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TOP TEN GIRLS of 2013

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of The Year

GAMES REVIEWED

ASSASSIN'S
CREED IV
BLACK FLAG

DEAD RISING 3



**Bruce
Springsteen**
High Hopes



B.O.B
Underground Luxury

*Nikki
Leigh*
RUKUS Girl
of The Year



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TOP TEN GIRLS

The Reader's Choice

TOP TEN GIRLS OF 2013



RUKUS magazine celebrates its 5th year by giving our readers another chance to vote for the Top Ten Girls of 2013 and our RUKUS Girl of The Year for 2014. Well, the votes have been tallied and our readers did not disappoint as you will see. We would like to say, "Thank You" to everyone who has supported us throughout the years and look forward to having you as a loyal reader for many years to come. Enjoy the issue and keep it RUKUS.



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Catherine Gontran
Cover Model, November

Photograph by Andrew Gates
Make-up and Hair by Catherine Gontran

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THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE





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TOP TEN GIRLS
The Reader's Choice





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Melyssa Grace
Featured Model, November

Photography by Andrew Gates
Make-up and Hair by Alisha Baijounas

ALL ACCESS

The Latest Albums Reviewed

Is The BOSS Back?

Written by Silas Valentino

You could make the claim that *High Hopes*, Bruce Springsteen's 18th studio record, came together because of Tony Soprano. While touring in Australia last March, Springsteen and the E Street Band were joined by Rage Against the Machine/Audioslave guitarist Tom Morello, who was filling in for E Street staple guitarist Steven Van Zandt. (Little Steven was out shooting for his show *Lilyhammer*, which has deep root inspiration from *The Sopranos*.)

While Morello was in the guitarist seat, he suggested they play Tim Scott McConnell's "High Hopes," a track the band did back in the 1990's. After tearing up shows with the electrifying "High Hopes," Springsteen felt that he had more than enough covers, outtakes and rerecorded songs to constitute for an album. "This is music I always felt needed to be released," Springsteen said in a statement on his website.

For the E Street Band, the Boss never takes a vacation. Springsteen must be restless after consistently releasing new albums every two to three years but neither the work ethic nor 64-year age seems to slow him down. The music still sounds strong and in charge but even the robust can eventually go stale. Since 2002's *The Rising*, Springsteen's music has shifted into arena-ready power anthems where you can close your eyes and visualize his dark collard shirt swaying freely without the top buttons buttoned. His themes still consist of blue collard people living in a bruised America filled with hopeful Americans.

"High Hopes" rattles in as the album opener and it's quite a pleasant surprise—but you have to remember that Springsteen has already released the same track in 1995 on the *Blood Brothers EP*. This is just the same song revamped, but it works, mainly due to the strong presence and heavy momentum of Tom Morello. "Tom and his guitar became my muse, pushing the rest of this project to another level. Thanks for the inspiration, Tom." Springsteen said in the same statement.

Morello plays on eight of the 12 tracks and his tenacious guitar playing is what truly drives this album away from a shabby shelf cleaner into a satisfying early-year record. "The Ghost of Tom Joad" was covered by Morello's Rage Against the Machine but it sounds best when it comes from the belly of the boss. Morello really shines on "Harry's Place" where his signature screeching guitar licks are splattered all over the track and fills in the empty spots.

The album's standout is "Hunter of Invisible Game." Ignore the simple title, this track sports an effective orchestral hook that draws you in as Springsteen tells the tale he sings best: life as an underappreciated loser.

The best cover on the record, "Dream Baby Dream" begins with a somber accordion chord progression before the Boss comes in doing his best low-voice James Dean vocals. "Dream Baby Dream" was written by the influential punk group Suicide and the original version is a stripped-down, late night walk home alone. But Bruce turns it from a downer looking down into a dreamer looking up—and isn't that the reason why we love him?

