



MORTAL Kombat 11 fighters are like buses as you wait for ever and three get announced in a row. After the news last week of Netherrealm adding Kabal and D'Vorah they have now revealed that Jade is joining the ranks of the new game. Mortal Kombat 11 smashes its way out on April 23 on Xbox One, PS4, and PC.



TEKKEN fans better brace themselves as it's been announced that series favourite Julia and the highly anticipated Walking Dead's Negan will be hitting the game next Thursday. Negan joins the game with a more TV show look than the comics as he is based on the Jeffrey Dean Morgan version from the smash AMC show.

# Battle royale is a big thing



**HARD Times** Clothing has just unveiled their latest design called Void, which is inspired by the Apex legend character Wraith. Void is available to pre-order now at [hardtimesclothing.co.uk](http://hardtimesclothing.co.uk). Costs £22.

## Apex Legends

Xbox, PS4 and PC FREE

Spot a cool gun, tag it. You get the picture. It's pretty slick. Another big difference over other Battle Royale titles is that if a teammate falls you can grab a chip from their body and run to a respawn point dotted around the good-sized map (made up of different style areas) and bring them back to life.

Graphically the game looks and feels like Titanfall (no bad thing) and the sound is solid throughout with a good level of voice acting. So far Apex Legend has made a huge impact. It has knocked Fortnite off top spot as the most-viewed game on Twitch as well as boasting over 25million players so far. It's early days but this looks like the next big thing. ★★★★★



STUART CULLEN

# DISNEY GET BETTER

## Kingdom Hearts III

Xbox and PS4 £49.99

THERE is nothing worse than having to wait for something — and if you are a Kingdom Hearts fan it's been an arduous 17-year journey to get to the final instalment. But sometimes the wait is worth it. Kingdom Hearts III is an epic crossover between JRPG masters, Square Enix, and the house of mouse, Disney. Hardcore fans will be eager to get stuck back into the adventure and I'd advise newcomers to jump on board too.

The game sees you filling the boots of series hero Sora who is out to save, well, everyone and is aided by classic Disney characters Donald Duck and Goofy. We suggest heading to YouTube to watch a few complete recap videos (which often run well over the half-hour) as there is a LOT of story here. It's easy to get lost and really not understand what's going on.

But that said, heading to each Disney-themed world is a joy — Toy Story, Monsters Inc, Pirates of the Caribbean, Tangled and Hercules to name but a few — and each really does have that trademark House of Mouse charm as you meet iconic characters and help them with their own individual tales (which are way easier to understand than the main one).

Combat is bags of fun, if a little easy, as you wield your key blade and cast a host of different spells. There are also tonnes of mini games and activities in each world to keep you busy when not pushing the tale forward.

Graphically the game is amazing — it's as simple as that. Soundtrack and voice are also outstanding throughout too.

Kingdom Hearts III is the end of a tale fans have been waiting for. For newcomers — stick with it and this is a joyful game. And if you're a Disney fan you'll have a blast catching up with old friends. ★★★★★

STUART CULLEN



# Creating an apocalypse is awesome

## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

IMITATION is the sincerest form of flattery...or so they say.

The team behind Far Cry certainly got the point when rival post-apocalyptic first person shooter Rage 2 issued a very similar marketing poster, below left, ahead of the game's launch.

Ubisoft Montreal narrative director James Nadiger, below, insisted they got the joke, but all the games had to find their own identity. He said: "That Rage 2 poster gave us all a good chuckle. The cool thing about the apocalypse genre is that everyone gets to put their own signature spin on it."

"For Far Cry, that's a lawless, but colourful open world, filled with dangerous predators, strange people, and random dangers as you take up the fight against Mickey and Lou."

The crew always planned for the game to be a standalone sequel in the series, with the ability to attract newcomers to the fun. James added: Far Cry New Dawn was always designed to be a "standalone sequel" to Far Cry 5, with a new player character, a new story, and new villains in Mickey and Lou.

"We wanted everyone to be able to jump in and enjoy this game, even if you've never played FC5 or any other game in the series."

