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P3zine

Issue 44 | November 2010

Free Magazine for PlayStation 3 Gamers. *Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates...*

PREVIEW!

HOMEFRONT

Move over Call of Duty – we go hands-on with THQ's shellshocking shooter! 



MEDAL OF HONOR
BONUS MAGAZINE



REVIEW!



Fallout: New Vegas 
Viva Las Vegas!

REVIEW!



Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock 
A rockin' good time?

REVIEW!



Medal of Honor 
DICE's latest shooter reviewed!

REVIEW!



PES 2011 
Can PES topple FIFA this year?

 **CONTROL** →





Welcome to P3Zine



Have you written your Christmas list yet? With the trip from Santa fast approaching, this month we take a look at a bunch of games we've tipped to be this Christmas' big hitters, including Fallout New Vegas, Medal of Honor and Castlevania: Lords of Shadow, and a few others where a lump of coal might have been more exciting – we're looking at you, WRC.

We've also been given the first ever look at Homefront's multiplayer campaign, the latest shooter from THQ which is looking to go toe-to-toe with Guerrilla's super sequel Killzone 3 early next year. We preview them both this month, but which one's the better game? And will either manage to drag you off of Call of Duty

MAGAZINE FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of the magazine

for long enough for you to care? Take a look at both later in the issue.

Dan Hutchinson, Editor
p3zine@gamerzines.com

MEET THE TEAM

There's nowt they don't know about PlayStation...



David Scammell
What David doesn't know about PS3 really isn't worth knowing.



Jon Denton
Game giant Jon works on 360Zine and also helps here, too.

DON'T MISS!

This month's highlights...

The latest & greatest titles on PS3



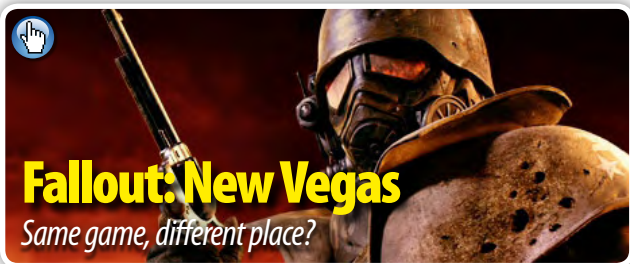
Homefront

Homefront's multiplayer modes revealed in our hands-on preview!



Killzone 3

We take a look at what's been changed for Guerrilla's shooter sequel



Fallout: New Vegas

Same game, different place?



Medal of Honor

QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Sorcery | Fallout: New Vegas |
| ArcaniA: Gothic 4 | Medal of Honor |
| Apache Air Assault | Castlevania: |
| Homefront | Lords of Shadow |
| Killzone 3 | WRC |
| Guitar Hero: | EA Sports MMA |
| Warriors of Rock | PES 2011 |

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We recommend you close and re-open the magazine and select "Play" when asked about the multimedia to enjoy the magazine as intended.



ASSASSIN'S —CREED— BROTHERHOOD



▶ PLAYBACK OPTIONS:

"KILLER IN EVERY SENSE OF THE WORD"
- FHM



OUT ON
19TH NOVEMBER

www.assassinscreed.com



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INCOMING

Another secret six heading your way...



Devil May Cry

Publisher: Capcom | ETA: TBA 2011

Love him or loathe him, Twilight Dante is here to stay. But even if you're not a fan of the new look, there's still plenty to love about Ninja Theory's reboot of Capcom's classic hack and slasher, including some superbly polished visuals and an increased focus on narrative as Dante unleashes hell on the world in revenge for his incarceration. Could DMC be 2011's Bayonetta? We wouldn't bet our gunswords against it.



Battlefield Bad Company 2: Vietnam

Publisher: EA | ETA: Late 2010

With Call of Duty: Black Ops just around the corner, it's time for another showdown between the two online titans as EA prepares its first expansion pack for Bad Company 2. Expect four brand-new maps set in the heart of Vietnam, plus new weapons and vehicles straight from the Sixties.

Resistance 3

Publisher: SCEE | ETA: TBA 2011

We're promised a far moodier atmosphere for the third game in Insomniac's popular alien-shooter series, which sees the Chimera continue to plague the Earth. From what we understand, you'll either be playing as or joining up with a rebel group of survivors intent on stopping New York City and Missouri from falling under the might of the invading alien force.



Inversion

Publisher: Namco Bandai | ETA: TBA 2011

A cover-based third-person shooter from the creators of TimeShift, Inversion is the PS3's very own Gears of War, but with a physics-based twist. Run up the sides of buildings, bring down skyscrapers and throw your enemies through the air as you defy Newton's laws to hold back the advances of an unknown force. It's quite similar to 2004's Psi-Ops if you can remember that far back, and looks equally as brilliant. Expect great things from this one.

Batman: Arkham City

Publisher: Warner Bros | ETA: TBA 2011

The horrors of the Asylum are breaking out into the city for the follow-up to last year's mind-blowing Batman game, which introduces an open-world environment and a multiplayer component. Game of the Year 2011? Almost certainly.



Create

Publisher: EA | ETA: November

With LittleBigPlanet 2 pushed back to next year, there's now only one option for those looking to unleash their creative juices this side of Christmas – and it isn't half bad. Taking full advantage of PlayStation Move, EA's Create lets players do exactly what it says on the tin: create. Create new levels, customise your world, solve brain-bending puzzles and create all-new ways to play. And because it's a budget title, you'll still have some cash left in the bank to afford all the other games you want this Chrimbo, too!



IN THE PIPELINE

NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY
NEED FOR SPEED: HOT PURSUIT CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS	TRON EVOLUTION GOD OF WAR COLLECTION	DEAD SPACE 2 LITTLEBIGPLANET 2	BULLETSTORM PORTAL 2



"...BLACK OPS, AS A MULTIPLAYER ENTITY, IS ASTOUNDING" — 360 Magazine

CALL OF DUTY BLACK OPS

09.11.10



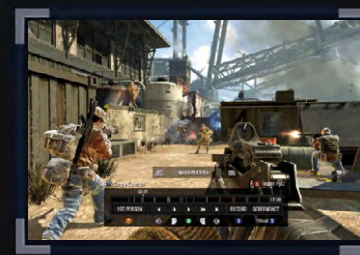
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CUSTOMISE—CHARACTERS & WEAPONS



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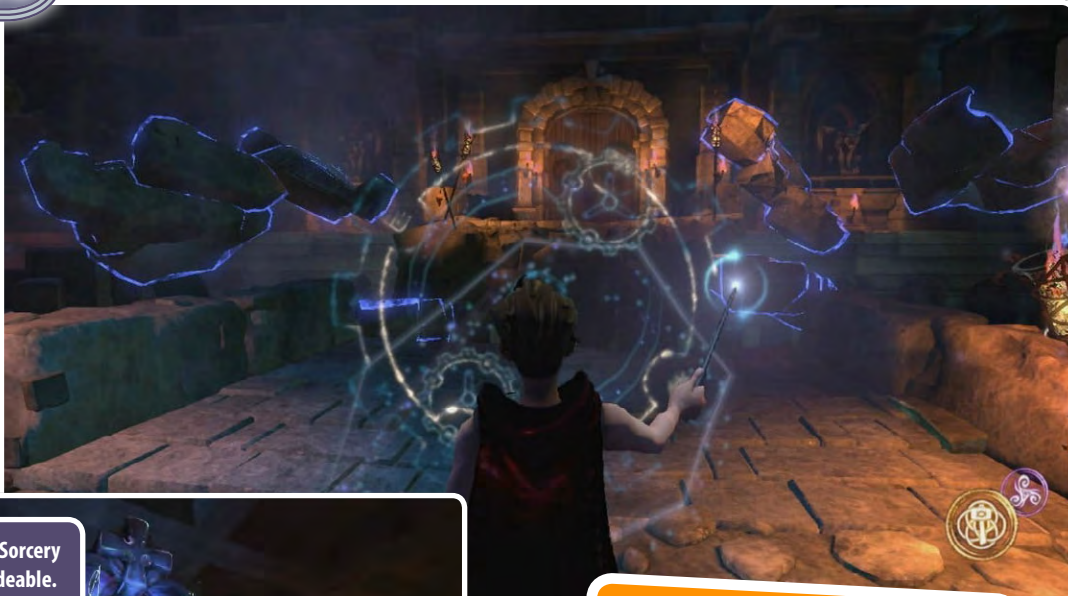


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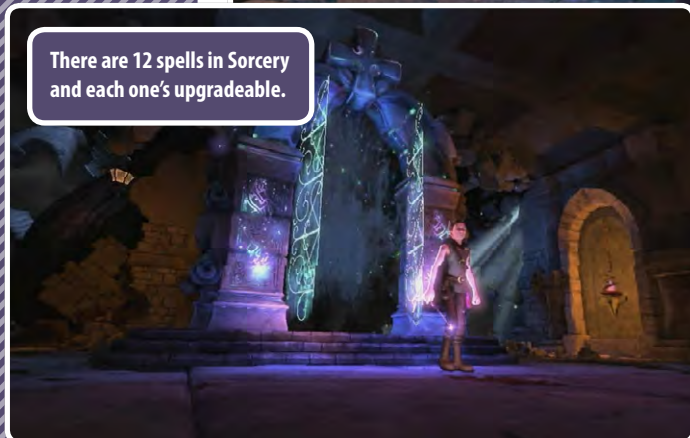


SORCERY

Publisher: SCEE
Developer: The Workshop
Heritage: N/A
PS Move Compatible: Yes
Link: <http://us.playstation.com/games-and-media/games/sorcery-ps3.html>
ETA: Summer 2011



There are 12 spells in Sorcery and each one's upgradeable.



"Sorcery has the potential to be a must-have game that leaves gamers spellbound"



Sorcery



Don't you wand me, baby?

Wizard wagging

There's no denying that Sony's Move controller is a compelling piece of tech, but you'd have to think long and hard to identify the accessory's killer app. Designed from the ground up with the motion control in mind, Sorcery has the potential to be that must-have game that leaves gamers young and old spellbound.

What's the story?

Conjuring inspiration from Irish folklore, Sorcery is a fable of a sorcerer's apprentice who must venture through Faerie Kingdoms, expelling the darkness shrouded over the land by the Nightmare Queen.

So it's Harry Potter Move?

Kind of. Borrowing a strong pallet from the Harry Potter franchise and elements of action RPGs like Zelda and Fable, Sorcery might not feel entirely original but its use of the Move controller has gamers chomping at the bit. Promising a 'no buttons required' approach, flicking the glowing controller at the screen will fire an arcane bolt

from your wand. Sticky targeting can be toned down but the final game promises to measure the accuracy of your aim.

What other spells are there?

What would a sorcerer's work be without a spot of potion drinking? Use the Move controller to shake up a concoction that transforms you into a rodent – not the most adorable of vermin, but one which can be useful for getting through narrow passages.

Is it for me?

It's still early days for Sony's wand-waving title, although from first impressions, this is the game that the countless Harry Potter titles should have been.



Criterion Games

WARNING

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19TH NOVEMBER 2010

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NEED FOR SPEED HOT PURSUIT



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Publisher: JoWood
Developer: Spellbound
Heritage: Helladoro, Giana Sisters (DS)
PS Move Compatible: TBC
Link: www.arcania-game.com
ETA: Q1 2011



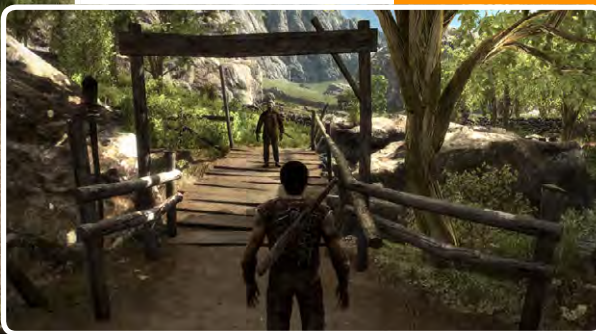
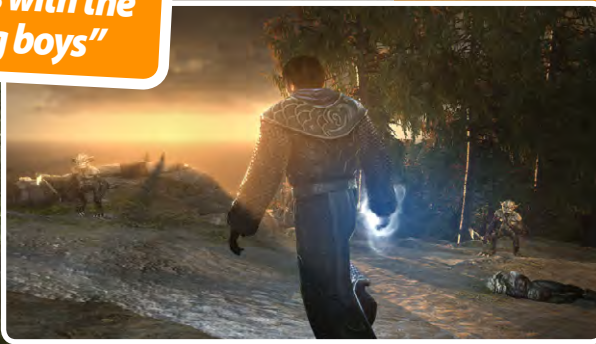
What loot will you find here...?

"ArcaniA's got a lot to prove before it can cross swords with the console big boys"

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
 Click here to tell us what you think of ArcaniA: Gothic 4



That giant rat was asking for it.



ArcaniA: Gothic 4

FIRST LOOK

It's time to leave your flock behind

Isn't it a PC game?

We don't blame you if you don't recognise the 'Gothic' name. The series has a stronger repertoire with the PC crowd, where successes are rarely acknowledged by console gamers. But with a new developer at the reins, Gothic is finally breaking free from its PC shackles, allowing us console gamers the chance to grab a sword, shield and whatever magical powers we can rustle up to join its epic quest.

What's the story?

Set 10 years after Gothic 3, a nameless shepherd living in a small idyllic village on Feshyr Island must say goodbye to his flock and hello to a future of questing and swordplay to seek revenge upon the warriors who pillaged and looted his village.

What's new in this one?

Borrowing a very familiar template its predecessors helped establish, players will travel around and beyond the isle of Feshyr, undertaking quests in order to level your character through complex skill trees on the way through a 30-hour campaign.

What makes it different to other RPGs?

ArcaniA's strengths lie in its unique charm. Despite some cringeworthy English voiceacting, the dialogue is witty, as we discovered in a bizarre scenario in which our hero talked an Orc into allowing us access to a cave in return for a swig of a beverage known as 'Scabooze'.

Should I buy it?

Gamers aren't starved for a good RPG these days, and with EA prepping a double dose of levelling and questing around ArcaniA's release window, it's got a lot to prove before it can cross swords with the console big boys.

