

A child's drawing of the word "Kinder Magazin" in large, stylized letters. The letters are white with black outlines, set against a background of a brown wooden surface. The drawing is done with a black marker. In the bottom right corner, there is a small drawing of a video game console with a screen and a red button.

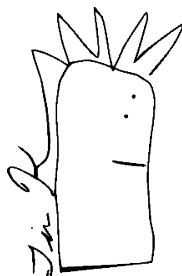


This is it! Video Killer Magazine, Issue 0001! The publication that dares to review video games that do not exist. It took courage, and I'm proud of you.

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**TOTAL GRAVY
& FRIENDS**



Asian Steev

There's something in the woods.

by Amanda Wallace

For the last five years, Ken Levine has been quiet. The downfall of Irrational Studios brought with it a silence from the man behind the worlds of Rapture and Columbia. Many expected him to continue at the helm of another major franchise, but instead Levine has retreated into a hermetic existence. There's been no word on what he and his small team has been working on.

Until an announcement early today on Steam. The game appeared with little fanfare, the image of a fox mask with the title Fox Games. No press reviews, no Steam Early Access. The game simply popped into existence, attributed to the Levine name.

Fox Games is not what anyone was expecting. At time of publication, no one has actually completed the game, and there's been rampant online speculation that it has no win state. Instead players travel a futuristic dystopia inhabited by large cantankerous beings known as the Fog. Each player has an animal mask, a blank expression highlighted by the games sketch-like artistic style. You and the Fog navigate a collapsing city, the edges of which are lined with thick forest.

Plot line and dialogue are uncharacteristically sparse, and where Levine really chose to focus his creative energy on was apparently hiring fantastic artists who bring a creepy and beautiful world to light.

When it comes down to it, I can't tell you whether or not to buy this game. Judging by the numbers, chances are you already have. After the announcement, sales for Fox Games easily towered over others on Steam. Whatever is in the woods, I hope it's worth the wait.

Brushing Sim Toothless

by Tim Knowlton

With every thrust, it feels like I'm about to shove this toothbrush into one of my eye sockets. Flecks of saliva spatter across my vision, then fade away. My teeth are zebra-striped in white and yellow, marking my progress toward a clean mouth. I'm a hair too late pulling the brush back and it casually contacts my tongue...

"Toothbrush Simulator is not that sort of title."

Studio Posthumous is riding the tail end of the offbeat simulator wave with their latest title, *Toothbrush Simulator*. It's aimed squarely at the second-generation VR market dominated by Facebook's Oculus line, the Technical Illusions castAR, and Sony's proprietary Morpheus VR system for the Playstation 4. I had no compatibility issues with my second-generation castAR with VR attachment.

When I booted the game for the first time, my hopes were high. This is the sort of title that, when executed well, can hold up an incisive mirror to your mundane day-to-day routine. It can spotlight the parts of your own private life experience that feel deeply personal but are actually shared across a wide swath of humanity.

Toothbrush Simulator is not that sort of title.

The game itself is a bit like lawn-mowing, street-sweeping, and snow-removing games where you're trying to plot an



efficient route to move a tool over every part of a surface. In this case, you're wiping away yellow biofilm from a mouthful of pearly whites. Visually, you're inside the mouth staring out. It's an unpleasant vantage point for the task at hand.

Each level (a brushing session) is time-limited.

Brush away the required amount of gunk and you'll move on to the next level. Fall behind, and you'll start the next level at a disadvantage. If you fail by a lot, and often, your virtual teeth will begin to rot out of your virtual skull and tumble from your virtual lips right before your eyes. If you didn't already suffer from that recurring nightmare, you will now. The first time it happened to me, my stomach flipped with panic and I instinctively slapped a hand over my own mouth. You've been warned.

Unlockables include new brushes, new flavors of paste, and a flossing minigame. The brushes all look the same, they're just painted different colors and bear different brand names (none of which you'd recognize—a missed opportunity). The paste flavors have a small effect on the tongue's behavior.

