

# 10 Years, 10 Nice Games: Xav's Picks

Throughout the week, Joystiq celebrates its tenth anniversary by revealing every writer's favorite - not "finest" - video games of the final decade. Aside from selecting a number one, every record is unordered.

For his top choice, Feature Content material Director Xav de Matos discusses the industrywide implications that have advanced out of the release of a shooter sequel in 2004.

Half-Life 2 - Valve / 2004

It will not be a bold choice, however Half-Life 2 represents greater than a singular product to me. When it launched in 2004, it ushered in what would be the changing face of the Laptop market, particularly, it introduced the world to Valve's digital, Steam.

Steam's introduction to the industry was rocky, littered with points when it arrived. Nevertheless it has developed and in the last ten years Steam has develop into the defacto Pc platform. In case your Computer recreation is not on Steam today, clients will probably be vocal in their disapproval.

Half-Life 2 also handed the business one other necessary ingredient, the Supply engine. Powering every part from revamped classic mods as standalone games like Counter-Strike and a plethora of inventive impartial games, the engine has also proven itself to be malleable sufficient to leap into the next era, Titanfall is powered by Supply, for example. And where would Minecraft Servers be without Supply, maybe we'd miss out on other Valve classics, like Portal, Left four Lifeless, Crew Fortress 2 and the ever growing Dota 2.

As for Half-Life 2 itself, why is it my favorite recreation of the final decade? Continuing the story from the original Half-Life, which was a pioneer in story-telling, Valve introduced us to a world after battle. A police state that evolved out of the mistakes made on the Black Mesa Research Facility. It introduced us to new and wonderful characters, we played with physics and the gravity gun, and visited incredible areas that stand in my mind as some of the very best any game has supplied. Stepping into the infested mining city of Ravenholm or walking off the practice right into a secured City-17 are a few of my favourite gaming recollections. Half-Life 2 instructed a story that, at its coronary heart, is about endurance and survival within the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. I will not argue with anyone who says they hated the airboat sequence, but to me Half-Life 2 was degree after level of new challenges, areas, and recreation kinds that we rarely see in games right now. And that feeling of getting a brand new Half-Life? Seeing these promotional bins on store shelves after ready so long for a brand new entry in the series? Lastly getting my hands on that game filled me with pure joy.

I love the Half-Life collection, it helped form my notion of what a complete sport must be - video games that place story in as excessive regard as gameplay - and I love Half-Life 2 and the original for doing that. And in the future we'll learn the way its story will finish and we'll get

our Half-Life 3. But probably not ... Valve's actually busy making hats for Group Fortress 2, or something. It is killing me.

#### Splinter Cell: Chaos Principle - Ubisoft Montreal / 2005

Whereas I contest that Splinter Cell: Blacklist is the higher game, Chaos Idea wins a spot on my record for one explicit mission: The bank heist. There is a mission, part of the way in which through Chaos Principle, that sends Sam Fisher right into a Panamanian bank along with his eyes on discovering the identity of an arms supplier. With a view to cover his infiltration, nonetheless, Third Echelon offers Sam a secondary objective: Make it appear like a financial institution robbery. Guiding your way by means of the twists and turns of the massive constructing after accessing the bank by a skylight, dodging laser trip wires and pocketing \$50 million in bearer bonds from a large vault is the most effective heist moment I've ever had in any recreation. It stands up as the most effective mission Sam has ever been despatched on, and the quantity of joy I had finishing it many times is what puts it on this list above the more refined Blacklist - a recreation I selected as my favorite of last yr, and one I've put over 50 hours into.

#### Minecraft - Mojang / 2011

Earlier than it became a sensation, Minecraft was this tiny game that captured the imagination of some buddies who tried desperately to elucidate to me why they cherished it and why I would really feel the identical way. To me, it regarded and sounded silly. I couldn't think about why anybody would waste hours of their time on a sport that seemingly had goal or function; certainly one of the many errors in judgement featured on this checklist alone. When i lastly took the time to play Minecraft I was struck by its simplistic creativity. Actually open world, Minecraft offers you little information and asks you to find issues by yourself. On land, in its vast seas, or deep at the core of your individual world. On a surface level, the sport is about surviving onslaughts of enemies that come out after dark, however hours later you find yourself building a portal to a new dimension with the only real function of discovering special supplies to make your private home base look a bit fancier than your friend's personal rudimentary constructions. It is a uncommon sport that turns into as complicated as you want it to be primarily based by yourself private goals. It is a wonderful expertise and one I am glad to have been proven utterly wrong about.

