

GameOn

GAMEONMAG.COM - GIFT GUIDE 2019







Welcome to The GameOn Christmas Gift Guide! We hope you'll find something to enjoy, whether it's for yourself, a friend, a co-worker, a special someone or a Secret Santa, there are plenty of options.

Having curated some of the hottest peripherals that have crossed our desks, from mice to controllers and beyond, these were rigorously tested and reviewed. Hopefully our reviews will let you get a feel for how these things work in a real-world setting, rather than some kind of lab.

We've put in the recommended retail price (RRP) next to each item to give you a guide on

their pricing. Be sure to shop around to get the best deal for you, as with any purchase, especially with the "sale season" upon us.

Ultimately, we hope this guide goes a little way towards making that hectic festive time of year somewhat more manageable. Whatever you might be celebrating - Happy Holidays!

If you want to make sure you have the latest issue (updated regularly!) you can check at the following address:

<http://www.gameonmag.com/url/g2019v1>

- THE EDITOR

Contributors

Editor-in-Chief - Steve Greenfield
Editor - Andrew Duncan

Magazine Design by Jessica Greenfield
Magazine Creation - Andrew Duncan

Writer - Alan Wen
Writer - Andrew Duncan
Writer - Anna Duncan
Writer - Benedict Daniels
Writer - Calum Parry
Writer - ElisaDS
Writer - Luke Greenfield
Writer - Nikki Koolonovich
Writer - Ryan Munro
Writer - Simon Brown
Writer - Steven Dawson



**XB PS PC**

A great addition to a genre that most don't even bother developing for anymore in the shadow of the titans, defying that trend and standing out as a serious competitor.

Apex Legends
8/10**XB PS PC**

A strong return for the series with enough changes to make combat feel fresh and exciting, some great new characters and an awesome soundtrack. A fun time from start to finish.

Borderlands 3
8.5/10**XB PS PC**

Almost brings the franchise back to its roots with a meaningful campaign that includes memorable characters and a horrifying depiction of war, but falls short when it comes to the traditional multiplayer.

Call of Duty Modern Warfare
7.5/10**XB PS PC**

It has the weirdness of Alan Wake/Max Payne in the story, the crazy action-packed combat of Quantum Break all while letting you explore this bizarre, beautiful building with so many secrets to uncover.

Control
8.5/10**XB PS SW**

Once I changed the controls to something more comfortable, I had a blast playing through the well-crafted adventure mode and all the tracks and challenges that reside in it, even if the CPU players had the rubber band effect.

Crash Team Racing Nitro-Fueled
8/10

GAME MICRO-REVIEWS



XB PS PC

The Division 2 is a vast improvement over its predecessor straight from launch. With improvements in every area of design, whether you're playing solo, with friends there is a wealth of content to keep you occupied.

The Division 2 9/10



XB PS

Obsidian could have easily fallen into the trap of creating a Fallout clone, but the various planets in the Halcyon solar system and types of quest provides a good amount of variety, with excellent splashings of humour and moral dilemmas.

The Outer Worlds 8.5/10



XB PS PC

Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Breakpoint

A fun if wildly unpolished title that deviates from the series established identity. Some solid stealth mechanics and great feeling gunplay offset the often broken feeling the rest of the game suffers from.

6.5/10



SW PC

Untitled Goose Game is a short and sweet village sandbox of chaos, with probably the most laughs you'll have in a videogame this year. Goose tier.

Untitled Goose Game

8/10



XB PS PC SW

An interesting and entertaining attempt at bringing the main Wolfenstein series' shooting mechanics into a co-op adventure that for the most part succeeds as long as you bring a friend. Solo play is disappointing but functional and fun times can be had regardless of how you play.

Wolfenstein: Youngblood

7/10

You might be looking for something to go with your new hardware - well here's what GameOn think about this year's biggest titles





GIOTECK TX-50 HEADSET

As someone who's been comfortably using in-ear headphones for many years, I've been reluctant to splash out on a proper bulky pair of over-ear headphones, but it's ultimately an accessory you need to invest in if you're into playing with friends online and prefer something more substantial than the basic earphone and mic that get chucked in with a console.

There's all sorts of headsets on the market that can offer a variety of fancy options, whether it's surround sound, noise cancellation, and wireless bluetooth connection - for a high premium price. But if you're after something more straightforward you can just plug in and use, the Gioteck TX-50 headset is a no-nonsense solution that's well-designed and affordably priced at just £29.99.

Plugging into any 3.5mm audio input, the TX-50 works on any console and device, while its black-and-orange colour scheme makes it rather neutral too. But although it's not mentioned on the packaging, it works just as well on the Nintendo Switch when played in handheld, which was one of my unlikely testing cases for the recent Overwatch port.

awful mobile app and whatever splitters you'd need to get that working. I had no problems making myself clear via the flexible metal mic. You'll still need to tweak volume settings in-game to balance out game and chat audio, though that's to be expected. The only control over your chat with the physical headset is an inline switch for muting the mic. Just be aware that if you plan to use the headset as a regular pair of headphones, the mic itself is not detachable, although you can adjust its position to be less conspicuous.

The TX-50 never gets deafeningly loud (even when the Switch and the headset's inline control



Like Fortnite, Blizzard have worked voice chat so that it works in-game without using Nintendo's



have volume set to max, it's always just at a comfortable level). It's certainly not as loud as my usual in-ear headphones, while on my laptop, I find myself tweaking the volume setting a few notches higher than usual. Nonetheless, the audio sounds great and the headset feels comfortable, with Alacantia cushioning that doesn't overheat my ears even after extended use.

If you're a veteran audiophile who's exhausted your current headset, you'd probably want to upgrade to something more sophisticated and detailed. But if you've never owned a headset before and don't want to splash out silly digits on one with features you may not even appreciate, then the TX-50 is an impressive choice to start with.



Suitable for:



Handhelds



Smartphones



Tablets



PC



PlayStation 4



Xbox One

**RRP: £29.99
/ \$N/A**





ROCCAT NOZ HEADSET

Having to find a new headset can be a rather stressful experience. You won't something that is as good as what you had, will last longer than that one, and will deliver outstanding sound quality no matter the situation. After having spent over a year with the Roccat Khan Pro headset it's time for me to move on and I'm happy to say that my replacement, a Roccat Noz headset, is a worthwhile successor. Having now spent a few weeks with it I think it's time to answer the question of if this headset is worth your purchase.

The Roccat Noz headset is designed with comfort in mind and you will notice that from the moment you pick it up. With an overall weight of only 210 grams, you won't find any trouble from wearing it for prolonged periods of time. To help with comfort the headset uses a premium fabric that maximises comfort without impacting the quality of sound. An added bonus is that it helps with keeping things cool meaning you won't have to worry about unwanted temperature changes. It might sound trivial but all together these design





NOZ



choices make the Roccat Noz headset an absolute pleasure to wear, with little to no fatigue.

Moving away from the comfort and into the overall design, an effort has been made to ensure it remains as durable as you would hope. You will find metal hinges and a stainless-steel headband slider to give the headset some reinforcement. I won't lie that the first few days with the headset I was worried about the durability of it. The Roccat Noz bends and flexes more than I was used to with other headsets but I quickly came to understand the limits of the design, and became comfortable with the build quality.

Now of course the main attraction is the sound quality and the Roccat Noz does not disappoint. Across multiple devices and a range of media including games, films, and even anime. The

range of sounds that the headset is able to deliver are solid while not feeling unbalanced. From a technical standpoint, the Roccat Noz won't be on the same level as other headsets, including some of Roccat's own, but the average user won't notice. Besides with how comfortable the headset is the difference in sound quality is worth paying just to have an enjoyable experience.

The same can be said about the quality of the microphone as well which for the Roccat Noz headset is a detachable one. This microphone, which could be a bit longer to be honest, delivers a solid range of sounds and captures the highs and lows of a users voice. It is noticeable that the quality differs a lot compared to other Roccat headsets but it gets the job done. Laughing and deep breaths can be an issue but once the ideal position is found these





HEADSETS

don't cause to much trouble. The microphone definitely isn't anything to write home about though and simply gets the job done.

Overall, the Roccat Noz headset is an ideal option for anyone looking for a comfortable and reliable headset. Sure, the microphone might be a bit underwhelming and the sound quality isn't going to break any records, but pros outweigh the cons here. If durability and comfort are your top concerns then I cannot recommend this headset enough. If you want the absolute top sound quality then maybe this isn't for you. If you are not fussed about that though, then give these a go. Seriously, it's like you're not wearing anything on your head.

**RRP: £62.99
/ \$N/A**



Suitable for:



Handhelds



Smartphones



Tablets



PC

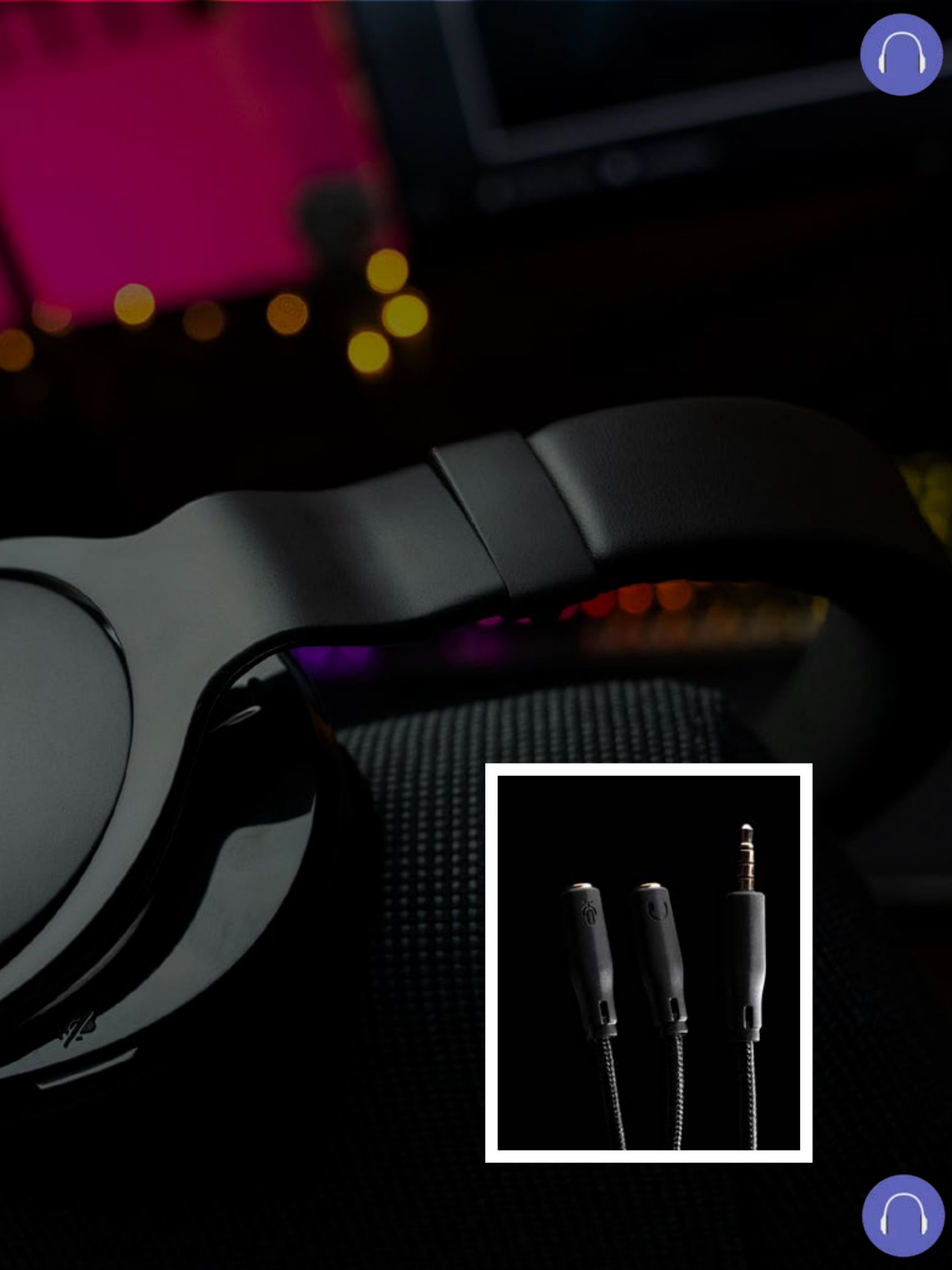


PlayStation 4



Xbox One







TURTLE BEACH ATLAS THREE HEADSET

It's been a while since I reviewed a headset, so when the opportunity arose to check out the Atlas Three from Turtle Beach, I jumped at the chance. It's a nice looking headset after all, and it's compatible with the PlayStation 4, Xbox One and Switch as well as the PC.

First off, I'll note that chat functionality on the Switch doesn't work with the headset, but it does work for the other two consoles and the PC. Also worth noting is that you have to charge it to use it for up to 40 hours.

In the box you get the headset, which has a cable ending in a 3.5mm jack. If your Xbox One controller doesn't have a 3.5mm port in it, then you need a Headset Audio Controller. The box also contains a PC splitter cable to plug it into your earphone/speaker and microphone ports. Finally, there's the micro USB charging cable, a quick start guide and a Turtle Beach sticker.

The headset's construction is very solid, though I did notice some creaking in the left earcup when I adjusted it on my head. The headband is adjustable, and is unlikely to shift around on your head as it is nice and stiff. The earcups and headband have a nice, soft cushion covering which is softer where spectacles might be, to make them comfier for glasses wearers.

The right earcup has the volume control for both the earphones and the microphone (which is for you to hear yourself, not the output), as well as the flip-up microphone itself. The sturdy microphone moves to three points, with all the way back muting it. It's quite short, but nice and clear. There are also the power and audio preset buttons.

While the headset isn't uncomfortable to wear for long periods, I have noticed that it's not as comfortable as my previous headset. It's difficult to explain how it feels different, maybe it's because the material is felt instead of leatherette? I've still been able to wear it for hours at a time without discomfort.

One issue I do have, however, is that the headset turns itself off automatically. Of course, this is a power saving measure, but I'm not sure what it looks for before powering down. It's happened after a few minutes of not being used, but it's also happened several times despite there being sound playing. Whether music, the Twitch app or a game, and after different periods of time, it gives a tone and turns off. Even more curious, I had turned the volume dial on the headset only 30 seconds prior to one of the shutdowns.

The headset boasts some audio boosting options, such as being Windows Sonic Surround Sound Ready, and having the aforementioned Audio





Presets. These are audio equalisers, and pressing the button rotates between the three: Turtle Beach Signature Sound, Treble Boost, and Vocal Boost. I'll admit that I'm not much of an audiophile, so the difference in the three wasn't very noticeable. Perhaps if I listened to music at a higher volume?