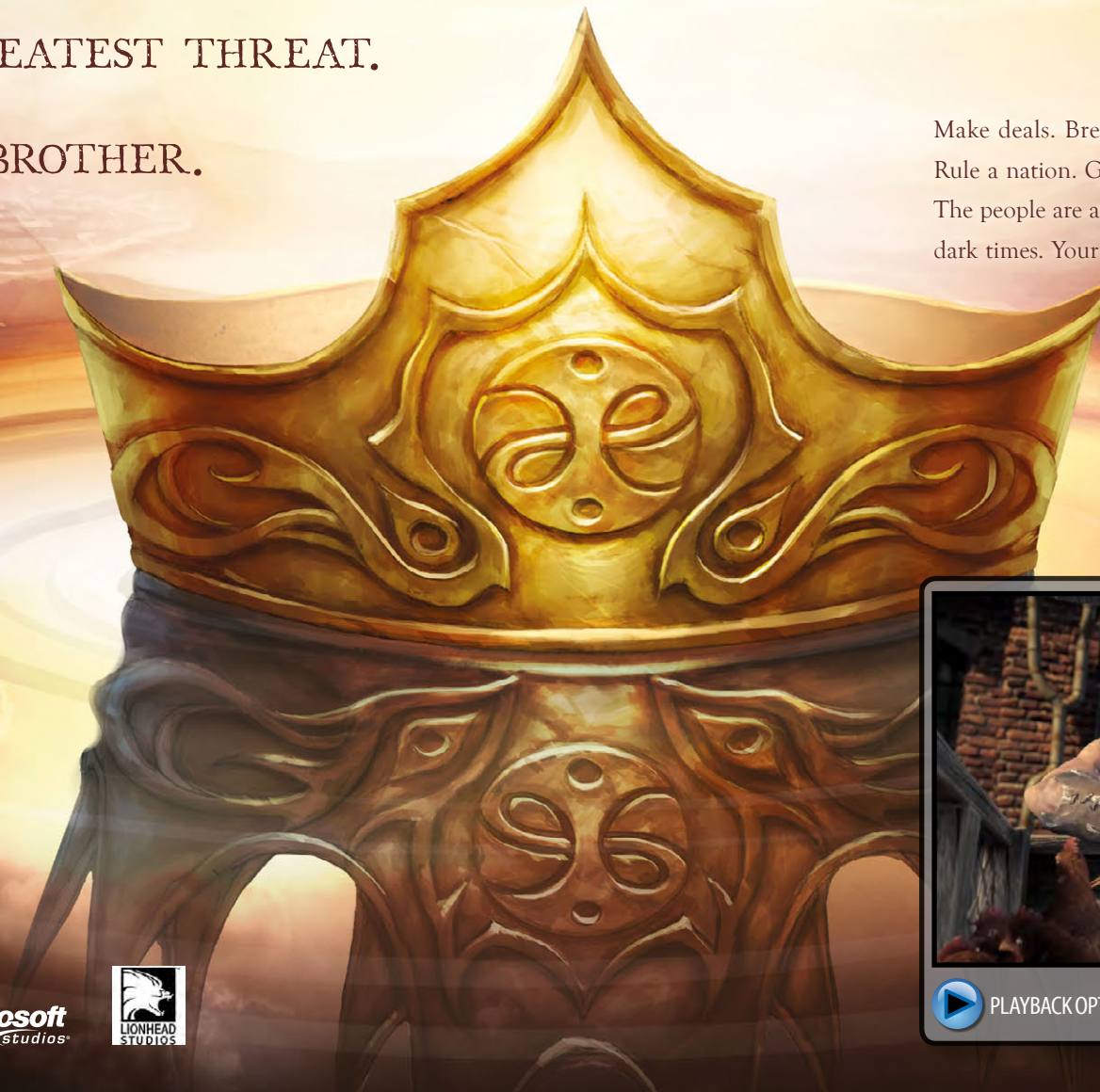
ON OCTOBER 29TH
THE KING OF ALBION
FACES HIS GREATEST THREAT.

HIS BROTHER.

FABLE III

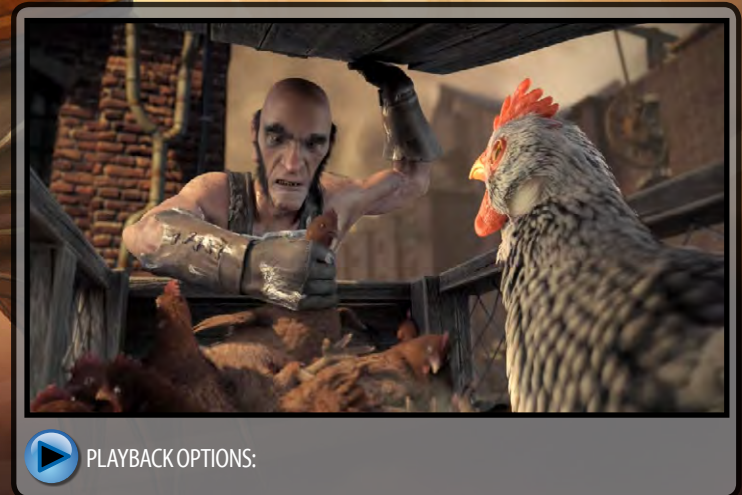
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Make deals. Break deals. Start a revolution. Topple a kingdom. Rule a nation. Gain the loyalty of masses and overthrow the king. The people are angry and it is up to you to lead them out of these dark times. Your greatest weapon against tyranny is your followers.



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PLAYBACK OPTIONS:

XBOX 360



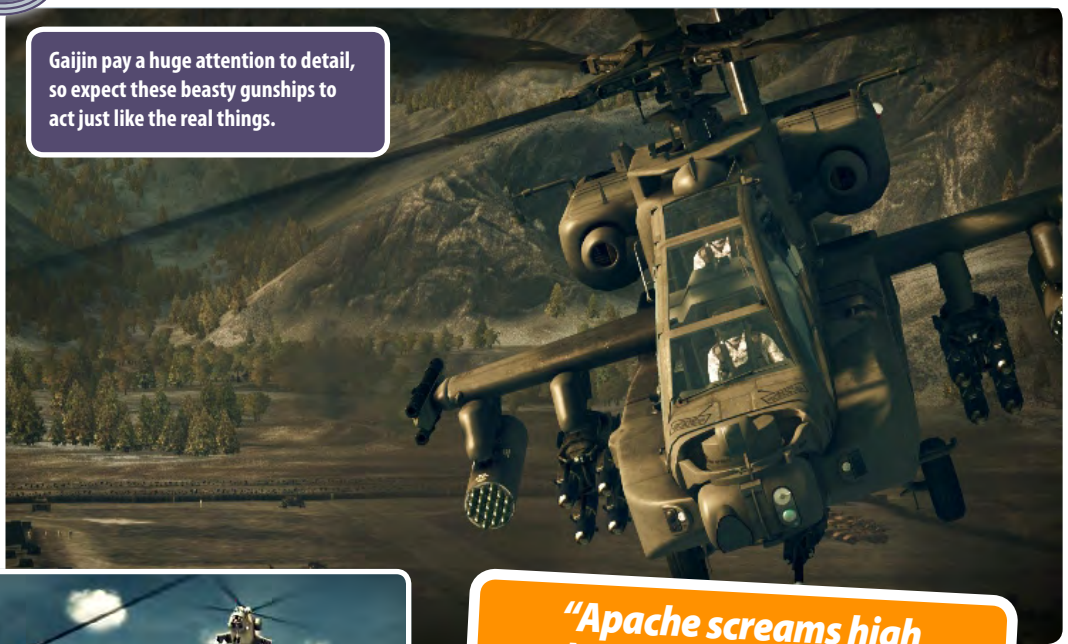
Jump in.

APACHE

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Gaijin Entertainment
Heritage: IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds of Prey
PS Move Compatible: TBC
Link: www.activision.com
ETA: 19th November

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
 Click here to tell us what you think of Apache: Air Assault

Gaijin pay a huge attention to detail, so expect these beastly gunships to act just like the real things.



"Apache screams high production values, far beyond your typical flight sim"



You'll be going to war all over the world.



Apache: Air Assault

FIRST LOOK

Get to the chopper!

I haven't played a helicopter game in years...

Let's go around the room... when was the last time you played a helicopter sim? Entertaining a niche market isn't Activision's usual forte, and against the slew of holiday headliners, Gaijin Entertainment's Apache Air Assault probably isn't going to turn heads like Call of Duty: Black Ops or Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood inevitably will.

So why should I care?

Regardless, Russian developer Gaijin Entertainment, whose pedigree includes popular flight simulator IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds of Prey, pushes on with their military-edged helicopter sim, bringing the mastery of Apache flight into some adrenaline-fuelled skirmishes.

Where can I fly?

The campaign alone is a 16-mission tour through a variety of colourful locations, including South American jungles, the mountains of the Middle East and South African coasts, each one a visual stunner lavished with a stunning score laid down by the Seattle Symphony Orchestra.

It certainly screams of high production values far beyond your typical flight-sim, but that doesn't mean Gaijin hasn't compromised the intricacies of piloting an Apache.

What can I do?

Squad Operations, a co-op mode akin to Modern Warfare 2's Special Ops, puts two players together as a team manning a single

**APACHE**
AIR ASSAULT

"Squad Operations mode puts two players together as a team to man a single helicopter"

> Apache: Air Assault continued

helicopter – one as pilot and another taking aim with the chopper's fire power across 13 missions. You can even enjoy a simple trip in Free Flight – pick your helicopter, a venue, a scenario and enjoy your ride.

Should I buy it?

We can't see Apache topping charts or breaking sales records when it launches this holiday, but flight sim fans should know they're in for something quite special with Apache. Keep this on your radar.



Mayday!
Mayday!



The truth behind
the BP oil spill...



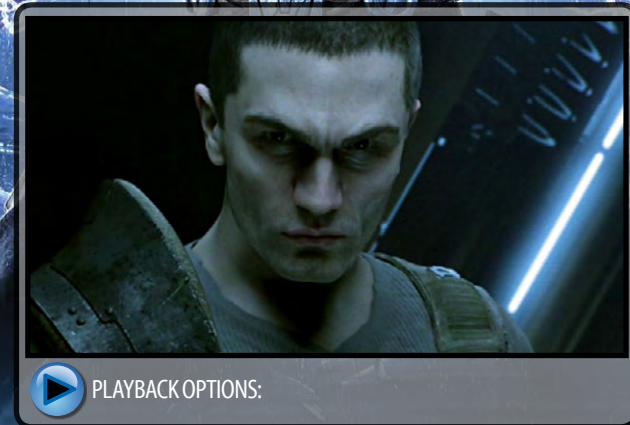
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NINTENDO DS



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HANDS-ON

Homefront

We go to war with Homefront's fantastic multiplayer mode!

Let's not fool ourselves; if you're in the market for an online shooter, you're going to buy Call of Duty: Black Ops next month, aren't you? Or failing that, you're going to pick up the Vietnam add-on pack for Battlefield: Bad Company 2, Medal of Honor or hold out for the brown-hued destructive delights promised by Killzone 3 (previewed later this issue) next February.

And THQ know it. The publisher's well aware that Homefront isn't going to steal

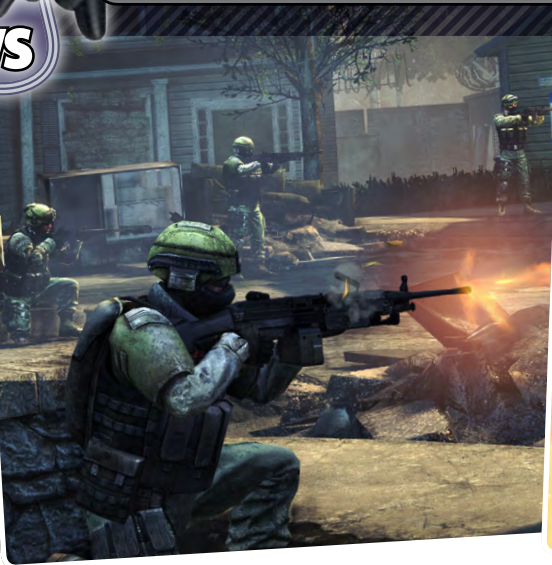
a huge amount of players away from its more established rivals – at least not the first time around. Instead, it's simply looking to surprise you, with developer Kaos able to focus on its own product rather than worry about other people's. And it seems to have done the team a world of good. Launching a new IP may naturally place Kaos as the underdog, but judging by our time with an early build of Homefront's multiplayer, they may just come out on top.



HOMEFRONT

Publisher: THQ
Developer: Kaos Studios
Heritage:
 Frontlines: Fuel of War
PS Move Compatible: TBC
Link: www.homefront-game.com
ETA: March 2011

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
 Click here to tell us what you think of Homefront



➤ Homefront continued

To say Homefront's multiplayer is nothing like the big boys though would be a bit of a fib. It feels very much like Call of Duty in a Battlefield setup. Controls are nigh-on identical to Modern Warfare's, pushing the left stick to sprint, Circle to crouch, shoulder button to fire, and the

D-pad to use special items. It's just as responsive too, although the size of the maps (maps can be vast and sweeping, easily on a par with some of BF:BC2's biggest online battlegrounds) mean it isn't quite as frantic as Call of Duty's constant kill/respawn cycle.

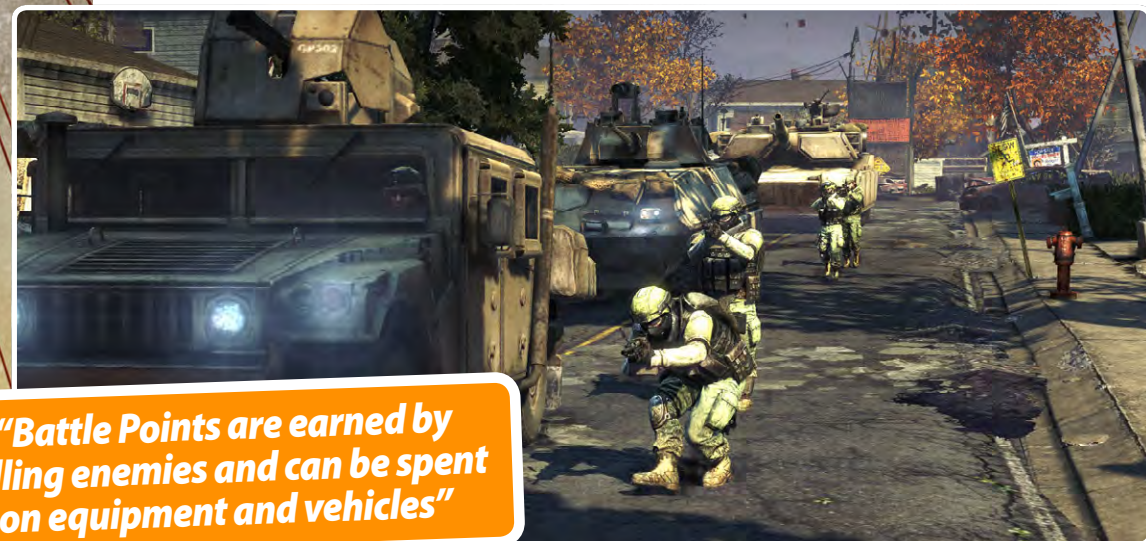
The 16-a-side battles mean that there's always something going on wherever you look though, be it grenades going off at your feet,

tanks rumbling in the distance, or a helicopter gunship wreaking havoc in the skies. The vehicles aren't just unpiltable killstreaks either; these are fully controllable war machines, loaded to the nines with rocket pods, Gatling guns and death-

"Homefront's MP feels very much like Call of Duty in a Battlefield setup"



Unless you've bought a rocket launcher, don't even think about taking that chopper out on foot.




