



BY IAN VAN ORDEN
NEWS AND OPINION EDITOR

Christmas morning, 1996: I remember my five-year old self excitedly running to the Christmas tree that morning to find the many gifts awaiting my young siblings and me. One of them in particular, a big box labeled for both my brother and me stood out. That was the year I received my Nintendo 64, and with it one of the games that defined my childhood, "Super Mario 64."

"Super Mario Odyssey" reminds me of that childhood favorite in so many ways. Many of the abilities found in "Super Mario 64" are present in "Odyssey," including the triple jump, the crouch jump and other similar abilities. Aesthetically, the game is very similar to "Mario 64," and very much feels like a modern update.

Beyond "Mario 64," "Odyssey" also features small segments that look and play like the original "Super Mario Bros." that was released for the Nintendo Entertainment System. One of the game's many worlds even features a callback to "Donkey Kong," the arcade game that originally introduced the red-capped plumber.

Though the game is very much a love letter to all the games that preceded it, "Odyssey" also manages to be its own game. The introduction of Cappy, a new character to the franchise early in the game, serves as the vehicle for the game's new gameplay mechanics.

Cappy, who takes the place of Mario's iconic hat, has the ability to take over many of the creatures that can be found throughout the game's world, granting the player different abilities based on the kind of creature controlled. These abilities are used to complete the majority of the game's puzzles. There are several attacks granted to Mario that use the hat as well, which forms the backbone of the game's combat.

Overall, "Super Mario Odyssey" manages to capture much of what has made Mario one of the most recognizable characters in video games, while also moving the franchise forward in a new and interesting direction. It is easily a must buy for the Nintendo Switch and a great gift for the holidays.



CALL OF DUTY WWII



BY SAM WESTON
PHOTO EDITOR

Boots on the ground "Call of Duty" is back with Activision's latest installment, "Call of Duty WWII." After three years of advanced movement, "CoD" has returned to the classic movement style that we all know and love. The release comes off the major disappointment of "Infinite Warfare" which was among, if not, the worst game in its franchise. The only thing that saved the title was the Remastered version of "CoD 4," one of the most iconic games in the franchise and FPSs.

While the "CoD" community was split between the two games, "WWII" was announced and "CoD" fans rejoiced. The game was released earlier this month and the reception has been positive as expected. The game brings back the feel of the movement style that hasn't been implemented since "CoD: Ghosts" which was not the favorite of the games but one of my personal favorites. In "WWII," you get to get a sense of the new generation consoles graphics with the old World War II feel.

The gameplay is reminiscent of how "Ghosts" felt since Sledgehammer made both titles. I was a huge fan of "Ghosts" movement system, so I am a fan of how "WWII" feels. The campaign is as good as any "CoD" campaign. "WWII" reintroduces a new story to the historical conflict that brings us back to Treyarch's World at War but with the new graphics and tuned movement system, it is one hell of an experience.

However, campaigns in "CoD" games are like the yams at Thanksgiving dinner. Some people like it but mostly everyone is in it for the turkey, the multiplayer in this case. "CoD" online has always been an experience and a pastime to me, so a return to the classic movement to a multiplayer had me excited from the get go. "WWII" doesn't fail in giving the community what it wanted since the end of "Black Ops III." While some aspects of the multiplayer are broken such as the always troublesome CTF game mode and the overpowered BAR which is what 95 percent of people use, it offers not much to new and old fans alike. Headquarters is a new idea that has been implemented in the game's multiplayer system which is like a social hangout for players. The new and innovative way to bring players together is what in my mind really elevates this game above most in the franchise. Sledgehammer answers many players' wishes while giving them some that they didn't know they wanted.

With its stunning campaign, insanely fun multiplayer, and return of the cult classic of Nazi Zombies, "Call of Duty: WWII" does not disappoint to bring fans back to the franchise that we love.

L.A. NOIRE



BY JARED PREBLE
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If you've been in the game scene for a while, odds are you were around when "LA Noire" hit the scene back in 2011. Now, six years later, a remastered edition has been released on all current consoles including the recently released Nintendo Switch. In a 1940s Los Angeles you play as Cole Phelps, an up-and-coming detective and USMC veteran, tasked with cleansing the thick grime of crime that coats your beloved city. Starting as a patrolman, you manage to solve a murder and land yourself a detective gig where you're put to the test. You make your way through a variety of cases, all influenced heavily by real crimes reported on by the media that year. The game also provides an open world Los Angeles, where, in addition to

driving to all your various crime scenes, you can find various collectibles and complete side quests. "LA Noire" is most notable for its interrogation mode where it utilizes MotionScan technology, one of the first games to feature this software, which allows developers to film actors from 32 different angles. This eliminates the need for animation, and provides the player model with a realistic rendition of a human face. This allows you to tell if your suspect is lying or telling the truth. Accusing a suspect falsely can result in you failing the case, and it's up to you and the information you gather throughout the game to decide what the right choice is. Players seeking a rich environment and fast-paced gameplay will appreciate the marvel that is "LA Noire," as well as anyone who appreciates the era from which "LA Noire" is built upon.