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360zine

Issue 59 | October 2011

Free Magazine For Xbox 360 Gamers. *Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates...*



ASSASSIN'S CREED REVELATIONS

Special interview!

PREVIEWED!

NEED FOR SPEED: THE RUN

Get ready for the scariest chase of your life! Previewed inside

PLUS!



REVIEWED!
GEARS OF WAR 3



REVIEWED!
DEAD ISLAND



PREVIEWED!
DISHONORED



REVIEWED!
FIFA 12

BATTLEFIELD 3





Welcome to 360Zine



Non-gamers will never understand. While most of the country pines over the end of summer and prepares itself for another miserable run up to Christmas, the gaming community is in high spirits. This year's silly season is officially upon us, announced with a chainsaw blade to the chest by Epic's thoroughly epic Gears of War 3. And you can read the full review inside.

That's not all. Just around the corner there's id's comeback, RAGE, which will likely prove one of the more divisive shooters of the year, and beyond that there's Assassin's Creed Revelations and Need for Speed: The Run to start slaving over.

So forget about the weather, fire up that 360 and we'll see you on the other side. It's going to be one hell of a ride.

Jon Denton, Editor
360zine@gamerzines.com

360Zine FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of the new issue

MEET THE TEAM

Probably the best games writers on the planet



Dave Scammell
He's a gaming machine!



Thomas Worthington
Paid-up COG member.

Don't miss! This month's top highlights

GEARS OF WAR 3
THE FULL REVIEW!

NFS: The Run
Previewed inside

Dishonored
First preview

Borderlands 2
First look

RAGE
Reviewed and rated

QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away!

Borderlands 2	Gears of War 3
Need for Speed: The Run	RAGE
Dishonored	FIFA 12
Assassin's Creed Revelations	Dead Island

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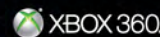
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"MODERN WARFARE SHOULD BE VERY AFRAID"



FEEL THE BATTLE BATTLEFIELD 3™

28.10.11



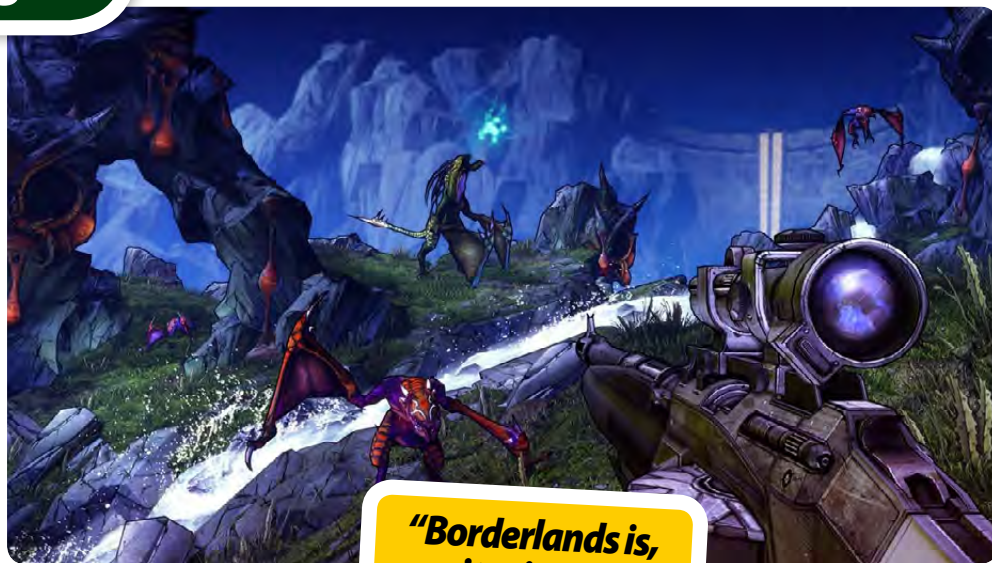
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BATTLEFIELD.COM/UK





Publisher: 2K Games
Developer: Gearbox
Heritage: Borderlands,
Brothers in Arms
Link: www.
borderlands2.com
ETA: 2012



**"Borderlands is,
quite simply, a
game about loot"**



FIRST LOOK

Borderlands 2

Ain't about the cha-ching, cha-ching...

What's the story?

The supremely popular Gearbox co-operative shoot-and-loot fest is back, and back in a big way. Borderlands 2 hasn't got much going on in the way of story, but if you've played the original then you should know what to expect. Lots of shooting, cel-shaded visuals and more guns than you could ever imagine. Gearbox is now putting Borderlands at the forefront of its ever-expanding FPS lineup, thanks to the fantastic sales of the original and the success of its story-driven DLC, so expect this to be the series' attempt to really attain Triple-A status.

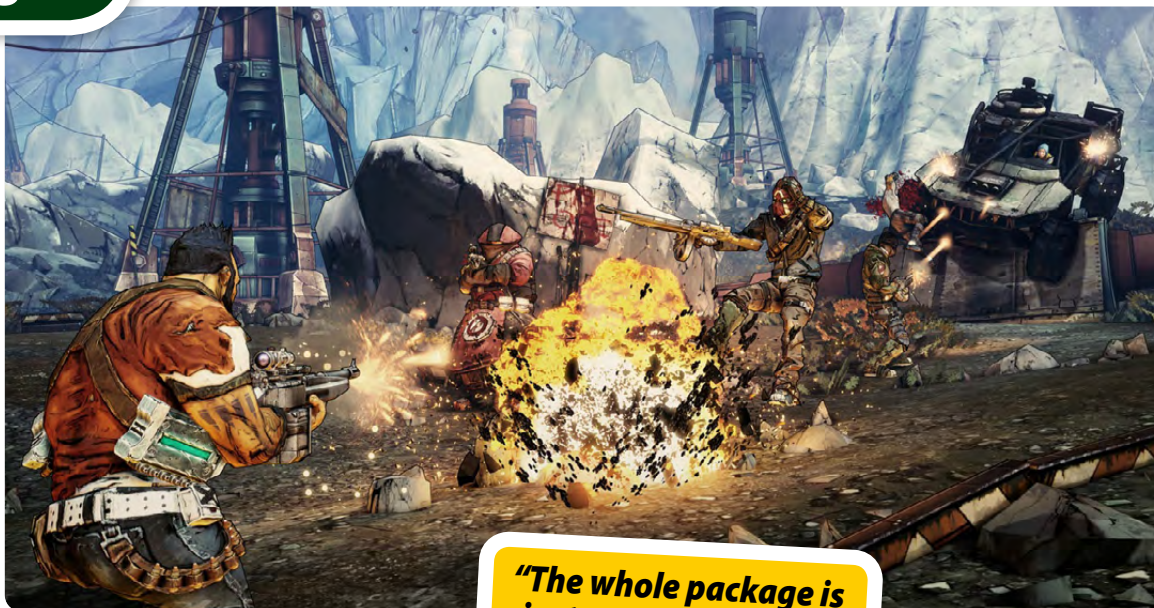
What do we know?

Gearbox has really listened to the community and the critics. Borderlands was too brown? Well here's an entire paint palette's worth of colour. Enemies too dumb? Now they have reactive and emergent AI. Bored of the characters? Have the Gunzerker, a meat-headed thug whose boomsticks are inexplicably more powerful than everyone else's, and he can dual-wield rocket launchers. In fact, he can dual-wield anything.

Good job too, as Borderlands 2 isn't about to let up when it comes to relentless assaults on your loot-hoarding face. Even in four-player co-op, you can expect to be attacked by all sorts of bandits, mutants and the amusingly named new ice-monster enemy, the Bullymong. And that's just for starters.

Ultimately though, it is more of the same. Borderlands is, quite simply, a game about loot, and unearthing bizarre and wonderful guns at every turn is just as compelling as a good story. It's what keeps you playing, and keeps you threatening to go to





"The whole package is just much slicker and much more complete"



>Borderlands 2 continued

that high-level area, just in case you unearth something magical that'll be the envy of all your mates. PC players have known about loot for years, and us console crowd are finally catching up.

Also the vehicles have undergone some serious cosmetic surgery. Not only do they move better, control tighter and there's more of the things to drive, but they finally run critters over instead of grinding to a halt whenever you bump into anything. The whole package is just much slicker and much more complete. It's why videogame sequels work so much better than their cinematic counterparts – we have an expansion of ideas and a fulfilment of visions, whereas movies tend to get bogged down trying to relive the magic of the original.

When do we get more?

There's only a nebulous 2012 release date to go on, but the safe money is on Borderlands 2 appearing about a year from now. There should be plenty of opportunity for the press to get hands-on between now and then, so keep it locked to 360Zine for all the latest on what could be one of the cult hits of next year.

Anything else to declare?

All the characters from the original will make an appearance in Borderlands 2, but as NPCs rather than playable classes, so whatever happens you know you're going to have to learn some new skills. Add multiple enemy AI routines (robots act much more aggressively than organic nasties, for example), significantly improved visuals and a real focus on variety, and you're looking at a pretty formidable package. Time to practise some dual wielding!



TWO ASSASSINS.

ONE DESTINY.



PLAYBACK OPTIONS:



ASSASSIN'S — CREED — REVELATIONS



AVAILABLE NOVEMBER 15TH



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UBISOFT



INCOMING

A fistful of top new titles coming to 360...