"Battle Points are earned by killing enemies and can be spent on equipment and vehicles"

> **Homefront** continued

bringing missiles. Homefront employs a system known as Battle Points, an XP system with a twist that lets you purchase equipment and vehicles on each spawn. Points can be earned in a number of ways – killing an enemy, grabbing an assist, taking control of a point, avenging the death of a

teammate (or getting revenge for yours), and you can choose when to spend them throughout the round. Smaller rewards, like an armoured anti-infantry drone, cost fewer points, while heavily armed helicopters require you to save up the cash. You'll spawn directly inside the vehicle too, and buying them with Battle Points is the only way to access them, meaning >



Click here to see the enhanced version of this shot! 

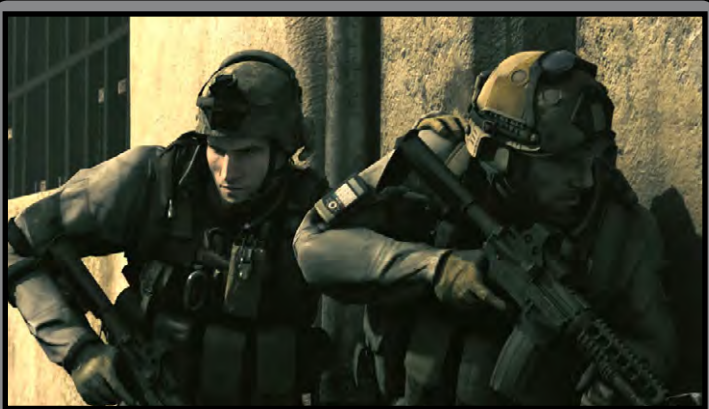




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FOR A NEW BREED OF WARFARE.

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PLAYBACK OPTIONS:

15.10.10

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> **Homefront** continued

there's no sudden rush for the tank at the beginning of the game. There's a standard XP system too, for fulfilling certain 'Call of Duty Barracks-alike' challenges, which unlocks new armour and equipment throughout your multiplayer career, and the usual class-based equipment loadout menus as well.

In turn, the nature of the Battle Points system ends up with games gradually building into a crescendo of all-out war, with matches starting out as relatively light, infantry-based scuffles and coming to a nail-biting conclusion of tank and helicopter fire overrunning the once-

quaint farmland environments and destroyed American suburbs.

Though Kaos promise plenty of game types in the full game (including the usual Team Deathmatch), we mainly got stuck into Ground Control, a game type that'll feel familiar to Battlefield veterans. It plays very much like Rush, and has players battling for control over two points on a map. Once your team has secured them both, a progress bar will fill over a period of a few minutes until your



"Games start out as infantry scuffles and conclude with tank and helicopter fire"

asked to push on to another two points. The biggest difference between this and Bad Company 2, however, is that there is no defending team. Both teams are vying to take control of the points, and if the opposing team manages to grab hold of the second set of points after being pushed back, you'll be back

Click here to see the enhanced version of this shot!



Interview

Kaos Studios' Community Manager Jeremy Greiner talks us through the studio's ambitions for Homefront.

Do you hope to take away some players from Call of Duty and Battlefield, or do you think you can exist side by side?

We can exist side by side. I think Homefront is its own type of title; no-one else has 32-player vehicular warfare like that on dedicated servers. Obviously we want to make it a low barrier to entry, and the Battle Points system does that. You don't have to be the best player on the map to get access to all the cool gear, which is a huge selling point.

I also don't think any other game has the escalating intensity which Homefront has. You spawn in the game and there's a couple of drone Humvees, as people don't have many Battle Points saved yet, then you'll see a few tanks and a few Apaches, and then it starts escalating. There's a really cool feature which is going to be revealed later on in the year. We've lifted up the skirt early on this one so far, but there's plenty more to come!

Would you like to run a public multiplayer Beta before launch?

We aren't commenting on that right now, but we're good at teasing... THQ and Kaos Studios are committed to delivering a Triple-A quality experience for Homefront, and within the competitive FPS genre we typically do see public Betas – and we definitely want to deliver a Triple-A experience!

Check out the full interview with Jeremy on GamerZines.com

HOMEFRONT

➤ **Homefront** continued

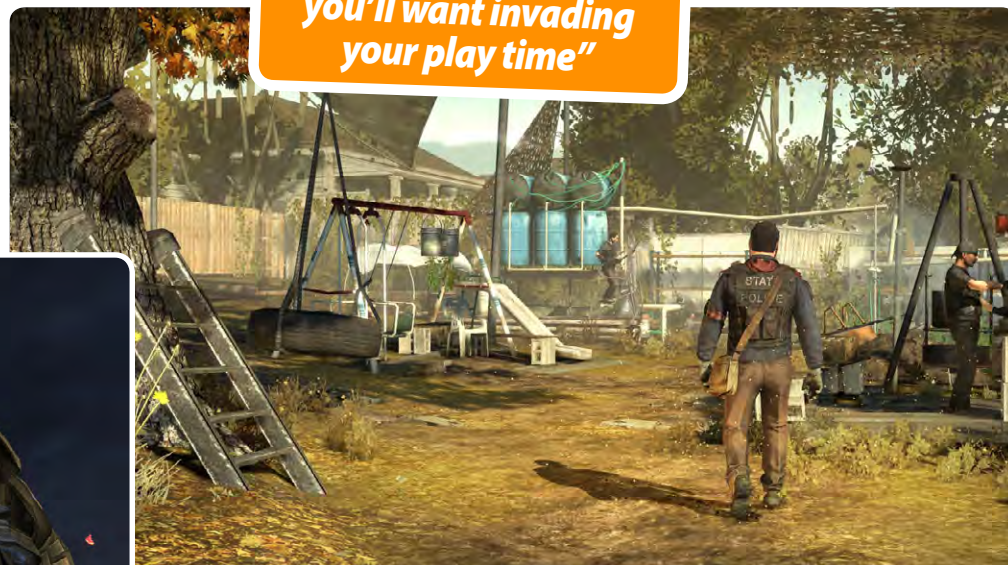
at square one. It leads to a sense of genuine struggle between both sides as control over the points goes back and forth between them, all the while knowing that at any moment in the game you could be on the back foot should someone have saved up enough points to bring in the big guns against you.

Of course, it's difficult to describe Homefront's multiplayer on the whole as innovative. It is what it is, a halfway house between Call of Duty and Battlefield, but what a genuinely brilliant halfway house it is. Given the option between staying to play more Homefront or heading back home for our daily games of Call of Duty, we'd have probably preferred the former.

And this really is just the tip of the Kalashnikov for Homefront. With plenty more going on behind the scenes, including a single-player campaign that looks worthy enough to stand toe-to-toe with the shooter behemoths, and the salivating tease of a multiplayer Beta possibly coming in the months ahead, we're sure to be seeing considerably more of Kaos' finest very soon. Could it be one of the finest online shooters coming next year? Almost certainly. Make no mistake, this is one game you'll want invading your play time. ●



"Make no mistake, Homefront is one game you'll want invading your play time"



VEHICULAR WARFARE

How Homefront changes the way vehicles are implemented in multiplayer shooters



- APCs
- Tanks
- Helicopters

APCs

Remember the mad rush for the tank or helicopter at the beginning of each game. Forget about it. You now buy your own vehicles through Battle Points, spawning directly into them once purchased. Different vehicles cost different amounts, with APCs costing the least.



P3Zine
 HOMEFRONT

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE 60% FIRST IMPRESSIONS 90%

Homefront could be one of 2011's best shooters

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THE X FACTOR



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KILLZONE 3

Publisher: SCEE
Developer: Guerrilla Games
Heritage: Killzone 2, Killzone: Liberation
PS Move Compatible: Yes
Link: www.killzone.com
ETA: February 2011

HANDS-ON

Killzone 3

We report back on Killzone 3's multiplayer

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
 Click here to tell us what you think of Killzone 3



Bringing the Helghast into eye-popping 3D and drawing players into the experience with the Playstation 3's Move controller is just the tip of the iceberg for Guerrilla Game's gritty vision of future war.

With so many titles battling it out to be the top dog of online shooters, Guerrilla Games have their sights set on the jugular, promising that Killzone 3 will have the same legs as the current heavyweights of the online battlefield.

Keen to build on the accomplishments and failings of 2009's Killzone 2, Guerrilla has delved deep into the well of player feedback, thoroughly reading comments and tweaking the multiplayer mechanics based on players' recommendations.

In particular, Killzone 3 goes as far back to simplifying its menu system. A new matchmaking system built from the ground up promises to let players find their friends quickly and simply – with as few menus to trawl through and button prompts as possible.

Five unique classes are on offer, including Medic, Tactician, Infiltrator and marksman, each more

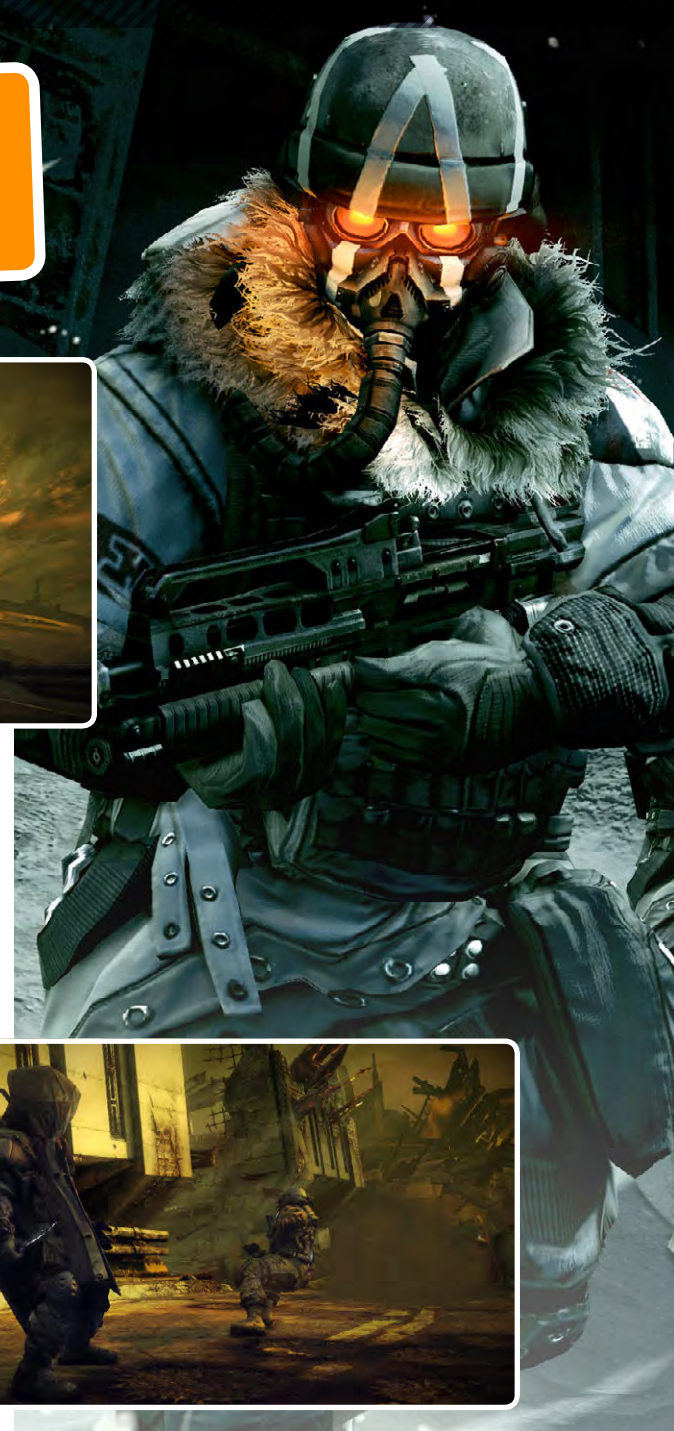
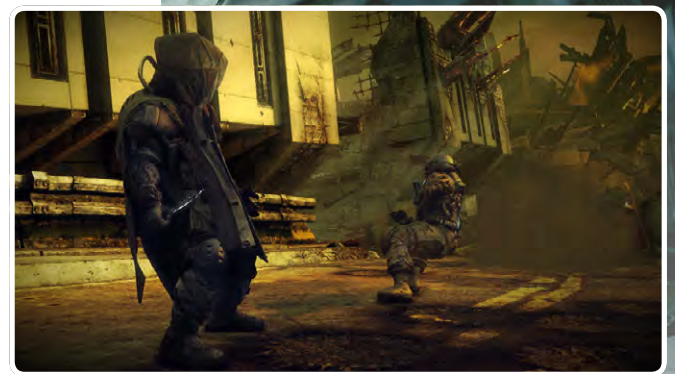
"Guerrilla promises that Killzone 3 will have the same legs as the current online heavyweights"

