

HARDWARE: PC BUILDING WITH A 10 000 CZK BUDGET

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COOLDOWN

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2 games free and a Witcher wallet for the fastest!

30 GAMING TIPS OF 2023 FOR YOUR SPARE
WINTER TIME

Oldschool Czech RTS

Madfinger Games comes to PC

Broken Sword goes back in time

Side project of Stronghold devs



NEW ARC LINE

CZECH-UKRAINIAN STEAMPUNK COMBINES SCIENCE WITH MAGIC

COOLDOWN #7

12/23

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Dear readers,



2023 has flown by and we certainly can't complain that there is no game to play. There is, but with time it's more complicated. At least for me. And since I have at least a thousand unplayed games, I've decided to include the thirty best games I could find that you might miss as the theme of the latest Cooldown. If you don't want to struggle through the stacks of reviews, you have the opportunity to take a peek at the most interesting titles from both the biggest and the smallest studios.

In an interview with the creative director of the Czech-Ukrainian studio Dreamate, we present an interesting steampunk RPG New Arc Line, which should be released within the next year.

In the Hardware section, we try the almost impossible, namely to build a PC under 10 000 CZK not only for office work, but also for simple gaming.

The first year is almost over, but we're not done, we'll meet again next time, so enjoy the holidays, good health and take care! Lest I forget, somewhere inside you'll find two keys, one great indie game and one huge hit!

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Realistic RTS Magna Regna shows the Great Moravian Empire



Czech Hammer Games has released two games so far, and both are in early access. Transport Services presents a simple tycoon and World of Castles is a building strategy about building castles. Both games are getting mixed reviews on Steam, and their social networks aren't exactly buzzing either. The studio is currently working on the Czech historical RTS Magna Regna, which is supposed to take players through the entire Middle Ages.

Great Kingdoms

Although the name suggests a vast domain, the beginnings are much more modest. The basic Skirmish game mode starts in the 7th century, and the player only gets a lone hillfort and a handful of inhabitants. As in classics such as

Age of Empires, the main task in both single and multiplayer is the collection of raw materials, the training of new units and the gradual research of new technologies, thanks to which the fortress can gradually grow into a castle, surrounded by a walled city. Of course, players must beware of conquerors. Magna Regna will also feature a story campaign that serves to introduce the game and its mechanics to new players, but at the same time it will offer real historical battles and stories of ancient rulers of the 7th and 16th centuries.

More strategy, less clicking

The game interface is intended to help casual players with planning construction, research or recruiting units. The authors want to differentiate themselves from classic

strategies, where the one who clicked everything fastest won, and they deliberately slow down the pace of the game.

Progress is divided into three periods - the early Middle Ages, designated as the "dark age", the high Middle Ages, the "golden age" and the late Middle Ages. Through research, the fort gradually moves towards the next historical stage, but if the player progresses a period further, all unexplored technologies of the previous era remain locked.

The lord will have the task of ensuring a sufficient supply of the five basic raw materials, which are food, wood, stone, iron and gold. The sixth "raw material" is people or in other words available population suitable for training into figh-



ters. Each period has a relatively low population limit of villagers, which should contribute to a slower pace of play and to prevent some players from "running away" from their opponents too much.

New units could be trained only in groups, and their number will be strongly limited by the population. This principle will reduce the number of clicks and simplify the management of already recruited units. Compared to competing Manor Lords, the developers focus more on strategy and combat than on managing your own village.

The authors promise maxi-

mum historical accuracy not only in the appearance of the units and buildings, but also in the historical setting. The game starts in 7th century in Great Moravia, and during the game it will be possible to meet real historical rulers, whose favor will give players unique bonuses. Helping a certain ruler to get the throne has an impact on relations with neighbors and can also change the pace of the game.

The game will feature a robust map editor that will make it possible to create additional scenarios. Integration with Steam Workshop for easier implementation of user content is also included. The last trailer

was created in the ingame editor, but we have to admit that it does not look very representative due to the poor animations. As a campaign editor demo, though, it's impressive.

Magna Regna will be released with English dubbing first in early access towards the end of 2024. The release of the full game is not yet in sight. We wish Hammer Games the best of luck, making it their first completed game.

But let's keep in mind that the recent Hammer Games creations are still in Early access (and they probably stay that way) due to practically finished development and a lack of money. One title (Runaway Train) highlighted on the official web even forwards users to a non-existent Steam page, which doesn't look professional. Hopefully Magna Regna will have a brighter future and will become the first truly finished game by the small Czech team from the city of Pardubice.

Good luck to you, guys!



Marcel Mojžiš

Madfinger Games presented their first game for PC



Brno-based Madfinger Games was founded in 2010, but before that the studio members worked on titles such as Mafia, Vietcong or Hidden & Dangerous 2. Madfinger became famous worldwide as a mobile game developer, especially thanks to their 2011 Shadowgun and the first-person zombie shooter Dead Trigger, which it came out a year later. Until now, the studio used Unity engine, but with the transition to a major gaming platform, they also changed the engine, their new FPS will be powered by Unreal Engine 5!

The first announcement of a major new game came during a press release in January 2022. CEO Marek Rabas said they were switching to a new engine to compete with the best games on the market, but the studio went silent for almost two years. In November of this year, the developers served up the first images and a trailer. The studio's roots cannot be denied in Gray Zone Warfare. The trailer and the first screenshots immediately resembles the jungle of the Vietcong, the emphasis on realism is similar to Bohemia

Interactive's Arma series. However, the game will not be just a recycled version of old Czech military simulations.

Gray Zone Warfare is supposed to be a hardcore tactical military simulation based on multiplayer battles between three factions and computer-controlled NPCs. The Steam description doesn't mention any singleplayer option at all.

"Grey Zone Warfare is an immersive tactical FPS with the utmost focus on realism. Join a private military company and roam the vast open world alone or in a squad. Adapt to your surroundings, use tactics to your advantage, and fight against other players and AI-controlled enemies."

Steam page



The story is not important here as in other multiplayer shooters. Players are placed in a fictional conflict. After mysterious events on an island in Southeast Asia, the United Nations evacuates most of the population and assigns a



trio of private military contractors to explore the area, uncover its secrets, and bring back any valuables they find. The mission types, however, have not yet been announced by the developers.