Hitman Absolution

Publisher: Square-Enix | **ETA:** 2012
 It's been a hell of a long time coming, but Agent 47 is finally back with us in the gorgeous-looking Absolution. This time, Hitman is going to be more comfortable with dishing out heat-thumping action, but there'll still be plenty of choice-heavy murdering to be had. And it'll be as dark as a Danish winter.




Max Payne 3

Publisher: Rockstar | **ETA:** November
 New screenshots and new information suggest that Max Payne 3 won't be as much of a departure as some have worried about. It's still neo-noir, it's still gloriously self-referential, and it's still very much a game about diving across the screen in slow motion while popping idiots in the head with your dual handguns. Some things just don't need to change.

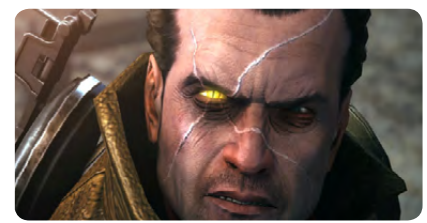
Mass Effect 3

Publisher: EA | **ETA:** March 2012
 With all the madness of the current gaming silly season, it's easy to forget that the game that could potentially define the Xbox 360 is going to be arriving just a few short months after Christmas. Expect slicker action than in either of its predecessors, along with that groundbreaking conversation and branching storyline system. The best action RPG ever made? It's hard to think of anything that could better it.



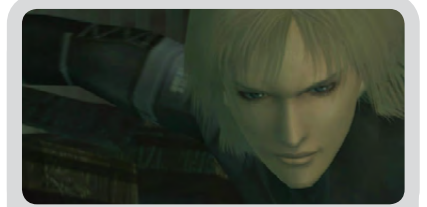

WWE 12

Publisher: THQ | **ETA:** November
 Another year, another SmackDown... except it's not called that any more. Instead, the WWE games are adopting the old yearly moniker nabbed from more traditional sports efforts, but it's still pretty much the same Smackers that you've been playing since the dawn of time. Expect thousands of modes and a shaky engine.



NeverDead

Publisher: Konami | **ETA:** November
 Konami's humorous shooter is in danger of being lost in the shuffle, but there's potential for a few Shadows of the Damned-style laughs locked away in this tale of Bryce, an undead demon hunter who literally falls apart when he's attacked. You can roll his head around like an RC car in Black Ops, you can spend ages looking for your legs, you can get drunk with only one arm... it sounds like the type of thing that deserves to at least get a bit of recognition. Good luck to it.



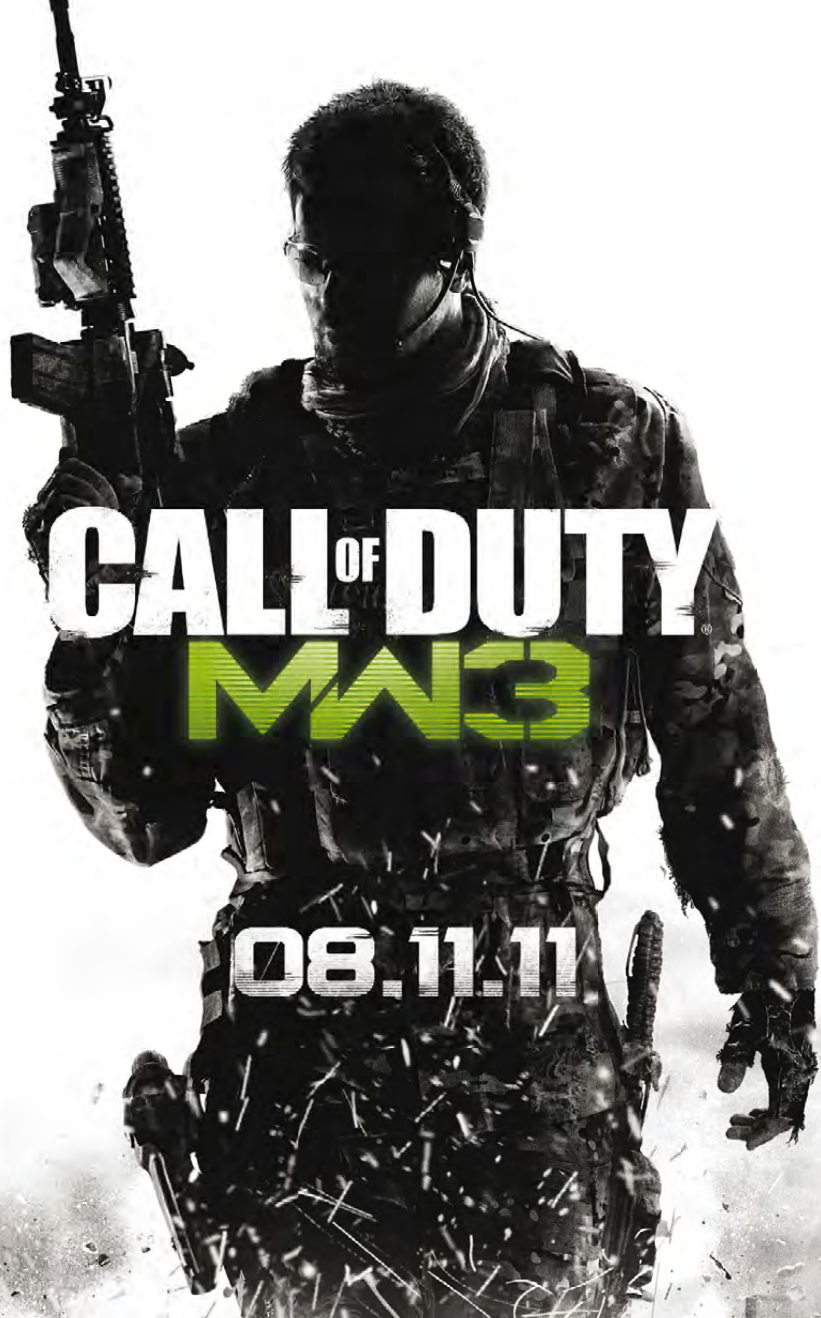
MGS: HD Collection

Publisher: Konami | **ETA:** November
 The opportunity to play Snake Eater, Peace Walker and Sons of Liberty in high definition shouldn't be sniffed at. Stealth might not be en vogue any more, but these are still some of the most ambitious and immersive action games ever made. If you can stomach the maddening (and ridiculously lengthy) cut-scenes, you're in for a triple-headed treat.

UPCOMING

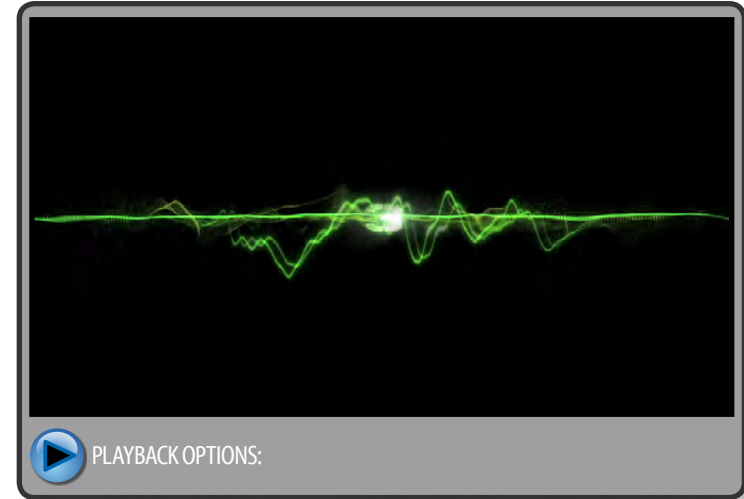
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gears of War 3 Battlefield 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modern Warfare 3 Assassin's Creed Revelations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rayman Origins Kinect Sports Season 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSX UFC Undisputed 3

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XBOX 360.

Jump in.





PREVIEW

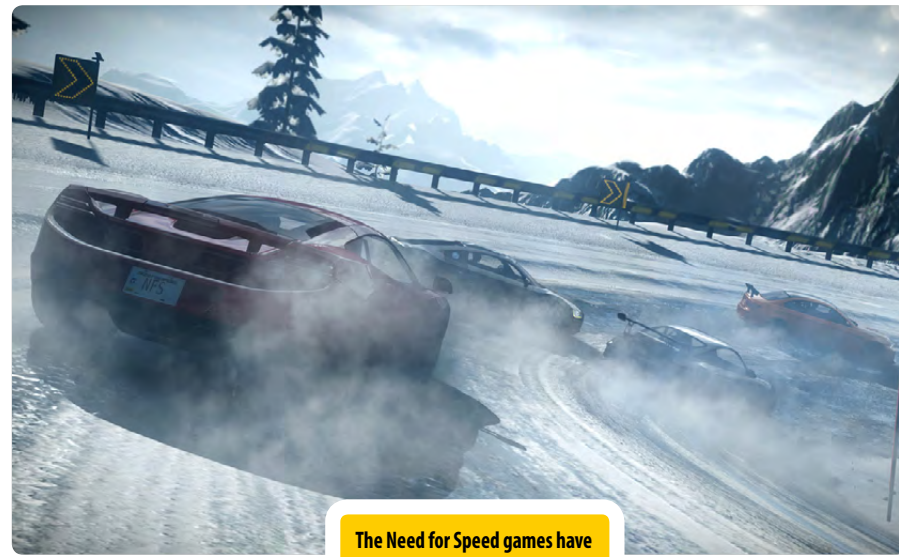
Need for Speed: The Run

Are you ready for the wildest road trip of your life?