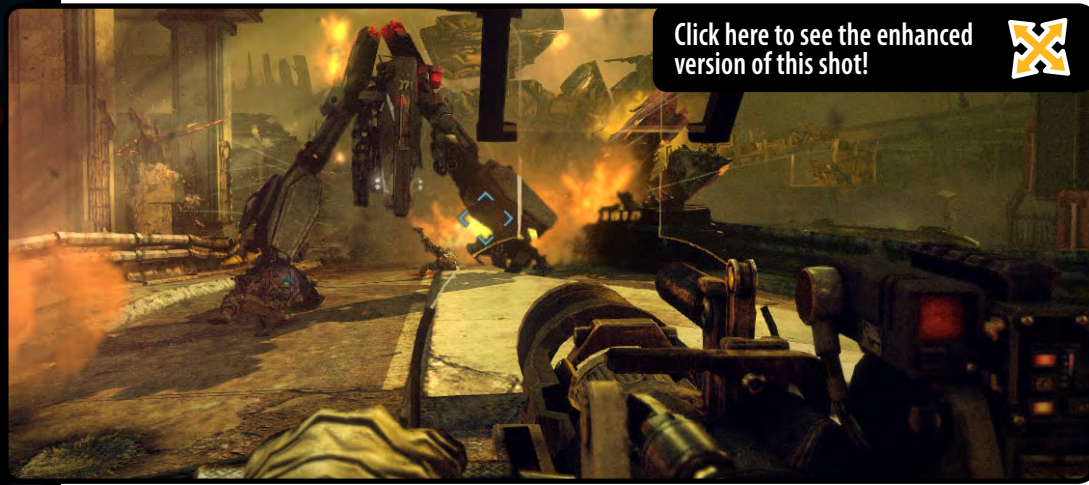
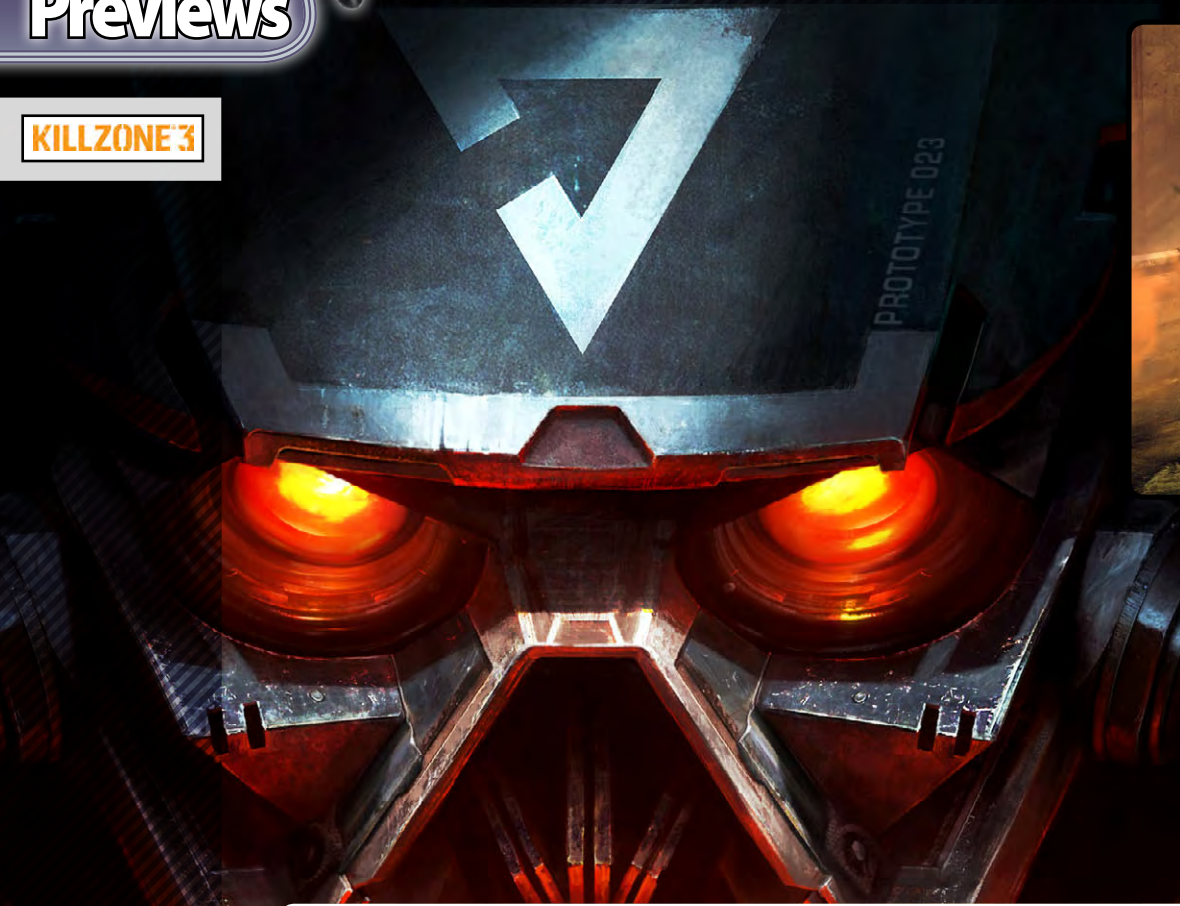


refined, and with substantial careers that reward your loyalty and successes with unique weapons and abilities. For example, the marksman can make use of a cloaking device, rendering him invisible to enemies and allowing you to use some sneaky tactics.

There is a balance to these unique abilities, of course. Some have limited use. The cloaking device won't work when running around for example, so unless you plan to crawl across the battlefield, use it wisely.

It was in Guerrilla Warfare, Killzone 3's Team Deathmatch world with a slight twist, >





> **Killzone 3** continued

where we got to give these classes a test run. Guerrilla Warfare sees players gun it out in expansive environments while capturing waypoints that allow your team to respawn closer to the battle. Players will also be able to make use of their clunky jetpacks for aerial assaults and bigger and better Exoskeletons to throw their weight around.

A second new mode that made an appearance, Operations, draws scenarios akin to those from the single-player offering, where teams of ISA and Helghast must defend or infiltrate the opponent's base as the ISA completes small objectives to hold back the Helghast. Each bout opens with a hugely impressive cinematic introduction, and each one is totally unique depending on which side you are on.



KILLZONE 3

> Killzone 3 continued

Completing objectives activates further cut-scenes to show how your efforts have affected the battlefield. For example, reaching a switch that turns on vents to cloak open areas with smoke drives your opponents into using different tactics while allowing you to sneak through the fog. Guerrilla Games have also implemented these features into standard multiplayer modes, allowing players to detonate level-altering switches, while Operations also makes use of Killzone 3's dynamic cut-scenes to put a spotlight on the top players of each round and highlight their heroic feats.

Guerrilla Games are keen to open up the Killzone 3 multiplayer experience to a wider audience.

The approach to this is encouraging rewards for a wide variety of rewards and unranked battles, allowing newcomers to gently settle in rather than be thrown into the deep end with a heavy suit of armour, gun in hand.

But that's not to say they've forgotten about the hardcore gamers. In fact, those who are keen to clan together will receive all the encouragement and incentive they need. For example, getting together with friends and 'squading up' will gain you tactical advantages on the battlefield, such as private headset chat, unique HUD displays and rewards.

We've only managed to scratch the surface of the extensive work Guerrilla Games has put into Killzone 3. With 45 ranks and over 100 medals to attain, as well as many more unlockables, if it can pull them away from the tough competition, Killzone 3 could well have gamers hooked long after it launches next February. ●



You'll be able to strap yourself into new exoskeletons during the MP.

"If it can pull them away from the tough competition, Killzone 3 could have gamers hooked long after it launches next February"



P3Zine
KILLZONE 3

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE 70%
FIRST IMPRESSIONS 90%
Guerrilla are in the zone for this one

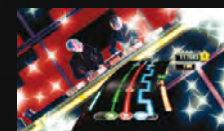


▶ **PLAYBACK OPTIONS:**

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PlayStation 2



Wii



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Publisher: Activision
Developer: Neversoft
Heritage: Guitar Hero III, GH World Tour, GH 5
PS Move Compatible: No
Link: www.guitarhero.com
OUT NOW

Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock

Banging the same old drum

There comes a point in any relationship where you tend to become a bit too comfortable with each other for your own good. Topics of conversation run dry and the magic – no matter how hard you try to spice things up – disappears. Or at least, that’s how it goes with us...

And unfortunately, that’s exactly what can be said for this year’s Guitar Hero. We still love it – we can always rely on Activision’s music game to give us a good time – but given how often it comes around, and the overwhelming sense of familiarity

we experience with every release, it’s starting to lose a bit of impact. Quite frankly, we’re suffering from Guitar Hero fatigue. Neversoft seem to be as well, with its attempts at mixing up this year’s version coming across as something of a little disappointment.

Warriors of Rock reverts back to the teen angst-fuelled highs of Guitar Hero III, bringing back the rock-centric soundtrack that, ahem, struck a chord with GH fans all those years ago, and introducing a Gothic rock and roll



The guitar-shredding solos are still the best bit.



➤ **Guitar Hero** continued

art style to try and engage you in the world. It's not particularly our cup of tea – in all honesty, we preferred the range of tracks and themes found in last year's *Guitar Hero 5* than this year's pig head-heavy rock focus, but each to their own.

Even in spite of this new-found direction, *Warriors of Rock*'s soundtrack still seems just as confused as those before it. Megadeth collides with Queen, Fall Out Boy with DragonForce and Black Sabbath with Dire Straits. It seems like Neversoft is trying to appeal to everyone here, and we're not entirely sure that it works.

The biggest change to this year's *Guitar Hero*, however, comes via Quest mode, but even that isn't saying much. It's the new face of

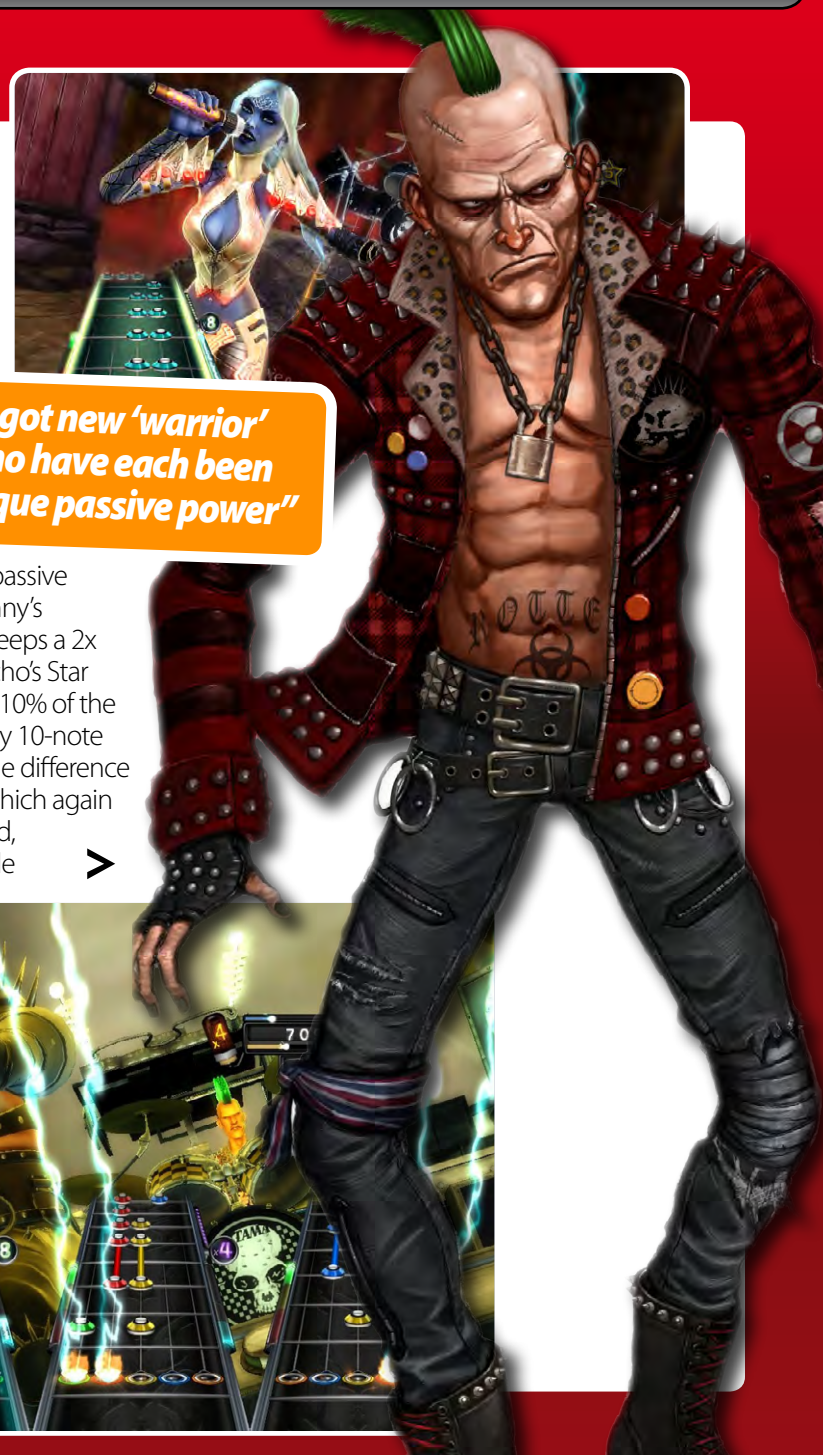


Guitar Hero's campaign, but other than throwing a new interface at us and distracting us with a few cut-scenes, Quest is still largely the same linear setlist progression system found in every other *Guitar Hero*. Even a barebones narrative from Gene Simmons can't shroud the fact that it's really just disguising the same old game.

You've also got new 'warrior' characters, who, after transforming at the end of each setlist, have each

"You've now got new 'warrior' characters who have each been allocated a unique passive power"

been allocated a unique passive power, ranging from Johnny's Speed Freak power that keeps a 2x minimum multiplier, or Echo's Star Power Generator that fills 10% of the Star Power gauge for every 10-note streak. They make very little difference to the actual gameplay, which again remains totally unchanged, other than acting as simple

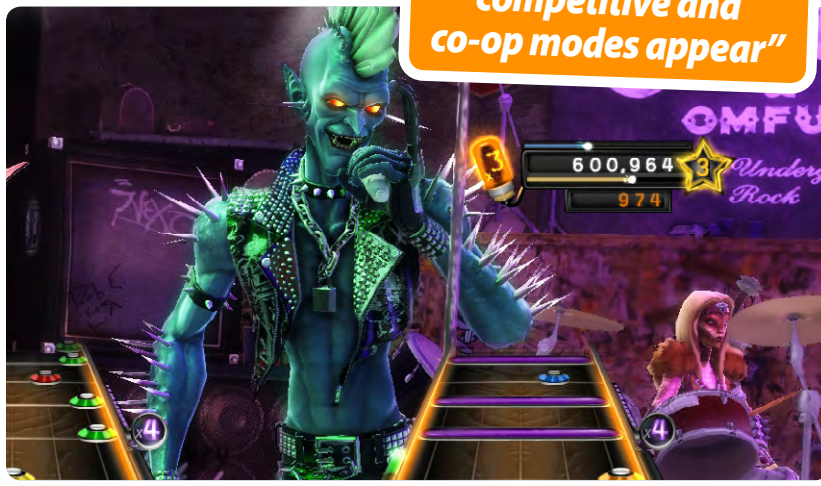


Roll over screen for annotations



With no new instruments this year, the core note-track spinning gameplay remains completely unchanged.