The Atlas Three had no problems with any audio I threw at it, whether songs, music, videos or games. All were perfectly clear and audible, though after my last headset they do seem quiet. My old headset required the PC to be set to volume two, or risk deafening me. The Atlas Three, even with the volume dial turned all the way up, I could comfortably

listen to things at volume 16 or above. That's not a negative, just an observation.

At £69.99, the Turtle Beach Atlas Three is a decent headset that works well with consoles and PC alike. If you're in the market for a non-USB headset, then you can do worse than this.

RRP: £69.99 / \$79.95

Suitable for:



Handhelds



Smartphones



Tablets



PC



PlayStation 4



Xbox One





ROCCAT KHAN PRO HEADSET

Hearing high quality audio is never the same once you experience it with a good headset. It's one of those things that you don't understand how much of a difference it makes until you try it and think "How have I managed without this until now?". It was with the Roccat Khan Pro headset that I experienced one of these moments and knew I could never go back.

The Roccat Khan Pro headset is designed for 'epic moments' and aimed at the esports market with the tagline of 'Raise Your Level'. The notion of wearing them should make you feel in the zone and ready for whatever challenge you might face next and though I didn't see my win rate go up, my enjoyment skyrocketed. From the moment I unboxed them to many hours later I still find myself amazed at how good the headset holds up while its audio output and noise cancellation continues to astound.

The first thing you will notice with the Roccat Khan Pro headset is just how solid and light the headset feels. Coming in at only 230g in weight you might think it is lacking in build quality but thankfully the headset is solid and flexible, complete with hardened hinges and feels as though it can handle a beating or two. I can also confirm that it will survive a number of drops without taking even a dent or scratch which ensures it will withstand even the most heated of rage quits.

This is accompanied by leatherette memory foam earpads ensuring you not only have a solid and light headset but also one that is super comfortable even after hours of use. One benefit to this - though only to those with glasses - is that the design and lightweight nature of the Roccat Khan Pro means you don't feel much pressure on your glasses. Other headsets can put pressure on the wearer's glasses resulting in a need for regular breaks. The Roccat Khan Pro does not suffer from this issue and even after a long period of use is still comfortable to wear and enjoy.

Even right out of the box the sound quality is impressive and a noticeable difference over other headsets and in-ear headphones, include Apple's own earbuds. After testing them with a number of games, films and different genres of music, across multiple devices, it is easy to acknowledge how good the sound quality of this headset is. With dynamic, high resolution audio that allows you to hear even the most subtle of noises, there is a rich range of sounds to enjoy. When playing a game such as Destiny 2 for example, you are able to notice the sounds of the ground under your feet, the tap of metal when reloading and even the rain pattering against the ground and your helmet.

Once more the headset comes complete with an adjustable microphone that features an auto mute function when raised to an upright position.





This small but reliable microphone means that you are able to communicate with your team with crystal clear audio that ensures a natural sound is delivered. Even when used outside of gaming the microphone is a robust stand-in when recording audio for other uses such as podcasts. Not only that but it is compatible with consoles, computers and mobile and is equipped with two 3.5mm jacks (Input and output) with an included adapter to allow for both input and output through one connector.

Whether you are sitting down to play a few hours of your favorite game or listen to some 80's jams as you work, the Roccat Khan Pro is a headset

that is suitable for the job and will deliver above your expectations. With a robust build quality and rich, high resolution audio like you have never heard before, this is a headset definitely worth checking out. The only real downside is that the microphone is not detachable which means it won't replace many out-and-about headphones. Regardless, that is a tiny negative in an otherwise flawless and impressive product. The Roccat Khan Pro is a highly recommend headset.

RRP: £89.99 / \$99.99



Suitable for:





ROCCAT KHAN AIMO HEADSET

Having recently reviewed a Roccat mouse, I was eager to check out more of their products, if only to see what the AIMO lighting system did with multiple peripherals connected. So when I was offered the Khan AIMO headset, I definitely wanted to check it out. It certainly helps that my old headset seems to be on its way out.

The Khan boasts a 7.1 sound card built into the headset, a 275g weight, and easy access earcup controls. One of those is false, which I'll get into in a moment.

In the box you get the headset and some disposal information. The braided USB cable is about two meters long, which doesn't quite give me the range that my old wireless headset did, but is certainly long enough for comfortably plugging into the rear of my PC tower. The microphone is attached to the left earcup, and the right one has the volume wheel, and 7.1 mode toggle button.

Now back to what I was saying a couple of paragraphs ago - the earcup controls are definitely not "easy access". Both the wheel and button are very small and difficult to locate. I've been wearing this headset for upwards of eight hours a day for about two weeks, and I still can't find the button very easily. I suppose it doesn't say they are easy to use, but man...

That said, the sound quality - which is the important bit - is quite good. It's clear and certainly loud - I have to have my system sound turned down as low as it can go, to avoid getting my ears blown off, even with the 7.1 turned off. I already have tinnitus, so I haven't dared to turn them up past half way while wearing them - and even then it was an accident. I'd also like to add that the memory foam around the earcups, and the shape of them, make them comfortable to wear for extended periods.

The 7.1 mode is good for adding bass to music, and depth to games, but it causes voices to be kind of echoey. Also, for reasons I literally cannot explain, toggling it turned my condenser microphone down to 60%, meaning I had to go into the settings and manually correct it. I got sick of it, and ran through Windows Troubleshooting, which fixed whatever was causing it.

The headset microphone is bendable, and moves up and down. When up, it activates the auto mute function, and the box boasts that it has noise cancellation. I didn't really get to test that, but the audio quality from the mic is very clear in recordings, and when talking to people over Discord.

Build quality on the headset is very good. It's solid and none of the moving parts feel loose.





The earcups rotate 95 degrees, and of course expand from the headband in case you've got a big head. I thought the default setting would be too small, but it fits me perfectly.

One final note, the AIMO lighting system. If you've got Roccat Swarm installed, basically it allows the colours to sync between your Roccat devices. This means that the colours roll from greens, to blues, yellows and reds, across both the headset and my mouse. If I had a Roccat keyboard as well, it would also roll across that. Unless you're really into colour coordinating your system, it's not really a selling point.



The Khan is a well constructed headset with a good quality sound, and a decent microphone. If you already have Roccat peripherals, then there's nothing saying that you shouldn't add the Khan to them. If you're just looking for a decent headset, then it certainly fits the bill if it's in your price range.

**RRP: £119.99
/ \$119.99**



Suitable for:



PC



PlayStation 4



Xbox One



CHRISTMAS ALCOHOL PAIRINGS: FIRST PERSON SHOOTERS

It's almost Christmas once again, so what better way to spend it than with a nice drink and your favourite games? But, have you ever thought about marrying the two more than ever before, to choose the ultimate beverage to accompany your playtime? Read on, and in this first article we'll look at drinks to go with this year's most popular first person shooters.

Call of Duty: Black Ops III

Call of Duty: Black Ops III follows every other game in the franchise with fast paced, non-stop action. You don't want a mellow wine or harsh whisky with this; for your CoD playthrough, you need to go for a lager, such as Budweiser Budvar, brewed in the Czech Republic. It's not related to that fizzy piss you might be fond of – and I'm definitely judging you for it – instead, it actually has flavour, and isn't so strong that a couple of bottles is going to have you on your arse.

After all, you need to keep some semblance of alertness to you given the pace in CoD. Budvar sits in at 5% ABV (in the UK, strength may vary in other markets), but if you need something weaker you probably shouldn't bother. Pilsner Urquell comes in at 4.4%, again another Czech production.

If these are too cultural for you, just stick with the Carling and Carlsberg. After all, perhaps that's all CoD deserves.

Battlefield V

Whereas Black Ops III is pretty much non-stop action (exception is the Blackout mode), Battlefield V is much more laid back. Well, as laid back as World War 2 can be. Massive maps lend themselves to a tactical approach, particularly in Conquest. Grand Operations can still get pretty hairy. So you still need to keep your wits about you, but with the amount of diversity on show, you need something with a bit of diversity for your mouth.

What on Earth do I mean by that? Something like an IPA, of course! What did you think I meant? IPA's have been a pretty big rise over the past few years, so it's not just hipsters with tweed jackets supping them in their mansions whilst sons Alfred and Victory are off in boarding school. (Yes, that is an actual name.) Brewdog's Punk IPA is a personal favourite of mine, brewed with six different types of hops with a tropical fruit aroma. Goose Island IPA is another solid choice.

If you want to go even stronger, Belgium has you covered. La Chouffe offers an IPA variant,





with the Dobbelen IPA Tripel a tasty 9% ABV. Might be quite difficult to find in the UK – if you take a trip over to France, or Belgium itself, you'll find it easier to acquire. You won't need many before you start hysterically shooting at houses instead of playing the objective.

Counter Strike: Global Offensive

You could probably take most of what I said earlier for Black Ops III and apply it to CS:GO, but I think that would be wrong. With CS:GO, you should go an extra mile and ditch beer and go for something heavier, but play a game with yourself.

Get

onto Demolition, and every time you die, have a shot of vodka / Sambuca / whatever other strong alcohol you've got. If you're really, really shit, you'll soon be too plastered to care. So this will give you some motivation to git gud.

If you don't want to play these kinds of drinking games, then that's okay. Stick to mixing with Coke or lemonade, so you don't even realise you're slowly moving from semi-competent to "oh fuck I've thrown a flash and it's bounced back to me-".

Remember, GameOn only endorses responsible drinking. Be safe, have fun, and look after each other.



MAD CATZ R.A.T. 4 MOUSE

After Mad Catz died, people were worried that the well-known brand was gone forever. Well, it was bought by a Chinese firm and has come back, releasing mice, keyboards and headsets galore. I took a look at the R.A.T. 4, which is the mid-tier priced mouse.

It comes with the quick start guide, sticker sheet and a 1.5 meter cable in the box, so not a lot but you don't need a lot. The mouse honestly feels a little cheap, which was disappointing to find. Due to the design there are a lot of parts that creak when any kind of pressure is exerted upon them. They've gone for a lightweight, "see-through" design, which lets you see the inner workings. Well, a couple of



cables, really. It kinda looks like an off-brand Deus Ex Mankind Divided tie-in mouse.

Also, the bit at the back that nestles in your palm can be moved, depending on the size of your hand. It's a pretty neat idea, but the further you move it, the looser it feels.

There are five buttons (apart from the three usual), with one behind the scroll wheel, and three on the thumb rest. Two are the usual "forwards" and "backwards" buttons, but the third by default is a "Fine Aim" button that will slow your cursor down. The one behind the scroll wheel adjusts your DPI, so that your cursor moves faster or slower, by rates selectable in the program you install with the drivers. The final button is to the left of the left mouse button, and it changes which profile you're using. Each one has its own colour, so you don't need to worry about using your League of Legends bindings when you're playing SMITE.

One thing I should point out is that despite the quick start guide telling you where to download the drivers from, it was a dead link. They might change that by the time you've read this, but be prepared to have to find them yourselves on the official website, like I did.



At the time of writing this, I've been using the R.A.T. 4 for a few weeks. I'll admit that it's pretty decent. I'm bummed that the scroll wheel doesn't move to either side, which my last mouse did, but I've been making do.

I know that I've mentioned this, but honestly this is not an expensive, high quality mouse. After only a day or two of use, a smooth section on the thumb rest unclipped itself, and is raised ever so slightly, so I can feel it whenever I use the mouse. Which, as a keyboard & mouse gamer who does video editing, is often.

I really do like the design and feel of the Mad Catz R.A.T. 4 mouse, just bear in mind that you get what you pay for. I am glad that Mad Catz are back, though, as there should always be peripherals at different price ranges.



**RRP: £58.15
/ \$75.03**



ROCCAT KONE PURE

Around a year ago, a fellow writer did a piece about the ROCCAT Kone Aimo, and the Kone Pure could be considered the Aimo's cousin. His review concluded that the Kone Aimo was a worthy addition to the ROCCAT Kone family, but have ROCCAT been able to raise the bar yet again with the Kone Pure?

Having reviewed a ROCCAT keyboard named the Horde Aimo several months back, I'm no stranger to ROCCAT's design and effectiveness. The Kone Pure arrived in a small box that contained the mouse itself, and a help guide on how to use it/set it up. As I had already set up the Horde Aimo, alongside with ROCCAT Swarm software, there were no drivers required for me to get the mouse working on my PC, and just minutes after unboxing it, I was using it.

The first thing I did with the mouse after plugging it in was joining a theme night on Killing Floor 2, which ended up lasting over four hours. What I began noticing as the session went on was that I wasn't feeling any form of discomfort from the prolonged use, something that I would notice during long game sessions with other mice. ROCCAT did an excellent job with designing the mouse to be comfortably used for extremely long durations. The mouse itself is nice to hold, the scroll wheel and back buttons are comfortably positioned, and the mouse buttons themselves feel responsive and satisfying.

Being a player of many FPS, precision when using the mouse is something that is extremely important to me. Thankfully, ROCCAT once again came through with reliable and precise responsiveness when using the ROCCAT Kone Pure. Adjustable sensitivity allowed me to make on-the-fly changes at times where a faster/slower move speed was required, such as when sniping.

Thanks to already owning the Horde Aimo, I already knew my way around the Swarm software and very quickly got my mouse customization set up, including DPI, lighting effects and scroll speed. The use of these really allows users of the ROCCAT Kone Pure to really personalise their mouse; no two users of the Kone Pure will have their mouse function the exact same way.

Overall, there's nothing I could say to fault the Kone Pure. It's an acceptable and tasteful upgrade to ROCCAT's previous peripherals, with excellent responsiveness and customization, offering you everything and more that you could want from a mouse. Already owning another ROCCAT item, it matches my desk nicely and works well with the software. Now all I need is some headphones and I'll have collected the whole set.





**RRP: £59.99
/ \$59.99**



ROCCAT KONE AIMO

I've been using the same mouse for almost two years, so I decided it was time to get something new. The point where my clicker game addiction random clicking has been wearing away, the pads on the underside are scuffed, and to be honest the glare from the RGB had been bugging me for a while. So when we were offered the Kone Aimo from Roccat, I snapped it up.

It came in a well-designed box, with a few stickers, and a quick start guide. The mouse itself is a bit on the large size, but well constructed. It doesn't feel too big to me, but my wife did reckon it would give her a cramp.

As well as the left and right buttons, and the chunky scroll wheel, there are two additional buttons on the top which control the speed which the mouse moves. Off to the left side of the mouse, and controlled with the right side of your thumb, are the T1 & T2 buttons, which by default go forwards and backwards in the web browser history. Beneath those, controlled with the left side of your thumb is the T3, which is called the Easy-Shift key, because it makes all of the other buttons do something else when held.