The tongue is your foil. It wags about like an air dancer at a

used car dealership, and if you have the misfortune of nicking it with your brush, the brush will launch in the opposite direction and ricochet around the oral cavity for a few seconds. The poor controls make this a frustrating eventuality. Unlocking a toothpaste that tamed the tongue rendered every other flavor obsolete.

Out of the gate, the controls responded like a drunkard swatting at a mosquito. It wasn't just lag; I sometimes struggled to get the game to mimic even the simplest of brushing motions. I thought it might be a calibration issue between my big dumb hands and my depth-sensing camera, but the problems persisted when I switched to the alternate old-school twin-stick controls. If this was intentional, played for laughs, it fell flat.

The soundtrack and overall sound design are the high points of this game. The music comprises several catchy tunes on mandolin and acoustic guitar. The sounds of the brush raking back and forth on a row of molars clearly use advanced positional audio effects. To their credit, the audio is pleasant and convincing. It's a shame the core mechanic makes the game inaccessible to the blind.

I just can't recommend this one. Posthumous missed the opportunity to poignantly portray personal dental hygiene practices. Save your pennies and go play something else. Me, I'm going to go make an appointment with my dentist and stock up on floss.

Jump a Third Time

by Asian Steev

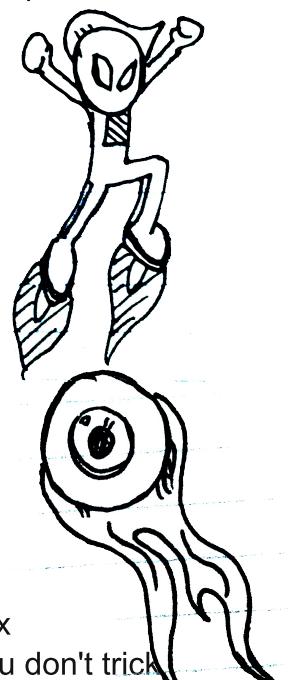
Amazing games have been built on the premise of a single idea. Portal and Minecraft come to mind as simple ideas that could have fallen under the weight of the primary idea driving them, but the execution carried the idea from gimmick to innovation.

Here we have *Triple Jump* by Sky Reacher Games. Triple Jump is a game based entirely on the mechanic of jumping two extra times in the air. What. What else sets this retro-styled 2D platformer apart? Let me tell you, certainly not execution. Hastily cobbled together 8-bit sprites across bland environments, hoardes of repeating enemies and puzzles, if you can call them that, where the solution to the puzzle is always "jump a third time" all come together to form a game that must have taken a weekend for the developers to code. And that's probably not all they did that weekend.

The controls are tight enough and I occasionally feel a sense of accomplishment for making that third tricky jump up to a platform that seemed unreachable. My concern is that the current generation of consumers is content with this kind of product. Flappy Bird provided the same fleeting feeling of achievement for a modest run, and provided the same feeling that given another go, I could do better.

But the gimmick fails. You don't earn your rite of 3x jump like you would in the Mega Man X series. You don't trick the game into awarding you an additional jump like an upward attack in Super Smash Bros. series. You just push A a third time.

Pass on this game... now excuse me, I have one last pit to clear and I'm pretty sure I'll be at the final boss.



Walk the Talk by Mitch Schwartz, @mitchlschwartz

Walk the Talk has failure written all over it--in wry, loquacious, and somewhat esoteric dialogue. Game tie-ins for Hollywood blockbusters rarely succeed. Most often, they feel simply like synergistic money-grabs. But, like bumping into someone as you briskly turn a corner in the office hallway, Walk the Talk surprises you. In fact, Walk the Talk works even better as a game than it does as a film. (Check next month's issue for my review of the movie.)

If you can't wait for the theatrical release in June, this is the perfect appetizer, as the game opens with the first 15 minutes of the movie. I know it sounds like a long time to wait before you start playing, but Sorkin's writing is so sharp that you don't even notice. From there, you basically get to walk-and-talk with Sorkin as he writes the film.

Imagine *The Stanley Parable* meets *Just Dance*. Throughout the game, you spend time controlling each of the six main characters. The gameplay unfolds as you walk through the hallways of NBS (the fictional TV network from *Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip*), trying to turn one of their mainstay sitcoms into a feature-length film. You control characters' motions via the Xbox One's Kinect, with each turn and dialogue choice taking you down a different path in the story's branching narrative.