"The usual line-up of competitive and co-op modes appear"



> **Guitar Hero** continued

modifiers. But beyond that, they also bring the question of balancing into the equation. If you're going for a high score in the game, there are very few characters you will actually want to choose.

The usual line-up of competitive and co-operative modes appear, including the inclusion of Quickplay+, an enhanced version of the usual Quickplay mode that allows you to collect stars and complete certain challenges specific to each track.

But it just isn't enough. Given the more adult direction Warriors of Rock has taken, we'd have liked to have seen Activision have the courage to take it all the way and provide an experience genuinely carved for the niche it's looking to appeal to. Instead, it's still clinging

on to that family-friendly side, with the censored tracks and restrained visuals holding it back from where it really needs to be.

It's just as competent as its predecessors, but its appeal is ultimately starting to wane. To continue the series in style, Guitar Hero will really need to evolve. ●



P3Zine + Decent, if confused soundtrack

Verdict - Quest mode is a bit dull

Still fun, but the series needs to evolve to survive

- Same old song and dance

80 %

TRUTH IS THE FIRST CASUALTY OF WAR



▶ **PLAYBACK OPTIONS:**



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PlayStation Move Features





Publisher: Bethesda
Developer: Obsidian Entertainment
Heritage: Alpha Protocol, Star Wars: KOTOR II
Link: <http://fallout.bethsoft.com>
OUT NOW

Fallout: New Vegas

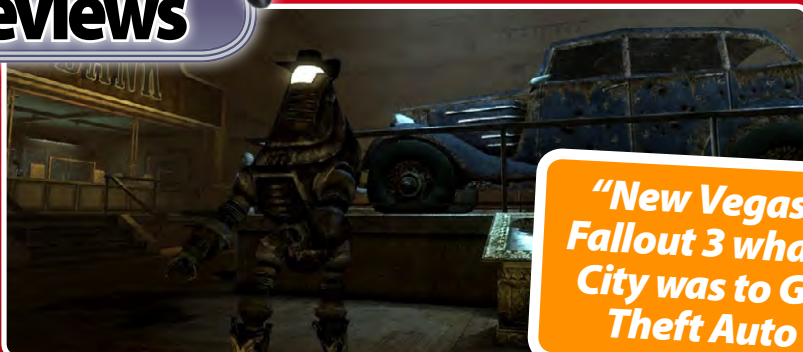
Winner takes all

Confession time: I've never been to Las Vegas; I've never rolled a snake eyes in Caesar's Palace; I've never spun a roulette wheel and watched as the ball dances between the red and black squares. I've never been on a winning streak only to lose it all on a 24-hour gambling binge...

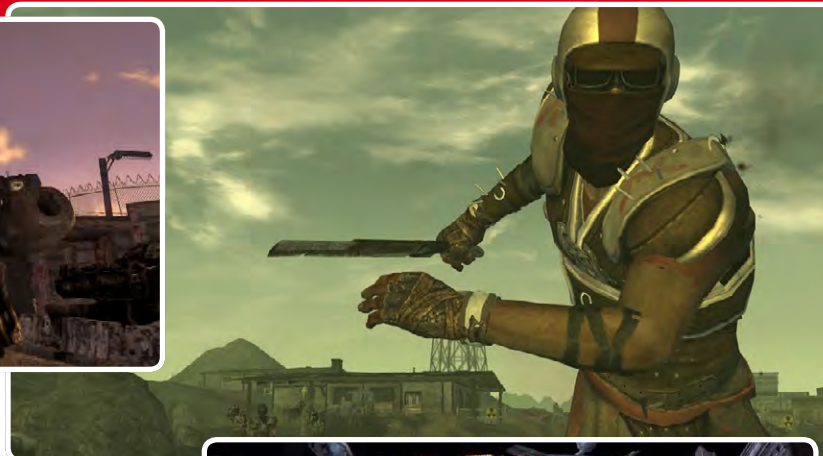
However, I have joined a gang of Elvis lookalikes in an effort to gain access to the nicer parts of Vegas. I've gone debt collecting in the wrong parts of town and I've helped a cult of ghouls complete their voyage to the stars by clearing out the basement.

These are just handful of the things that happened during my recent stay in Fallout's latest post-apocalyptic shooter, New Vegas. A follow-up to 2008's reboot, don't expect this new instalment to accomplish quite the same





***“New Vegas is to
Fallout 3 what Vice
City was to Grand
Theft Auto III”***



> **Fallout: New Vegas** cont.

significant jump. Instead, what's on offer here is a new story in a new setting with pinched cheeks and some minor tweaks here and there. To put it into simpler terms: New Vegas is to Fallout 3 what Vice City was to Grand Theft Auto III.

You play an unlucky courier who, while delivering a platinum poker chip, ends up in a shallow grave with a hole in the head. Rescued by a robot named Victor, a quick fix up from a doctor in Goodsprings and a brief tutorial sees you on your way to finding the culprits who robbed you.

From here, the Nevada desert is your oyster. You have the freedom to do as you please, although you won't survive very long in the desolate wilds if you don't prepare yourself and take on a few quests to earn some experience and caps.

Luckily jobs aren't that hard to come by in a post-apocalyptic wasteland. With factions in awry causing problems for each other and locals alike, you'll find that jobs come in all shapes and sizes – clearing convicts from a casino, collecting unpaid debts or investigating some strange goings on about town.

While some are merely your bread and butter for gathering cash and experience points, they're also a chance to meet some of the more interesting residents of New Vegas.

Like Fallout 3, you'll be forced to make decisions that affect your karma. Stealing objects or shooting innocent civilians is an easy way to get on the rap sheet, but the way



The shoddy visuals can still surprise you with the odd stunner.



You don't want to get on the wrong side of this guy.

WRC

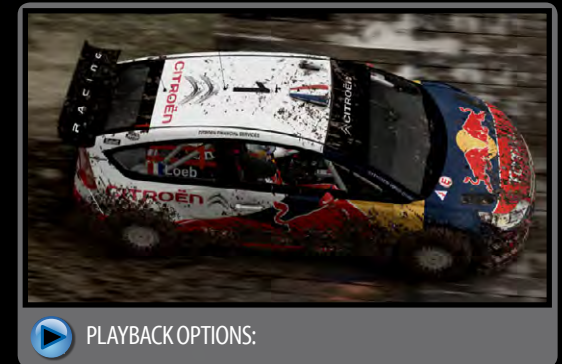
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▶ **PLAYBACK OPTIONS:**



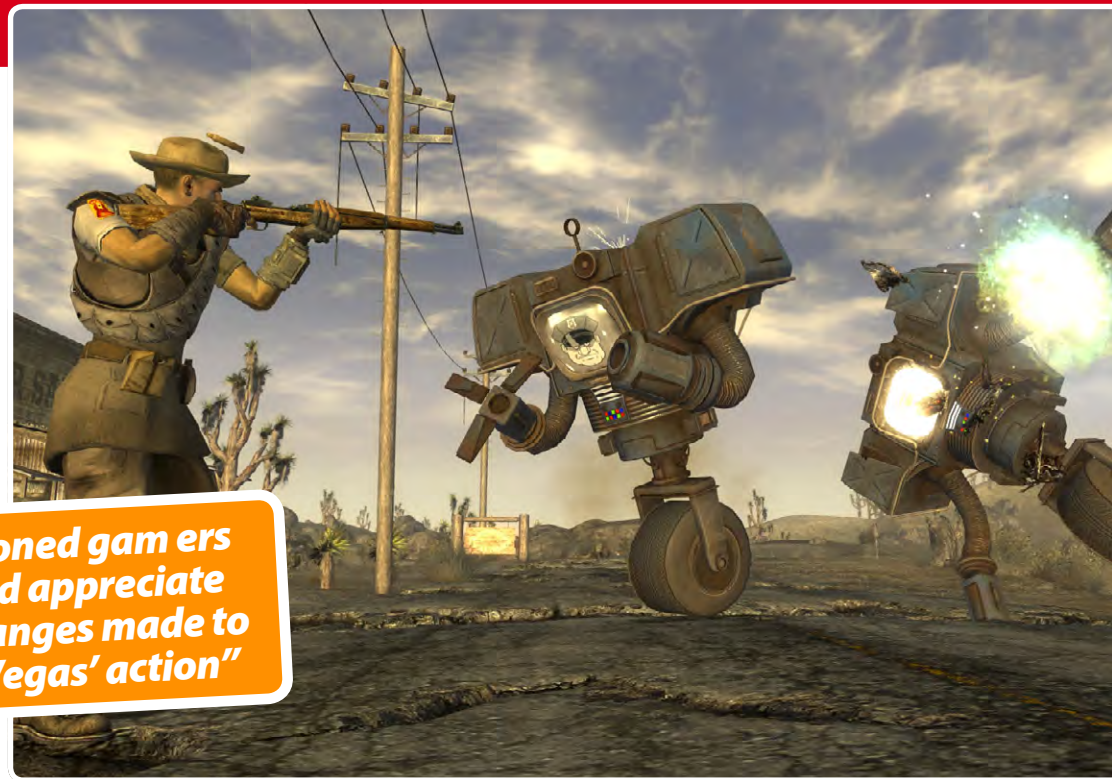
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Earth-destroying blue laser beams?
Where's Will Smith when you need him?



"Seasoned gamers should appreciate the changes made to New Vegas' action"

> **Fallout: New Vegas** cont.

you handle each mission can also affect your reputation, a new feature to New Vegas that affects how factions and towns greet you. If you perform good deeds consistently then townsfolk will treat you well with discounts on their wares, whereas bad actions will see certain

groups greet you with hostility or fear.

Depending on how you level up each of your attributes through Fallout's point allocation system, players can benefit from excelling in particular areas. For example, level up your speech and you can deliver powerful speeches that sway minds, improve your bartering skills and you may be able to get yourself a better cut of out of a fetch quest.

If this sounds a little too familiar to Fallout 3 players, then it should, but in particular seasoned gamers should appreciate some of the changes and improvements made to the action side of New Vegas.

While the Vault-Tec Assisted Targeting System (aka V.A.T.S) returns for a more RPG-based

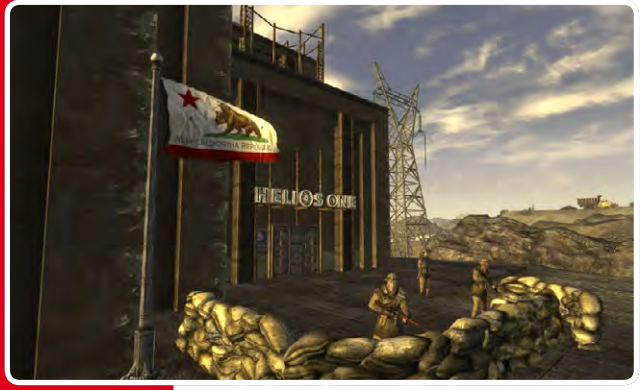




There must be an easier way to catch dinner...



"After trotting for miles through the Mojave Desert, seeing the New Vegas strip for the first time is a Technicolor spectacle"



> **Fallout: New Vegas** cont.

combat system, New Vegas introduces significantly improved aiming for each weapon, allowing you to move back and forth between real-time and turn-based combat seamlessly. That's not all, as weapons can now be modified from items collected on your journey to be put together at workbenches.

If that's not enough, a new Hardcore mode will test the limits of the true Fallout fan. Essentially, a 'realistic' mode, players will have to eat, drink and sleep on a regular basis to avoid deprivation, your ammunition counts towards your overall weight, and recovering from limb loss will require some serious medical skill. Not for the faint of heart.

It's a little disappointing to see New Vegas still suffers from the same lacklustre animations and visual finesse that plagued the last

instalment. However, the saving grace is the aesthetic style inspired by 1950's advertising and propaganda. Whistling along to *Blue Moon* played through your Pip-Boy will become a regular habit, and after trotting for miles through the Mojave Desert, seeing the New Vegas Strip for the first time is a Technicolor spectacle.

There's a lot to see and do in New Vegas, and overall play time can easily put you into weeks of running errands, though sticking solely to the core campaign missions is not recommended. New Vegas proves once again that the Fallout universe is an absorbing one filled with interesting characters and complex gameplay that makes each minor accomplishment mean so much more to the player.

So I've never been to Vegas, so what? I can still gamble away my fortune on the Vegas strip with a mutated Lady Luck by my side. ●



Yes, heads still explode.

P3Zine
Verdict

An addictive and rewarding experience

- + Weeks upon weeks of content
- + New additions are great
- Overwhelming for newcomers

88 %



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Publisher: EA
Developer: DICE/
Danger Close
Heritage: Medal of Honor:
Pacific Assault, Battlefield:
Bad Company 2
PS Move Compatible: No
Link: www.medalofhonor.com
OUT NOW

Medal of Honor

Tiers for Fears

There's an easy way to describe EA's new foray into the world of modern combat. It's EA's version of Call of Duty. Simple. The mechanics mimic Activision's juggernaut to a tee – tug L1 for Iron sights, R1 to fire, Square to reload and click the right stick to melee. The multiplayer pops a magical '10' in the air when you shoot someone. The weapons are the same. To the uninitiated, it might as well be the same game that you're playing.

Dig a little deeper though, and you'll find that Medal of Honor is its own beast. While it may share a lot

with its more-established competition, this co-development between Danger Close and DICE has a few things of its own to say about modern FPS action.

The single-player campaign follows a disparate group of soldiers through a two-day period of the war in Afghanistan. While it'll never be confused with a documentary, it's nonetheless a lot more grounded than Modern Warfare and its sequel's 'save the world' madness. This is a tale about soldiers, about war and about the raw human drama that



There's a lot of explosions in Medal of Honor.



