

HUNTED[®]

THE DEMON'S FORGE

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

FROM THE PUBLISHERS OF PCGZINE, P3ZINE AND 360ZINE



INTERVIEW

The final word from inXile Entertainment

THE CRUCIBLE

Hunted's ace up the sleeve unveiled!

EXTENSIVE PREVIEW

Why you should care about this co-op adventure!



WELCOME

Co-op is rarely thought of as more than an add-on; another feature added to the back of the box to sell more copies. However, with *Hunted: The Demon's Forge*, this is far from the case. Built from the ground-up to accommodate two players working together, this is the ultimate buddy experience enhanced by a dark fantasy setting, epic dungeons to explore, loot to lust over and its very own editor.

Hunted: The Demon's Forge is far more than just another blockbuster. Underneath its polished and pretty exterior beats the heart of a hardened dungeon crawler which rewards exploration and player commitment. We had the privilege of getting exclusive access to this exciting third-person actioner and needless to say, it definitely got our blood pumping.







In this magazine we take a closer look at what exactly sets this title apart from its rivals – without spoiling the plot – and we also have an exclusive interview with the talent behind the game, not to mention your chance to get a copy of the game for free on your format of choice!

We hope you enjoy this very special magazine.

Andy Griffiths, Editor

"*Hunted: The Demon's Forge* is far more than just another blockbuster"

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INTRODUCING THE STARS OF HUNTED: THE DEMON'S FORGE

What better way to introduce *Hunted* than by taking a look at its playable stars. Described by inXile's Matt Findley as exactly the opposite of what players would expect from their appearance, this fantasy duo are sure to steal plenty of hearts – well one is anyway...

CADDOC

This straightforward warrior may look like the Duke Nukem type, with his bulging muscles and grumpy demeanour, but in actual fact this mercenary boasts a keen strategic head. Not one to let his emotions get the better of him (due to a mistake in his younger years which led to his wife meeting an early demise), he's a grizzled veteran of many battles and he's been around the block more than once. Caddoc relies on his trusty sword and shield skills to get the



job done. He has a crossbow for long-range attacks, but he isn't as proficient as his sassy colleague. Honestly, he seems like a bit of a softie at heart. He despises anything remotely creepy or crawly and looks to get ahead whenever possible, as long as the means are just and the rewards plentiful.

E'LARA

The female part of this duo is much more like the average gamer: rash, unpredictable and always ready for the next thrill. One of the last Elves on the planet, you'd think her rare status would give rise to caution, but instead she rarely thinks about her tragic past and focuses on the next moment of adrenaline-pumping action she can grasp with both hands. She's always busting Caddoc's chops about being too old and careful, but as we soon realised, *Hunted's* world isn't one without dire consequences... ●



PLAYTEST



Formats: PC, Xbox 360, PlayStation 3
Publisher: Bethesda Softworks
Developer: inXile Entertainment
Heritage: The Bard's Tale
Link: www.huntedthegame.com
ETA: June 3rd (Europe) May 31st (North America)

So we've introduced the protagonists but what about the game itself? Well as we mentioned before, in essence *Hunted: The Demon's Forge* is a third-person dungeon crawler with a fully fledged cover system and co-op dynamic.

The plot kicks off with a glossy in-game cinematic introducing the adventuring duo, bemoaning their monetarily poor existence, with Caddoc haunted by a nightmarish vision of a mysterious evil entity and E'lara ribbing her professional partner in the usual manner. Soon the duo stumble upon a spooky magical artefact which gets them noticed by a seductive ghostly mistress named Seraphine (voiced by the luscious Lucy Lawless) who becomes bound to E'lara after she touches the mysterious magical

"Caddoc is haunted by a nightmarish vision of a mysterious evil entity and E'lara ribs her professional partner in the usual manner"

macguffin. This leads them to all to investigate the affects of their actions and attempt to set free the untrustworthy Seraphine from her spiritual binding. E'lara's mistake won't be undone easily, as the world is being ravaged by the disgusting Wargar, an Orc-like race which are as ruthless as they are ugly. Their origin is unclear and their motives unknown, but they've taken to raiding towns and slaying entire human populations before burning the centres to the ground. Like all other great fantasy worlds, *Hunted's* is in a



“Dialogue between the starring duo really helps to give proceedings a fun and fluffy tone, with dark undertones bubbling nicely beneath the bravado”

ENEMY CLASSES

Three of the foes you'll be facing during *Hunted's* six different chapters



Wargar Archer

Archghoul

Minotaur

Wargar Archer

These ugly fellows are the mainstay of the Wargar force, along with their soldier brethren. Due to a lack of armour, they prefer to stay back and pepper foes with arrows. Players should be prepared to slay legions of these guys.