Realism

What Madfinger has been basing itself on since the first announcement is the emphasis on realism. Every decision can be fatal, failure in the mission is supposed to mean the loss of all equipment and progress. The fear of loot loss is thus intended to strengthen cooperation between players and tactical progress forward. Slower exploration could thus be a nice

refresher of frenetic Call of Duty-type shootouts. Weapons should behave realistically, including true physics and ballistic simulation. The health of the soldier should also be important. In the trailer, we saw a soldier drinking, eating and taking some medication. We hope that the game will offer something more sophisticated than just a health bar and unrealistic miracle drugs or potions, as is the norm today. But we still

have to wait for the details.

The only platform announced is Steam, and we're supposed to head into the jungle for the first time sometime in 2024. Consoles haven't been announced, but the developers aren't ruling them out just yet.



Marcel Mojžíš



Vladyslav Dobrovolskyi: "New Arc Line is about a conflict between mages and technologists"



Although Dreamate Games is headquartered in Kyiv, part of the team works in the Czech Republic. This international group is currently working on a turn-based RPGs with original game mechanics. We present you an exclusive interview with creative director of the studio Vladyslav Dobrovolskyi.

First of all, thank you very much for your time! Please, tell us about the beginning of your studio, how you guys assembled, and your experience in game development?

It all started with my childhood experiences playing games like Baldur's Gate, Arcanum, Planescape Torment, and

Fallout. That's when I started imagining, "What would my game look like if I made one?" After gaining experience in a major game development company, I decided to create a prototype. I made a model of the main character and programmed the basic logic. I asked my wife to draw textures for the characters and interface. After that, I realized how much work and effort is required to create a game. So I went to my friends with my idea. I have about 17 years of experience in the industry, and the average experience of a specialist on our team is about eight years.

You describe Dreamate as a Czech-Ukrainian studio onli-

ne. There is information about your Headquarters in Kyiv. What is your connection to the Czech Republic?

I want to joke about a deep spiritual connection, but it's exactly as it sounds. A Czech-Ukrainian studio. There's a studio in the Czech Republic with part of the team and an office in Kyiv with another part of the team. Most of our employees work remotely. We also have employees in other countries, like other Eastern European countries or the USA.

New Arc Line is your first game, if I'm not mistaken. How would you describe the game to someone who has never seen it?



Indeed, this is the first game of our studio, Dreamate. New Arc Line is a top-down RPG in a steampunk fantasy setting with the aesthetics and issues of the USA in the 1900s. The central conflict is the opposition of magic and technology, using North American folklore. It's definitely a game that everyone should play.

How many people work on New Arc Line and for how long?

It's hard to determine a clear start of the project. To be more accurate, we started around 2019. The team size varied at different stages. Sometimes, there were 3 people, then 8, then 14. We actively began recruiting colleagues for the project in October 2021. Now, there are just over 40 of us.

Was steampunk RPG your first choice, and why did you select this setting?

Actually, this is a very

complex, fundamental, and, at the same time, philosophical question. I'll try to answer as clearly as possible. Yes.

Steampunk was chosen right away. It was chosen because it is profound and already has a concept. There are unusual principles and issues to consider - such as aesthetics. But there is also a massive space for inventing mechanisms of any kind, function, outfit, and weapon. It's interesting to think about how people would live, what challenges they would face, what their environment would look like, and why. How, for example, the economy would work because steam is a source of energy. But while being down-to-earth, steampunk also has its own fantasy.

The trailer reminded me of old top-down isometric games like "Baldur's Gate" or "Arcanum". What games inspired you, and how do you plan to stand out?

The games you mentioned did inspire us :) In general, many games of this genre. Neverwinter Nights, Icewind Dale, Dragon Age. Special pillars in our list of inspirations are Disco Elysium and Planescape Torment. Recently, an absolutely wonderful Baldur's Gate 3 was released. Standing out is relatively easy. Although all the listed games are delightful, they are different despite having a common genre. Our project will be both similar and dissimilar to them. We have our own setting, lore, story, role-playing, and game systems without going into the details of mechanics.

One of the important aspects of RPGs is the storyline. Can you describe the main plot a bit (or lore without spoilers)?

Describing the plot without spoilers is extremely difficult. Briefly, our story is about the journey of an immigrant



arriving in the New World—his path of becoming and overcoming difficulties for his goal. And the player has yet to determine the goal. You will need to get to the bottom of the conflict between mages and technologists. Discover the underbelly of this world, its injustices, problems, and choices that you will have to make on the way to the coveted goal.

Do you incorporate any choices that affect the story or is the story linear?

Like in most games of our genre, the story will be non-linear. There will be more

different decisions and then again. And one more time :)

Regarding questing, what type of quests can we expect? Any specialties?

Completing quests in New Arc Line feels detective-like and somewhat similar to the quests of The Witcher 3. We try to balance quests between everyday phenomena that the player has heard of and has some relation to in real life and high-fantasy stories. For example, love, corruption, alcohol, debt slavery, racism, etc. How about a story featuring a Slenderman addict, a swamp witch pimp? Or a story

indifferent.

The game trailer shows both magic and technology. Can you reveal some details about character classes and how they fit in the world?

The player will have access to six classes to choose from at the beginning of the game and another six prestige classes (like in D&D) during leveling. The technologist classes depend on Steampunk, Dieselpunk, or Teslapunk technologies. And the mage classes are more religious—for example, cultists and voodooists. Cultists, for instance, are a kind of fire mages who can



significant choices that will further impact the plot, as well as less significant ones that will influence the fate of specific characters or certain events. We try to give the player a sufficient number of plot branches so that the player enjoys it and wants to play the game again, making

about how the residents of the New World, "outside the law," resist the advent of progress in the form of automatons and then welcome it and convert it into moonshine apparatuses. But this is all humor. We try very hard to ensure that every story in New Arc Line does not leave the player

fight enemies at close range using flaming two-handed weapons. Or shoot from afar with fire arquebuses. At the same time, for example, Teslapunk Scientists is a class about wild science and experiments with electricity and magnetic fields.



Important motivation in RPGs is character progression. I saw a small fraction of something that resembled the Path of Exile talent tree. Could you describe the character progression and skill system a bit?

You probably saw an old concept. Character progression now is like a mix of SPECIAL and D&D5. Characters will have stats, skills, perks, dice - everything players love. Mage characters will have two parallel progressions!

We could see a glimpse of combat online. What type of combat do you implement and do you utilize any known rule set (D&D or another)?

We have turn-based combat. Our combat is very similar to Baldur's Gate 3. We also use dice rolls to work with probabilities, not D20, but D100. And naturally, our accompanying rules differ.

What technology do you use to develop the game?

