknown can be at times.

VERDICT

Visually stunning, mechanically rewarding – Hollow Knight is a game that works on just about every level. It presents challenge, but always fairly, with plentiful options to explore new pathways. **Oscar Taylor-Kent**

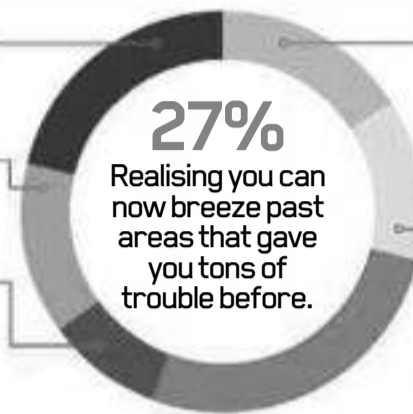
THE OPM BREAKDOWN

WHAT YOU DO IN... HOLLOW KNIGHT

21% Collecting the Geo to buy a lantern, then dying in a tricky location.

14% Sitting on a bench browsing the map, picking where to go next.

9% Crying because you're lost in Deepnest with no map or benches in sight. Oh God, why?



16% Feeling a tad too proud you managed to finally beat that boss.

13% Finding a hidden secret right next to somewhere you've walked past dozens of times.

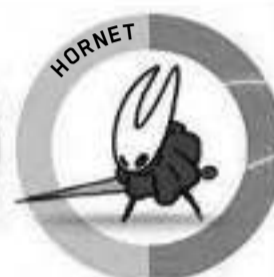
FRIENDS & ENEMIES



Follow a trail of paper and this guy will sell you a handy map.



The main fast travel in the game, he'll ferry you between locations.



A deadly fighter who uses a needle in combat. But is she friend or foe?

THE FIRST FIVE HOURS ...



1 Even this early in the game we're finding secrets hidden off the beaten path. 2 What's this little wormy man crying about? Larvae we'll have to collect, we find out later. 3 Moving to a new area we get lost, until we hear the hum of Cornifer. 4 Picking up a dash power-up, we go back and pull off some tricky platforming to collect a charm. 5 Lost and scared again, we follow signs to a Stag Station where we can rest.

STAT PACK



TROPHY CABINET



BRONZE
Vanquish the False Knight, the first boss you'll encounter, to pop this one. Just the first step on a long journey!



SILVER
Open every Stag Station and ride your friend to glory. What more can The Last Stag help you find?



GOLD
This tricky trophy unlocks after beating the game with 112% completion! There's so much to explore!



The speed gear is an invaluable aid in your quest.

THE MEG

@MrOscarTK



MEGA MAN 11

Get ready to rock, man



INFO

FORMAT PS4
ETA OUT NOW
PUB CAPCOM
DEV CAPCOM

All is as it should be. Despite moving away from the 8-bit retro-styled throwback of 9 and 10, *Mega Man 11* is wholeheartedly the 11th game in the Mega Man series. And that's no bad thing. Move from playing one of the recent PS4 ports of the classic '80s games to this one, and it feels the same, only smoother. It's no easy feat to build on that through-line, and that's the magic of *Mega Man 11*.

If you have any familiarity with the core Mega Man series then you'll know what to expect. You control the sleek, shiny blue guy himself as he runs in two dimensions from one screen to the next, blasting enemy robots and navigating tricky platforming challenges. At first, you'll get the choice to tackle eight levels in any order you like, before taking on a more difficult final gauntlet in the crazed Dr Wily's final fortress.

Each stage is presided over by one of Wily's robot masters, and themed appropriately. Defeating a robot gives Mega Man its power to use as an alternative weapon, and each robot is weak to certain attacks. Part of the fun is finding your footing, and ferreting out these

"IT'S STILL TRICKY LIKE MEGA MAN ALWAYS WAS, BUT IT AVOIDS FEELING CHEAP."

new weapons, so in a sense the first portion gets easier the more headway you make. Part of overcoming the obstacles is learning their patterns as you retry failed attempts.

WINNING 11

The 8-bit pixels have been moved aside, but visually *Mega Man 11* is gorgeous. Full of bright, vibrant colours, all the 3D models have a fantastic smoothness. And it doesn't remove that Mega Man feeling at all. Stages look fantastic because of this, and are full of character – from Block Man's monolithic temples to Torch Man's campfire trip gone horribly, horribly wrong.

It's still tricky like Mega Man always was, but it avoids feeling cheap in the same way those old games sometimes could. A swathe of difficulty modes makes it approachable to everyone, with a newcomer difficulty level giving infinite lives (the game's checkpointing is pretty generous anyway), and infinite spike and pitfall protectors. Those can be

purchased in the main campaign, to give you an edge if you find a section too tough.

The main difference between this game and its predecessors is the double gear system, which allows Mega Man to temporarily enhance his abilities with either a Power or Speed boost (which both use the same cooldown). You'll need to make sure you don't overheat or you won't be able to use them for a while, but clever use of both boosts can help you master tricky situations, by either doing more damage or slowing down time briefly for tricky jumps and slides. And boy, you'll need them for some of the challenges, especially if you go in for some of the bonus content outside of the main campaign. It's a mega package.

VERDICT

This deftly made return to Mega Man revives the core series beyond being a novel retro throwback, giving it a gorgeous coat of fresh paint at the same time. **Oscar Taylor-Kent**



Classic teams allow you to throw together dream match-ups like Chicago '92-'93 vs Memphis '05-'06.

UPTOWN DUNK

@BenjiWilson



NBA 2K19

A must-buy, so long as you can spell 'Antetokounmpo'



INFO

FORMAT PS4
ETA OUT NOW
PUB 2K GAMES
DEV VISUAL
CONCEPTS

EA has dominated videogame sports for the best (or, in cynics' eyes, worst) part of two decades – at least where frozen hockey and both kinds of football are concerned. In basketball terms, NBA Live has been consistently outperformed by its 2K rival, and this year once again sees Visual Concepts' sim score title honours. Realistic on the court and packing myriad options off it, it's an essential buy for the hoops completionist.

Still, what of the casual fan or basketball diehard who wants more than a roster update? Both types of supporter are catered for, though it's tougher to recommend this over picking 2K18 up on the cheap. Take MyLeague and MyGM, the two versions of NBA's deep franchise mode. Changes include the option to assign older players to mentor younger prospects, and sliders to adjust contract values and draft pick depreciation. If that has you blinking at this page in a fog of 'WTF?!', it's likely you'll be fine with last year's offering.

On court the basics feel near-identical. Shooting, for instance, can be done by tapping a button or using the right stick, and 2K19's pick-up-and-play value is strong. Yet there

are nuances, too, for series veterans, such as the archetype system, which enables individuals to 'Takeover' a match for a limited period. A playmaker gets a brief shooting upgrade, a post-scorer receives boosted hooks, fades, and shimmies, and slashers become temporarily better at euros and hot steps. It can feel a touch arcadey – almost a throwback to NBA Jam's 'He's on fire!' era – but these surges of individual brilliance do occur in real life, and some attempt to mimic them is neat.

CHINESE TAKEAWAY

The mode Visual Concepts trumpets annually is MyCareer, where you steer a created character to glory. For 2K19 it's titled The Way Back, and tips off in China after your on-screen alter-ego goes undrafted in the NBA. Eventually he rebounds to the US pro game, with mixed results: the wealth of ways to customise your character are welcome, and activities like dodgeball and trampoline basketball

make great additions to the 'Neighbourhood' hub. But many of those customisation options – and, worse, stats upgrades – require you to drop money on virtual currency, edging 2K19 into 'play-to-win' territory.

Even so, there are elements 2K19's contemporaries can learn from. Starting MyGM as an expansion team is superb, and a feature Madden needs in order to transform digitised NFL. Blacktop basketball on inner-city courts showcases how great a FIFA Street spin-off would be. And the option to play as historic teams such as Michael Jordan's '92-'93 Bulls makes every exhibition match matter, and is something all sports games should borrow. Microtransactions hold it back from a bigger score, but 2K19 is still an exceptional baller.

VERDICT

NBA 2K19 is fantastic at all the times when it isn't asking you to part with real cash. Although sadly, in MyCareer, you'll be tempted to open your wallet way too often. **Ben Wilson**

"REALISTIC ON THE COURT AND PACKING MYRIAD OPTIONS OFF IT."



The breathtaking watercolour-like art doesn't betray the horrors of war.

