

Video Game Review: ‘Prince of Persia Trilogy HD’ Packages Classic Games

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on May 3, 2011 - 11:29am

- [Brian Tallerico](#) [2]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [3]
- [PlayStation 3](#) [4]
- [Prince of Persia](#) [5]
- [Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time](#) [6]
- [Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones](#) [7]
- [Prince of Persia: The Warrior Within](#) [8]
- [PS3](#) [9]
- [Ubisoft](#) [10]
- [Video Game Review](#) [11]

CHICAGO – I’m nervous that future generations will remember “Prince of Persia” more for the awful Jake Gyllenhaal movie than the massively-influential and beloved video games on which it was based. To combat this possibility, Ubisoft has released the trilogy that really turned the franchise into a phenomenon in the mid-’00s in one value-packed release called “Prince of Persia Trilogy HD,” now available in stores exclusively for the PS3.



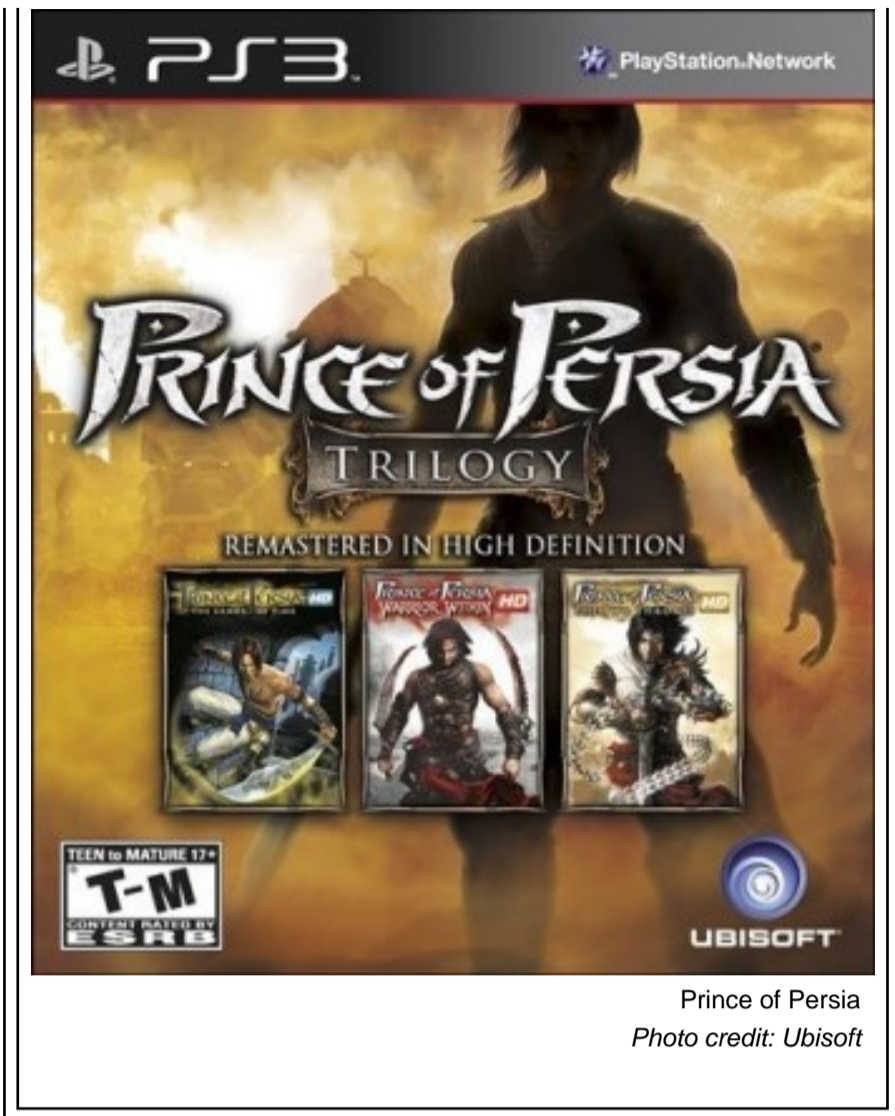
As Sony did with the excellent value release of “God of War” and “God of War II” in one package, Ubisoft has gone back and upconverted three of their best PS2 games for the PS3 generation — 2003’s “Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time,” 2004’s “Prince of Persia: The Warrior Within,” and 2005’s “Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones.” With over 30 hours of gameplay, the triple-pack is one of the best values you’ll find this season. And it’s easy to see why these games became such a phenomenon and the influence they’ve had in the years since. HD (and the advancements of gaming in the last few years) has the ability to amplify the flaws of these titles but they still feature high-quality, sometimes-addictive entertainment for your video gaming dollar.



