

Video Game Reviews:

New Games, High Expectations

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While Hollywood ends its Summer blockbuster streak of sequels and big action flicks, the gaming industry enters its boom and sequel season with the release of Halo 3 on September.

By now, undoubtedly, you, your friends, and even non-gamers know how massive the Halo franchise is. The third installment alone brought in over 170 million dollars in the first day alone. Of course, the slew of stellar reviews are in from the regular magazines and internet sites. If the market says anything, then Halo is clearly the best game ever.

However, whilst I recommend this game over any of the other Halo games, it still has a share of gripes and problems.

First, the storyline. It does finish the war between the dregs of humanity and the Covenant, etc. But can the story hold itself up under close scrutiny? Yes, this being one of the few times in the gaming world, the story of Halo 3 works, and does manage to surprise, without being to unpredictable.

However, the characters need work. Through the cast of well-voiced characters, we see the typical cast of gung-ho males and females who always become weak at the fighting moment. Of course Master Chief has to drop down to save them all.

The story aside the main draw of the game should be, and definitely is, the online multiplayer. I was never a big fan of Halo 2's multiplayer, it felt unbalanced and clunky, but Halo 3's vastly improved system over Xbox Live was clearly receptive to fan complaints.

Which brings me to the best part about the game. Obviously the storyline is decent, and the multiplayer, which brings the standard assortment of gametypes (Deathmatch-style, Capture-the-Flag, etc), but the most fantastic part of Halo is the company behind it.



In a year of sequels, Microsoft and Bungie's Masterchief of the Halo franchise makes his last stand Halo 3.

You get this unrivaled sense of community with Bungie, as they appear to be open to the problems found/created by the gamers. The first week of online gameplay many gamers found that one style of online play would take precedence over another. Gamers couldn't do much about, as the game decided this aspect randomly, but after a few days this nuisance was cleared up.

They didn't really have to because the game would've sold either way, but the inclusion of features like unlockable armors and a skill ranking system, plus their quick problem solving beats in the fact that they want people to play this game.

My biggest problem lies with the graphics, and whilst it is unfair to judge the quality of a product on its aesthetic value, Halo 3 is the flagship game of the Xbox 360. The game is pretty, though, but I was expecting gorgeous from the system's biggest game.

Should you buy it? You probably already did, so let's take a look at a much heftier investment: Guitar Hero 3.

Running at about \$100, is the 3 installment of the veritable Guitar Hero series worth the money?

Yes, yes it is. (I speak only for the Xbox 360 version)

But the game mechanics haven't

changed much, so let's take a look at the new.

The wireless Gibson is fantastic. It addresses all the problems that I had with the Guitar Hero 2's controller. The Gibson's strum bar is far quieter than GH2's and the controller itself feels well-built in general. The buttons are smoother as well. Also the bad boy is wireless, which makes it much less likely for those of who like to rock

out during the game to accidentally pull the cord out effectively ruining the momentum of the song.

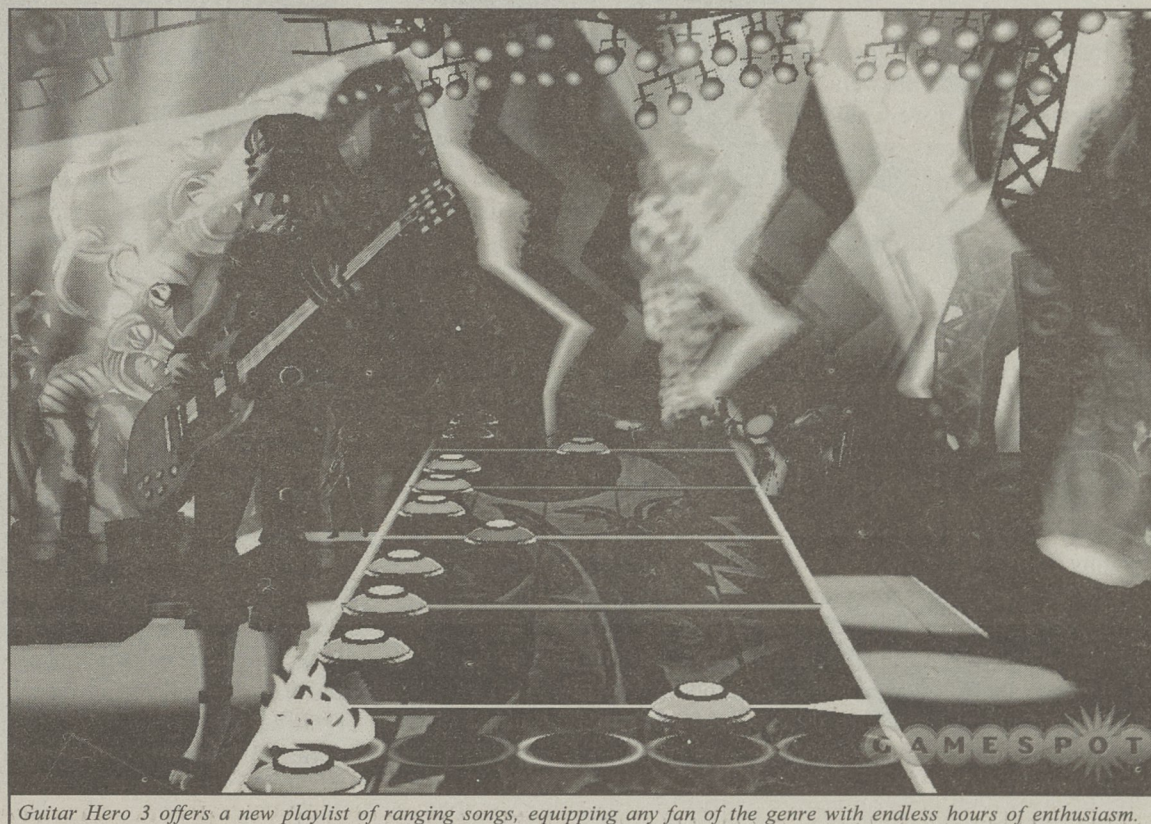
The only problem with the controller, which seems to be the norm for any new product nowadays, is the glossy fingerprint attracting external shell. The sexy curvy, controller feels ruined whenever you get a bit of your filthy hand grease on it.

Next, we have the online multiplayer, which alone makes the game worth it. It is the first time for the GH series to have multiplayer, and the foray into it is well worth the price. The tracklist this time around is more mainstream, but still doesn't forget its underground roots.

But most people will be able to recognize the tracklist, which is somewhat unfortunate because GH and GH2 really did help to open my ears to some bands I'd never heard before.

The only problem on my end is really the 'Career' mode. It remains relatively unchanged except for the entertaining animations in between each set. The boss battles aren't spectacular, and I myself didn't particularly enjoy them.

So, what should you buy this season? If you want something wholly different and still haven't tried the series yet, save up for Guitar Hero 3. If you want a well polished game that improves slightly on a tried and true shooter formula, then go for Halo 3 if you don't already own it. Here's me waiting for the next big thing: Call of Duty 4: Modern Combat.



Guitar Hero 3 offers a new playlist of ranging songs, equipping any fan of the genre with endless hours of enthusiasm.