

= Monster Kingdom : Jewel Summoner =

Monster Kingdom : Jewel Summoner is a turn @-@ based role @-@ playing video game developed by Gaia and published by Sony Computer Entertainment and Atlus for the PlayStation Portable console . The game was released in February 2006 in Japan and in February 2007 in North America .

The game takes place in a world where monsters and human beings once lived in harmony . The monsters were hunted and many of them were eventually imprisoned in devices called " jewels " . Once trapped in a jewel , a monster becomes tame and servile to the owner of the jewel , allowing human warriors , called Jewel Summoners , to use them in combat against other monsters . The story of Jewel Summoner revolves around the quest for vengeance of one such warrior , Vice , whose mother died at the hands of a monster .

Jewel Summoner received mixed reviews from the gaming press . Its monster @-@ collection theme and turn @-@ based gameplay was often compared to Nintendo 's Pokémon series . The game 's audio and voice acting were praised , but its story and gameplay were criticized as uninspired and monotonous .

= = Gameplay = =

Jewel Summoner takes place in a third @-@ person perspective with a top @-@ down view . The player character 's avatar moves around a static world map and can enter 3D dungeons . Inside dungeons , the player 's movement will activate random battles against wild monsters ; battles are represented in a split @-@ screen format . Dungeons also contain save points that can be used to restore the health of the party . The player can have a party of up to three characters , and each member has a maximum of three monsters that can be summoned from storage receptacles , called jewels , to fight against enemies . Battles are turn @-@ based and each monster has access to several attacks that it can execute each turn . Monsters do not have individual health bars ; their controlling character 's health is used instead . Enemy monsters can be recruited by weakening them in battle and then capturing them within a jewel .

There are over 100 different types of monster in the game , and each possesses traits in the forms of " elements " that dictate its strengths and weaknesses . The element system is similar to a game of " rock @-@ paper @-@ scissors " ; for instance , water @-@ elemental monsters have an advantage over fire @-@ based monsters , and fire @-@ based monsters have an advantage over ice @-@ based ones . A monster can only be captured within a jewel that represents the same element . Monsters earn experience in battle and subsequently level up , learn new abilities , and evolve into different creatures . Jewel Summoners can also influence their monsters ' growth by fusing them with specially refined items and pieces of quartz , or by increasing their stats with " Ability Points " earned in battle .

In combat , each Jewel Summoner can bring out one monster at a time . Every turn , each monster (both enemy and ally) can activate one attack or elemental ability . Each monster initially has four slots available for abilities . Monsters can quickly learn abilities of their own element type , but can also pick up abilities from other elements . A fire dragon , for instance , can learn snow @-@ based attacks . Using an ability requires the expenditure of a monster 's " Jewel Points " , a mana @-@ like energy of which each creature has only a finite amount . When a monster 's Jewel Points are depleted , it becomes inaccessible to the character and another monster must be selected to fight . Monsters can return to battle when their Jewel Points have been restored at a save point .

Jewel Summoner has two options for multiplayer , using the PSP 's " ad @-@ hoc " local wireless feature . Players can trade monsters with each other or fight 1 @-@ on @-@ 1 battles . The game also includes a browser mode that players can use to connect to the Internet and download wallpapers and game trailers .

= = Plot = =

Long before the events of Jewel Summoner , monsters and humans coexisted peacefully in the game 's world . Eventually , a mysterious event called the " Great Disaster " occurred , and many monsters disappeared . Those that didn 't were contained within " jewels " that became a source of energy that humans harnessed to provide power for their civilization , called the " Powered Civilization " . Occasionally , rogue monsters called Abominations would appear and attack humans indiscriminately . The humans responded by developing a skill known as " Jewel Summoning " , which could be used to fight and capture Abominations . Jewel Summoners are generally descended from a clan called the " Enchanters " and receive special training in the use of jewels . Trained Jewel Summoners work for an organization called the Order and collaborate to fight Abominations .

Jewel Summoner 's story centers around a young Jewel Summoner named Vice . Vice 's mother died at the hands of an Abomination named Shina years before , and Vice has been searching for the monster ever since . Before she died , Vice 's mother gave him a jewel containing a monster , Schatten , and he subsequently discovered that he had the ability to summon and control Schatten despite not having been trained at the Jewel Summoner Academy . Vice traveled for some time , hunting and destroying Abominations , before drawing the attention of the Order . He eventually enrolls at the Academy and is joined by several other Summoners . The rest of the game follows Vice 's journey with his Order teammates and his quest for revenge .

