

SLEEK

THE DEFINITIVE OPINION ON ALL THINGS TECH

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JOHN RICCITIELLO

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PLUS+

25 GAMES YOU'VE HEARD
OF BUT NEVER PLAYED





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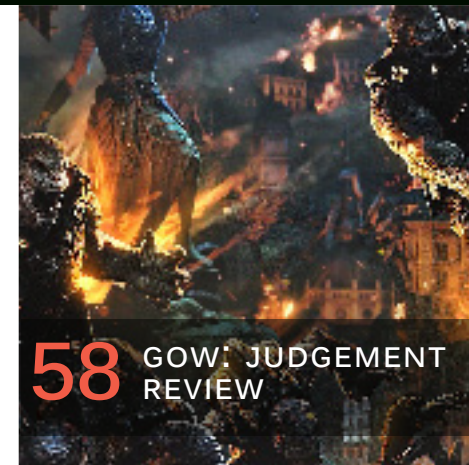
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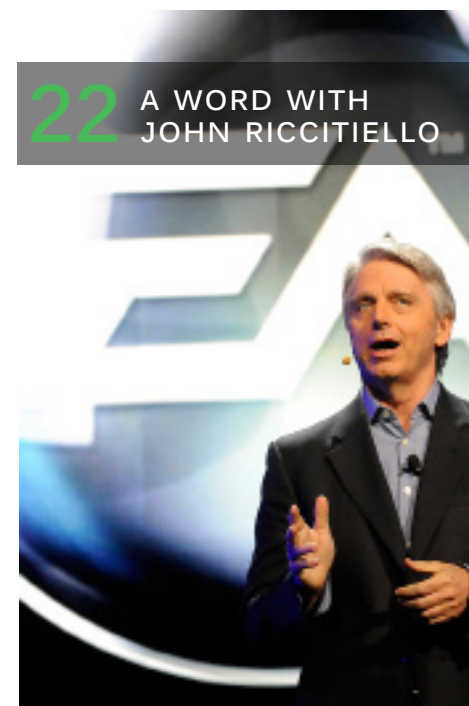
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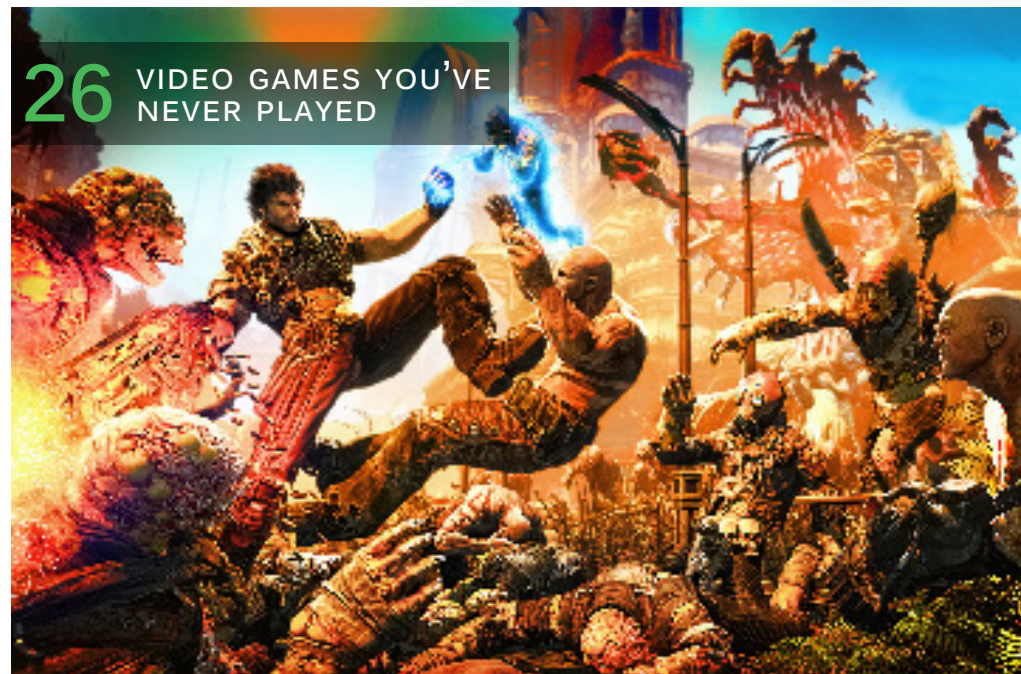
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Price: £10
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 Published by: EA
 Release Dates: PS3 - March 19th, PC & Xbox 360 - March 26th

GAME OVER MAN

IS *BATTLEFIELD 3'S* END GAME CONTENT WORTH PICKING UP?

At last, the final piece of downloadable content for EA and DICE's *Battlefield 3* is available online. It's been 17 months since *Battlefield 3* first dropped and this final DLC pack marks the end of the continued content and support that players have seen since release. Premium players will get this release included in their membership, but is it worth a purchase for those without *Battlefield Premium*?