A GALLIA-NT EFFORT

@mitchjaylineham



VALKYRIA CHRONICLES 4

A tale as beautiful as it is bittersweet



INFO
 FORMAT PS4
 ETA OUT NOW
 PUB SEGA
 DEV SEGA CS3

For ten years you've waited to take up arms against the devastating Eastern Imperial Alliance, and now comes Squad E's chance to fight for what they believe is right. Blood will be spilled, tears will be shed, and the emotional devastation of losing an ally doesn't get any easier. Gear up and take to the battlefield, but keep a box of tissues nearby.

Taking place in the same timeframe as the original Valkyria Chronicles, this fourth instalment sees Sega attempt to capture a Western audience with its mature narrative and adult characters. Little has changed from the series' first forays into war, so those disappointed in Valkyria Chronicles II's student-centric cast can rest easy, as the cast here is, refreshingly, from all walks of life.

You can change the difficulty whenever you're out of battle, which is handy considering how tough the game can get. You'll be laid to waste in no time if you rush blindly in, and you're encouraged to fight strategically. Combat is turn-based, and the core mechanics are simple – you can move as many characters as your CP (Command Points) allows. Battles can last the

better part of an hour, but this is where the magic of Valkyria Chronicles lies. You have party members hiding out in bushes, crouching besides sand bags, and rolling forward in tanks, all in the hopes that you'll be able to grasp victory from an overwhelming army which seemingly has no end of reinforcements. It's satisfying seeing the results screen after a gruelling battle, generally being awarded a medal.

TEAM TACTICS

You usually have ten members per battle, with the option to switch them around at ally-occupied camps. Each character has their own personality which affects how they perform. A determined character like Kai may get a short burst where their accuracy rises, but the bald Aladdin will perform worse thanks to his "Shiny Head", which makes him self-conscious. Each character is different, and it's well worth taking the time to know your squad. That's what a good captain does, after all!

Despite the serious tone of the narrative, there are a lot of time-out moments and jokes, and optional scenes to learn more about the characters and how they interact with each other. Allies who are friendly with each other are more likely to perform joint attacks in battle, and these scenes serve to provide a richer experience. The humour will be familiar to Japanese game fans, but it's a little less loud, where Sega has kept, us, its eager Western audience in mind.

The watercolour-like art is utterly gorgeous, conveying every emotion, and it almost justifies buying the game on its own. Thankfully, gameplay is tight and engaging, leaving no doubt that this is a must-play tactical JPG series fans and newcomers alike.

VERDICT

Valkyria Chronicles has had a rocky history in the West, with the third game never even hitting our shores, but Valkyria Chronicles 4 is just what the fans ordered. **Mitchell Lineham**

"EACH CHARACTER'S PERSONALITY AFFECTS HOW THEY PERFORM."



INFO FORMAT PS4 ETA OUT NOW
PUB ACTIVISION DEV BUNGIE



CAYDE MAN

DESTINY 2 – FORSAKEN

Latest DLC delivers the Guardian goods

Good news, Guardian: this is comfortably the best expansion Bungie has released since the first Destiny's *The Taken King*. Compared to *Curse Of Osiris* and *Warmind*, the latest DLC offers a far meatier, more compelling tale that kicks off season four of the shooter sequel in style. If you're a lapsed fan who hasn't touched the base game in months, this satisfying, surprising campaign should rejuvenate your burnt-out Guardian's enthusiasm.

First, though, you'd better ask Hawthorne for some hankies. As teased throughout the pre-launch campaign for *Forsaken*, everyone's favourite quip-cracking robot does indeed bite the big one. But it's all in a good cause, as far as the storyline goes, at any rate.

Cayde-6's untimely demise at the hands of the returning (never more scheming) Uldren Sov (last seen in *The Taken King*, coincidentally enough) fuels a revenge quest that sees your Guardian hunting down not only Sov, but his psychotic Barons across the new Tangled Shore area. These bulky Scorn generals provide *Destiny 2* with its best boss fights yet. Whether entering into a pike-on-pike smackdown with *The Rider*, or diffusing *The Mad Bomber's* array of

explosives, these assassination quests feel bespoke and varied.

GAM-BITTEN

With a couple of notable difficulty spikes as you try to reach the new soft power level of 500, ranking up your Guardian feels less grindy than it did in past expansions. It helps that the headline new Gambit mode is a pleasure to blast through again and again.

A super-smart marriage of PvE and PvP, these heated matches ask each team to collect notes by killing enemies. The first side to bank 75 of these can then summon a Primeval boss, and whichever team kills this beastie first wins the round. The twist? One player from each side can invade the other team's area every minute or so, adding PvP chaos and competition into these superbly thought-out skirmishes.

Though the *Last Wish* raid wasn't live at time of writing, *Forsaken's* cracking campaign, trio of tight Strikes, and compelling end-game – the journey to unlock the Dreaming City hub is a hoot – ensure *Destiny 2's* latest DLC is already worth the price of admission.

VERDICT

The sequel's best expansion by a distance. This update delivers a lively campaign that deserves to lure lapsed players back into the Fallen fold. **Dave Meikleham**

@McMeiks



LAST MONTH ON PS PLUS



@KoeniginKatze

T'was the season to get your spook on... not that we need much excuse, but the odd scary game certainly helps! But as the nights closed in and things got darker, so too did the PS Plus lineup with plenty of brooding titles.



In time for Halloween was **FRIDAY THE 13TH: THE GAME**, inviting players on a

jog around Camp Crystal Lake as one of a number of potential survivors trying to outrun and outgun classic serial killer Jason Vorhees. This asymmetric co-op was a bloody good time.



If you wanted something with a slightly more level playing field, then

the second title on PS4 this month was right up your alley. Illuminating Autumn evenings with a neon glow, **LASER LEAGUE** was an excellent, capture-the-flag-like future sport title. We're still very fond of it after reviewing it back in OPM #150 and giving it 8/10.

Also on PS4 (and, more importantly to some, on PS Vita too) were two more titles. **2064: READ ONLY MEMORIES** looked towards a cyberpunk future where a journalist had to bust open a kidnapping case. **ROCKBIRDS 2: EVOLUTION** was a little more optimistic in its vision of the future... if a smidge bird-brained. This side-scrolling shooter could be played with up to four players, though it left us with a hankering for nuggets. **THE BRIDGE** was playable on PS4, PS Vita, and PS3. The black-and-white 2D puzzler definitely helped us work up an appetite with its fiendishly tricky logic-based conundrums. Closing out the PS4 titles was PlayLink quiz game **KNOWLEDGE IS POWER**, which also featured in the September line up.

Lastly, on PS3, was **MASTER REBOOT**, which imagined a world in which death is not the end. With your memories stored, it was all a bit *Altered Carbon* by way of a spooky corridor, in first person with puzzles sprinkled throughout.

Farming Simulator 19

AVAILABLE NOVEMBER 20, 2018
FOR PC, MAC, XBOX ONE AND PLAYSTATION 4!



PRE-ORDER TODAY
AND RECEIVE A
**Mahindra
RETRIEVER UTV**
FOR YOUR GAME!



PC



www.farming-simulator.com

© 2018 GIANTS Software GmbH. Published and distributed by Focus Home Interactive under license of Giants Software. Giants Software and its logos are trademarks or registered trademarks of Giants Software. Focus, Focus Home Interactive and its logos are trademarks or registered trademarks of Focus Home Interactive. All manufacturers, agricultural machinery, agricultural equipment, names, brands and associated imagery featured in this game in some cases include trademarks and/or copyrighted materials of their respective owners. The „PS“ Family logo is a registered trademark and „PS4“ is a trademark of Sony Interactive Entertainment Inc. „Playstation 4“ is a trademark of the same company. Kinect, Xbox, Xbox LIVE and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and are used under license from Microsoft. All other trademarks or registered trademarks belong to their respective owners. All rights reserved. The agricultural machines and equipment in this game may be different from the actual machines in shapes, colours and performance.

network

online

dlc

ps vr

movies

streaming



this month



on the store

102 Assassin's Creed Odyssey DLC plans

Get two whole extra games, and story content so prolonged Homer would proclaim it epic.

099



on your xmb

104 Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom

Dino-mighty or dino-snores? Let's count Jeff Goldblum's scenes...



streaming now

105 This month's hottest shows



online tests

Strange Brigade ¹⁰⁰

Don't be a stranger - be a Strange Brigadier. Mauling mummies and other bounders is more fun in a team.

online tests

MULTIPLAYER MODES PUT THROUGH THEIR PACES BY OUR TEAM OF EXPERTS

WHAT WE'RE PLAYING NOW



DIVINITY: ORIGINAL SIN II

Jess Kinghorn sins as she's winning

Much like planning any session of a tabletop roleplaying game, arranging to play a tens-of-hours-long RPG in co-op is a logistical nightmare. That said, I've managed to find someone foolhardy enough to go on this adventure with me (spoiler alert: it's Oscar). Because I dream of becoming an improbable-haired magical girl, I choose to play as head-like-a-haunted-house-enchanter Lohse... though I'm not sure how I'd handle the latter part of her storyline when the devil comes a-knocking without a little help from my friend.



CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS III

Oscar Taylor-Kent gets brutalised so much he blacks out

The new Blackout mode brings battle royale to COD for the first time. But it still feels like the COD I know and love, perfectly removing the clunk these games can have for newcomers. Blackout might exist because other games have popularised the form, but polished gunplay, maps, and movement are where COD excels. Things like vaulting fences as I run from other players make everything feel better, even if the bullets in my back don't.



SPACE LORDS

Ian Dean puts his feet up in the latest F2Per

I have no idea what's going on here, but it looks oh-so-pretty. Like an Italian comic book from the '80s, this recently revamped free-to-play shooter (Space Lords is the game formerly known as Raiders Of The Broken Planet) is all big guns and boobs, on the men as well as the women. There are objectives to be achieved in each map, but I'm more concerned with headshotting anyone I see. Leaving the legwork of completing the mission to my team mates may be the laziest way to play, but it can be the most rewarding. Does this make me the biggest boob in the game? Not quite, but it's close.

REVIEW



INFO

FORMAT PS4
PUB REBELLION
DEV REBELLION
REVIEW #154, 8/10

Strange Brigade

Struggling to find players? Par for the curse

Shooting undead baddies – rotters in every sense of the word – from Ancient Egypt is great fun on your own, but one person does not a Strange Brigade make. With the game now on shelves, you should be mauling mummies, pwning puzzles, and destroying demons with three other adventurers whenever you like, but things don't quite work out that way.

Though the servers are surprisingly quiet, they're not empty. You'll have very little trouble finding other people to plough through story levels with. This brings a few advantages, not least of which is the fact that players can revive one another. Strange Brigade's system in this respect may seem annoying in theory, as you must reach whichever sarcophagus your buddy has been teleported to first. In practice, though, revives are much more likely to be successful than in comparable games,

thanks to the fact that you will almost certainly perform the revive away from the highest concentration of enemies.

While it's every brigadier for themselves when it comes to nabbing gold and health flasks, any and all hidden collectables are shared among the group. (I'm not saying that I've relied on other people's skills to help complete my collection but, you know...

I'm not saying that I haven't, either.)

HORDE UP

The obligatory Horde mode is well implemented. Taking place in custom maps, the exploration and puzzle elements are understandably dialled down in favour of more intense combat. You start off with just pistol and grenades, earning cash as you play to unlock better weapons,

IT'S EVERY BRIGADIER FOR THEMSELVES WHEN IT COMES TO NABBING GOLD AND HEALTH FLASKS.

JOURNEY'S FRIEND

Don't fear not being able to choose your favourite character - duplicates are allowed in a team. Not many games offer zombie-hunting quadruplets, do they?



The season pass adds four new characters to the original set.



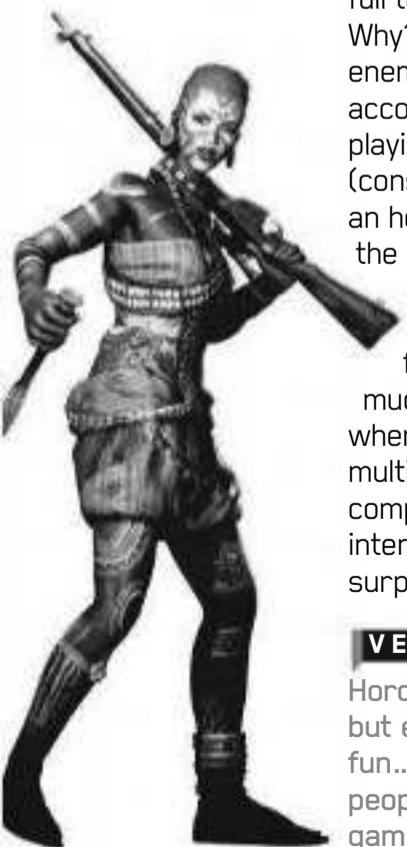
ammo refill chests, and doors that hide treasure and health drinks. You'll often find, unfortunately, that people quit games in this mode part-way through.

A Horde game with four players is a little rarer than you might expect, and a full team will rarely stay full for long. Why? Simply because the volume of enemies, understandably, scales up according to how many people are playing. One four-person round (consisting of 15 waves) can take about an hour and a half to complete. Solid as the experience is, 90 minutes for a single round is a bit much.

Score Attack is the best mode for playing with others. Featuring much shorter versions of story levels where you need to chain kills to keep a multiplier going, it's ideal for bursts of competitive fun... but hardly anybody's interested in it! As unpleasantly surprising as a hand from a grave.

VERDICT

Horde mode can start to drag slightly, but everything's here for hours of fun... except servers rammed full of people. Come and help make a good game even better. **Luke Kemp**



F1 2018

Where the rules of racing are only a suggestion

INFO

FORMAT PS4
PUB CODEMASTERS
DEV CODEMASTERS
BIRMINGHAM
REVIEW #154, 9/10

F1 2018's quickmatch equivalent is a five-lap, ranked race... and it's chaos. It doesn't matter how politely you follow someone; pull alongside and they'll invariably steer into you, trashing both your cars. The new Sportsmanship score is meant to match you with like-minded racers, but blame is rarely apportioned correctly and lobbies often range from A-D which is hardly 'matched'. Some players also beat the penalty system and skip over corners, zooming off into an unassailable lead. If you fancy something more genteel, you can try 25% distance races instead, or eschew ranked mode entirely in favour of friendly events or custom championships with friends. It's technically great throughout, but the public mode is basically spoiled by the public.

VERDICT

A well-implemented online mode that's often spoiled by cheating and barging. Go friends-only, or just take a deep breath and join the melee. **Justin Towell**



PES 2019

Do you wanna be in myClub, myClub...

INFO

FORMAT PS4
PUB KONAMI
DEV KONAMI
REVIEW #154, 8/10

Offline not much has changed, but online, particularly in myClub, PES 2019 has undergone many solid improvements, some cosmetic, some game-changing.

There's no denying Konami has lifted ideas from FIFA Ultimate Team, with new player cards and weekly revisals of stats. But this was sort of there anyway, only now it's clearer. What has changed is your squad size, and the ability to sign up to three players at once from a Special Agent. This means the new trading system will become a metagame in its own right, in due course.