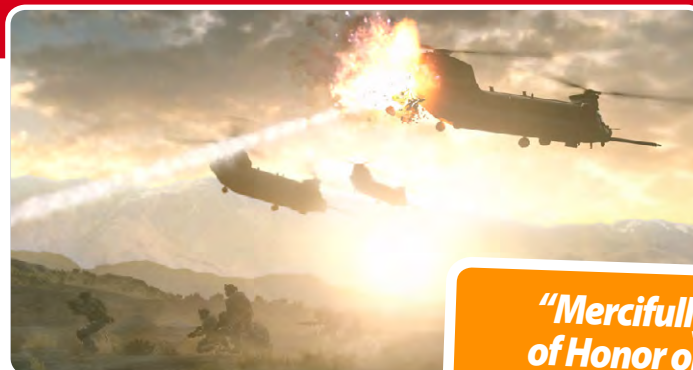


> Medal of Honor cont.

happens every day on the battlefield. And at times, it's rather stirring.

There are a handful of set-pieces that get the heart pumping and the adrenaline flowing without having to resort to outlandish spectacle. We won't spoil them for you, but Danger Close has done great work in making the danger seem very close indeed, and throughout Medal of Honor's meagre four-hour campaign there's rarely a dull moment. Some will cry that it should be longer, and perhaps they're right, but the action is well paced, the story simple and well told, and the in-action dialogue tremendously engaging and oddly cold. It seems the best way to win is to make sure you're clear and concise.

When the single-player is over, and it will be over pretty quickly,



"Mercifully, Medal of Honor online has undergone some cosmetic surgery since the Beta"

there's the small matter of a DICE-built multiplayer mode to get your teeth into. Mercifully, Medal of Honor online has undergone some cosmetic surgery since the Beta, with improved collision detection, a slicker HUD and some weapon balancing fixes. It's all led to a rather enjoyable, if slightly flawed, online experience that slots almost directly between DICE's own Battlefield and the obvious comparison, Call of Duty. The action is fast

and frenetic, but never quite as gung-ho as CoD. In Team Arena (Deathmatch), the matches actually feel more like battles for a frontline than the circular carnage of CoD. You'll need to use smoke grenades when moving between cover and >



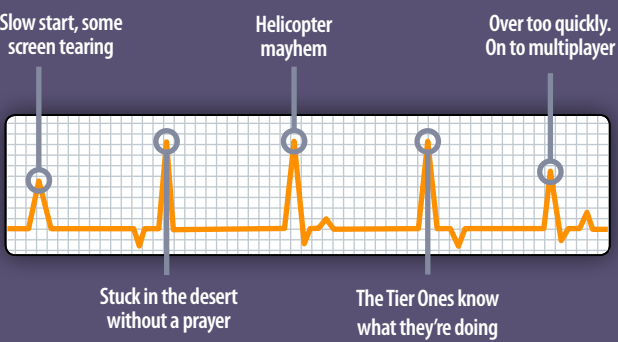
Roll over screen for annotations



Epic beard.
That is all.



PULSOMETER *Signs of life*



“Medal of Honor is firmly in the top tier of online shooters (pun intended)”

difficult to work out just where they are. One game saw an enemy sniper end up with 35 kills to 0 deaths. That suggests an issue with balancing rather than stupendous skill.

Still, this is an issue that might just resolve itself over time as people get used to the maps, and the general level of satisfaction and tension puts Medal of Honor firmly into the top tier (pun pretty much intended) of online shooters. It might not knock Call of Duty off its lofty perch, but on PS3 at least, it could feasibly slot into second place. Time will tell.

As it will for the game as a whole. There’s been controversy surrounding its depiction of conflict, but this is probably the most respectful war game out there, and the best Medal of Honor ever. ●

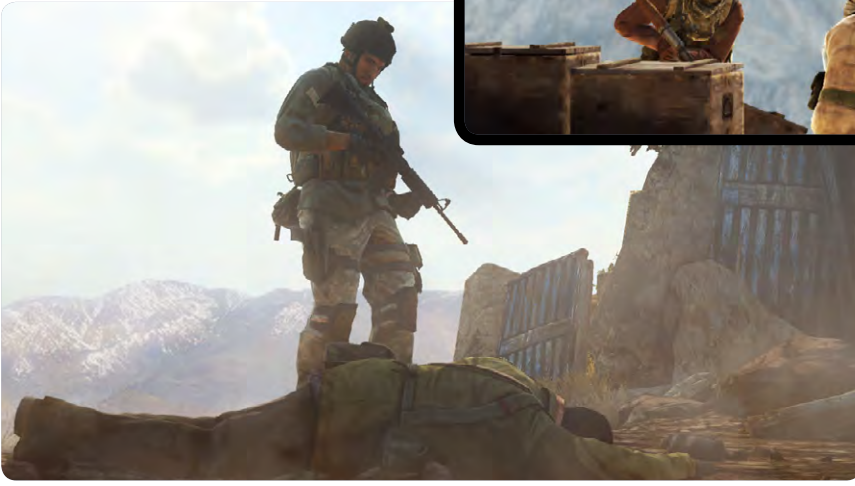


> Medal of Honor cont.

keep a sharp eye on the radar in order to avoid being popped in the head by some unseen enemy.

Levelling up is similar to Battlefield Bad Company 2, with three classes (Sniper, Rifleman and Spec Ops) to choose from, all of which increase their rank individually. Perhaps Medal of Honor’s most interesting game type, Combat Mission, is a little flawed at present though.

Essentially it’s Battlefield’s Rush, but with fewer vehicles and a variety of objective types. Unfortunately though, snipers are proving to be a huge problem. Spawn points are often out in the open for the attacking team, and defensive marksmen can pick off players with ease. There’s no way to ‘spot’ them (highlight them to others), and there’s no killcam, so it’s incredibly



P3Zine
Verdict

Sharp, intense and enjoyable, if slightly derivative

- + Short but well-made campaign
- + Snappy multiplayer
- A bit too samey

90%

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Castlevania: Lords of Shadow

Publisher: Konami
Developer: MercurySteam
Heritage:
 Clive Barker's Jericho
PS Move Compatible: No
Link: www.konami.jp/castlevania
OUT NOW

Is Konami's latest in vain?

Castlevania. Simply mentioning the name conjures memories of the celebrated 2D action-adventure series that has so often pitted you against all manner of mythological creatures. However, even bloodlines of vampire-slaying protagonists haven't been enough to thwart the demons preventing it from making any real impact in the realms of 3D. News that the publisher had approached relatively unknown Spanish developer MercurySteam to reboot the franchise was a surprising move, yet Castlevania: Lords of Shadow is set to show that even unproven studios can pack one hell of a punch.

Lords of Shadow's storyline revolves around Brotherhood of Light devotee Gabriel Belmont's lust for revenge following the murder of his wife at the hands (or claws, rather) of one of the many supernatural creatures that stalk the land. With dark magic preventing the souls of the dead from being peacefully laid to rest, Belmont becomes haunted by

his wife's soul as she encourages him to fulfil his destiny in ridding the world of evil. With the Lords of Shadow identified as the culprits, Gabriel learns that each one holds a piece of an ancient God Mask that, according to legend, will grant its bearer the ability to resurrect the dead. With a reignited sense of purpose, he sets out to bring his deceased wife back to life.

While the over-arching plot becomes a little disjointed in places, it is cemented by a



If only Sarah Michelle Gellar was an unlockable skin...



> Castlevania continued

spoken narrative that prefaces each level. Told from the perspective of Belmont's mentor Zobrek – voiced by seasoned thespian Sir Patrick Stewart – these portions easily become a highlight amidst the game's array of vocal talent that also includes notable contributions by Robert Carlyle, Natascha McElhone and Jason Isaacs.

As you can expect, combat becomes a fundamental aspect of the game, and while you are only ever equipped with the Combat Cross (complete with complimentary retractable spiked chain) to tackle your foes, attacks are divided between the genre-standard 'heavy' or 'light' classifications, and are able to be linked together to perform combos. A number of enhancements to the

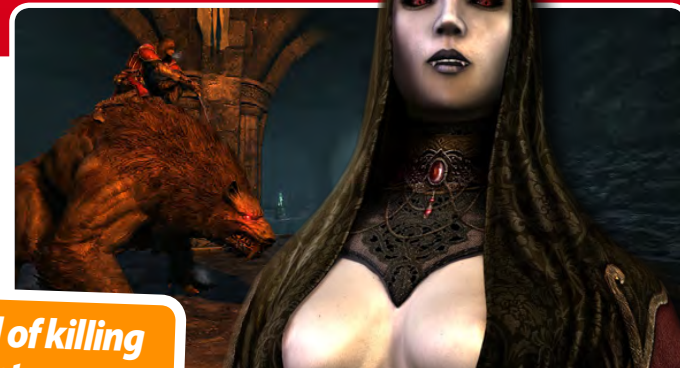


"You'll never grow tired of killing the variety of monsters Castlevania throws at you"

weapon scattered across the storyline coupled with a seemingly never-ending list of unlockable skills ensure that you'll never grow tired of killing the variety of monsters that the game throws at you.

Such depth is further improved with the introduction of Light and Shadow Magic, each providing their own benefits. Activating Light Magic allows you to gain health from

each successful hit, whereas Shadow increases the damage that you deal. These aren't infinite and utilise their own individual gauges that must be filled by absorbing unassigned orbs. The ability to quickly switch between offensive/defensive



Roll over screen for annotations



"Puzzles are also a regular feature, the 'Music Box' being a highlight"



> **Castlevania** continued

bonuses becomes a necessity as the game ramps up the difficulty later on.

Further enhancing the experience are a number of visually astounding boss battles, equally matched by the impressive cut-scenes throughout showing clear influences from the team at Kojima Productions, who assisted with development. Puzzles are also a regular feature, the 'Music Box' being a highlight, and breathtaking environments that range from the picturesque through to the traditional gothic flavourings, that have become a staple element of the franchise.

However, the game isn't able to steer clear of a few noticeable flaws, with the fixed camera system proving troublesome in places, slightly repetitive platforming sections, and a complete lack of any sort of

signposting to aid when you get stuck. Yet with so much polish, it is hard not to stand back and admire the developer's achievement in its entirety.

Much in the same way that Rocksteady Studios achieved success with the Batman franchise last year, MercurySteam have not only defined the formula that allows the Castlevania universe to successfully translate itself into an incredibly solid 3D action-adventure experience, but have now heightened expectations in regards to future instalments within the series. This is definitely not one to miss. ●



P3Zine + Fluid combat

Verdict + Incredible art direction

Castlevania's back with a bang!

- Camera problems

86%

WRC

Time to get down and dirty...



Publisher: Black Bean Games
Developer: Milestone
Heritage: SBKX, Superstar V8
PS Move Compatible: No
Link: www.wrcgame.com
OUT NOW



For a game all about pitch-perfect accuracy, a flawless sense of judgement and perfect placement, WRC sure doesn't help itself. The amount of times we clipped the tree on the very first bend of the very first race, thanks to some horrendous clipping issues, was almost enough for us to switch off our consoles in disgust and never return to WRC again. But we persevered, and it was very nearly worth it.

It's not that WRC is a bad game at all – as a rally simulator, Milestone has done

a tremendous job tweaking the nuts and bolts to release an accurate representation of the sport. Vehicle handling, although an area that takes a fair amount of getting used to when you first start playing the game, feels sublime when you find the sweet spot. Cars can be tweaked to find that perfect balance of downforce and brake balance, and the cars just, drift and bounce around the different road surfaces, bumps, and crests exactly as you'd expect them to.

Sadly, what WRC has in expertise, it lacks in style. In many respects, WRC could best be compared to the school geek; the guy who knows exactly what he's talking about but sits alone in the corner, scared to come out of his shell. There's no flair nor any excitement here. The thrill of the race is nowhere to be found, and when it's going up against the most popular and ostentatious kid in school – Codies' superb DiRT series – WRC's may well struggle a bit to win any friends.



If you're too hard on the throttle, get used to spinning out on gravel corners.



Hit a tree and your co-driver will become an emotional wreck.

> WRC continued

The game's core component, 'The Road to the WRC', simply consists of a series of races separated by a bunch of clunky menu screens. You're able to customise your team name, co-driver and buy new cars, but ultimately RttWRC follows a totally generic structure, and its slightly dull presentation and text-based communication makes it difficult for it to hold your attention for too long.

A WRC Academy mode offers a series of challenges for you to compete in under the pretext of training, but again there's barely any inspiration on show, just basic time-based challenges that ask you to complete segments of a track within an allotted time.

And if that doesn't put you off, the tired presentation might just be the final



WRC, S-WRC, P-WRC, J-WRC and WRC Group 8 series all feature.

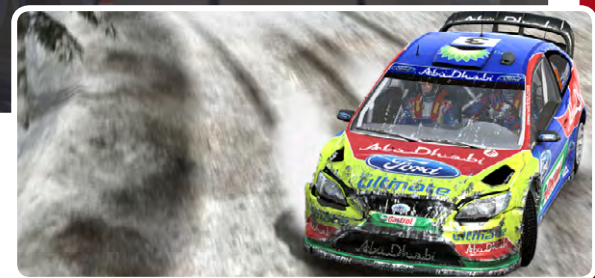
nailed in the coffin. The low resolution textures, substandard lighting, glitchy environmental props and static courses had us convinced that Black Bean had sent us a PS2 build. It's nowhere near the level it needs to be for this gen. As per

"With some polish and a radical graphical overhaul, WRC could have been the game rally fans had long been waiting for"

the rest of their line-up, presentation, it seems, was not on Milestone's list of priorities when it came to WRC.

But to dismiss WRC for what it lacks rather than what it has would be churlish. Look beyond the lifeless shell and dull presentation and you'll find an incredibly competent racing experience. When you get the hang of how it works, WRC becomes one of the most satisfying rally racers we've ever experienced, learning to delicately apply the throttle and faintly nudge the left stick in some sort of off-road ballet. If you're not immediately put off by WRC's presentation and archaic nature, sticking with it can prove fairly rewarding.