What makes the story so intriguing is that you feel like you're playing out all the different ideas Sorkin had for the movie. The game is basically one giant alternate ending, except it's more than just the ending that's alternate. The best comparison I can think of is the "Remedial Chaos Theory" episode of *Community*. In Walk the Talk, you're playing out these different timelines, each representing a rewrite or cut that didn't make it into the final film. And because it's all Sorkin's writing, even the storylines and dialogue that didn't make it into the movie is engaging and entertaining.

Walk the Talk also really highlights the sophistication of the Kinect.

Many scoffed when Xbox basically required you to buy it with the Xbox One, but Walk the Talk proves the Kinect's value.



You'll require a small system update that upgrades the Kinect's ability to detect irony, and the level of sophistication after this update is impressive. No longer will your Xbox unintentionally pause or turn off due to a stray command. With the Walk the Talk update, your Xbox will understand all the nuances of human speech.

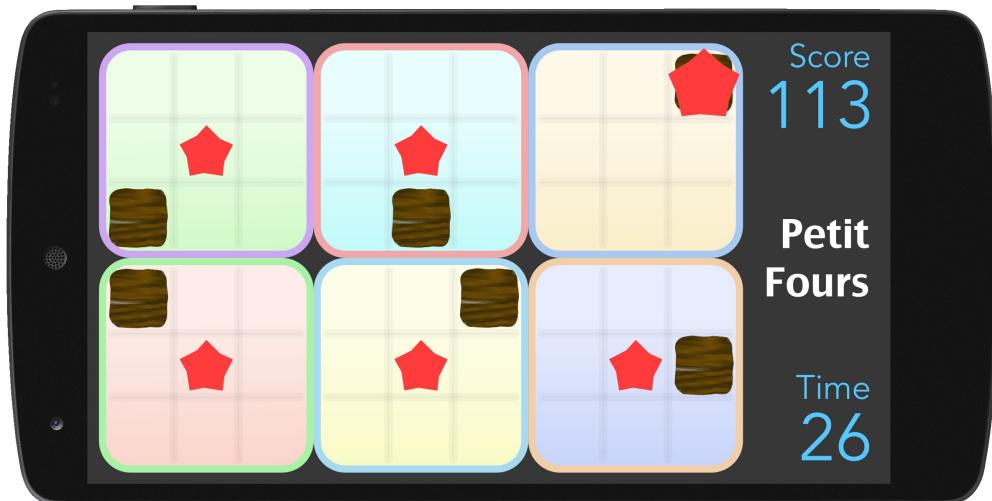
And this is vital to the game's XP system. Naturally, you'll gain experience for matching the gait and pace appropriate to a given walk-and-talk scenario. But you'll also level up each of the main characters based on how your delivery of their lines matches their personalities. Did you really sound emotionally-stunted when you read Harry's lines? Were you calm despite being surrounded by neuroses as you played Leon? Did you really sell Susan as a conservative surrounded by liberals? Honing your voice to these Sorkin archetypes will be vital to leveling up each character, which provides access to new hallways to walk down, more comfortable shoes, and other accessories like gum and folders filled with papers.

Overall, Walk the Talk makes excellent use of the enhanced Kinect functionality to finally let you live out your dream of adroitly walking while eruditely talking.

Walk the Talk: 9/10

Petit Fours: A Frosted Mini-Treat

by Tim Knowlton



The Rubik's Cube still holds a mystery that I'm unable to solve. It's a colorful little polygon of pain. I can fail at brute-forcing it as well as the next person. I've never been able to decipher the core puzzle. Of course, that doesn't mean I don't enjoy the feeling of the little plastic squares between my fingers.

Petit Fours, the latest mobile game from Indelicate Designs (Undulum, Whomp!), makes my muscles remember Rubik's twists and turns even though the gameplay is wholly original. My phone's screen is all pastels, gridded out into six small squares. The squares are dubbed "petit fours" because the art evokes the tiny snack cakes. Each of these is subdivided into a light tic-tac-toe grid with a dot of decorative icing in the middle and a spot of bare cake on the perimeter. Your goal is to cover the empty spot with icing as quickly as possible.