Artist: Bruce Springsteen

Album: High Hopes

Website: bruce.springsteen.net

★★★★★

Label: Columbia

Release Date: January 14, 2013



ALL ACCESS
The Album Reviews Cont'd



Cream of the Crop

Photo by Hannibal Matthews
Written by Jeremy Weeden

Atlanta rapper B.o.B has had plenty of previous success but his last album was more pop than hip-hop and B.o.B took some criticism from some corners. With his third album, *Underground Luxury*, B.o.B is looking to balance his different musical styles. The album is tinted with all of B.o.B.'s musical influences from rap and soul to electronica and rock. The result is an appealing, easy to listen to album with a wide variety of songs.

The first song "All I Want" is a slow grooving song that finds B.o.B rapping and singing about the different things he wants—mainly women and money. "One Day" is a bass heavy, piano laden song about B.o.B's dreams before he made it big. He raps about the things he and his family used to want when he was growing up. At the end of the song B.o.B speaks about growing up poor with no refrigerator, heat or AC, but that instead of feeling sorry for himself, he used it as motivation to get out of poverty and never have to go back.

"Throwback" featuring Chris Brown features an electronica styled synth beat and is definitely a possible future single. The vocal sample and the drums go together seamlessly with the synthesizer to perfectly showcase B.O.B's producing skills.

Things relax a bit with "Back Me Up" a bass heavy, slow melodic song that catches B.o.B boasting about his lyrical prowess with rhymes like "They was hopin I'd probably fall off, right/But all I feel was them haters on my back yeah/ I ain't even got no genre/But this ganja gives contact, yeah/Well how the hell they gone call us the rap game when most of yall niggas can't rap/Most of yall niggas so whack/Most of yall ain't got, most of yall ain't got no swag/Most of yall bad."

B.o.B has obviously not forgotten where his biggest successes have come from as "Coastline" is more of a pop oriented song in the vein of "Airplanes" or "So Good." B.o.B sings the chorus and raps the verses. This song sounds like a Top 40 hit should he choose to release it as a single.

No doubt everyone has heard the bouncy "Headband" featuring 2 Chainz. This song, the album's second single is perfect for the clubs and the radio. 2 Chainz comes with his trademark comedic flow with lines like "Chain hang to my ding-a-ling/Chain hang, chain hang to my ding-a-ling/To do a threesome you gotta intervene/Her legs so sexy when I'm in-between."

Underground Luxury takes a more serious turn with "John Doe" which features Priscilla and is about alcoholism and its effects on people and those around them. B.o.B paints the perfect picture of a closet alcoholic through lyrics like "Without it, it's just harder to function at times/You race to the bottom of every single bottle as if there was someone or something to find/You're struggling in your mind/And you tell yourself lie after lie/Till you get to the point where it's no longer private/People that you work with noticed the signs/When you walk in the room it gets noticeably quiet/So you break up the silence, you say you've been at the gym/But the way that you look, you can't blame on the diet/So what you hiding?"

"Cranberry Moonwalk" is B.o.B's dedication to quality, high-grade marijuana fresh out of the jar. This is a nice smooth song with the beats switching from an old school R&B groove over the chorus to a more traditional beat for B.o.B's verses.

Overall, *Underground Luxury* is a well-put together album that fans of B.o.B will certainly enjoy. The album showcases B.o.B's many talents without coming across as forced. B.o.B himself produced the majority of the album and it shows with the way he flows naturally over each track. *Underground Luxury* is definitely worth a listen as almost everyone is sure to find a few songs they enjoy.

