ISSUE #1 SPRING 2025

INDIESPHERE

BATTLE OF THE CENTURY?!

$1.00



Featuring!
Interview from **Maja Moldenhauer** for ***Cuphead: The Delicious Last Course***

INDIE GAME REVIEWS, NEWS, & MORE!

100% TRULY INDIE!



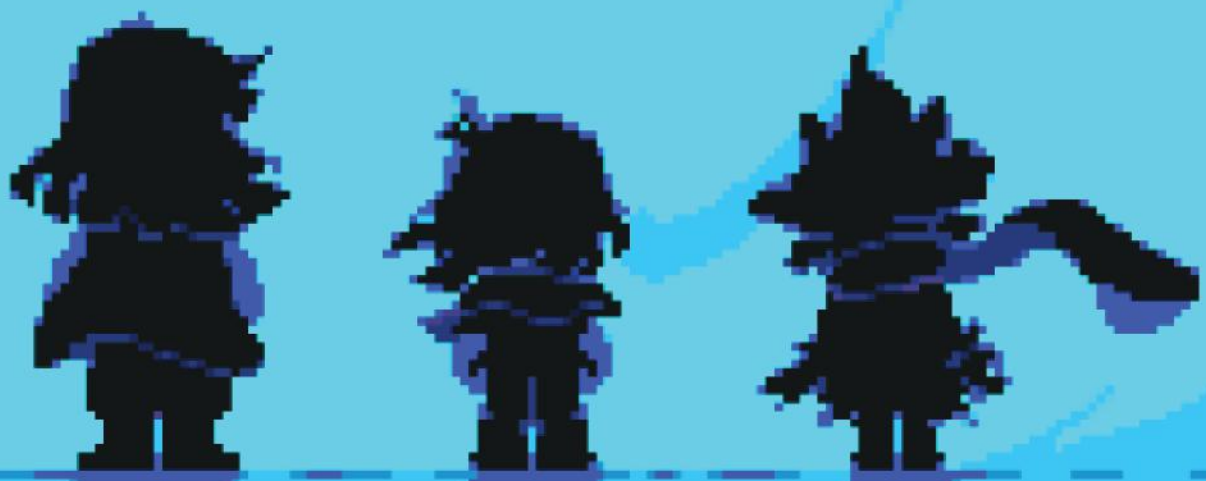
© 2025 Matt Makes Games Inc. All rights reserved.

Your choices don't matter... or do they?
Enter the dark world.

deltarune

STEAM® NINTENDO SWITCH PS4 PS5

EVERYONE 10+
10+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB



© 2025 Toby Fox. All rights reserved.

CONTENTS

PIZZA TOWER	10
ANTONBLAST	16
RIVALS OF AETHER 1/2	22
CUPHEAD: TDLC	28
UFO 50	32
GRAVITY CIRCUIT	36
PENNY'S BIG BREAKAWAY	42
GAMEMAKER ENGINE	48
NEWS	56
INTERVIEW: MAJA MOLDENHAUER (CUPHEAD: TDLC)	58

IS



PUBLISHER'S LETTER

Thanks so much for picking up this issue of IndieSphere. Whether you're a longtime reader or this is your first time flipping through our pages—welcome. We're really glad you're here. We started this magazine because we believe indie games deserve way more love. There's something really special about games made by small teams or solo devs. These aren't big-budget blockbusters—they're personal, creative, and often totally unexpected. Indie games take risks, try weird ideas, and tell stories in ways you just don't see anywhere else. And that's what makes them so awesome. In this issue, we're shining a light on some amazing new titles from all over the world. You'll find interviews with developers, sneak peeks at upcoming releases, and some behind-the-scenes looks at game developments.

You'll find developer interviews that dig into the "why" as much as the "how." We're interested in what drives people to make games—what stories they're trying to tell, what they've learned along the way, and what keeps them going, even when the road is rough. We've also included previews and reflections on games that try new things, take risks, or just feel different in the best way. We're not chasing trends or traffic here.



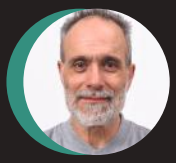
This is about curiosity, connection, and creativity. We're a small team making this magazine because we care deeply about games that don't always get the spotlight—and about the people behind them. So wherever you are in your own journey—playing, making, or dreaming—we hope these pages give you something to connect with. And maybe even a bit of encouragement to keep going.
Thanks for being a part of this.

Keep playing,
Keep creating,
And most of all—have fun.

— Sam Ortega
Publisher, IndieSphere



INDIESPHERE



Jonah Miller

CREATIVE DIRECTOR



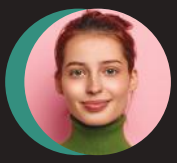
Bob Surgel

GAME CRITIC



Theo Hall

SENIOR WRITER



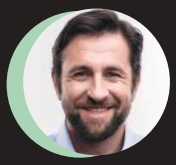
Mia Patel

ART DIRECTOR



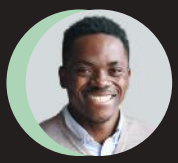
Sasha Lin

WRITER



Tommy Cruz

ASSISTANT WRITER



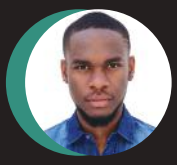
Victor Hale

EDITOR



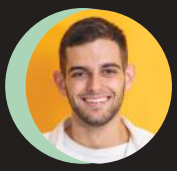
Dante Ruiz

FEATURES EDITOR



Liam Brooks

ILLUSTRATOR



Noel Kim

WEB & TECH LEAD

CONTRIBUTORS



Rob Hujo

Rob Hujo is a key contributor to IndieSphere, blending his passion for quirky games with sharp editorial insight. He amplifies indie developers, bringing fresh perspectives while keeping a strong stance against loot boxes.



Marc Reyes

Marc Reyes is a game designer and writer in Oakland, focused on narrative mechanics, quiet games, and storytelling through level design. He's always chasing the balance between structure and surprise—and often getting lost in Outer Wilds.

PLAYER'S VOICE

Built in My Bedroom

by Eli Tran



I remember the first game I ever made. It wasn't much—just a little pixel guy who could jump over lava blocks. I built it in GameMaker on a hand-me-down laptop, sitting cross-legged on the carpet of my childhood bedroom, the hum of my old PC fan louder than the soundtrack.

Back then, I didn't think about polish or press kits. I just wanted to make something that felt like the games I grew up on. The ones that carried me through lonely summers and awkward middle school years. The ones that felt like they got me. Now, years later, I'm still at it. Still up late, still debugging, still chasing that same feeling. The scope's bigger now. The art's better (thankfully). But at the core, it's still that same kid, trying to say something with pixels and silence and maybe one haunting little piano loop.

People ask me why I don't go AAA. Why I stay indie. And it's hard to explain—except to say that the games I loved most didn't come in shiny boxes. They came from forgotten forums, passed around like secrets. They felt handmade. Human. That's what I want to make. Something that feels like it came from a bedroom. Because it did. And maybe, someday, it'll end up in someone else's.

TIDBITS

A bold, dynamic play button marks the end of each section, signaling a shift in pace. It's a cue to dive into the next thrilling chapter of our indie journey.

Play Button

Frantic, furious, and fueled by mozzarella rage, Peppino returns as Anton's chaotic rival. Expect wild eyes, faster fists, and zero chill—he's bringing the sauce and the smoke.



Peppino

Explosive, unhinged, and powered by pure demolition energy, Anton storms in as Peppino's unshaven nemesis. He's loud, reckless, and ready to out-blast, out-smash, and out-sass the competition.



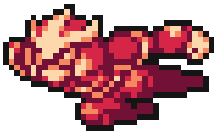
Anton

Agile, spirited, and full of surprises, Ms. Chalice brings ghostly flair to every adventure—and even more personality in our exclusive end-of-issue interview!



Ms. Chalice

Kai, hero of justice, wants revenge—Anton stole his upgrade core and probably his lunch.



Kai


PIZZA
TOWER

PIZZA PANIC!

Pizza Tower is a fast-paced, retro-style platformer featuring Peppino Spaghetti. It combines quirky humor, vibrant visuals, and intense action for a nostalgic and thrilling gaming experience.

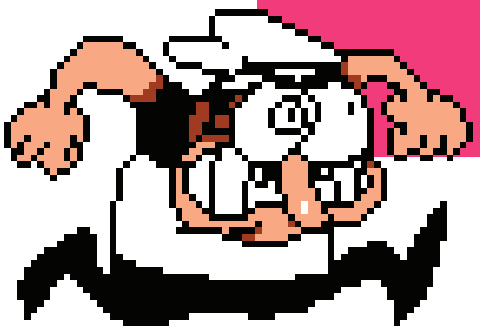
by TEDMOND AYETTEY

Pizza Tower is a fast-paced, action-packed platformer developed by Tour De Pizza and released on January 26, 2023. The game draws heavy inspiration from the 1990s era of platformers, particularly Wario Land, blending quirky, high-energy gameplay with unique visuals and mechanics that quickly captured the attention of gamers. With its vibrant, cartoony art style and music, Pizza Tower evokes a nostalgic feeling while delivering a fresh experience for modern players. The game's protagonist, Peppino Spaghetti, is a determined and somewhat neurotic Italian pizza chef who must navigate through a series of zany levels to save his pizzeria from destruction by a menacing tower. Players guide Peppino through increasingly difficult stages filled with hazards, enemies, and traps. What sets Pizza Tower apart from other platformers is its unique blend of speed, precision, and creativity in movement. The game's core mechanic revolves around maintaining speed while avoiding obstacles and enemies. The gameplay emphasizes fluidity, rewarding players who can chain together various moves like dashes, wall jumps, and rolls to maintain momentum. This gives the game a high skill ceiling where expert players can zip through stages with incredible speed, performing acrobatic feats and exploring hidden secrets. Peppino's primary ability is his speed-based dash, which allows him to break through walls, attack enemies, and travel at high velocities. The dash can also be used to perform combos, increasing the game's frenetic pacing and encouraging players to keep moving. Visually, Pizza Tower embraces a quirky, hand-drawn aesthetic with exaggerated animations, adding to its lively, chaotic vibe.

"Pizza Tower is a 2D platformer inspired by the Wario Land series, featuring fast-paced gameplay, unique visuals, and a memorable soundtrack."

At its core, the game is built around speed and momentum, with the player controlling Peppino, an eccentric Italian pizza chef on a mission to save his pizzeria from destruction. The primary mechanic revolves around Peppino's ability to move with remarkable speed, using his agile running, sliding, and jumping to navigate intricate levels. Players are encouraged to chain moves together in a fluid, uninterrupted flow, rewarding quick reflexes and creative navigation. One of the standout mechanics is Peppino's "charge" attack, which allows him to barrel through enemies and obstacles with incredible force, adding a layer of offensive strategy to the platforming. The game also introduces a "combo" system, where the longer you maintain your momentum, the more points you accumulate. This system adds an extra layer of challenge, as players must balance speed with precision to maximize their score.