Like the old wooden Labyrinth game or those ball puzzle party favors, you can touch a petit four and tilt the phone to

move its dot. The blob moves on the grid, snapping to the squares, and makes a satisfying haptic kick in your hand when it makes the sugarcoat whole again. Grab a petit four and flick it away from you to smoosh some frosting into the northern slot. Kick it away and then to the right to smear it into the northeast.

The other train passengers are pretending not to notice as I hold the phone like a gamepad, then like a sandwich, then like a tiny accordion. The difficulty ramps up nicely, adding another pair of cakes, then adding multiple dots per cake, then allowing dots to jump to neighboring empty cakes, then mixing in levels made of bare cakes with icing that “melts” under your finger. Melted icing flows across the top of a petit four with the viscosity of chocolate or hot molasses as you work your wrists to fix the confections.

My complaints are few. When you finish a level, it takes too many clicks to replay it for a better score; a quicker replay path would help you act on that “one more time” feeling. The music doesn’t quite fit the mood, like it was made for another game. I turned it off. Finally, returning to the game from an interrupting alarm or phone call drops you straight back into a live game. That flow begs for a pause screen or re-entry countdown so you can get your bearings again without ruining your score.

Part puzzle, part dextrous score attack, Indelicate’s latest offering satisfies explorers and achievers alike. *Petit Fours* goes on sale next week for mobile devices at \$1.99.

TITTY PUNCH



Titty Punch by Asian Steev

Titty Punch. Jesus Christ. *Titty Punch*. A game where you strike busty vixens with your ample bosom. You already know if this game is for you based on that premise alone. I can stop the review now.

The fighting system is straightforward. You and your opponent use basic attacks, tit for tat, whittling each other's health away. Charge up the Mammory Meter to execute your Rack Attack. I can't believe I just typed that.

The strength of the game is how they deep the breast puns go. It permeates every aspect of the game, the characters, the backdrops, the story, the cinematics, everything. You'll fight characters like Gorgeous Washington, dressed in a skimpy 1700s colonial-themed costume, in front of Mount Bustmore, a mountain with busts of busts carved into the side. Other characters include a lady dressed as a seductive burglar named Funbags, whose top has large dollar signs across the front; Luchadoress, a Mexican wrestler who grapples with her chest muscles; Ultrama'am, whose Rack Attack involves her Ultramammory Cannon; and Jugs, a hillbilly moonshiner who blows flaming moonshine and fights in a style reminiscent of Jackie Chan in Drunken Master. Oh, and the single character in the game that does not have a heaving bosom: Bee Sting, dressed in a bee costume, complete with stinger. The breast allusion of this theme didn't click for me until a few hours after encountering it.

The creators of this game knew their strength was humor and they killed it. The game is packed with dialogue. I don't think I heard a repeated line for the first three days I played. Sure, I constantly rolled my eyes, but I didn't stop smiling for hours. I wasn't as offended as I expected I would be after reading all the criticism coming from many high-profile game news outlets. "Misogynistic," really? Using breasts as a weapon is anything but. This seems more like a 14-year old boy's love letter to boobs.

If you want a relaxing game to play with friends this weekend, this is it. *Cans-el* your plans, invite your *bras* over and *teat* them how to *rack* up points in one of the *breast* games of the genre. The genre of boobs.

The Lunar Engine Review: The Moon is Made of Us

by Richie Hoagland, @pjchardt

The Lunar Engine strives to be the ludological embodiment of Jane McGonigal's proselytizing. Part MMO, part engineering project, part social experiment, The Lunar Engine is an insanely ambitious project that strives to shape our future while simultaneously permitting us an escape from our present. It does all this and more.

Before I go on to praise the Lunar Engine for all its glory, I must address the pink elephant in the room. The game costs \$15,000. Continue reading to discover why this game garners such a lofty price tag and how the developers and others are working to provide access to individuals across the economic spectrum.