Artist: B.O.B

Album: Underground Luxury

Website: bobatl.com

★★★★★

Label: Grand Hustle/Atlantic

Release Date: December 17, 2013

ALL ACCESS SPOTLIGHT

Written by Samuel Wendel

Facebook.com/e40



E-40, *The Block Brochure: Welcome To the Soil, Pt. 4, 5, & 6*

The word "workmanlike" doesn't even begin to describe Bay Area hip-hop legend E-40. He released three full-length albums in 2012 alone, *The Block Brochure: Welcome To the Soil Pt. 1, 2, & 3*, and now he's followed it up in 2013 with parts 4, 5, and 6. And these aren't throwaways and half-finished demos; his latest albums do not suffer from diminishing returns. *Pt. 4, 5, and 6* are jam-packed with meticulously produced, imaginative, and consistently entertaining hip-hop tracks featuring a wide array of guest appearances from big names like Rick Ross, 2 Chainz, Danny Brown, and T.I. E-40's delivery is vicious and crisp throughout, and despite the producing three albums in one year, nearly all the tracks sound fresh and burst with energy. E-40 fans should already be well acquainted with his consistent mastery of the hip-hop genre, but now, even at 46 years old he doesn't sound like he's ready to fade away; if anything he sounds like he's still ahead of the curve. All hip-hop fans should find something in *The Block Brochures* that'll keep them entertained.