By default the alternative modes are basically media keys. The scroll wheel does the volume and track change, etc. However, if you download ROCCAT's Swarm app (either to your phone or computer), you can set them to do other things like open programs, websites, press a button combination, or even

shut down the computer. Since I don't fiddle with the DPI once it's at a speed I like, I just recalibrated the default mode of buttons.

The box - and app - boast that the Aimo has an "intelligent lighting system" designed to "react organically with your gaming behavior". I've had it set to that since I installed Swarm, and it literally just seems to cycle through the colours. I tried several games, but maybe it does something during multiplayer games that I've not seen? For instance, maybe it stays yellow during Counter-Strike, or red for Team Fortress 2 - I've no idea. It could just be something that coordinates when you have a Roccat keyboard and headset, unfortunately I only have the mouse and a Roccat Kanga mousemat.

While I'm talking about it, the Kanga compliments the Aimo well. It's nice and smooth to glide the mouse across, and it's not as thick as my old one, and takes up a little less space on the desk.

I can't think of any negative things to say about the Kone Aimo. It's a good mouse, with a lot of customisation options. The "Titan" scroll wheel is nice and chunky, and unlike other mice I've used it doesn't have those tiny ridges which can cause discomfort if you use the scroll wheel a lot. Instead, it's got well spaced dips around the wheel, and it's lit up with the same RGB as the body of the mouse.

Roccat's Kone Aimo is celebrating the



10th anniversary of the original Kone, and it's certainly a worthy successor. It's worth a look if you want a new mouse.



**RRP: £69.99
/ \$79.99**



LOGITECH G900 CHAOS SPECTRUM MOUSE

Truth be told, aside from a controller, I could never see myself using a wireless keyboard or more to the point, a wireless mouse for PC. Wired devices have always been my choice for PC gaming. The reason had always been that I've never trusted them. The battery could die out, the signal could get interfered or drop out, or something similar to that effect.

They are concerns that I need not be left with a headache about. Now, though times have changed. I am now, a believer. Enter the Logitech G900 Chaos Spectrum. Logitech's flagship wireless gaming mouse and man, what a world of difference it has been.

Arriving in Logitech's fanciest packaging, upon removing the outer box and lifting the lid, staring back at me was the G900 mouse itself. Below contained a micro-USB cable, USB extender adaptor and the all important wireless dongle. Also included is additional plates for mouse buttons and covers, but we'll talk more about those shortly.

The G900 is an ambidextrous mouse, so it is incredibly comfortable in its symmetrical design, which is a surprised me being so used to predominantly right-handed mice.

It's also lightweight, weighing 107 grams. It doesn't support or include additional weights -- which I know, is a deal breaker for some. Fortunately, its lightness doesn't make it feel cheap. It has a premium finish, with a smooth top body and subtle grip indentations for your thumb and fingers on either side.

Besides your left and right click, you've got a scroll wheel which can be unlocked for that infinite scroll wheel action and is your middle mouse click, two DPI buttons allowing you toggle back and forth on the fly, and four additional buttons on either side of the mouse.

With the latter, what's interesting about this design is the customisation. Choosing to either utilise the four buttons either side or keep to two. You can then, using the included covers you can keep your device sleek by covering the unused buttons. Not only that, but everything from the buttons, battery life, DPI, and RGB lighting can be customised, monitored, and adjusted within Logitech's gaming software.

The quality really does show through the use. Both the main left and right buttons have a crisp clean click to them, and every click was precise without any delay or lack



of responsiveness. I soon discovered that these two buttons contain mechanical pivots, similarly to mechanical switches on keyboards. Which is not only crazy but impressive. Goes to show, they're not just keyboards anymore.

As for performance, this is what impressed me the most and elevated all my concerns over wireless. With a 2.4Ghz connection, the connection was perfect, with no interference from any of my devices, there is some technical wizardry here from Logitech and it shows. Within the belly of the beast contains the PMW3366 sensor and a built-in and a non-removable 720 mAh battery. The battery life Logitech promises 32-hours of continuous use without the RGB light, or 24-hours with it enabled.

The numbers aren't always exact, but after continuous use, I need not worry about keeping the mouse charged. Even when plugged in, the included micro-USB cable is moulded to fit perfectly to the mouse further streamlining the mouse when wired. The sensor is state-of-art and is regarded as being one of the best on the market, whether

it be a wireless or wired mouse, and its reputation holds true. Supporting from 200-12,000 DPI, you'll be getting an incredibly smooth and accurate experience. And during my time using the mouse encountered no lag, loss of connection and perfect response, regardless if I played wirelessly or wired.

Now for the price: I got lucky on this find, happening to find a seller online offering it for £55. For those interested may not be as lucky, but at a full price of £100, it is pretty steep for a mouse, but personally, you can't go wrong. Choosing the right gaming mouse is tough, but in my honest opinion, the Logitech G900 Chaos Spectrum stands above all others and can be not only considered the best wireless gaming mouse on the market but also the best-wired mouse too.



**RRP: £105.00
/ \$81.00**





SPEEDLINK ULTOR MECHANICAL KEYBOARD

Speedlink have been around for sometime: they're big on making console and PC peripherals from headsets, controllers and keyboards. So it comes to no surprise that they would continue their foray into the market and create something much more premium for all the PC gamers out there. That's why Speedlink have developed not one but two mechanical keyboards, and I've had the pleasure of using their top-model: the Ultor.

As you do with the arrival of any keyboard I took it out of the box. The Ultor's packaging isn't anything special, It isn't sleek or minimalistic coming in a black box with red lining across covered in logos showing its features as well as a very handy logo signifying it being a British layout keyboard. Once the Ultor was out of the box all that was left were quickstart and info papers. But we're not here to talk about the included booklets, it's all about the keyboard.

Popular among other manufacturers and of course gamers, the Ultor uses Red mechanical switches. The ones used here are not Cherry MX but instead are Kaihua Kailh, which aren't as favoured as the Cherry's, but are still of a high quality and offer excellent feedback.

Now for the keyboard itself. The Ultor is a compact keyboard, that's not to say it's got smaller keys absolutely not, it means it lacks a numpad. I'm personally not a fan of this as I prefer a numpad, but as I will explain, there is good intention for why Speedlink decided not to have one. For you see the Ultor's body is designed for portability with very little compromise. It's a keyboard for the gamer and many other manufacturers do the same as a player would rarely use the numpad in normal gaming. As for the design, the Ultor is very nice, with a frameless design and an entirely red aluminium top. When I first saw the press images I was rather put off by the entirely red frame, but as soon as I plugged it in and the glow the blue backlight of the keys came on I was surprised how pleasing it looked. And while it may not feature of any fancy RGB colours as seen on other keyboards, the blue glow was pleasant enough.

Using the keyboard took some getting used to, I love mechanical keyboards, but I'm used to a





fully sized keyboard including a numpad. So this certainly took some time for my hands to adjust, but surprisingly after a short while and getting my hands positioned the typing experiencing was very comfortable and the feedback from mechanical keys was very responsive and smooth - this backed by the anti-ghosting and up to 1,000hz poll rate.

All the keys glow blue, except for W,A,S,D, the arrow keys and the dedicated Game (Print Screen) key, which glow white. Beside these, there are a number of function keys included. With the right Windows key replaced, you can use this to access a number of media controllers including: volume, next/previous track and mute. One real nice feature is the inclusion of macros - although you'll first need to install the Speedlink drivers to use. Once installed, you'll be able to create up to six macros as well

as five profiles (switchable using the F keys) for said macros. It wasn't something I took an advantage of, but certainly for someone who enjoy their MMO's will be able to make full use.

I was very surprised how much I've enjoyed using this keyboard and I will continue to do so. Although during my time, it didn't make me want to ditch my other mechanical keyboard, which is full-sized and has dedicated media controls. What I will say is the Speedlink Ultor is a perfect travel / LAN gaming keyboard. Due to it's compact size, macro support and durable build it will make an excellent complement to anyone's portable rig. Even if that's not your thing and you're someone looking for a unique keyboard for their gaming rig at home and your favourite colour is red, then definitely check this one out.



**RRP: £43.54
/ \$N/A**





ROCCAT HORDE AIMO KEYBOARD

With gaming capabilities and requirements constantly evolving and advancing, tech companies are forced to adapt and design better hardware to stay on top of the competition, and German manufacturer ROCCAT have stepped up with the Horde AIMO, sporting everything and more that you could look for in a keyboard.

Starting with the basics, the keyboard itself was very simple to set up - simply plug it in and for the most part, it does everything on its own. The keyboard is very comfortable to use, with a detachable palm rest for extra convenience. The keys just feel right, even if my muscle memory meant that for the first week or so, I would occasionally miss keys when pressed reflexively under pressure.

One of my favourite features of the keyboard is the tuning wheel. Whilst most keyboard wheels are stuck to changing the volume, the wheel on the Horde AIMO offers precise control over multiple functions besides volume, ranging from keyboard brightness, microphone volume, and even a task switcher, that allows you to cycle through all open applications, which is useful when you're working with multiple programs.

Keyboards are either membrane or mechanical. Membrane keyboards are those cheap ones with the rubber that get all sorts of crap inside them and stop working. Mechanical keyboards are all the rage nowadays, especially in the gaming community. The annoying loud clicking they generate is made up for in the amazing responsiveness of the keys, and the tears of





everyone that you ever go on voice-activated comms with. But for some, the obnoxious sound is enough to put them off ever getting one, which is where ROCCAT have come in to save the day.

Coining the term 'Membranical', the Horde AIMO manages to combine the technology to give you the soft, quiet touch of a membrane keyboard, with the responsiveness and longevity of a mechanical. Sporting what is being described by many as the best membrane-based keyboard on the market, ROCCAT have certainly outdone themselves with the creation. ROCCAT have kept many details regarding the membranical design close to their chest, but have stated the keys have a 'fast midway travel actuation point', achieving an actuation speed of 7.8ms, when compared to the standard membrane keyboard of 9.0ms actuation speed.

As with any gaming keyboard, macros are generally included as a must-have feature.

The keyboard has five programmable macro keys. The keys can be easily assigned by use of the ROCCAT Swarm software, which can also be used to further customise things like key bindings and illumination. I was a bit worried

about how responsive they'd be due to being membrane and macros often being needed on the moment they're pressed, but ROCCAT tackled this worry in an amusing yet practical manner: by sinking the macro keys deeper into the keyboard so they have less distance to go before registering as a press. To test the macro keys themselves, I made one for the 'struggle' function for when you're on the hook in Dead By Daylight that repeatedly 'pressed' the spacebar with a delay of 0.05 seconds and continued for as long as it was held down. The longest amount of time you can 'struggle' for before dying is 44 seconds, and the macro managed to hit this almost every time (with the almost being down to human error of pressing too early/late).

Overall, ROCCAT's latest keyboard is definitely one that any gamer is going to want to get their hands on. With a current pricing of £89.99 on their website at time of writing, it's certainly worth the investment if you put a lot of time into gaming, whether casual or competitive. Simple to set up, easy to use and effective at what it sets out to do, there's not much that could be done to improve the Horde AIMO.

**RRP: £89.99
/ \$99.99**





HYPHERX ALLOY ELITE MECHANICAL KEYBOARD

Having tried out HyperX RAM and headsets, I thought it was about time to try one of their keyboards. With the Alloy Elite being their latest model, how could I say no? Surely it would beat the snot out of my wireless Logitech keyboard which was older than at least one of my children.

The keyboard comes with a quick start guide and warranty, silver 1234 & WASD keys as well as a wrist rest in the box, so not much to talk about there. It is pretty weighty, thanks to the entire key base being metal. The underneath is plastic, as is the wrist rest, and the section along the top of the keyboard where there are some quick keys, and all of the keys themselves.

An attached cable measures about a meter and a half long, and ends in two USB plugs, both of which require being inserted. The reason is that there is a USB 2.0 port in the rear of the keyboard. Personally, I plugged my mouse into it.

The quick keys I mentioned before are as follows, on the left an LED brightness control, LED mode and game mode buttons. On the right are media control buttons and a volume wheel. Since my old keyboard had media controls, they were a welcome addition, though on the opposite side to where I'm used to them being.





With my wife owning the HyperX Alloy FPS, I was prepared for the Elite to make a huge racket as I typed. You can practically hear her typing clear across the house, after all. I was delighted to find that the volume of the keys engaging is actually quite subdued.

The speed of typing, and feel of the keys is better than the non-mechanical keyboard I was using, and the weight of it means that it doesn't move when I'm playing games a bit too roughly. The wrist rest is textured along two thirds of it, but I haven't noticed it too much which probably means it's doing its job.

Honestly though, I've found myself making typos now and then, because it takes less pressure to activate each key than I'm used to. The Alloy Elite is a very good mechanical keyboard. I switched out the black 1234 & WASD keys for the silver ones mainly because I wanted to try out the textured WASD than for how it looked. I did try out the other LED modes, but stuck with the solid glow on the medium brightness. The others are breathing, trigger, explosion and wave, and though I did like explosion (the keyboard lights with each key

press, centred on that key), it meant that they keyboard was dark for the majority of the time.

Easy to set up, quiet to use and the media keys do exactly what they should do. I don't think I can get any more succinct than that, the HyperX Alloy Elite is a great keyboard.



**RRP: £119.99
/ \$109.99**



CHRISTMAS ALCOHOL PAIRINGS: OPEN WORLD GAMES

It's almost Christmas once again, so what better way to spend it than with a nice drink and your favourite games? But, have you ever thought about marrying the two more than ever before, to choose the ultimate beverage to accompany your playtime? Read on, and in this article we'll look at drinks to go with this year's most popular sprawling open world games.

Red Dead Redemption 2

The sprawling open world of Red Dead Redemption 2 is possibly one of the greatest ever, which I said in my review. It's slow, methodical, and perhaps too realistic in some places, but it's an enjoyable universe to lose yourself in over Christmas.

Leave the beer in the fridge for this one, and join the cowboys with their good old fashioned whiskey. If you have some moonshine brewing in your bath, that could work too, but I'd rather stick to some Kentucky bourbon. There's a few quality choices to choose from that are available in your local supermarket, even Amazon has a decent selection. Buffalo Trace is a personal favourite, but you can't go far wrong with Four Roses either, particularly their small batch and private selection offerings. You have to drink it neat, though. No ice, no watering down. It'll put some hairs on your chest – both men and women.

The whiskey that was actually available in the Wild West was a lot different from what he can buy today, mind. Tobacco juice was a popular ingredient, and in some, gunpowder. I wouldn't recommend trying to produce this concoction at home, though; I don't want to be cited as the reason you've blown your brand new kitchen up.

Spider-Man

This is a tough one because Spider-Man tends to refrain from drinking. After all, pissed whilst taking down The Green Goblin isn't going to go well. He's not exactly Deadpool.

