

READER SUBMISSION**GAME REVIEW**

THE BEST F1 GAME TILL DATE

KAZI AYON

Codemasters' latest edition of the acclaimed F1 series, F1 2016 has been a giant leap forward compared to the previous installments. The graphics have become far more realistic and the gameplay is much more challenging than it ever was. While Codemasters is known for being easy on the PC, this time you will probably need more than a mid-tier PC to play the game.

Codemasters has introduced the new virtual safety car feature where you need to follow the speed limit while the car is being retrieved. You can now customize the weather. So in races like Bahrain GP

or Singapore GP, which are hosted at night, you will get to experience how it feels to drive those circuits in day time. New races have been introduced just like the actual F1 calendar. This time you can actually get sacked by your team for poor performance.

So what about modification of previous features? Well the tyre grip is more challenging than ever. In previous installments the tyres used to lose grip after a certain amount of time irrespective of how you use them. But this time around, every little act has an impact on the tyres. Braking too early or too late, going marginally out of the track, or straying away from the racing line - all

of them contribute to the grip of the tires.

The crash mechanics have improved. The cars used to have the same form of damage irrespective of the intensity of damage. However, they have fine tuned this aspect. Tyres get punctured when you graze metal objects and the damage visuals are far more realistic and so is the effect on your car.

Safety cars and penalties are more frequent than the previous installments. While it is good, I still don't think they have got it right. They still need to sort this feature out. It is not realistic enough.

Despite all the good things they have

done, Codemasters still failed to give us a decent AI. The AI simply is not aggressive enough. When you try to overtake the AI, they hardly bother to defend, and dive bombing through the inside happens once in a blue moon. The driving is very challenging I admit, but beating the AI is still just a piece of cake. The AI rarely tends to opt for different strategies which is sort of disappointing, especially if you consider the fact that in modern day F1, strategies are often the deciding factor in a race. Hopefully they will sort it out in their next game.

The game is still not in the sweet spot. In my opinion there is room for improvement and it needs fine tuning.

A Therapeutic Beauty

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

Genre: Walking Simulator/Adventure
Developer: Campo Santo
Publisher: Panic

When I finished Firewatch last year, I was left with feelings of despair and regret. The regret came from me not being able to spend more time in the lush, intricately-made environments made in the game. The despair stemmed from the thought that I would never be able to talk to Delilah again. Delilah: a friend, perhaps more than just a voice coming out from the radio that I was handed out when I entered the game as Henry.

Firewatch drops you into the game world with a simple premise: you're escaping your life after an unfortunate series of events that I'm not going to spoil for you. Just know that you're in for an emotional ride: one that you will not be able to comprehend after you're done playing. After I started replaying the game a week ago, I did everything that I had missed the last time around: found myself a pet turtle, explored a creepy little house with a raccoon, found well-hidden and brilliant secrets that lay buried in the



woods. This isn't a game where you'll be plagued with objectives; in fact, there will be very few. The bulk of your activities will revolve around your radio conversations with Delilah, a fellow lookout. Everything that I loved about the game revolved around Delilah the first time around, and she was the reason that I pretty much rushed through the cam-

paign. The dialogues are still some of the most beautifully written and realistic in my recent gaming memory, you'll rarely feel that it's not a real person talking to you in your solace among the rocks and trees of Shoshone Forest.

The way the map implemented in the game is something I've always liked: you're essentially deprived of an on-screen

map in favour of one that you could take out from your pocket: just like in real life. It did take me a while to get re-used to this map, but it increases the immersion tenfold.

The intense storyline is often intercepted by well-timed jokes which breathe life into your day-to-day conversations with Delilah. The map, although fully explorable at any time, does require some items that you will need in your inventory in order to be able to pass, for example an axe that you will eventually receive that you'll use to cut down shrubs. Despite these minor technicalities, the game is largely your own personal little forest to explore. There are no puzzles, quick time events or bosses to fight. The artistic style of the game intentionally takes a cartoonesque form, and it does go a long way in making sure that the game remains timeless in terms of graphical fidelity. The label of "Walking Simulator" does not do the game justice in any way, mostly because I not only walked; but I smiled, distressed, worried and perhaps most importantly, reflected on my wonderful journey. Firewatch for me would be far more than a game: it is therapeutic in its own right.