

Video Game Reviews: More magic, massacres bring 'God' sequel to life

by *Jeb_Haught*

Game: "God of War II"

Publisher: Sony

System: Sony PlayStation 2

Cost: \$50

ESRB rating: M

Review rating: 4 stars

Just when you thought that Spartan warriors couldn't get any tougher (as evidenced in the brutal movie "300"), along comes the only Spartan to reach the title of "deity."

At the start of "God of War II," Kratos, the self-proclaimed divine being, sits restless atop Mount Olympus. Unbeknownst to the mighty Spartan, the gods were conspiring in the shadows.

After Zeus betrays him, Kratos must exact revenge by changing the very flow of time. Along the way, the exalted potentate must slay the usual assortment of Greek monsters such as Cyclops, Medusa and Minotaur as well as skeletons, armored orc-like creatures and plenty of ungodly fiends who are sure to haunt your nightmares.

'GOD OF WAR II' - Find out what it's like smiting thine enemies as the most powerful of all supernatural beings by playing 'God of War II.' CNS Photo courtesy of Sony.

BRING ON THE WARRIOR - Be a Spartan warrior and slay skeletons and ungodly fiends with magic maneuvers. CNS Photo courtesy of Sony.

'WING ISLAND' - Sadly, unreliable controls, below-average graphics and a bland presentation send this game into a tailspin. CNS Photo courtesy of Konami.

GROUNDED - A game about birds flying planes may make you cry fowl, despite Wii remote action. CNS Photo courtesy of Konami.

Part of the fun of the original title, "God of War," was figuring out the most stylish way to defeat enemies with the plethora of ultra-destructive moves at Kratos' fingertips. The sequel ramps up the action with more weapons and magic maneuvers. Now, players can slaughter hordes of enemies with a deadly, double-edged spear; a magical bow and arrow; earthquake blasts; and the most gruesome two-handed hammer to ever grace a TV screen.

Perhaps the most noticeable new ability is flying on the back of Pegasus. While the computer determines the direction of flight, the player is free to maneuver around the screen, attack enemies and even jump onto the backs of rival flying steeds.

"God of War II" looks unbelievable for a PlayStation 2 title. Just like its predecessor, this sequel also sports ultra-stylish art design, great voice acting and a fantastic musical score.

What's it like smiting thine enemies as the most powerful of all super-natural beings? Play "God of War II" and you'll find out.

Game: "Wing Island"

Publisher: Konami

System: Nintendo Wii

Cost: \$40

ESRB rating: E

Review rating: 2 stars

Expanding upon the many flying mini-games available for the Nintendo Wii is Konami's flight game, "Wing Island."

In this unusual title, players perform a variety of nonviolent missions on a remote, mystical island as a young bird pilot in a world ruled by birds. Sadly, unreliable controls, below-average graphics and a bland presentation send this game into a tailspin.

You would think that flying an airplane would feel natural when using the Wii's motion-sensing controller, but not in this game. Don't get me wrong - flying around using basic turns is fun, but attempting anything more can be quite frustrating.

Performing 180-degree turns and changing flight formations both require "flicks" of the Wii remote, but they aren't recognized half of the time. Maybe the game manual should be changed from saying, "Flicking the Wii remote will perform a 180-degree turn" to, "Flicking the Wii remote may perform a 180-degree turn."

Even on a high-definition television, this game looks worse than most PS2 or Xbox games. In fact, the graphics are so pixelated that during the cow-search mission, I couldn't tell the difference between bovines and humans until I practically landed on top of them.

Add a lame mission system in which quests are presented in a list rather than being given by characters and "Wing Island" becomes an experience that only indiscriminate gamers will enjoy.

RATING KEY

4 stars - Must have

3 stars - Pretty good

2 stars - So-so

1 star - Don't waste your time

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Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB)

E: Everyone

T: Teen (13 and older)

E10-plus: (Everyone 10 and older)

M: Mature (17 and older)

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