After a bit of digging (read: furious Googling), I found that there is actually an issue where Peter Parker gets a bit tipsy. Web of Spider-Man #38, 1988. Peter Parker attends a party and gets drunk on punch, and then runs off to fight the Hobgoblin, almost injuring some innocent civilians in the process. So I'm taking that and running with it.

A decent fruit punch doesn't take a lot of effort to make, and is fairly cheap too. The quick and easy way is to buy a few bottles of fruit juice from the supermarket – orange, pineapple, and other exotic fruits always go well together – along with a few strawberries chucked in and some orange or tangerine slices. As for alcohol, you could lump for vodka, or get some spiced rum to spice





things up a bit. Make sure you're liberal with it too, unless you're letting your kids sample some. But hey, it's Christmas, don't be a scrooge.

Assassin's Creed Odyssey

Do you know what the most popular drink was in ancient Greece? How all those great thinkers got their ideas?

Wine! Yes, glorified grape juice is the source of much of today's intelligence. Mead was also popular, which is slightly different – this is fermented honey, usually with other added flavourings. But for that true old timey feeling, get out a decent bottle of wine and

put away a couple of bottles as you fight in the battle between Athens and Sparta.

I have to be honest though and admit that exactly which wine you should be choosing is lost on me. Don't they all taste the same? Regardless, red wine is definitely what you should be aiming for (I do know that there are different colours, obviously...), and to make it truly in line with our Greek friends, get a period Kylix or Kantharos. Glasses are soooo 14th Century.

Remember, GameOn only endorses responsible drinking. Be safe, have fun, and look after each other.





STORAGE BASICS

In this guide I aim to give a brief rundown of what's currently available on the market, good use cases for each technology, and help make things a little clearer for potential buyers.

I'll be looking at internal drives in this article specifically in the consumer space.

Mechanical / Magnetic Drives

When talking about hard drives, most people think of the traditional drive that's been around since 1956. Offering the highest capacities in the consumer space at a reasonably low cost, this type of drive stores data on rotating platters (also known in the industry as "spinning rust").

Solid State Drives

Solid State Drives or SSD's have been around for awhile now but have really caught in in recent times due to the increases in capacities.

Where as a traditional hard drive uses metal platters with magnetic coatings to store the information, SSD's use non-volatile flash memory instead which can offer a number of benefits. performance is the main gain but also they can use less power, put out less heat and are silent. SSD's are available in a wider variety of form factors which I will detail further later in this article.

Hybrid Drives

Hybrid drives are a hybrid of the standard tried and tested hard drive with the relatively newer SSD.

The integrated Solid State Drive is generally of a small capacity around 16—32GB and

is used as a cache. Frequently read data is kept on the SSD portion of the disk for faster access, while the rest of the disk stores the brunt of the information. Whilst you won't get the performance of a full SSD with a hybrid drive, you will generally notice performance gain over a standard hard drive. These drives are commonly known as Hybrid or SSHD.

You can purchase a hybrid drive which combines the SSD and hard drive in one package, which is the most straightforward way, or you can also add a separate small SSD to your system in combination with an existing hard drive. The SSD will then work as a cache for your existing drive though this is a little more complicated as it requires a specific combination of hardware and software.

Form Factors

2.5"

This is the standard model that most of you will be familiar with. It looks like a standard hard drive and connects to your motherboard via SATA, Delivering good performance and generally offering the best capacity for an SSD.

M.2

The M.2 form factor replaces the old mSATA standard and comes in varying lengths of 30, 42, 60, 80 and 110 mm. mSATA plugged into mini-PCIexpress slots on older Laptops.





Supported busses for M.2 are PCI-E, SATA and USB 3.0. Check your motherboard when purchasing whilst most will take all three standards some boards will only accept one of them (PCI-E M.2 drives, for example).

I am a big fan of M.2 due to the form factor, these drives are very small and fit into a socket on the motherboard, which means no data / power cables and an overall tidier look inside the computer.

On the PCI-E side of things, the legacy Advanced Host Controller Interface (AHCI) is supported for older SATA drives, as well as the newer NVMe Express (NVMe) for newer PCI-E drives.

U.2

This is a bit of an odd one, as currently only a single SSD vendor supports the standard, Intel. However, I can see it catching on — the drives are your standard 2.5" form factor and will fit nicely in many current cases out there, the differences being the interface and the cabling. Essentially, the drives use the same PCI-E 3.0 4x interface that the M.2 drives use, but with a more familiar cable and socket on the motherboard for connectivity. Performance-wise, the drives are on par with the M.2 variants.

In theory, with the right setup you should be able to have more of these hooked up to a single system, but as with the M.2, there is only so much space on the motherboard to put the connectors.



PCI-E

I have already mentioned PCI-E in both the M.2 section and the U.2 section, but this is a third type which installs directly into a PCI-E slot just like your GPU does. This is the more familiar PCI-E device. Again expect performance in the same ball park as the M.2 drive and the U.2 drives.

SATA Vs PCI-E

So you're looking for a new drive which one do you choose: SATA or PCI-E? Well, the main benefit of PCI-E over SATA is its performance. Both drives can be a lot faster but will you really notice it in the real world? That depends on the workloads. Windows will load faster and feel snappier on a PCI-E drive, however, with gaming you probably won't notice a huge difference.

SATA also costs a lot less, which may also be a consideration — most people I know who have SATA-based SSD's are very happy with its performance.

Personally, I use both. I have a small PCI-E based M.2 SSD for Windows and a larger SATA based 2.5" drive for my ever growing Steam collection, and I find this a great balance.

Terms used in this article

Essentially, NVMe is a logical device interface specification that was designed from the ground up for PCI-E SSDs. The

specification improves over AHCI in a number of ways in order to make the most of the low latency and parallelisation of PCI-E SSD's.

PCI-E - 'Peripheral Component Interconnect Express'

A high-speed serial computer expansion bus standard, designed to replace older less performant standards.

SSD - 'Solid State Drive'

A hard drive that has no moving parts, allowing data to be accessed much faster than a standard hard drive.

NVMe - 'Non-Volatile Memory Express'

A logical device interface specification that was designed from the ground up for PCI-E SSDs. It utilises the low latency and parallelisation of PCI-E SSDs to perform better than AHCI





STAR WARS BOOK SETS

Star Wars Rogue One Book and Model: Make Your Own U-wing



RRP: £9.00
/ \$12.00

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RRP: £9.00
/ \$12.00





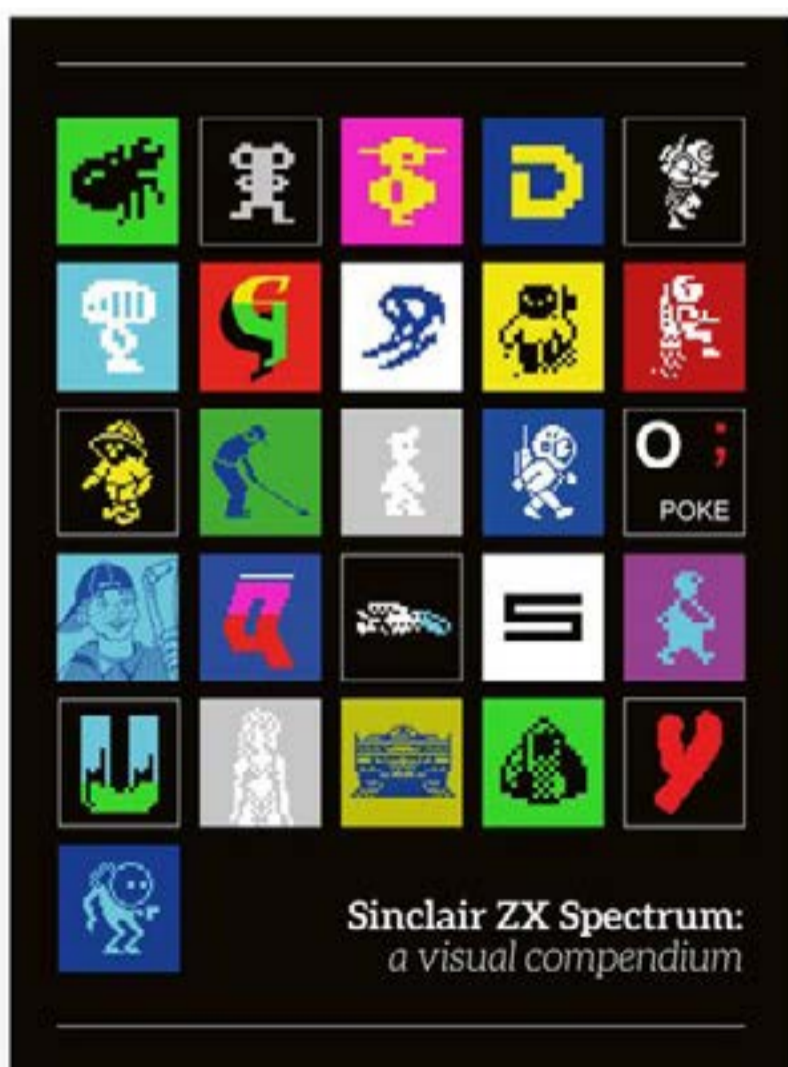
SINCLAIR ZX SPECTRUM: A VISUAL COMPENDIUM

The early 1980s were a unique time for computers and gaming and the ZX Spectrum had a massive hand in forming the fledgling industry in its early years, at least in the UK and Europe. Bitmap Books' Sinclair ZX Spectrum: A Visual Compendium takes us back to those exciting days of colour clash in a celebration of the little black box.

The book takes you on a historical jaunt through the iconic systems life with full-page screenshots for each game covered along with a brief paragraph or two from a variety of people ranging from industry veterans, developers and artists who worked on or are connected to the game in some way.

It gives you insight into the significance and importance of a variety of titles ranging from Sandy White's isometric marvel, Ant Attack, through to Rare's heritage with Ultimate Play The Game's Jet Pac and Sabre Wulf. Each and every game in the book has a story to tell and there were a number of games I hadn't thought about in years that came flooding back to me as soon as I saw their art.

The bold, chunky art that the Spectrum is known for looks fantastic when blown up to fill the page and the garish colours help the whole thing pop, which makes for an inviting and engaging coffee table book. For those with nostalgia for the black box with rubber keys it's a lovely trip down memory lane, but it's also quite informative with sections devoted to Durell, Beyond and Vortex, to name a few. It even finds room to briefly touch on the Russian scene, that kept the humble "Speccy" alive well into the 90s.





The book is clearly made with love and there is a reverence to the machine and the games that graced it that shines from every page. The Spectrum is an important cornerstone in the industry, a machine that despite all odds became a gaming heavyweight, especially in Europe. This compendium manages to visually condense that into a lovely volume that anyone can pick up and get enjoyment from.

Bitmap Books have created a quality book that feels premium, looks wonderful and filled my old, haggard body with nostalgia for my younger years where I'd spend hours typing in code listings from magazines and looking forward to spending my pocket money on the next Dizzy game.

If you have an interest in the Spectrum at all or just want an interesting, enticing coffee table book, you can do a lot worse than the Sinclair ZX Spectrum: A Visual Compendium. Oh, it also has Spectrum coloured fabric bookmarks too, so there is that in its favour!

**RRP: £29.99
/ \$38.70**





VENOM CHARGE & STORE FOR NINTENDO SWITCH

If you've been taking advantage of all the Switch has to offer, then like me, you may have acquired an extra pair of Joy-Cons for those party gatherings, a Pro Controller for better extensive gaming sessions at home, and a Poké Ball Plus to feel more like a real Pokémon trainer in Pokémon Let's Go. When it comes to charging them though, I'd mostly been just plugging in a USB-C cable when needed into the docked console. Meanwhile, the pair of Joy-Cons not attached to the system just sit idly as the battery gradually drains so that when I do need them for a party, I find that the battery's quite low. At the same time, I've been wary of investing in separate space-invading charging stands.

With that in mind, the new Charge & Store dock from Venom has arrived at just the right time, acting as a complete charging and storing solution for multiple wireless Switch controllers, which you can just plug straight into your Switch dock via USB.

At the front is a slot to rest your Pro Controller, while on the sides are metal strips where each Joy-Con can easily slot in. LED lights at the front indicate that each controller is slotted in correctly, and will change from red to green when fully

charged. So you can always dock your controllers at the end of a gaming session confident that they'll be back to 100% charge when you return.

The only LED indicator missing is for the Poké Ball Plus charge point, which is really just a simple USB-C port that you flip up on the top of the device (so if you're not into catching 'em all, you're free to just leave it as it is - although you could always use the USB-C port for charging a smartphone?). It's a neat place to stick in the Poké Ball Plus to rest just in between the Joy-Con slots though.

The back of the dock is something of a bonus tail where you can store Switch game cases. Six slots doesn't like much and if you already have a shelf filled with Switch games, you probably don't want to mess with that. Yet for someone who prefers all of their games digitally on the Switch, I've actually found this sufficient for the few special titles I did buy a physical retail copy of, such as Nintendo Labo.

The only caveat then is charging the Pro Controller. Unlike PS4 and Xbox, there's no built-in way to charge it from the bottom so the workaround to be able to drop it onto a dock and charge is a dongle that slots into the USB-C





port on top and wraps around to the back. Beneath it are three pin strips which will align with three strips on the dock that will enable charging. This dongle is, however, not connected to the dock in any way, so you can either store it or leave it on that spot loose, which doesn't sound ideal. You could just leave the dongle slotted in the Pro Controller, but when I tried playing a game of Super Smash Bros. Ultimate, it's impossible to grip the controller and not have my fingers run over this new protrusion without feeling weird and uncomfortable.

That's ultimately a niggle and I wish there was a more elegant solution. However, it's not a dealbreaker by any means, especially when all your wireless Switch accessories now have a single home that can comfortably sit next to your Switch dock or beside your TV.



**RRP: £8.23
/ \$N/A**





VENOM PRO GAMER CASE FOR SWITCH LITE

Since I bought a Switch Lite I knew it would need some sort of protection from my four children. So when I got offered to review a Venom Pro Gamer Case I jumped at the chance. In the box you get the Pro Gamer Case and a screen protector. There were no instructions but it was easy to work out how to attach the case to the Switch Lite.

The Pro Gamer Case is a soft rubber on the outside and a hard plastic in the middle which has a compartment for you to store your Game Cards. At first I found it hard to slot them in, before I worked out you have to put the left side of the Game Card in first then it will fit easier. However, taking the Game Cards out I find to be hard.

My six year old daughter found it easy to open the compartment and take a Game Card out and put it back in. However, my 14 year old autistic son found it hard to open and insert a Game Card, though he found it much easier to take one out.

After only having the case a few days and hardly opening the back to retrieve a Game Card the flap has now on one side started to get loose. Also the lid/flap is scratched from putting it in my handbag so it is easy to scratch, because I don't even have keys in there.