If I understood the question correctly, you mean the engine. We are developing the game on Unreal Engine 5.

I saw two types of cameras

in the gameplay - over-the-shoulder in the alpha version and top-down. Does this mean any customization options in the GUI or controls?

We abandoned the over-the-shoulder camera view and focused on the top-down view. Design reasons dictated this decision. Switching the camera and controls greatly disrupted the feeling of immersion.

Do you plan to include any multiplayer options?

No, we do not plan to. Our game revolves around storytelling and plot, focusing on a single character's journey.

Nowadays, the geopolitical situation has made not only game development significantly more difficult. What were your biggest obstacles caused by the ongoing war in Ukraine, and has it affected the release of the game?

This is a tough topic. Commenting on it at the moment is challenging. A simple answer would be, "We had to move the deadlines." But when bombs are falling, and people are dying, it's complicated to say precisely how the

war affected us.

Is there a release day planned already?

As of now, we don't know the exact day, but the year and month are known.

Do you know the price point?

We know the price, but for now, it's a strict secret that cannot be disclosed.

What platforms will New Arc Line be released on, and are there any possibilities for Nintendo Switch (2) or Steam Deck?

So far, we are planning the release of New Arc Line on PC, PlayStation 5, and Xbox.

Is there anything else we did not discuss and what you would like to tell our readers?

I believe we've covered everything in this extensive interview, with numerous insightful questions. Thank you for it! I encourage readers to experience New Arc Line — it's a fantastic and thrilling game. Goodbye, everyone!



**Vladyslav Dobrovolskyi
Marcel Mojžiš**

30 gaming gems of 2023



December is the time when it gets dark early and it's cold outside. It is not possible to walk around the Christmass markets endlessly, so this is the ideal time to catch up on games, for which there is no time left due to the year-round workload.

Because there was so much this year, we divided the selection into 3 categories: Big, i.e. titles from renowned studios, Small, which are independent or small studios, and Tips, where we put everything that didn't fit into the first two categories. Each category contains 10 games. We chose taking into account the best-rated gems of the year according to the Metacritic server, and finally we adjusted the list according to the editor's preferences. For each game, we provide ratings by experts and players from

Metacritic.

Big Games

Lies of P (80/8.2)

Souls-like game by South Korea's Neowiz Games (very) loosely based on the novel The Adventures of Pinocchio by Carlo Collodi is reminiscent of the great Bloodborne, albeit set in a steampunk setting. It takes a lot of inspiration from From Software, but who doesn't these days. A great choice for Souls fans!

Everspace 2 (81/7.9)

You might argue that this space arcade belongs in a different category. But for us, Everspace 2 is a great AA title for interstellar freelancers eager for adventure. It will offer an interesting story, a vast world, planetary exploration, RPG elements, loot, mining and production. Solid mix of features!

Starfield (83/7)

The Universe again! But now it's an AAA production. Bethesda really tried to serve up a huge and complex space game with a great story. Reviews by critics are very positive, but players do not share their enthusiasm. In any case, fans of Fallout or Skyrim will like this formula which is similar to previous games by Bethesda.

Hogwarts Legacy (84/8.5)

Potterheads have been waiting for this large open world RPG set in the Hogwarts castle and the surrounding area for a long time. Roughly 100 years before Harry, we have the opportunity to experience firsthand what it's like to study and face hidden threats at the most famous school of witchcraft and wizardry. The game was successful and although the story does not

reach the quality of the books, it can entertain for dozens of hours!

Alan Wake II (87/8.8)

Remedy first introduced the story of writer Alan Wake thirteen years ago, and this year we finally got a sequel. First installment is a cult and number two has a solid foothold. Both professional reviewers and players praise the work, and this mysterious detective story should not be missing in the virtual bookshelf of any fan of the genre.

The Talos Principle II (88/9.1)

Devolver Digital published a sequel to the logical first person game The Talos Principle in November. Puzzle games are on the fringes of interest, and The Talos Principle II aims to change that. It will offer great graphics, a story and a brain twister. Many players on Steam consider it to be the best puzzle game ever made. Have you liked Portal? So try The Talos Principle!

Marvel's Spider-Man II (90/9.1)

Insomniac Games has been ruling the Playstation with the spider hero since the Playstation 4 and the new one is no exception. The action-adventure with an open world led by Peter Parker aspires to similar success on the current generation of consoles as the previous one. It builds on proven foundations, but some might regret the absence of a significant evolution. Even so, according to experts and players, it's worth it! Only on PS5 for now.

Super Mario Bros. Wonder (92/9.1)

Speaking of exclusives, we mustn't forget this year's Nintendo hit starring the immortal plumber! After a number of successful genre experiments, the developers are returning to the classics that today's 30-somethings grew up on. But even if Mario is once again a classic platformer, it wouldn't be Nintendo not to enrich the game with a bunch of new and original ideas. I wish the competition from Sega would be just as successful...

Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom (96/8.3)

Nintendo for the second time with an iron in the fire of The Game Awards 2023. This time with the sequel to the open world RPG about saving the world and Princess Zelda (are Zelda and Peach sisters?) from the clutches of the evil Ganon. The Legend of Zelda builds on the great first installment and recycles the popular mix of exploration, puzzles, crafting and combat as only the Japanese devs can. Switch owners probably don't have a better RPG on their hands, but in our opinion, the following title will win game of the year!

Baldur's Gate III (96/8.9)

This classic IP couldn't have been resurrected better! The Belgian Larian Studios knows how to work with the genre of turn-based RPGs, they proved it with the Divinity series, but their best D&D RPG so far came with a more famous brand behind it. 87533-D4229-

9C592-2C82B. Baldur's Gate III ranks alongside the best RPGs in history, with experts and players alike calling the game the best RPG since The Witcher 3 and a hot contender for Game of the Year 2023.

What's the competition? The already mentioned Alan Wake, Spider-Man, Mario, Resident Evil 4 and Zelda.

Small Games

Viewfinder (84/7.5)

An original 5 hour long first-person platformer is heavily inspired by Portal, but instead of teleporting, you bend reality with the camera. You take a photo of what you see in front of you, bring the photo to another place and using perspective transfer the location from the photo to real world. Those familiar with Looney Tunes and Coyote's chases with the Roadrunner know what we mean. It's hard to explain, but it's divine.