It must take a lot of meetings to keep Need for Speed relevant. This is a series that's been around since the mid-Nineties, has barely missed a year, and has pretty much exhausted every possible vehicular idea in existence just to keep itself fresh. Cops and robbers, street racers, realistic pro touring cars, undercover cops... okay, so maybe not every idea in existence. Still, it has to be bloody hard to keep coming up with new ones.

Somehow though, the pit crew at EA Black Box has done it again, turning Need For Speed into a high-concept chase movie. You play as Jack, a cropped-haired square-jawed vessel for adrenaline, who is competing in a race to get from San Francisco to New York City as quickly as possible, using the sexiest cars known to man (or anyone else for that matter).

If that's not enough to get your petrol-fume addled brain spinning, for the first time in the series' long and storied career, there'll be entire



The Need for Speed games have always been good-looking, and The Run is no exception.



NEED FOR SPEED
THE RUN



It's lightning quick and brimming with variety.



> Need for Speed cont.

sections of Need for Speed: The Run that have Jack freed from the confines of his metal jacket and running the streets of whichever urban sprawl you've managed to guide your four wheels towards, looking to get behind

the wheel of something even more exorbitant and speedy.

Yes, even though the idea of racing across the USA is pretty damn agreeable, Black Box isn't satisfied with having players being able to just soak in the scenery. No, for some reason that no one yet knows, Jack's in trouble with



Need for Speed: making cars sexy since the 90's.

"Jack's in trouble with the Mafia and is being chased. He's got to get to New York before they do..."

the Mafia and is being chased. He's got to get to New York before they do, and no one knows why. Well, he does. But he's not real, obviously.

It all helps to ramp up the tension, but in truth, it's the sweeping corners of America's highways that are the real antagonists in this tale of vehicular coast-dashing. At a glance, the screenshots look startlingly similar to last year's ferocious Need for Speed Hot Pursuit, but this is actually only the second game to have ever been built on DICE's magical Frostbite 2 engine – the very same destructible tour-de-force that's powering the mighty Battlefield 3, no less.

What this means to us normal folk who don't spend hours analysing bump-map shading and V-sync is simple: Need for Speed: The Run looks good. Really good. And it's also capable of some rather tasty destruction. On one demo level, known as Buried Alive, Jack has to burn through a snow-soaked mountain wind while an





> Need for Speed cont.

avalanche threatens to crush him into tiny polygonal pieces. So not only do you have to think about the race itself (oh, and the Mafia too, obviously), but you've also got to fight the entire collective power of nature. Whatever's waiting in New York better be pretty special after all this effort.

It looks spectacular in action though, with trees collapsing (maybe you're driving past Alan Wake – should offer him a lift, really), snow tumbling from the peaks and rocks smashing into the Tarmac as you swerve between them like a boss. The on-foot stuff looks solid, too. Dreams of a Mirror's Edge-style romp should be nixed quickly though, as this is a QTE-driven affair; more about basic interaction with crazy set-pieces than anything particularly meaty. It's a nice bit of variety though, like a sneaky hot wing lurking in the corner of a zinger tower meal, but it's not what you came in for. Basically, you really want that towery burgery goodness.

There's even full autolog integration, so you can battle your buddies to see who's the fastest person at driving to Chicago, or who negotiated San Fran's hills the quickest. And as is now the norm, your friends' times will be beamed directly into your eyes the



second they beat your score, creating the kind of relentlessly compelling metagame that, secretly, is almost better than the real thing.

Thankfully, Black Box has been building Need for Speed games for many years, and the on-track action is as slick and speedy as you'd expect from such a veteran studio. This is no quick cheap Nfs runabout (Undercover, we're looking at you, you bad boy), this looks like the perfect accompaniment to the searing Shift 2 and a worthy successor to Hot Pursuit. The run's not over yet! ●

"The on-track action is as slick and speedy as you'd expect from such a veteran studio"



PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of Nfs: The Run



HOW COMPLETE?	FIRST IMPRESSIONS
90%	80%
Shaping up to be a wild ride	



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XBOX 360.



Jump in.



DISHONORED

Publisher: Bethesda

Developer: Arkane Studios

Heritage: Dark Messiah

Link: www.

dishonored.com

ETA: 2012

PREVIEW

Dishonored

There's a new killer in town

If the adventures of Altair have taught us anything, it's that an assassin really is nothing without the expert weapons and equipment at his or her disposal, and we've never come across a toolset as extravagant as the one found in this new bleak futuristic adventure from Arkane Studios. Players will get to mess around with time, teleportation, human and animal possession, along with regular agility skills and scaling tall buildings – the difference here though is that this is strictly in the first-person.

Dishonored sees humanity pushed to the brink of extinction, with four small islands providing refuge against an apocalyptic plague sweeping the Earth. The last remnants have turned against each other with the ruling class regularly stepping on the less-fortunate, which includes our protagonist who has been falsely accused of murdering his former employer. Though a series of jobs he seeks to strike back against those who have wronged him and hopefully have some fun along the way.

The setup will be familiar to anyone whose enjoyed Hitman: Blood Money,

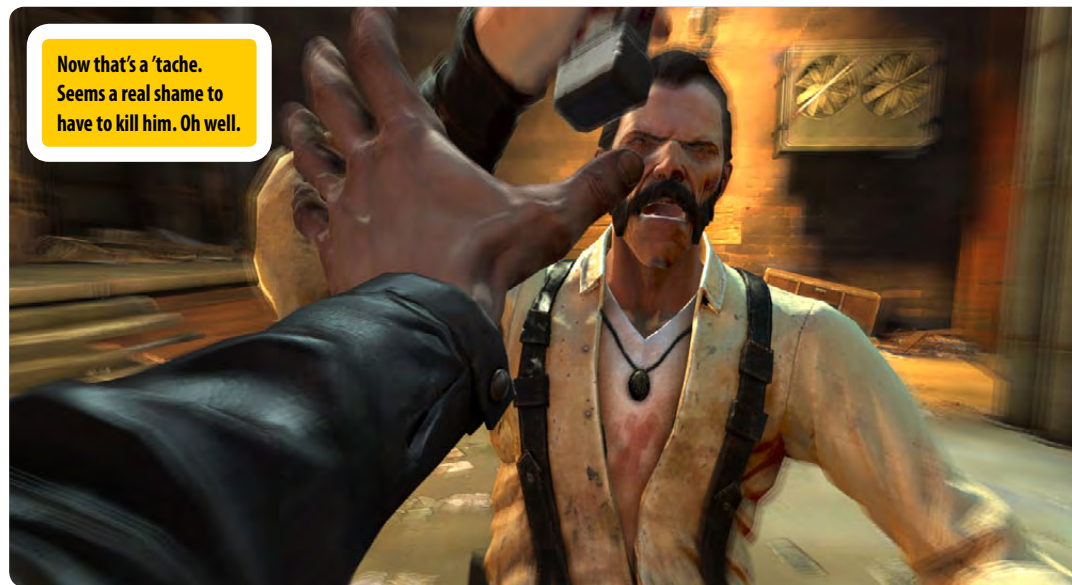
with the campaign linked via missions where the player is dropped off at a safe point and must then kill a pre-determined target utilising any method they see fit. Like the aforementioned title there's a lot of choice open to players, whether it's hacking force fields, scaling buildings or storming in all-guns blazing, but there doesn't seem any hint of the dark comedic undertones you might expect.

Instead the demo we witnessed, set in the Eastern European-looking city of Dunwall, was tinged with sadness and tragedy, with the city streets deserted and corpses rotting in alleyways and being munched on by packs of rats. The mission at hand involved killing a lawyer who was holed up in a tower near the centre of town, but along the way we spotted soldiers dressed in costumes that appeared to come from the Victorian era performing patrols and a women being assaulted down a dark alleyway by what looked like two policemen. There is the option to stop grotesque acts such as these, but they will affect your Chaos rating – a gauge which can determine how many guards are patrolling around, their

"The city streets were deserted, with corpses rotting in the alleyways"



Now that's a 'tache. Seems a real shame to have to kill him. Oh well.





DISHONORED

> Dishonored continued

state of alertness and whether certain NPCs will help you in future missions. Choices, choices...

Switching between the various skills seems really simple, with all of them accessed by a skill wheel, and best of all they can be combined together. So for example, if you want to jump from one building to the next you can combine a running jump with a teleport to get maximum distance, or you could slow down time when being attacked to move a guard who recently shot at you into the path of his own bullet. All of these skills have a lot of potential, especially when coupled with the parkour-style environment traversal, so there should be plenty of opportunity for good players to feel like a bad ass.

There are a few oddball inclusions thrown in too, like procedurally

generated rat formations, which will emerge in the environment whenever there's a recently deceased guard to chow down on – and when they're in big enough numbers they'll even attack the player character. And if you think that's strange, after the mark was finally killed we were then chased out of the city by Strider-esque (think Half-Life 2) Tallboys, which consisted of a single guard attacking the protagonist on stilt-like vehicles armed with flame throwers.