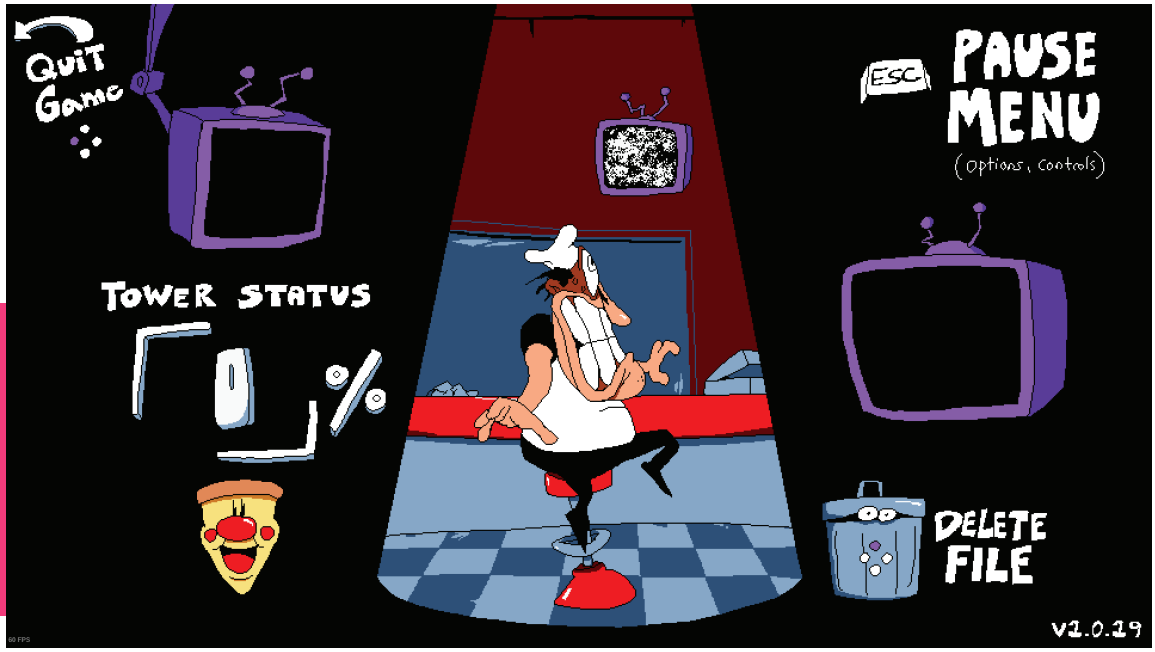
From Slice to Success



The creation of Pizza Tower is a story of passion, persistence, and a deep love for the golden age of platformers. Developed by Tour De Pizza, a small indie team led by Tom "McPig" Larios, Pizza Tower began as a labor of love, inspired by 90s-era cartoons and the fast-paced platforming games that defined the genre. Since its inception, the game has grown into a cult hit, thanks to its unique gameplay, vibrant art style, and nostalgic charm. The game's development journey started back in 2018 when McPig, a longtime fan of games like Wario Land and Rayman, began experimenting with the idea of creating a new, modernized platformer with the same frantic energy and personality. Drawing inspiration from Wario Land 4, which was known for its inventive level design and emphasis on exploration, McPig set out to create a game that not only paid homage to these classic titles but also infused his own creativity and humor into the mix. Initially, Pizza Tower was developed as a simple prototype, which was shared online as a demo. The early build, featuring rough animations and placeholder graphics, quickly garnered attention from fans who appreciated its fast-paced action and quirky design. The feedback from players helped shape the direction of the game, pushing the developers to refine and expand upon the core mechanics. One of the key elements that set Pizza Tower apart from other indie platformers is its unique visual style. McPig and the team chose to go for a hand-drawn, cartoonish aesthetic, inspired by 90s animation and comics. The bold, exaggerated art style gave the game a distinct personality, with characters and environments bursting with color and flair. This visual approach was a deliberate choice, as it not only captured the spirit of older cartoons but also complemented the game's high-energy, fast-moving gameplay.



Its development process wasn't without its challenges, though. Being a small indie team, Tour De Pizza had limited resources, and creating the game's intricate levels, unique animations, and dynamic soundtrack required a lot of time and effort. The soundtrack, composed by Matt "Meme" Roach, played a crucial role in setting the tone of the game, with its jazzy, upbeat tracks perfectly complementing the frenetic action and chaotic atmosphere. The music has since become one of Pizza Tower's most beloved aspects, helping elevate the game's pace and intensity. The game's design also emphasized speed and fluidity, allowing players to zip through levels with a sense of momentum rarely seen in platformers. The tight controls and fast movement mechanics became a hallmark of Pizza Tower, encouraging players to think quickly and make split-second decisions while maintaining a constant sense of urgency. This was a key part of the development process, as the team wanted to create a game that felt both challenging and exhilarating, offering a true sense of reward for players who could master the game's complex movement system. After several years of development, Pizza Tower was officially released in early 2023. The game's release marked the culmination of years of hard work and dedication from a small, passionate team. Pizza Tower quickly gained a dedicated following, praised for its creative design, nostalgic influences, and its ability to capture the spirit of retro platformers while adding something new. In the end, the development of Pizza Tower is a testament to the power of indie game creation. It showcases what can be achieved when a small team is fueled by a genuine love for the genre and a desire to create something truly unique. For fans of fast-paced platformers, Pizza Tower is not just a game—it's a tribute to the classics that shaped the gaming landscape.



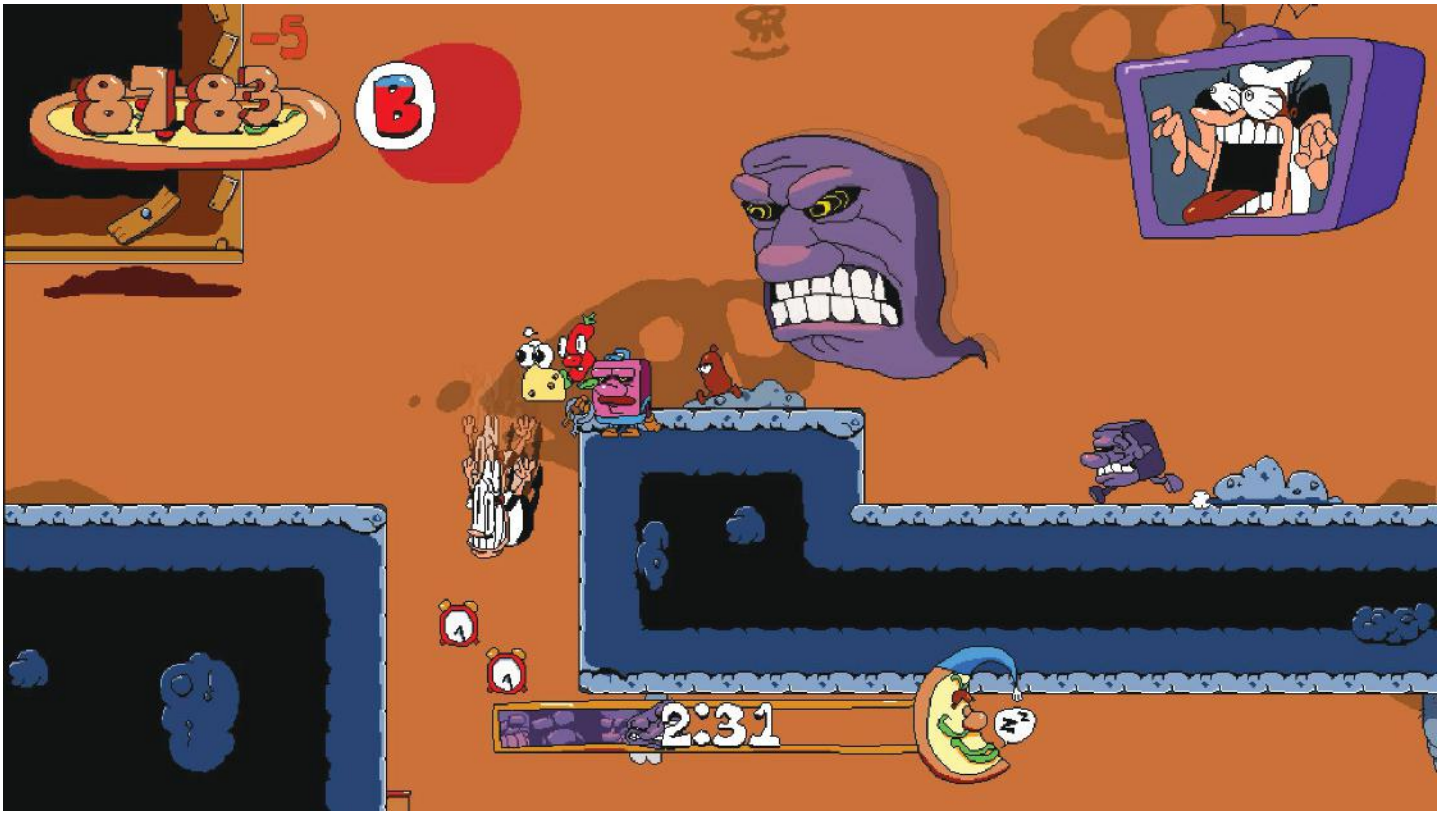
Explore Pizza Tower's quirky main menu, setting the stage for its chaotic platforming action, released on January 23, 2023.

Initially, Pizza Tower was released exclusively on PC via platforms like Steam and GOG. These platforms allowed the indie title to quickly find its niche audience, offering both casual and hardcore gamers the opportunity to experience its unique gameplay mechanics and fast-paced action. The game's availability on Steam was particularly pivotal in its success. The platform's vast user base and its integrated community features—such as user reviews, Steam Workshop support, and modding capabilities—allowed Pizza Tower to expand its reach and develop a loyal fanbase. Its retro-inspired aesthetic and dynamic level design also contributed to strong word-of-mouth marketing, which helped the game gain more attention across various online spaces. In addition to the PC release, Pizza Tower has also made waves through the indie gaming scene by being made available on Itch.io, another popular platform known for hosting indie games. The developer's decision to release the game on multiple digital storefronts maximized its accessibility, allowing fans from different regions to get their hands on the game. Pizza Tower was officially released on Nintendo Switch in 2024, not 2023. This release was highly anticipated, as the Switch is a popular platform for indie games, and Pizza Tower's fast-paced, action-packed gameplay was a perfect fit for the console. The Switch version brought the same chaotic, smooth platforming experience to a portable format, allowing players to dive into the game's high-speed action whether at home or on the go. The portability of the Switch added a new layer of accessibility for fans, especially those who wanted to enjoy Pizza Tower in short, on-the-go sessions or in handheld mode during travel.



McPig: The Creative Force!

MCPig is the developer behind Pizza Tower, a chaotic platformer blending retro aesthetics with modern gameplay.created the Pizza Tower universe with a perfect mix of creativity and nostalgia, inspiring the indie game community.



REVIEWS

Released in January 2023, Pizza Tower quickly garnered attention for its dynamic gameplay, nostalgic design, and vibrant aesthetics. Developed by Tour De Pizza, the game has been lauded by various gaming publications. Below is a synthesis of reviews from several esteemed sources.

PC Gamer: Celebrating the game's energetic platforming, PC Gamer noted that Pizza Tower not only honors its inspiration, the Wario Land series, but also surpasses it in creativity and execution.

Polygon: Highlighting the game's departure from traditional Mario titles, Polygon praised Pizza Tower as a "paradise platformer for Wario freaks," emphasizing its quirky humor and unconventional approach.

Den of Geek: Positioning Pizza Tower as a spiritual successor to the Wario Land series, Den of Geek described it as "a slice of heaven for Wario Land fans everywhere," underscoring its appeal to enthusiasts of the genre.

Nintendo Life: Reviewing the Nintendo Switch version, Nintendo Life lauded the game as "a juicy slice of heart-pounding 2D platformer," commending its detailed levels and vibrant visuals.



Geoffroy "McPig" Lanctôt, the main developer for Pizza Tower.

"Move over Wario, Peppino Spaghetti is-a number one now." - IGN





OUTTA THE WAY, IT'S MY TURN NOW!

ANTONBLAAAST!

Antonblast is an explosive, action-packed retro platformer featuring a destructive twist to classic gameplay. Destruction worker Dynamite Anton has a bone to pick when Satan steals Anton's prized Spirit collection.

by TEDMOND AYETTEY

Antonblast is an exhilarating new entry in the world of indie platformers that has captured the attention of gamers with its vibrant visuals, lightning-fast gameplay, and a dash of quirky humor. Developed by the same team behind the beloved Anton series, Antonblast is a spiritual successor that amplifies the formula of its predecessors while introducing a fresh, modern twist. Released in 2023, Antonblast instantly attracted fans of classic 2D platformers with its vibrant style, high-octane action, and nostalgic appeal. At the heart of Antonblast is Anton, a lovable but somewhat chaotic hero who is always ready to jump into action. The plot, as typical with many retro-inspired platformers, is delightfully simple: Anton must save the world from an evil villain, but with his signature flair, of course. The game revolves around Anton's ability to traverse levels with fluid, high-speed movement, and his trusty blaster is the key to both offense and exploration. What sets Antonblast apart from many modern platformers is its emphasis on fast-paced movement and the freedom it offers players. Much like the classic Mega Man or Wario Land games, the core of the gameplay is rooted in precise jumping, dodging, and shooting. However, Antonblast ramps up the excitement with its aggressive pace, creating an intense, often frantic experience that demands players stay on their toes. The game allows players to zoom through levels, bouncing off walls, dodging enemies, and finding shortcuts in an almost fluid, parkour-like motion that's incredibly satisfying once mastered. The game's visual style is a major highlight. It features colorful, pixelated graphics that pay homage to the 16-bit era while maintaining a modern sheen. The art is wonderfully expressive, with characters and enemies bursting with personality. Anton's exaggerated movements, from his over-the-top jumps to his bombastic blaster shots, help give the game a lively, cartoonish feel that perfectly matches the energetic gameplay. The environments are equally diverse, ranging from lush forests to crumbling castles, each filled with enemies, traps, and hidden secrets that encourage exploration. Another standout feature of Antonblast is its dynamic soundtrack, which drives the action and complements the game's high-speed pacing. Composed by a talented team, the music is fast, funky, and often jazzy, providing a rhythmic backdrop that fuels the player's sense of urgency. Every level has its own unique track that enhances the atmosphere, making even the most challenging stages feel exciting and fresh.