Cassette Beasts (84/8.4)

The small British studio Bytten took the old MC cassette, Pokémon, Final Fantasy and Octopath Traveler and mixed it into a run-of-the-mill but fun pixel art JRPG. You find yourself on a strange island inhabited by various creatures that can be collected by recording their sound on a walkman (instead of locking them in claustrophobic pokéballs). Afterwards, characters in your party can take on the form of collected monsters and fight in Final Fantasy-style turn-based battles. Admittedly, it sounds weird but it's fun. If you've ever rewinded a tape

with a pencil and collected Pokémon, you should give it a try. Gotta record them all!

Chants of Sennaar (85/8.4)

A unique puzzle game like you've never played before. As a traveler, you will find yourself in a country where you do not understand a single word and your task is to gradually learn the language to understand what is happening around you. The game combines elements of platforming, mazes and various puzzles, mostly based on deciphering language, returning to familiar places and putting old words in a new context. A very good game recommended not only for students of linguistics.

Hi-Fi Rush (87/8.9)

Japan's Tango Gameworks has moved from horror to the comic action slasher Hi-Fi Rush, where everything on the screen moves to the beat (including the UI). We've seen quite a few music games, but none played with music quite like the Hi-Fi Rush. The game also has great cutscenes and styling. Judging by the reviews, it definitely deserves your attention.

Sea of Stars (88/8.1)

Another JRPG reminiscent of Chrono Trigger or Octopath Traveler. But it's not just a cheap copy. The developers of Sabotage have prepared an honest RPG with its own story and an original world. Get ready for about 30 hours of high-quality story and turn-based battles modeled after the classics of the genre. A

prequel to the platformer The Messenger from the studio of the same name, the game is peppered with nods to the previous title and contains a ton of main and side content. According to player reviews, it's a blast.

Cocoon (88/8.2)

From Jeppe Carlsen, the designer of the successful platformers Limbo and Inside, came another game aspiring to a similar cult status as the two aforementioned titles this year. It's no longer a black-and-white platformer, but a logical top-down adventure based on exploring various interconnected worlds and completing logic puzzles in classic style without a single spoken word. If Limbo or Inside appealed to you, Cocoon is an obvious choice.

Pizza Tower (89/8.9)

The developer studio aptly named Tour de Pizza describes its debut as a fast-paced 2D platformer inspired by the Wario Land series with an emphasis on movement, exploration and score-raising. And that's exactly how it is. You race against time, overcome obstacles in the style of classic platformers and try to save your skin (and the restaurant). In addition, it is funny, graphically imitating Cartoon Network and for less than 20€.

Dave the Diver (90/8.2)

Detailed atmospheric pixel art where you harpoon fish in gorgeous underwater depths during the night and during the day serve your catch to

hungry necks at a sushi restaurant. Although the game practically offers two main activities – catching fish and managing a restaurant – these two mechanics are gradually expanded and, thanks to the amount of content, will keep you busy for several tens of hours. According to reviewers and players, it's a great game!

Turbo Overkill (91/7.6)

Boomer shooters have literally experienced an international revival in recent years. Ion Fury, HROT or the current Turbo Overkill are proof of that. Those who grew up with Quake, Unreal Tournament or Duke Nukem know what we are talking about and are already rushing to buy it on Steam. The game is not just for retro fans, the gameplay offers a modern concept of movement, where you climb, jump, slide or run along walls and shoot at everything in motion. A total blast!

Slay the Princess (92/8.7)

The visual novel Slay the Princess offers a great horror story and a hand-drawn graphics with a perfect atmosphere and voice acting. The seemingly simple task of the narrator to kill the princess branches almost endlessly, giving the player a high degree of freedom in decision making. According to expert reviewers, the best game on our list and definitely one of the best visual novels of the year!

Tips

Resident Evil IV Remake (93/7.9)

Although the remake of the fourth Resident Evil is a contender for game of the year due to its indisputable qualities, we think it will not win the competition. Reviewers praise the remake, but on Metacritic there is criticism of outdated graphics from the playerbase.

Quake II Enhanced Edition (90/7.8)

Interested in Turbo Overkill? Then you certainly won't despise the remaster of the shooter legend Quake II. According to reviews, the remaster of the second Quake is done with a respect to the source material, and it also includes one brand new expansion. A must for fans of the series.

Dead Space Remake (89/8.8)

The legendary shooter got a new remake after 15 years, and it's still a great genre game and according to many is even better than modern Callisto Protocol.

Diablo IV (86/2.2)

Blizzard really tried to present an atmosphere close to the first two of the series, and according to professional reviews, the authors succeeded. However, players criticize the content and pay to win mechanics.

Drawing from memory (?/8.5)

Online party game for at least two players offers exactly

what you would expect. The concept is simple, you join the lobby with your friends, choose a character or a picture to draw and then you have to draw it from memory.

HROT (81/8.5)

Author Spytihněv made a splash in the Czechia this year thanks to his retro shooter HROT. The classic FPS inspired by Quake takes us to an alternate reality of 1986, where the communists are still in full strength and fighting off unknown intruders. The game is deliberately low poly and almost entirely brown-textured. We don't like the graphics, but it definitely has its charm for a lot of players.

Wartales (80/8)

Strategic isometric RPG Wartales brilliantly mixes genres. First, you manage a group of medieval mercenaries and ensure the supply of food, money and other resources, then tactically maneuver in turn-based battles like in the XCOM series. The goal is to get as much wealth as possible while traveling the world.

BZZZT (?/9.6)

A cute 2D platformer with a robot in the main role, distantly reminiscent of Super Meat Boy. 9AC76-6F933-E64FA-6252D. Although the game was released at the end of November, it has already managed to collect several 10/10. A score of 9.6 on Metacritic promises the success of Czech developer Karel Matějka as well. This homage to eighties platformers is a hit! It has beautiful pixel-art

graphics, fast gameplay and diverse levels.

Metroid: Prime Remastered (94/8.7)

Another remaster. There are too many, aren't they? But this one is a damn gem! The game is so graphically improved that it wouldn't even be ashamed of the Remake status. This sci-fi FPS with an emphasis on exploration and interesting puzzles runs at 60 FPS on Switch. Given the original platform 3DS is dead now, the remaster makes a lot of sense.

Last Train Home (83/6.3)

Ashborne Games chose the complicated theme of Czechoslovak legionnaires in Russia as their first game. They have a single, but very difficult task – to flee at the end of the WW1 by armored train via Vladivostok to the newly emerging Czechoslovakia. Part of the gameplay is thus devoted to the management of resources and the train crew. It is necessary to gradually repair the train, take care of fuel and supplies. But sometimes you have to stop, and each stop presents the risk of a bloody duel with the Red Army in real-time battles. The game is garnering very positive reviews on Steam but has not escaped controversy in Russia and China, unsurprisingly.