> PLAYTEST continued

state of chaos, which leads to some very entertaining set-pieces and bosses to slay across six lengthy chapters.

Both E'lara and Caddoc have their own combat specialities but neither are limited to them, as both can elect to use either bows, swords, hammers and daggers. Fights follow the usual hack and slash tropes, with the ability to perform combos on enemy soldiers, which is handy as they usually come at you in droves, requiring tactics of mob management and occasionally taking cover to hide from enemy arrows or magical barrages.

All of this sounds like a regular hack-and-slasher, but the dialogue between the starring duo really helps to give proceedings a fun and glossy tone, with dark undertones bubbling nicely beneath the bravado.

However what really stood out from our experience with the game was just how much inXile allow players to deviate from the main path. In every chapter there are opportunities to tackle optional sidequests. While we were navigating a dark dungeon with very dank corridors and hassled intermittently by a giant spider, we discovered a room adorned with a giant up-lit treasure chest, at which point a wall opposite slid open and a pop-up emerged detailing an objective which would lead to the mysterious container opening.

Loot lust is something very few multi-format releases cater for, but it's alive and well in *Hunted*, and players will often be tempted to go the extra mile for a special sword or bow, with drops





“Hunted is a game with plenty of strings to its bow”

> **PLAYTEST** continued

which are randomised. Special weapons usually having a coloured aura surrounding them, so you'll know when you earn a good one with the HUD offering up vital stats. It isn't all about weapons though, as both characters also earn crystals when completing missions which can then be spent on unlocking new abilities via the skill wheel.

During our time playing as Caddoc we unlocked an explosive orb option which worked a lot like a magical grenade, as well as a powerful Shield

Bash move which when activated made the bald warrior carry out a deadly shoulder charge on enemies. Magic is the other major attack avenue, with moves often requiring little time to charge with the potential to set ablaze, electrocute and freeze enemies.

Hunted is definitely a game with plenty of strings to its bow, including fan-requested split-screen co-op, and from what we sampled, it could be one of the few fantasy games to be a hit with not only the hardcore but the casual crowd too. It's an accessible, beautiful and cinematic experience, which promises an evolving and entertaining campaign. ●



THE JOYS OF CO-OP

Hunted: The Demon's Forge has been designed from the ground up to accommodate co-operative, whether a player is working together with a friend or an AI buddy. But what exactly does this mean in real terms?

Players begin the game either as Caddoc or E'lara, with the other character appearing on-screen with you – either online or locally via split-screen. There's also the opportunity to switch between the two characters whenever they come across special obelisks liberally sprinkled throughout the game's branching levels. The structure will be familiar to those who have played either Gears of War or Army of Two, but in all honesty, Hunted's melee-centric combat is a much more natural bedfellow for co-operative play than its shooter cousins.

Taking down enemies with a sword and shield while your compatriot hits them from afar with arrows never gets old, and inXile have gone even further to ensure teamwork is rewarded as much as possible.

Gamers have the ability to revive their ally whenever they are about to expire by throwing down a respective potion in their vicinity, and they charge each other up to

enable more powerful status attacks. Also, at key moments in the campaign, players will need to arm ballistas to take down more powerful threats, while their partner slays oncoming enemies. These stand-off moments are carefully placed, so they don't feel routine and create great moments of tension.

Every essence of combat feels a lot cooler whenever you tackle it with a friend, even the dull-witted ones. inXile are keen to throw players a bone now and then with some of the more challenging puzzles, with protagonists often giving audible commands or hints about what to do next. It's a system which will be appreciated by most players, especially as usually you just want to get on with the fighting.

All these elements culminate in a really memorable co-op experience, but it's the protagonists themselves