"Blast through buildings, fight your demons, and explore wonky worlds!"

IT'S HAPPY HOUR!!



ARTWORK BY
@DROILIUS

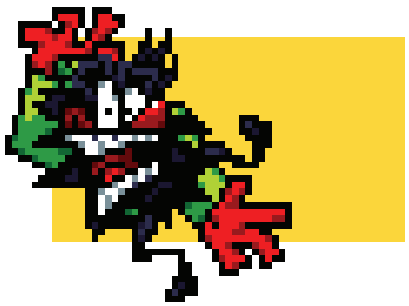


HEY...YEAH YOU!
HOW 'BOUT YOU
KEEP READING!



Demolition Mania: Anton's Explosive Rampage Redefines Retro Platforming

Antonblast also features a level design that rewards both skill and exploration. While the game encourages players to rush through levels for speed, it also hides a wealth of secrets and collectibles that promote revisiting levels to uncover everything they have to offer. This design creates an excellent balance of challenge and reward, offering players both a fun, fast-paced experience and a sense of accomplishment for uncovering hidden pathways and power-ups. Despite the game's rapid pace, it's not without its difficulty spikes, making it a challenge for even seasoned platformer fans. The enemy variety and clever traps add layers of complexity, requiring players to hone their skills and develop quick reflexes to avoid hazards and defeat bosses. These difficulty spikes contribute to the game's sense of accomplishment, giving players that satisfying feeling of mastery once they finally overcome a particularly tough section. In conclusion, Antonblast is a true love letter to classic platformers, blending nostalgia with fresh ideas that both challenge and delight. With its fast-paced gameplay, charming visuals, and memorable soundtrack, Antonblast is a standout indie title that will appeal to both long-time fans of platformers and newcomers alike. It's a game that encourages speed, exploration, and mastery—qualities that are sure to keep players coming back for more as they experience Anton's wild, action-packed adventure.



Blast Hard, Run Fast

It has garnered significant attention for its colorful art style, tight gameplay mechanics, and a heavy emphasis on speed and exploration. The game's development process, much like its design philosophy, combines a deep appreciation for retro platformers with a desire to innovate and evolve the genre. The development of AntonBlast began with a core vision of creating a fast-paced, tight platformer that encapsulates the spirit of games from the golden age of the 90s. Inspired by the likes of Donkey Kong Country and Super Mario World, the developers wanted to evoke the same sense of adventure, discovery, and challenge that made those games so memorable. The game's protagonist, Anton, is a bold and heroic figure armed with his trusty blast cannon. The team wanted Anton to feel dynamic and responsive, with every jump and shot exuding the satisfying, weighty feel typical of platformers from that era. Summitsphere's founder and lead developer, Tony Grayson, has been a key driving force behind AntonBlast. The studio aimed to create an art style that both honored the classics and offered something fresh. The result is a beautiful, hand-drawn aesthetic with bright, vibrant environments that bring Anton's world to life. The fluid animations, colorful backdrops, and highly detailed character designs set AntonBlast apart from other platformers, offering players an immersive visual experience. In terms of mechanics, the team wanted to push the boundaries of traditional platforming. At the heart of AntonBlast is its blast cannon, a versatile tool that Anton uses for both combat and traversal. The cannon isn't just for fighting enemies; it serves as a core mechanic that allows players to interact with the environment. For instance, it can be used to blast through obstacles, activate switches, or even propel Anton across platforms using explosive force. The addition of these mechanics helps distinguish AntonBlast from other games in the genre, offering players a sense of agency and creativity in how they navigate each level. The development process wasn't without its challenges, particularly when it came to refining the game's level design and balancing its difficulty. Summitsphere strived to create levels that encouraged exploration and mastery, ensuring that players would feel rewarded for taking the time to fully explore each environment. The challenge was to find the right balance between accessibility for casual players and depth for those seeking a more challenging experience. To achieve this, they used a mix of hidden paths, collectible items, and clever enemy placements to reward players who were willing to experiment and explore. Another notable aspect of AntonBlast's development is its dedication to a strong, quirky narrative. The game is filled with humorous dialogue, light-hearted moments, and colorful characters, which further elevate the player's experience. The storyline adds context to the fast-paced platforming, giving players a reason to care about Anton's journey and the world around him.



Tony Grayson, creator of AntonBlast and founder of Summitsphere.



IF WE DIDN'T SUCCEED, WE WOULD'VE BEEN ON THE STREETS

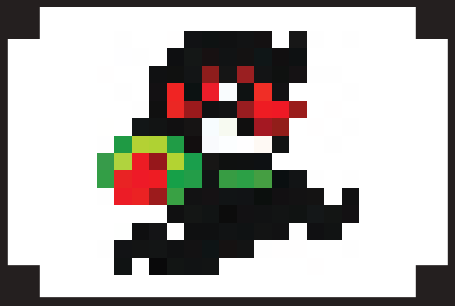


SPOTLIGHT - If We Didn't Succeed, We Would've Been On The Streets

Short snippets from a recent GameMaker interview with Tony Grayson, creator of Antonblast. Scan the QR code to read the full interview!

Were you surprised by the enthusiastic reception of ANTONBLAST?

TG: There's been a lot of fanart, a lot of fan media and a lot of fan games - the kind of stuff you'd only expect if you were Shovel Knight or something like that. We've been very blessed.



What other games, aside from ANTONBLAST, have you worked on?

TG: The big one is Antonball Deluxe, which is a part of the same series but not quite. People look at Antonball Deluxe and think it's a spinoff of ANTONBLAST, when it's the other way around. ANTONBLAST was inspired by Wario Land, and gets compared to it a lot, but for us it's more of a Shovel Knight-type game. Antonball Deluxe, on the other hand, has so much Nintendo flavour. It's not very innovative. The gameplay and the art direction are great, which matters the most. It was also our first game with a publisher, which was an… interesting experience.





REVIEWS

Antonblast has garnered a positive reception from both critics and players alike since its release, with its retro-inspired gameplay, charming visuals, and tight mechanics standing out as key highlights in reviews across various platforms. Critics have praised Antonblast for its nostalgic nods to classic 2D platformers, drawing comparisons to games like Super Mario World and Donkey Kong Country. The game's vibrant pixel art style and energetic soundtrack have been widely appreciated for capturing the essence of the '90s gaming era while also feeling fresh and modern. The levels are well-designed, offering a mix of challenging platforming, clever puzzles, and satisfying exploration. This blend of difficulty and accessibility has made Antonblast a hit with both casual players and hardcore platformer fans. Another frequent point of praise in reviews is the game's control mechanics. The protagonist, Anton, has a range of moves that feel fluid and responsive, making the act of navigating through the levels a satisfying experience. The game's difficulty curve has also been lauded for being fair—players face challenging levels without feeling punished, as Antonblast provides plenty of opportunities for skill-based progression.

GamesRadar+ lauded the game, stating it "explosively reinvents the destructive energy of Wario Land," highlighting its high-energy action and rewarding precision.

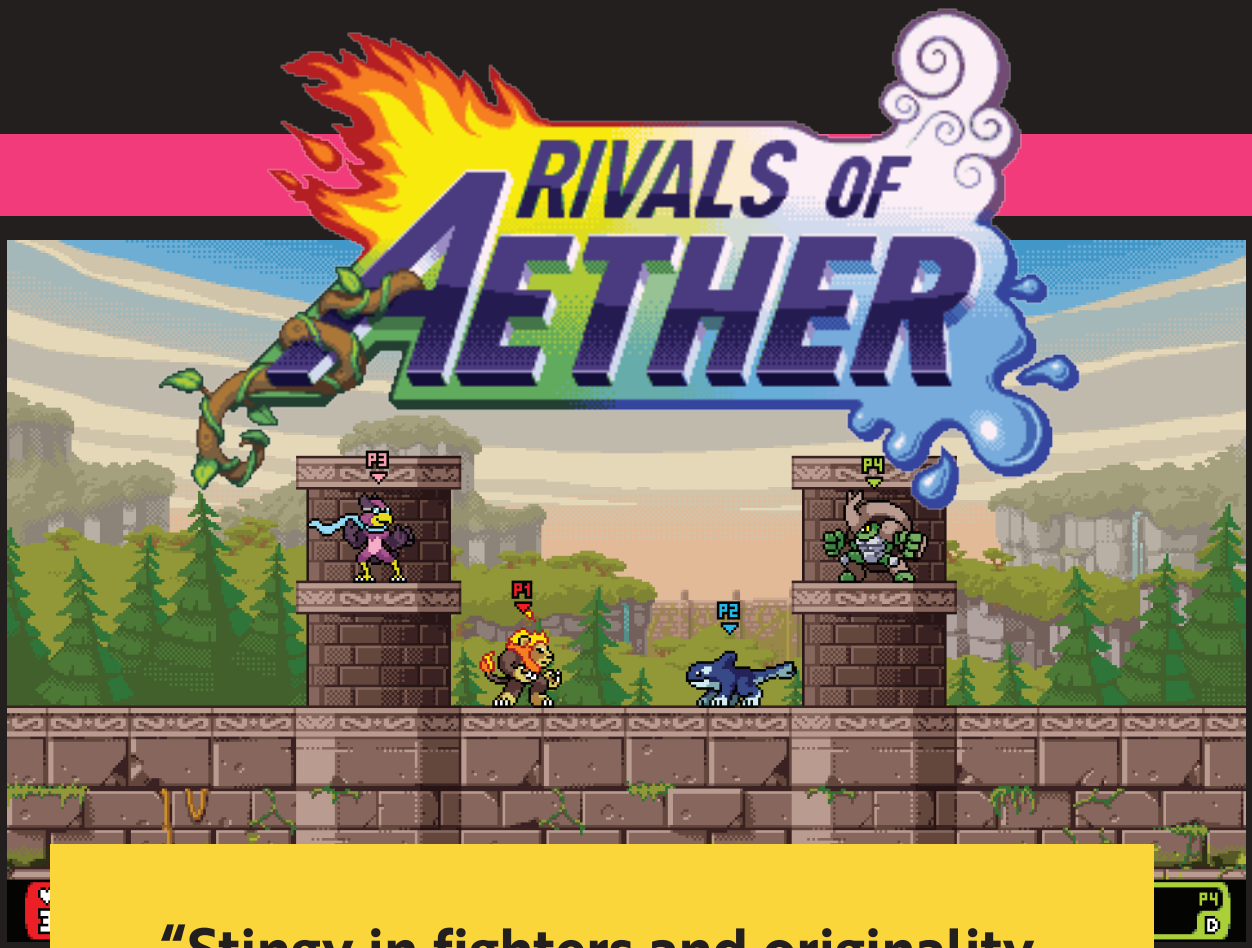
Nintendo Life praised Antonblast as "a great tribute to Nintendo's Wario Land series," noting its madcap action and gameplay variety, though they mentioned performance issues on the Switch version.



FRIEND OR FOE?