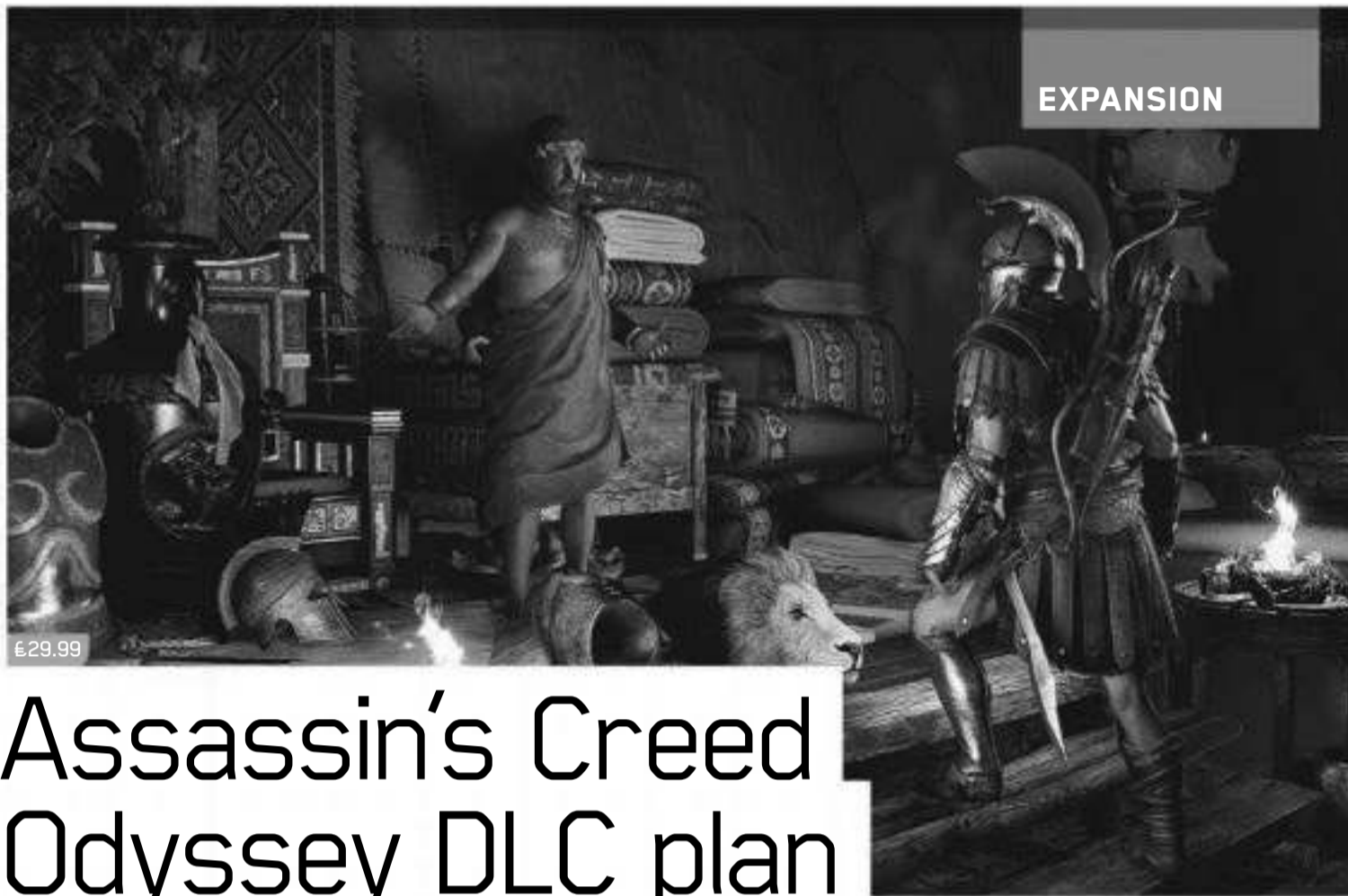
On the pitch PES 2019 is the best edition yet, and if you only play online and are happy to ignore the lacklustre offline tweaks, there's no better game of football on PS4.

VERDICT

Brush aside the poor offline modes and embrace PES 2019 online. Welcome changes and the best on-pitch action make it a must play. **Ian Dean**

on the store

EMPTY YOUR WALLETS NOW WITH THE LATEST DOWNLOADABLE DIVERSIONS



£29.99

Assassin's Creed Odyssey DLC plan

The journey continues for Kassandra and Alexios

Now you're playing Assassin's Creed Odyssey, thoughts turn to its post-release content, and Ubisoft has something special planned. We're not only getting new content, two whole extra games are incoming.

That's right, the post-launch is so big, it effectively triples your gaming experience. The Assassin's Creed Odyssey Season Pass includes Assassin's Creed III Remastered, which in turn contains a remaster of the PS Vita spin-off Assassin's Creed Liberation. Naturally, it'll come with all of Assassin's Creed III's DLC. You can expect that to land March 2019.

The narrative extra content for Odyssey will take the form of two episodic story arcs, called Legacy Of

The First Blade and The Fate Of Atlantis. The first will begin to roll out in December 2018, with new episodes in that arc releasing every six weeks; and the second arc will start in spring 2019, with the same six-week episode run.

We're also getting free content. Odyssey: The Lost Tales Of Greece are

narrative quests that will be added over time; each week there will be new challenges and daily contracts; an educational tool similar to Origins' Discovery Tour, will be added; and we'll get much more besides, such as a new game plus mode, and "new monstrous and mythical creatures to defeat".

THE POST-LAUNCH CONTENT IS SO BIG IT EFFECTIVELY TRIPLES YOUR GAMING EXPERIENCE.

DLC

£15.99

MARVEL'S SPIDER-MAN - THE CITY THAT NEVER SLEEPS

These three story chapters feature new missions, costumes, and challenges. The first, The Heist, is out now. Turf Wars and Silver Lining will then release in November and December respectively.

£4.99

SHADOW OF THE TOMB RAIDER - THE FORGE

The first of seven DLC adventures releasing monthly, The Forge offers a new standalone story based in the City Of Paititi. And you get a new Challenge Tomb, outfits, and weapons, as well as the Grenadier skill. The Forge is out 13 November.

£4.99

OVERCOOKED - SURF 'N' TURF

It's time to take the co-op fun on holiday with 12 new exotic maps, and three new chefs, including the return of Boof! New kitchens mean new recipes, and this DLC offers smoothies and BBQ skewers. Just watch out for the new hazards, including a chaotic conga line.

ALSO ON PSN



£4.99

NEW CHARACTER PACK
Both Lei Wulong and Anna Williams return to kick off the second season of DLC content for the fantastic Tekken 7. Also available as part of the £24.99 season pass.



£7.99

THE SURGE - THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE AUGMENTED EXPANSION
The sci-fi Soulsborne gets a western-themed expansion set inside a Westworld-like TV show.



£7.99

SPOOKY STUFF
OPM's Jess loves a bit of Halloween, and so do the Sims with this collection of costumes and decorations for scary season. If you have a party, invite Jess.



£3.99

COOLER & ANDROID 17
The fight(Z) must go on! Cooler and Android 17 are the latest fighterZ to join the Dragon Ball FighterZ roster, available individually or as part of the £28.99 FighterZ pass.



£7.99

STAR WARS PINBALL: SOLO PACK
The movie's digital means crossover DLC, in the form of three tables for Pinball FX3: Solo; Calrissian Chronicles; and Battle Of Mimban.

EMP

THE UK'S BEST SELECTION OF GAMING MERCHANDISE

Get **15% Off*** all orders
exclusively at emp.co.uk
with this code: **EMPOPSO**

*minimum order value: £50

visit us at
emp.co.uk

on your XMB

BLU-RAYS



Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom

They didn't stop to think if they should...

One strange quirk of modern cinema, and the limitless potential of CGI, is that even the sight of a photorealistic dinosaur running away from an exploding island can evoke apathy. But, thankfully, there's a little more to Jurassic World sequel *Fallen Kingdom* than its yawnsome centrepiece.

Set several years after the events of *Jurassic World*, the prehistoric inhabitants of Isla Nublar face a new extinction-level event. With the rest of humanity unwilling to intervene, Owen (Chris Pratt) and Claire (Bryce Dallas Howard) lead an expedition funded by Benjamin Lockwood (an old buddy of John Hammond) to swoop in and save all the dinos they can. But not everyone's motives are altruistic.

While the first half of *Fallen Kingdom* follows familiar beats, climaxing in an expensive-looking but otherwise uninspiring action sequence, it's the second half where the film shines. Set entirely in Lockwood's spooky gothic

mansion, the segue into claustrophobic horror evokes the original *Jurassic Park*, with new hybrid dino the Indoraptor providing the scares.

Director JA Bayona (*The Orphanage*) is in his element here, and lends the film a visual poetry lacking from *Fallen Kingdom's* workmanlike predecessor. But by failing to deliver the goods until the mid-way mark, it's too little, too late. Claire and Owen remain bland leads for this new trilogy, but with Jeff Goldblum returning for a brief cameo, let's hope life finds a way to bring the old gang back together for one last hurrah. **Jordan Farley**



■ Stay till the end (or fast forward) for the series' first ever post-credits scene.

COMING SOON



ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK 29 OCT

Metal Gear Solid drew on this John Carpenter classic, remastered on Blu-ray alongside '80s gems *Prince Of Darkness* and *They Live*.



THE FIRST PURGE 29 OCT

This isn't the 'first' *Purge*, it's the fourth. But it's the first chronologically, covering how the night of legalised crime came to be.



SICARIO 2: SOLDADO 29 OCT

Josh Brolin and Benicio del Toro return for the sequel to 2015's war on drugs thriller, this time adding a topical splash of terror to the mix.



BATMAN: THE COMPLETE ANIMATED SERIES 29 OCT

Bruce Timm's legendary animated series was a huge influence on *Rocksteady's* *Arkham* Trilogy.



2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY 29 OCT

The greatest sci-fi film of all time? Watch this Blu-ray rerelease pulled from an unrestored 70mm print and decide for yourself.



UNCLE DREW 5 NOV

Film adaptation of a web-series about a team of septuagenarians (played, for the most part, by NBA pros in makeup) who compete in a street ball tournament.



RICK AND MORTY SEASON 3 12 NOV

The continued antics of mad scientist Rick Sanchez and his naive grandson Morty Smith release on shiny disc.



