

GAME REVIEW

'Like A Dragon: Ishin' did not disappoint

The newest game in the 'Yakuza' franchise completely conquers



Photo courtesy of SEGA

The main characters in "Like A Dragon: Ishin" line up to prepare for an invasion. The game follows Sakamoto Ryoma, who is the second from the right, and how he deals with the political intrigue of feudal Japan. The game is set in 1867, and features historical namesakes with the appearances of previous "Yakuza" characters.

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The newest iteration of the Yakuza game franchise, "Like A Dragon: Ishin," is an amazing experience that brings together the best aspects of the series with a refreshingly new setting and combat system.

"Ishin" was originally released in Japan in 2014 as a launch title for the PlayStation 4. Now it has been brought to the states with a remaster and an English localization, and it was definitely worth the wait.

With beautiful sceneries and great graphics, the game immediately catches your eye with the title screen alone. The introduction with seeing the main character, Sakamoto Ryoma, sailing across the open waters with the sunlight reflecting across the waves sets the expectations for the rest of the cutscenes high, and boy does it deliver.

One of the best things about the franchise as a whole is the sheer absurdity that happens in between the heavily dramatic, and oftentimes bloody, scenes, and this game once again keeps up this tradition.

There are still substories, or the side quests that you can do around the cities in between major plot points, there's still

fishing and most importantly: there's still karaoke.

On the whole the experience is very much like "Yakuza 0," one of the franchises most popular games. But instead of walking around the nightlife of 1980s Japan, you are in the bustling cities of feudal Japan where tensions between the national government and the factions of samurai are at an all-time high.

The combat system in this game has gone through some changes from previous games. While it still has the multiple styles that the player can quickly switch between during battle, the leveling up system is different with the ability to put in placeholders to gain more skills quickly.

Not all of the combat styles are equal, especially in their effectiveness. In the game the character uses not only a katana but a gun as well. There are 4 unique styles: brawler, swordsman, gunman and wild dancer. Each has their own skill tree, but it feels like only two to three of them are really effective.

The gun fighting style is fine but clunky and oftentimes ineffective in a fight with multiple enemies. The swordsman style takes a while to really get going, and it's only after buying a better sword that

a difference can be seen. Brawler is, as it always is in these games, incredibly brutal and very smooth to play.

The wild dancer style is the most fun. With a gun in one hand and a sword in the other, Ryoma is able to sweep and dance around his opponents, and it is definitely the most polished of the fighting styles.

There is also a marked difference in the abundance of supplies that the game provides. In previous games it felt like there was a limited amount of good items that were few and far between, but in this one they point out the most obvious way of getting supplies, pots and wells, that are so clearly marked it's ridiculous to think a player could ever miss them.

While this concept is incredibly helpful in the beginning it can feel a bit like hand-holding the further you get into the game.

There are also new aspects of the game that contribute to the uniqueness of this game in a series of heavy hitters, such as the concept of "virtue" or points you can get by doing good deeds and other completion activities around the cities.

"Ishin" is set in the feudal era of Japan during the 1860's. Despite every game in the series before this being made from scratch in terms of story, the premise for this one was

a bit different. Ryoma was an actual samurai and political figure in the late Edo period.

While the game itself is still totally fictional it still has the namesakes of important men from the era as main characters in the game, all of which still have the faces of characters from previous games. Ryoma himself has the same voice and model of the main character of the franchise Kiryu Kazuma.

It's great to see the favorite characters of the series back on the screen in a totally different setting, but still acting just as you remember them. There's always something special about seeing Kiryu learn "Tiger Drop" for like the eighth time.

"Like A Dragon: Ishin" is a great game that balances the drama of bloody political intrigue with the hilarity of seeing a grown man try to complete the most basic of tasks, and that in itself is the best summation of the entire series. Those who enjoyed previous games in the series won't regret picking this up and giving it a try.



GAME REVIEW



'Metroid Prime Remastered' is a space odyssey

Nintendo has successfully managed to modernize their spacefaring cosmic classic

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After 20 years, Nintendo's universally-acclaimed "Metroid Prime" has been given a fresh coat of paint for a new generation.

On Feb. 8, Nintendo simultaneously announced and released the long-rumored and highly-anticipated "Metroid Prime Remastered" during one of their "Nintendo Direct" online presentations. The game was available to purchase after the presentation for only \$39.99. A breath of fresh air from Nintendo's usual \$59.99 asking price.

The remaster's release was a huge surprise and a huge hit with Nintendo and Metroid fans alike. Many people online have said the announcement was one of, if not the best part of, the entire presentation.

After sinking time into exploring every nook and cranny of the game's multiple alien biomes, and learning about the history of ruins of a once prosperous alien civilization, it's easy to understand why the game received so much praise – both then and now.

The leading lady is Samus Aran, a silent but deadly intergalactic bounty hunter suited in the usual intergalactic bounty hunter getup. She's got an arm cannon, rockets, bombs and a visor she can use to scan environments for extensive knowledge on either an exotic alien scarab or an elevator.

Controlling the bounty hunter is a mostly intuitive process. The game is played from a first-person point of view, and it's the player's job to gun down lethal otherworldly creatures and scan things to obtain information on their surroundings.

The act of shooting, scanning and searching is the name of the game and it's a blast, save for some small complaints.

Shooting is fun, but Samus can only fire a handful of projectiles at a time even if the button is pressed throughout the duration of a combat encounter.

Similarly, the lock-on system requires players to press the lock-on button again after an enemy is destroyed in order to refocus on another instead of just automatically locking onto the next so long as the button is held.

Scanning for information is probably the most tedious thing since individual points of interest must be scanned one by one. It's novel at first but ends up breaking the flow the most. Perhaps having the information show up within range without having to scan everything would've helped maintain the game's moment-to-moment action.

While these gripes aren't deal breakers and don't drag the game down, they could've used a touch-up in some way. That being said, the game is still a fun time.

The sense of exploration is great and the areas players explore are dense and detailed. There are countless alien species to discover and dispose of and various biomes across the game map. It's a beautiful game as well, with a lovely revamped art style that makes the world feel alive and lived in.

The sounds can range from ambient and atmospheric to alien and intense at the drop of a hat, and it adds a lot to the game's atmosphere. It's a visual and auditory treat that creates a sense of dread and adventure that makes the game feel unmistakably "Metroid."

Never before has a game captured the



Photo courtesy of Nintendo

The player character, the bounty hunter Samus Aran, stands armored up and prepared for her mission with her Power Beam cannon readied.

exaggerated swagger of an imposing, 6-foot-tall, blonde, mute intergalactic bounty hunter until now.

There are a few hiccups along the way, but overall "Metroid Prime Remastered" is a faithful and high-quality modernization of one of Nintendo's most iconic games. It's

not perfect, but it was and is definitely one of the best first-person alien bounty hunter-type games ever made.

