



IT'S been a 20-year wait but Earthworm Jim fans have finally got the news they wanted — he's coming back. Better still, the original creators will be at the helm as they are reuniting for a new

game. However, there is a catch...the game isn't being developed for the current crop of consoles or the PC. It's being built for the Amico — a new Intellivision console that is due out in October 2020.



MANY will know Steve McNeil from Dara O'Brian's Go 8 Bit but the stand-up is a proper gamer and has just released a book on the golden period of computer games. Hey! Listen! see

Steve trace games between the early 70s to the late 90s, looking at the good, the bad and the downright rank. Hey! Listen! is available now from all good book shops priced at £14.99.



FORMULA'S RIGHT

HANDS-ON PREVIEW

F1 2019

Xbox One, PS4 and PC

FORMULA One is an ever-changing landscape — from the cars to the drivers, even to the rules.

So it's fitting that a game based on the sport will go down the same road. And, as the series is built on yearly instalments, those changes keep things fresh.

F1 2019 may still be a few months away, but we were lucky enough to get hands on with an early build at an exclusive event in Hamburg this week.

The first thing that hits you is just how much sharper and crisper it is from the start. It is so easy to navigate.

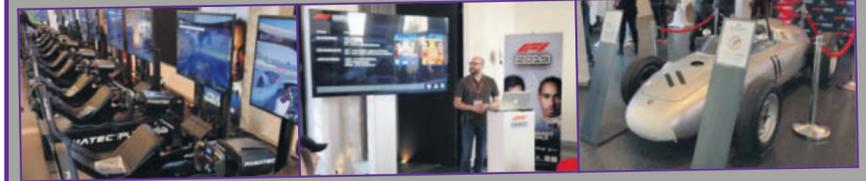
The build we played had a section of track to test with a full roster of cars and drivers.

For the first time you can even race in Formula 2 with the full 2018 grid available from launch.

The 2019 season drivers and cars will be added later as a free update.

F2 has different rules and regulations and it is the breeding ground for the next generation of F1 drivers.

The new game also has a strong focus on rivalries in the sport — and fans will love the Ayrton Senna and Alain Prost



RACING kit specialists Fanatec used the Hamburg event to show off a stunning set of wheels. Star of the show was the new Podium Racing Wheel F1.

They also had their first full rig set-up. The wheel has more buttons, dials and lights than a fighter jet. It feels and looks great with 10 levels of feedback ranging from easy to skip arm day at the gym. It's the first direct drive system for PS4 with a peak torque of 20Nm that

matches the real thing in cars using power steering.

As for the prototype, it's fair to say the rig is a snug fit for some, but it's a solid bit of kit. Want it? You had better start saving — the wheel alone will cost you £1,288 from fanatec.com

The full set — with wheel, racing rig and PC — is being touted as north of £5,000. That's a scary number but this is a world apart from anything else out there. It's like the real thing.



ZAP the code to see the reveal trailer with legends Ayrton Senna and Alain Prost.

on you working your way through the ranks to the F1 paddock.

But it's not just a single player affair — eSport will play a large part now and it has its own dedicated area on the main menu. From there, you'll not only be able to watch live races but also take part in weekly events to bag rewards like new designs for your car.

It is not on Forza levels just yet, but F1 2019 will be the first title to let you fully customise your car and your driver from his helmet to his gloves, boots and race suit.

Codemasters want it to allow players to express themselves online and hopes are high that it will take off in eSport.

If it is as big as they hope, Codemasters will add more layers further down the line.

For those looking to be more of a video editor and capture their epic racing moments, the replay system has been reworked with theatre mode.

That lets you edit clips as well as upload them to a number of social media outlets.

F1 2019 is shaping up to be one of the strongest instalments in the series.

There is something for everyone from the casual player to a more hardcore crowd.

This is definitely a title that should rev your engine when it launches on June 28 on Xbox One, PS4 and PC.

STUART CULLEN



Kombat klass is winning combo

PRODUCER Matt Burke knew his NetherRealm team were treading a fine line with Mortal Kombat 11 — thrilling hardcore fans and bringing new gamers.

But he believes they have managed the feat in style. He told **STUART CULLEN**: "I think that MK11 may be the most accessible title we have done — we have added a whole new tutorial system that walks you through an attack to doing special moves to get them into the game."

"We also get really in-depth if you want to dive that deep. We show how to do air combos and how to extend combos with a special move as well as explaining frame data.

"I really try to explain every aspect of the game in simple terms. Where we do have to use fighting game jargon, then we explain it so you can understand it. For example, if you were watching a stream and they said that was 'punishable', you'd be like 'oh yeah, I know what that means'."

MK11 looks to take the best of the previous games and shake it up.

Matt, right, admitted: "We have removed the run mechanic but added crushing blows which happen on the fight line if you meet certain conditions. The gameplay is focused around poking and trying to pull off your crushing blow to do big damage."

