



• *Anniversary* is rife with familiar scenes from the first game, redone with graphics that don't suck ass.

# TOMB RAIDER: ANNIVERSARY

A worthy celebration

PUBLISHER: Eidos Interactive DEVELOPER: Crystal Dynamics GENRE: Action-Adventure AVAILABILITY: Retail, E-tail ([www.steampowered.com](http://www.steampowered.com)) ESRB RATING: Teen  
 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS: 1.4GHz CPU, 256MB RAM (512MB with Vista), 4GB hard drive space (gamepad recommended) MULTIPLAYER: None VERSION REVIEWED: Near-Final Reviewable

## REVIEW

**Y Poor Lara Croft.** She's spent an awful lot of time getting kicked around by her creators. But last year's *Legend* went a long way toward redeeming Lara and compensating for the many wrongs done to her and the franchise. Now, *Tomb Raider: Anniversary* proves that was no fluke.

As a retelling of the original story, *Anniversary* is all about archeology and exploration—in short, *raiding tombs*. In fact, *Anniversary* feels like what *Tomb Raider* was always intended to be. The story is the same, the levels are named the same, and they're set in the same areas...but virtually everything else is different. Gone are the vast black, cubist spaces of the first game, replaced by enormous, gorgeous, detailed levels with plenty of opportunities for vertical movement and vertigo-inducing acrobatics.

I do miss those open spaces, though; being in the middle of a small pool of light in a seemingly limitless cavern gave a sense of scale and exploration that *Anniversary* doesn't quite match. But that's a small complaint that's more than made up for by the excellent pacing and level design, which provide some nice scares and genuinely tense moments.

### LEGENDARY

Playing to the strengths of *Legend's* engine, *Anniversary* features an exceptionally acrobatic Lara. She scales ledges, leaps onto columns, and grapples along walls at a furious pace clearly inspired by the recent *Prince of Persia* games. Trouble is, *Anniversary's* got no Rewind button. At first, that's not much of a problem, as the focus is more on exploration and puzzles. But as you move

into the third act, things start to get considerably more challenging, building up to an absolutely vicious endgame, which features a positively sadistic series of traps and fingernail grabs (yes, you are correct: trying to play this without a gamepad is an excruciating experience).

It's not as infuriating as it *could* be; a generous checkpoint system mitigates the frustration as much as possible. But one downside to moving from the original games' square-by-square movement to a more fluid system is that it can make for some annoying quirks when executing difficult jumps. You'll hit areas where you have to get the angle *just* right...and find yourself missing the jump over and over as you try to figure out the precise positioning. This sort of issue is compounded by the squirrely, hyperactive camera. You're not *constantly* fighting it, but it intrudes just enough that you'll notice it more than you should.

Looking at *Anniversary* as a whole, though, these issues are fairly negligible. Overall, it's a solid, entertaining game with a hell of a lot of fun stuff packed in (including a fairly extensive bonus quest set in Croft Manor). It may not offer the same degree of wonder you may remember if you were around for the very first game, but it's a damn fine homage—and a damn fine game in its own right.

• Joe Rybicki



• *Tomb Raider: Anniversary* has nice cinematic scenes...it's just too bad you have to fight the camera to switch from "cinematic" to "usable."

### VERDICT

• Gorgeous levels; some interesting puzzles.

• Squirrely camera and controls.

8.5/10

GOOD

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AS A RETELLING OF THE ORIGINAL STORY, ANNIVERSARY IS ALL ABOUT ARCHEOLOGY AND EXPLORATION—IN SHORT, RAIDING TOMBS.



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