Dishonored is a high-concept adventure, and the visuals certainly put across just how much time has been put into creating this intriguing universe, but the demo did pose more questions than it answered. Nevertheless we're still excited, mainly because it seems unlike anything we've seen before. Definitely an attribute more games should strive towards. ●



It's a unique-looking game, leaning towards the likes of BioShock and Half-Life 2.



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



HOW COMPLETE?	FIRST IMPRESSIONS
50%	85%
Intriguing, ambitious and unique	



IT'S NOT A RACE YOU WIN. IT'S A RACE YOU SURVIVE.



PLAYBACK OPTIONS:

NEED FOR SPEED THE RUN RACE FOR YOUR LIFE

PC PS3 PlayStation Network XBOX 360 XBOX LIVE Wii NINTENDO 3DS Available on the App Store Origin



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INTERVIEW

Assassin's Creed Revelations

Talking all things Ezio

Another year, another Assassin's Creed game, but there's every indication that this year's effort could be something a wee bit special. Over to the game's Director, Alexandre Amancio, to fill in the blanks.

Talk us through the recent Gamescom show demo – what exactly happens?

The demo begins near the end of a carriage chase – which is fully playable in the final game – between Ezio and Leandros, the enemy that was first seen in the Revelations E3 trailer. Leandros has one of the five Masyaf keys Ezio needs to unlock the hidden library of Altaïr. Leandros' men throw bombs at Ezio who loses control of his chariot and is propelled down a cliff, suffering major injury. Hurt and in pain, Ezio approaches the Templar stronghold outside Atlas Village – a new location never seen in Assassin's Creed – a small town near the Masyaf Fortress.

"The demo begins near the end of a carriage chase between Ezio and Leandros"

Upon spotting Ezio, Leandros orders his men to attack and leaves with two guards. Leandros has underestimated Ezio – legendary master assassin – who manages to fight off the guards despite being seriously wounded.

Ezio infiltrates the village, using his new eagle sense to follow Leandros' path. Ezio cannot run or climb due to his injuries so he will need to employ the use of several bombs in his arsenal and use his bombcrafting abilities. Ezio manages to heal himself while avoiding attacks by Leandros and his men. Now able to run and climb, Ezio dodges enemy fire and a confrontation between Ezio and





It's the most varied and pretty Assassin's yet.



You'll play as Altair and Ezio throughout the story.

> AC Revelations cont.

Leandros ensues, resulting in Leandros' assassination and the retrieval of the seal.

These seals not only will permit Ezio to access Altair's library but also to relive key moments in Altair's life. Upon touching this seal, the demo flashes back to Altair at the age of 24, before the events of Assassin's Creed 1. Altair finds himself outside of the Masyaf fortress gates. A traitor (The Crusader) reveals himself on the other side of the gate – Al-Mualim, Assassin mentor – and three other assassins are being held by Templar guards. Altair

"In this demo, Ezio uses his evolved instincts which we call Eagle Sense"

needs to infiltrate the fortress before the traitor kills off all the assassins and Al-Mualim. Altair doesn't make it in time to save the fellow assassins but Al-Mualim is spared when Altair assassinates the traitor. The revelation in the game is that this event led Altair to become a master assassin.

So who is Leandros?

Leandros is a Byzantine Captain sent to Masyaf to oversee the expedition to retrieve the lost library of Altair Ibn-La'Ahad, which Ezio also seeks. He is the character seen in the E3 Trailer.

Eagle Sense is a new feature in Assassin's Creed Revelations. Can you talk us through it...

With age comes wisdom. In this demo, Ezio uses his evolved instincts which we call Eagle Sense. Eagle Sense is a natural step forward as Ezio can instinctively pick up cues in the environment to analyse a situation and formulate a strategic response. As >



SAINTS ROW

— THE THIRD —



PLAYBACK OPTIONS:



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PS3 PlayStation 3

PC DVD-ROM



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ASSASSIN'S
 CREED
 REVELATIONS



"Ezio is able to craft bombs in Assassin's Creed Revelations, a useful tool that can be deadly efficient"



There's plenty of fun to be had toying with guards.

> AC Revelations cont.

showcased in the demo, he uses it to feel and visualise where enemies are around him, as well as providing an approximation of where enemies will go. For example, this very useful ability can be used during Secret Locations sequences to pick up environmental clues to help players get unstuck during trickier moments.

And what about bombcrafting? That's another new feature for the series isn't it.

Ezio is able to craft bombs in Assassin's Creed Revelations, which is a useful tool that can be deadly efficient in the correct hands. However, his enemies also have

access to these instruments, as bombs were used to drive off Ezio from a cliff prior to the beginning of the demo. All these different bombs interact with low levels of the game – basically we are letting players modify the gameplay to their liking. For example, in the demo, Ezio first uses a splinter explosive which can be used to dispatch a small number of foes quickly and efficiently. Afterwards, Ezio uses a bomb which produces a thick smokescreen. Ezio can then assassinate targets caught in the smoke without being noticed. He can also use a screen to block the view of guards and pass by without being noticed. It's a very versatile system which can be adjusted to each player's play style.





He had a real point to prove...

> AC Revelations cont.

The crafting system is simple to use but doesn't compromise depth – we managed to find a system that covers both. Usually in videogames you need to find a specific list of ingredients to craft a unique item.

In our game we have the complete opposite. We created a non-linear crafting system where every combination of ingredients actually creates something useful. Each bomb can be created to fit your style of play and the situations you are confronted with. Experimentation is key, as sometimes happy mistakes are the most useful. However, there isn't an infinite amount of bombs. Each bomb must be crafted using components collected throughout the game. More common components are available in

shops or in the Assassins' dens. Others might be found only in a specific part of town, or by looting guards.

When Ezio assassinates Leandros, he touches an artefact and witnesses a memory of Altaïr. How is that possible?

Altaïr studied civilisation artefacts for most of his life, as detailed in his CODEX. The keys that open the library of Altaïr are one type of these artefacts, which in this case enables the holder to witness a key moment of someone's life. Leandros had in his possession one of these keys which, when picked up by Ezio, enables him to relive one Altaïr's most vivid memories.

Finally, can you tell us who is the traitor, the Crusader?

Called Haras, the Crusader was born an Arab Christian and later recruited by the Templars around 1185. He joined the Assassin Order a year later posing as an apprentice eager to learn. Despite never passing beyond his initial rank, Haras managed to make enough friends and gather enough intelligence to sabotage the Assassin Order from within, doing much damage and nearly killing the Mentor Al Mualim. The Crusader is a playable character in the Multiplayer portion of Assassin's Creed Revelations. ●



HOW COMPLETE?	FIRST IMPRESSIONS
90%	90%
<i>The series goes from strength to strength</i>	

"LIVE OUT YOUR KING OF COOL FANTASIES FOR REAL" - SHORTLIST

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PLAYBACK OPTIONS:



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UBISOFT



CONTROL →





Publisher: Microsoft
Developer: Epic Games
Heritage: Unreal series, Gears of War
Link: <http://gearsowar.xbox.com>
OUT NOW

Gears of War 3



Brothers to the end

Few games get as hard a time as Gears of War. It's held up as the nadir of modern gaming, a meatheaded bromance decked out in khaki, starring vacuous roid-hounds who hug knee-high walls and blast a multiverse's worth of high-velocity lead into anything that moves or growls.

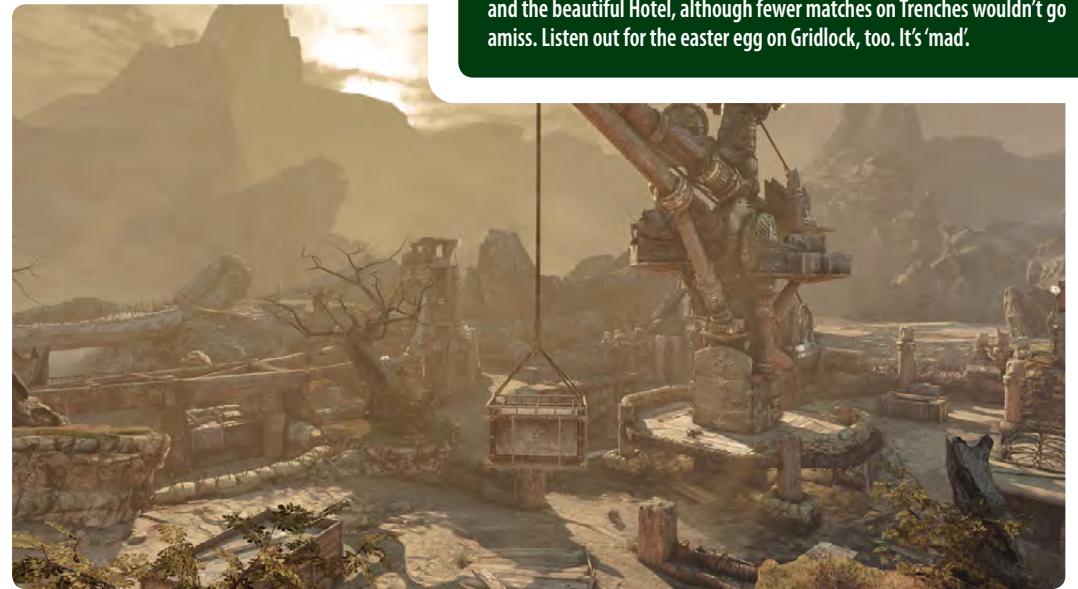
The thing is, it's also the most referenced touchstone of the modern Triple-A era, even more so than Call of Duty or Halo. When's the last time you read a review of an action game that didn't mention Gears? We're as guilty of

is as anybody. And while it might be harder to connect with the elephant-necked Marcus Fenix and his band of knuckle-headed bros, in truth the scripting and characterisation is actually far stronger than almost any action game you could care to mention. What Gears of War lacks in brains, it more than makes up for in gusto.