INCREDIBLES 2 12 NOV

Belated sequel sees Elastigirl on a mission to stop a supervillain, while Mr Incredible is left holding the baby. But Jack-Jack is no ordinary toddler...



STAR TREK DISCOVERY SEASON 1 19 NOV

The latest *Star Trek* series starts off slowly, but hits warp speed by the stellar final stretch.



SKYSCRAPER 19 NOV

Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson stars in this *Die Hard*-inspired actioner about a security consultant who gets framed for a fire in the world's biggest building.

Streaming now



Co-writer Mark Bombback is rumoured to be scripting the new Batman movie.

FORMAT NETFLIX PRICE €7.99 A MONTH

Outlaw King

Chris Pine heads north of the wall

Before Mel Gibson lost Hollywood's love he made Braveheart, the story of Scottish rebel William Wallace's revolt against King Edward I. Overlapping with the events of Wallace's rebellion, Outlaw King is, in many respects, a spiritual sequel to Gibson's multi-award winner, albeit one that never hits Braveheart's heights.

Chris Pine puts on his best Scots as Robert The Bruce, the 'outlaw king' of 14th-century Scotland. Outnumbered, Robert and his meagre force engage in guerilla warfare against the occupying English army, forcing rival kings into a battle for the future of Scotland.

Re-uniting with David Mackenzie, the director of superb neo-Western Hell Or High Water, Pine feels out of his element here. Sporting a dubious mullet, and an even more dubious accent, his Robert is full of contradictions that don't sit right with the film's depiction of him as a

morally resolute hero. On the plus side, MacKenzie does such an impressive job depicting medieval Scotland in all its bloody, muddy glory it's almost a shame this is heading to Netflix - there's visual ambition here that would benefit from the big screen experience.

But without the crowd-pleasing, underdog charm of similar David and Goliath stories, Outlaw King overstays its welcome, with at least two forest ambushes too many. It'll fill a few hours, but don't be surprised if your eyes drift towards the Braveheart DVD on your shelf throughout.

Jordan Farley



MORE TO SEE



DAREDEVIL SEASON 3

FORMAT NETFLIX PRICE €7.99 A MONTH

The third season of Netflix's best Marvel series [The Punisher? - ed] picks up after The Defenders, with Matt Murdock recovering from his injuries. Wilson Fisk is back on villain duties, and if internet scuttlebutt is to be believed, Bullseye will make his debut too...

THE BALLAD OF BUSTER SCRUGGS

FORMAT NETFLIX PRICE €7.99 A MONTH

The Coen Brothers (Fargo, No Country For Old Men) make their streaming debut with this western anthology movie consisting of six tales. The titular chapter stars Coen veteran Tim Blake Nelson as an all-singing, six-shooting outlaw.



THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE

FORMAT NOW TV PRICE €7.99 A MONTH

Mike "Oculus" Flanagan is in the midst of shooting Shining sequel Doctor Sleep, but before that there's this adaptation of Shirley Jackson's chiller to look forward to. Carla Gugino stars as the matriarch of a family affected by their haunted home for generations.



APOSTLE

FORMAT NETFLIX PRICE €7.99 A MONTH

Welsh writer/director Gareth Evans is the man behind the astonishing Indonesian martial arts films The Raid and its sequel, so you should be very excited about his English-language debut, starring Dan Stevens as a man who infiltrates a cult to rescue his sister. Not for the squeamish - it may be set in 1905, but it's a far cry from Stevens' turn in Downton Abbey.

R

Homecoming may be the best Spider-Man movie, but Tom Holland's ace caper doesn't have a superb PlayStation tie-in.



106

PlayStation 2



INFO

PUB ACTIVISION
DEV TREYARCH PRODUCTIONS
RELEASED 2004, PS2
GET IT NOW AMAZON, £32.96

NEED TO KNOW

- 1 Treyarch made a further three Spidey titles.
- 2 It sold enough copies to become a Platinum title.
- 3 MGS3's Josh Keaton voices Harry Osborn.

Marvel-ous

Every month we celebrate the most important, innovative, or just plain great games from PlayStation's past. This issue, we sling and swing around a sandbox New York with one of the most heroic movie tie-ins of all time



Spider-Man 2

On rare occasions, licensed games don't suck. And when we say 'rare', we're talking the equivalent of a singing dodo performing *Les Misérables* on Broadway. Yet against all odds, and years before Rocksteady's Batman trilogy, Treyarch served up a sensational Spidey title that's never been topped, even 14 years on.

Released the same week as Sam Raimi's excellent superhero sequel, *Spider-Man 2* was PS2's best licensed game. Why? Because it introduced a pioneering traversal system that used physics-based algorithms and a techy term called 'raycasting' to infuse every web swing with a joyous sense of empowering momentum. We're now two console generations removed from Treyarch's heroic effort, and there's arguably never been a more effective use of in-game physics.

The lion's share of the credit belongs to designer Jamie Fristrom. Unhappy with the PS2 tie-in of the original *Spider-Man* movie, Fristrom set out to develop a system where the Wall Crawler's webbing physically attached to a multitude of specific points on buildings. Previous games had cheated by giving Peter Parker magic webs that connected to random points in

the sky, rather than physically sticking to objects in the world. It meant every Spidey outing before this 2004 classic felt floaty and fake, with the hero never truly connecting to his surroundings.

Even at the prototype stage, when shown internally at Treyarch, producers were astounded by the new physics-based swinging system. Everyone who saw it in action, even without missions to match, would stare in giddy awe and simply revel in the act of swinging through and around New York City. Early in development, Activision knew it had a hit in the making.

It's easy to see why the publisher was so excited: in the decade-and-a-bit since Spidey 2 launched, few other games have come close to replicating its effortless joy of movement. Even gliding above rooftops in *Batman: Arkham City* or working yourself into a free-running frenzy in *Mirror's Edge* can't quite match the empowering elegance that comes from catapulting Spidey between skyscrapers. In motion,

IN MOTION, THE FRIENDLY NEIGHBOURHOOD WEB-SLINGER IS A JOY.

the friendly neighbourhood web-slinger is a joy to watch, a series of beautifully blended animations combining to create a contorting, pirouetting hero you can't take your eyes off.

What your peepers *will* want to shun are the Citizens In Distress missions. Thank the Stan Lee above swinging is such a hoot, because many of the objectives Spidey has to sully with himself with are far from heroic. Saving precariously hanging construction workers; stopping stolen cars; thwarting purse snatchers; saving little girls' balloons; pizza delivery. And no, that last one isn't a typo. There really is a subset of missions that ask Spidey to get margheritas from stuffed-crust point A to marinara-sauce-slathered point B. Um, Pete... why is our dinner covered in sticky, translucent goo?

SWING STAR

Even when missions grate or boss fights against the likes of Rhino and The Shocker frustrate, the core pleasure of swinging between New York's skyscrapers never dulls. Subsequent Spidey games fiddled with the web-slinging formula, diluting the purity of what was close to a perfect mechanic. It's only now, with *Insomniac's* wall-crawling reboot, that Marvel's most famous hero is fully hitting his swinging stride again.

PS4's Spidey may have finally dethroned Treyarch's classic – *Insomniac's* effort isn't bogged down by Tobey Maguire's catatonic voiceover or Citizens In Distress missions. Still, dodgy VO aside, we'll forever be stuck on 2004's awesome arachnid.



■ Spidey's swinging system is utterly sensational.

■ Combat is inconsistent, but webbing goons is fun.

■ Even Persia's Prince can't wall-run like Mr Parker.

Name that game

Guess the four games, and their scores, from these review quotes

1 **BRILLIANTLY INVENTIVE. ONE HIGHLIGHT INVOLVES A MUSIC BOX, BUT I'M NOT GOING TO SAY WHY.**

2 **ONE OF THE SLICKEST, MOST DAZZLINGLY PRODUCED, AND ENJOYABLE PLATFORM GAMES EVER MADE.**

3 **TACTICAL TEAM-BASED SHOOTER [...] - THE CHARACTER-SWITCHING MECHANIC SWEETENS THE GENRE. GROUP UP WITH FRIENDS TO AVOID CLUELESS CARNAGE.**

4 **A BRIGHT, INVIGORATING SPIN ON THE ARCADE RACER WITH A FEW FOUNDATIONAL ISSUES IT NEVER QUITE MANAGES TO OVERCOME.**

- ANSWERS**
1. Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow, issue #50, 9/10.
 2. Sonic Mania, issue #140, 9/10.
 3. Overwatch, issue #125, 9/10.
 4. Onrush, issue #151, 7/10.