Rivals of Aether 1 & 2: Intense, strategic platform fighters with unique elemental combat.

by TEDMOND AYETTEY

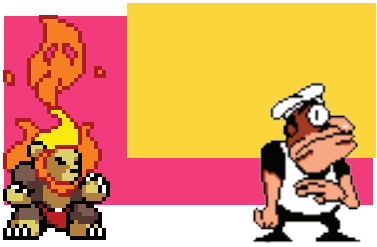


"Stingy in fighters and originality, Rivals of Aether represents the best Smash Bros clone ever to hit the market." - IGN

PART 1 - The Pixel Legacy

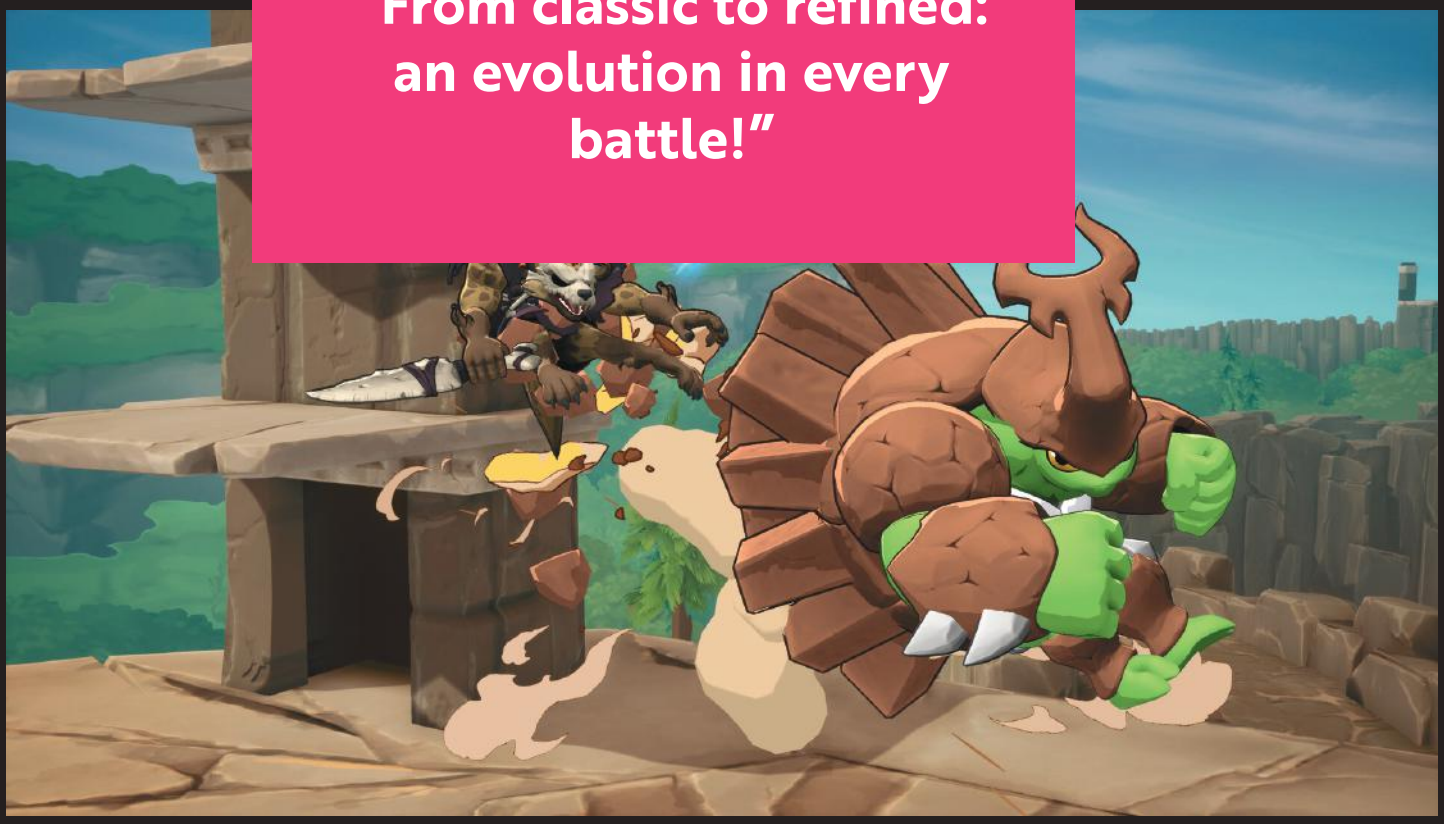


Rivals of Aether is a standout title in the competitive fighting game scene that has captured the hearts of players with its unique blend of strategic depth, intuitive controls, and vibrant pixel art. Released in 2017 by indie developer Dan Fornace, Rivals of Aether offers a fresh take on the traditional 2D platform fighter genre, drawing comparisons to the iconic Super Smash Bros. series while carving out its own identity. With an emphasis on accessibility, competitive play, and deep character design, Rivals of Aether has earned a dedicated fanbase and carved a niche in the world of fighting games. One of the core aspects of Rivals of Aether is its tight, responsive controls. The game simplifies many of the more complicated mechanics found in other platform fighters, making it easy for newcomers to pick up and play while still offering plenty of depth for more advanced players. The game's controls feel smooth and deliberate, with a focus on precision and movement, allowing players to execute a wide variety of combos, aerials, and special moves with ease. The result is a game that is not only approachable but also rewarding for those who take the time to master it.The roster of Rivals of Aether is another key element that sets it apart. The game features a unique cast of characters, each with its own elemental powers and playstyle. From the fiery attacks of the aggressive Ranno, to the tactical and defensive playstyle of Kragg, each character feels distinct and requires a different approach to maximize their potential. This diversity in playstyle ensures that no two matches feel the same and allows players to find a character that suits their preferred style of play. The depth of each character's moveset, as well as their elemental interactions, ensures that the game is never monotonous, even after hours of play. A standout feature of Rivals of Aether is its rich, competitive scene. The game is built with competitive play in mind, and its online mode is robust, offering matchmaking, ranked play, and the ability to compete in online tournaments. This focus on the competitive community has given rise to a thriving esports scene, with Rivals of Aether being featured in major fighting game tournaments and streams. The game's balance and accessible mechanics have made it a popular choice for players looking for an alternative to other platform fighters, particularly for those who enjoy a game that prioritizes skill and strategy. Visually, Rivals of Aether is a treat for the eyes. The game employs a beautiful, retro-inspired pixel art style that is both nostalgic and refreshing. The vibrant colors, smooth animations, and dynamic stage designs make every match feel like a spectacle. Each stage is meticulously crafted, with environmental hazards and unique elements that add an extra layer of strategy to the gameplay. Whether you're battling in a mystical forest, on a floating platform, or in an industrial factory, the stages offer diverse and engaging backdrops that enhance the overall experience. Perhaps what makes Rivals of Aether most compelling is its passion and commitment to delivering a high-quality experience. As an indie title, the developers have poured immense effort into creating a game that appeals to both casual players and competitive enthusiasts. The community has grown through consistent updates, new characters, and balance patches, keeping the game fresh and engaging. With ongoing support, Rivals of Aether continues to evolve, ensuring that it remains a staple in the world of platform fighters.



PART 2 - A New Dimension

“From classic to refined: an evolution in every battle!”



From pixels to polygons, Rivals of Aether 2 builds on the foundation of its predecessor—evolving the beloved indie fighter into a bold new 3D era while staying true to its competitive spirit.

Rivals of Aether 2 is the highly anticipated sequel to the popular indie platform fighter Rivals of Aether. Developed by Dan Fornace and featuring a rich cast of characters and innovative mechanics, the game continues to expand on its predecessor's formula while introducing exciting new features and depth. In Rivals of Aether 2, players engage in fast-paced, tactical battles on various stages, each filled with hazards and unique features. The game revolves around elemental combat, where each character represents a different element, such as fire, water, earth, air, and more. Each fighter in Rivals of Aether 2 is designed to offer a unique playstyle and set of moves that reflect their elemental affinity, giving players a wide array of choices when selecting their main fighter. One of the standout features of Rivals of Aether 2 is the expanded roster. While the first game introduced players to an exciting group of characters, the sequel brings in new fighters, each with their own movesets and playstyles. Notable among these are the inclusion of brand new characters, as well as returning favorites, each receiving significant updates to their mechanics and moves. The inclusion of new characters opens up even more possibilities for creative and competitive play. The game also introduces several new gameplay mechanics designed to improve both accessibility and depth. One major addition is a revamped air-dash mechanic, which allows for more fluid movement in the air. This encourages faster-paced gameplay and allows for even more advanced combos and recovery techniques.



The inclusion of a "grappling" system also adds new layers to the game, allowing players to grapple opponents into combos or position them more strategically. The stage design in Rivals of Aether 2 has also seen notable improvements. With new stages come new interactive elements, adding another level of strategy to each battle. These stages are designed to offer both competitive and fun elements, with features like dynamic platforms, hazards that can be used to a fighter's advantage, and stage transitions that change the flow of the battle. Players will need to be mindful of the environment as much as their opponent. In terms of balance, Rivals of Aether 2 takes a more refined approach, ensuring that each character is viable in competitive play while allowing for more specialized playstyles. The development team is highly engaged with the community, constantly tweaking the game to ensure a balanced experience and rewarding skilled play. The addition of a robust online mode, complete with matchmaking, ranked play, and custom lobbies, ensures that players can compete against others worldwide. Local multiplayer also remains a cornerstone of the experience, offering a fun and fast-paced atmosphere for friends to battle it out in person. Overall, Rivals of Aether 2 builds on the foundation laid by its predecessor, providing a deeper, more refined experience for players who love competitive platform fighting. With its diverse roster, new mechanics, and high level of polish, it's a game that promises to appeal to both new players and veterans of the original Rivals of Aether. Whether you're looking for casual fun or intense competitive action, Rivals of Aether 2 offers an engaging and rewarding experience that stands out in the platform fighter genre.






Sonic's been murdered... on his birthday?! Join your favorite characters in a thrilling whodunit packed with mystery, humor, and unexpected twists. Can you crack the case before it's game over?
THE MURDER OF SONIC THE HEDGEHOG
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB


STEAM®

DELICIOUS CHAOS!