Actually, that's a little unfair. Epic's trilogy is a meticulously designed rollercoaster of violence, single-handedly changing the way we view third-person shooters and still leagues

ahead of the competition. Gears 3's campaign offers more of the same – low walls, chunky bad guys and riotous set pieces – but it's no accident that these immaculately detailed killboxes are infinitely more engaging than anyone else's. Epic knows exactly how to ram you down the pulsing aorta of the war on Sera and straight into its thumping heart.

And what a campaign. Twice as long as either of its predecessors and punctuated by moments of awe, >



BAND OF BROTHERS

So much to see, so much to do



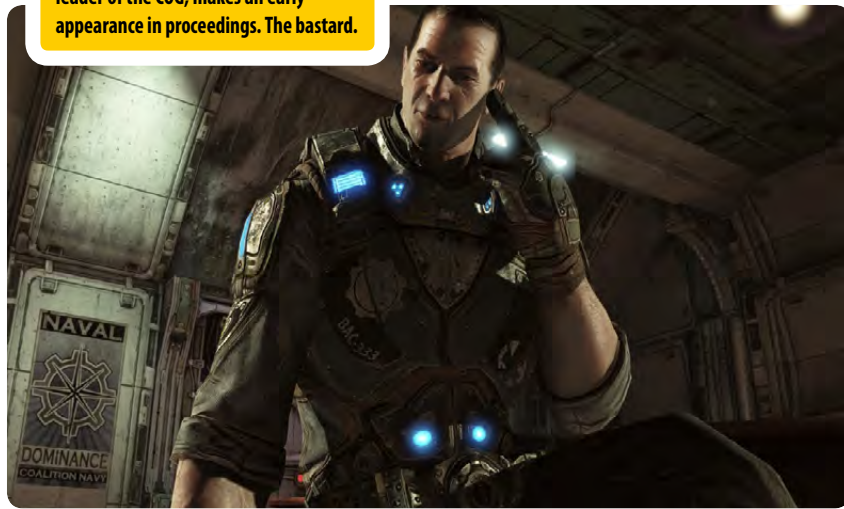
- Map pack
- Unreality bites
- The odd couple

Map pack

Gears 3 comes with 10 maps in the box for multiplayer, horde and beast, and they're all pretty good. Special mention goes to the multi-levelled Overpass and the beautiful Hotel, although fewer matches on Trenches wouldn't go amiss. Listen out for the easter egg on Gridlock, too. It's 'mad'.



Chairman Prescott, the unscrupulous leader of the COG, makes an early appearance in proceedings. The bastard.



> **Gears of War 3** cont.

moments of poignancy and even moments of sadness, Gears of War 3 marks a high point for the series.

Each of the characters is fleshed out expertly by new scriptwriter Karen Traviss, although it's Marcus whose journey takes centre stage. It's a story that's both memorable and efficient, never getting in the way of gameplay but complimenting it instead. There's even political allegory in there if you want to find it. Not so stupid, after all.

Shotgun-rolling the narrative for a second, Gears 3 still plays a mean game

of bad-guy butchering. On a purely mechanical level, Epic has deliberately built its levels around open combat arenas, designed for four players to work together co-operatively but just as varied and enjoyable on your own. As Fenix and the gang travel across war-torn Sera on a mission to find Marcus' father, they must do battle with the familiar Locust and the new mutating threat of the Lambent, making for some memorable three-way skirmishes and the need for fresh

tactics on the battlefield, as tentacles reach over cover or gurgling immulsion-infected behemoths hurl glowing projectiles at your face.

"Epic has deliberately built its levels around open combat arenas designed for four players to work together"

Of course, with this being a first-party published system-seller, there's a lot more in the Gears of War 3 box than just a hearty campaign. The main menu is a glittering list of temptations, with an Arcade-flavoured campaign (complete with scoring, leaderboards and Halo-style mutations – think skulls), Multiplayer, Horde 2.0 and the delightfully immediate Beast mode.

Beast is a simple idea executed brilliantly. It's Horde in reverse, basically. You pick a Locust, along with your four buddies, and try to take down the humans in as quick a time as possible. They'll start out with just a few stranded civilians, and you'll only have lower-level Locust to throw at them. As you rack up the kills then you'll earn money and unlock heavier and nastier monsters. Each wave you complete though, sees Gears joining the human team. By the end, you'll be smashing down fortifications with Berserkers while Marcus and Dom desperately try and hold off the inevitable. It's not going to get huge amounts of replay, but for the first few times, Beast is, well, beastly.

FREEZE FRAME

Taking you through the game one step at a time...



10 MINUTES
The Gears are back and they look better than ever (if that's the right word) and they're ready for a fight.



3 HOURS
The huge first Act is coming to an end, and you'll have come face-to-face with the Lambent.



6 HOURS
Halfway through the story and it's memorable and poignant stuff. Who'd have think it?



10 HOURS
You're neck-deep in the final act and the combat intensity is higher than ever. Can you save Sera?

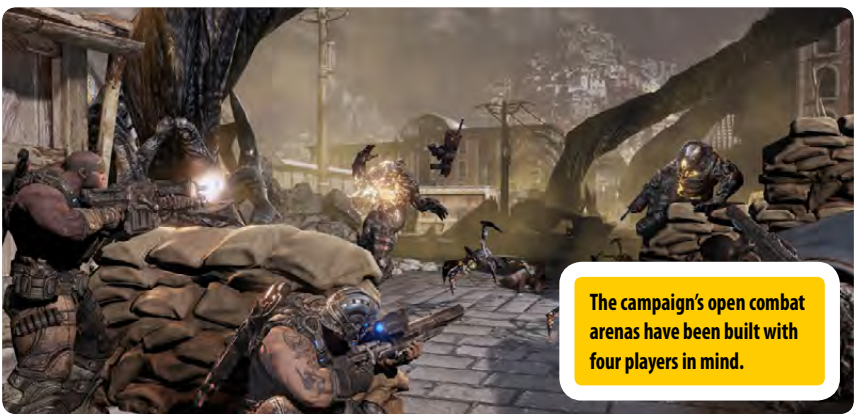
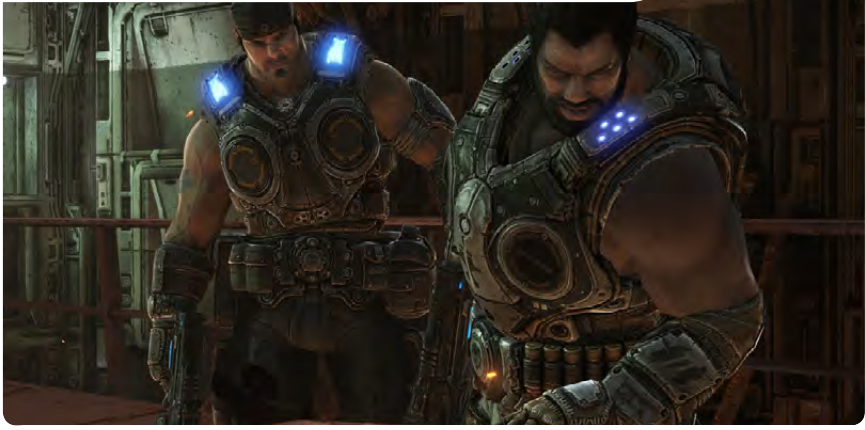


15 HOURS
Multiplayer, horde, arcade mode, beast mode... there's a bounty of riches to get stuck into.





There's not a piece of scenery out of place or a corridor without perfectly placed cover. This is fantastic design.



The campaign's open combat arenas have been built with four players in mind.

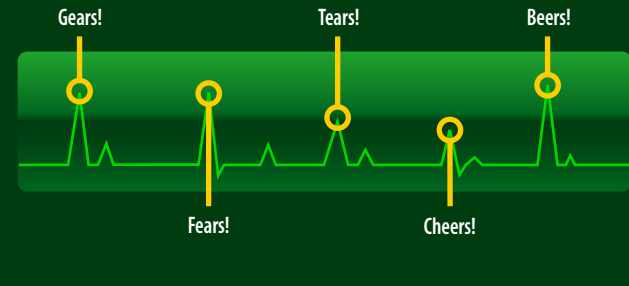
> Gears of War 3 cont.