OPM TIME MACHINE 5 YEARS AGO

Assassins and pirates? That's the Kenway to do it! Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag boarded the cover of **OPM #90**



Above But wait! Edward Kenway wasn't our only cover star this month. Half the issues printed featured everyone's fave comic book antihero instead, as we had the exclusive review of Batman: Arkham Origins. Dark Knight or Black Flag? You had a tough choice.

Below left PS4 wasn't out, but we still got to play Black Flag on it. Needless to say, we loved it.

Below right LittleBigPlanet was a pretty huge world in its own right - so we became your tour guide.



Far left We talked a lot about 'Oversized sex objects' in our Lego Marvel Super Heroes preview. Hulk, eh?

Left Oh, go on then... drinks were on us as we celebrated PlayStation's most memorable bevies.

DON'T MAKE ME PLAY! PERSONA 5

Don't like it. Never tried it. Every month we force one of our team to play their most feared game

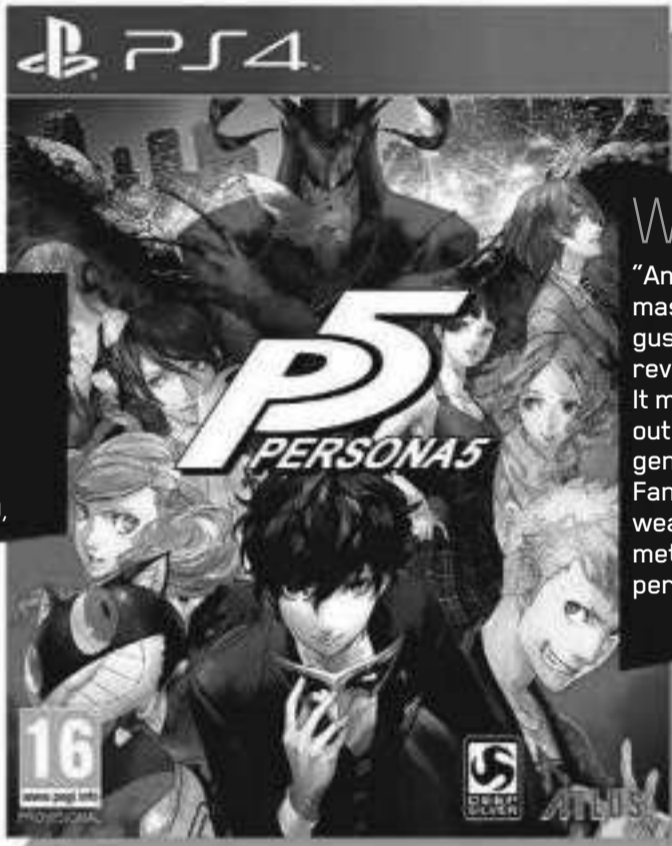


WHO?

Always looking for a new challenge, and unable to resist a talking cat, Ian Dean embraces the world of Megami Tensei and menu-manages his way through Persona 5.

INFO

PUB ATLUS AND DEEP SILVER
DEV P-STUDIO
RELEASED 4 APRIL 2017
GET IT NOW £39.99, AMAZON



WHAT?

"An unabashed masterpiece," we gushed in our 10/10 review in OPM #134. It marked Persona 5 out as *the* JRPG of this generation, the Final Fantasy VII for gamers weaned on Slack and metanarratives. The perfect JRPG.

Ever since Persona 5 released I've listened to Jess and Oscar prattle and tattle about their Palaces and catching up with Ann Takamaki and the gang over a beef nabemono or a hot coffee. You'd be forgiven for thinking this was real. It's not, of course, it's life inside Atlus' JRPG, albeit the highest-scoring JRPG in recent times.

It's for this reason, and the 120-hour lifespan, that I've put off jumping into Persona 5. Can I fit new virtual friends into my social life? Do I want to commit to such a time-sapping ordeal? Well, for the sake of Don't Make Me Play, and team unity, I've joined Shujin Academy. It's four hours in and I've had a taste of the alternate world of the Palaces, but mostly I've gone to school, learned how to clean my room, and got lost in Shibuya tube station.

I BECOME MORE ENTWINED IN THESE CHARACTERS' PERSONALITIES.

After another five hours of browsing in shops, messaging my new pals, and hanging out at school, the game finally leans into its turn-based combat. Heading into the 'Perv Palace' to steal the heart of the school's bullying paedophile (done by climbing a penis shaped tower and taking his 'treasure') reveals Persona 5's complexities, and its skewed sense of humour. A combat system that balances magical and weapon-based attacks, linking combos between party members, is instantly invigorating. At every encounter I become more entwined in these characters' personalities.

With the villain dispatched, I'm thrown back into the 'real' world of teen angst, school-day dilemmas, and juggling friendships. Everything done in this world boosts my character's stats and creates *my* version of the protagonist. It's clever, stylish, and infinitely more rewarding than most JRPGs released in the last ten years. I'm a convert. So, who's up for a coffee at Cafe Leblanc?



■ With virtual friendships, a talking cat, and a distinctive sense of humour, Persona 5 is the best JRPG in a generation. Don't miss out on the joy of going back to school...

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO CURRENT-GEN'S GREATEST GAMES

PS4 HALL OF FAME



1



UNCHARTED 4: A THIEF'S END

Nathan Drake's swan song is a daring evolution. It combines series-defining set-pieces, quietly devastating storytelling beats, and sprawling levels that make you feel like a real-life explorer. This franchise finale retains its signature charm, with the wisecracks flowing as fast as the bullets, while the new characters each justify their inclusion. With an astonishing attention to detail, it's Naughty Dog's best yet.



2

GOD OF WAR

A departure in some ways but a resounding return in others, Kratos is back with a son *and* a ruddy big axe. Taking the legend from Greek to Norse mythology, this entry brings a lot to the table while improving on what was core to the earlier series' identity.



9

ASSASSIN'S CREED ORIGINS

In this impressively large Ancient Egyptian open world - there's a *whole desert* in your sandbox - you discover the roots of the Assassins. More challenging, enjoyable combat and stunning graphics mark a return to form for the series.



3

THE WITCHER 3: WILD HUNT GAME OF THE YEAR EDITION

The White Wolf's epic journey is an RPG experience like no other on PS4. It's been made even more spectacular with this gigantic pack stuffed with DLC, making this a must-have part of any gaming library.



10

OVERWATCH

PS4's best multiplayer shooter bursts with colour, character, and charm. At its core, Overwatch is a pleasing mix of empowerment and teamwork, enhanced by a raucous roster. Expect to become obsessed with landing Play Of The Game. Boop.



4

HORIZON ZERO DAWN

A staggeringly large world that condenses cracking combat, accessible systems, and uncut eye-candy into an action RPG that will please anyone. In Aloy, PlayStation might just have a new icon. Come for the robo-fights, stay for the exquisitely dense mythology.



11

RESIDENT EVIL VII: BIOHAZARD

Capcom's greatest series returns to terrifying form thanks to a trip to Louisiana to meet the Baker family, who stalk you around their mansion. While the second half of the game doesn't match the intensity of the first, this is a must for any horror fan.



5

NEW!

MARVEL'S SPIDER-MAN

Borrowing heavily from Rocksteady's Batman series, this delivers the heart and soul of Marvel's famous superhero. This outing ticks every box you could ask for: perfect web-swinging, a powerful story, a roster of classic villains, and all of New York to defend.



12

MONSTER HUNTER: WORLD

Presenting a vibrant open world, light on story but heavy on action, this is the most accessible entry in the series yet. Perfecting the feel-good grind through its complex systems and pitch-perfect multiplayer, it's a PS4 must-play.



6

GRAND THEFT AUTO V

Laughing in the face of other cross-gen ports, GTA V on PS4 is more than just a mere HD remaster. Upped to a glorious 1080p, it weaves everything that made the PS3 original great, with new music, more dynamic weather, and a game-changing FPS mode.



13

TOWERFALL ASCENSION

You haven't lived until you've enjoyed a four-player free-for-all in this instant couchplay classic. The solo campaign is fine by itself, but almost nothing beats the arrow-grabbing, death-defying last-second kills of local multiplayer's mayhem.



7

BLOODBORNE

With the finest third-person melee combat in gaming, drool-worthy art design and the most twisted monsters imaginable, this is a gorgeously gothic must-have. The Old Hunters expansion adds enough nightmare fuel to make a return to Yharnam essential.



14

DISHONORED 2

This strong follow-up to one of PS3's greatest mixes a creative skillset with impressive level design to create a Kaldwin-ning immersive sim. From the shifting rooms of The Clockwork Mansion to discovering how to link your powers, there's near-endless scope for experimenting.