That's all, hopefully you've chosen an interesting game for the winter and if we've missed another gem, write to us on Facebook or send us an e-mail.

Marcel Mojžíš

Dude, Where Is My Beer?



I want a pilsner.

Just a nice cold pilsner.

A refreshing pilsner, if you wouldn't mind.

Could I, if it's not too much of a bother, have a cold pilsner?

Ok, forget it.

Do you like a classic lager and still haven't developed a taste for hipster sours, IPAs, APAs or weizenbiers from breweries smaller than micro? You are not alone! The authors of *Dude, Where Is My Beer* apparently have the same problem, and it's burning them so much that they've built an entire old school point and click adventure game around it. How old school, you ask? Almost

„A point and click adventure game about finding an old school pilsner in the confusing world of unnecessary craft beers and snobby hipsters.“

dudewhereismybeer.com

like the pilsner itself!

Although the plot might seem that the play is of Czech origin, this is not the case. The game was created by Norwegian developer and graphic designer Arik Zurabian

and writer and animator Edo Bernes from Costa Rica. The authors introduce us to contemporary Oslo and set before us an overwhelming task - to find and enjoy Pilsner-type beer in a world where the mysterious Master Brewer, based on the result of a brewing competition, decided to ban the sale of an inferior classic lager. Bars and pubs are thus filled with hipsters ordering craft beers

from small breweries at exorbitant prices, passionately debating all kinds of fermentation methods that the main protagonist does not understand. All he wants is to find a normal beer after the long bus ride to Oslo.



Drunkenness is the best policy

Unlike other point and click adventures, the main protagonist is not a nosy curious person, and being among weirdos in an unknown world is stressful for him. The devs thus came up with a unique mechanism, the so-called beer-o-meter. In order for the main character to dare to start a conversation with a stranger, or to solve some complex puzzle, he has to boost his confidence with a drop of alcohol. At all times, the player sees the degree of intoxication and must correct it as necessary. However, it is not possible to get hammered, but the authors mention the expanded possibilities of inebriety in the upcoming second installment. The game is not story-completed, and the second part is set for a Kickstarter campaign.

Back to the Past

The interface, like the main

character, is conservative. It borrows the classic 1990s adventure game scheme from Sierra. So forget about simple control with two mouse buttons. You control the movement of the character with the mouse, but the appropriate action must first be selected from a menu of nine actions, as you can see in the picture. The system seems to allow more freedom, but in most cases one option to move forward is still just one, so such a choice seems redundant. Fans of old school adventure games from the nineties will be pleased with the controls though.

The graphics have a quirky comic book style with a limited color palette with predominant blue and gray tones. Its simplicity is perfect for a 2D adventure game. The level of detail is sufficient and the character design is good, including the animations.

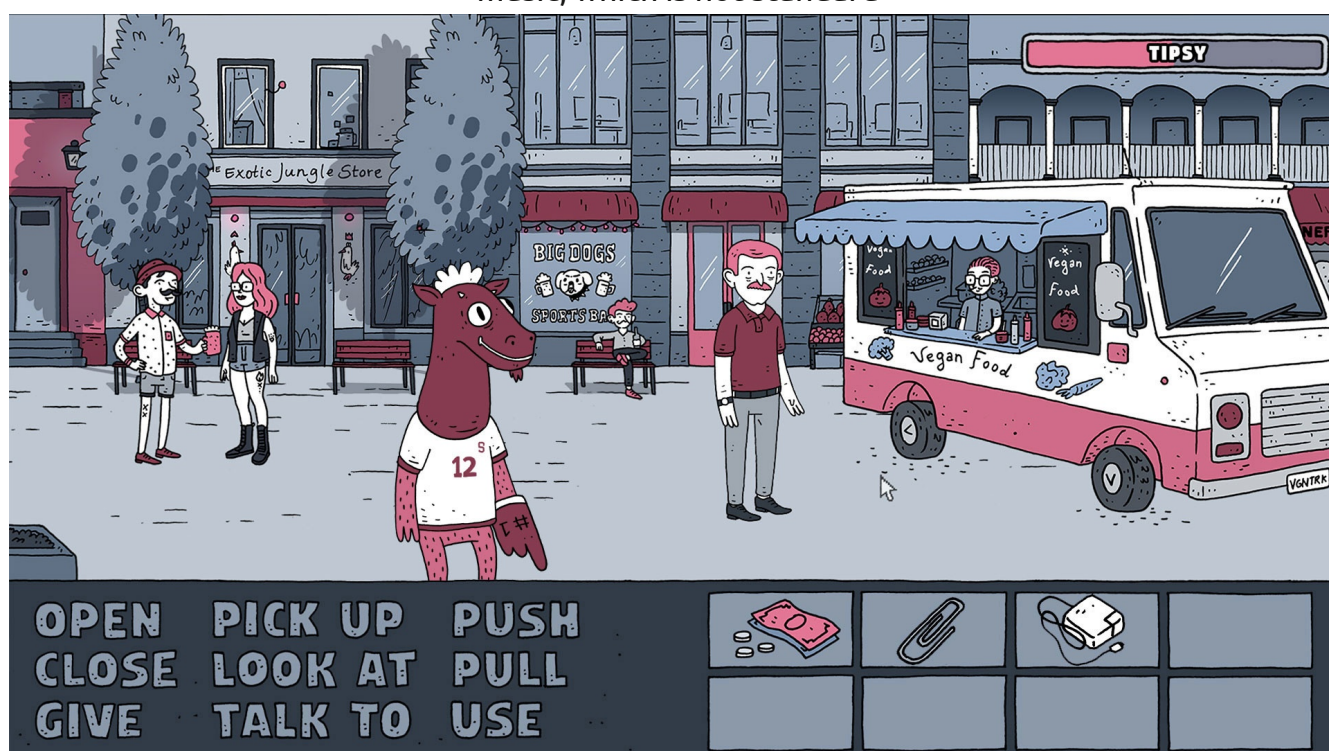
We can also hear the original music, which is not standard

for indie games, and expert reviews praise the game's audio presentation - from the well-created atmosphere with the background music to the movements and sounds recorded in the real world. The absence of dubbing is completely understandable.