If you're after a meatier morsel, then Horde 2.0's 50 waves of hell should satisfy your hunger. This time around, you can convert the cash you gain from murdering Locust into fortifications, from razor wire to sentry turrets, and each battle becomes a tactical toss-up between spending money and making sure you've got enough ammo and resources to survive. Every tenth wave sees an enormous boss character trampling through the level, and seeing a Brumak scaling a ramp that it is clearly far too big for is both hilarious and terrifying in equal measure.

Finally, there's that genre-defining multiplayer. Most importantly, it works, perfectly. The Beta showed that Gears of War 3 had learned from the mistakes of its predecessor, but nonetheless having 5-on-5 matches running flawlessly on dedicated servers is a glimpse of what we can expect from the future of our online shooters.

The modes on offer are fairly standard Gears fare, save for the limited-spawn Team Deathmatch, and

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*



there's still a little too much focus on rolling about with a shotgun, but with a team who is prepared to pay attention, take up good positions and scout out the open ground, it's actually fairly easy to keep those marauding shotty-monkeys at bay, especially if you're a dab hand with a Torque Bow or the new one-hit-kill sniper, the One Shot.

An incredible package then, and a fitting end to the most epic of trilogies. This won't be the end of Gears of War, but it will be the end of Marcus and the rest of Delta squad, the rhino-skinned brohorts who've helped establish the Xbox 360 as the premier place to be for action gaming. It's been a long journey and the boys will be missed. But for now, let's just enjoy the madness. ●

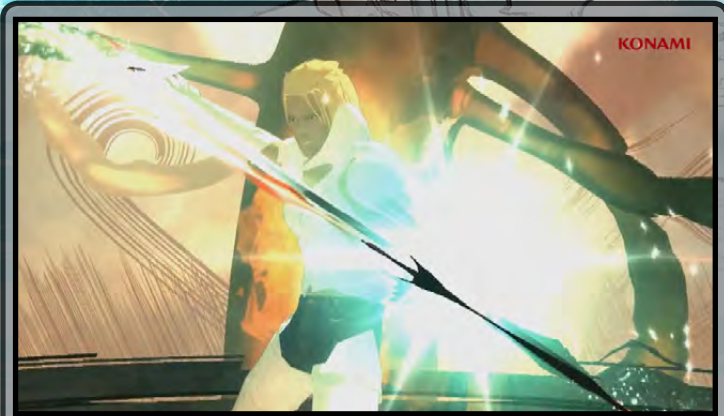
360Zine Verdict *A landmark for quality, and the best game Epic has ever made*

- Amazing campaign
- Phenomenal multiplayer
- It's all over...

94%



KONAMI



▶ PLAYBACK OPTIONS:

El Shaddai

ASCENSION OF THE METATRON

JOURNEY TO A WORLD THAT NO MORTAL HAS SEEN...



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9/10 "INCOMPARABLE" - EUROGAMER.NET



8/10 "BRAIN-BENDIPLY BEAUTIFUL VISUALS" - UK OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

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RAGE

Moving forwards, looking backwards

Publisher: Bethesda
Developer: id Software
Heritage: Doom, Quake, Quake 3
Link: www.rage.com
Out: 7th October

The plot to RAGE, the long-awaited return of id software, is oddly prophetic. It tells the story of an ark survivor, a great warrior from the past who has been stuck in stasis and reborn into a future world he doesn't quite understand. And then he's given a gun. If it's not a deliberate metaphor for the game's great creators then it's a bloody big coincidence.

RAGE does feel like Relic forced into a modern world. It bears the hallmarks of id's past – shooting so sharp and

emphatic that it makes the competition look flaccid – but it also feels like it's stepping into uncharted territory without much of an idea what to do.

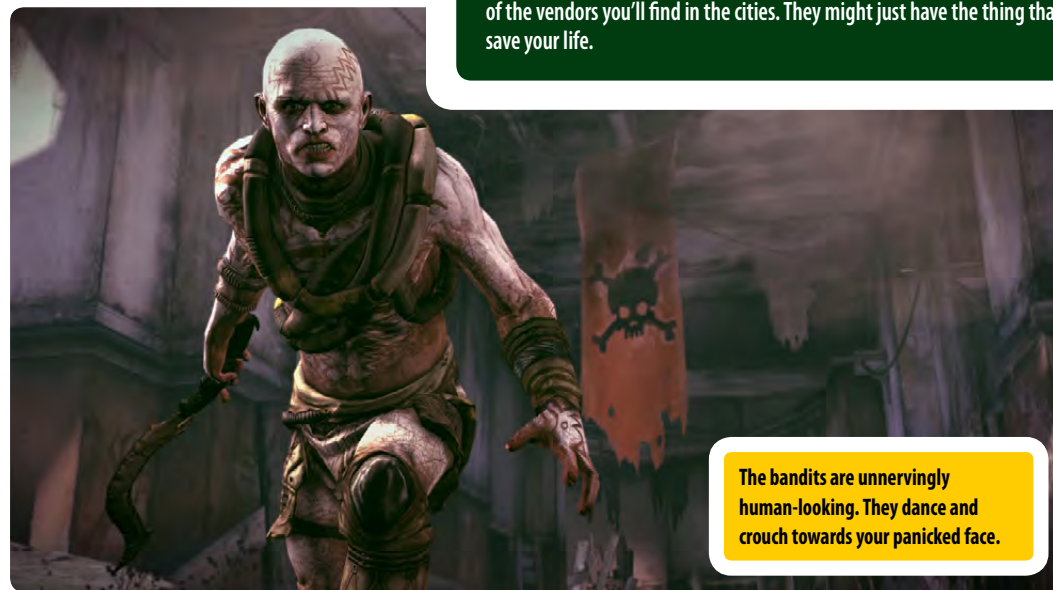
Ostensibly, this is an openworld game. You're free to roam RAGE's dusty wasteland on foot or in a choice of Mad Max-a-like buggies, dotting between settlements, salvaging scrap and generally doing the types of things you'd expect from a Fallout game.

Except, there's lots to do in Fallout. In RAGE, it's just emptiness. The

backgrounds may be pretty, but there's nothing to see. After meeting jovial wastelander Dan Hagar in the game's first settlement, RAGE falls into a rhythm. Man tells you to do something, you drive to the place he asks you to go, and then the game switches completely and turns into a defiantly linear corridor shooter.

Unlike Far Cry 2 or even Crysis, RAGE's missions don't take place out in the open. No, they exist firmly and

"RAGE features corridor shooting so sharp and emphatic that it makes the competition look flaccid by comparison"



The bandits are unnervingly human-looking. They dance and crouch towards your panicked face.

AGAINST THE MACHINE

A day in the life of a wastelander



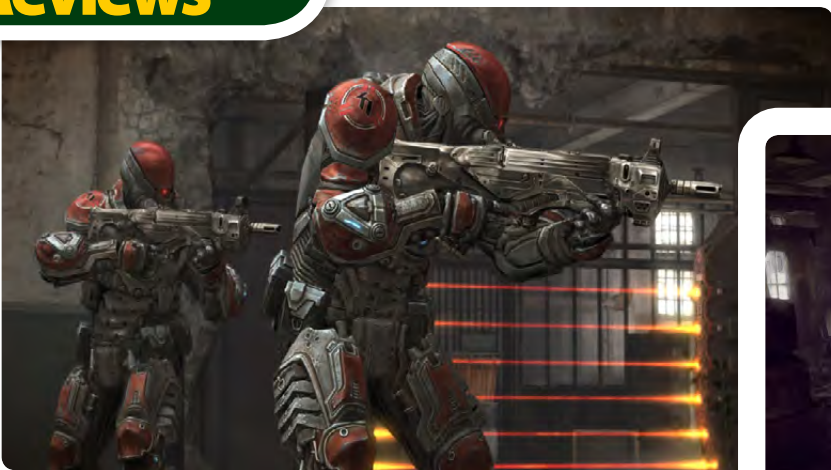
Market forces

Twisted metal

Bandit country

Market forces

You'll find a hell of a lot of trash in RAGE's levels, some of which can be salvaged and turned into useful gear, but the rest you should just sell to one of the vendors you'll find in the cities. They might just have the thing that'll save your life.



As you hammer through the story you'll get your hands on some slick tech, like these spider bots. Go forth my pretties!



> **RAGE** continued

warmly in id's comfort zone, placing you at the start of an elaborate and intricately designed corridor, and asking you to blast your way to the end. It's old fashioned. It's disconnecting. And it's exactly what the game needs.

When you're in one of the game's numerous levels, everything improves immeasurably. If any other designer had just mapped out linear levels in an open world, it'd be terrible. But this is id. They invented this, and they're still the best in the world at it. Every moment is scripted, every skirmish

meticulously designed, and the freedom comes from your use of the game's superb weapon set rather than clambering over rocks or running everyone over in a truck.

Instead of drowning you in weapons, each of RAGE's arsenal can house multiple ammo types. So you might have a crossbow that can shoot electro bolts into water or a shotgun that fires grenades. Picking the right ammo and gun for each battle is crucial, but when you get it right, it's hard not to feel like a grit-toothed mutant wrecker.

It helps that the enemy design is excellent, too. While most of the time you'll be fighting bandits or run-at-you-screaming mutants, id's use of AI and animation means they're unlike any other foes you'll have faced in a FPS.