With a bit of polish, WRC could have been the game rally fans had been waiting for. But as it is, it's almost the same game they got five years ago. A disappointing debut for the franchise, but with a bit of polish, future versions could be stunning. ●



Roll over screen for annotations

P3Zine Verdict

- + Great rally sim
- Only average visuals and presentation
- Feels out of date

Rally nuts only need apply

70%



EA Sports MMA

The new king of the ring

Publisher: EA Sports
Developer: EA Sports
Heritage: FIFA 11, NHL 11, Fight Night Round 4
PS Move Compatible: No
Link: www.ea.com/games/mma
OUT NOW

EA was always going to struggle with its inaugural Mixed Martial Arts game. It's hard enough recreating one of the world's most complex and intricate sports, so doing so without the juggernaut UFC license is a huge mountain to climb.

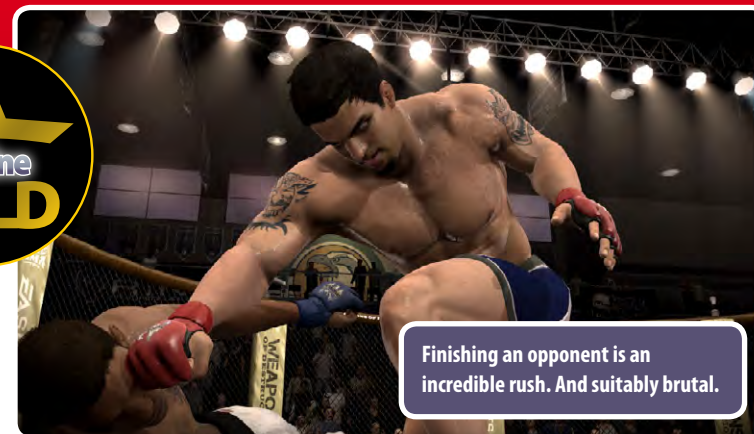
Instead of dwelling on these pitfalls though, the team at EA Tiburon has focused on the positives. Free from the shackles

of the UFC brand, EA MMA can showcase the global nature of Mixed Martial Arts, and does so with aplomb. In its slick and well-paced career mode, you'll fight all around the world, competing in Brazil, Japan the US and UK, as well as travelling to the planet's best training camps, all while professional mentalist Bas Rutten barks hilarious soundbites at you through the in-game smartphone.

In order to compete with the might of UFC Undisputed though, EA MMA really needed to get it right in the ring. Or cage. And that's exactly what it has done. This is a superb approximation of Mixed Martial Arts, combining striking, grappling and submissions and everything in-between, with a fluidity and brutality that the competition cannot match.

Essentially, the sport is split into three areas: striking, clinch-work (or in-fighting) and the ground game.

Everyone understands striking, and the modified Fight Night engine does a great job of the art of hitting men in the face. The right stick is used for all manner of punches, there's a modifier for kicks, and you can throw combos with precision when you get accustomed to the system. Just like MMA though, you can wade in swinging wild hooks and catch your opponent unawares. Knockouts can happen



Finishing an opponent is an incredible rush. And suitably brutal.



The right-stick striking is very well done, but EA MMA features button controls too, should you wish.



"Finishing is a violently satisfying rush"

To some, this looks weird. And it is. Ground fighting takes a while to appreciate.



> **EA MMA** continued

at any time, but they're always fair – you'll notice yourself lowering your head at the wrong time, for example, or rushing in with your hands down. Most knockdowns see your opponent slump to the canvas, activating a quick minigame as you jump on your felled foe to finish them off as they desperately try to

Bas Rutten is one of the best humans on planet Earth, and he'll coach you through the Career mode.

recover by hammering Circle. It's a violently satisfying rush and a far more accurate representation of a fight finish than UFC Undisputed's dice-roll KOs.

The ground-game and clinch are very simple, but have hidden depth. Basically, you're given two buttons – X to advance, Circle to deny. You then play out a game of human chess as one person tries to advance to a more advantageous position, while the other looks how to stop them, counter them or get back to their feet. By putting this all on two buttons, EA has removed some of the true subtlety of grappling, but it's a more elegant and cerebral solution that UFC's complicated quarter-circle stick movements.

up submissions, strikes, slams and lots and lots of blood. The matches take place in real-time (a rarity for sports games) which means most fights won't go to decision, but you have the time to take part in genuine epics.

If the exciting Live Broadcast mode works as EA hopes, there's enough here to tempt the same casual audience that took UFC Undisputed into the million-sales stratosphere. And even if not, it's still the best MMA game ever made. ●

Ultimately though, EA MMA captures the drama and science of the sport beautifully. You can have slow-paced wrestling matches that ride out the clock, you can fly in and knock someone out in seconds, you can have technical striking matches that are as tense as anything you'll ever find on Street Fighter, or you can have an all-out war that mixes

Roll over screen for annotations



P3Zine
Verdict

One of the most exciting sports games in years

- + Great recreation of MMA
- + Looks amazing
- Lacks the big names

90%

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PES 2011

Best left on the bench?

After years of being promised the World Cup and delivered the Community Shield, our relationship with PES is rockier than a collapsed Chilean mineshaft. For every corker there seems to be an absolute stinker; for every last-minute wonder goal there's an embarrassing howler. And this year, we feel, Konami have ballsed it up again.

The majority of our troubles with PES 2011 boil down to the fundamentals. Passing, player movement, ball

physics... almost every intricacy of the sport feels inaccurate. But it's not your typical PES inaccurate. Instead, Konami seem to have tried to emulate FIFA's authenticity, but come up way too short. Rather than the extensive set of algorithms FIFA uses to determine the flow of the game, in PES, the ball's actions often seem completely random.

It ultimately means that PES 2011 neither plays anything like football, nor what you'd come to expect of PES. It lacks the nuances of FIFA, yet also lacks

the pick-up-and-play fun of PES of old, with the semi-authentic direction often resulting in the game feeling more frustrating than entertaining. Passing feels inaccurate, with balls often drifting off in completely different directions to those you're anticipating, while player movement feels largely broken. Don't even think about relying on your teammates to set up scoring opportunities – lone runs, it seems, are encouraged in PES 2011.

Ball placement and power is determined by the power you



This year's presentation is better than ever.



The UEFA Champions League mode is one of the highlights.

> PES 2011 continued

apply to the pass – tap for a short pass, and hold to pass further. Simple, right? But when the game decides that long pass was meant for someone standing right next to you, or to pass a short ball to someone 30 yards away, what good does it do? Human error and misjudging power and direction is one thing, but shoddy AI is another.

Off the ball movement, too, is the worst we've seen in a football game for a long time. Player selection can be ridiculous, with the AI selecting completely the wrong player when attempting to pick up a dead ball, while strikers often stand around waiting for the ball rather than make runs into the box. It makes the idea of teamwork and crossing the ball almost pointless – perfectly slotted crosses count for



Master League can now be taken online, though the differences seem minimal.

nothing when your players are standing around the 18-yard line. And don't get us started on the penalty taking, where power and placement seems decided by a roll of the dice.

At least they've seen fit to get rid of Mark Lawrenson this year, but when replacement Jim Beglin reckons that a

"You'll be screaming at your TV for that wonky pass more often than you will a top-drawer goal"



shot scraping the corner flag is a decent effort, you've got to ask, what's the point?

Yet PES 2011 still has its redeeming features, even if it isn't quite as much fun as last year's. Master League Online will be the game's biggest crowd-puller, even if it does play exactly the same game as the offline variant, Scoring a scorcher is arguably more satisfying than FIFA, and the near misses will genuinely have you sucking air. It's just a shame you'll be screaming at your TV for that wonky pass more often than you will a top-drawer goal.

So, PES 2011 seems confused. It still has some of the hallmarks of the old PES, but Konami's poor attempt at simulation doesn't work. The gap between PES and FIFA now seems bigger than ever, and there's ultimately only one real option for football fans looking to get on the pitch this Christmas. In the words of Jim Beglin: "If it carries on going this way, they're finished." ●



Roll over screen for annotations



P3Zine
Verdict

PES seems further behind FIFA now than ever before

- + Super satisfying goals
- Passing wildly inaccurate
- Still lacks FIFA authenticity

70
%

In **P3Zine** Issue 45

DJ Hero 2

The final verdict on this year's
hottest music game!

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MEDAL OF HONOR™

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EXCLUSIVE PLAYTEST



Hands-on with the campaign!



MULTIPLAYER



DICE changes online combat forever. Hands-on inside!

Exclusive interview inside!



CONTROL →



WELCOME

The name Medal of Honor has been synonymous with the first-person shooter genre for over a decade now, in a series spanning three console generations and picking up countless awards along the way.

With this franchise reboot, EA has taken Medal of Honor out of World War II for the first time, and recreated the reality of modern combat within the most current setting imaginable: Afghanistan. Here you'll follow the trials and tribulations of a group of US Army Rangers and a pair of highly trained Tier One Operators as they navigate one of the toughest hotspots in modern military history.

As the game is split into two distinct modes – the narrative-drive Campaign and the frenetic Multiplayer – we've decided to give you the full breakdown on both, before speaking to the man behind the online action, DICE's Patrick Liu. This magazine will give you the inside scoop on everything you need to know about Medal of Honor before it hit stores on October 15th.

Enjoy the issue,

Jon Denton

"With this franchise reboot, EA has taken Medal of Honor out of World War II for the first time"

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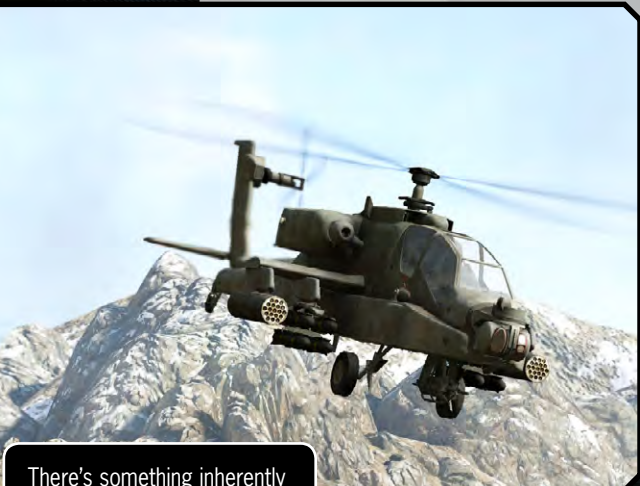
Interview 10

We talk multiplayer, with DICE's Patrick Liu





Publisher: EA
Developer: DICE/
Danger Close
Heritage: Battlefield
Bad Company 2,
Mirror's Edge
Link: www.medal
of honor.com



There's something inherently cool about Apaches.

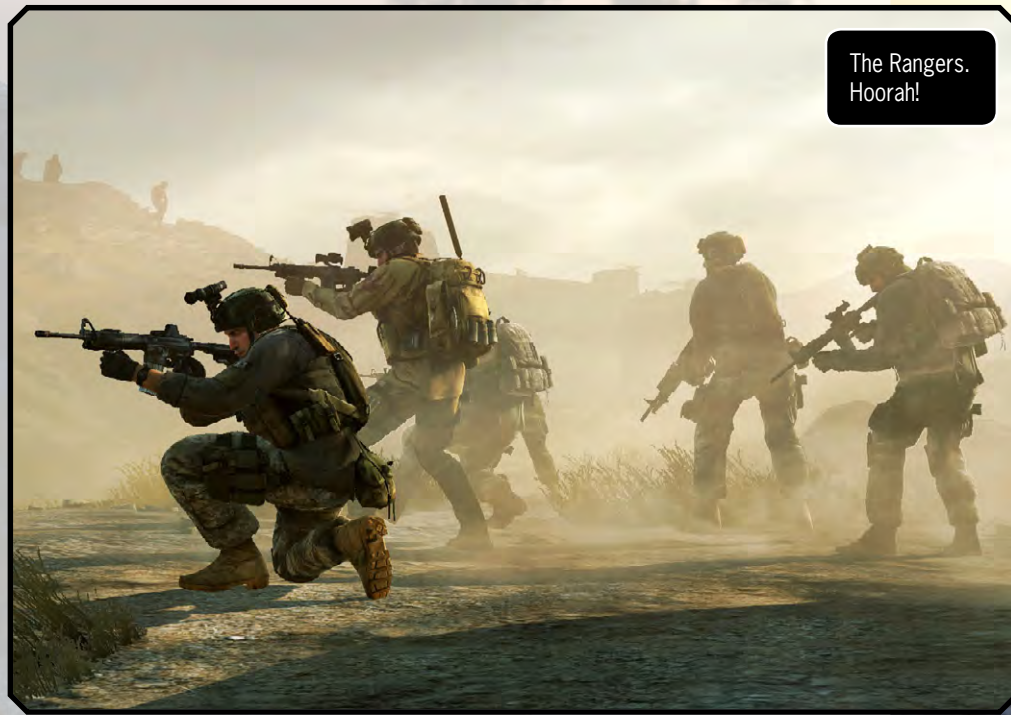
HANDS ON CAMPAIGN

Think you know war? Think again...

How do you stand up and get noticed in the most crowded market in the industry? Some do it by being flashy, loud and obnoxious. Others by filling their games with gimmicks that seem like a good idea at the time and end up being as stupid as they sound. And some just try and fail. With Medal of Honor, EA has relied on the one thing it's always had: pedigree.

The all-new Medal of Honor is as concentrated and intense a shooter as you could hope for. It knows exactly what it's trying to achieve – to deliver a story that captures the reality, terror and bravado of war – and wraps that up in super-tight mechanics. It's more interested in making you tense, scared and relieved than it is showing off.

Not that Medal of Honor is remotely unimpressive, you understand. The newly renamed Danger Close has created a beautiful game. Well, beautiful's probably not the word, but the recreation of a war-torn Afghanistan is startling at times. The stark, harsh, sand-bleaching sunlight, the hidden menace in the dusky streets of Kabul, the imposing mountains of the Shahikot Valley... Modern Day Afghanistan is not exactly a holiday hotspot, and Danger Close have done great work in capturing that.



The Rangers.
Hoorah!

Playing through Medal of Honor's interweaving soldiers' stories is a nerve-wracking affair, but one that's broken up with moments of levity. Whether you're playing as the

"Danger Close has created a beautiful-looking game"

> Campaign continued

bombastic, courageous Rangers or the tight-knit silent assassins of the Tier One operators, Medal of Honor never forgets that there's more to war than bloodshed. These are real people, and you'll get to know your teammates as you battle through this treacherous terrain.

Our first mission in the dusty boots of a US Ranger saw our team working its way through the Shahikot Valley in an effort to clear a landing zone for an Apache. It soon becomes abundantly clear that this particular section of mountainous outcrop is a lot hotter than even the burning sun could have ever let on. There are insurgents everywhere,



The scorched skies are very evocative.