"There is now an offensive and defensive meter so you can spend more on offense. We have also added gear and tonnes of new modes, so it is very much a new experience."

The fighters have also been tweaked. Matt added: "Custom variations is a big new feature. At the start of the game everyone's equitable abilities are unlocked and you can really build your own version of a character. You may decide you want a better projectile attack or way to air dash or you may want armour on your character so they can absorb a hit."

"You can build any character to suit how you want to play. The gear sets are more cosmetic — you can build the look of your character so they stand out when you go online.

"Towers of time is also new. We have

towers that change over every hour and every week — and that means you'll have to fight in different ways to unlock new gear and skins."

Even the fan favourites did not escape the makeover and Matt believes that was vital to the new game's success.

He said: "They have all changed a lot. Look at Scorpion — he didn't have swords in MK1, 2 and 3 but now he has some cool blades and throws his spear around and attacks instead of just pulling enemies closer."

"Sub Zero makes ice axes and ice walls. It's really cool to see the roots of a character and move forward."

A key element in MK games has been guest fighters — with the likes of Predator, Hellboy and Freddy Krueger in MK X. None have been revealed for the new game yet, but Matt is up for some more crossover magic. He said: "We have a lot of internal discussions on who to add but sometimes people ask us."

"It's a real fun process working with other companies — seeing if the essence of their character is coming through but also fitting into the MK universe."

It's also safe to say that fatalities are staying brutal, bloody and hard to watch. Matt admitted: "A lot of the inspiration is that we are all a bit crazy in that room."

"We are inspired by a lot of things like other games and things we have done in the past as well as trying to switch things up a bit."

The eSports revolution will also play a huge part in the game's future. Matt insisted: "I hope this will be our biggest eSports title to date. We always like the eSports side of things and love seeing pro players play the game. It's exciting for us to see them push the game to its limits."

"I love it when a game comes out and, a week later, a character that I've been playing for two months has a whole new way of playing because someone has tried something different."

As for post-launch support, expect some added fun. Matt said: "We have already announced our first DLC fighter — Shang Tsung — with Cary Tagawa as his voice and likeness. We are really excited about that."



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

KRYPTIC CODE



IT is a pretty safe bet that you are getting something right if your game reaches the 11th instalment.

However, it is also fair to say that Mortal Kombat has hit a few rocks in the road along that journey.

You will probably know what to expect from NetherRealm Studios' latest offering — arcade brawling with its own brutal style.

The difference is that it has been refined. Right off the bat, this is an excellent starting point for first-time fighters or more casual brawlers. It has one of the most in-depth tutorial modes ever. It will teach you more than just the ropes — it goes from the basics into more technical moves.

That is a massive plus because, more often than not, fighter games throw you in at the deep end and expect you to swim.

MK11 takes the time to explain things and teach you everything you'll need for the story mode and to actually compete in a fight online.

Once you get a handle on how the fighting works, it's time to test your skills and MK11 is packed with options.

We especially liked the over-the-top time travel-focused cinematic story mode where past characters battle to save Earth from the forces of evil that we saw in MK X. The whole thing will take up to five hours to complete.

As you finish each chapter you can pick from new fighters and get a taste of how they play and what moves work best.

Beyond the story there is a tower mode where you have a number of fights to get to the top often laced with challenges that can

Mortal Kombat 11
Xbox One, PS4, Switch and PC £49.99

impact how you face each battle. It will come as no surprise that the higher you go the harder it gets but the reward is also better.

Then there is the online excitement. You can take on lvl fights or winner stays on-style tournaments and, once you're done with the story mode, this is where you'll spend most of your time. It's your chance to test yourself and your skills against the best fighters in the world.

For the most part the online side runs very smoothly although we did get lag from time to time and a few opponents who "rage quit" the game when it wasn't going in their favour. That will encourage your own rage quit especially if you mastered an epic combo only to get an "opponent has left" message on the screen.

If that's the good side, the bad is the return of Krypt — this time as Shang Tsung Island.

Top fact spoiler: It is really hard to see such wooden and lifeless acting. It's a real let-down especially as the rest of the cast add depth to their characters.

In many ways Mortal Kombat 11 is an amazing fighter. The gameplay is fun, over the top and brutal as everything MK should be. It should be a guaranteed 5/5, but the Krypt is a huge mistake.

Setting it on an island doesn't hide the fact that it's a fancy loot box shop. Yes, some will grind out the gear but most won't. Randomising the boxes could be a real killer. It could take you three boxes... or 500 to get what you are looking for. And that's no fun for anyone.

STUART CULLEN



IT'S been a year since we set sail with Rare's pirate fest Sea of Thieves and the firm is celebrating by releasing a FREE Anniversary Update which also marks the game's largest content update to date as well. The update

introduces a host of modes as well as fan-requested features and enhancements. They include a multiplayer mode The Arena, narrative-driven quests in Tall Tales — Shores of Gold and fishing, hunting and cooking through the Hunter's Call trading company.