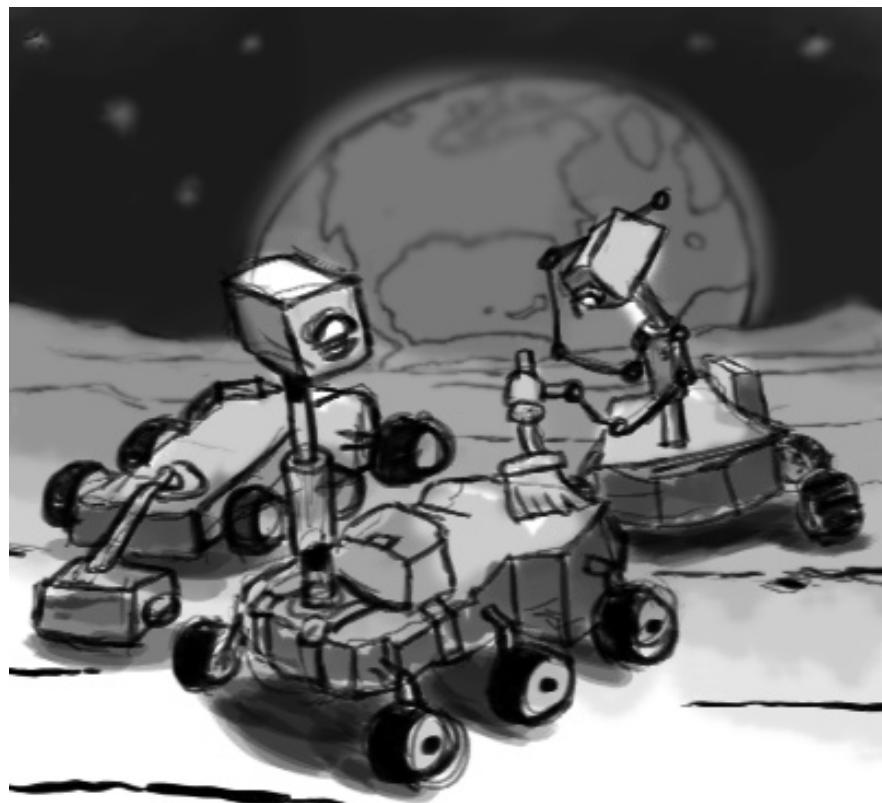
The Lunar Engine has a simple, albeit grandiose, premise: REAL robots, on the REAL moon, in REAL VR. Players purchase a real world robot avatar on the moon, wittily named a Ravatar, and then control this Ravatar through an Oculus Rift VR headset. Players are given real-world quests: geo-plotting a route for a drain line, helping construct a satellite, or laying cable between stations to name a few. All of which pay real world money to the player. In effect, players are terraforming the moon for future habitation by playing this game.

If players wish to take a break from these real-world quests, AR quests abound. Enduring a harsh alien desert while battling an Alpha Centauric slug or joining a party of other Ravatars to invade an enemy encampment; fascinating worlds are overlayed on the moon through AR to create some of the most compelling MMO-style questing I have ever experienced.

The game designers on this project shine through in the intimate touches layered onto the experience. For example, audio and text communication channels are the only way to distinguish individuals as all Ravatars start out the same (something similar to the Mars rover). On top of the indistinguishable form of the Ravatars, there is no way to personally modify your unit. Yet in a brilliant move to create

social behavior in players, Ravatars are equipped with spray cans, cleaning tools, and other methods of modifying, prettifying and cleaning their lunar compatriots. It is not uncommon to stumble upon a contingent of Ravatars grooming each other in the pale blue glow of the earth, as it slowly dances behind them. At these times I see the emergent art of this game, a ruleset that creates a sincere commentary on the awe-inspiring ingenuity of humanity coupled with our delicate and humble nature.

I find a certain edge of bitterness in saying such wonderful things about a game that is only available to the highest economic tier. Fortunately, companies and universities are lining up to offer sponsorships and scholarships for passionate individuals willing to join the Lunar cause, while socially-minded players are spending their days building more Ravatars to drive down the cost of the game—because after all, the moon is made of us.