If it wasn't clear from the paragraphs above, this is a humorous adventure game with a light-hearted theme. Although reviewers mention the sometimes illogical gameplay and generally low difficulty, the game is fun and will shorten a long winter evening by about 5 hours. It is available on Steam for a pleasant €13.50, but it is often discounted for under €10.



Marcel Mojžiš



Call of Saregnar will be a hardcore nineties RPG style game



Slovenian solo developer Damjan Mozetič has been preparing an RPG affair for several years, which seems to have fallen out of the mid-nineties! Nowadays it's modern to use oldschool graphics in new titles, as we can see in our list of 30 gems, there are quite a few.

Some may argue that the simple graphics are a bit of a cheat on the player. The games look old, but in reality they are not and often integrate modern gameplay. That old-school style is often just an artstyle and sometimes the only way if you don't have capable artist or a sufficient budget.

The author of Call of Saregnar probably thinks something similar, so he decided to prepare an RPG that not only looks, but also plays like old TES:

Daggerfall, Betrayat at Kronedor or Might and Magic.

The 1990s RPG was characterized by almost zero player assistance and stacks of written text that needed to be read to understand the story and progress further. If you read the last book at school and you turn on the quest helper in WoW, this game will not be for you. However, if you still have a squared paper with dungeons in your drawer and you don't mind reading, this could be the game for you!

The author himself refers to the game as a tribute to the era of party-based RPGs from the nineties.

Story

The author invites you to a complicated plot and an original fantasy environment inspired by various historical nations. The game begins in

the village of Avanmoor, which is sleeping restlessly due to the mysterious disappearance of its inhabitants. In addition, the local lord is murdered in his chamber at night. As is customary with old RPGs, a really diverse group of adventurers - a knight, a student of magic and a thief - decide to get to the bottom of it. The search for the Baron's killer takes our wanderers deep into the battle between the gods.

OG Gameplay

Gameplay is indeed traditional one and does not deny inspiration from old classics. The player controls a group of adventurers of various professions, completes quests and travels through the world from a first-person perspective in the style of Might and Magic 6, which, among



other things, was the first in the M&M series to offer smooth movement in 3D instead of classic movement in squares. There will be survival elements too. The player will have to take care of sufficient supplies of food for his group, quality clothing and also blankets to survive the cold nights in the wilderness. Warriors will have to carefully maintain their armor and equipment to be ready for any battle that takes place on a hexagonal field, reminiscent of Heroes of Might and Magic. Battles are not randomly generated, but manually inserted into certain parts of the map to optimize difficulty as much as possible. The reward for winning battles is classic loot in the form of money or items, but the amount of looted items will

be much lower than what we are used to in contemporary RPGs. The inventory will not overflow with junk, on the contrary, each thing should



have its specific purpose. We have to commend this approach.

Graphic Design

We can look forward to a low poly 3D open world with pixe-

lated textures here and there made special by more modern effects such as fog, smoke or fire. The real nineties feel is given by the characters, who are all portrayed by real people in costumes and photographed from different angles and in different activities. We will not find any three-dimensional character in the game. It's a great nostalgic ride for players of the original Betrayal at Krondor or M&M, and for younger generations a way to peek into classic role-playing games wi-

thout the need to complicatedly search for emulators of older operating systems.

The market for such a game is unknown, games of this type do not come out, and it is impossible to estimate what the commercial success will be. This old-school journey will be slow, full of reading, and will resemble more of a fantasy novel or old game-book. We wish Damjan to find a large group of fans. We will probably see it sometime in 2024 on PC.



Marcel Mojžiš



Broken Sword: Parzival's Stone



The pair of main protagonists, American George Stobbard and French journalist Nicole Collard, first met in 1996, when the first part of the adventure series Broken Sword was published, which defined the genre for a decade ahead and became a cult. It was a classic point and click adventure game with excellent two-dimensional graphics and an interesting detective story about the search for the treasure of the Templars.

George and Nicole are the central characters of a total of five Broken Sword titles, but only the first two volumes are considered classics. From the third part, players were bothered by the inclination towards the third dimension, which was popular at the beginning of the millennium, but technically immature, thus unable to create the right at-

mosphere and rendering of details. In addition, the game began to adapt to consoles in terms of control and incorporated, in addition to classic mouse clicking, sometimes clumsy keyboard control.

2D on steroids

The sixth installment of the popular adventure game will therefore return to the roots of gameplay and once again showcase the hand-painted backgrounds of individual screens in the spirit of the first two games. The studio returned to hand-painted locations already in the fifth installment called The Serpent's curse and received positive feedback from players who were not used to the three-dimensional locations of the previous two games. Charles Cecil revealed at Gamescom that the hand-painted locations are then converted to 3D so that the classic aesthe-

tic is preserved, but the game feels more cinematic, and supports 4K resolution. It will thus try to bring the best of both worlds. The authors call the graphic style Super 2D.

Time travel

Similar to the previous parts, in the sixth edition we will be searching for traces of forgotten treasures and secret conspiracies. The central motif is supposed to be a kind of ancient manuscript. While the Templars played the main role in the first part, in the sixth Broken Sword it will be the Cathars, a medieval heretical religious movement. Pope Innocent III. even led a crusade against them. In Broken Sword 6, the Cathars are portrayed as the guardians of a mysterious grail, supposed to have something to do with the blood of Jesus. It is not surprising that the Pope did not like their work especially



in France and Italy.

The Nazi Heinrich Himmler was later to be interested in obtaining the Grail too. So the enemy is clear and so is the task - to prevent the Third Reich from obtaining the Grail, whatever it is. The main character will have the ability to travel through time to the past and the future thanks to a part of the grail. We are also to witness an alternate future where we will see the Nazi threat in case of our failure.

So we have historical myth, mysterious treasure, Nazi danger and time travel. Is it original? Not at all! Do we want to play it right now? Absolutely! Broken Sword: The Parzival's Stone is out sometime next year.

Remaster

As a bonus, Revolution Software prepared a treat for us – a remaster of the first part in 4K! Pure hand-drawn 2D graphics converted to high definition are breathtaking. You

can't see the difference when watching the demos, but when the original graphics are turned on, the indulgent nostalgia that makes us remember the games somehow fonder is fully exposed. We praise the authors that this is an improvement of the original work, not the later Director's Cut, which added unnecessary gameplay passages and thus lost the game's pace.

We should expect a remaster of the first part in the first quarter of 2024, and Charles Cecil does not rule out a remaster of the second part, if Broken Sword Shadow of the Templars: Reforged is a success.