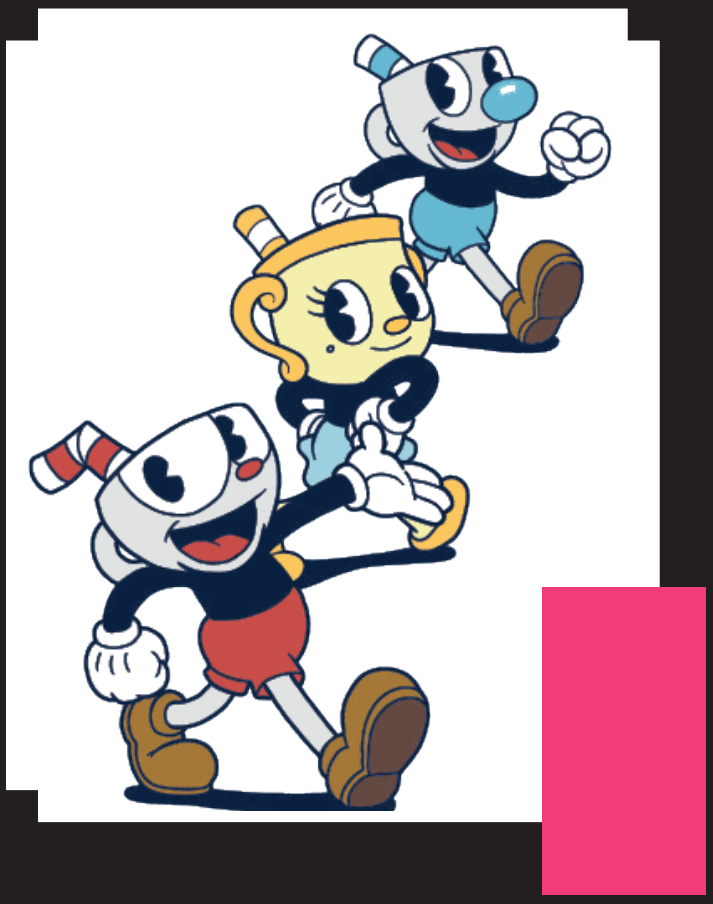
Cuphead: The Delicious Last Course

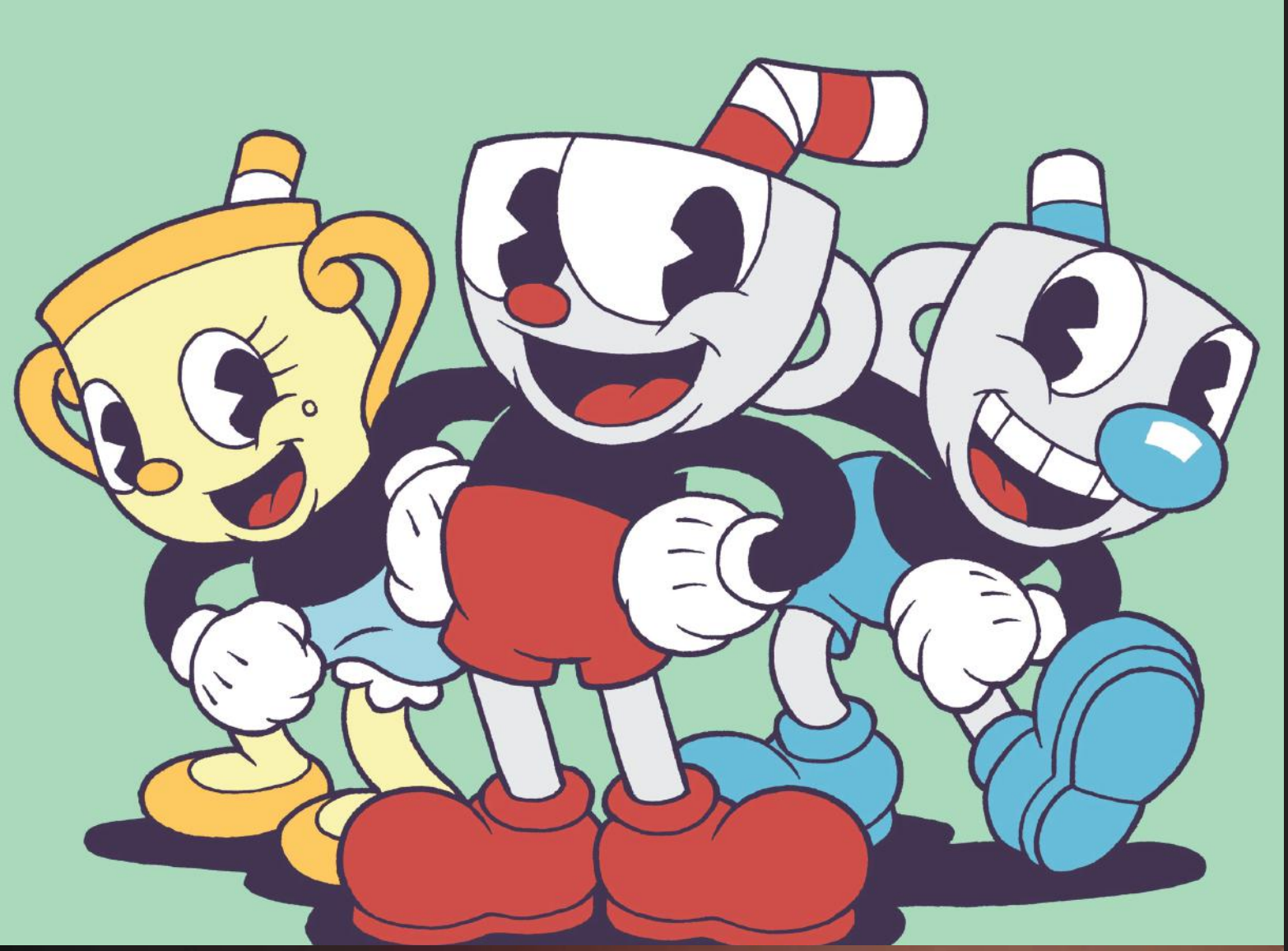
Challenging new bosses and levels in Cuphead's delicious final DLC.

by TEDMOND AYETTEY

Cuphead: The Delicious Last Course is a highly anticipated DLC that expands on the unique and challenging world of the original Cuphead. Released on June 30, 2022, this expansion introduces a host of new content, mechanics, and an additional playable character, all while maintaining the distinctive art style and punishing difficulty that fans loved in the original game.The DLC introduces a new playable character, Ms. Chalice, who brings a fresh set of abilities and moves to the game. Ms. Chalice's unique moveset includes a double jump and the ability to dash through the air, which provides new strategies for players to explore during the tough boss battles that define Cuphead. Her inclusion not only adds a new dynamic to the gameplay but also encourages different playstyles, offering players the chance to experiment with various strategies to overcome the formidable challenges the game presents. In terms of new levels and challenges, The Delicious Last Course brings several new bosses, each with their own set of moves and patterns that require precise timing and adaptability. These bosses are designed with the same level of creativity and intensity as the original game, with the visuals and animations continuing the hand-drawn, 1930s cartoon-inspired aesthetic that made Cuphead stand out. The new environments are as vibrant and detailed as ever, providing a visually stunning backdrop to the intense combat. Another notable addition in The Delicious Last Course is the new set of weapons and charms that players can use. These new items add even more variety to the gameplay, allowing players to further customize their approach to each battle. From explosive projectiles to shield-breaking weapons, the new arsenal gives players more ways to strategize against the creative and difficult bosses.

Additionally, the DLC features new levels and a brand new world to explore, continuing the game's tradition of rewarding skillful play with engaging and visually charming stages. While the game remains as difficult as ever, the addition of new mechanics and character abilities gives players more tools to tackle the challenges ahead, offering fresh twists on the already-tested formula that made Cuphead so popular.









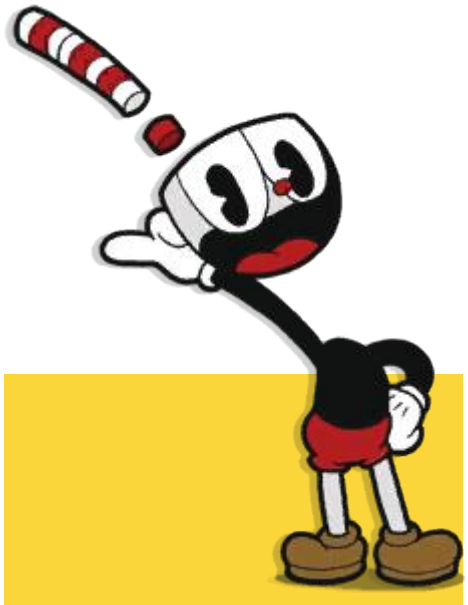
Another significant aspect of the DLC is the refinement of the game's difficulty balancing. Although The Delicious Last Course doesn't shy away from the notorious difficulty that Cuphead is known for, it does offer more opportunities for skill-based progression. Ms. Chalice's abilities, combined with new charms, offer players more flexibility in how they approach each challenge, making certain fights feel more manageable while still keeping the stakes high. The addition of new ways to customize characters and combat strategies is a deliberate effort to allow players to tailor their approach without undermining the game's core difficulty. The soundtrack, composed by Kristofer Maddigan, continues to impress in the DLC, providing an exciting and jazzy backdrop to every fight. The music shifts in tone and tempo to match the intensity of the battles, and the soundtrack as a whole complements the visual and gameplay elements of The Delicious Last Course perfectly. This cohesive fusion of music, animation, and gameplay is what gives Cuphead its unmistakable charm, and the DLC doesn't fall short of maintaining that excellence.





The music, composed by Kristofer Maddigan, adds to the intensity, shifting tempo during boss fights to match the action. The Delicious Last Course succeeds in enhancing the Cuphead formula without losing the charm that made the original so beloved. For more on the development behind this DLC, including an exclusive interview with Maja Mouldenhaur, co-founder of Studio MDHR, the full transcript is available in the final article of this magazine.

"A challenging and visually stunning masterpiece."
— GiantBomb



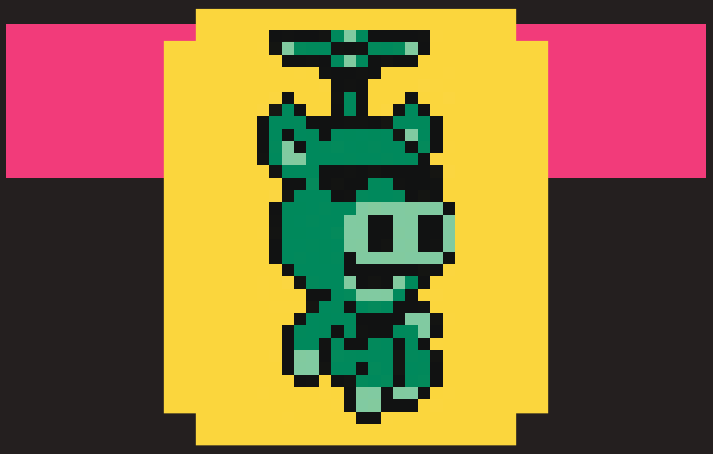
UFO 50: A Retro-Inspired Odyssey

Exploring 50 Unique Alien Worlds in a Bold, Indie Adventure That Blends Nostalgia with Innovation

by TEDMOND AYETTEY

UFO 50 is a unique indie game that seamlessly blends retro aesthetics with modern gameplay innovation, offering players a rich and dynamic experience across 50 different mini-games, each inspired by classic arcade titles. At its core, UFO 50 presents itself as a collection of quirky, original titles, all loosely connected by the theme of extraterrestrial exploration. Players take control of a diverse group of aliens, each with their own distinctive abilities and characteristics, as they traverse the strange and unpredictable worlds within the UFO. The game's mechanics are diverse, with each mini-game featuring its own set of rules and challenges. One moment, players may find themselves in a fast-paced shooter, dodging obstacles while taking down enemies in a neon-lit space corridor. The next, they could be navigating a puzzling platformer, jumping from platform to platform, or managing a fast-food restaurant in a time-management simulation. The variety in gameplay styles keeps the experience fresh, ensuring that no two sessions feel alike What truly sets UFO 50 apart is how it cleverly adapts each mini-game to feel like a homage to classic arcade genres, while also introducing modern twists. Some games may involve retro pixel art and simple mechanics, while others embrace more complex, modern systems like open-world exploration or roguelike elements. The 50 distinct games each come with their own unique difficulty curve, creating a layered challenge for both casual and hardcore gamers alike.

What truly sets UFO 50 apart is how it cleverly adapts each mini-game to feel like a homage to classic arcade genres, while also introducing modern twists. Some games may involve retro pixel art and simple mechanics, while others embrace more complex, modern systems like open-world exploration or roguelike elements. The 50 distinct games each come with their own unique difficulty curve, creating a layered challenge for both casual and hardcore gamers alike. Throughout all of these mini-games, a unique progression system allows players to unlock new abilities, characters, and challenges. This depth of content creates a sense of reward and keeps players invested in exploring every corner of the UFO, offering hours of gameplay across its multifaceted universe.





“Fifty games, endless retro fun.”



One Unforgettable Journey

UFO 50 delivers a unique gaming experience by offering 50 distinct games, each with its own mechanics and genre. The collection features a mix of platformers, shooters, puzzles, and even RPGs, all designed with retro aesthetics and tight controls. The variety is one of the collection's strongest points, with each game drawing inspiration from classic gaming eras, yet often adding fresh twists to familiar formulas. The platformers, for example, feature responsive controls and well-designed levels that challenge the player's timing and reflexes. Meanwhile, the top-down shooters tap into the nostalgia of early arcade games, providing simple yet addictive gameplay. Puzzle games within the collection demand critical thinking, often combining elements from multiple genres, like physics-based mechanics or tile-matching systems.

One of the most impressive aspects of UFO 50 is how each game within the collection, despite its distinct genre and mechanics, feels like part of a larger, cohesive experience. The variety of genres, from fast-paced shooters to methodical puzzle games, is united through consistent visual and auditory design. The pixel art style harkens back to the golden age of gaming, with each game featuring vibrant, nostalgic visuals that are both charming and detailed. The soundtrack further enhances this retro feel, with chiptune-inspired music that is catchy and atmospheric, setting the tone for each game's unique world.



The diversity in gameplay doesn't lead to a lack of polish, either. Each title within the collection is well-designed, with tight controls and thoughtful mechanics that encourage replayability. For instance, the RPG-like games incorporate light narrative elements that give the player a sense of progression and investment, while the platformers and shooters challenge skill, offering increasingly difficult levels that reward precision and strategic thinking. The balance between complexity and accessibility ensures that each game can be enjoyed by players of various skill levels, yet never loses its charm or depth. This combination of variety, consistency, and attention to detail is what makes UFO 50 such a standout in the indie gaming scene.