The Game Card slot on the Switch Lite itself is hard to get to if you don't have nails while the Pro Gamer Case is attached. You have to lift up the rubber to access it, but if you need to get to the micro-SD card slot it has a little notch to make it easier.

I've found that the Case is more for making the Switch Lite easier to hold, rather than to protect your Switch Lite, as it doesn't protect the sticks/buttons. As I mentioned it comes with a screen protector, but the Case does leave a lot uncovered. However, it does help you grip a lot better than just the plain Switch Lite.

**RRP: £9.99
/ \$N/A**







GIOTECK WX-4 WIRELESS SWITCH CONTROLLER

I've personally been pretty happy with my Switch Pro Controller, but at an RRP of £59, it's also a pricey gamepad, especially when compared to the PS4 and Xbox One. This is of course an opportunity for third party manufacturers to swoop in with cheaper alternatives, and in this case, Gioteck has kindly provided me with one of its latest controllers to try out.

The WX-4 controller is available in both wired and wireless ranges, with the former costing less but also with fewer features. For the purposes of this review, I was supplied with the wireless one, which is priced around £24.99. Note that this is compatible with not only Switch but also PC and PS3, though this is based purely on my experience with the Switch.

The WX-4 certainly looks the part with matte surfaces (except for the grips) and a traditional layout with regard to face buttons and non-symmetrical analogue sticks, much like the style of both the Xbox controller and the official Switch Pro Controller. The colour of the letters of the face buttons might make the WX-4 look a bit too much like an Xbox controller. Fortunately, the AB and XY buttons are still in the reverse order that Nintendo has always used. You'll also find the home and capture buttons

placed in the centre, which seem convenient. Compared to the Switch Pro Controller, where I often forget where those buttons are.

It's when you pick up the WX-4 that you notice that it feels a bit too light. While we generally prefer our electronics to feel lighter, a good controller also needs to feel weighty otherwise it just feels cheaply made. This extends to the feel of the buttons, specifically the sticks and d-pad. They make very audible clickity-clack noises, which again accentuates that cheap feel. Not quite a premium product then. That said, everything still works like it should, including the built-in rumble and motion/gyro controls. I also had to test the d-pad out with Tetris 99, and am happy to say it passed the test of not accidentally making me hard-drop any blocks.

Also of note are the triggers, which appear to be analogue even though the Switch by default doesn't use analogue triggers, though it should be useable on PS3 and PC, which do support that function. Nonetheless, as a controller intended for the Switch, it is a little annoying that the shoulder buttons are named L1/L2 and R1/R2, which are actually the naming conventions for the PlayStation's DualShock, rather than the Switch's L/ZL and R/ZR.





As for pairing the controller to your Switch, connection is made with a USB to micro-USB cable, which is included. Once paired, a blue light is displayed on the front of the controller, the number of lights indicating whether it's player 1-4. The downside is that you have to manually pair it with a cable each time, meaning you can't use it to turn on your docked Switch. Leave it idle for a few minutes and the controller also switches itself off so you'll need to reconnect it again. Nonetheless, if you're planning to go for an intense gaming session, you should be able to manage with a fully charged controller for up to 10 hours.



**RRP: £24.99
/ \$N/A**

I don't see the WX-4 replacing my official Pro Controller anytime soon, but despite my niggles with it, it's a perfectly functional controller at a lower price, which still beats making someone play with the Joy-Cons in a grip.





SPEEDLINK ORIOS XL RGB MOUSEMAT

“God, it’s huge!”

Said the wife when I whipped this baby out of the box.

Rolled up around a cardboard tube to reduce stress on the edges, this mousemat measures roughly 40cm by 91cm, and now covers the lion’s share of my desk.

Now what the hell am I doing reviewing a mousemat?

Well, this particular mat is a mousemat on lots of drugs, ladies and germs. Edge lit with RGB LEDs, it now covers my desk and leaves me without the need for a separate mousemat, and means I have an overall silky feel to my desk. Mmmmmm...

OK, let’s be honest, it’s a water resistant material, maybe neoprene but they don’t actually say anywhere, with a subtle black and grey hex design. Rubber backed, it’s non-slip and is solid as a rock on my desk, which isn’t smooth as it has a faux woodgrain finish. The mat does feel smooth and slick to the touch although if you rub against the grain you can feel the cloth resist somewhat. Stitched around the edge is a plastic optical fibre, lit centrally by a mini-USB ported power unit, which is minimal, and has a power switch on it for control. You’ll need any USB 2.0 or 3.0 port

free to power it, and it doesn’t have any follow on USB port, which normally I wouldn’t expect on something like this anyway, but which could have been neat to run my mouse off, given what it’s for.

Hold the power button for three seconds to power off, tap it to power on, and tap to cycle through the light modes; seven colours which you can see below, and a pulse mode which cycles through each colour in a “breathing” effect.

What’s a shame is there’s no option as far as I can tell to control the lights from the PC. Given Corsair’s iCue controls of fans, DDR LEDs, even the lights on my Void headset, it’s kind of a pity these RGB mouse mats don’t include something like that, but it’s not like it was advertised as such, so I’m not docking any points for that.

While it’s obvious it’s lit only by a pair of LEDs in the power unit, apart from a little more intensity in the length either side of





that, the light is consistent all the way round the edge of the mat. The colours are nice and vivid, no pale pastels here, and with the lights off they really do kick out, so should complement any other LED lighting you have on show.

OK, so it looks nice, but is it actually any good? Well, this is tricky to answer.

The material feels really nice to the touch, but for those who are used to hard mouse surfaces, this will take some getting used to. Previously I've used a Razer Sphex polycarbonate mat, which I've grown very used to, and my Logitech G502 skims across it with almost no resistance. On this however, there's definitely resistance, although response is smooth and uninterrupted. Coming rolled up into itself, there's no worry about laying it out flat, although there's a couple of lifts towards the corners it's not noticeable. Being water repellent, it's good at not retaining spills, although a mousemat would normally be bottom of the list of things to panic about over electronic hardware. It really is vast (the XL edition) and with my keyboard and both mice with plenty of space to spare it does make my workspace look tidier and more organised. It does look really quite nice on my desk. The quality is second to none, the stitching is tight and consistent, although for those who rest their arms on the edge of the desk it might get a little scratchy. The USB cable that comes with it is quite a "loose" one, so should get around any cabling routes you have without a hitch.

This is a solid product, well made, and good looking. On the whole, it simply depends on how happy you are to drop 55 quid on an RGB

lit mousemat. After a few days use, I'm liking it, it's smooth and comfortable and just gives that nice edge to my setup, without overdoing it.

If, just in case anyone checks this review out who's looking to release something like this, two suggestions: make it a USB hub, so I can string at least my mouse off it, and give it some software so I can sync it up to other RGB gear. On the whole, I'm not sure I can justify the £55 asking price, maybe £40 or so would be a better price point personally, but it still does a pretty bang up job for the money.



RRP: £69.99 / \$79.95





ROXIO GAMECAP HD PRO

The Roxio Gamecap HD Pro is an external video capture device intended for recording gameplay from games consoles in an easy to use combination of hardware and software as well as provide an easy way to stream to Twitch and YouTube. So how does it fare?

First of all, the Roxio Gamecap HD Pro can capture multiple resolutions from 480i up to 1080p, this means you can capture from last generation consoles (Wii, PS3, Xbox 360, WiiU) easily as well as from both Xbox One and PlayStation 4. It can record at up to 60fps except at 1080p where it is limited to 30fps.

The Gamecap HD Pro fits in between your TV and your console and has both HDMI and Component inputs and outputs. You simply connect your console to the inputs then connect the preferred output to your TV (most likely using the HDMI option), finally you connect the box to your PC via the included USB cable.

It should be noted that you cannot connect a PS3 using HDMI as Sony enforce HDCP (High-bandwidth Digital Content Protection) sadly and the Gamecap HD Pro doesn't act as a HDCP stripper so you'll need to use a Component connection for PS3.

In the box you get the device itself, which is extremely light, a USB cable for connecting to your PC and supplying power, an installation DVD and a Quick Start Guide that explains how to set up a PS3/Xbox 360. No HDMI or Component cables are included however so that's something to factor in.

After installation of the newest software from Roxio's site (rather than the outdated DVD), it's simply a case of launching the included software where you'll then see your console's output in the preview window and some settings related to capturing.

From here you can configure whether you are using the HDMI or Component input source, the location to save files to and length of videos (if required). You can also choose from one of two video containers, M2TS or the more widely used MP4. Capturing video is then as hitting the green Capture button.

Jumping into the options lets you customise the bitrate for your videos as well as link your Twitch and Youtube accounts. Once you've done that, streaming to those services is as simple as hitting the Live Stream button. This all works really well and is great for a beginner but it's very barebones, there is no support for adding an overlay of any sort (camera or image) or any sort





of scene transitions. As long as you only want your game image with voice over the top the included software does the job with a minimum of fuss.

If you want to go the extra mile all is not lost however as you can use the Gamecap HD Pro in both OBS Studio (Open Broadcaster Software) and XSplit streaming programs. Using these more advanced programs you can create overlays, show video from webcams, as well as other more advanced features. Support in other programs however is a little hit and miss, even though the Gamecap HD Pro shows up as a video device in other programs, it often won't work as you'd expect.

This isn't generally a problem as you'll most likely be using OBS or XSplit (or indeed its own software) to stream/record video but it does bear mentioning. The software also includes a surprisingly competent video editing package called Roxio Videowave, it's no replacement for Sony Vegas Pro or Adobe Premiere Pro but for the budding YouTuber it's an exceptionally fully-featured piece of software allowing

you to trim and piece together a video with a wide variety of transitions and effects. The product does have some negatives though, it's really light and the plastic casing doesn't feel sturdy at all, the lack of an HDMI cable in the box is a shame as that's something extra you need and the hit and miss compatibility with other software could be something that requires more investigation if you have specific needs.

The Gamecap HD Pro does what it says it will and in combination with its own software is straightforward to get setup and working quickly. If you solely intend to record videos from newer consoles for use on YouTube or to stream to Twitch in a plug and play manner then it performs those tasks admirably.



RRP: £94.99 / \$149.99

Suitable for:



PC



Switch



PlayStation 4



Xbox One





BLUE MICROPHONES YETI NANO

A while ago, I had a cheap condenser microphone running off of a phantom power block. It was a mess of cables, but it sounded great. Unfortunately, the operative word there is 'cheap', so it lasted about 18 months, then stopped working for no apparent reason. So, I defaulted to the microphone on my headset. It sounded fine, so I was in no rush to get a new standalone microphone.

Until Blue Microphones got in touch, and offered me a Yeti Nano. Of course, I had heard of the company, and over the years had read that their microphones were the go-to for people doing voice acting as a hobby. So, of course, I jumped at the chance to try it out.

The Yeti Nano from Blue Microphones comes with: the microphone, a desk stand, a micro-USB cable, a stand adapter, a quick start guide in seven languages, a registration reminder and a card which tells you where to download the Sherpa software. On the microphone itself, there are two buttons, the micro USB socket and an earphone socket so that you can listen to yourself in real time.

The button on the front (where the Blue logo is) mutes and unmutes, as well as controls the earphone volume if you've got something plugged into it. The button on the rear toggles between

cardioid and omnidirectional modes - the first one is for a single speaker, the second is for a group. It's pretty cool that it can switch between the two modes with just a push of a button, in case you get into a surprise podcast, or need to let someone in the room join you in a Discord call.

However, even in cardioid mode the microphone is sensitive enough to pick up other things that are happening in the room. It's even sensitive enough to pick up things that you cannot hear yourself. When I was first setting the Yeti Nano up, I was listening to the audio to check levels and such. I then realised that, despite the house being silent apart from my PC fans, I could hear two people having a conversation. I couldn't make out the words, and when I took off my headset I couldn't hear anything. I had a window open, so I can only assume that it was picking up one of the neighbours, judging by the clattering during the conversation, in their kitchen. Not counting the unoccupied house next door, there wasn't a kitchen within 100 metres of the microphone.

So yes, it's sensitive, but how does it sound? The answer, of course, is pretty great. I haven't had the opportunity to try it out with multiple people, but streaming and recording podcasts sound good. I haven't tried any voice acting yet, but certainly intend to.





Honestly, I didn't use it very much with the stand, as I found that it would attach to the boom arm that I used for my old microphone. It has a thread in the bottom, and will easily screw onto a standard mount. Of course, they recommend the Blue Microphones-created boom and mount, but it's up to you.

If you're looking for a new microphone, then definitely consider the Yeti Nano. It's 21.1cm tall (in the stand) and weighs 0.63kg, so is quite portable. Being powered by USB means that it's suitable for use on the fly, without having to plug in loads of other things first. It's a great little microphone that's really sensitive and very clear.



**RRP: £249.00
/ \$299.99**





COUCHMASTER CYCON

For quite some time, the main gripe I've had when playing games from the comfort of my sofa is that, for FPS games at least, I haven't been afforded the accuracy that comes with using a mouse and keyboard for input. Nerdytec have, however, come up with an elegant solution to that problem.

Enter the Couchmaster. The model we have here is the Cycon, which is their all-singing, all-dancing version that comes with all of the gadgetry you'll need for comfortable couch based gaming. Out of the box, you'll get the two armrest pieces, the support case (which houses the USB3 hub), a 5 meter active USB3 extension cable, mousemat and a pocket

for your mouse to go in when not in use. The two armrest pieces are fairly simple, comprising of a foam inner and faux leather outer (other fabrics are available) that are fairly sturdy, but still allow your arms to rest on them without causing discomfort. Before use, I had worried that the armrests may have ended up pushing my shoulders up, however, in use it became apparent that this wasn't the case.

The real meat of the Cycon is in the support case. In order to set this up, you need to remove two panels from the back of the case, and wire in your mouse and keyboard to the internal USB3 hub. Take note, that you'll also need to connect the USB3 hub extension wire that allows it to be





connected to the longer 5m extension at this point. Something I'd forgotten to do and had to re-open the back of the support case to solve...

Once the keyboard and mouse is in place, you can hook up the Cycon's USB3 hub to your PC using the supplied 5m cable, and then get yourself comfortable for some gaming. Sitting at the Couchmaster feels a little weird at first, as you adapt to the more outward placement of your arms and hands. Initially, it's a little difficult moving your hands to the keyboard to type, but this is likely caused by years worth of muscle conditioning from sitting at a desk. It becomes second nature quickly enough, and you'll be using your mouse and keyboard as naturally as if you were at a more standard setting of a desk. Getting in and out of a seated position is relatively easy too, as you can slide the support case over one of the arm rests to facilitate movement. Since the pieces are separate, you could also use the support case on it's own over a chair that has armrests already. Nerdytec do sell the support case solo - should

you already have a single-seater chair that means the armrest pieces would go unused.