#### The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings - CD Projekt Purple / 2011

My 2011 Recreation of the Yr was CD Projekt Crimson's gorgeous and vicious RPG, The Witcher 2. Not to take away from some other RPG I've performed and enjoyed over the last decade, however nothing holds a candle to the choices obtainable and characters met in Assassins of Kings. The story is difficult, injected with the identical stage of political intrigue that fascinates viewers weekly with HBO's Game of Thrones. Its techniques are very completely different and specific, its combat can be tough and thoughts-warping, however the Witcher 2 is a mountain of a recreation. It affords challenge hardly ever seen anymore. Nearly like Darkish Souls, The Witcher 2 refuses to tone down what it wants from a player to be enjoyed, patience and perseverance. It is a wonderful game and that i urge anyone who has yet to experience it to leap at the prospect before Geralt of Rivia's story concludes in the

### Witcher 3: Wild Hunt.

#### Xenoblade Chronicles - Monolith Comfortable / 2012

A game that almost never launched in North America, if not for the outpouring of followers demanding its arrival, Xenoblade Chronicles finally hit stateside store shelves in restricted release in 2012. From the moment the sport begins you're handled to a JRPG that makes substantial developments to storytelling and gameplay. Its tale is about in a captivating locale: A world actually constructed on the back of two huge dueling deities. Its combat system takes hints from MMOs and Western RPGs with cooldowns and special skills, but positioning is crucial to success. Additionally, Xenoblade Chronicles options a myriad of encounters that players should intelligently consider. It is not like typical JRPGs the place you roam and battle at random intervals, come beasts merely exist in the world and solely have interaction if they feel threatened. It removes the standard sense that every thing that isn't you and your get together outdoors of city needs in your demise. It is natural and lived-in. Xenoblade Chronicles options genuinely charming characters I wished to protect, an original and mystical setting and a narrative about discovering your importance in a world that seems too vast to be impacted by a single individual.

#### Batman: Arkham Asylum - Rocksteady / 2009

I remember enjoying Eurocom's mediocre Batman Begins recreation and considering, "I suppose this is one of the best we'll get" when considering the historical past of Batman's video game adventures. NES sport apart, the respect video game builders have had for the license had been laid out next to the chalk outline of Bruce's mother and father in Crime Alley for years. And then little-recognized developer Rocksteady came out of a mysterious and magical place - I imagine they name it London - to bring us Arkham Asylum. What adopted was an incredible journey, featuring performances from voice actors that helped grow my fondness for the franchise as a toddler in the early nineties. I want the original to the larger Arkham City as a result of it puts Batman in a extra isolated scenario. He is probably the most feared entity in Gotham, however caught throughout the partitions of Arkham he is confronted along with his whole profession. It's a monument to his success and it's slowly attempting to choke the life out of him. From its fight system to its gorgeous results, Arkham Asylum is an amazing piece of leisure that finally provided the Dark Knight the respect he'd been neglected.

#### Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy - Midway Games / 2004

Psi-Ops is a sport that was method higher than it ever deserved to be. Developed by the now defunct Midway Video games, the third-particular person shooter featured crazy psychic skills and one of many earliest makes use of of a game that really embraced its use of the Havok physics middleware. Grasping an exploding barrel together with your mind and hurling it at an enemy who'd then blast the sky bouncing off any object it passes was embarrassingly hilarious. Later we would get video games like the Force Unleashed which tried to observe in its footsteps, but did not capture the same spark. The power to take management of an enemy's thoughts, open fireplace on his squad after which leap off the facet of a ledge sending him careening toward sure doom was some of the dumbest enjoyable I had gaming

in 2004. It's a weird and random selection, but I remember dying to finish work or school so I might get home to play the identical levels many times.

#### Hotline Miami - Dennaton Games / 2012

Dennaton found the formula for addictive gaming bliss: Rope me in with nostalgic graphical design, add buckets of blood, horse head masks, and among the finest gaming soundtracks I've ever heard and you have yourself one in all my favourite video games of all time. Hotline Miami is a weird game, however its puzzle-like construction captured my attention when it launched in 2012. I've since gone through the game again on Vita, exploring each corner in search of those hidden letters to get the "actual" ending and i all the time find myself glad to replay outdated ranges. Did I point out the soundtrack? Great.

#### Dark Souls - From Software / 2011

I've written a lot of features about how improper I used to be after i first played and discarded Darkish Souls. I've spilled a variety of blood in-recreation, struggling by each encounter and studying my errors. Dark Souls is a demanding sport, but one that never feels cheap. Failing in Darkish Souls is purely as much as the participant. The tools to dominate are all current, but only patience is rewarded. Thankfully, I learned the error of my methods.

#### Metroid: Zero Mission - Nintendo / 2004

There was some speak internally when I discussed that I used to be going to pick out Metroid: Zero Mission as certainly one of my favourite ten video games of the final ten years. Some are adamant that it's a cheat as a result of it is technically a remake of the original Metroid, but I contend that it's far more than that [and editor-in-chief Ludwig Kietzmann sided with me on that, so right here it is!]. Metroid: Zero Mission does follow the same unfastened narrative featured in the NES basic, however it has fully new areas, new gameplay, and options a detailed story that outlines Samus Aran's origin, beforehand solely actually fleshed out in manga. Samus is, by far, my favourite video recreation hero. Metroid Prime and Super Metroid are among my favorite video games of all time - both ineligible right here - however Zero Mission introduces a brand new generation to Nintendo's robust female protagonist. We be taught the place she got here from and who would not love an origin story?

[Images: Nintendo, Ubisoft, Valve, From Software program, Dennaton, ZOO Digital, Rocksteady, CD Projekt Red, Mojang, Monolith Comfortable]