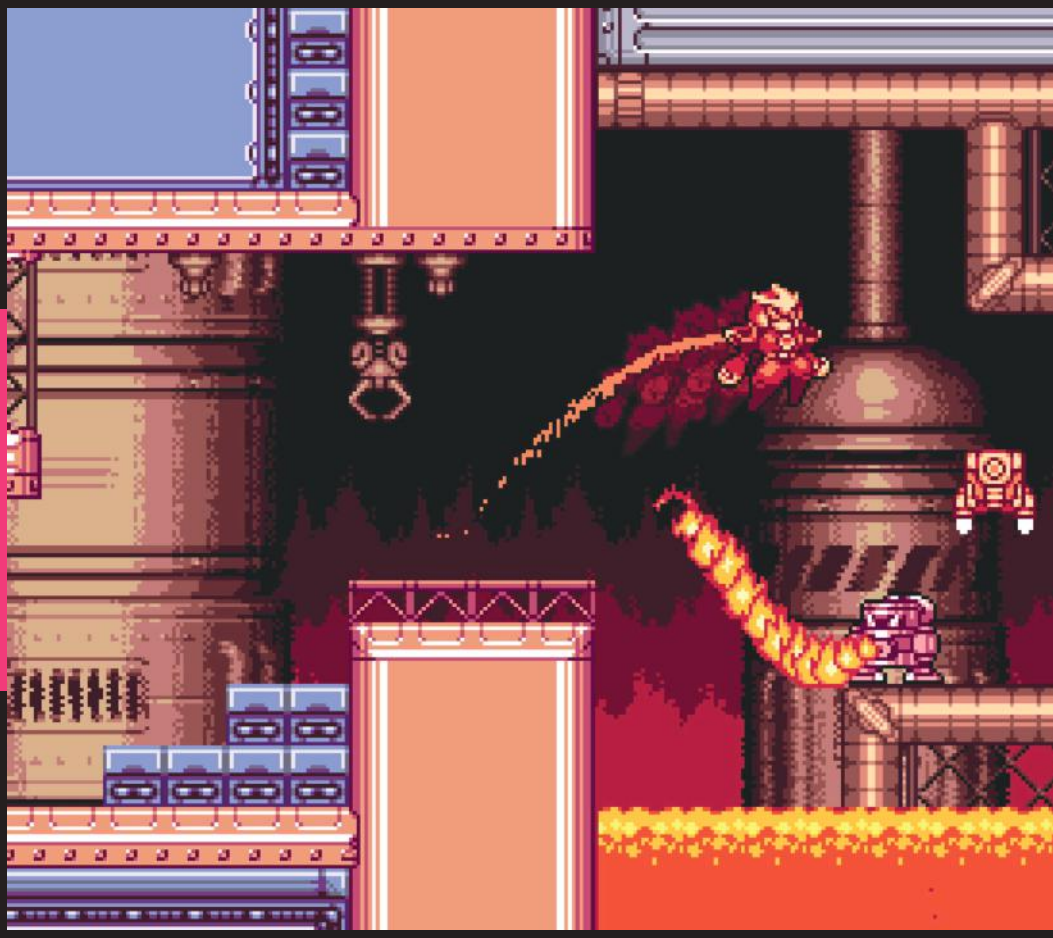
Critical reception has been positive, with many praising the game's innovative take on nostalgia. Indie Game Reviewer called it "an ambitious, love-letter to retro gaming," while Rock Paper Shotgun noted it "feels like a curated collection of forgotten classics, each brimming with charm."

Eurogamer's Christian Donlan lauded it as "a dazzling piece of creative audacity."

The Guardian's Pushing Buttons column described it as "an anthology of pure nostalgia."







CIRCUIT RUSH

Gravity Circuit

Gravity Circuit is a fast-paced, action-packed platformer that combines dynamic combat, gravity-based mechanics, and intense challenges in a futuristic, robot-filled world.

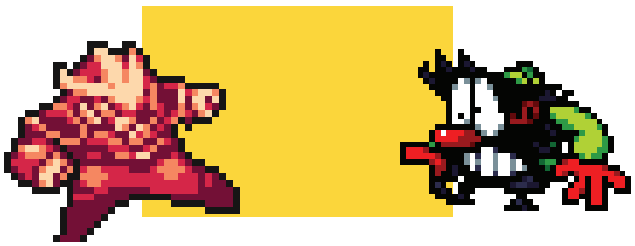
by TEDMOND AYETTEY

"Gravity Circuit blends retro action with modern fluidity, offering a fast-paced, gravity-defying experience."





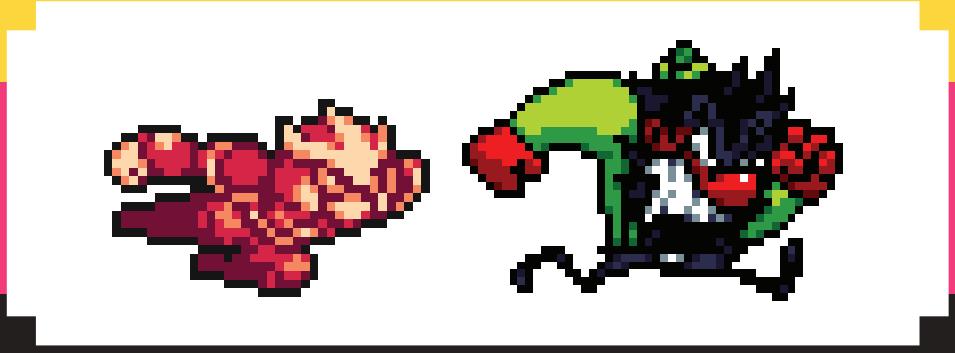
Gravity Circuit is an action-packed platformer that channels the spirit of classic 90s arcade games while adding a modern twist. Set in a futuristic world where gravity is manipulated to gain the upper hand, players control Kai, a skilled hero on a mission to defeat powerful enemies and restore peace to a shattered world. The game's core mechanic revolves around using gravity to navigate challenging environments, dodge attacks, and unleash devastating combos. With tight, responsive controls and a fast-paced combat system, Gravity Circuit keeps players on the edge of their seat as they engage in gravity-defying action. The vibrant pixel art style brings the futuristic setting to life, offering a visually stunning and nostalgic experience. Whether you're a fan of retro platformers or looking for a fresh, exciting challenge, Gravity Circuit delivers an unforgettable adventure full of adrenaline-pumping moments and exhilarating boss battles. Get ready to flip gravity on its head! Gravity Circuit draws heavy inspiration from the iconic Mega Man series, particularly in its level design, tight controls, and challenging boss battles. Like Mega Man, players must traverse diverse stages, each with unique enemies and obstacles, culminating in a powerful boss fight. The game also channels Mega Man's emphasis on mastering new abilities, as players unlock gravity-based powers to navigate the environment and defeat increasingly tough foes. This nostalgic influence, combined with fresh mechanics, offers both a familiar and exciting experience for fans of classic action-platformers. Building on Mega Man's legacy, Gravity Circuit offers a similar sense of progression, where defeating each boss grants new abilities that can be used strategically in later stages. This dynamic adds layers of depth and replayability, keeping players engaged as they refine their skills and adapt to new challenges. The seamless blend of old-school inspiration with modern design ensures that both nostalgic fans and newcomers feel right at home.



Gravity-DEFYING Action

Gravity Circuit, the action-packed platformer from developer Domesticated Ant Games and publisher PID Games, brings a unique and exhilarating twist to the genre by combining gravity manipulation with fast-paced, retro-inspired gameplay. Drawing heavy inspiration from the legendary Mega Man series, the game transports players into a futuristic world where they control Kai, a hero with the ability to manipulate gravity. This mechanic isn't just for traversal—it's central to combat and puzzle-solving, making Gravity Circuit a truly dynamic experience. The gameplay of Gravity Circuit is a thrilling mix of tight, responsive controls and innovative movement. The central mechanic—Kai's gravity-altering abilities—lets players flip gravity, walk on walls, and jump in unexpected directions. This gives the game a level of fluidity and strategy that makes both combat and platforming sections feel fresh and exciting. Whether you're dodging enemy attacks, solving environmental puzzles, or launching yourself into high-speed chases, the gravity mechanic constantly keeps the gameplay engaging and fast-paced.

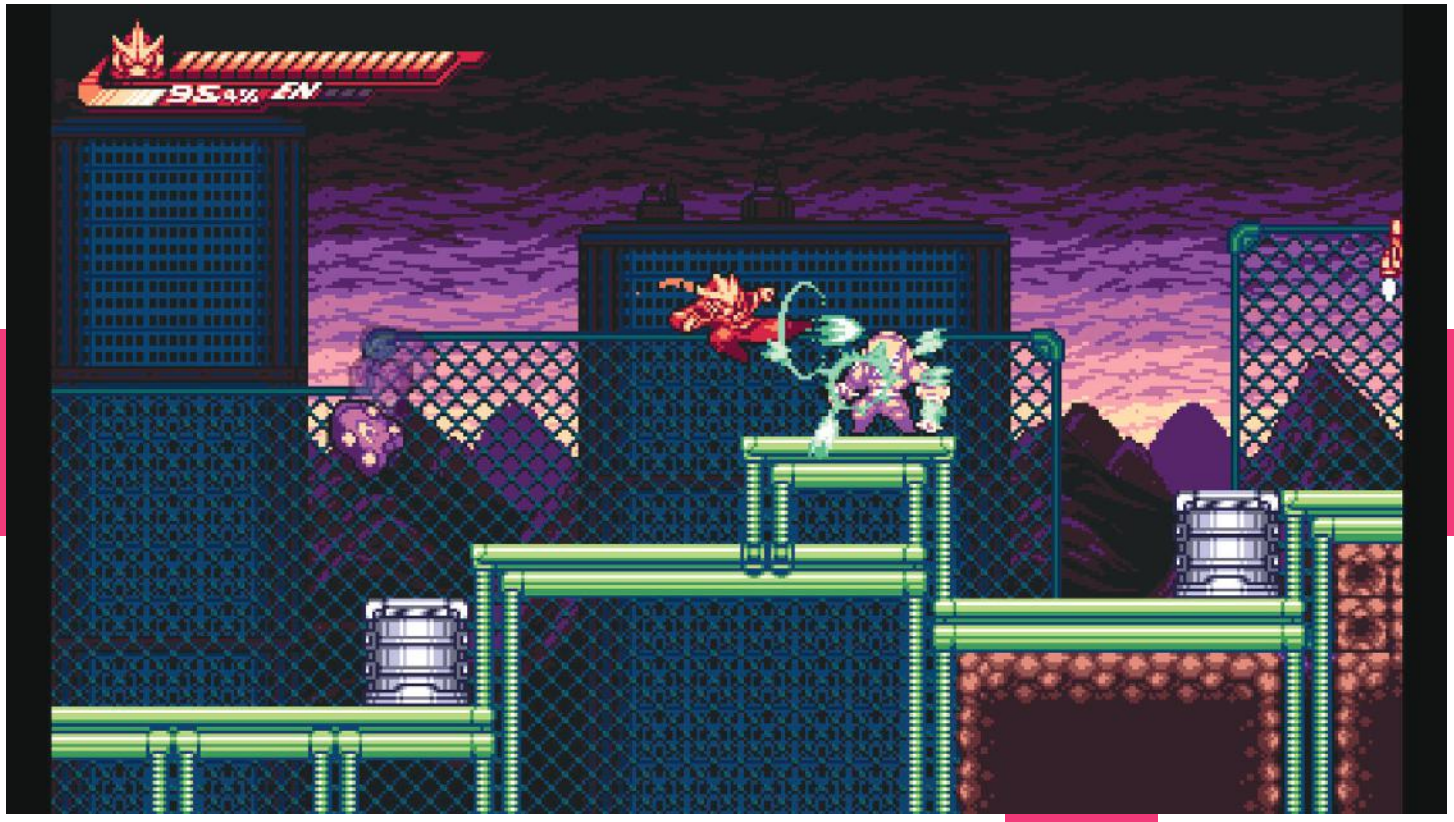
Levels in Gravity Circuit are thoughtfully designed, offering diverse environments filled with enemies, traps, and challenging platforming sequences. Each level culminates in a boss fight, where players face off against powerful foes with unique gravity-based mechanics. These bosses are a highlight of the game, providing a tough but fair challenge. Visually, Gravity Circuit takes a retro-inspired approach, with stunning pixel art that blends classic 16-bit aesthetics with smooth animations and vibrant environments. The game's look is not just a nostalgia trip—it's a well-polished, modern take on pixel art that enhances the futuristic feel of the world. The animations are crisp, making every jump and attack feel satisfying. Released on July 13, 2023, Gravity Circuit is available on PC (Steam), Nintendo Switch, PlayStation 4, and PlayStation 5. Whether you're playing on the go with the Switch or enjoying the fluid action on a larger screen with PC or PlayStation, Gravity Circuit promises a thrilling and accessible experience across all platforms.