"When you get it right, it's hard not to feel like a grit-toothed mutant wrecker"

Mutants and the more reckless humans will charge at you, but instead of just aimlessly sprinting at your gun barrel and meeting a bucket of buckshot to the chops, they'll crouch, spin, roll and leap, making it extremely hard to get a lock on them. They'll run off walls, jump up into doorframes and even scoot along pipes on the ceiling. They feel alive and real, and taking them down is all about keeping your cool, concentrating on your aim and splitting their tiny mutant skulls in two. The resultant shower of blood and entrails is the kind of gory treat that non-gamers would be horrified by. Us desensitised monsters just grin, wide-eyed and ready for more.

A shame, then, that RAGE can't maintain this sort of pace and precision. Too much time is spent in the admittedly pretty townscapes, chatting to the beautifully animated locals and snaffling up missions. It's all done very nicely, but it's as if id hasn't seen any of the progress others have made in the past decade. It's just a tiresome procession of fetch-and-carry side quests, long-winded conversations

FREEZE FRAME

Taking you through the game one step at a time



10 MINUTES
Everything's strange and unfamiliar at the beginning, until you then get behind a pistol.



3 HOURS
You'll be driving between missions, waiting for the shooting action to start up all over again.



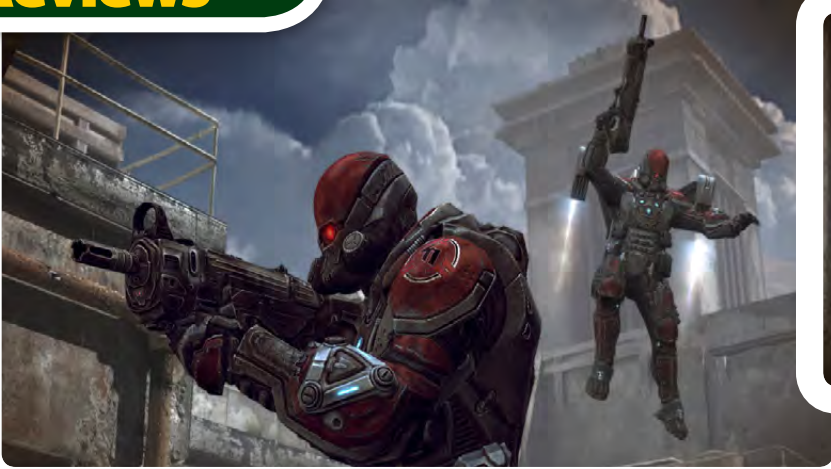
6 HOURS
It's nearly the end of disc one, and things have got a little samey. Definitely fun, but also samey, too.



10 HOURS
The second disc is in full effect, and new ammo types have helped sharpen up the combat.



15 HOURS
Things are wrapping up, and RAGE has left some of its best stuff until last. Good old id.



The open world is stark and seems vast, but is actually small and largely empty. It's literally a waste of space.

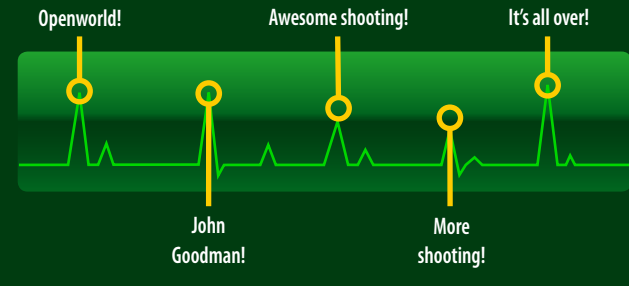
> RAGE continued

about a deeply unoriginal story (evil oligarchy, repressed citizens, resistance... feel free to stop us at any point if you've heard it before) and a lot of selling and buying. And, of course, car combat.

Yes, the other string to RAGE's bow is its fender-bending car wars, but they truly feel like a relic from another era. As you hurtle through the wasteland on your way to a mission, you'll be assaulted by bandits. You can choose to take them out using your miniguns and rockets (earned through race events, oddly), but if you do, they'll level up next time you're in the area. So it actually makes more sense, from a survivalist point of you, to just speed past them. Yes, you earn cash for every bandit you take out, but you'll end up spending it repairing your car.

It's this vehicular melee that makes up RAGE's competitive online mode, too. In a strange move, RAGE features no gun-on-gun action, only a four-player game of circling each other trying to blow each other up. Or reach

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*



checkpoints. To be totally honest, it's not exactly a Call of Duty challenger.

Much better are the co-op missions though, which do a pretty good job of filling you in on the NPC's backstories while focusing on what RAGE does best: balls-to-the-wall action. Two players have to work together to battle through the game's main levels, this time kitted out with different enemies. Kills, assists and objectives are greeted with satisfying yellow numbers popping up on screen, and it finally feels like a modern game. This section of the game is highly recommended.

When RAGE sticks to its guns, it's one of the best shooters on the system. It just doesn't do it enough. Sometimes progress just isn't worth it. ●

360Zine Verdict *Excellent blasting sandwiched by expanses of nothingness*

- Sharp, enjoyable shooting
- Good to have id back
- Openworld is somewhat futile

82%

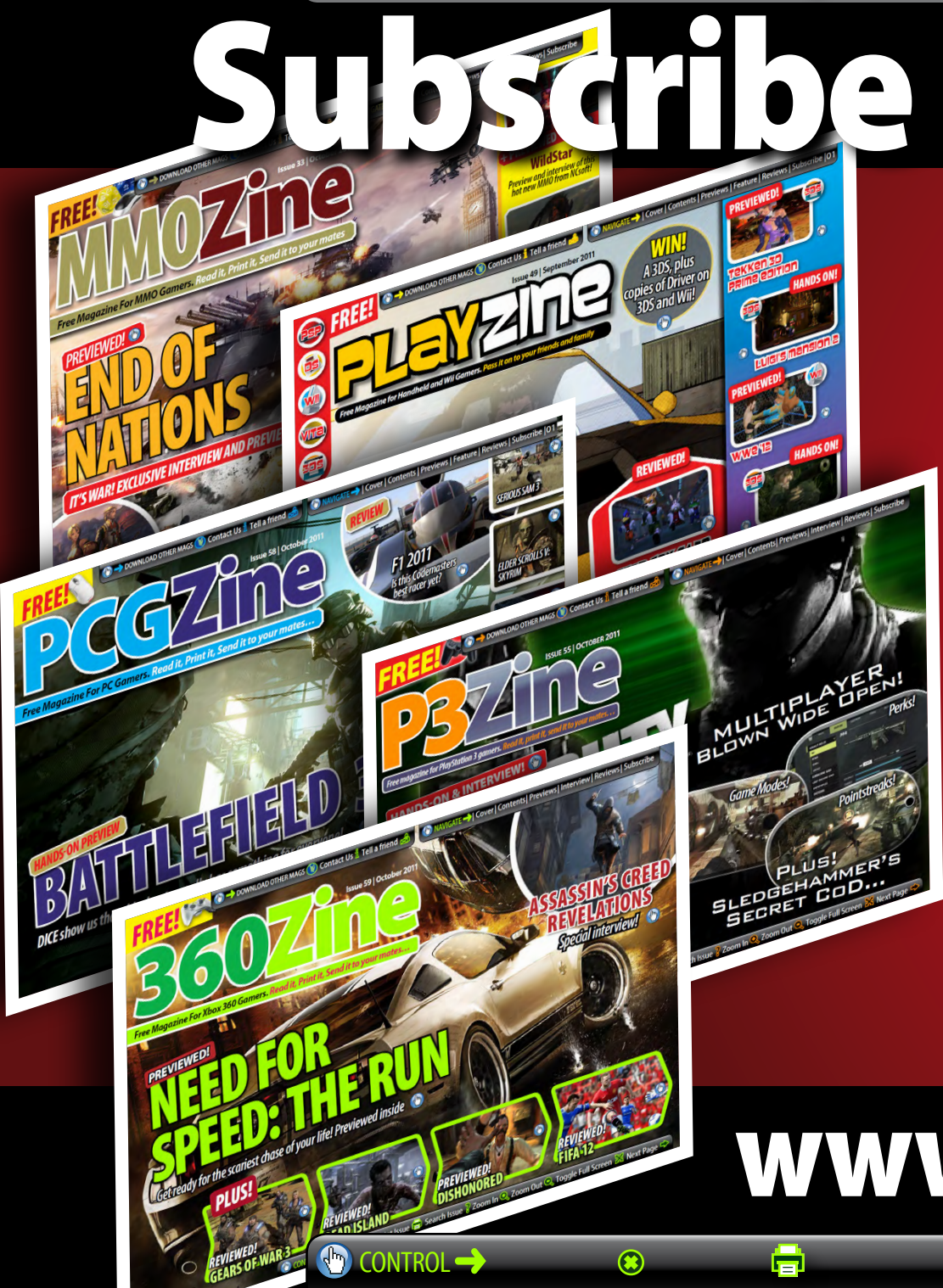


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FIFA 12

Still the player of the year?