A major plus point is that the unit can be used for more than just a keyboard and mouse combo, with the addition of a USB port on the top of the support case, you could quite easily connect a joystick or gamepad to your PC such that you could control games like *Elite: Dangerous* whilst retaining the full command set afforded to you by having a keyboard at hand. Alternatively, you can pop your laptop on top of the support case and use it from the comfort of your sofa too. Though, if you've wired in a keyboard and mouse, you'll need to find somewhere to "hang" them whilst using a laptop - or unwire them from the base completely.

I've since spent a couple of our Theme Nights here at GameOn using the Couchmaster Cycon, playing games such as *Counter-Strike: Global Offensive* and *Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare*, interspersed with time spent playing single player outings. Sitting in front of a home-theatre system and large screen had me wanting to relive some

of the experiences of games gone by, to see them in a new light. So with that, I fired up *Half-Life 2* and got to work saving City 17 (again). Sat on the sofa, with the Couchmaster in place, watching Gordon Freeman





get ported to the other side of the office on a large TV with full surround sound brought new life to the game, instead of being hunched over a small 22 inch screen with only a stereo headset for audio, and that's part of what makes the Couchmaster Cycon such a great addition to the gamers set piece. I also figured that a good test of the stability of the Cycon would be to play some strategy games, like an old favourite Command & Conquer: Red Alert 2, constant mouse shifting and keyboard presses meant nothing to the Cycon, which sat there and ate them up like it was a fully fledged desk. To wind down from all that, I moved onto some Factorio and well, 5 hours later I was still sat as comfy as ever laying waste to hordes of biters and placing transport belts, which speaks volumes for the comfort and usability of the Cycon.

Lastly, there's some additional gadgets available for the Couchmaster; an ash-tray, phone holder and a tablet holder round out the selection of what's available as optional extras. I quite like the idea of mounting a tablet to the Cycon, for those times you need to look up crafting recipes in Minecraft or where that last damn flag is in Assassin's Creed.

**RRP: £159.99
/ \$N/A**





Suitable for:



Handhelds



PC



PlayStation 4



Xbox One





NINTENDO SWITCH LITE

When the Nintendo Switch Lite was first announced I wanted to pre-order it right away. Yes, I did, and got it on launch day.

In the box was the Switch Lite, charging plug and instructions, which covers both the original and Lite consoles. Not a lot, but since you can only play games in handheld mode, there's not a lot that they could put in.

The flaps to insert the Game Card and micro-SD card are stiff and hard to open, but in time I'm sure they will loosen up. The buttons/sticks are easy to press and the sticks are easy to move with no stiffness. I have to say it was the best feeling as the Joy-Cons on our original Switch have started to drift, and it was getting very irritating. The buttons are just like having the Nintendo Switch but it's slightly smaller and you can't feel the sides like on the Switch itself where the Joy-Cons connect. Because it doesn't actually have Joy-Cons, it's all fixed together.

The first game I tried out was Pokémon Let's go Pikachu. The screen is perfect for that game, and the quality is just like the original Switch itself. It is a little bit brighter though, even at lower settings.

The Switch Lite is easy to hold and not too heavy. While playing it doesn't get hot in the hands. It does get slightly warm, but

that is normal for the original Switch too. It all depends on the game you play.

I decided to test the battery, especially since the Switch Lite is designed to be played away from a plug socket. After one hour with low brightness and a full battery, it dropped down to 79%. With the brightness all the way up, the battery went down to 73%. It also got warmer, which is worth noting.

As an update to the original, the Switch Lite is quite good. As a handheld console it's fantastic. I really like being able to play Dead By Daylight wherever I am, and recommend the Switch Lite to anyone wanting to break free from their TV.





Nintendo Switch Lite

Zacian & Zamazenta Edition



**RRP: £199.99
/\$199.99**





NETGEAR NIGHTHAWK XR500

Look at your router. Chances are, you've got one that your ISP gave you as part of your internet package, and you've never really considered anything different, merely because it's doing the job it's supposed to. And for most households, that's probably fine. But when you're part of a household that comprises of gamers, Netflix binge watchers and obsessive Linux distro downloaders, it may well be time to look at an alternative router, to ensure that everyone gets a fair piece of the internet pie.

Enter the Netgear Nighthawk XR500. Looking like something directly from Lockheed's warehouse, its design is certainly striking and won't appeal to everyone, but that's personal choice which ultimately has no bearing on the inner workings of the hardware.

Whilst you could find a comparable spec router for less money, the unique selling point of this unit is all in the OS it's running, and some of the unique features it brings. However, before we dive into that, let's talk under-the-hood. The Nighthawk XR500 is an AC2600 MU-MIMO Wi-Fi router, compatible with both cable and ADSL internet services via using your existing hardware as a modem. This device is all router, so won't act as a complete replacement of your current hardware, it's designed to make much better use of it instead. Across the back are four gigabit ethernet ports for shifting data to various

devices, and a fifth that's used by your modem. There's a power input jack, power switch and reset pin, and a final switch to allow you to turn off the LEDs on the device, barring the power LED. A nice touch if you have to put this in the open somewhere, and find the lights too bright or an inconvenience. There are also a couple of USB3 ports to the side of the router for attaching storage devices. Finally, there's four spots for antennae to be attached, and two buttons on top of the unit for serving WPS requests and the ability to turn the Wi-Fi on or off at a moments notice.

Those two USB ports can have various storage media attached to them, which allows you to run them as something of a makeshift NAS, using spare flash drives or external USB enclosures you have handy. As an added bonus, you can set up backups to these drives too, using free software from Netgear, or Time Machine on MacOS. Pretty handy for keeping a local backup of files, or sharing files between devices easily.

But, so far, we've only talked about the features of the router that other routers also have, what really makes the Nighthawk XR500 stand out from the crowd, is their partnership with the NetDuma team and that collaboration has given birth to DumaOS. An OS specifically designed for routers, and in the case of the Nighthawk, filled with features that gamers will relish having at their fingertips. Part of DumaOS' charm, is





down to the fact it looks like the team spent more than 5 minutes throwing a few input boxes on a page. The whole OS is sleek and built with usability in mind, which really aids in making the features they have intuitive to use.

First up, there's options for Quality of Service (QoS), which let you prioritise (or not!) traffic to individual devices on your network. Say if someone is profusely binging their favourite show on their favourite streaming service, and you decide to play some games, but find that you're getting lag because there's not enough bandwidth left for you, then you can pop into the QoS screens, and simply drag the chart around to prioritise your gaming device. Anti-bufferbloat can watch for those spikes in usage, and will automatically stop a device from taking all available bandwidth

in the event of something like a video buffering. You can find QoS on many a higher end router, however, it's the ease of use present in DumaOS that makes it an absolute breeze to use.

Next up, is Geo-filtering. A very different way of aiming to ensure that your gaming experience is a pleasant one as possible; Geo-filtering allows you to define a radius on a map that will limit where your games can connect to in terms of servers (or players). This means that instead of being given the one that was first to respond, you can control it to being a one that's likely to give you a much better ping and thus a better game play experience. In theory it's a great idea, though in practice, it's a bit hit and miss. This is by no means the fault of Netgear, but since here in Blighty there generally tends to be only servers in Europe you'd





want to connect to, then limiting your range could be a bit well... too much in the way of control - but this is only for games where dedicated servers are available. It works much better with games that utilise P2P (where one player "hosts" the game) as this setup can really change wildly in connection quality between matches.

There's also built in support for OpenVPN, allowing you to secure your inside world from your outside one, allowing all of your networked devices to be protected by the offerings that using a VPN brings.

It's difficult to offer up any real-world details of the Wi-Fi quality that the Nighthawk offers, notably down to how different each environment it's in could be. As a general guideline, however, setup in the living room of an average sized house here in the UK, I had no problems maintaining a connection to the router on my laptop or mobile

phone wherever I was in the house. Signal did drop off a little when moving to areas of the house that would put the signal through a couple of walls at a shallow angle, but even then it wasn't enough to have any adverse effect overall.

RRP: £250.00 / \$250.00

Geo-Filter

Control connections to local players for lower ping.





Gaming-VPN

Keep your head in the game and off security.



Protect your network identity and prevent DDoS attacks.

Use the VPN client to connect to the VPN server (requires existing VPN service).

Anti-Bufferbloat

Prioritise gaming devices and traffic to minimise lag spikes.



Automatically detects online gameplay and prioritises gaming traffic above all else, ensuring lower latency and a more stable gameplay.

Control the maximum upload and download speeds per device on the network to minimise sudden lag spikes while gaming.

Network Monitoring

View real-time bandwidth utilization by device, network and system performance & monitor live game ping.



Automatically detects online gameplay and prioritises gaming traffic above all else, ensuring lower latency and a more stable gameplay.

Control the maximum upload and download speeds per device on the network to minimise sudden lag spikes while gaming.

Gaming Dashboard

Custom dashboard with real-time control and analytics.



View real-time bandwidth utilization by device and real time ping latency

Pin your favorite panels to customize your dashboard

Stabilise ping, reduce lag spikes and stay ahead of the game!





SNAKEBYTE GAMING:SEAT

Having gone through many different gaming hardware in my time, something I've never considered is the more practical stuff, such as chairs. Having happily spent my gaming history sat in >£70 office chairs, when I woke up to find the £250 chair on my doorstep, it's needless to say that I didn't really know what to expect. It took two of us to actually get it through the door, and then I was left with this behemoth of a box that resided in my living room.

After unboxing all of the components and leaving them strewn across the living room, I was fairly daunted by the amount of pieces I would have to put together. When I braved up to looking at the instructions, I was initially overwhelmed, with only pictures being used with very little being diagramed and, as I found out later, certain steps that just were skipped by the manual. Whilst these steps were fairly self-explanatory, as someone who likes to (and has to) follow instructions to the letter, the exclusion of certain steps was overly difficult for me to get around.

Instructions aside, the construction of the chair itself was surprisingly easy. Many components simply slotted and clipped together, and any screws needed were already provided and screwed into the appropriate holes, avoiding all the awkward shuffling of screws that usually occurs when constructing any form of

furniture. Once I'd gotten my head around the instructions, to actually build the chair only took around 15 minutes or so. The only issue I did encounter was the plate which attaches the height & recline levers to the chair is shown screwed in facing a different direction in the instructions to how you actually can with the real chair. The version depicted in the instructions made more sense as the actual way it screwed in meant I had to adjust how I'd screwed in the arm rests, as they were overlapping.

Once those complications were put aside, it came to actually using the chair. Sporting a headrest, lower back pillow, retractable leg rest & adjustable armrests, it was a lot of choice and comfort that I was not used to. Being a digital magazine designer, nightly livestreamer, small-time writer and long-time procrastinator of real, important tasks, it's not wrong to say I spend 8-10+ hours sat in my computer chair on an average day. As of writing, it's currently 2:45pm GMT and I'm at five hours already as an example. I was happy enough with my basic chairs, but Snakebyte have changed that. The Snakebyte 'Gaming:Seat' remains perfectly comfortable to sit in, and the customisation you're given in the chair's design makes it easy to comfortably switch up sitting positions to avoid your entire body from sticking to the chair, especially in this heat.





One thing I feel is important to bring up is that I suffer from both Scoliosis, a spinal condition which causes the spine to curve into a C or S shape, affecting only 3% of the population, and Scheuermann's Disease, where the vertebrae grows disproportionately, causing the spine to bend outwards/inwards. These combined cause me irritation and pain whilst doing pretty much anything, especially for long periods of time, and sitting down is one of them. Being unable to consciously correct my posture, I found I could only sit in the office chairs for about an hour until pain started. With the Gaming:Seat, the use of the back pillow and headrest allowed me to sit comfortably in the chair for up to 2+ solid hours without discomfort occurring. As mentioned earlier, I livestream almost every night for two hours, and towards the end of many streams it would be commented I would grow visibly restless and fidgety. Since using the Gaming:Seat however, I have been able to happily sit through the two hour session without growing abnormally discomforted. I'm not saying it's cured my issues, and long gaming or work sessions still cause pain and high irritation, but this experience would not be typical of most users and if anyone reading this suffers from problems like this when seated, the Gaming:Seat is definitely worth your interest.

The leg rest was a feature that I was interested in seeing how it worked, and if it was practical to do so. Whilst it looked relaxing, I couldn't imagine it's use when PC gaming, and this showed from my experiences. From trying to play Rocket League, if I had the leg rest up I generally found it more uncomfortable as I would naturally lean

forward when playing. For watching videos, the leg rest managed to find its love in me, as well as when I was playing games that required an Xbox controller such as Human: Fall Flat. The versatility the chair gives you offers an extraordinary variety of ways to enjoy yourself.

Overall, the snakebyte Gaming:Seat showed me what I've truly been missing all these years. Amazing quality, great customisation, a bit of a confusing construction but it can be easily overlooked when you get the final product. With a current cost of £230 at the time of writing, the price may put many off, but for anyone who spends a large amount of time at a PC, whether it's watching videos, doing work, playing videogames or just relaxing, it's definitely a great value for the money, especially when compared to other gaming chairs on the market.

**RRP: £170.00
/ N/A**





E-WIN CHAMPION SERIES ERGONOMIC COMPUTER GAMING OFFICE CHAIR

It's easy to say that I'm not one to splurge. I've looked at several gamer chairs and tried out quite a few in stores, but it's hard to commit when you're a penny pincher. Finding the right style, the right fit, and for the right price is a challenge.

When E-WIN reached out regarding their gaming chairs, I was most definitely interested. I recently moved and when I did so, I left almost all of my furniture behind. Up until recently, I had been using a dining chair until I finally purchased a very basic office chair. It was comfortable enough, but as a person who has broken their tailbone in the past, comfort is occasionally a challenge. Note to readers, don't break your tailbone.

I have wanted a gaming chair for a while, and to get the opportunity to try out one of E-WIN's quality was a chance I couldn't pass up. After getting my measurements, they were happy to send over a chair from their E-WIN Champion Series. It was wonderful to find one that even fit my aesthetic, one with a bloody handprint on the front and back and with the word "bloody" printed on the pillow. I do love horror games after all, why not play them in a horror-ish gamer chair!

The delivery arrived quickly and was in a rather large box. After letting my dogs sniff around the

new arrival, I set into putting the chair together. It was amazingly easy and actually faster than putting together the cheap office chair I had bought only two weeks prior. Finally all set up, I was looking forward to giving it a try, and try I did.

Seeing as I had work to do, I set the chair at my desk and went to work. After adjusting to the pillow at the base of my back, I realized it was incredibly comfortable. Where my other chair had made me feel a bit stiff after sitting in it for a while, I didn't feel fatigued at all with this new chair. For computer gaming chairs, this one was incredible, especially considering how it allowed me to sit. I'm one who tends to sit crossed-legged in my chairs, curled up while I type, do research, or play games. This chair fits not just the normal style of sitting, but definitely fits me sitting like the curled up odd person.