THE SOUND GOES AROUND



Dominic Ninmark is the talented composer behind Gravity Circuit. Known for his captivating soundtracks, Ninmark brings a dynamic, retro-inspired score that perfectly complements the game's fast-paced action and gravity manipulation mechanics, adding an extra layer of energy and excitement to the experience.

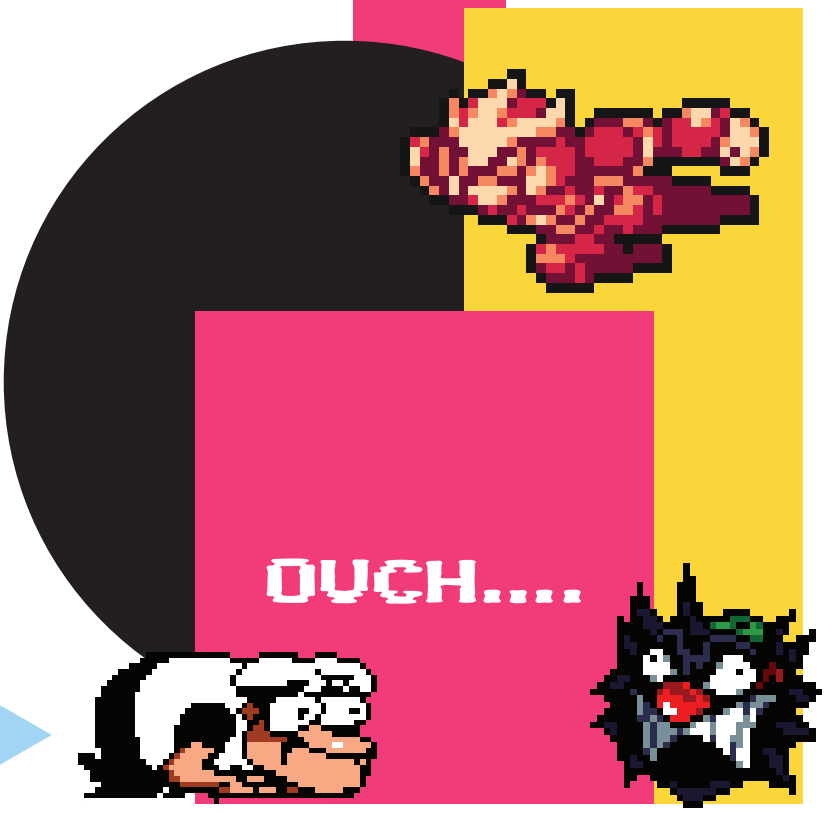


REVIEWS

With its captivating visuals, innovative mechanics, and nostalgic influences, Gravity Circuit is a must-play for fans of action platformers. Whether you're revisiting the genre or discovering it for the first time, this game is sure to keep you on your toes with every gravity-defying leap. Gravity Circuit has received praise for its tight controls, engaging gravity-based mechanics, and retro-inspired design, with critics highlighting its blend of nostalgia and innovation, making it a standout in the genre.

"A masterclass in fluid movement and level design." – IGN

"A love letter to the classics, with a twist." – Kotaku



UNLEASH YOUR INNER HERETIC...IT'S TIME TO BREAK ALL THE RULES!

HERETICAL



BY PURCHASING ON STEAM!
OUT NOW!

STEAM®

GO FAST.
HIT HARD.
GO BERSERK.



STEAM® NINTENDO SWITCH PS4
PS5 XBOX ONE XBOX SERIES X|S

STAB VAMPIRES, SLAY SCHOOLS, AND SAVE YOUR SOCIAL LIFE.

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB



#BLUD

© 2025 BLUD. All rights reserved.
Unauthorized reproduction or distribution is strictly prohibited by law.

XBOX ONE STEAM® NINTENDO SWITCH PS4

ONE QUACK AT A TIME.



EVERYONE 10+
10+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Solve spooky campsite shenanigans with the world's snarkiest, bread-loving duck detective!

COMING SOON.

STEAM®

Duck Detective
the ghost of glamping

© 2025 Happy Broccoli Games. All rights reserved. Unauthorized use, duplication, or distribution is prohibited.



ULTIMATE ESCAPE!

Penny's Big Breakaway

by TEDMOND AYETTEY



Penny's Big Breakaway is an exhilarating adventure bursting with energy and charm. Packed with unforgettable moments and vibrant worlds, this story celebrates bravery, creativity, and new beginnings.

"The yo-yo never rests."



PIXEL PERFECT,
EVERY FRAME.

aseprite

STEAM®

DOWNLOAD
ON STEAM!

FREEDOM IN FULL SWING

Penny's Big Breakaway is an action-packed adventure that follows the bold journey of Penny, a young protagonist determined to break free from her ordinary life. When an unexpected opportunity for escape arises, Penny takes a leap into the unknown, setting off on a journey filled with challenges, self-discovery, and heart-pounding moments. Along the way, she encounters a cast of memorable characters, each offering new lessons and perspectives. As Penny pushes through obstacles, she learns the true meaning of courage and freedom, realizing that sometimes the greatest adventure lies in embracing change and taking risks. With a perfect balance of action, emotion, and growth, Penny's Big Breakaway captures the essence of what it means to break free from the ordinary and pursue something greater. It's a thrilling tale that will resonate with anyone seeking adventure and personal transformation.





SPEED MEETS STYLE

Penny's Big Breakaway offers a unique blend of dynamic mechanics that keep players engaged throughout the journey, elevating the gameplay while supporting the game's narrative themes of freedom and self-discovery. The central mechanic revolves around Penny's ability to break free from traditional movement systems, using a variety of abilities that allow her to interact with the world in exciting and innovative ways. Whether it's using acrobatic maneuvers to scale walls, performing gravity-defying jumps, or manipulating the environment to solve puzzles, the game's fluid platforming mechanics create a thrilling sense of freedom and empowerment. The combat system also stands out, combining fast-paced action with precision timing. Penny can unlock new abilities and upgrades as she progresses, adding variety and depth to her skills. These abilities not only serve in combat but also help in exploring the vast, interconnected world. Players must use their newfound powers strategically to tackle increasingly complex obstacles, offering a gratifying challenge as they navigate different environments. In addition to the core mechanics, Penny's Big Breakaway incorporates a clever narrative structure where choices made during gameplay influence Penny's journey and interactions with other characters. This integration of player choice into gameplay deepens the overall experience, encouraging replayability as players explore different paths and outcomes. The game's vibrant art style and smooth animation further complement the mechanics, with every action feeling fluid and satisfying. The dynamic soundtrack enhances the sense of excitement, underscoring each daring moment. Developed by Evening Star Studios, known for their focus on creating rich, immersive experiences, Penny's Big Breakaway reflects their commitment to quality and innovation. Evening Star's expertise shines through in the way the game's mechanics are tightly woven into the narrative, making each leap, twist, and turn feel integral to Penny's journey of self-discovery. Whether navigating through intense platforming sequences or engaging in fast-paced combat, every action in Penny's Big Breakaway is designed to empower players to feel like they are truly breaking free.



A GLOBAL TEAM!

Founded in late 2018, Evening Star is a boutique game studio with locations in Los Angeles, London, and Melbourne. Dedicated to creating fresh, fun games, the studio values strong communication and collaboration despite being a distributed team.

With a focus on innovation and sustainability, Evening Star strives to push creative boundaries while maintaining a healthy work environment, crafting games that reflect their unique style and passion.

GAME UP.

XBOX

ONLY $49.99!

SCAN HERE!



Experience precision and comfort with the Xbox Series X controller—perfect for indie and PC games!

© 2025 Xbox. All rights reserved. Unauthorized use, reproduction, or distribution is strictly prohibited.

BONUS FACT!

“Gravity Circuit’s development is a global effort, with a diverse team spanning multiple countries. From the creative talents of Dominic Ninmark, the composer and character designer, to the artists who contributed to the captivating in-game visuals, the collaboration has brought together a range of skills and perspectives. While the core group responsible for the game consists of a dedicated few, including myself, Dominic, and a small team of artists, additional members such as porting staff, play testers, and promotional artists have also played crucial roles in bringing Gravity Circuit to life.”

- Antti, game developer

Gravity Circuit evolved from a solo project to a global team effort!





CODE & CRAFTS

GameMaker Engine

A powerful, accessible engine empowering indie developers to create polished 2D games with ease and speed.

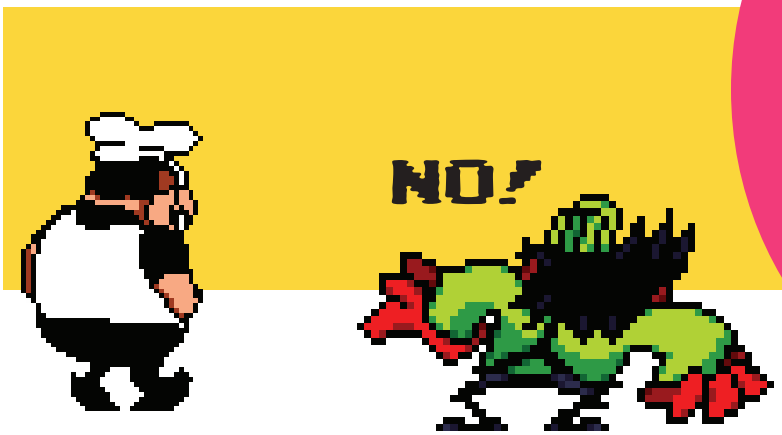
by TEDMOND AYETTEY



"Create without Limits!"

"Powerful 2D tools, indie-ready."

DO YOU WANNA BECOME A GAME DEVELOPER?



...IS THAT A YES?

*WELL, YOU'RE JUST IN **LUCK!***

If you're a budding game developer with a passion for creating your own indie games, **GameMaker** is the perfect tool to turn your ideas into reality! GameMaker's user-friendly interface makes it easy for beginners to dive into the world of game development, with no prior coding experience required. The drag-and-drop feature allows you to design, animate, and code all in one place, while the option to write custom scripts gives you the flexibility to unlock more advanced features as you grow your skills.



"With its intuitive interface and powerful tools, GameMaker empowers developers to bring their creative visions to life, regardless of experience level."



BEND THE RULES, DOMINATE THE DECK.

BALATRO

EVERYONE
STEAM
NINTENDO SWITCH
PS4
PS5

WHERE POKER HANDS MEET POWERFUL COMBOS, WILD JOKERS, AND STRATEGIC CHAOS



The Engine Behind Indie Hits!

GameMaker has become a go-to tool for aspiring game developers, offering an accessible and powerful platform for creating games without needing to master complex coding. With its intuitive drag-and-drop interface, GameMaker makes it easy for beginners to design, animate, and program their own games. But what really sets GameMaker apart is its versatility: as you gain experience, you can dive deeper into coding with its scripting language, GML (GameMaker Language), to unlock more complex features. Since its release, GameMaker has powered some of the most iconic indie games in the industry. Titles like Undertale, Hyper Light Drifter, and Hotline Miami have all used GameMaker to create their distinct worlds, proving that you don't need a big budget to make a big impact. These games showcase GameMaker's ability to handle everything from simple 2D platformers to intricate, story-driven experiences. GameMaker's community is another huge asset, with a wealth of tutorials, resources, and forums available to help new developers. Whether you're designing a retro-inspired pixel art game or a modern indie hit, GameMaker provides the tools and support you need to bring your vision to life. It's the perfect starting point for any young developer looking to dive into the world of game creation.



CONSOLE COMMAND



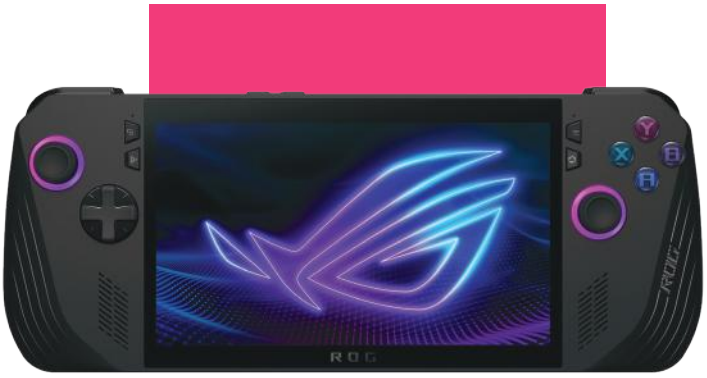


STEAM DECK - $399

PC gaming in your hands. The Steam Deck runs your entire Steam library with a 7" touchscreen, customizable controls, and full desktop mode for extra flexibility. Great for indies and Elden Ring.

