

THE WORLD'S **NUMBER ONE** PC GAMES MAGAZINE

PC GAMER

EVENT OF THE YEAR!

100

GREATEST PC
GAMES. EVER.

**ZOMBIE
INVASION!**

THE 10 BEST
L4D MODS

THE BIGGEST REVIEWS

MODERN WARFARE 2
COLIN MCCRAE: DIRT 2
SERIOUS SAM HD
SHATTERED HORIZONS
AVATAR

EXTRA LIFE

**THE VERY BEST
OF PC GAMING**

- ◆ BUILD YOUR OWN
FLASHPOINT BATTLES
- ◆ **TOP 10 FREE DOWNLOADS**
- ◆ SHOULD YOU RETURN TO
EMPIRE: TOTAL WAR?



MASSIVE HANDS-ON!

STARTREK ONLINE

"SET NERDGASM
TO STUN!"

UNREAL
INDIES
INSIDE THE
FREE TECH
REVOLUTION

SITH VS JEDI!
CHOOSE YOUR SIDE IN
THE OLD REPUBLIC

£6.49 OUTSIDE UK & EIRE PRINTED IN THE UK

gamesradar.com

JANUARY 2010

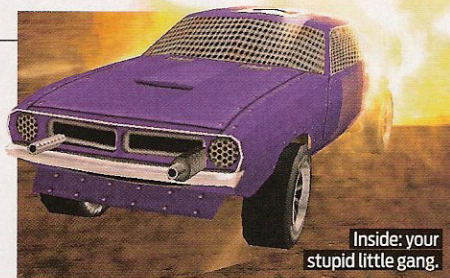
£5.99

01>



UK Edition • £5.99
January 2010 • Issue 209
www.pcgamer.co.uk





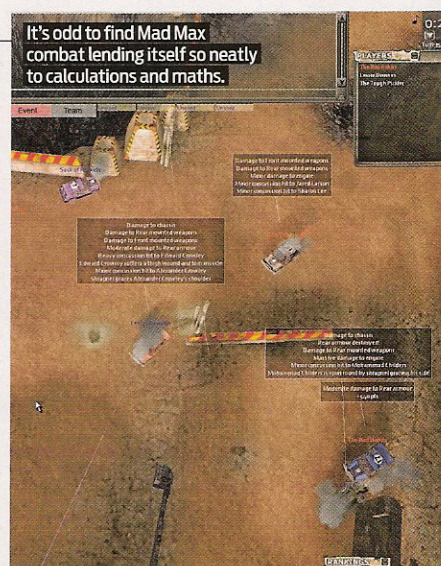
Inside: your stupid little gang.



Way more entertaining than Top Gear.



There's a whole minigame where you come up with excuses to tell the AA.



It's odd to find Mad Max combat lending itself so neatly to calculations and maths.



Spangly convertibles do not mighty weapons make.

ROAD RAGE

Featuring turn-based car-combat, online, **DARKWIND** offers a ride like no other. *By Quintin Smith*

Need to know

What is it?

An MMO of turn-based car warfare with a dash of death and drugs.

Influenced by

Carmageddon, EVE Online

Play it on

Anything with a 64MB graphics card

Alternatively

EVE Online, 86%

Copy protection

None

Darkwind: War on Wheels is the best quasi-real-time, partially browser-based, online, post-apocalyptic turn-based vehicular fighting game I've played.

You have a gang in a persistent online world. You manage their training, vehicles and travelling orders from the *Darkwind* website, one in-game month passing for each real-world week. Then, whenever you've have some (real world) time to spare you fire up the game on your PC, and take control of your gang in 3D, turn-based, vehicular contests. That might mean arena battles, races or championships of some kind, or it might mean leaving the relative safety of the towns to battle AI or other players in the wasteland.

The tactical car combat is fiddly at first, but quickly resolves into an interesting and well-executed idea, more closely resembling sea-battles than you might expect. At their

simplest, fights are about keeping enemies within the firing arcs of your weapons and maintaining the distance best suited to them, while taking into account where everyone's armour is strongest and weakest. You're also thinking about turning circles and terrain, the different stats and skills of your characters and whether anybody's about to panic.

Tailgaters beware

A large variety of weapons keeps it all interesting, machineguns and rocket launchers joined by mortars, spike-droppers, ramming spikes, lasers, paint sprays, cannons and mines.

Your brave, drug-addled gang members will be killed, permanently, by everything in that list. The brutality of *Darkwind* is the most appealing thing about it. Your team ages: at 30 their stats start dropping, at 40 their skills follow. You'll give them nicknames, train them, get

attached to them, maybe even unlock specialties such as Engine Tuner or Negotiator, and then they'll die.

You'll buy vehicles, name them, paint them, decide what armour goes where, pick tyres, pick from an extraordinary list of weapons and choose where to mount them, then you'll wait for the garage to put together your new Death Car/ ambulance/saloon/carrier van, and then on its first outing you'll accidentally set fire to it with your Death Sedan's passenger-side flamethrower and it'll explode.

Reverse gear

Sometimes your convoy will be carrying goods from one town to another when you're attacked by so many bandits you'll be happy to get out of there with a single vehicle you can use to build yourself back up. Sometimes you and your friend will win a Death Race, split the winnings and buy flaming oil dispensers.

Darkwind is a gamble, a ride, and gets under your skin quite easily as a result. It's as rickety and bodged-together as the in-game cars, but it deserves credit for bucking MMO tropes and creating a compelling genre mashup. ■

VERDICT

A proud, rickety project that's unlike anything else. Check out the hobbled free-to-play version before diving in.

PC GAMER
80

◆ **Expect to pay** Free to play, \$20/3 month sub ◆ **Release** Out now ◆ **Publisher** Psychic Software
◆ **Developer** In-house ◆ **Multiplayer** Massively ◆ **Link** www.dark-wind.com