The whole PES vs FIFA war has been talked about, debated and argued incessantly for three console generations now. It's seen the underdog rise to prominence, ousting the big-money pretender from the top of the league and winning the hearts of a digital footballing globe. And just when it seemed like PES would rule forever, FIFA sacked the manager, rebuilt its team around youth and came back hard, blowing the aged legend out of the water in the past few years, assembling the kind of lead that again

Publisher: EA
Developer: In-house
Heritage: FIFA series, NHL series
Link: www.easportsfootball.com
OUT NOW

"Much has been made of a new physics engine that realistically calculates every interaction between players"



The new 'tactical defending' system is very hard to get to grips with.

seemed unassailable. Surely the tables can't turn again? Well, it's going to be close this year. PES has made huge strides and is threatening to return to its former glory, while FIFA 12, despite promises of revolution, is very similar. The most

significant change comes at the back, with the inclusion of 'tactical defending', which throws out the old 'hold A to charge' in favour of a highly convoluted four-button system that sees you jockeying, positioning and timing your tackles.

players flawlessly, but in truth, it doesn't make a huge amount of difference to the action. Yes, it looks nice when someone crumples perfectly under your slide tackle, but equally it looks bloody stupid when both your centrebacks fall over each other as an opposition striker strolls neatly through on goal.

In theory, tactical defending is great, and when you isolate a winger, send them down the line then time your foot-in and nab the ball, it's a beautiful system. Unfortunately, it's also a system that forgets that in FIFA you control a whole team, not just one defender, and when you have Barcelona pouring forward at you and you're trying to manage four defenders at once, it's almost impossible. After 30 matches of trying, it was time to switch back to the (mercifully still included) 'Legacy' defence settings.

Much better are the new crossing and finishing animations that finally

Elsewhere, much has been made of a new physics engine that realistically calculates every interaction between





"FIFA 12 is a better game than last year's, but only marginally"

Shooting is much improved. The ball behaves more realistically than ever, and there are far more shot variations available.



You rarely actually have this much space in FIFA 12. The pitches are still a little too narrow for expansive football.

> **FIFA 12** continued

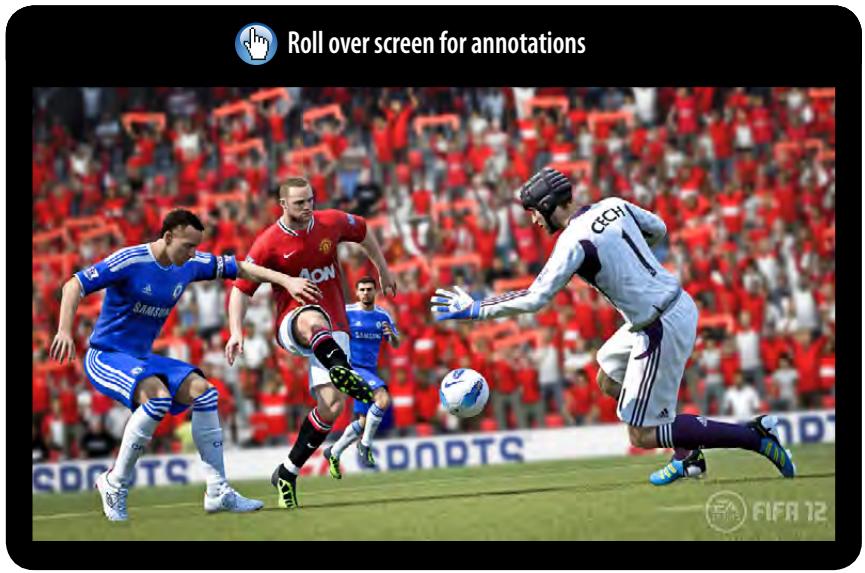
look like the real thing. Attacking the ball from a cross is now a real possibility, and good strikers will steal a year in the box with exceptional AI player movement to nip in and score.

Unfortunately, because there is so much animation and so many calculations going on under the hood, FIFA 12 can feel too sluggish. Against the AI, matches are still tiresome affairs on even the medium difficult settings, with defenders who can read your dribbles before you make them and attackers who use impossibly quick skill moves to befuddle your back line. It's a shame too, because career mode is much improved this year, with all sorts of managerial options, player interactions and even a transfer window.

Against human opposition, FIFA 12 is still a stellar game of football, but the way it favours quick passing, crossing and throughballs means the variety of

goals you'll see is as limited as Steve Keane's managerial brain.

FIFA 12 is a better game than last year's, but only marginally. It needs to dust itself down, look at its diet, get back into hard training and make itself brilliant once again, because there's an old superstar just behind it, hungry and ready and wanting FIFA's place in the first team. Next year could be very interesting indeed. ●



Roll over screen for annotations

360Zine Verdict Super slick, but a little too sterile this year. Needs more drama

- Fluid, slick footballing
- Tighter animation
- Sterile matches, predictable AI

85%

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Dead Island

Life's a beach and then you die

Publisher: Deep Silver
Developer: Techland
Heritage: Nail'd, Call of Juarez
Link: www.deadislandgame.com
OUT NOW

The Dead Island trailer was annoying. Seriously annoying. While a slick piece of CG edited together with some manipulative music, it was never actually going to represent the game it was pushing, and the general reaction to it was as frustrating as it was baffling. After so many years of being duped by fake screenshots, FMV intros and 'not representative of in-game' adverts, had we really all been sucked in again?

Dead Island might have needed that trailer to get attention, but don't be

"This is an openworld RPG about two things: exploring and hitting zombies in the face. Hard"

fooled into thinking you're getting yourself into an emotional rollercoaster of survival and human horror. This is an openworld RPG that's about two things: exploring and hitting zombies in the face. Hard. Anyone expecting disquieting moments of solace in the

face of a zombie outbreak will be put off the second they hear an NPC talk.

Nevertheless, there are moments where Dead Island does make you think, and make you feel. When you head out into its vast openworld, taking on fetch-and-carry quests for other holiday makers (the first act is set on the island of Banoi's luxury holiday resort), there are clever and touching little details littered around the world that you might not even notice.

The game's been compared to Fallout 3 thanks to its reliance on stats, perks, degrading weapons and stacked quests, but it's actually the sense of discovery and wonder that is most reminiscent of Bethesda's opus. Almost every inch of Banoi has been hand-crafted to tell a story; one of people caught in a terrible situation. It doesn't shove it in your face, it doesn't get in the way of the action, but it is there if you want to go looking.

The acting isn't good, but the story's actually fairly good fun and occasionally poignant.



Not that you'll have much time for that. After picking from one of four characters (all idiots) and setting off either on your own or with up to three buddies, Dead Island is a straight-up zombie-thwacking romp. The buggers come at you in moderate numbers, and you can target their various body parts with your make-do weaponry, and smack them to pieces with a smile.





"Dead Island is different, and more importantly, it's bloody good fun. In every sense"



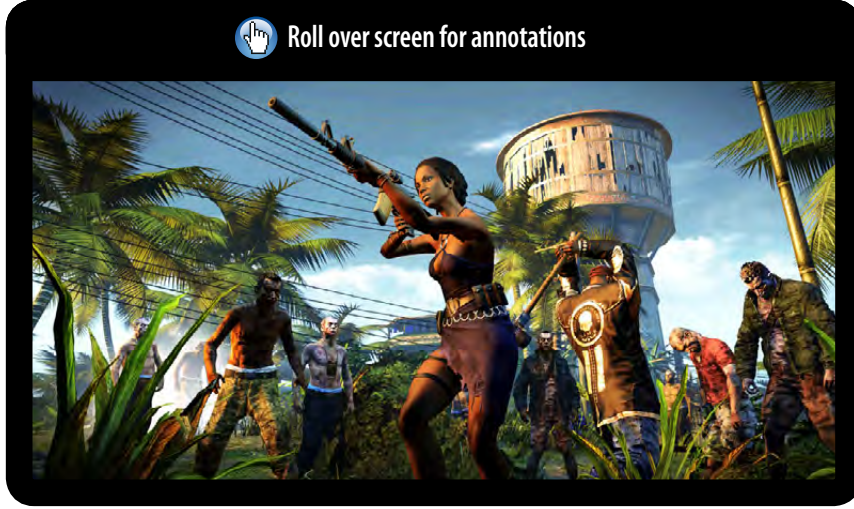
Four-player co-op works very well, but in truth Dead Island is very enjoyable on your own. Good for the friendless.

Battering undead in the head is universally enjoyable. Timing a swipe and watching a head roll? Priceless.

> Dead Island continued

The great sense of weight and bludgeoning force is tangible, whether it's caving in a sprinting Infected's skull with a mace or tactically slicing the arms off a giant Thug so it can no longer swing at you. It's not hugely clever or flawlessly implemented, but combat in Dead Island is different, and most importantly, it's bloody good fun. In every sense.

What's most impressive though, is how it keeps your attention. After a thrilling opening couple of hours, it seems like Dead Island is comfortable settling into a sprawl of dull fetch quests, but if you power on through the main quest line, you'll hit a point where the whole tone of the game changes and you're stuck in one of the most horrendous cities ever built. The most immediate comparison that came to mind was Half-Life 2's relentlessly unpleasant Ravenholm. It's just not a nice place to be.



Roll over screen for annotations

360Zine Verdict *It's ropery in parts, but the ambition and enjoyment do shine through*

- Brilliant setting
- Fun, meaty combat
- The engine has issues

84%



In **360Zine**
Issue 60



PREVIEWED! SAINTS ROW: THE THIRD

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THE ELDER SCROLLS V: SKYRIM PES 2012
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