

Perfection for the PS4

GAME REVIEW

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Platform: PS4

Bloodborne is more than a game. Wrought with exhausting challenges and enthralling environments, and capable of delivering one of the most rewarding experiences ever found in a video game, Bloodborne is an enticing work of art; its clutches are nigh inescapable.

In Bloodborne, you play the role of a hunter in Yharnam, a city marred by a virulent plague which turns men into beasts. Such a plague's roots lie in the city's obsession with the manipulation of blood (known as bloodministration in the game). This manipulation allowed the citizens of Yharnam to be cured of any ailment which afflicted them. But alas, the blood that was used for such purposes became corrupted and thus the plague spread.

From Software, the masterminds behind the Souls series, are the ones who have made the game. Thus, Bloodborne retains various elements that are prominent in all Souls games. Bonfires, which are the only savepoints, make a return in the form of lamps scattered all across Yharnam. All the unique areas of Yharnam are interconnected with one another barring a central hub world known as the Hunter's Dream in which you can buy new weapons, armor and consumables, and upgrade your hunter. The subtle role playing elements also provide depth and complexity to the character.

The world design is heavily influenced by Victorian London and German architecture. Bold, castle-like buildings are dotted across the cityscapes while stone pavements and intricately designed steel grates accentuate the look and feel of the city. Such beautiful fantasy ends here, however. Danger lies behind every corner, posed by grotesquely horrifying enemies.

Speaking of enemies, even the lowest ranking minnows are capable of obliterating the player with two hits.



Thus the combat system beckons to be mastered. It seems very daunting at first but once the player becomes a master of it, the gameplay resembles a graceful dance of death while the hunter delicately (or not so delicately) dispatches foe after foe. The combat is deceptively simple but once the player delves deep into it, many hidden complexities emerge. Hit timing, spacing, dodging, item usage all have to be taken into account if the player wishes to stand unscathed after a savage battle.

Bloodborne features some of the most unique bosses I have ever seen in a game. Each of them has unique traits, characteristics and abilities which make each fight

feel fresh and rewarding. And how rewarding it is! The feeling of finally beating a boss after hour-long bouts is beyond compare. This rewarding feeling is exactly why I kept on coming back even after going through such relentless punishment.

The game's sound design is marvelous. The music is epic and beautiful. Every track fits the sections of the game they play in. The game's music composers have created moving pieces which usher in goosebumps every time the player hears them.

All in all, Bloodborne is perfection; a certain type of perfection that is extremely uncommon nowadays in the world of gaming.

What it Means for Gamers

DirectX 12

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Free performance boosts are always welcome when it comes to gaming. Showcased by Microsoft at the Game Developers' Conference 2015, DirectX

12 aims to bring exactly that. DirectX 12 brings with it Direct3D 12, which will allow for richer scenes, more objects and maximum utilisation of modern graphics cards. Fortunately, this doesn't apply only for the uber-modern gaming rigs—Direct3D 12 will be functional across all Microsoft devices, namely phones, tablets,

laptops, desktops and even the gaming console, Xbox One. So all applications and games running on these devices will benefit from the implementation of DirectX 12.

The most welcomed advantage of DirectX 12 is the low level hardware access it provides compared to its previous iterations. This will allow for significant improvement in multithreaded scaling in games and will allow all DirectX 12 applications to utilise the available CPU power to a higher potential than before. The implications of this is more dramatic than it seems – it will mean that CPU bottlenecks will be harder to hit, and that a higher number of older CPUs will be powerful enough to play the latest games and to power top of the line graphics cards. This will essentially result in cost-cutting in two ways – sufficiency of inexpensive CPUs will reduce the initial cost of a computer, and current CPUs getting a new lease on life will postpone a much feared upgrade.

DirectX 12 will increase utilisation of GPU power as well. This means that games will see a boost in performance even if the graphics card is the bottle-

neck. To back this claim, Microsoft has revealed performance numbers of Fable Legends when ran on both DirectX 12 and DirectX 11. According to them, DirectX 12 provides a whopping 20% increase in performance (53FPS vs 44.5FPS in the same test) versus DirectX 11. This will, very similarly to CPU scenario, reduce expenses on the graphics card side of things.

Another laudable feat of DirectX 12 is enabling console level efficiency on PC. Till now, there has been a major discrepancy between utilisation of the potential of the hardware of a console and that of a PC. This meant that consoles required much less hardware power than a PC to run a game at the same settings. With the introduction of efficient low-level APIs as on consoles, the advent of DirectX 12 hopes to change that situation.

Stuck with an old graphics card? Fear not, because you are in luck. Nvidia will allow support for DirectX 12 on all of its DirectX 11 graphics cards, going as back as its 400 series of graphics cards. All these perks are not too far away, given the fact that games based on DirectX 12 are currently aimed for a holiday '15 launch.