

The Saboteur

'Cuz what you see you might not get

Somehow, blowing things up never gets old—especially blowing up Nazis. Sixty-five years after the fall of the Third Reich, it's still a gaming favorite.

As the titular Saboteur, Irish mechanic turned French freedom-fighter Sean Devlin, you throw a wrench into the gears of the Nazi occupation in 1940... except this wrench is actually a wad of TNT that detonates in a spectacular fireball. The game equips you with an ample pile of explosives and turns you loose in a target-rich open-world version of Nazi-occupied Paris (complete with Eiffel Tower and Louvre) and its surrounding rural areas. Much of the joy of playing comes from planting bombs on poorly guarded Nazi equipment and casually strolling out of the blast radius before it blows, then watching it crumble down, jackbooted thugs and all.

Sure, the story, which follows Sean's quest for revenge against a sadistic S.S. officer/race car driver is a little hammy and more than a little absurd, but it doesn't take itself too seriously. In fact, it works well with the roguish Indiana Jones-style attitude of the character. The voice actors play along, delivering entertaining performances with caricature Irish, French, and German accents.

There's a touch of *Schindler's List* here, too. Until you liberate them by completing a few missions, Parisian neighborhoods under the heel of the Third Reich have the color drained



Blowing up Nazi equipment gives you resources you can use to buy bombs that you can use to blow up more Nazi equipment. Everybody wins! (Except the Nazis.)

from them, except for important items like weapons and red swastika armbands. The effect gives *The Saboteur* a distinct and very cool look, as well as effectively helping you spot threats quickly in a firefight.

Sean borrows driving and shooting skills from *Grand Theft Auto*, wall-climbing and stealth-killing abilities from *Assassin's Creed*, and a knack for Nazi uniform-stealing from *Hitman*. All of these elements blend together surprisingly well, allowing you the freedom to approach your bombing and assassination targets by running and gunning, sniping from the rooftops, infiltrating in disguise, or simply bombing their cars. A few story missions are designed like corridor shooters, such as a battle through the inside of a burning zeppelin, but

they're usually brief and enjoyable. Simplistic enemy AI and rapidly recharging player health keep the third-person Nazi-killing action fast-paced and cartoonish, and it feels great on a mouse and keyboard. Driving feels a little too "bumper car" in its lack of damage modeling or consequences for running down Parisian civilians, though, and the menus and map screen could've used some more work to improve mouse-friendliness.

It's unfortunate that the campaign of this single-player-only game doesn't finish as strong—the story deteriorates in the third act, failing to tie up loose ends, and lazily concluding Sean's revenge quest. But that doesn't interfere with the core enjoyment of blowing things up, so it's easy to let those flaws slide.

However, in a staggering failure of quality-assurance testing, out of the box *The Saboteur* simply won't work with ATI graphics cards. As of this writing, EA has released a beta version of a patch to remedy the problem that has shown some success in tests, but until it's finalized, cautious Radeon owners shouldn't risk sabotaging themselves. —DAN STAPLETON



Sneaking up behind an enemy and breaking his neck avoids messy getaway chases.

VERDICT		6
THE SABOTEUR		
<p>+ FRENCH KISS</p> <p>Fun with explosives; fast-paced action; black-and-white graphical filter.</p>	<p>+ JERRY LEWIS</p> <p>Huge ATI crash/v-sync bug; weak third act.</p>	
<p>\$49, www.pandemicstudios.com/thesaboteur, ESRB: M</p>		



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