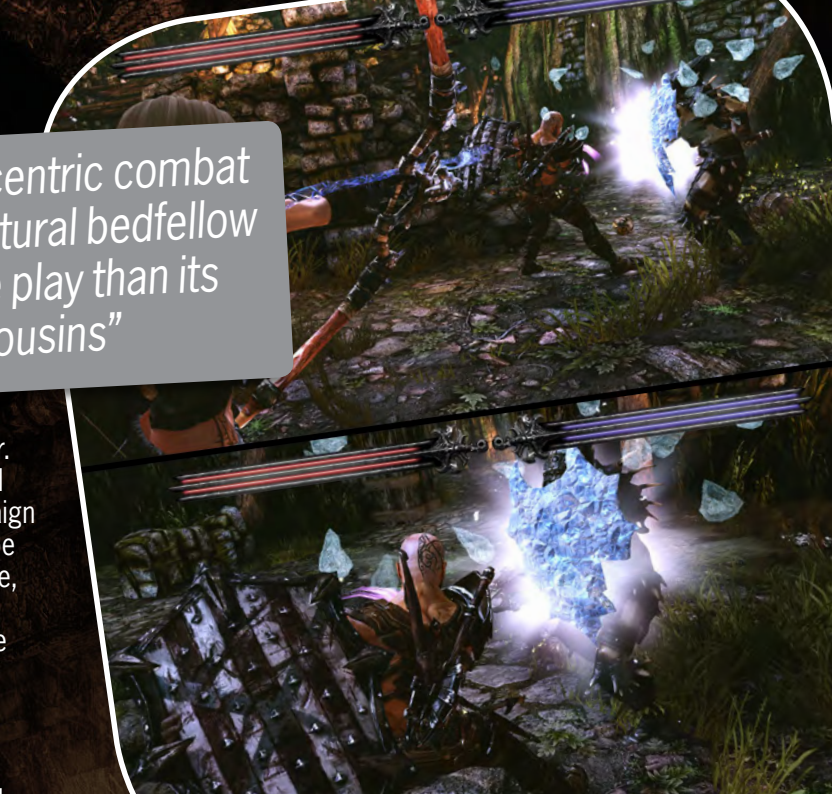
"Hunted's melee-centric combat is a much more natural bedfellow for co-operative play than its shooter cousins"

that give it such a unique flavour. Hearing Caddoc and E'lara goad each other on during the campaign often echoes what players will be doing themselves over Xbox Live, PSN or Steam chat.

Crucially, the developers have taken time to listen to their fans when creating this experience, adding additional co-op-specific on-screen cues and rewarding players with multiple playthroughs with friends. If you have a regular game-playing compadre waiting in the wings, Hunted should definitely be on both your radars. ●

HUNTED
THE DEMON'S FORGE

THE POWER OF TWO



LET LOOSE YOUR CREATIVE SIDE IN THE CRUCIBLE

Throughout the campaign you'll amass enough gold to fill Fort Knox, and what better way to spend it than in Crucible mode; a map editor which allows players to create elaborate dungeon runs utilising all the enemies, locations and weapons from the main game.

All the content is determined by the amount of gold found in-game and is split into 29 different tiers, with the earliest unlock granting skeleton enemies and the last enabling your run to be populated by the evil antagonist Annuin for an impressive 190,000 gold. Usually this kind of editor is reserved for PC owners, but this functionality is present in every version of Hunted.

The method behind forging your own gauntlet starts by choosing a layout on a red grid, and selecting a theme. From there you'll need to choose a location, enemy types, and number

"Usually this kind of editor is reserved for PC owners, but this functionality is present in every version of Hunted"

of waves. Finally there's also the ability to transform the experience with mod slots, which include bonuses and hindrances such as automatically replenishing health or adding a time limit, and the loadout where players must choose from a

variety of weapon sets. Further details are discussed in the video below, but we were shocked and impressed with just how powerful and easy to use it was once you've grasped the basics.

Crucible mode should expand this title's life exponentially, with players awarded more gold for completing run-throughs, and the ability to share and download other gamer's creative efforts online.

Obviously the success of this mode depends on how well it's adopted by Hunted's community, but from what we've seen it should prove to be a fan favourite. ●



HUNTING FOR HITS

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

We wanted to know more about Hunted so chatted to Matt Findley, the President of inXile

There have been less 'fantasy' games over the past few years, with a lot of developers working on modern concepts. Do you think Hunted: The Demon's Forge can do its part to popularise the setting once again?

The great thing about Hunted is that it's a modern take on the dungeon crawl, with 'modern' gameplay mechanics. It has universal appeal and applies co-op cover-based action game mechanics to this classic formula set against a

fantasy backdrop. There will be a lot of players that are familiar with this style of gameplay and will feel at home with it as soon as they get their hands on it.

Beyond the accessible controls, we know that Hunted genuinely offers something new and exciting with broad appeal that will also tempt newcomers to fantasy.

We have been talking about this game for years and as a team are all massive fans of fantasy, and have a lot of collective experiences in this area. We have a lifetime of playing and making these types of games!

