



ARCHLORD

EverQuest, meet Highlander

PUBLISHER: Codemasters DEVELOPER: NHN GENRE: MMORPG AVAILABILITY: Retail ESRB RATING: Teen
MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS: 800MHz CPU, 256MB RAM, 4GB hard drive space MULTIPLAYER: Massively so VERSION REVIEWED: Retail Box

REVIEW

By their nature, MMOs ask a lot of their players, and we expect a lot in return. We're not just making a one-time purchase and losing ourselves for a few hours—we're moving into that world. We're creating imaginary lives, setting up shop, making friends, and spending weeks, months, or even years of our time in the place.

This is less like picking up a game and more like buying a summer home. When peanuts can get you a luxury place with a private beach, you're not terribly motivated to save money by vacationing in a ghetto. Sometimes it's better to just stay home... which is why *World of Warcraft* winds up holding half the population, with the rest split between several dozen other games that offer enough local color to draw their own niche community.

To be fair, and to torture the metaphor a little longer, *ArchLord* isn't exactly a slum; it's more of a low-income housing complex in a suburb of Detroit (especially when you consider the game's sudden switch to a fee-free subscription model two months after its U.S. launch). Not a hellish place—but stark, dull, and definitely something you've seen all over the landscape. It's got hot- and cold-running Elves, but that's about it for amenities.

THE OLD GRIND

You're not paying cash for it, but you *are* investing your vacation time. So what's the hook? When you've got graphics that look more like a manga reinterpretation of *Dark Age of Camelot* than a



If you must put big, scary spikes all over your mount, we recommend *not* pointing them at the guy in the saddle.

current-generation MMO, PVP that comes down to who carries the most red potions, and a 100-level grind of the sort that epitomizes Korean MMO design, there better be one hell of a carrot at the end of that stick.

That carrot is the titular ArchLord. At the end of 60 levels and a series of raids, one player attains godhood...more or less. The ruling ArchLord gets a castle, a dragon to ride around on, armor that makes him twice as tall as everyone else, the ability to control the weather, and the power to just generally kick great big bunches of ass. It's a great gig if you can get it—unfortunately, only one opening exists per

server, until the ArchLord's three-week reign expires and somebody else gets a shot.

It's a pretty ludicrous system. It's nice to have something crazy to aspire to, you know, *on the side*. In this case, it's something so central that the game is actually named after it. *ArchLord* doesn't offer much else to do besides grind your way through the levels as yet another Gothic Lolita-looking moon elf, and aside from the poorly implemented rule-the-world gimmick, we're left playing a dated game with limited classes, a lot of grind, and a miniscule chance of something cool at the end if you really throw yourself into it. Not exactly our cup of mead. **Scott Sharkey**

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VERDICT

- It's good to be the king.
- The game is about two years old—and it looks and plays like it's even older.

4/10

BAD

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