FIRST look at the Sonic The Hedgehog movie — and there is much distress. Fans aren't impressed with the trailer. The live action flick stars X-Men's James Marsden and Jim Carrey as Doctor Robotnik.

UBISOFT have just released the latest Ghost Recon Wildlands free update. It is built around two story-driven missions under Operation Oracle. It will see you running what initially appears to be a routine hostage rescue mission to liberate a Skill Tech engineer from Unidad, but it won't surprise many to know that things don't go as planned. The best bit is that you'll be

running the mission alongside Jon Bernthal — yes, the Punisher is joining the ranks of the Ghost tactical shooter game but he won't be playing his iconic Marvel role. Instead, he is Cole D. Walker, a Ghost Team Leader on the hunt for truth. Operation Oracle arrives after two years of post-launch support and follows the completion of Year 2. Out now... so form an orderly queue, people.

NEW treats on the Microsoft Game Pass this month include Wolfenstein 2: The New Colossus, Wargroove, Tacoma, Lego Batman 3 and Surviving Mars. It all kicks off on May 2 with Wolfenstein 2.

YOU would need to have been living under a rock to avoid Fortnite, but they have teamed up with Marvel to celebrate the release of the new Avengers Endgame movie. There is a limited-time team mode where you are Thanos and his army of

Chitauri or Fortnite heroes with the Avengers weapons. You want Infinity Stones to boost your Chitauri health and transform the first Stone finder into Thanos, but the Avengers are out to stop you. It's last standing and it will be popular.

UBISOFT'S toys-to-life space adventure Starlink has just got a free boost with Crimson Moon on top of some new paid DLC. Crimson Moon will add a number of new features — the biggest being a new vehicle racing mode. Ubisoft had originally said it would be digital-only releases as they had given up the toys-to-life side of thing due to poor sales.

will also be leaderboards and custom paint jobs. The pay-for treats include five new pilots, three starships, and 11 weapons. These are the first ships and pilots to be released since the launch but Ubisoft had originally said it would be digital-only releases as they had given up the toys-to-life side of thing due to poor sales.



NEW MUSIC
By Jim Gellatly

SWIM SCHOOL

WHO: Alice Johnson (vocals/guitar), Lewis Bunting (guitar), Matt Mitchell (bass), Naim Milne (drums)
WHERE: Edinburgh

FOR FANS OF: Pale Waves, Wolf Alice, Circa Waves

JIM SAYS: With so much exciting new music coming out of Scotland, I shouldn't really be surprised when something like Swim School's debut single comes along.

Sway stopped me in my tracks as soon as I first heard it. It went straight on my radio playlist.

It's indie pop perfection. Alice Johnson's vocals are outstanding and I can't believe Swim School are her first band.

Alice, Lewis and Matt are all from Edinburgh and only got together in August to write songs. Naim, who's originally from Aberdeen, joined shortly afterwards.

It's been a fast turnaround to get themselves out there. They hadn't even settled on a name when they went into the studio at the end of the year to record Sway with renowned local producer Mark Morrow.

The band's progress has been so rapid that they've already changed their minds about the next single.

Lewis explained: "We recorded another song for our second single but, after releasing Sway, we wrote one which we all fell in love with."

"So we decided to release that song next. We can't wait."

Drummer Naim revealed the second single will probably be released in June — and he's excited about it. He said: "Although we're excited about releasing it we are nervous."

"Sway had such a good response so the next one will have big expectations."

"We absolutely love it, and it's had a good response at the shows."

The band have just completed their biggest gigs yet, supporting The Xcarts in Glasgow and Dundee.

And bassist Matt told me: "The small came through around three weeks after we released the single and we were all buzzing."

"We're led to believe Murray Macleod from The Xcarts heard the song and that's how both of the shows came about."

The gigs were a special thrill for Naim because he's been a huge fan of The Xcarts since his teens as Murray and Jordan Smith are fellow Aberdonians.

Swim School will be showcasing at Inverness's XpoNorth in July.

The festival features around 60 acts — and I'm already drooling at the prospect of 20 exciting acts I've featured in The Scottish Sun appearing as well as a host of others that are already on my radar.

Naim said: "We've heard great things about XpoNorth and have a couple of friends who've played there and loved it!"

"The artists are usually quite varied which is probably why it's such a successful event as it can appeal to a wider audience."

"With XpoNorth being all about emerging bands, we feel it could be fantastic for us."

MORE: facebook.com/weareswimschool
● Jim presents a weekly showcase of New Music on Amazing Radio Sundays 2-4pm.
amazingradio.com
jimgellatly.com

Watch a video of the band at: thescottishsun.co.uk