

Video Game Review: Say Hello to a Very Little ‘Scarface’ for iOS

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on May 3, 2012 - 2:02pm

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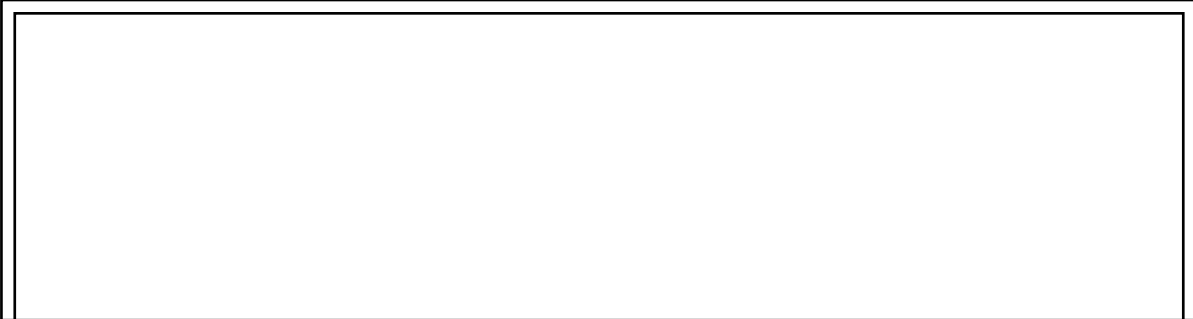
CHICAGO – I wonder when Brian De Palma and Al Pacino were making “Scarface” if they had any idea how much of a phenomenon they were about to unleash on the world. “Scarface” is no mere movie. It has had more of a shelf life than most of the superhero, fantasy, and typically fan-centric films of its day. There are countless posters of Pacino littering the world and the iconic character has even made a foray into video games, including a recently-released version for iOS. Yes, now you can alternate marathon sessions of “Angry Birds” and “Fruit Ninja” with drug-running in Miami.

People love Tony Montana. And much of fan base for “Scarface” loves their smart phones. It’s a movie that’s always been hot with the young generation, one who uses their smart phones for everything but actual phone calls. And so it makes a little bit of sense to target the youth demo that loves “Scarface” with an iOS video game. However, there’s no denying that “Scarface” is a weird game. There aren’t many apps that replicate living the life of one of the most legendary crime lords in the history of cinema.



Scarface
Photo credit: Fuse/Universal

Hothead Games and Universal have devised a unique experience that’s part action, part strategy, and even part sim in that you have to build an empire to keep making you the cash flow you need to run it. You choose the businesses and place them strategically in different locations and you can even customize Tony’s mansion down to the strategic defense systems required to take down potential enemies.





Scarface

Photo credit: Fuse/Universal

“Scarface” incorporates actual voices and images from Brian De Palma’s film and uses them in over 96 missions with 40 different business across six different locations. I have some issues with “Scarface” but none of them are related to “bang for your buck.” This is a big game with a wide variety of gameplay options and references from the beloved source material that fans will love. If you’re a huge “Scarface” nut, it’s certainly a good value.

However, I’m not sure I can recommend it for anyone who’s not in love with the Pacino movie. The gameplay is repetitive and fails due to never becoming what all great iOS games need to be — addictive. The best game apps bring you back because you’re obsessed with a new high score or a faster completion time. “Scarface” is a bizarrely slow game, especially given its source material. There’s no urgency to keep going. Just minor curiosity.

Part of the problem is that “Scarface” is an action-based property on a system that doesn’t really support high-paced action. There’s something about tapping on an enemy that doesn’t really give the player the visceral thrill a game like this need to in order to work. It’s bizarrely slow at times as you simply wander your empire building up enough cash for another mission.

Ultimately, “Scarface” is an interesting attempt to bring a property to an audience that already adores it but wants to experience their adoration in a new way. Seen the movie, bought the poster, own a t-shirt, played the console games — for you, I recommend “Scarface.” Everyone else should go back to “Angry Birds.”

“Scarface” was released for iPad, iPhone, and iPod Touch on April 26, 2012.



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