8

METAL GEAR SOLID V: THE PHANTOM PAIN

While retaining that distinct storytelling and sense of wonder that defines an MGS title, MGS V offers a level of freedom and creativity unheard of in any sandbox. Grand, majestic, and bittersweet, it's an instant classic.



15

THE LAST OF US REMASTERED

This modern masterpiece just gets stronger with age, like a full-bodied stilton. A starkly brutal, emotionally honest take on the end of the world, Naughty Dog's stealth shooter is quite simply one of the best games ever, even if this PS4 port doesn't add much to it.

16

**PERSONA 5**

Atlus' anime wonder dazzles thanks to its mix of friendship building, stylish dungeons, and speedy turn-based combat. Add a story oozing with darkness and taboo-busting confidence and you have the gold standard for JRPGs on PS4.

17

**LIFE IS STRANGE**

The sublime writing and pacing of this episodic narrative will have you agonising over choices, and then marvelling at their flawless integration. To quote heroine Max's BFF Chloe, it's "hella" good. You'll wish you could play it all over again for the first time.

18

**ALIEN ISOLATION**

Explore Ridley Scott's original vision of a horror-tinged future in startling fidelity with an attention to detail that borders on the obsessive. It's time to remember what made the xenomorph so scary in the first place... and then get killed by it.

19

**SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS**

Bluepoint completely overhauls the visuals of Team Ico's masterpiece but still manages to match the original step-for-step in its remake. New controls and a beautiful photo mode add to the package. Wander's tragic quest has never looked or played better.

20

**DRAGON BALL FIGHTERZ**

The most beautiful game on PS4? Possibly. This fighter from genre masters Arc System Works is a polished gem packed with content. Whether you're a hardcore fight fan or solo arcade basher, or just love the anime, Dragon Ball FighterZ sets a new standard.

21

**BATMAN: ARKHAM KNIGHT**

Rocksteady sends the Bat out with a bang. A compelling, cathartic story adds new layers to the Dark Knight, while PS4 allows Gotham to blossom with a truly amazing engine. The stealth still sings, the fisticuffs are fab, and the Batmobile is brilliant.

22

**STREET FIGHTER V: ARCADE ED.**

This fighter has finally come into its own. Arcade combines all previously released DLC, a slicker UI, and new modes, including fine-tuned online play. The titular mode, which explores over 30 years of series history, makes a welcome return to the ring too.

23

NEW!

**DIVINITY 2: ORIGINAL SIN - DE**

The Definitive Edition of this PC classic takes every preconception you have about Western RPGs and jettisons them. Beautiful writing, complex tactical combat, and months of deep adventuring: it's the purest high-fantasy RPG on PlayStation 4.

24

**FIFA 18**

With smooth, gorgeous on-field action and the best suite of modes of any sports game on PS4, EA's monstrously popular footie sim is back at the top of the table. Fair warning, though: Ultimate Team will suck up every spare moment you have.

25

**DRIVECLUB**

This phenomenal racer leaves its rivals for dust due to gorgeous graphics, strong social features and great handling. Major add-on Driveclub Bikes is also the greatest bike racing game on PS4, thanks to making driving on two wheels fun again.

BUBBLING UNDER

Alternative picks

We mine the library for gold.
This month: Lego games

PICK # 1

**LEGO CITY UNDERCOVER**

Miriam McDonald says ditch the IPs

As the team's unashamed Lego liker (not Lego liker; that'd be weird), I know you don't have to be undercover cop Chase McCain to identify the best Lego game of all. While it's not based on a movie or comic book franchise, this crime caper riffs on everything from Columbo to Starsky And Hutch to The Shawshank Redemption as you hunt down Rex Fury. Not convinced? A side mission has you *firing pigs out of a cannon*. Now you are.

PICK # 2

**LEGO JURASSIC WORLD**

Oscar Taylor-Kent is a clever girl

While I might have thought Jurassic World was a bit rubbish, what really makes this Lego game shine for me is the recreations of the stories from the original trilogy that aren't namechecked in the title. This is what Lego has done best since its movie-cribbing format originated with Star Wars - riff on older movies. They might not all be of equal quality, but those three Jurassic Park movies might be my ultimate nostalgia trip.

THIS IS WHAT LEGO HAS DONE BEST SINCE STAR WARS - RIFF ON OLDER MOVIES.

PICK # 3

**LEGO MARVEL SUPER HEROES 2**

Ian Dean loves this broad, blocky lineup

Being able to play as Marvel characters from different time periods and dimensions ensures this Lego entry has *the* best lineup of minifigs and worlds of any game to date. From Black Panther to Spider-Gwen and Howard The Duck, in locations from Knowhere to Wakanda to Hala and *three* New Yorks, Lego Marvel Super Heroes 2 has it covered. It's a blocky superhero heaven.



■ Squirrel Girl is one of many Marvel characters to make it into Lego Marvel Super Heroes 2. Who doesn't like that?

THE VIRTUAL REALITY HITS YOU HAVE TO PLAY

PS VR HALL OF FAME



1



THE PERSISTENCE

Designed specifically for PS VR, this first-person horror roguelike is, arguably, the headset's first true killer app. With the action structured around short bursts of intense survival, this shooter manages to pack in everything expected of a PS4 release, in VR. Clever ideas, unique weapons, genuine jump scares, and beautiful visuals delivered with zero motion sickness. All this plus inventive couchplay too.



2



REZ INFINITE

Creator Tetsuya Mizuguchi's vision becomes reality in PS VR. This psychedelic rhythm rail shooter has achieved its final form. Its crowning achievement? New level Area X, it's powerful enough to bring players to tears. Worthy of its name, this is a truly timeless title.

3



THUMPER

Make no mistake: the brave chrome beetle gave Rez a run for its money for our top spot. Hurtling down a violently kaleidoscopic track, pounding notes and scraping round corners is exquisitely tough - and the manic magic is enhanced and perfected in PS VR.

4



KEEP TALKING AND NOBODY EXPLODES

Who knew bombs could bring people *together*? With one headsetted Defuser, and as many Experts as you can fit around a 23-page manual, no other VR game comes close for inclusive, endless multiplayer fun.

5



STATIK

Saw meets Portal in this fantastic puzzler. It makes ingenious use of the DualShock 4 by giving every button a specific function. You'll need to use them all to free your hands from the strange box in which they're trapped. An intriguing concept done well.

6

NEW!



FIREWALL: ZERO HOUR

There's only one game mode, a cat-and-mouse assault to find and either destroy or protect a laptop, but when the shooting is this laser-focused, who could want more? A PS Aim controller is a must to get the most from PS VR's standout shooter.

7



RESIDENT EVIL VII: BIOHAZARD

Can you can go eye-to-eye with the Bakers? Playing in VR raises the tension to almost unbearable levels and has gameplay benefits such as face-aiming, which makes shooting a *lot* easier. A brilliant example of how VR can improve already great games.

8



DOOM VFR

A new take on a classic game, this proves first-person shooters can shine in VR. A mix of control choices, including the PS Aim controller, ensures Doom is as fast and fluid in VR as it's ever been. Every PS VR owner needs this in their collection.

9



TO THE TOP

Leaping into our PS VR top 10, this creative platform-puzzler enables you to scamper, jump, and skate across its 35 sandbox worlds. It's as physically demanding as it is perplexing, and all the better for it. To The Top is a PS VR one-off.

10



RIGS: MECHANIZED COMBAT LEAGUE

Mech-suited, shooter b-ball where you dunk yourself through the hoop? It might sound goofy, but it's PS VR's most elegant team sport. Potential nausea aside, this is the future of competitive gaming.

11



STAR TREK: BRIDGE CREW

Mixes the fanboy fantasy of nestling in the Captain's chair (or taking control of the helm, weapons, or engineering section) on a USS starship with the strongest co-op experience on PS VR. This is Star Trek's finest hour on PlayStation.

12



SPRINT VECTOR

A crazy mix of SSX racing and obstacle course high jinks, Sprint Vector makes use of the best control setup on PS VR to deliver a near perfect experience. A single-player Challenge mode and online races impress; only the poor single-player AI holds it back.

13



BATMAN: ARKHAM VR

Not only is the training mission an unparalleled exercise in wish fulfilment (Wayne Manor! The Batcave! Batarangs!) but the defiantly sharp, if short, campaign is the epilogue to Arkham Knight we needed and deserved. Bats off to you, Rocksteady.