End Game, as the content is suitably called, offers players the chance to wage war across 4 new maps, as well as 2 new game modes and an alternate version of the ever popular; Conquest. There are additional vehicles on these maps that have not been seen before, as well as new player assignments and a few new weapons. To start with, the maps are very well done, offering enough variety in play styles to keep things fresh from round to round, as well as looking beautiful. There are a range of

climates, from snow to desert, and flat to hilly, meaning that there is something for everyone, whether you want to sit back and snipe or run in guns blazing. There are also plenty of vehicles lying about to commandeer and nooks and crannies to explore. Each map is distinctly different from the others, meaning people will find their own favourites based on their play style. The new maps also offer a new take on the Conquest game mode, with a large drop ship flying across the sky whilst players battle for control of the flags below. Whichever team controls a specific flag also controls the drop ship, which can be used as a spawn point for both infantry and APCs. This allows players to parachute into the majority of the map, opening new ways to attack and defend objectives as well as creating choke points as players fight over certain areas. The ability to drop in using an APC also creates a unique approach to the action, with nothing more terrifying than a

full APC landing 10 feet in front of you. The new game modes added with this pack are Capture the Flag and Air Superiority. CTF, offers up a standard multiplayer affair with a few unique *Battlefield* twists but can currently only be played on these new maps, presumably due to balancing issues. Unlike usual CTF affairs, players must hang around the flag for a period of time before it is returned

to the defending team. This makes returning the flag a much more tactical move, with teamwork being required to keep control of the match. However, it is the much requested Air

Superiority that fans have been yearning for that takes centre stage. In this dog fighting mode, the two teams duke it out in the sky, racing to deplete the other team's tickets first. This creates some hectic battles, with bullets, rockets and flares lighting up every inch of sky. Think *Top Gun* crossed with the space battles from *Star Wars* and you're about there. Offering up even more bang for your buck, the regular ground battles have been upgraded with some new vehicles. From the sluggish mobile anti air battery to the nimble motorbike, the new vehicles have something for all play styles. In typical *Battlefield* style, all of the new vehicles have multiple player slots, having room for at least a driver and passenger. Now more than ever, the *Battlefield* is balanced. The new AA means that dominant jets are now less effective, and the speed of the bikes means that players can more easily get past tanks. Bad for those players that would sit in a tank or jet or all game, good for everyone else.

“ TOP GUN
 CROSSED WITH
 STAR WARS ”



GREAT ESCAPE

The new maps bring a new game mode; Capture the Flag. An FPS standard in multiplayer games that now has the *Battlefield* series' own unique twist on things. Picking up the flag as an attacker follows all the traditional conventions, however, defending your own flag sees some changes. A player must stay near the flag to return it, rather than just touch it. This creates rather frantic scrambles from defenders trying to protect their flag, as the only way to prevent a capture is to get up close and personal. However, in typical *Battlefield* style, flag carriers can jump into vehicles for protection and speed, creating exhilarating chases across the maps. Nothing feels better than capturing a flag after being driven across the map by your buddy on a motorbike.



The only issue with the new pack is that it again causes diversions in the already spread thin player base. Those without the content obviously are left on the older maps while everyone else will be playing these. The number of new map packs has meant that there are a number of players only playing certain DLC content which has meant that there are only the more popular maps and modes being played online.

While the gameplay isn't exactly new, the new content helps keep the game fresh and adds more things for players to do. Those expecting something new should look elsewhere, as this is purely an extension to the already huge multiplayer experience. Those bored of current maps and modes will find this enjoyable, as each mode and area opens up a huge amount of game time for players.

While some may question the steep asking price, people must be reminded of the costs involved with bringing in new DLC, especially with the sheer quantity and quality that the *Battlefield* series has had. In the same period of time, other online heavy shooters would have created a new game for all the content, effectively doubling costs for consumers. Each map in this pack is huge, with many hours of gameplay available before things get stale. Add in the new game modes and player assignments and you've got a lot of new content for not what seems like a bargain. Regular players will easily get their money's worth from this pack, although for the casual gamer, just sticking with the standard multiplayer is probably the best option. ■



Right: The new conquest maps see the addition of a huge dropship, allowing players and vehicles to parachute into the map.



Left: Each class has been given a bunch of new weapons to play around with.



Right: The maps are varied in their terrain. From flat deserts to hilly fields and even snow covered peaks.

SLEEK VERDICT

This final piece of DLC is a good send off for an outstanding game that has stuck around much longer than the majority of online shooters. There is plenty of new content to justify the asking price, with maps, guns and game modes enticing players back to the game. Whilst casual players can give this a miss, any regular Battlefield players will gain a lot of enjoyment from this release. A solid piece of gaming.