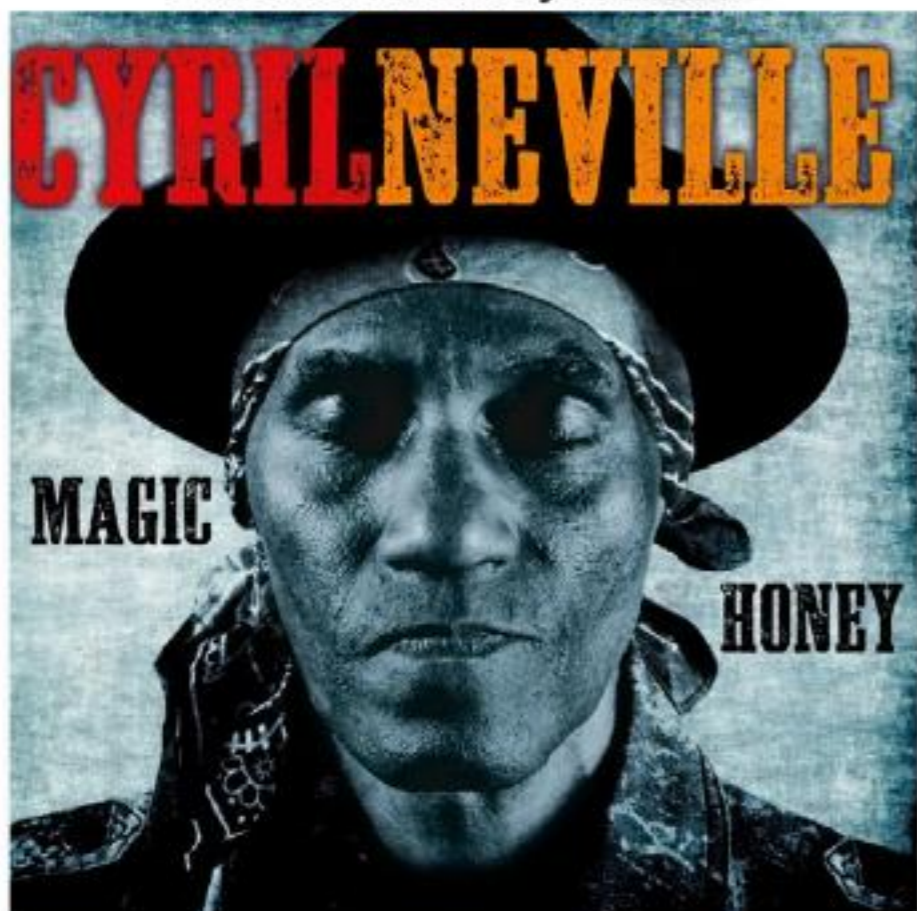
Facebook.com/PopEvil



Pop Evil, *Onyx*

Pop Evil, a group of hard rockers from Western Michigan, barrel ahead unflinchingly on their third full-length album, *Onyx*. Across 12 tightly produced tracks, Pop Evil settle themselves further into the post-grunge/ heavy rock/rap arena that's cozily occupied by groups like Nickelback, Creed, Linkin Park, and others have carved out since the late 1990s. Pop Evil's songs sound big. They surge with a boastful and powerful swagger on nearly every track. Pop Evil sound like it's demanding to have its music included on waves of heavy rock radio. Lead single "Trenches" is a frenetic and bombastic punch of hard rock that should please old fans and catch the attention of news one. At times the group dips their toes into the ballad-zone, threatening to derail some of their momentum, but like their peers they dive into them with a strange combination of arrogance and angst, and it's not hard to imagine them strutting forcefully around the stage as they belt out the lyrics over waves of power chords. Pop Evil don't break any new ground on *Onyx*, as a group or musically, but with the attitude and enthusiasm with which they dive head first into their material their old fans and heavy rock fans in general shouldn't care too much.

Facebook.com/CyrilNeville



Cyril Neville, *Magic Honey*

On his fourth solo album, entitled *Magic Honey*, Cyril Neville churns out a respectable collection of songs that incorporate everything from jazz, R&B, to funk. But at its core, this album is a straight and dirty blues album. Neville, who is practically an institution in the New Orleans' music scene, pulls out all the stops on *Honey*. Neville powerfully growls his way through funky blues tracks like "Blues is the Truth" and "Swamp Funk" but also lets some guitar muscle fly on "Something's Got A Hold of Me" and "Still Going Down Today." And to up the ante, Neville and company cover the Canadian prog-rock band Rush's "Working Man" with a bluesy swagger that makes it sound all their own. Neville is the star of the show on *Honey*, but he's also backed by a gifted cast of backing musicians who more than hold their own, and there's even an appearance from another New Orleans legend: Dr. John. With *Magic Honey*, Neville delivers a straightforward and entertaining pack of old fashioned New Orleans tinged blues-rock that showcase a veteran musician doing what he does best.

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TOP TEN GIRLS
The Reader's Choice





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Phoenix Stanna
Featured Model, June

TOP TEN GIRLS
The Reader's Choice





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Jamie Centers
Featured Model, March

TOP TEN GIRLS
THE BEST OF 2014





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Nina Carla
Featured Model, February

LIVE & LOUD

The Live Show Reviews

Best of 2013

Photos by Nicolas Bates

Written by Dan Sinclair

Ladies and gentlemen, please congratulate The El Rey Theatre. It easily walks away with the Venue Most Attended award (if such an award actually existed) with a whopping six *Live & Loud* concerts this year. Also, while we're discussing numbers, oddly enough, I attended shows on the 18th of the month four different times last year. Coincidentally, 18 is also the number of times I uttered the phrases "What?!" and "I really need to invest in ear plugs" within 18 seconds of each other. 2013 was a great year in music.

I know what you're thinking. Seriously, dude, if 2013 was so great, what were the five best shows you saw? Funny you should ask. Here they are:



5) Femi Kuti and the Positive Force,
January 18th, El Rey Theatre, Los Angeles

In all honesty, I wasn't really familiar with Femi Kuti prior to this, which is all the more reason this show had to go in the top five. For someone to know exactly zero of the songs played and have such a memorable concert-going experience, speaks all the truth you need about just how great this man, and his Positive Force really are. Though Femi himself was about 51 at the time of the show, you'd never have known it by his youthful energy as he danced around the stage, directing the numerous musicians and dancers up there with him. It was impossible to not only get infected with the beautiful music being played, but simultaneously get swallowed whole by the overwhelming force of positive energy shooting out all over the El Rey that night. If you ever get a chance to see Femi Kuti, fucking go!