14



THE ELDER SCROLLS V: SKYRIM VR

Though compromises have been made to texture detail and controls, you get all of The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, including the expansions, inside PS VR. The scale and organic nature of the world at your feet overcomes any shortcomings.

15



MOSS

Guide adorable mouse heroine Quill through a fantasy storybook world full of virtual puzzles, fights with insects, and perfectly pitched Disney influences. There's no need to say cheese, because you'll be smiling as you play, all day long.

16

**ACCOUNTING +**

One of PlayStation's funniest games is a dark, twisted journey into the world of accounting. It's an Inception-like dive into increasingly bizarre and frequently hilarious scenarios that will scratch the itch of any Rick And Morty fan.

17

**FARPOINT**

This sci-fi shooter is a brilliant showcase for the PS Aim controller, a versatile bit of kit that makes the satisfying range of weapons feel weighty and real. The game matches it, delivering a strong story and challenging co-op for great VR action.

18

**KNOCKOUT LEAGUE**

Punching things in VR is possibly the least creative use of the medium but when it's used to create a classic arcade boxing sim that plays like a brutal puzzle puncher, it's irresistible. It's also good for you: it tracks your calorie count as you work up a sweat.

19

**APEX CONSTRUCT**

This story-driven FPS demonstrates five-to-eight hour adventures can work in PS VR. Building its narrative organically through physically exploring the game's world while fending off mechanical creatures with a trusted bow and arrow is a delight. Ambitious.

20

**GNOG**

This puzzler doesn't require PS VR to play, but hugely benefits from it. Giant floating heads hide gentle conundrums, and only by probing them can you discover their secrets. A vivid art style makes this already lovely treat feel all the more vibrant.

21

**STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT ROGUE ONE: X-WING VR MISSION**

Climbing into the cockpit of an X-wing is one of the most potent bits of wish-fulfilment on PS VR. It may only be 15 minutes long, but this free Star Wars Battlefront DLC is a magical portal into the movies.

22

**TUMBLE VR**

With its sassy robot, pinpoint-accurate motion-tracking and block-stacking brainteasers, the virtual reality version of the PS3 physics puzzler is utterly absorbing. Multiple modes including lasers, mines and ticking timers make it PS VR's smartest entry.

23

**SUPERHOT VR**

Time moves only when you move in this exceptional PS VR first-person shooter that manages to make you feel like you're playing through a slow-mo action movie. The free Superhot Forever update adds even more challenges. Make time for VR bullet time.

24

**PSYCHONAUTS IN THE RHOMBUS OF RUIN**

Your cynical inner voice says this is a marketing tool to remind you how amazing Psychonauts is ahead of Psychonauts 2. Your gamer voice will tell it to shut up and enjoy one of PS VR's best virtual adventures.

25

**ARIZONA SUNSHINE**

One of the first, and one of the best, uses of the PS Aim controller. This colourful shooter pits you and your peripheral against waves of zombies with score chasing more important than narrative. It's old-fashioned, but dead good fun.

ON-THE-GO GOODNESS PS VITA HALL OF FAME



1

**TEARAWAY**

One of the best platformers on the system, it makes terrific use of the entire PS Vita to create a unique experience: camera, touchscreen, touchpad: it's all here. The PS4 version has more content, but it remains more intimate and special on PS Vita.

2

**PERSONA 4: GOLDEN**

Where Persona 5 went bigger on PS4, this ultimate version of Persona 4 nails the warmth of a small-town high school setting. Filled with timeless characters, the Investigation Team dig into a murder mystery and befriend demons.

3

**UNCHARTED: GOLDEN ABYSS**

Nathan Drake proves that it's not about the size of the package, but what you do with it in this prequel expedition. Packed with Uncharted charm, this pulp action adventure is the biggest spectacle on the little handheld, and stands with the greats.

4

**DANGANRONPA: TRIGGER HAPPY HAVOC**

If being trapped in a school for the exceptionally gifted weren't scary enough, a murderous bear is goading everyone to kill their classmates. Investigations and trial scenes; thinking caps on.

5

**TXK**

Bright lights and flashing colours. That's the emergency services come to move you on, as you remain still and engrossed in this pulse-pounding shooter that's always ready to turn your PS Vita into a trippy, zen-like getaway.

**HOT MOVES****ALL-NIGHT FEVER**

Oscar has a fever he simply can't sweat out whenever he travels to danceland on PS Vita

Sometimes when you're travelling you just want to switch off as you magic yourself mentally from one place to the next. Rhythm games are marvellously absorbing, and plentiful on PS Vita. With the Persona 3 and 5 versions incoming 4 December, Persona 4: Dancing All Night has returned to my Vita, ever the mainstay. Coming back from the USA, I rocked out through some truly dire turbulence, and then almost missed my train stop home. Sorry-not-sorry, fellow travellers, for my rad dance moves.

LOOK AWAY!
**SPOILER
ALERT**



No.71

Protagonist punch-up!

Take on Devil May Cry 4's big guns, literally

■ **FORMAT** PS3, PS4 / **PUB** CAPCOM / **DEV** CAPCOM / **RELEASED** 2008 / **SCORE** 9/10

Last
Month

Inside

Oh my blob, that's an ending none of us expected. Horrifying, but we'll roll with it...

With every game series comes the best boy debate and favourite character face-off, and Devil May Cry 4 finally gives you the opportunity to battle out the best of them when Nero faces Dante, DMC 1-4's beloved hero. At the very beginning of the game, no less. But as it goes on, the battle of strong one-liners, demonic take-downs, and gunslinging leaves you wondering who's actually the good guy in the situation.

From the moment Dante crashes through the glass ceiling (quite literally) and starts causing

hell in a church, taking out people left, right, and centre (people who, admittedly, turn out to be demons), you know you're in for an interesting fight. And it gets even more compelling when Nero whips out the demonic trick he's been hiding up his sleeve this whole time: his 'devil bringer' arm, which is supernaturally strong and able to summon, er, *another, giant, arm*.

The fight that follows is nothing short of what you would expect from the series: slow-motion gun reloads, deadly jump-kicks, and even the classic scene of Dante being impaled by a sword

to the chest and gruesomely removing himself (he gets into that situation a little too often for his own good). With an obligatory "We're the same, you and I," the game highlights their similarities that go beyond using the same hairdresser: the two share matching demon souls. This isn't the last time the two characters go at it, as Dante puts up a tougher fight midway through the game. But this initial tutorialised introduction lets you know what a mess you're in for and gives you the time to ask yourself: who's really the best demon hunter? ■

Next
Month

**Metal Gear
Solid V**

Feeling very smug after taking down a mechanised unit *all by yourself*.

NEXT
MONTH

PlayStation®
Official Magazine - UK

ON
SALE
20 Nov

Subscribe on
page 58

FREE!

THREE SPECIAL
RESIDENT EVIL
GIFTS!

RESIDENT EVIL 2 COLLECTOR'S ISSUE

We sit down to interview Capcom about Resident Evil then and now, plus exclusive free gifts!

 PlayStation VR



JAPANStudio 

ASTRO BOT RESCUE MISSION™

OUT NOW



PlayStation® and "PS4" are registered trademarks of Sony. Astro Bot Rescue Mission™ ©2019-2020 Sony Interactive Entertainment Inc. Published by Sony Interactive Entertainment Europe Limited. Developed by SCE Japan Studio. Astro Bot Rescue Mission™ is a trademark or a registered trademark of Sony Interactive Entertainment Europe. All rights reserved.

DIGITAL
OFFER

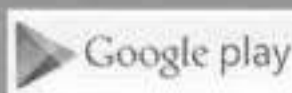


FOR PRINT
SUBSCRIPTION
DEALS, TURN
TO PAGE 58



DOWNLOAD YOUR FIRST DIGITAL ISSUE FOR FREE*

JUST SEARCH FOR 'PLAYSTATION OFFICIAL MAGAZINE' ON THESE SELECTED PLATFORMS...



*TERMS AND CONDITIONS: The free trial is only available to new subscribers. If you have previously subscribed then payment will be taken immediately. Your subscription automatically renews unless auto-renew is turned off at least 24 hours before the end of the current subscription period. Payment will be charged to your iTunes, Amazon or Google Play account at confirmation of purchase. You will be charged for renewal within 24 hours prior to the end of the current period, for the same duration and at the current subscription rate for that product. You can manage your subscriptions and turn off auto-renewal by going to your Account Settings after purchase. No cancellation of the current subscription is allowed during an active subscription period. This does not affect your statutory rights. Any unused portion of a free trial period, if offered, will be forfeited when you purchase a subscription.