

Duke Nukem Forever

Always bet on Duke

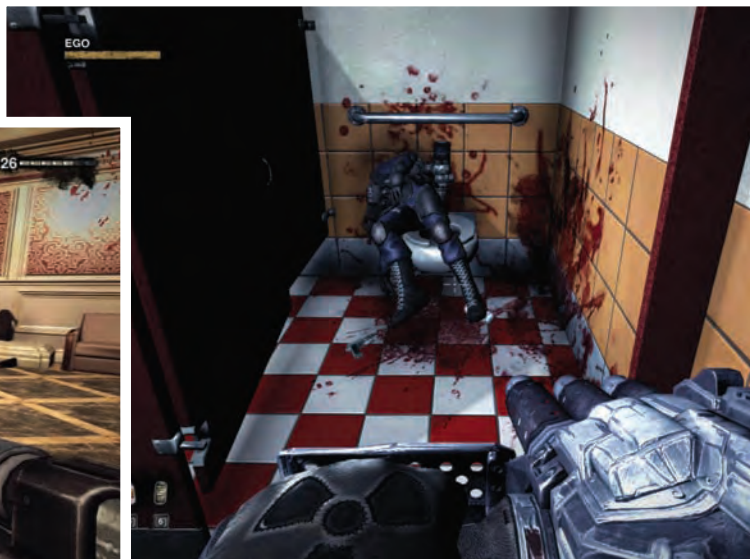
There has never before been a game like this.

It's been fifteen years since *Duke Nukem 3D*. Fifteen. For many gamers out there, and here at NAG, that represents a significant portion of one's life, if not the majority of it. This means that there are two types of people who might play this game: those who have been waiting for it all this time, and those who will treat it like any other game because the first time they picked up a controller, it had dual analogue sticks and was probably used to play a game with *Battle or Duty* in the title. As a member of the old fuddy-duddy segment, the mere fact that *DNF* exists at all is enough for me to tell people to go out and buy it right now, but luckily for you, we'll try to be a little more objective.

So, here it is: *Duke Nukem Forever*. Right from the ugly introductory video which shows you a montage of Duke's finest moments from *Duke Nukem 3D*, you're made well-aware of how

[details]

Platforms:
360 / PC / PS3
Genre:
First-person shooter
Age restriction:
18+
DRM:
Internet connection required [Steam]
Multiplayer:
Local: None
Online: 8 players
Developer:
Gearbox Software
Triptych Games
Piranha Games
3D Realms
Website:
www.dukenukemforever.com
Publisher:
2K Games
Distributor:
Megarom Interactive



awesome you're meant to think this man is. Once you're into the actual game, the sales pitch continues driving home the *Duke* fever. It's 12 years after the events of the first game; Duke is living it up in a Las Vegas penthouse with all the babes, booze and celebrity he could ask for. But the Cycloid mothership that brought the first wave of aliens has stuck around, and people are getting scared that the aliens are preparing for another attack. Lo and behold, they are, and once-again it's up to Duke to save the day. The first few chapters of the game see you getting yourself out of the casinos of Las Vegas and onto the streets; they're focused on how awesome Duke is and packaged into repetitive corridor shooting. Compared to the brief prologue in which you replay the final boss fight from *DN3D* with today's glorious visuals, this part of the game is tedious; only when you're outside and the game finally stops fellingating itself, does it actually start to shine. It's ironic, really, that this so-massively anticipated sequel

does better on its own merits than by shirking off of those of its prequel. It's almost like it's a good game in itself. When it achieves the correct balance between "OMG I'M ACTUALLY PLAYING THIS GAME RIGHT NOW!!!" and giving players meaningful gameplay, then it rocks as hard as Duke's abs, but there are aspects that keep cropping up that will prevent this game from ever being as significant as its predecessor.

Throughout the single player campaign's 4-5 hours of game time, you'll engage in all manner of decidedly Duke-like actions: killing familiar aliens with familiar weapons (and a few new ones), drinking beer and popping 'roids, ogling scantily-clad and eager women, and being a foul-mouthed chauvinist. Make no mistake: *Duke* is not for those sensitive to any of the afore mentioned topics. It's sexist and immature at every opportunity, far more so than *Duke 3D*. It's also firmly set in the old school of level progression and combat, but tries to throw in a few new conventions that don't sit well alongside the old: since



/1/ Plenty of distractions exist to not only entertain you for a few minutes, but finding and interacting with these mini games and items will give you a permanent boost to maximum Ego (health)

/2/ It might handle like a drunk mule, but the Might Foot monster truck is a blast to drive.

/3/ Yeah, that's right; that's an underwater boss fight. Don't run out of air!



when can Duke only carry two weapons at a time? Sure, it adds a tactical element to the game, but that's the last thing one would expect to find here. When this modern approach to shooters is paired with the classic level exploration system of linear progress through isolated environments with a few hidden locations, it leaves us wondering just how many people sat in the Gearbox board room during meetings. It even adds in a few platforming sequences that are fairly amusing, especially as mini-Duke, and when you throw some solid combat on top of all of this, the result is an entertaining action experience that's neither as brainless as the likes of *Serious Sam*, nor as "tactical" as *Bulletstorm*, but forms a happy balance between the two. In fact, compared to any other first-person shooter, I'd say that *DNF* plays the most like *Quake 2*, but that could be the jump pads playing on my nostalgia.

It was mandatory that *DNF* releases with a multiplayer component, and we're pleased to say that it hasn't let us down. Mind you, our requirements were set to the level of "will we be able to shoot our friends with a Shrink Ray?" There are four modes on offer: a free-for-all called

DukeMatch; a team-based variant, Team DukeMatch; a capture-the-flag mode called Capture the Babe; and a headquarters/king-of-the-hill mode called Hail to the King. Each functions as well as can be expected, with the only notable boat-rocker being the controversial Capture the Babe mode in which players must kidnap the opposing team's babe and bring her back to their capture point. Occasionally, the babe will wave her hand in front of your face, preventing you from firing with the already-limited pistol you're forced to wield while carrying her. The only way to prevent this is to slap her. Yes, it's horrible, sexist stuff. We did warn you.

So the big question is "was it worth the wait?" It's impossible to say yes: there is *no* game that could take this long to reach our shelves and live up to all the hype leading up to its release. We're just glad that it is finally here, though, and managed to at least deliver a solid action experience. It lacks innovation, tact and subtlety, and the boss battles are way too easy, but will give you a good few hours of fun – possibly more if the multiplayer strikes your fancy. **NAG**

GeometriX

/ PLUS / Solid combat / Easter eggs / Looks good (on PC) / Decent puzzles
/ MINUS / Limited appeal / Console version issues / Relies too heavily on *DN3D*'s fame

PLAY THIS PIECE OF GAMING HISTORY, EVEN IF IT'S JUST TO SLAG IT OFF.

NAG



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- Assassins of Kings
- Duke Nukem Forever
- Brink
- + More!



BATTLEFIELD 3

Two words, Hands-on multiplayer! Or is that three words?

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If your DVD is missing we are really sorry. The truth is the DVD had to be redone this month after the burner was formatted. This has nothing to do with your particular DVD being missing - that's just bad luck, which is why we're sorry.