

Videogame

Conan

(Rated M. \$59.99)

By [JOSH MARKS](#)

A THQ presentation of a game developed by Nihilistic Software and licensed by Paradox Entertainment Inc. for Playstation 3 and Xbox 360. Reviewed on Xbox 360



'Conan'

It's been 75 years since writer Robert E. Howard created "Conan the Barbarian," but the carnal warrior is still going strong in the videogame world. THQ's new incarnation of the swordfighter delivers appropriately violent sword fighting sequences, impressively detailed oil painted scenery and a storyline just decent enough to keep things moving. While Conan will have a tough time vanquishing foes like "Halo 3" and "Call of Duty 4" at retail, fans will find it's a bloody good time.

Game has a cinematic feel to it, which seems appropriate because the 1982 Schwarzenegger starrer is how many younger people know of Conan (Millenium Films acquired the movie rights in August of this year). This Conan is voiced by actor Ron Perlman, who's not exactly the Governator but does a competent job. Story unfolds across the fictional world of Hyborian as Conan battles countless foes, from pirates to lions to dragons, in his quest to find the magical armor that will help him against a mysterious evil force that is threatening the land.

A Conan game is all about the sword fighting, however, and this one works well, with smooth controls and a perfectly placed third-person camera. There are over 100 unique combat moves and more than 20 weapons Conan is able to use throughout the game, giving the game a "God of War"-esque feel as the Barbarian's moves get more sophisticated while his enemies get tougher. Interactive environments also allow players to pick up enemy weapons and objects such as large rocks to throw along the way, some more effective than others. Mini-games involving objectives such as knocking down enormous columns and forcing open entry-ways are a fun addition.

Overall graphics are solid, though many of the enemies are severely lacking in detail. It's the backgrounds, however, that really shine. Each of the 24 missions features backgrounds that were painted on an oil canvas, giving the game a unique look compared to computer-rendered competitors. Each of the different regions of Hybor has a unique look that makes the player feel as if he or she is within a painting.

.....> Composer Michael Reagan ("God of War 2") created the musical score and it gives the game an epic and cinematic scope. The soundtrack is as professionally produced as any blockbuster adventure movie and significantly enhances the gaming experience.

Given the game's advanced fighting system, lack of any multi-player is a disappointment, but hopefully something that can be addressed before Conan turns 80.