Over the next few days I worked through the adjustments, changing the angle of the reclining back as well as adjusting the arms. I was pleased to see the arms adjusted three different ways: sliding in toward the chair and away from it, sliding forward and backward, and lastly up and down. This has made it so that I can find the exact height and angle I want the arms at so that my elbows can rest comfortably while I work or play. The buttons are easy to press and figure out,





and for the first day or so I felt like I kept finding a new armchair button feature! The headrest pillow was also a wonderful surprise, especially on nights where my head started to bother me. I've never had a more comfortable chair and I'm extremely happy to have this one now.

As a slightly vertically challenged person, I worried about the lowest height setting on the chair. Granted, my feet aren't on the ground the vast majority of the time, but I do have to sit a little closer to the edge for my feet to hit the ground on the lowest setting. That's not all that bad, though, as the comfort of the chair is more than enough to make up for that occasional issue. As a former orchestra student in school, one gets used to sitting on the edge of the chair and old habits die hard.

All in all, the E-WIN Champion Series may be my first in the world of computer gaming chairs, but I already feel I will turn to them whenever

I need another. I have had my friend's mother and father even try them due to looking for a chair that will be comfortable and it hugs just like a glove. E-WIN puts a lot of work into their chairs and it shows with not just the design and craftsmanship, but also the feel. If you're in the market for a gaming chair, definitely give E-WIN a look, as they are worth it.



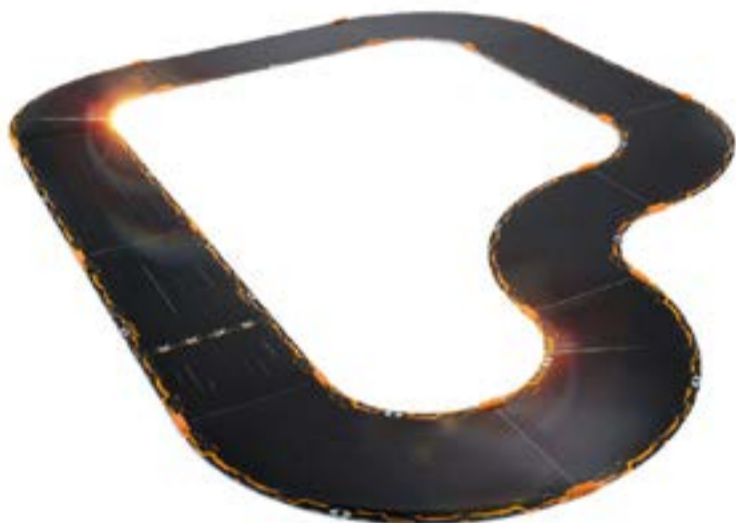
RRP: from £276.00
/ from \$349.00





ANKI OVERDRIVE REVIEW

If you remember the old days of Scalextric racing car sets, where your cars would have to be manually slotted into the track and prone to coming off at every available corner, this is nothing like that.



We took a look at the Anki Overdrive Starter Kit, which comes with a wide selection of track for you to use, as well as two cars and a charging station which can simultaneously charge up to four cars.

Explained in the simplest terms I can conjure up, just so you can rush out and buy the damn thing as soon as you possibly can once you're through reading this. This is a track racing game, that you play with up to four players (or play with with AI-controlled cars), You race around the track with different mode and objectives, from trying to stay in the lead to how many time you can destroy your opponents.

I have to admit, at first we were expecting just a run of the mill normal racing game, which would get a bit tedious after a while of playing. Oh boy, we couldn't have been more wrong and we were thoroughly surprised.

First off, the cars just sit on the track instead of slot on. The track pieces magnetise together, making them extremely easy to construct and dismantle. The computers that are built into the cars stop it from shooting off the side of the track; the only way your car can leave the track is if you are knocked off by an opponent, and even then when this happened several times the cars were able to find their own way back onto the track and carry on as normal. You then race the using a mobile device (Android/iOS or Kindle Fire) to control the cars. Tilting your phone to the left or right veers you onto the four available lanes, and you can control your speed via the





anki OVERDRIVE™



on-screen throttle, which you slide up and down to vary your speed. On top of all of this, you also get weaponry attached to the car, which you can upgrade or swap out as you earn XP. Located on the right hand side, you have two buttons to operate these weapons; one for primary attack the other is for a special attack. Each car has it's own personal arsenal, really giving each player a unique experience and mixing up the gameplay.

After using our phones for a while, we decided to switch to tablets and both played using an iPad. Having the larger screen was really nice, but personally I preferred the phone as it was smaller and easier for the steering. My friend preferred the iPad though, due to the larger screen allowing for easier selection and control of speed and weaponry. Each player is required to have a phone or tablet (even an iPod Touch would work) but in this day and age, there aren't many households without a couple of smartphones in the house.

The charging of the cars from drained only takes 10 minutes, and we found the battery life lasted between 30 and 45 minutes each time. With the charge time so short, it was easy to do things like make a cup of tea (we are British) or nip to the loo.

There is quite a list of devices that have been tested to make sure they are compatible with the Anki Overdrive racing system, but if you are not sure, you can find out by just downloading the app on the appropriate app store for your device, it will tell you if it's supported or not.

Once again, we have been very surprised about a lot of the features found in Anki Overdrive. With multiple game modes, this should keep you occupied for quite some time, there are ways just two of you can play and again will support up to four players at a time. But for those moments when you find yourself in the house on your own, have no fear, Anki have you covered on





MISC

that as well, as there is an AI built in so you can compete against it. This mode comes with a story mode, which is split into six episodes to keep you entertained. However, if you do have friends and still want to progress through the story mode, you can do co-op against the AI with a friend.

Unlike conventional Scalextric, it is extremely easy to keep track of the game. Before starting matches you can adjust the score limit, whether it's laps or amount of opponents destroyed. Not only this, but the game tracks these automatically and tells you what position you are in, making it

much easier to determine the rankings of players. Overall the Anki Overdrive Starter Kit is a great present for kids or adults and enough comes with the game to keep you occupied for quite some time. Plus we can only hope that they implement new game modes later on.



RRP: £149.99 / \$149.99



ANKI OVERDRIVE ACCESSORIES



Thinking of getting someone an Anki Overdrive for Christmas? Here are some great add ons which friends or family could buy for them.

Speed Kit

(Consists of two straight pieces)

If speed is what you need, then look no further. Build long straightaways where there's nowhere to hide! Put the hammer down and outrun your opponent or take aim and do battle.



Corner Kit

(Consists of two curve pieces)

Add more twists and turns to test your precision racing skills. Take tight corners at top speed, but watch out — slow down and you'll become a target! Or blast your opponent before they disappear around the bend!



Launch Kit

(Consists of two straight pieces and the raiser pieces)
Add jumps to your battlefield with the Launch Kit!

Collison Kit

(Consists of one Crossroad piece)
Pick off your opponents as they speed past, but watch out for devastating collisions and don't get caught in the crossfire!

Supercars

With a great selection of cars which all have their own unique primary and secondary power up for battling one another.



SuperTrucks

Supertrucks are nearly three times the size of Supercars, and use their heft, weapons and new control system to dominate the track. But Supertrucks are more than just oversized vehicles, they come with access to a new game mode and Commanders.

anki
OVERDRIVE™



CHRISTMAS ALCOHOL PAIRINGS: PLATFORMERS

It's almost Christmas once again, so what better way to spend it than with a nice drink and your favourite games? But, have you ever thought about marrying the two more than ever before, to choose the ultimate beverage to accompany your playtime? Read on, and in this article we'll look at drinks to enjoy responsibly with this year's most popular platform games.

Tanglewood

Tanglewood is an old-school game, so it deserves a real old-school drink. None of these new-fangled micro brewery gubbins or fizzy pop masquerading as cider. No, a game needs something warm and brown with little twigs floating in it. To wit: it needs a real ale.

There are a few options here, and one that springs to mind immediately is Tanglewood Branch IPA. This didn't make the cut however due to the aforementioned ruling out of microbreweries, and also the fact that it ceased production a few years ago. The similarly named Tangle Foot brewery do a few lovely ales that are worth considering too, including Fursty Ferret, a nice malty number, and The Legendary Tangle Foot, which is a lovely refreshing golden ale.

game, is Fuller's Red Fox. This deep ruby ale is a deep and mellow sipping ale which works well with the more considered approach to platforming that Tanglewood provides.

Unravel 2

This cute-as-a-button sequel from EA adds multiplayer into the mix. With a game that is best played with a friend, it seemed like a good idea to find a drink best enjoyed with a friend. And what better drink to enjoy with someone else than a cocktail.

As much as I try to make out that I'm a manly man, I'm really not, so from time to time I do like to sip something with a lurid colour and more sugar than Kim Tate and Jeremy Lyle put together. The perfect cocktail to go with this title would have to incorporate the colours of our two woolen heroes. If you remember back to primary school you'll know that red and blue combine into purple, so what better than a purple people eater. This Grenadine-based cocktail incorporates Blue Curacao and Cranberry juice for a sweet but dry hit. If that's not your jam though, perhaps a Purple Haze; a classic mix of Vodka, Chambord and Sprite.

The winner for me though, with its fruity autumnal notes that complement the aesthetics of the



Sonic Mania Plus

Sonic Mania's success was a surprise to literally nobody except Sega. Fans of the series had been crying out for a classic 2D game like the 16-bit days and finally, thanks to a collaboration with Christian Whitehead, it came in 2017. Off the back of that, 2018 saw the breakout hit get a physical release with a bunch of new bells and whistles in the form of Sonic Mania Plus.

It would be easy to just say that Blue Curacao or WKD would be the way to go here, but we've already used colour for our inspiration earlier. Instead I'm taking my cue from the blistering speed that is Sonic's other trademark.

The obvious choice for drinks that people who gotta go fast love to consume is the classic Jägerbomb, made by dropping a shot of Jägermeister into a glass of energy drink (usually Red Bull). This gets you drunk quickly, and gives you energy, because everyone likes an energetic drunk.

There's an ever more potent alternative though which is less famous. Buckfast Tonic Wine, known to Glaswegian clubbers in need of a vitality boost as "Buckies", is an even more lethal mix. Made by the monks of Buckfast Abbey in Devonshire, you'd think this would be a pretty posh drink. It turns out though that this caffeine-fortified wine is just as popular amongst the riff-raff. In 2010, an investigation by the BBC found that the drink had been mentioned by name in an average of 3 crime reports a day in the Strathclyde area alone between 2006 and 2009. If you decide to engage in a tippie of this speedy intoxicant, do so in moderation and please don't break any laws. Except those of physics as you zoom through Sonic Mania Plus's loops, ramps and rolling hills.

**Remember, GameOn only endorses responsible drinking.
Be safe, have fun, and look after each other.**





RANKING THE SWITCH SNES GAMES

When Nintendo announced the NES line-up for the Switch last year, I sat through all of the games, even the rubbish ones, in order to rank them for you. Don't say I don't suffer for my art. With the launch of the long-awaited SNES equivalent, there are far less stinkers, so doing the same seemed to be a great idea.

20 Super Soccer

Whilst it's worth bearing in mind that the age of this game puts it at the point where football games were relatively simple, there's no getting around the fact that this is a muddled and confusing mess of a game. There are very few mechanics, and subtle play is not rewarded. The lack of any real finesse in the moveset and the fact that players are always bunched up like they're attached to each other means that your best bet is usually to just hoof and hope. It's like the videogame version of Stoke City.

19 Brawl Brothers

Beat 'em ups were huge at the time of the SNES, with games like Battletoads, Final Fight, and Ninja Warriors selling in ridiculous numbers. With so many great beat-em-ups on the system, it's a surprise to see a reasonably average one being picked for the starting line-up. Generic sprites with plenty of enemy palette swaps and a fairly limited moveset across the included characters makes for a

fighter which doesn't stand out particularly.

18 Kirby's Dream Course

This is a relatively rare game and fetches a decent price on eBay. When a game is rare, that can be because lots of people have copies but don't want to sell them, or not many people have copies. In the case of this game, I believe it is the latter, as I can't see why anybody would have bought this in the first place. It's a slow and relatively simple mini golf game with Kirby as a ball. The graphics are cute and it's certainly a novel use of the character but with a proper Kirby platformer in the line-up, there's no reason to play this.

17 Super Metroid

It was innovative and impressive at the time, but this isn't a game that's aged well. Lots of getting lost and running around like a headless chicken, levels designed very sparsely with backtracking and stop/start gameplay, and an unintuitive control system stop this game from being enjoyable for me. It's too slow for a run and gun game, but it's still fun, just not as fun as people make out.





16 Super Tennis

This is a fair bit more entertaining than Super Soccer. Whilst it's not the most accurate simulation it's still aged better than a lot of older sports simulators. It's very tough to get the hang of and some of the graphical choices are a bit odd. The attempt at a 3D effect with the net is rather strange looking, but it doesn't detract from what is a decent enough tennis sim.

15 Super Puyo Puyo

There are plenty of ways to play this game already but it's still a fun puzzle game. Perhaps maybe not as addictive as some others but it's still a good laugh. The trouble is, it's been rebranded, remastered, and re-released so many times that you probably already have a version of it somewhere.

14 Super Earth Defense Force

Not to be confused with the third-person shooter of the same name, this is a rather generic side-scrolling shmup with RPG style upgrade mechanics. It's quite tough and screens are rather empty, but it's still fun to play even if it is a little bland. The SNES wasn't really a powerhouse for shooters so don't expect R-Type or Ikaruga, but this is still worth a quick blast.

13 Stunt Race FX

This is one of those games that loses its impact in the modern world. At the time it was something completely different, but the rudimentary 3D graphics don't hold up in 2019, meaning that the title's gameplay needs to hold it together, and it doesn't do that hugely well. This is a competent enough racer with some fun touches and cute anthropomorphised cars, but with sluggish

races and two better racing games in the mix, it's hard to recommend this above its peers.

12 Demon's Crest

This is the third title in the Gargoyle's Quest series, which in turn is a spin-off of the Ghosts 'n' Goblins series, and it absolutely shows. It took me nearly half an hour to defeat the very first enemy that you face in the game! This would have been markedly helped if Nintendo didn't insist on not providing instruction manuals for the games on the Switch. Once you're worked out what you're supposed to do and what the controls are, then it's a really competent Castlevania-style title with lovely graphics and a nice, if somewhat repetitive soundtrack.

11 Kirby's Dream Land 3

Kirby's third adventure has a little bit of a twist compared to the earlier ones in that he has companions now. This innovative take on the classic Kirby mimicry gameplay sees you team up with various other characters to give additional moves to our perky pink protagonist. It's a little on the easy side and probably the weakest of the platform games in the selection, but it's still good fun to play and a worthy inclusion.