Gastro Truck Melee by Sarah Vessels

Hot dogs, tacos, and cutthroat culinary competition--Turnpike's Gastro Truck Melee has it all. This game is a quirky take on your usual MMORPG experience, and while it has some rough edges, there are enough questionably-meaty innards to satisfy your cravings for several weeks' play. Let's dig right in.

You begin your savory journey by choosing from one of three classes: Food Truck Owner, Restaurant Critic, or the basic Customer. Each class has its merits and weaknesses, and there's no one set way to play a given class. The Food Truck Owner is the default option, and its skill tree focuses on cooking abilities, salesmanship, and the ability to wield your chosen food as a weapon.

The Restaurant Critic is a kind of bard/ranger option as far as a traditional RPG goes, with perks ranging from Barbed Tongue and other persuasion techniques to the ability to intimidate Food Truck Owners into giving you extra food in return for a good review. The Critic is also the only class that can use ranged weapons, including the deadly sauerkraut-flinging power of the Krauttoss which becomes especially deadly after you unlock the Spicy!! Mustard mod.

The Customer's rise to power starts out slowly compared to the other classes, but by level ten you can easily be one of the richest players at your level. The Customer is all about eating and investing your money in the food trucks you think will do best. I only leveled my Customer to level thirty, but I definitely developed an appreciation for its depth: it is the class easiest to learn but hardest to master.

For the sake of this review, I'll be focusing on my time as Food Truck Owner. You have the option of developing your cooking talents in many directions at once, or putting points into only one cuisine for maximum power. I opted to put the majority into Traditional-Style Pizza, with a few in Salesmanship and only three in Girth by the time I was level fifty. I saw many Food Truck Owners focusing in Girth as a primary skill, and it's certainly doable, but I preferred to inflict damage with my food rather than my gut. It really just comes down to personal

preference.

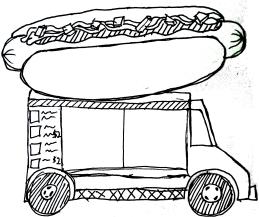
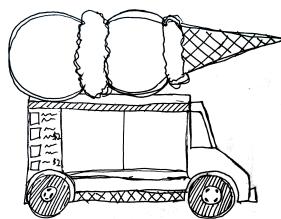
The beginning levels of Food Truck Owner are all about getting your brand name out there. This can be done in so-called legitimate ways, such as handing out fliers and giving away free samples, or via the shadier-but-faster route of bribing Critics. Wanting to speed things along so I could get into the meat of the game, pun intended, I bribed Critics. You can find Critics in the downtown square of each town, and there are five towns per server. Turnpike's North America servers were rock solid when I was playing pre-launch, but we'll see how that goes come launch time.



It wasn't hard to find Critics at lower levels, but the Critics you can use are locked to within a certain range of your current level. That meant because of limits on the number of players per server, there were typically only a handful of Critics available for my level in each town when I got above level fifteen or so, which in turn meant I had to do a lot of traveling between towns.



Combat in Gastro Truck Melee is pretty entertaining and remained so across all classes. I most enjoyed combat as the Food Truck Owner, and my main weapon was the Supreme Pizza with the Extra Cheese mod. Combat comes about for a variety of reasons, but I mostly found myself duking it out when a Customer didn't like my food. While they lack the full officially sanctioned-reviewing potential of a Restaurant Critic, Customers do have the ability to start Boycotts of your food trucks if you do something to particularly upset them. One way of combating them requires a high Salesmanship level, but I preferred the more physical route.



You can initiate combat with a Customer by flipping their table, or by waiting until they leave and driving over them. While Vehicular Manslaughter is almost always fatal to the Customer, it has the

downside of leaving you Blackballed in that town. While Blackballed, Customers in the area will Boycott you and Critics will refuse to speak with you. It is critical to be able to do business in all towns available to you, so I avoided Vehicular Manslaughter most times and instead opted to settle disputes with traditional weapons.

The Supreme Pizza is a modest Pizza-class weapon whose starting bonuses include a higher than usual Chance of Flatulence due to its greasiness and +50 Dehydration damage from salt content. The Extra Cheese mod increases Flatulence Chance by 25% and adds a bonus of +10 Burning damage at higher levels. Since I focused my points in the Traditional-Style Pizza tree, I was able to use pizza boxes as disposable shields and even discarded paper plates acted as emergency armor in a pinch.