4) The Specials,
March 18th, Club Nokia, Los Angeles

30 fucking years. Yes, it had been 30 whole years since The Specials had played in the city of Los Angeles, so how could I not put the legendary musicians as one of the best of 2013? It was so cool to see the age range in fans from the "barely legals" to the "barely-still-livings." There wasn't a still set of feet in the entire club from the beginning of "Do the Dog" to the end of "Guns of Navarone." And if it wasn't enough just to witness this great moment in music history, Terry Hall also ripped on Ben Affleck and *Argo*. Pretty much made my night. Not sure why some people booed the fact that "Hey Little Rich Girl" was Amy Winehouse's favorite Specials tune. Guess that even at the best of times, the worst of people can still sneak in. All in all, one of the best times I ever had at a show. Also, I saw Dexter Holland at the bar and he didn't kick my ass for my review of his last album, so that was cool.



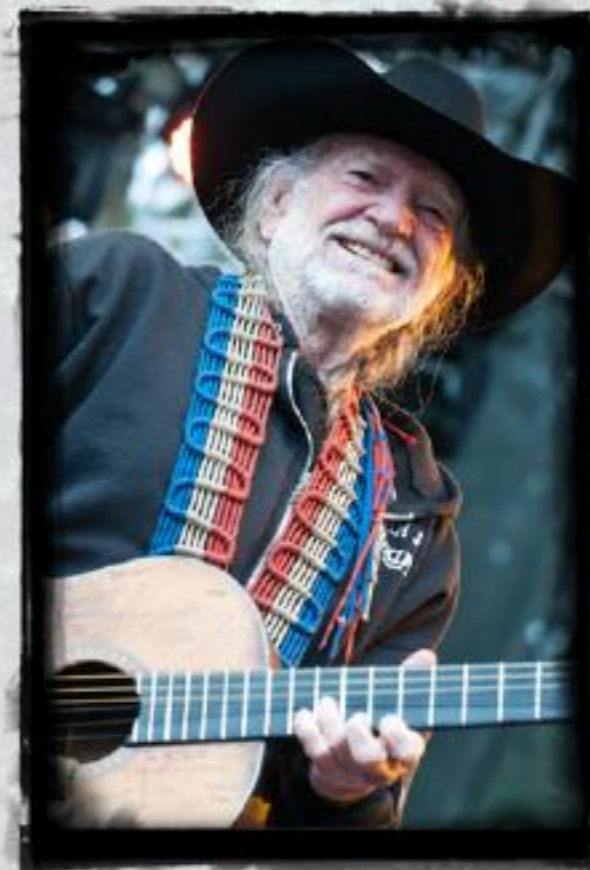
3) Deltron 3030,
November 24th, Fonda Theatre, Los Angeles

The simple fact that Deltron 3030 was putting out their first album in 13 years, covering them live would've already been an honor, but when a 16-piece orchestra backs the coolest hip-hop trio from the future? Well that, my fellow music lovers, equals a unique, borderline spiritual experience one can only be so lucky to witness. I mean, Del Tha Funkée Homosapien spitting the flow over Kid Koala's hypnotic beats as Dan the Automator conducts guitars and bass and drums and keyboards and horns and strings and back-up vocals. My ears and eyes made passionate love together all night long. You wish you were there. Even Joseph Gordon Levitt was in the house to talk about smoking weed and doing his part for "Stardate." Where the fuck were you, Los Angeles, huh? At home being jealous, that's where.



2) Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers,
June 11th, Fonda Theatre, Los Angeles

When Nick told me that Tom Petty's people had granted us permission to cover them on the small stage, I was like, "Bullshit." But it wasn't bullshit. It wasn't bullshit at all. It was real. Though originally from Florida, the band now considers L.A. their home and rewarded their hometown fans by playing six intimate shows in a row. And I was one of those lucky mofos that got to be there! Okay, sure, maybe at first I wished Mr. Petty had played a couple more of his hits that we all love so much, but it was understandable. It was the final night and it was time for the Heartbreakers to cover every nook and cranny of the catalogue. I get it. Plus, in reality, that means that not only did I get to see this big-time arena band playing in the small-time club setting, I also got to see them play all the songs that they never play! Truly a one-of-a-kind time, and I can't complain about that.