Marcel Mojžiš



Romans is free to play strategy from the devs of Stronghold and Caesar



British Firefly Studios are known primarily for their strategy series Stronghold, the first two parts of which have earned the status of legends of the RTS genre. In their ranks, the developers have veterans of the video game industry who worked on the building strategies of the Caesar series, among others. But the novelty is not another city building for one player. You would look for singleplayer here in vain. Fire-

fly want to fill the gap in the multiplayer co-op city builder market and bring the free to play strategy Romans: Age of Caesar.

The player has one district in the city to manage at a time and must work together with the neighboring 15 players to make the city they manage together prosper. The first task is the destruction of barbarian settlements on the common map of the city and

the subsequent repair and management of the territory.

The construction is an absolute classic borrowed from classics of the genre such as Caesar or Pharaoh. You build production buildings, houses, roads, wells and take care of the satisfaction of the residents and, above all, a full cash register. Each activity, whether building or fighting, costs action points that are renewed over time. We saw this mechanic in browser games, where it is mainly used to slow down progress and for microtransaction purposes. Fortunately, the authors do not push the shop too much here, although you can find the ingame shop very quickly thanks to the on screen icon.

An interesting element is the collection of materials and goods from neighbors. If you don't have the necessary pro-





duction building and you need a certain material, you can check if any of the other 15 players on the shared map have supplies produced. Collecting from neighbors building costs more action points, but it will transfer the given commodity to both you and the owner, so you don't have to worry about theft. The purpose of mechanics is to strengthen cooperation within the city.

Once the city prospers, you start establishing inter-city trade routes (the game includes an entire continent) to re-

store the Roman Empire. Here, city building fades away and climbing the imaginary political ladder comes into play. The player can make it all the way to the senate, where a completely different part of the game begins. The devs promise complex gameplay full of information sharing between senators, plots, joint projects and gaining the affection of the Roman gods. However, historical experience advises to be careful and watch your back for daggers that the senator players will always have at hand. However,

intrusive barbarians also attack on the rulers. This is where the PvE component of the game comes into play.

Don't expect a complex RTS experience, the battles are semi-automatic. Players place their cohorts on the battlefield and then watch how the soldiers fare. Fortunately, it is possible to issue occasional sub-instructions with a limited duration of effect, so the game offers some influence over the course of combat.

Unfortunately, Romans won't deny their mobile roots, so the game doesn't look very good. The ancient Caesar III looks better, although it does not have such a high resolution. On the other hand, you can play the game everywhere thanks to cross-platform play (iOS, Android, PC). It's worth giving the game a chance.



Marcel Mojžiš



The Simpsons: Hit & Run are getting a remake and a remaster

In 2003, the American Vivendi Universal Games released a video game based on the famous television animated series The Simpsons called The Simpsons: Hit & Run. The game was heavily inspired by the popular Grand Theft Auto series, which went fully 3D in 2001 with the third installment, and in 2002 the popular GTA: Vice City was released.

The developers from Radical Entertainment managed to appropriately mix a parody of GTA with a gameplay in the form of a popular series, and thus a video game was created that gained cult status. It's no surprise that the video game community is trying to revive Hit & Run with modern versions. Two unofficial The Simpsons: Hit & Run projects are currently in development. Remaster of the original game and complete remake in Unreal Engine 5.

Remaster

The author of the modification calls himself El Gato Del Tejado and you can follow his progress on the YouTube channel, Instagram or Patreon. The game changes beyond recognition under the hands of a modder. Not only will it receive support for modern resolutions and new textures, but the cutscenes, 3D character models, or cell shade rendering imitating the animated series are completely new. The game will be 1:1 to the

original, but it will significantly change. All 3D cutscenes are reanimated to the gorgeous 2D look of The Simpsons animated episodes! We have to say that 2D look awesome and the author is not only a skilled modder, but also a skilled animator.

The graphics of the remaster will be faithful to the original animated series as well as the original version of the Hit & Run game.

Remake

Youtuber Reubs focuses on remakes of various video games and is currently working on a total conversion of Hit & Run to Unreal Engine 5. Graphically and probably physically, the original game will move more than the aforementioned remaster. The project was originally created as a joke "I made the Simpsons in a week", but thanks to the huge response on the Internet, the author decided to devote himself to the remake of the game in more detail, and judging by the latest videos, it looks like whole game is finished. One of the original game designers even commented on one of the YouTube videos and praised the remake.

Compared to the original game, the remake will offer a completely open city without loading screens. The cutscenes will also be changed, unlike the remaster above, they will be in the game engi-

ne, so they will not be pre-rendered. Reubs also implements the possibility to play in VR. The author tries to get the most out of UE5.

You can find the author's entire journey behind the remake of The Simpsons: Hit & Run on the YouTube channel Reubs, and you can show your support through Patreon, where the author offers a game development course in Unreal Engine too.

However, both projects are threatened by copyright issues. The owners of the rights to The Simpsons can put both a remaster and a remake on hold relatively easily. Reubs has already let it be known that although his project is already completely finished, he will never release it precisely because of copyright issues. Well, at least the remaster will be lucky...

El Gato Del Tejado



reubs:



Marcel Mojžiš

Command & Conquer Remastered Collection

The game first saw the light of day in 1995 and became one of the primary titles that subsequently defined the shape of the entire genre.

On June 2020, Electronic Arts released a remastered version of the two original games, i.e. C&C and C&C: Red Alert, under the name Command & Conquer Remastered Collection.

On the development of this game, EA collaborated with the Petroglyph Games studio, which consists of many employees of the then Westwood Studios, and therefore also those who created the original C&C parts 25 years ago.

This remastered version of the game contains all missions from the original two games and their DLCs (including missions from the console versions and secret missions). Both video sequences and the visual side of the game have been improved, which now supports up to 4K resolution.

Graphics

The main attraction of the remaster is the improved graphics. All models, textures and animations have been improved but still look like they are from the original games.

The graphics have been converted to 4K, you can switch to the original with the space-bar while playing.

The Soundtrack was also remastered and added several new tracks. Frank Klepacki, the author of the original music, did a great job and the result is once again captivating.

Gameplay

Gameplay remains the same as in the original version. The game is still as fun and addictive as ever. Units still move as if they don't know where to go at times.

The basis is classic: build a base, train troops and destroy the opposition!

Of course, in the campaign you also have missions without building a base, they are

still as difficult as before. Sometimes you can't do it without Quick save and Quick Load if you don't want to start the mission over and over again.