One typical MMORPG element that is sadly not improved upon by Turnpike in Gastro Truck Melee is grinding. Once you get about level twenty, finding quests that are suitable for your level becomes harder and you have to spend a lot of time on street corners hawking your vittles. Customers are free to choose from any available food truck, and there's no real incentive system to cause them to choose yours over someone else's. Your food might be legitimately better than others', made with better quality ingredients, but Customers don't know that--they just see the lower-priced food trucks that are your competition. You could lower your prices to meet Customers' demands, but that requires cutting corners somewhere, and that can hurt your review scores with Restaurant Critics. It's hard out there for a Food Truck Owner with higher standards.

All in all, Gastro Truck Melee kept me entertained for several weeks while I was working on this review. It suffers mainly from the repetitiveness that plagues many of its genre, but Gastro Truck Melee starts to get stale earlier than you would expect. It could also benefit from tweaks to the advertising system for your food truck, as a Food Truck Owner. Hilarious weaponry and consistently fun combat are the saving graces, though at \$40 for the base game and a \$7 / month subscription fee, it's worth waiting for a sale before gobbling it up. I give Gastro Truck Melee a solid 7.5.

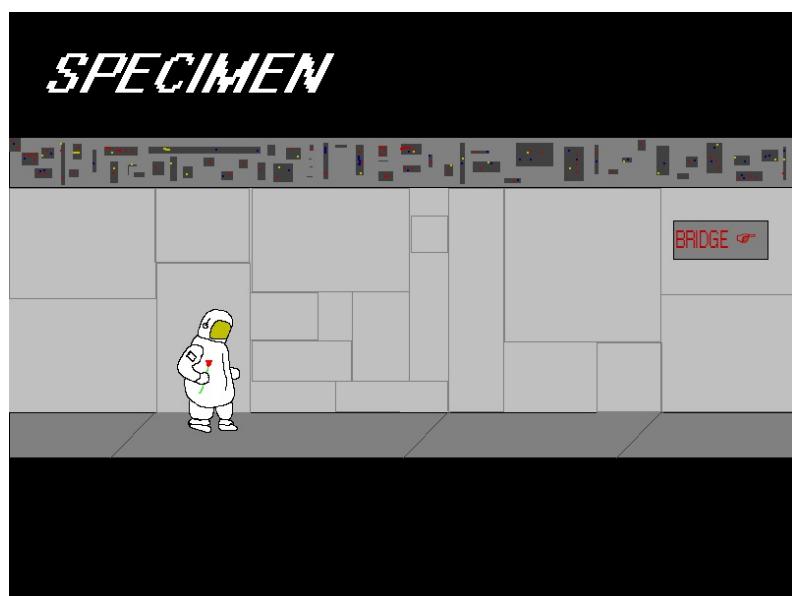
Specimen Charms, Haunts by Justin Morse

Specimen puts you in the spacesuit of lonely space-botanist, Salvatore Mancini, as he attempts to collect various spores, molds, and fungi found aboard derelict spacecraft. Sal's is a solitary existence, flying from one deserted ship to the next, collecting samples, and cataloging new species. His only contact with other people are video calls from the fleet, tersely alerting him to the location of new ships that require his attention.

Specimen is, at its heart, an exploration game. Each ship Sal boards will offer a host of new puzzles to solve and non-indigenous flora to collect. The puzzles are clever, without being frustrating, and the retro-futuristic aesthetic is charming. Sal's emotional journey, conveyed through a series of brilliantly voiced diary entries, is every bit as compelling as the core gameplay.

The game is somewhat linear in nature and after you've been through it once, there's very little reason to do it again. Sal's adventure is fairly short and one can expect to see everything there is to see of Specimen in about 4-6 hours of gameplay. However, at a very reasonable \$4.99, it's difficult to complain too loudly.

Specimen releases next month on all major consoles, and mobile platforms.



COMBO !!!

X 4

Life



Powerups

