



Time to send your fireball-hurling red minions behind enemy lines.

PUBLISHER: Codemasters DEVELOPER: Triumph Studios GENRE: Action-Strategy AVAILABILITY: Retail ESRB RATING: Teen
 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS: 2.4GHz CPU, 512MB RAM, 4.5GB hard drive space (gamepad recommended) MULTIPLAYER: 2 players VERSION REVIEWED: Near-Final Reviewable

REVIEW

Y Being evil? Hell, that's easy. Letting players unleash their id and make 'em laugh at the same time? *That's* the hard part. Yet, between ordering the demise of countless sheep and gutting rabid unicorns, that's exactly what's happening in third-person action-adventure *Overlord*.

Many games try dangling that cause-and-effect karmic pendulum, yet it rarely fazes; you don't care what happens. Embracing that, *Overlord* essentially says, "Go on. Be the most insufferably evil bastard on the planet, and we won't punish you any more than we would if you actually decided to help people." Saving the town's food supply is an option, sure—the people will give you a hero's welcome. On the other hand, hoarding the stash and killing witnesses can lead to additional side quests...like, say, kidnapping women to create your own harem. Since evil deeds unlock so many more cool options, the challenge becomes doing the "right" thing (achieving a zero-percent corruption rating's easier said than done).

THE POWER BEHIND THE THRONE

Still, *Overlord* isn't really about the overlord. Yes, you can buy weaponry or kit the castle with everything from torture gear to coffee tables, but your gang of adorably sadistic minions steal the show. Point in a direction and let 'em go; they know to attack targets, loot the area, or move objects...and if you're low on health, your subjects willingly jump into a nearby shrine and die to restore you. At first, they're fodder to fling into fights, consequences be damned. If they die, you just call up more. Something happens along the way, though: You get attached to the little guys.

You want to keep that pumpkin-headed, dress-wearing imp alive—not only because you've had him since the beginning, but because new gear means a more powerful minion. Besides, the aforementioned "meat grinder" strategy only works for so long. Tactics eventually come into play with new minion types: Reds hurl fireballs, greens excel at stealth, and blues hang back as healers. Suddenly,

SOMETHING HAPPENS ALONG THE WAY: YOU GET ATTACHED TO THE LITTLE GUYS.

combat requires more finesse than just throwing those brown scrapper minions at every dilemma.

The problem is that you need finer control than the keyboard-and-mouse setup offers. Play enough battles requiring simultaneous attacks from a gremlin horde and your antihero, and you'll notice a huge difference when using a gamepad. As is now becoming standard, *Overlord* maps its controller layout to the ubiquitous Xbox 360 pad—the left stick moves the master, and sweeping the right stick gives total control of the minions. So if you don't already own a gamepad, add that to the price tag.

Your flunkies also embody *Overlord's* one weak point: Loosen the iron grip, and they'll stupidly drown themselves chasing after a bug...or race headlong into overwhelming odds. Maybe the boneheaded A.I. is intentional; maybe they're supposed to be feral lemmings, and the game's forcing you to slow down for tactics—but I ain't buying it. With a throng of mischievous pets as the game's centerpiece, you'd expect 'em to be a little better housebroken. I lost track of how many times I voluntarily restarted from a checkpoint to keep one doopey übergremlin alive. Then again, any game that makes me want to restart—rather than making me have to restart—can't be all bad. **•Darren Gladstone**

VERDICT

- A genuinely different—and darkly funny—game.
- No map means getting lost frequently; boneheaded minions occasionally off themselves accidentally.

8/10

GOOD



Here we're ransacking Melvin's kitchen and equipping the horde with whatever's lying around—including butcher knives and pumpkins.

GEARS OF WAR EXCLUSIVE!

PC VERSION OF EPIC'S MASTERPIECE REVEALED • NEW CAMPAIGN MISSIONS!



FALLOUT 3
BETHEDA'S MIND-BLOWING RPG!

PAGE \ 26



Games for Windows[®]

ULTIMATE PC GAMING AUTHORITY \ THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

EXCLUSIVE PC FIRST LOOK

GEARS OF WAR

BIGGER AND BETTER THAN THE 360 VERSION

NEW MISSIONS
NEW MULTIPLAYER
MODE AND MAPS
MAP EDITOR AND MORE!

MULTIPLAYER DETAILS

CALL OF DUTY 4:
MODERN WARFARE
NO NAZIS FOR YOU!

SPECIAL REPORT

ARE GAMES GOOD
FOR YOUR BRAIN?
NEW STUDIES SAY YES
(TELL YOUR PARENTS!)



FIRST PC PREVIEW
MERCENARIES 2
EXCLUSIVE SCREENS,
CO-OP DETAILS



REVIEWED
OVERLORD
SAURON + PIKMIN
+ GREMLINS = YAY!



TECH
**POOR MAN'S GUIDE
TO PC GRAPHICS**
TWEAK YOUR CRAPPY RIG!

ZIFF DAVIS MEDIA[™]



AUGUST 2007 ISSUE 09
\$4.99 U.S. \$6.99 Canada

GFW.1UP.COM 1UP NETWORK

Display Until August 28