"It's intense. It's pretty scary. The only way to stay alive is to stay calm"

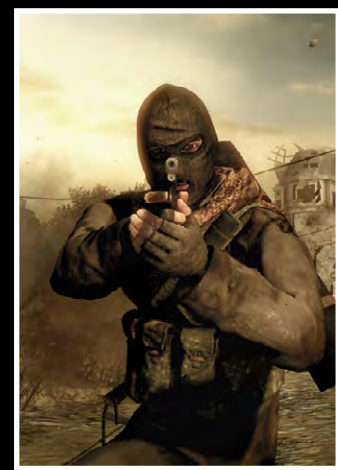
and you have to clear them out quickly in order to survive. There's constant chatter from your teammates, who are quick to alert you to enemy positions and let you know what's happening around you. It's intense, and rather scary. The only way you're going to stay alive is by keeping calm, though. And you do, and you move on.

The mission ends in one of the most memorable sequences the genre has ever managed. Holed up in a shelled-out house, insurgents piling in from all angles, RPGs going off everywhere and begging for support from a nearby Apache. The building is being blasted to pieces and you've run out of ammo. It's over. It was good serving with you, boys. Suddenly, a thunderous roar and a torrent of hellfire from above. You're saved, and it's going to be okay. Until next time, anyway. >



Hoo-rah!

The good, the bad and the ugly



Insurgents

Rangers

Tier One

Insurgents

It's a real war, and a very real threat. The enemy insurgents know the landscape a lot better than you do, and they know how to use it. IEDs, RPGs, AK47s and an innate knowledge of guerilla warfare are all part of their strategy. You need to keep your wits about you if you're going to survive.

> Campaign continued

The game then slips neatly into the cockpit of the Apache, as you circle the valley looking for troops. This is how Medal of Honor handles its intertwining narrative threads, and it's a supremely slick way of telling a story. EA has really emphasised that it's all about telling the stories of the soldiers, and it's definitely to the game's benefit.

Of course, there's a third party in this particular tale, and it's those bearded wonders, the Tier Ones. These guys have seen it all and done it even more, and they're about as difficult to fluster as a Buddhist monk on general anaesthetic. The two in question here are Dusty and

"The Tier Ones are as difficult to fluster as a Buddhist monk on a general anaesthetic"

Deuce, who are doing a bit of sniper/spotter work over on a distant mountain. There's a calmness that's almost eerie. Even when one of their protective Claymores goes off, they know they have a couple more. Easily enough time for another shot. The Tier Ones prefer stealth and cover to the gung-ho aggression of



An oddly beautiful site... if they're on your side, that is.

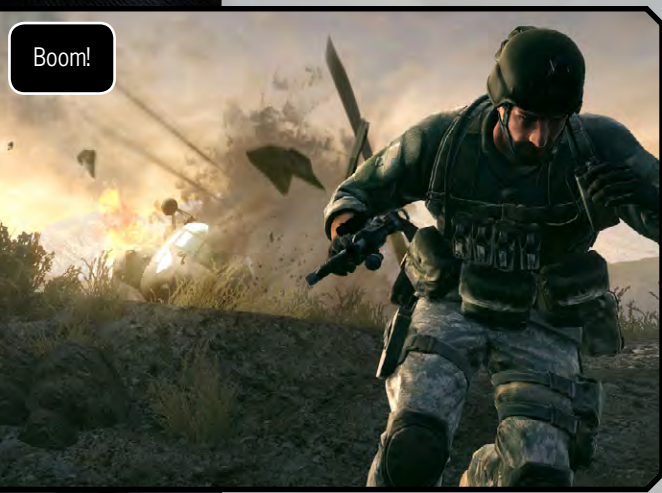
the Rangers, and you'll spend their missions behind enemy lines, taking out key personnel with surgical accuracy and minimal fuss.

It's this contrast in personalities and styles that defines the Medal of Honor campaign. You'll get to know the soldiers around you, gain an understanding of their struggle and their bravery. Yes, it may be war shot through a Hollywood lens, but that doesn't make it any less real, any less shocking or any less valid. Of course, none of this would matter if the mechanics weren't up to scratch, and this is where Danger Close's experience with the long-running franchise comes into play. It's a smooth and instantly playable shooter, easy to get into for those that are comfortable with the genre, but with its own tricks and subtleties that will only reveal themselves after some extensive play.

Finding the balance between fun and realism is always difficult in a game that purports to



Boom!



Expect to be moving in a hunched posture a lot of the time.



Shooting captions is forbidden under NATO ruling. Unfortunately, no one told this soldier.

> Campaign continued

portray war in a convincing fashion, but Medal of Honor finds that middle ground comfortably. The threat is always there, the sense of danger tangible, but it's always fair; it always gives you a chance to win. If you keep your wits about you, keep your eyes firmly open and make sure you listen to your teammates then you'll definitely make it back alive, if maybe a changed person.

So, has EA and Danger Close done enough to separate Medal of Honor from the pack? Well, that

"Medal of Honor is back, and it's better than ever. That's how you get noticed"

goes without saying. This is a much more thought-provoking shooter than anything else currently on the market, but one that doesn't forget that it needs to keep you entertained as well as make you think. And all that before you get close to the multiplayer.

Medal of Honor is back, and it really is better than ever. That's how you get noticed. ●



War. It's just thoroughly unpleasant – unless you're playing it, obviously.



MULTIPLAYER

War games, designed by the best team in the world

"To compete with the best, you need to be the best"

DICE. Let that name sink in for a moment. It's not often you can draw conclusions about a game's quality just from the name of the developer, but DICE has earned that over the years. After all, these are the guys who made their name on Battlefield, who took the console world by storm this year with Bad Company 2, and who are one of the most consistently excellent teams on the planet. So when EA needed a multiplayer component for Medal of Honor that could compete with the best, well they had to bring in the best.

You may have already had a taster of Medal of Honor's online game if you were involved in the Beta earlier this year. Be assured that the game has come on a long way since then. It's faster and slicker, the hit detection is improved and the HUD is less intrusive. It feels more like the game that DICE should be making.

Medal of Honor's multiplayer is a familiar experience, but in the best way of all. There are elements of Battlefield's movement and gunplay that make you feel instantly at home (or as 'home' as you can feel when fighting a brutal battle on the streets of Kabul), and also the snap and pace of Call of Duty. Medal of Honor sits comfortably between the two camps, matching the competitions' intensity without ever forgetting the depth and satisfying gameplay that has made DICE games so popular.

Each match begins with a choice of class. You can pick from a Rifleman, Special Ops or a Sniper. As you progress in the multiplayer landscape, you unlock new weapons and attachments for each class. So, if at first you want to stay out of trouble and concentrate on being a sniper, you will unlock new bits of kit for your long-ranged weapon of choice. But don't expect that



Combat Mission is a story-driven multiplayer epic in the mould of Battlefield's Rush. It's superb.

Shoot To Kill

What modes can you expect to get stuck into?



- Team
- Objective
- Combat

Team Assault

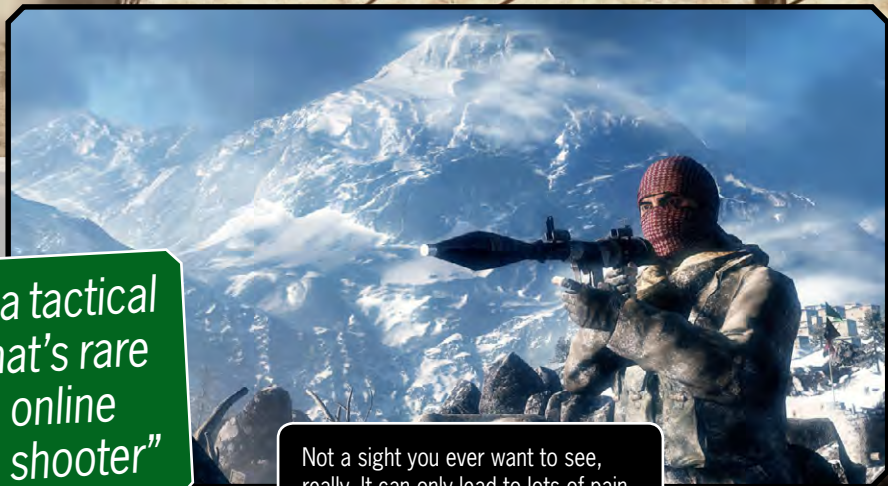
As straight a Team Deathmatch as you could ask for. Team Assault is a classic six-on-six, with the idea that your team has to kill the other one. First to 50 kills wins. That's all the obvious stuff out of the way. What you didn't know though, is that Medal of Honor's snappy combat means that it's possible to go on serious kill streaks through pure skill and technique. Just keep your wits about you, communicate with your teammates and you *will* succeed.

> Multiplayer continued

experience to translate to your skills with a Special-Ops rocket launcher. You'll have to put the time in on all three class types to become a truly dominating Medal of Honor player. Of course, which type of mode you are playing will determine just what you want to achieve, and which class you pick. Team Assault is a standard team deathmatch mode, so working up your rifleman abilities is probably the best way to go. If you're battling in the narrative-driven epic that is Combat Mission though, it's probably wise to concentrate on

"There's a tactical depth that's rare for an online console shooter"

your Special Ops heavy weaponry, or sticking back and helping your teammates out by sniping. It's more kill-driven than Battlefield sure, but there's still a tactical depth that's rare for an online console shooter.



Not a sight you ever want to see, really. It can only lead to lots of pain.

Our hands-on time went very well. Racking up kills became second nature, just due to a generally high experience level with the genre. If you're comfortable checking your corners and not walking around with an empty ammo clip, you will do well. If you do manage to get yourself on a good run of kills, you'll earn a support action. You can either pick an offensive action – a



It's familiar and fresh at the same time.



> Multiplayer continued

mortar strike for example, or go for a more philanthropic approach and replenish all your teammates ammunition. It'll separate the team players from the more selfish types, and is another great example of DICE's innate knowledge of how community makes multiplayer shooting a success.

Of course, the real value of Medal of Honor's online will only come weeks and months after the game's release, but we fully expect to still be there on the front line well into next year. That's what happens when DICE comes to town. ●



The Tier One operatives are an amazing bunch.

Roll over screen for annotations



It's tough to convey the tension and drama of a Medal of Honor shootout in screens alone. Be sure that this guy's in serious trouble, though.

INTERVIEW

PATRICK LIU

With DICE's multiplayer guru, it's a questions of Honor...

"It's been both fun and challenging for us to make something other than Battlefield"

What was the aim for Medal of Honor's multiplayer?

One thing was the whole core tenets of the franchise; the respect for the soldier and telling the soldiers' story. If you look at Combat Mission then we have some storyline in there, and that kind of dictated the pacing and direction of the multiplayer game. It's more grounded and not as over-the-top as Bad Company where you level buildings and have people flying all over the place, and that just

doesn't happen in Medal of Honor, so for us it has been a really good creative exercise to make something different, because we know that some people who play Battlefield are asking for more infantry-focused maps, or close-quarters combat, so that's really what we've been focusing on with this Medal of Honor game. It's been both fun and challenging for us to make something other than Battlefield.

How useful was the Beta as an aid to the multiplayer game's development?

A lot. We put out the Beta very early because we really wanted to have time to react to it. If you look at development cycles and certification times etc., it takes a lot of time to make actual changes, so we wanted to have plenty of time to take the community feedback into account.

We made a lot of changes based on the feedback, and a lot of changes that we had planned already. So, for example, the weapon recoil... a lot of people from the Beta test wanted more of that, so that's done. Some people didn't like the HUD display or the art direction of the menu, so that's completely changed too, and we made a lot of changes to the Frostbite engine to make the game behave like it needs to in a close-quarters combat scenario.

Are you trying to win the Battlefield fans over, or just appeal to the general shooter crowd out there?

It's a bit of both, to be totally honest. If you look at the game modes we have, then there's the extremely quick and intense game modes, then we have Combat Mission, which is a lot slower-paced and tactical, so in a sense we're really trying to make everyone happy.



So a more 'realistic' approach?

Exactly that. It's more about the authenticity than the other factors. Yes, we have proven that we can make destruction, but that doesn't mean that all our games will have destruction in them. It's the design that dictates that. Just looking at the tone and the atmosphere of the game, it doesn't really fit to blow up walls with a grenade. It's more grounded, more realistic. It's still possible to blow up wooden fences and more fragile material, but you're not levelling houses.

Would you say that DICE becoming a more console-focused development team?



> Interview continued

Yeah, it depends on what kinds of games we're making. It just happens to be that the consoles are quite big now, but we're focusing a lot on PC, both with Bad Company 2 and Medal of Honor both focusing on PC compatibility.

How much freedom do you have to patch the game post-release?

We certainly have room for that, and we have plans to patch the game and balance things. And we also have plans for PDLC – more maps, more game modes, etc.

Can you tell us how the class levelling works?

It's quite straightforward. You need to unlock for each class separately, like Bad Company 2, so you'll have to play each individual class.

How does Combat Mission differentiate to Rush?

They are similar. There are a couple of things we added on top of that, though, adding to the whole engagement of the player. So, for example, in Bad Company you can basically go from place to place and blow up the crates... that's basically



it, but here we give it a bit more variation in terms of game mechanics, so it's not just blowing stuff up, it's activating things, capturing flags, etc. Depending on the context, the game mechanics are different, and the context is given to you as a player by the voiceover, the environment and the things that are happening around you. It's not just blowing up the next crate; maybe it's securing a helicopter, then taking out the RPGs, so there's always a context why you should progress.

We noticed vehicles creeping into online play. Is that just something in Combat Mission?

That's something that we use in Combat Mission only. It's more about the epic feeling, whatever they're doing in Afghanistan. They have some Bradley tanks, but there's not

like an army of tanks or anything, so it should fit the fiction of the game.

How was the relationship between DICE and Danger Close during development?

It's been surprisingly smooth, actually. It's been very good. I was a bit concerned in the beginning, although still very excited to do it, but it turns out that it's a great team in LA, so we've been working really close together, depending on where we were in the development cycle. In the beginning, we were speaking on a weekly basis, but as we neared the end of development, we were speaking on a daily basis. We fly out to each other from time to time to help out, give feedback on each others' work and things. The more concrete stuff like sharing game assets and textures and stuff like that has been very useful, too. ●