

Video Game Review: ‘Red Dead Redemption’ is Early Frontrunner For Game of the Year

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on June 7, 2010 - 3:19pm

- [2K Interactive](#) [2]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [3]
- [Deadwood](#) [4]
- [Grand Theft Auto IV](#) [5]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [6]
- [Red Dead Redemption](#) [7]
- [Rockstar](#) [8]
- [Video Game Review](#) [9]
- [Westerns](#) [10]



CHICAGO – Rarely has a game lived up to the advance hype as completely as “Red Dead Redemption,” the very unique title that will be influential in so many ways that they’re almost hard to count. There have been titles that pushed the gaming world forward in terms of single-player campaigns or multi-player experiences or gameplay or graphics, but “Red Dead Redemption” is a masterpiece on every discernable level. It’s doubtful you’ll play anything better all year.

It’s downright hilarious to read the naysayers trying to pick apart the little things that may hold “Red Dead Redemption” back from a perfect score. You can’t swim seems to be the only one gaining any traction. Yes, this is a game that is so perfect that the fact that your character never learned how to doggy paddle is the only thing message board trolls seem to be able to pick apart. “Red Dead Redemption” is bulletproof.



Red Dead Redemption
Photo credit: Rockstar

Your character, John Marston, is not. Brilliantly voiced by Rob Wiethoff, Marston is a former outlaw near the border at the turn of the century. We meet Marston as he’s being ushered out of town on a train and sent to New Austin to capture the notorious Bill Williamson. Marston and Williamson used to be partners in crime, but this doesn’t stop Bill from shooting John and leaving him for dead in the game’s opening scenes.



Red Dead Redemption
Photo credit: Rockstar

John is discovered by the lovely Bonnie MacFarlane and the single-player campaign begins with the player finding their spurs on her ranch. Horse-riding, shooting coyotes, and even lassoing runaway stallions has never been so fun. It's here where the single-player campaign begins to reveal its remarkable depth. "Red Dead Redemption" is a sandbox game like no other (even if it has been called "Grand Theft Horse" and "Grand Theft Stagecoach" as it comes from the developers of "Grand Theft Auto IV").

For the next several hours, Marston will ride back and forth across the county of New Austin and eventually across the border, completing a series of story missions and side missions. Or merely playing poker, blackjack, or other games in one of the many towns. Or picking flowers. Or skinning wild animals. Or starting a duel. The freedom of game experience in "Red Dead Redemption" is simply jaw-dropping.

There have been sandbox games in the past with a large quantity of side missions to personalize the experience but they almost always seem like mere distractions from the "A plot" or the missions that push forward the story. Such is not the case with "Red Dead Redemption". The side missions, which can be as banal-sounding as lassoing and breaking wild horses, add atmosphere to the world of the game and depth to its characters. This is one of the most well-written games ever made in its subplots as much as its main story.

And it's easily one of the most visually striking as well. Like "GTA," a lot of the game is spent getting from point A to point B, but the world of New Austin is so amazingly detailed and beautiful to look at that one never minds the journey. Every visual element from the character models to the way it feels like your horse's feet are actually hitting the road has been perfectly conceived, designed, and executed. And I'll never get over the beauty of the horizon and the way the clouds feel almost real as they darken and unleash rain.



Red Dead Redemption
Photo credit: Rockstar

"Red Dead Redemption" would be a solid Game of the Year contender with its single-player campaign alone but the title also boasts one of the most revolutionary and impressive multi-player experiences that you'll ever have.

The player starts in "Free Roam," which means you're merely roaming the New Austin countryside not unlike in the single-player campaign but with other players over every hill. You can visit towns and play games, band together to form posses, and, of course, kill at will, which seemed to be the basic drive of most players in the first few weeks.

From "Free Roam," it's also easy to jump into "Quick Match" multi-player experiences like "Grab the Bag" (a variation on the traditional "Capture the Flag" of many MP titles) and "Hold Your Own" (which is basically "Deathmatch"). The shootout games are incredibly addictive although they do suffer a bit from some small maps that can become easily overcrowded with characters, resulting in a 'spawn-twitch-die' scenario a bit too often. However, most of the maps are remarkably well-designed variations on locations from the story and will entertain you for hours.

Ultimately, that's the best word for "Red Dead Redemption" — entertain. By now, you've probably read about how revolutionary and masterful the game is but many of the critics are missing the fact that it is, above all else, straight-up entertaining. Like an amazing spaghetti western brought to life or a few days spent in the town of Deadwood, your time in "Red Dead Redemption" is transportative, addictive, and different every time you play it. One day, you may be in the mood merely to waste some time with Liar's Dice, Blackjack, or a few "Stranger" stories (side missions in which you help locals that you meet along your path). The next time you pick up the controller, you may be ready for something more intense.

With ever-changing multiplayer and with DLC a very strong likelihood given how notably the "GTA IV" team released entirely new chapters for their landmark title, "Red Dead Redemption" feels like it will be an addiction that's hard to shake for months and possibly even years to come. If you own a PS3 or Xbox 360 and do not play "Red Dead Redemption," you are missing a glimpse at the future of video games. What are you waiting for?

'Red Dead Redemption' was released by Rockstar Games and developed by Rockstar San Diego. It is rated M (Mature). The version reviewed was for the Xbox 360, but the title is also available for the PS3. It was released on May 18th, 2010.



[11]

By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [12]
Content Director
HollywoodChicago.com
brian@hollywoodchicago.com [11]

Source URL (retrieved on *Mar 29 2024 - 1:38am*):

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/10924/video-game-review-early-game-of-the-year-frontrunner-red-dead-redemption>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/briantt>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/2k-interactive>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/brian-tallerico>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/deadwood>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/grand-theft-auto-iv>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/red-dead-redemption>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/rockstar>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/video-game-review>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/westerns>
- [11] <mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#BRIAN>