Part of the development was creating new challenges. James explained: "We're excited to introduce several new gameplay features — light RPG mechanics in our weapons and enemies, players can craft stronger weapons and we also have outpost escalation and expeditions, which are replayable challenges where players can get the best crafting materials and rewards."

He added: "When we decided that one of the endings of Far Cry 5 — which was centred around a doomsday cult — would actually be an end-of-the-world scenario, we got very excited. It opened the door to take the series into the post-apocalypse, which we've wanted to do for some time now, and also gave us a chance to revisit old friends but in a drastically different set of circumstances."

The team also decided to ring the changes on the gameplay and maps. Hope County no longer has a large population and the devastation is obvious. James said: "Mother Nature has reclaimed the space aggressively. In addition, people are forced to build makeshift shelters using anything they can, which further transforms the scenery."

He added: "It's a lot of fun to see how the locations have changed. So much so that we actually included a side mission where you hold up photographs of what places used to look like before the Collapse."

STUART CULLEN



# Hey good nuking



## THE post-apocalypse is all the rage just now in gaming.

Not wanting to miss out, Ubisoft has given their Far Cry series an end-of-the-world makeover with New Dawn.

But with it being less than a year since the last full-fat Far Cry game and the number of fun DLCs that came with it the question is: Is it too soon for another standalone title in the much-loved series?

**Spoiler warning:** New Dawn takes part some 17 years after the events of Far Cry 5 which saw nukes being dropped on the US. The first thing that hits you is it's such a short time since the bombs drop to be returning to the world as most titles like this are set hundreds of years after cataclysmic events.

But it does mean that there are a number of returning characters this time out from Far Cry 5 who have aged and lived through the nuking.

You fill the boots of a voiceless hero known only as Captain. He is the right-hand man of Thomas Rush, who is a bit of a hero in the world as he helps the needy and rebuilds towns.

But all is not well in Hope County as a gang of outlaws called the Highwaymen rule the land led by twins Mickey and Lou.

While traveling to Hope County to help, Rush's train is attacked by the

## Far Cry: New Dawn

Xbox, PS4 and PC £37.99

twins and things go sideways. From there it all kicks off as you fight to liberate the county and stop the twins in that signature Far Cry way.

As tales go it's OK but not one of the best in the series. The twins are good enemies but lack the ultimate bad guy vibe you got from past bosses. Think more Pagan Min and less Vaas and you get the gist.

On the gameplay front, there is a definite Far Cry 5 feel (no bad thing) and its ultimately just a reskin of last year's release but the team at Ubisoft has added a few new mechanics to freshen things up. You still do all the staple actions from main to side missions, as well as recruiting buddies to fight along with you, but you will spot the map is a good bit smaller than the main one in Far Cry 5.

In an interesting move the game now has an RPG damage system so each weapon can do X damage and some enemies will just soak up your fire and laugh. It's a strange feeling as it sees you having to find resources to upgrade to get to the high-tier weapons that do the real damage. This system does mean that at times you'll face enemies you can't really kill.

This impacts on the new outpost system. Once you

have taken an outpost you can give it up to get some resources but with each return the enemies get stronger and then you need better guns. You soon hit a wall that needs you to complete more side missions to get the gear needed to clear out the Level 3 elite baddies.

The perk system also returns — you'll unlock new skills and abilities to help you get the upper hand in most fights — and there is a new tier of unlocks that makes you almost a superhero. But this is linked to story and we'll leave it at that.

The other big addition is the expeditions out of Hope County, which are fun. They also give you a peek at how the nukes affected the rest of the US as well.