= = Development = =

Jewel Summoner was the first game produced by Gaia , a studio formed by Kouji Okada in 2003 after he departed from Atlus . Okada was one of the co @-@ creators of the Shin Megami Tensei role @-@ playing game series , commonly referred to as " MegaTen " in the West . Okada continued the game mechanic of collecting and raising creatures in Jewel Summoner , altered from MegaTen 's concept of " nakama " : player @-@ controlled , friendly demons .

Okada 's goal with Jewel Summoner was to create an original game " that goes back to the basics of gaming " . At the Akihabara Entertainment Festival in 2005 , Okada explained that the Japanese gaming industry was full of game series and he was interested in developing new ideas . Shortly after Gaia was formed , the new studio learned that Sony was interested in finding developers for its upcoming handheld game console , the PlayStation Portable . Gaia developed Jewel Summoner exclusively for the PSP , including visuals tailored to its screen and a creature development system that would utilize the console 's internal clock to continually train monsters , even when the unit was not in use .

Jewel Summoner borrowed several aspects from Okada 's previous games , including Megami Tensei 's concept of elements . Despite the similarities , the art style of Jewel Summoner is more in line with traditional RPGs , instead of MegaTen 's darker , more adult theme . An important design component of the game is its " renei " ; the monster training system , which is a staple of Okada 's work . The game 's soundtrack was created by Shinji Hosoe , Hitoshi Sakimoto , Yasunori Mitsuda , Yoko Shimomura , Kenji Ito , Masaharu Iwata , Tsukasa Masuko , Yasuyuki Suzuki , Ayako Saso , and Takahiro Ogata . The game is fully voiced with over 5 total hours of dialogue , which took Gaia a week to record .

Jewel Summoner was released on February 23 , 2006 in Japan and February 19 , 2007 in North America . Gamasutra reported that at the time of its North American release , it was listed at # 7 on GamerMetrics , an IGN program that monitors fan anticipation of video games by tracking wish list requests , e @-@ mail notifications , and other Internet @-@ based game data .

= = = Future = = =

Okada has revealed that the game was planned as the first entry in a series of Monster Kingdom games ; its title was even created with this in mind . Gaia created a comprehensive timeline for Jewel Summoner to allow additional games to be developed within the same universe . Folklore is a PlayStation 3 game with similarities to Jewel Summoner ; developed by Game Republic and

released by Sony in 2007 . Gaia assisted Game Republic with Folklore 's monster @-@ creation system , and its original title was Monster Kingdom : Unknown Realms . Another Gaia game , Coded Soul , was released in 2008 and also has gameplay elements in common with Jewel Summoner .

= = Reception = =

Jewel Summoner received mixed reviews . Its gameplay format , especially the premise of monster collecting , elicited frequent comparisons to Pokémon , a long @-@ running Nintendo series of games . The gameplay itself was considered generic and unoriginal . IGN stated " All too often the same battles happen again and again " , and Game Informer 's reviewer said the battle system " is as boring a turn @-@ based snoozefest as I ? ve seen in years " . GameZone called Jewel Summoner " prototypical " and said the game " does not stray too far from the formula . You fight , you level , you unlock new skills . " The process of improving monsters was described by GameSpot as too long and needlessly complicated , and IGN declared " for the most part it 's not even worth it . "

Reception of the game 's audio was generally positive , with IGN referring to the music as " top @-@ notch " and GamesRadar commenting " The tunes are varied , catchy , match the settings , and show off the PSP 's sound system . " Comments about the voice acting were lukewarm , however , especially regarding the amount of dialogue in the game . GameSpot referred to the dialogue as " dull " and IGN said " the script itself is a mess . " The game 's beginning was described as especially slow .

" ... there were times where I just wanted to zip around and gather monsters , but I had to put up with everyone yammering at each other for over 20 minutes . It wouldn 't be so annoying if this was on a home console , but on the bus to work , there should be less reading and more monster bashing . "

The game 's art style and visuals were praised . X @-@ Play said " The monsters [sic] designs here are creative , detailed takes on all kinds of different well @-@ known fantasy archetypes . " GameZone 's reviewer said " The monster details are very good , as is the majority of the artwork " , and IGN noted that " Each of the characters also gets nice , crisp art for the conversational scenes . " Game Informer , however , mocked the character design , stating " ... each of the major heroes has some kind of glaring aesthetic blunder to make fun of . From the biggest faux @-@ hawk in history to tan lines that Itagaki would be ashamed to put on one of his characters , there ? s at least some shallow amusement to be had by mocking these hapless digital rejects . "