ROG ALLY X - $799

A powerhouse handheld with a Ryzen Z1 Extreme chip, 24GB RAM, 1TB SSD, and a massive 80Wh battery. Built for serious gaming, wherever you are.



LENOVO LEGION GO - $699



A bold entry with an 8.8" QHD+ display, detachable controllers, and Windows 11. It's part console, part tablet, all muscle. Perfect for on-the-go AAA or multitasking with a mouse.


ADVENTURE CRAWLS BACK.
A whimsical adventure of bugs, bravery, and bonds.
Bug Fables
The Everlasting Sapling
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
STEAM
NINTENDO SWITCH
PS4
XBOX ONE


TOREE
3D
LOW POLY, HIGH SPEED.
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
STEAM



© 2025 Heart Machine Inc. All Rights Reserved.

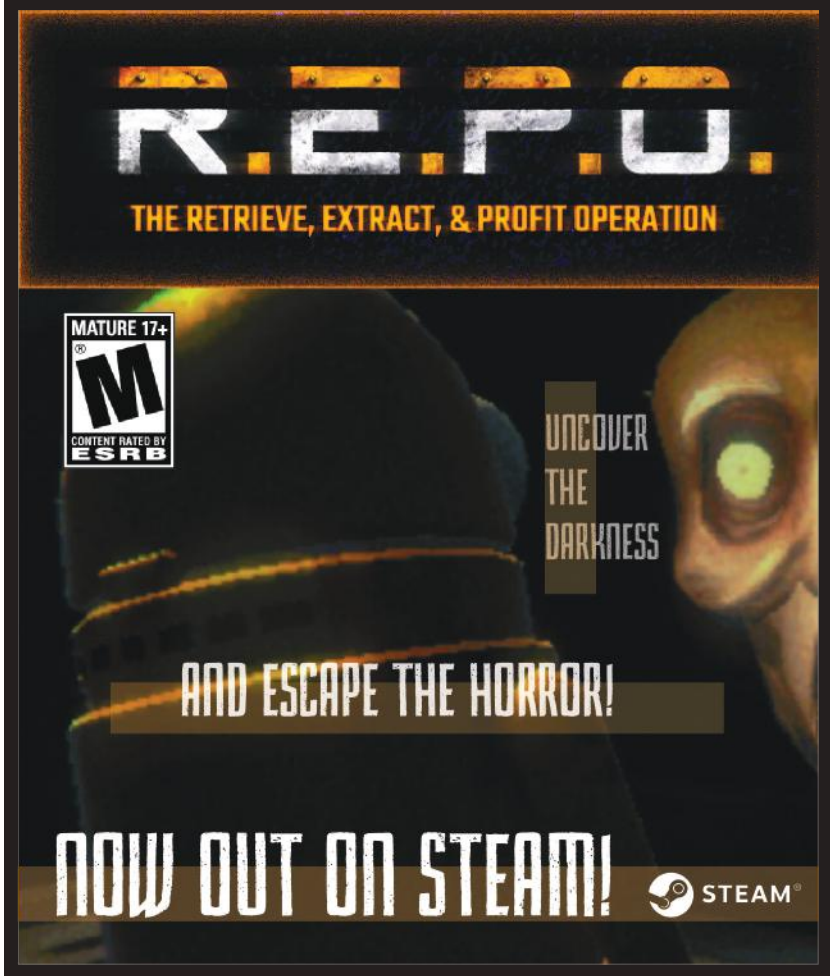
NEWS



Singapore-based studio kopiforge is set to release SEDAP!, a co-op cooking-combat adventure blending action and culinary challenges, set in a mysterious Southeast Asian-inspired world.









Once Upon A Puppet announces its April 2025 release with Daedalic as publisher. The new gameplay trailer showcases dynamic stage mechanics, handcrafted set pieces, and character interactions as Nieve, an exiled Stagehand, and Drev, a Puppet, uncover secrets of the Understage.

INTERVIEW



Maja Moulderhauer is a talented game developer known for her innovative work in the gaming industry. With a passion for storytelling and unique gameplay mechanics, she brings creativity and expertise to every project. She is currently the executive producer of Studio MDHR.







It's been almost five years since Cuphead was first released, it's got its own TV, it's appeared in Super Smash Bros, and it's arguably the most recognisable indie title ever at this point, did you ever expect all of this?

MM: No! We did not, we did not expect this. When we started on this, it was a very small scope, a very unique art style and we were like, if we get a thousand people who recognise these cartoons or played these hard-as-nails games, success and we can't take it to our graves that we did it [sic]. Then it ballooned from there but none of it was forecast. It's still wild and shocks us every day.

Did Microsoft's early partnership with yourselves help with that?

MM: That was probably the biggest milestone and differentiator for us between doing that very small scope versus, you know, 'what if Microsoft is paying attention?' The support they gave us in those years was formative. We took it from this small little game to 'let's go big or go home' - it could have never happened without that.

Now we're two weeks away from the DLC, can you give us a brief overview of what development looked like? Given that it was initially slated for a 2020 release.

MM: Timeline has never been a driver for us. Everybody laughs when we say that, they're like 'yeah, we know!' For us, it's about quality and staying true to what we want to do. At the end of the day, we want to say 'whether it worked or didn't work, we did what we intended to do and we're happy with it.' The DLC in itself is our biggest island yet, there are five super-sized bosses, with tons and tons more to discover, which we're keeping under wraps. There's the new playable character, who is built from the ground up and isn't a reskin of Cuphead or Mugman. We haven't done a full inventory check of what our total frames are, but it will be comparable to the full base game. We wanted to push the boundary of what we'd done before, not rest on the laurels of that success. We wanted to give the fans something more.

Was there any point during development, when things got so big that you thought about pulling a Team Cherry and breaking the DLC out into its own game?

MM: Yeah. That was a decision we made at the beginning when we mapped out what the scope was. It was pretty easy because it was all the things in the back of our minds that we didn't get to put on paper.

In the beginning, when we put pencil to paper in early 2019, we really quickly realised that it's the same genre and completes the story we started. Storyline-wise, it only made sense to be an extension of this game, so let's put it as DLC and that will save a lot of headaches.



Did the delays allow you to add more content or was it a case of making sure everything was spot on?

MM: It was all about quality. People are going to really notice a difference in the animation between the base game and the DLC. It's not just the boss transformations but the location changes. There's almost triple, quadruple the background count alone.

Speaking of the enemies, what's your favourite of the new bosses?

MM: We've not shown it just yet, but it's Esther Winchester. Her energy, the creativity of her transformations, and what her attacks are, plus her music.



Are there any run-and-gun stages?

MM: There are none in the DLC. We wanted to experiment with different ways of getting the coins to buy the upgrades in the shop. I think how we've done it turned out brilliantly. That's one of the additional things where we're like 'Just wait and see,' it's fun.



What's the biggest learning you took from the base game into the DLC?

MM: One of the things that we'll struggle with continuously is putting a line in the sand and calling it. We just want to continue adding layers and more. Furthering and pushing the boundaries of things.

Other than that, the process was the same. We streamlined by concepting early on, rather than alongside the animation, as there was a lot of wasted time there.

What makes Miss Chalice so special?

MM: I prefer playing as her, I think they all have complementary skill sets. I use parrying as an example. So, if you're not great with timing your double jump to parry things, she's an automatic parry with her dash. I really like that. It was a different way to play the game - maybe it's the novelty of it. You can also play the core game with Miss Chalice, allowing you to experience the game in a different way. You don't even have to beat the core game to play the DLC, you just have to beat one mausoleum.

You've alluded to lots of mystery and secrets, is there anything you can give away before?

MM: It's strictly under lock and key. One of our favourite things is easter eggs. We plant a lot of easter eggs in terms of homages and things to discover. It's one of our favourite things. We love looking online to see how people discover them.

I will say, from the core game, there are still some things that have never been discovered and we love that.

What's next for you, now we're at the finish line. Do you have other projects that you're working on?

MM: We do, but they've not been announced yet. We're not going anywhere - we love 2D animation, we love pencil to paper and that, for the foreseeable future, we're gonna continue with.

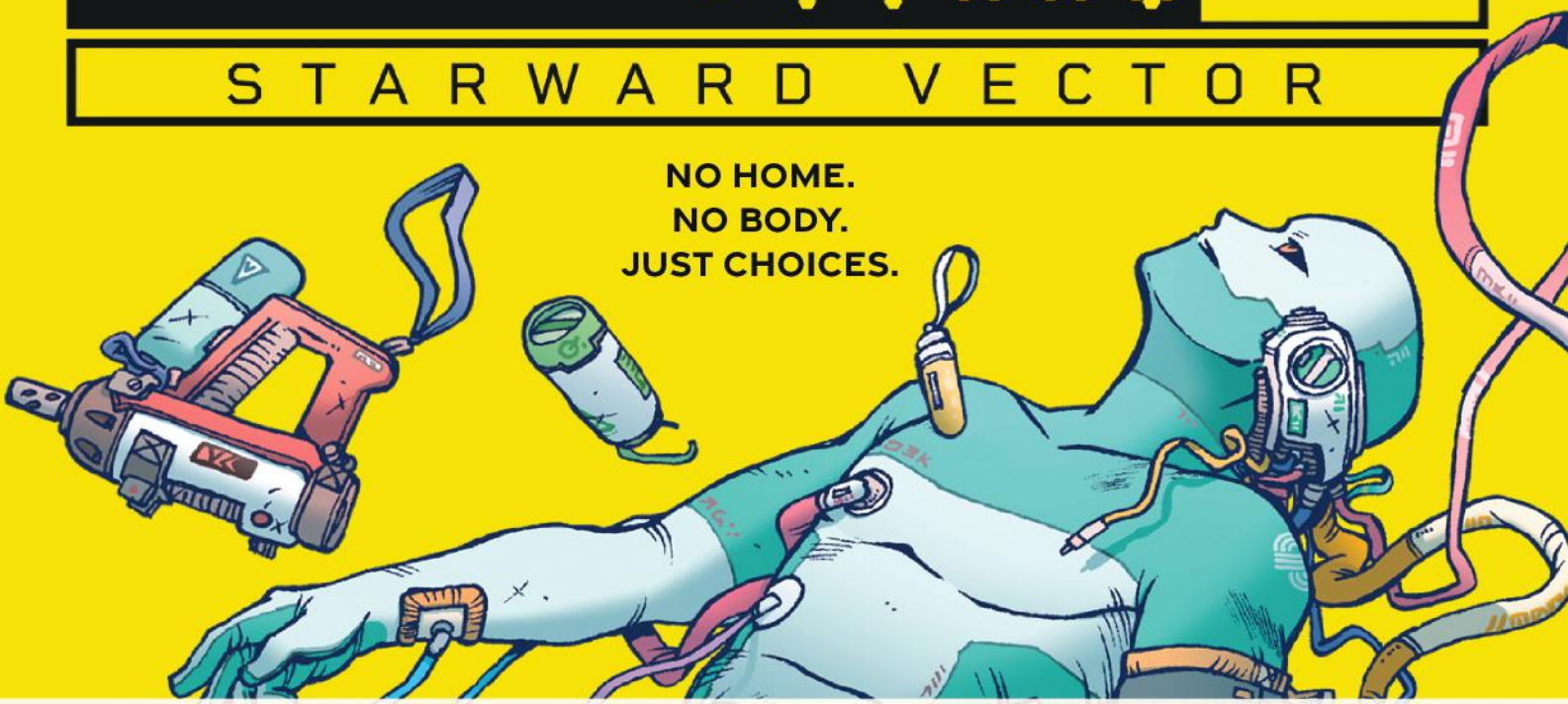
Is that with Cuphead?

MM: You'll have to wait and see.



CITIZEN SLEEPER 2

STARWARD VECTOR



NOW AVALIABLE!

STEAM®

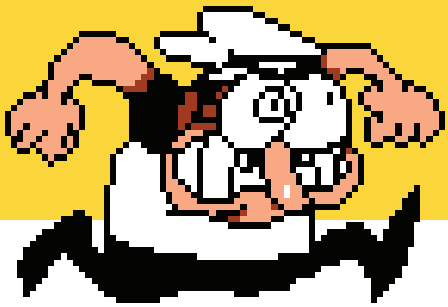
NINTENDO SWITCH

SERIES X|S

PS5



TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB





IS

www.indiesphere.com

A-0020-Z