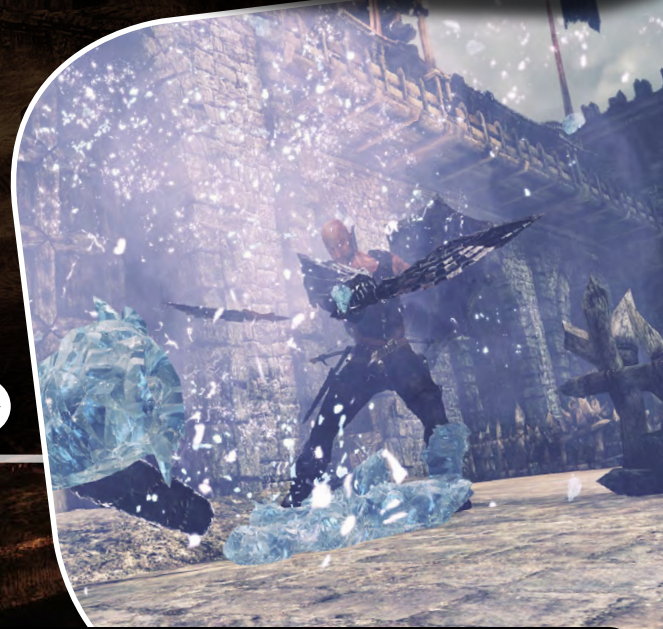
create a dark fantasy action game from the start and one that offers a more mature experience. We also wanted to cover a large range of emotions, and with the story we explore themes of addiction, morality and betrayal. We were inspired by the Middle Ages and try and give a sense of history and tell a story through the environments as well.

That said, we also wanted to inject some humour into the game and avoid too many genre clichés. There is some great banter between Caddoc and E'lara, and we use this as a device to lighten the mood at times. As you progress through the game we have gone for some diverse locations to ensure that there is lots of variety, ranging from dark dungeons to lush forests.

The world of Hunted is dark, violent and quite seedy, with plenty of skin being flashed all over the place. We aren't complaining, but why did the studio elect for these motifs?

Our intention was to

Coupling the classic dungeon crawler formula with the third-person action template is really a no-brainer. Why do you think so few developers have done it successfully?



> Interview continued

We're not sure why it's not been done before, and the initial press and consumer responses echoed this. We have wanted to create this game for a few decades now and finally feel we are at a point from a technology stand-point to deliver on this vision.

Although we are revitalising an older genre, we are able to do this with amazing graphical fidelity and add the co-op aspect to resonate with a new generation of gamers. Also, unlike many dungeon crawlers, *Hunted* has a meaningful plot. We also develop this template further by adding the concept of character growth, exploration and developing skills and abilities as you progress.

Getting Lucy Lawless to voice Seraphine was a massive coup for you guys. How important is

getting the right voice talent when crafting a game like *Hunted*?

We wanted Lucy from the outset as she is perfect for the character of Seraphine. Seraphine acts as a spirit guide and is a beguiling character, and Lucy's voice and acting experience was perfect.

Casting the right voice is really important particularly for such an important character within the plot and one that has a complicated relationship with our protagonists.

The ability to build your own maps via the Crucible mode is a very nice touch. How difficult was this mode to put together, and is it easy for players to use?

It's not so typical in a console game to be able to create your own levels. We wanted to give gamers the chance to create their own dungeons. We allow players to jump in there, and provide the building

blocks and parameters to create their own levels and create an experience you can share and play online. Essentially, we've given the tools to create infinite levels and modes.

It was an ambitious task but we feel we have pulled off a really cool system that is both deep and intuitive but not intimidating either.

Are inXile planning to add new components to that mode via DLC?

I can't really confirm comment but watch this space.

Developers from inXile have said before that they have plenty of

ideas for *Hunted 2* already. Are you guys any closer to getting the sequel green lit?

We're not able to confirm plans at this stage but rest assured this is something we are looking into and have lots of great ideas. ●





COMPETITION!

THREE HUNTED BUNDLES TO BE WON!

We've teamed up with Bethesda to offer three lucky readers a copy of *Hunted: The Demon's Forge* on their format of choice (PC, PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360) along with an assortment of goodies associated with the dungeon crawler, including an almighty T-shirt and belt buckle!

For your chance to win one of these *Hunted* Bundles, all you need to do is answer the question on the right-hand side of the page and enter your details before 30th June. Winners will be chosen at random at the competition's end. Good luck!

For full competition terms and conditions, please see www.gamerzines.com

