

## Video Game Review: 'Fallout: New Vegas' Transports Players to Fascinating World

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on November 2, 2010 - 7:26pm

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CHICAGO – It takes some time to build up momentum, but there's a point in "Fallout: New Vegas" where the game becomes one of the most addictive titles on the market in quite some time. Once you cross the Mojave Wasteland and arrive in Freeside, just before entering the gorgeously-rendered The Strip itself, "Fallout: New Vegas" gets its hooks in you and won't let go. There are a few glitches that remain even after the notorious week-one disasters but it's easy to overlook the minor blemishes in this beautiful release, one of the best of a very crowded season.



If you've read most of the reviews of "Fallout: New Vegas," you probably think the game is broken. And it most certainly was for the first few days of its release. Some reviews included clips of spinning heads and I experienced one of the most frustrating rendering glitches I've seen in ages; so much so that I had to put the game down and wait for a patch to continue. I'm sure people who paid full price for a title that they had anticipated since the end of "Fallout 3" were furious that the game was essentially released incomplete.



Fallout: New Vegas

Photo credit: Bethesda Softworks

Well, now that it's been patched, we can more accurately take a critical look at "Fallout: New Vegas" and see how it compares to the last award-winning title and the numerous alternative choices for your gaming dollar. The development reins may have been handed from Bethesda Softworks to Obsidian Entertainment but the most notable thing about "New Vegas" is how distinctly it fits within the "Fallout" universe. Fans of the last game need not worry about new management trying to fix what wasn't broken in the first place. In fact, some have voiced complaint on message boards that the game feels TOO much like the last one, as if it should have been released as the largest DLC in



history: A ridiculous assertion that I only mention to point out how clearly the game feels cut from the same cloth.



And I mean that in a good way. “Fallout 3” not only helped redefine the gaming marketplace but making a game that feels like it is not as easy as it looks. The fact that “Fallout: New Vegas” is as accomplished on nearly every level as its predecessor is something remarkable.

The game takes place three years after the end of “Fallout 3” and moves the action to the barren wasteland of Nevada. You’re a courier and, as the game opens, you’re attacked, your package is stolen, and you’re left for dead. The first several hours of the game consist of you trying to discover who tried to kill you and, of course, tracking them down to get your revenge. As you make your way across the world of the game, you’ll meet different factions of survivors of this post-apocalyptic world.

Like the previous game, “Fallout: New Vegas” requires a constant stream of game-shaping decisions. From the very beginning, the player is encouraged to make the game their own from the skill choices to perks to weapons to armor and so on and so on. But the decisions in “New Vegas” are more game-shaping than ever. When you make certain choices, you close off entire sections of the narrative. In other words, it’s not mere “will I be good or bad” moral decisions that might alter your ending. These are choices that you can’t come back from and that will completely change the experience. You’d have to play through the title multiple times to see it all and experience all the quests.



The sense that the decisions that you make are shaping the game extends to the entire experience in that it’s one of those rare titles in which the entire world feels distinctly alive. As you travel the wasteland, sticking to the road so as not to avoid deadly creatures in the dark distance, there’s an amazing sense that the world of this game is living, breathing, and going on regardless of what you do. The depth of this title is one of the most notable in the history of gaming. From the look of your character to the order of quests and those you choose to take to a neverending stream of moral decisions, “Fallout: New Vegas” is truly a game that will be different for everyone who plays it.

To be fair, “Fallout: New Vegas” isn’t perfect. A bit too much of the narrative is spent going back and forth, often transferring a piece of information from one group to another. If another Freeside quest was updated with my player having to retrace my steps to tell somebody what I just learned, I was about to start tossing dynamite around town. And people who play “Fallout: New Vegas” need to be comfortable with long sections of on-foot travel.





Fallout: New Vegas

Photo credit: Bethesda Softworks

I almost lost patience wandering around Nellis Air Force Base trying to find the right person to talk to. You'll be amazed at how many hours you'll spend just trying to get from point A to point B. Although if you spent 200 hours in "Fallout 3," I can't imagine you'll be upset by the "slow passages" of "Fallout: New Vegas."

There are also a few remaining glitches in "New Vegas" that might not be address-able in a future patch. They're often small things, like getting stuck behind a door every time it opens or walking through your dog Rex in a graphical glitch, but they can sometimes pile up and pull the player out of the experience. And when a battle ends with an enemy falling through the ground in his slow-motion death, the lack of polish can be truly grating.

As for combat, the V.A.T.S. system returns but you can also take down your enemy more off-the-cuff with an improved iron sights system. The fighting sequences, from a Vegas suite ambush to stumbling into a pack of mutated creatures called Lakelurks, often got my pace racing in the way that only great action games can do.

Choice of weapon and mod or different aid systems like food and medicine once again enhance the sensation that your "New Vegas" experience is like no one else's. Every decision, from which items to keep from your recently-killed enemy to which ones to repair to make them more deadly, effects the progression of the game.

If you're like me, the increased sense of ownership over my game experience makes a title harder to put down. When you feel like the character is yours and the world is living, it becomes difficult to leave it. At one point — and it may not sound like a compliment but it is — I nearly fell asleep playing "New Vegas." It's not that I was bored but that I had continued playing long past the point where my body could handle it in a way that I hadn't really done since all-night gaming sessions in college. It's that addictive that you'll push yourself to just keep playing a little bit longer. And longer. And longer.

Is "Fallout: New Vegas" too similar to "Fallout 3"? Perhaps. But are we really at a point where we're complaining that lightning has struck twice? Before you answer that question for yourself, check out this teaser trailer:

*'Fallout: New Vegas' was released by Bethesda Softworks and developed by Obsidian. It is rated M (Mature). The version reviewed was for the Xbox 360 but the title is also available for the PS3 and PC. It was released on October 19th, 2010.*



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