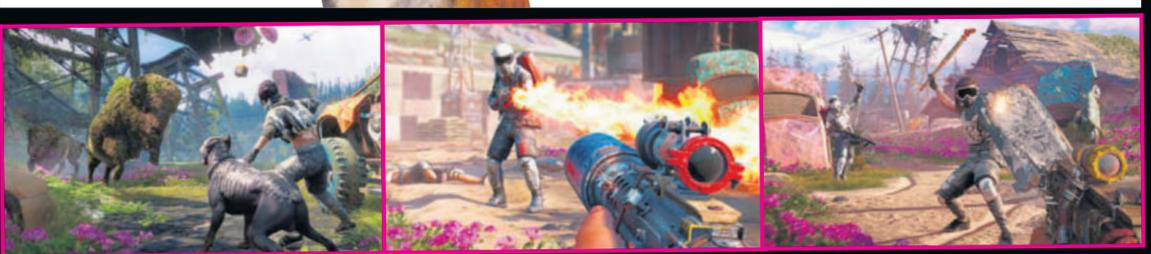
Graphically the game looks like Far Cry 5 but with the colour palette turned up to 12 as the "wasteland" is covered in lush growth and bursts of flowers.

Soundtrack-wise, it's decent but not really a standout. The voice acting is good with characters showing real emotions at times.

If you are a diehard fan, odds are you'll be playing it just now. If you enjoyed Far Cry 5 this continues the journey, though you will feel like you have seen a lot of what's on show already. But that doesn't affect the Far Cry fun factor, which is here in spades.

If anything it would have been nice for Ubisoft to mix up Hope County a bit more than what we got. Maybe throw in a mutant or two. ★★★★★

STUART CULLEN



## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

MICROSOFT maestro Joseph Staten has been one of the linchpins behind the Halo series — but has insisted he WON'T be heading back.

He said: "The team at 343 Industries is doing terrific work and, these days, I'm happy just being a fan of the franchise. It's been terrific to play the remastered versions of the original Halo games and I'm looking forward to seeing where they take it with Halo: Infinite."

Halo and Joseph's latest project, Crackdown, will always be linked after the first game was made the exclusive gateway to playing the Halo 3 beta in 2007. But Joseph told STUART CULLEN he has kicked back the idea that Halo actually set up the Crackdown success story. He said: "Certainly, the beta for Halo 3 helped draw a larger audience to Crackdown but the original game absolutely stood on its own as a terrific action-platformer with a unique, over-the-top, sandbox experience. I fell in love with Crackdown back when I was working on Halo 3 and it's been a real pleasure helping to bring the newest game to life."

Joseph, above, also likes the comic series link. He added: "The comic book story takes place right before the events of Crackdown 3, during a devastating Blackout attack in San Reno.

"We're always looking for ways to tie the extended universe stories together, so San Reno is actually the setting of one of the Wrecking Zone multiplayer maps — and you can see the Blackout attack taking place as you play the game. This kind of connectivity makes the world feel deeper and more cohesive."

But he insisted the links with actor Terry Crews won't lead to silver-screen action. He said: "We're excited to release the four-issue comic, but we aren't sharing any other franchise plans at this time."

members of Activision staff being affected by job losses. This news comes despite the firm's CEO Bobby Kotick recently announcing that the company's financial results for 2018 "were the best in our history, we didn't realise our full potential".



BAD news hit the industry last week as Activision Blizzard announced that the rumoured cuts to staff have been confirmed. As part of its quarterly earnings call to investors, the firm said it will be laying off approximately eight per cent of its workforce. That translates as about 770

members of Activision staff being affected by job losses. This news comes despite the firm's CEO Bobby Kotick recently announcing that the company's financial results for 2018 "were the best in our history, we didn't realise our full potential".

CAPCOM have just released two retro costumes for the Resident Evil 2 remake. You can grab a '98 get-up for both Leon and Claire for FREE if you fancy a hit of nostalgia.

NINTENDO have joined the Battle Royale ranks with a very unusual partnership. The firm has just released Tetris 99 — which is a new version of the classic falling block puzzler for Switch. The game sees 99 players battling it out to be crowned the winner in a mostly traditional take on the classic formula — but with a neat

twist. You can see how all the other 98 players are doing at the same time as you play PLUS they're all able to throw challenges at your board by sending junk to stop you as the block-dropping competition heats up. Tetris 99 is available now to download and play FREE for members of the Nintendo Online subscription. Get on it!