1) Outside Lands 2013,
August 9-11, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco

Sets by Paul McCartney, Willie Nelson, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Nine Inch Nails, The National, Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Trombone Shorty, Kurt Vile, Dawes, Bombino, Wavves, Band of Horses, The Tallest Man on Earth... uh, probably some others, too, all in one weekend with cold beer, delicious food, live art work, interesting people, and in one of the coolest cities in the entire United States of America? This was not only my pick for best show of 2013, it was also one of the best weekends of my life. I mean, I had never seen a live Beatle before, Bombino came all the way from Niger and Karen O shoved a microphone down her pants! If you claim to have had a better weekend this year, you're a liar... or maybe you just get out more often than I do. But either way, Outside Lands was amazing and I really hope to get back there in 2014!

And remember, kids, keep reading your RUKUS!

RM

TOP TEN GIRLS
The Reader's Choice





3

Arley Elizabeth
Featured Model, February

TOP TEN GIRLS
THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE





2

Jennifer Gonzalez
Featured Model, March

Photography by Andrew Gates
Make-up and Hair by Kimberly Hill



**Congratulations Nikki Leigh,
2014 RUKUS Girl of The Year.**



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Nikki Leigh
Cover Model, February

Girl of The Year
The Reader's Choice





1

Nikki Leigh
Cover Model, February

GAME ON

The Latest Games Reviewed

Treasure Grab

Written by Josh Schilling

Another year, another Assassin's Creed game. Although this time, instead of a roguish crusader, or a roguish renaissance dude, or a roguish Native American, you get to be an oxymoronic roguish pirate. You are Edward Kenway this time, a pirate that has some pretty good assassin-like skills and you eventually end up being an actual member of the Assassin Order after infiltrating the nasty Templars. All of this is done through the ancestral genetic memories in the present-day Abstergo Entertainment Company as they try to further their Templar goals. Then goats fly down from the heavens in their fiery glory to usurp the ancient-modern day rule from the Slavic ice limbo-dancers that have enslaved the dark moon of Europa.

I'm joking, of course, about the last part and it might sound like I hated this game, but I didn't. I'm just a little tired of the franchise as a whole. However, this game has quite a few interesting things that are pretty enjoyable. I've always loved me a good open world game, and Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag has a wonderfully rich and diverse area to explore and find adventure. This game takes place during the Golden Age of piracy in the Caribbean, and you are the captain of a ship that gets to traverse the extremely large game world. The ship-based combat is borrowed from what many believe was the top aspect of the previous Assassin's Creed game and there are a ton of collectible items that you can use to customize your character and your vessel. Mix that in with the typical assassin-type quests that harken from the previous titles and you've got this gist of this game.

One of the things I truly like about the Assassin's Creed franchise are the historical aspects. These games take you to places that you rarely see in video games and introduces actual people from these eras that you get to interact with. Black Flag adds to that by bringing in Blackbeard, Mary Read, Stede Bonnet, Anne Bonny and quite a few other historical figures. This game in particular does a good job in weaving the real characters with the fictional ones, and might even get some of the curious fanbase to wiki a name or two.

What it boils down to is that Black Flag lacks anything that would set it apart in the gaming world. I've experienced better stories, I've witnessed better scene rendering, and I've played games with better combat styles. Not only that, but this game gives you character modeling that looks like a bunch of Barbie dolls that have had their teeth under a UV ray for too long, and then hands you story inconsistencies that make you go question the plot. But hey, at least there are some clunky mechanics and an uninteresting story to go along with the rest of the game aspects that you played in last year's game. And you get to be a pirate!

Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag feels like a cash grab. It takes advantage of a trendy motif and pairs it with a popular franchise. What this game actually needed was time to breathe. It needed to distance itself a little from its disappointing predecessor, and refine the things that made it more popular in the first place. This is not a franchise that needs to be an annual event like Call of Duty or Madden. These game designers need to build some urge from us gamers by letting us stew upon the qualities and uniqueness of the Assassin's Creed world for a couple of years, rather than bombard us with unfinished monotony year after year. When they should try to immerse us in a gaming experience, instead it just feels like they are flicking water in our collective faces.

Game Title: Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag
Producer: Ubisoft
Platform: Xbox One, PS4, Xbox360, PS3, PC, Wii U
Website: assassinscreed.ubi.com

★★★★★

Ratings: Mature

Genre: Action-Adventure

Release Date: October 29, 2013



ASSASSIN'S
—CREED IV—
BLACK FLAG

GAME ON

The Game Reviews COND'T'D



DEADRISING 3

From Your Grave

Written by Jesse Seilhan

Dead Rising is a franchise that pretty much ran its course within two releases. The zombie-infested mall spilled out into a casino strip and after playing as the gritty Frank West and loving father Chuck Greene, it seemed as if this series was as dead as the millions of corpses left in their wake. But when Microsoft needed a big third-party game to debut on their brand new shiny Xbox One console, they helped Capcom Vancouver along by publishing Dead Rising 3 and bringing something different to the console wars. With the power of a new machine, the developers were able to do things that prior iterations could not to really bring the genre to the next generation. But it takes more than just horsepower to make a successful product and Capcom took the time and energy to make sure this game worked.

The story follows Nick Ramos, a mechanic in Los Perdidos that is attempting to escape a zombie outbreak and certain death as the government is set to destroy the city in seven days. This game takes place a decade after the second one, so zombies are just a normal part of life, with medicine and weapons created specifically to deal with the shambling antagonists. The city is larger than either area from the first two and no loading is required to venture through any corner of the four neighborhoods within the game. Most buildings can be scaled and nearly as many can be entered, with specific items, weapons, and outfits waiting for you. Mission structure remains about the same, tasking you with finding survivors and bring them back to safehouses while also fighting over-the-top bosses to move the story further. The plot gets weird with each twist and turn, but the final chapter payoff is worth the dozen or so hours it will take to finish.

Dead Rising's patented wacky nature has been toned down a bit this go-around, but the costumes are back and some of them offer unique attacks and other bonuses. Weaponry is also crazy as usual, but the new wrinkle of being able to combine weapons on the fly without the need of a bench is a godsend. The same goes for the game's new vehicle combos that lead to awesome creations like a motorcycle/steamroller hybrid that, of course, shoots fire. There are over a hundred different things to create and thousands of things to wield on their own, so the combat never feels boring. While slogging through thousands of zombies can sound like a grind, being able to use something different and cool each time you take a swing breaks up the monotony. Online co-op is back and much improved, allowing players to choose what style of buddy smashing they are looking for, whether it's hunting down all the collectables or just pushing through the story.

The biggest addition to the game is the skill tree. Prior games pushed players down a linear path, upgrading specific metrics with each new level, but DR3 lets players put skill points into a variety of things, drastically changing the play style from person to person. Those that love vehicles will want them to handle crowds easier and those interested in melee combat will want to hold stronger items for longer. Even when the level cap has been hit at 50, there is still so much more to do and upgrade, and replaying prior chapters with an improved Nick makes exploring the world pretty engaging. While the game hits some technical snares when the action gets too intense, this is the most next-gen of any launch title on either new console. The things you do and see couldn't possibly be made on last decade's hardware and while the game is mostly just refinement from prior formulas, Capcom finally made the most successful and accessible Dead Rising game yet. If you picked up an Xbox One recently or got one for the holidays, make sure you skip the crappy ports and rehashed sports game and go for a real winner in this violent thrill ride.

Game Title: Dead Rising 3

Producer: Microsoft

Platform: Xbox One

Website: capcom.com

★★★★★

Ratings: Mature

Genre: Action-Adventure

Release Date: November 22, 2013



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