In conclusion, C&C remaster is a great opportunity for fans of the original games to enjoy them again in a new guise.

Even newcomers will definitely enjoy the game as it is a classic that is still worth playing. Nowadays, there are no such good RTS releases anymore (at least according to us in the RetrohryCZ team).

Pros

Good old fun

New graphics and remastered soundtrack

Cutscenes

Switching between old and new graphics immediately after pressing the space bar

Cons

Pathfinding is still somewhat unfinished

Lack of new content

Rating

M1m1nk0 from RetrohryCZ
4/5



M1m1nk0

Stavíme nový počítač do 10 tisíc



BRAND NEW PC PARTS ONLY
FORTNITE, LOL AND CS

ON THE BUDGET

If we are on a tight budget and don't want a refurbished PC or a second-hand and don't want to spend unnecessarily, we have to make a number of compromises. We must not close the door on upgrading for the future. The first compromise will be a processor with an integrated graphics card, because we can't get dedicated graphics into the budget. We have a very good performing Intel Core i5-12400 of Alder Lake architecture to choose from, which outperforms the aging AM4 from the red competitors as far as the processor part is concerned, but AMD leads in price-performance ratio in in-

tegrated graphics cards. For gaming, the Alder Lake i5's UHD 730 and 750 aren't at all gaming friendly, and we reckon the kid will want to play at least something. AMD's competition, both Vega 7 and Vega 8, offer much better graphics performance. So we'll go with the Ryzen with the Vega graphics chip. The new AM5 chipset would be ideal, where AMD offers decent integrated graphics, but with the current pricing we can't fit it into our budget. So we'll choose the AM4 socket, a generation older (but still usable). Here we have two options: AMD Ryzen 5 5600G or the more powerful AMD

Ryzen 7 5700G. We can use the more powerful Ryzen 7, but in this configuration we are at the limit of the budget and have to save on the motherboard and SSD. While, as you will see below, it can theoretically be pieced together, I cannot in good conscience recommend this build. The motherboard is the cheapest possible, it will certainly need a BIOS update, which may already be a problem for inexperienced users. In addition, it will limit us in future upgrades and the SSD only has a capacity of 512GB, and that's very small considering the size of games today.

R7 Build	Price: 9779 CZK (Alza.cz 11/23 prices)
CPU	AMD Ryzen 7 5700G
Motherboard	ASUS PRIME A320M-K (nutný upgrade BIOSu)
RAM	16GB Kingston FURY DDR4 3200MHz
SSD (M.2)	Apacer AS2280P4 512GB
PSU	SilverStone Strider Essential 80Plus 500W
Case	EUROCASE ML X501 EVO
Fans 120 mm	2x ARCTIC P12 PWM
Fan 80 mm	1x ARCTIC P8 PWM PST

We'd rather reduce the performance requirements and choose the still very good Ryzen 5 5600G CPU, which will allow us to afford more storage, a better motherboard and faster RAM. Experienced builders will surely object to a cheaper power supply, the lack of a better CPU cooler, or a very basic case. It must be

said that for a PC without dedicated graphics, the energy requirements are not too great. If you have some extra coin, I would definitely fit a more powerful power supply from a reputable manufacturer, e.g. 550W Seasonic B12 BC-550 Bronze for 1499 CZK. This seems like an unnecessary overkill for integrated

graphics, but when you upgrade to a dedicated graphics card in the future, you'll appreciate not having to change the power supply. The case can be exchanged for Cooler Master MasterBox MB311L (extra 550 CZK). This build below is enough for browsing and some simple gaming on low details.

R5 Build	Price: 9873 CZK (Alza.cz 11/23 prices)
CPU	AMD Ryzen 5 5600G
Motherboard	GIGABYTE B550M AORUS ELITE (new BIOS)
RAM	Corsair 16GBDDR4 3600MHz CL18 Vengeance
SSD	M.2 Kingston NV2 1TB
PSU	SilverStone Strider Essential 80Plus 500W
Case	Zalman T6
Fans 120 mm	2x ARCTIC P12 PWM
Fan 80 mm	1x ARCTIC P8 PWM PST

Brebuilt PCs

There are also ready-made PC kits on the market, which also include an operating system. The computer can thus be used straight out of the box. This variant is suitable for inexperienced users and for those who simply do not want to spend too much time building. We can find decent machines at Mall.cz, where we found interesting prebuilds by ADDERO. However, we will spend more money on future upgrades in case of GPU upgrade (new PSU will be needed too).

ADDERO Hráč AR-71e: The most you can get for 9799 CZK

CPU: AMD Ryzen 5 5600G
 Motherboard: ASUS TUF Gaming A520M-Plus
 RAM: Lexar Thor DDR4 16GB (kit 2×8GB) DIMM 3200MHz
 SSD: Lexar NM620 1TB NVMe M.2
 PSU: Eurocase Eco+ 400W80Plus Bronze
 Case: Gamemax Silent Hill
 Microsoft Windows 11 Home 64-bit



ADDERO Hráč AR-51h: Cheap and reliable for 8699 CZK

CPU: AMD Ryzen 3 4100
 Motherboard: ASRock A520M-HVS
 GPU: ASUS Radeon RX 550 4GB GDDR5 EVO
 RAM: G.Skill Aegis DDR4 16GB 2666MHz
 SSD: PNY 480GB CS900 SSD S-ATA3 2.5" TLC
 PSU: 1stCOOL 350W Economic PFC
 Case: Eurocase MC X108
 Microsoft Windows 10 Professional 64-bit CZ



Free games and a Witcher wallet for the fastest ones

This year's last issue again holds some surprises. If you've scrolled all the way here to get free stuff, we have to disappoint you. We've hidden the game codes somewhere

else inside the magazine. The fastest activation on Steam or GOG wins (you have to guess the platform) and the first person to send the password to get the Witcher wallet along with their address to

the editor's email will receive the package.

Please note the Witcher wallet can be sent to Czech and Slovak addresses only. Thank you for understanding.

Merry Christmass to you all!



Did you like or dislike our magazine? Write us

If you've read this far in the magazine, thank you so much for your support and we'd love it if you subscribed to us on the platforms below, it would make us very happy! Moreover, from now on the website uses a GTranslate API into English, German, Polish, Russian and Ukrainian. You can easily set the language and read more interesting content!

The first year is over, but we're not done, we'll see you again! Enjoy the holidays and have a great time.

web:

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Take care!

Marcel "Moyzis92" Mojžíš a Magdulè