BURNOUT fans are in for a treat as Three Fields Studios have announced that the game's spiritual successor Dangerous Driving is set to come out on April 9.

EA and BioWare's Anthem has landed this week and to celebrate the firms teamed up with Hollywood director Neill Blomkamp — the man behind District 9 and Elysium to make a live action short film called Conviction. It is more like



a trailer for something much bigger — the 3min 45sec clip is a look into a world the movie guru could bring to life if given the go ahead. Blomkamp is no stranger to gaming-based movies having been linked to the failed Halo project in the past.

TOP 5 GAMES THIS WEEK  
1 Far Cry New Dawn  
2 Metro Exodus  
3 Red Dead Redemption 2  
4 Jump Force  
5 FIFA 19

A COPY of Super Mario Bros on the NES has just sold for an eye-watering \$100,150 — around about £78k. The pristine sealed copy was sold at auction for a record-breaking price, making it the largest sum of money ever paid for a single video game graded for its unique conditions. But why was it so special? Well this edition of Nintendo's



1985 NES classic comes from the earliest US batch which was made to test the market in New York and Los Angeles before the console's wider release. What also makes that run unique is a circular black foil Nintendo sticker sealing the game box. We'd say you best dig out those old NES games. You never know. You could be quids in!



## NEW MUSIC

By Jim Gellatly

### ARCADES

WHO: Matt Thomson, Max Graham. WHERE: London. FOR FANS OF: Zedd, Dua Lipa, Anne-Marie.

JIM SAYS: The Anglo-Scottish production duo have emerged from the shadows to create their own stunning electronic pop.

For the past three years Matt Thomson and Max Graham have produced and remixed tracks for other artists under different names. Their impressive list of credits includes Julia Michaels, Ellie Goulding and Years & Years. But Ayrshire lad Matt and Londoner Max formed Arcades in 2017 as a way of releasing their original material.

Matt, from Prestwick, moved to London with Parka, the indie rock outfit he fronted in the 2000s. He recalled: "It was high-energy indie punk, which was great fun to play live and took us all round the world. It was classic three-chord punk written in five minutes, whereas now I get so into the intricate production that I could easily spend a month working on a single song!"

Max also had a band background before turning to production. He said: "I spent years in studios, just engineering sessions for artists. I got my first music job in New York and learned so much living there."

Matt added: "We've both worked on a lot of different genres but kept key elements and techniques to form our own sound and style."

Ex-Parka frontman Matt has yet to take the limelight with Arcades. The glorious debut single In The Air featured One Little Indian signing Sarah Walk, while the wonderful vocals on the current single Fragile come from rising star Sofia.

They've also been working with Scots X Factor couple Ryan Lawrie and Emily Middlemas.

Matt revealed: "We've probably collaborated with more than 100 artists but Ryan and Emily were two of our favourites to work with."

"We've written loads with them and they both feature on what will hopefully be future singles of ours."

Arcades' support team includes manager James F Reynolds, himself an acclaimed producer. And it was his work with Glasgow band Prides that led to Arcades netting a record deal with Nick Gattfield.

A musician with Dexys Midnight Runners in the early 80s, Nick was boss of Sony Music UK before he founded Twin Music Inc in 2015.

Matt told me: "James was mixing an album for Prides, who are also on Twin. He introduced us to Nick and we started off by doing production and remixes for some of his acts. But he was keen to hear our original stuff. We played some demos and he told us he'd sign us on the spot!"

Having previously overseen the signings of Radiohead, Blur and Amy Winehouse, Nick reckons he's on to another winner. He said: "So much pop today is formulaic. But Arcades bring a distinct style — not to mention a killer instinct for a hit."

MORE: [www.facebook.com/arcadesuk](http://www.facebook.com/arcadesuk)

● JIM presents a weekly showcase of New Music on Amazing Radio, Sundays, 2-4pm.

[www.amazingradio.com](http://www.amazingradio.com)  
[www.jimgellatly.com](http://www.jimgellatly.com)

Watch a video of the band at: [thescottsun.co.uk](http://thescottsun.co.uk)