Prince of Persia
Photo credit: Ubisoft

Naturally, “The Sands of Time” looks the most dated (it’s actually kind of remarkable to appreciate the games as a sort of history lesson in the progression of video game development in the mid-’00s...it came out just two years later but “The Two Thrones” looks nowhere near as dated. Two years is a lifetime in the world of video games.) It may be a little too retro for some players, but “The Sands of Time” set the foundation for this successful series by bringing the hero into a third dimension and setting the stage for the basics of the gameplay — acrobatic movement, sword fighting, and a bit of time manipulation. If you’ve never played these games, it’s clearly the place to start as it gives you a solid sense of what to expect not just for this entire release but the 2008 “Prince of Persia” reboot (a beautiful game that I love but most people were lukewarm on) and the disappointing “Prince of Persia: The Forgotten Sands” from last year.





The story of the trilogy of "Prince of Persia" is arguably its weakest element (and that could explain why it was never quite a good fit for a Hollywood blockbuster where story matters more than with a controller in your hands). You play a Prince who falls from power, battles the undead, finds a dagger that can manipulate time by backing it up a few seconds (most often to save your ass), and eventually returns to the role of the hero after going through some dark times in the mid-section of the series.

You don't have to play the whole series in order. You can jump right into any of the three games and I found it fun to actually bounce back and forth between the titles. Many of the fighting controls are the same and it's interesting to appreciate the synergy between the games. Oddly enough, you do have to restart every time you want a new game. There's no menu to bounce back to after you pick which of the three you want to play. It seems like a mistake.

Of course, all three games have been upconverted for HD and they look spectacular. They have also been reconfigured to support 3D televisions. As for the graphics, there are times when the HD conversion looks amazing but other times where it feels like the effect may be to amplify the glitches of the game. When the game looks like a 2011 title but still features camera issues more common in 2003 then it can be even more jarring. The fact is that all three of the "PoP" games have frustrating camera issues, some odd control discrepancies, and even the occasional glitch. Just recently I killed an enemy in "Two Thrones", went to pick up his weapon, and watched as said weapon came to life as if my enemy was still alive and carrying it. I had to kill Mr. Invisible.

Combat was never the biggest strength of "Prince of Persia" and what really matters about the series hasn't changed — the acrobatic navigation of areas that basically play like three-dimensional puzzles. When the games are at their best, they have a fluid beauty as your prince bounces back, forth, up, and down to get from point A to point B. I wish more games appreciated the beauty of movement in the same way.

As video game history grows by the day, there's going to be more and more releases like "Prince of Persia Trilogy HD," packages that try to capitalize on already-released product. Some will be mere compilations — "Greatest Hits" of video game history — and some will be more accomplished at introducing classics to a new generation. Despite some glitches and camera issues that are simply more frustrating in 2011 than they were in 2003-05, "Prince of Persia Trilogy HD" is a solid release, a collection of three excellent games at a price lower than most new ones.

"Prince of Persia Trilogy HD" was released by Ubisoft on April 19th, 2011, exclusively for the PS3.



[12]

By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [13]
Content Director
HollywoodChicago.com
brian@hollywoodchicago.com [12]

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