10 Pilotwings

The Pilotwings IP has been left dormant for a while now, which is a shame because it's one of the more unique titles in Nintendo's arsenal. It's somewhere between a flight simulator and a mini-game collection with aeronautical events such as landing planes, controlling jetpacks, and parachuting. There's really nothing else like it out there and it's still as much fun today as it was in the 90s.

9 Super Ghouls and Ghosts

This is ridiculously hard by today's standards but it's also such an addictive game. Like Ghosts 'n' Goblins on the NES collection, it's a game that really benefits from having a rewind function because you will die a lot, but seeing your protagonist struggle on in their pants when their suit of armour gets knocked off never gets old.

8 Breath of Fire

With a non-linear world, multiple protagonists and unique icon-based menus, the first Breath of Fire was groundbreaking at the time and competed exceptionally well against the established genre champions like Final Fantasy. Battles are very commonplace so be prepared for a lot of grinding, as that was the fashion in JRPGs at the time. It's a really good story and well translated, unlike some of the sequels that had some questionable localisation.

7 Super Mario Kart

There aren't many games that you can say invented a genre. Super Mario Kart is one of those games that did however, and its influence can still be seen on kart racers today. The original is still a fun game with plenty of variety, but it is starting

to show its age compared to the newer entries. The core gameplay is the same but the sense of speed isn't quite the same as the more modern versions. If you don't already have Mario Kart 8 on your Switch though, this is a worthy substitute.



6 Joe & Mac 2: Lost in the Tropics

The first game in this series is available in its arcade form on the eStore under its Japanese title of Caveman Ninja, but this title was a SNES exclusive and didn't have an arcade release. It's a lovely platformer with some nice touches and oodles of bright and colourful graphics that make good use of Mode 7. Easily the best of the third-party platform games in this collection.

5 F-Zero

It was a toss-up between this and Super Mario Kart as to which would be the highest rated racer in the collection, but F-Zero edges it for me. The fact that there isn't an official F-Zero game on the Switch helps here. Like Super Mario Kart, this game started a revolution in its wake, inspiring later games like Rollcage and Wipeout, but I'd argue that it's aged a little better and doesn't feel as sluggish as its colourful cousin in the modern day.





4 **Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island**

This was a brilliant sequel and one of the nicest looking games on the SNES. With more complex level design and a bunch of new mechanics, this took Super Mario World to another level and introduced so many things that are staples for the series now. The downside though is that it also introduced Baby Mario, and his crying sound effect when you lose a level is annoying. Some of the collecting went a little overboard too, but nonetheless, this is still a must-play



3 **Star Fox**

In the first part of this article, I mentioned how graphics that were great for the time won't hold up these days and the gameplay is vital. Star Fox is testament to that. Even though the chunky polygons and relatively slow frame rate don't look that impressive these days, the fast-paced combat and strong level design of Argonaut's classic is just as addictive today as it was in 1993.

2 **Super Mario World**

What can I possibly say about this game that hasn't already been said? Beautiful colourful graphics, a fantastic soundtrack, and a world multiple times larger than any Mario game to this point. It was the game that sold the SNES and without it, things could have been very

different. Not just one of the best games on the SNES, but one of the greatest games of all time.

1 **The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past**

I was quite dismissive of the first Legend of Zelda when I ranked the NES games on the Switch. It's not that I don't like Zelda, I just think that it pales in comparison to its more recent brethren. In contrast to the NES title, this was (and still is) a game that you can sink days on end into. The storyline might get a little over the top and silly, but that's kind of what you expect in a Zelda game.

There's so much to see and do, and level design that generally guides you in the right direction without taking away the sense of freedom and non-linearity that this title has in spades. This is a stone-cold classic that will never get old, and it's worth the Switch online subscription fee on its own.





THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF CONSOLES

Trying to decide which console to buy isn't being made any easier, with the recent releases of some upgraded versions of the latest consoles. Hopefully this will help you pick out which one you're looking for.

Xbox One

Standard model, which has gone down in price since the introduction of the newer "S" and "X" models.

Xbox One S

4K blu-ray player, 40% smaller and slightly more powerful than original Xbox One. Offers HDR content, can be positioned vertically and internal power supply (avoids the blocky object attached to the cable, allowing better fitting into more confined areas). Built-in storage available is up to 1TB. HDMI 2.0 allows 4K and 60FPS. IR (InfraRed), TV controller compatibility, more updated controller. (Available separately)

Xbox One X

Whereas the S allows 4K media playback, the X is much more powerful. It is more than twice as powerful as its predecessors, and still packs in a 1TB hard drive.

This allows you to play games in 4K, with more games being enhanced to give you much better graphics in higher resolutions.





Buyer beware:

Prices will vary depending on a variety of factors such as location, stock availability and the amount of items bundled with the console. Bundled items may include games and controllers.

The PlayStation Pro and Xbox One X are the only console which will cost over £300 / \$300 without games.

PlayStation 4

The “slim” is now the standard PS4 model and is 30% smaller, 16% lighter and 28% better at power consumption, with fewer USB ports. If you understood what all that means, you’ll also be glad to know it houses the exact same innards as the original PS4 so your games won’t look any different. Unlike the original, the Slim comes with both a 500GB and 1TB options with prices starting from around £230. In a nutshell, it’s more of the same, in a better looking and smaller body.



PlayStation Pro

The PlayStation 4 with more power, perfect for those obsessed with crisper graphics, better frame rates and a 1080p resolution. With a price of around £400 and coming with a 1TB hard-drive, it is on the more expensive side of other consoles you can currently buy, but there is a reason. The PS Pro has a more powerful and faster GPU & CPU at its core, as well as harnessing the latest in HDR and 4K technology. Though there is no 4K Blu-Ray player for films (Sony are working with Netflix and YouTube on 4K streaming apps), the games you play will be the best looking ever seen on a PlayStation console, appearing all the better if you have a 4K television. Having the new console won’t hinder the games you can play either, all PS4 games will be compatible with the Pro, some even receiving patches to optimise the Pro’s technology. If you’re obsessed with the latest tech, it’s certainly for you, but if you just want to jump into the console space, the Slim will be just fine.



TOP FIVE GAMES YOU SHOULD GET FOR SWITCH

The Nintendo Switch has been around for a while, and a great many games have come to the system, with even more on the way. It should only be natural that a console that can shift between three forms has a wide array of games to go with it, so here's five games that, if you have the Switch or plan on getting it, should definitely find room on your shelf.

5. *Minecraft*

Minecraft is on pretty much every system, and for good reason. The addictive wide-open sandbox shines even better on Switch, since you no longer have to wait until you get home to work on the building idea you have in your

head: you can make it happen anywhere. With constant updates and plenty of add-ons, DLC, and hundreds upon hundreds of items to craft, the only limit in Minecraft is your own imagination.

4. *Xenoblade Chronicles 2*

Don't let the name fool you: it has no direct connection to the previous game, but it definitely shares its charm, style, intricacies, and gorgeous landscaping. With an excellent story, a memorable cast of characters, and action-RPG elements that'll keep you on your toes in the heat of battle, it's definitely one to pick up and play. Just keep in mind you'll be playing for quite a while.





3. Mario Kart 8 Deluxe

Even if you're not a fan of the racing genre, Mario Kart 8 Deluxe is sure to make you one. With simple to learn and easy to master controls, and stunning graphics you can lose yourself in, what the game lacks in story it more than makes up for in the hours of fun you'll have blazing through tracks old and new. With plenty of characters and parts to choose from, you can pick out your ultimate ride and aim for that winner's circle in style, and portability.

2. The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild

GOTY isn't an award given lightly, and Breath of Wild earned it and then some. Travel across a ruined yet breathtaking Hyrule to battle, forage, explore, and uncover the mystery of Link's century-long slumber as you fight the Calamity and win the war that started so long ago. Breath of the Wild shines in its storytelling, and can leave an impression long after the Switch has been shut off.

1. Super Smash Bros. Ultimate

Surprising no one, Super Smash Bros. Ultimate makes the list. Whether you're a die-hard veteran anxious to take your skills to the next level, a casual fan happy to see the new characters, or even the most neophyte of neophytes, if you love tossing around your friends and family with your favorite video game characters, look no further than the latest iteration of the party fighter that's taken the world by storm. The title's not for show, with plenty of third-party characters joining the fray. There's faces old and new, and with everyone from the previous games making their way in, it truly is Ultimate.



TOP FIVE GAMES YOU SHOULD GET FOR XBOX ONE

The Xbox One is in a weird place right now because it just doesn't have anything to offer during the end of its lifecycle that is blowing many peoples skirts up like PlayStation 4 at the moment, but it used to, just many people don't know or remember. It used to be the opposite in the earlier years of these two consoles; PlayStation 4 wasn't pumping out hits like they are now and Xbox One was, but, since PlayStation was dominating the market in console sales, many people don't know about most of Xbox One's best games. So, without further ado, here is a list of the best games on Xbox One!

5. Forza Horizon 4

When it comes to racing games there is only one franchise that continues to pump out hits what seems like every year and that's Forza. I'm more of a Need for Speed player myself, which is why I prefer the Horizon series to the Motorsport games because they feels more arcade-like, but they are both equally good in quality. I loved the crazy missions that the Horizon series brought like epic races against helicopters or boats and every Horizon game just seems to keep getting better, plus, every Forza game is just stunning to look at.

4. Sunset Overdrive

I feel like not many people have played Sunset Overdrive due to it coming out early in Xbox One's

lifecycle and many people not owning an Xbox One in the early years, but I think it's a mistake people should correct immediately. I loved everything about Sunset Overdrive; the bizarre story, the iconically crazy Insomniac weapons, the fast movement, everything just worked together so well and is a huge reason I knew that Insomniac Games were the perfect developers for Marvel's Spider-Man. My only worry is if it holds up nowadays because the comedy might be dated.

3. Halo: The Master Chief Collection

Of course, it wouldn't be a top Xbox games list without Halo, but this is more than a Halo game, this is the ultimate Halo experience. Despite being probably one of the rockiest launches we have ever seen for a game, Halo: The Master Chief Collection (Halo: MCC) is a must-own for any Halo or Xbox fan now that it's all up and running. Those Blur Studio cutscenes for Halo 2 Anniversary are excellent and the ability to swap graphics/music with a press of a button is very impressive, but the Halo multiplayer for each game should be reason enough. It's going to be very exciting when PC players finally get a chance to experience Halo: MCC later this year!

2. Ori and the Blind Forest

Ori and the Blind Forest is definitely one of my favourite metroidvania games that has come out





in a long time. It's such a beautiful game in terms of story, visuals, and music plus the gameplay and level design are excellent while challenging. I can't wait for the sequel – Ori and the Will of the Wisps – to finally release February 2020 after being teased for years and I hope it's equally as good, if not better than its predecessor.

thing Quantum Break does is having an episode of their own TV show after every chapter with scenes that are impacted by your decisions from the game, which I personally loved. Unfortunately, Quantum Break suffered the same fate as Sunset Overdrive, even though it was critically acclaimed as well, so play it if you haven't!

1. Quantum Break

Remedy Games' Quantum Break is definitely my favourite Xbox One game and one of my favourite games this generation. I'm just a huge fan of Remedy Games and almost everything they have done in the past and this game just speaks to me. I love well-done stories about time travel, feeling like a badass, great characters and when developers try something new and Quantum Break has all of this. The most unique



TOP FIVE GAMES YOU SHOULD GET FOR PLAYSTATION 4

No one can argue that the PlayStation 4 is the undeniable “winner” this generation as it continues to move up the list of best-selling consoles of all time. In the earlier years, the PS4 didn’t have many system sellers like it does today, it was mostly selling so well because of how awful the Xbox team handled the marketing for the Xbox One. Now, at the end of the console’s life, there are some truly incredible experiences to be had on the PS4 and I’m here to tell you all about them.

5. *The Last of Us Remastered*

This kind of feels like cheating but since this Naughty Dog masterpiece came out so late in the PlayStation 3’s life, I thought there might be many people who haven’t had a chance to play this incredible game. The Last of Us is a game that many people – like myself – might say is one of the greatest games of all time because of its masterful story-telling and stellar characters/performances. It coming to PS4 makes it the definitive edition bringing 4K support for the PlayStation 4 Pro along with a 60FPS for the base console. Now would be the perfect time to play as well since The Last of Us Part II will be out next year, and from what we’ve seen, it’s bound to be another hit from Naughty Dog.

4. *Horizon: Zero Dawn*

Horizon: Zero Dawn shocked many people because who would have thought that the next game from the people that worked on the Killzone series was an action RPG and an amazing one at that. Horizon is still one of the best looking PS4 games to date and it’s great combat system, superb story and fascinating world are all reason enough to check this game out. I’ve heard great things about its DLC, The Frozen Wilds, as well and I hope they are working on a sequel for the PlayStation 5 which seems likely based on the game’s success.

3. *Marvel’s Spider-Man*

I’ve been a huge Spider-Man fan for as long as I can remember, but it’s been years since we’ve got a great Spider-Man game. Then, unexpectedly at Sony’s E3 2016 conference, they announced Marvel’s Spider-Man being developed by Insomniac Games, which I immediately knew was the right developer for the job thinking back to Sunset Overdrive. Marvel’s Spider-Man is everything I could have wanted from a Spider-Man game; the swinging felt perfect, the story was epic and emotional, and the performances were fantastic. There are a few very minor hiccups when it comes to side content, but none of them takes away from what makes this an amazing Spider-Man game.





2. *Uncharted 4: A Thief's End*

It's no surprise that Naughty Dog would be on the list twice since they are some of the best developers in the business right now. *Uncharted 4: A Thief's End* is the first time we got to see the developer taking advantage of the new hardware from the ground up and the results are, unsurprisingly, incredible. With *Uncharted 4* being the end of Nathan Drake's journey, it's only natural that Naughty Dog would want this to be his biggest and best adventure yet and it absolutely is. The gameplay in *Uncharted 4* is a massive improvement over its predecessors and its set pieces are some of the best in the series. It's a perfect end to one of PlayStation's best exclusives and a must-play for everyone, but if you're not familiar with the series, *The Nathan Drake Collection* is available on PS4 as well.

1. *God of War (2018)*

God of War (2018) is reason enough to own a PS4. It's one of those games you immediately want to talk to everyone about because it's just that damn

good. As someone who wasn't really a huge fan of the previous *God of War* games, I was completely blown away by how much I loved this game. *God of War (2018)* is a generation-defining game that sets a new precedent for all videogames in terms of cinematic visuals, attention to detail, characters, story-pacing, and gameplay. I'll never forget how amazing it felt to throw and catch the Leviathan axe as the DualShock 4 rumbles when it returns to your hand. *God of War (2018)* is definitely up there for game of the generation, if not one of the greatest games of all time.





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