

# GAME REVIEWS

By Chad Sapieha

## DJ HERO

Rock 'n' roll game lovers have been inundated with choice over the last few years, but what about clubbers? Activision aims to fill the electronic void with DJ Hero, a new music game that focuses on beat mixing and is sold with an inventive turntable controller. Players use a volume fader to move between tracks from the likes of Grandmaster Flash and Daft Punk while tapping buttons and making record scratching motions in accordance with onscreen cues. There's never been a better time to be a wannabe turntablist.

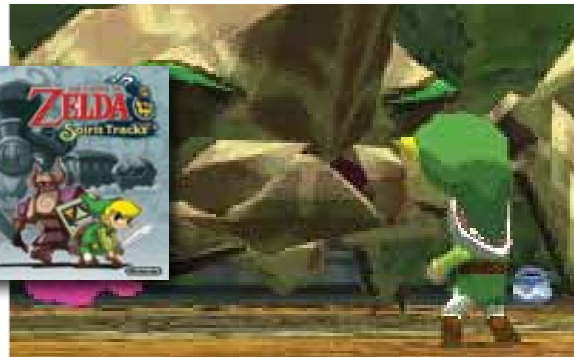


## CALL OF DUTY: MODERN WARFARE 2

The most recent iteration of videogamedom's most popular shooting franchise acts as a benchmark for like-minded games. Effortlessly alternating between stealthy infiltration and wildly over-the-top action sequences, it's difficult to imagine anyone growing bored during the game's 10 hour action-packed campaign, which features battles in many of the world's current hot zones, including Russia, Afghanistan, and Kazakhstan. And when the story ends, multiplayer begins, with an all-new co-operative mode, dual-wielded handguns, and an awesome level that recalls the shower room firefight from Michael Bay's The Rock.

## LEGEND OF ZELDA: SPIRIT TRACKS

It's not quite the same as a new full-blown Wii adventure starring Link and the franchise's eponymous princess, but The Legend of Zelda: Spirit Tracks ought to satisfy anyone who enjoyed the series' previous outing on the DS, Phantom Hourglass. The shtick this time has to do with phantoms, enemies that Link battled in the preceding game but can now control to help him solve puzzles by moving them onto pressure plates, into environmental perils, and having them throw levers. Sounds simple, but expect plenty of brain-breaking navigational conundrums.



## THE SABOTEUR

According to one of the game's developers, the 'elevator pitch' for The Saboteur was simple: Grand Theft Auto with Nazis. In truth, there's a bit more to it. Sporting beautiful black-and-white art design with colourful highlights for flames and blood, this open-world action game puts players in the shoes of a French farm boy-cum-racecar driver who seeks revenge on a Nazi general who killed his best friend. Based in a Moulin Rouge-style club in Paris, our hero travels by foot and car, carrying out daring demolition missions and saving civilians.

## ARMY OF 2: THE 40TH DAY

■ The original Army of 2, a game designed from the ground up for two players (or one player plus an A.I.-controlled helper), was a commercial success but met with lukewarm reviews. Its sequel, developed by Electronic Arts' Montreal team, sees our two private military contractor heroes in near-future Shanghai, which is in the throes of terrorist chaos. It features revamped controls and new abilities that allow the player to do things like feign a surrender to outflank bad guys and take humans as shields. Sounds better already. Expect it mid-January.



## DRAGON AGE: ORIGINS

■ Edmonton-based Bioware has been hard at work on this fantasy RPG—a 'spiritual successor' to the studio's beloved Baldur's Gate games—for years, and it was time well spent. The game's tone is determined based on the race the player chooses. Each playable species has its own hours-long 'origin' story to provide context for our character's involvement in the game's grander, save-the-world plot. The environments are darkly beautiful, the characters deep, and the sword-and-sorcery action gratifying. Sometimes it's good to be an RPG geek.

## BRÜTAL LEGEND

■ Jack Black + heavy metal + video game. Could there be a better formula? Brutal Legend puts players in the shoes of Black's Eddie Riggs, a roadie who has been magically teleported to a fantasy realm inspired by the album art of bands like Motorhead and Black Sabbath and is ruled by evil overlords. Eddie uses a two-bladed battle axe to lop off enemies' heads and a flying-V guitar to create devastating waves of sound that bring freedom to the land, all while rocking out to over 100 classic heavy metal tracks.



## LEFT 4 DEAD 2

■ Valve Software has taken flack about releasing a sequel to its blockbuster zombie slayer—an innovative game that pitted four players against hordes of lightning quick undead and which was designed to be gradually augmented with new content over several years—a mere 12 months later. That said, it's difficult to imagine franchise fans not wanting to upgrade to this sequel, which contains five new campaigns, a new play mode dubbed scavenger, a splendidly spooky New Orleans setting, and a much more satisfying story arc for its four protagonists.