



● LONDON is set to get a pop-up Pokémon Centre. Similar to a Disney store but focused on all things Pokémon, it will sell merchandise as well as

exclusives that can't be found elsewhere. London's pop-up Pokémon Centre will open in Westfield Shepherd's Bush shopping centre from October 18 to November 15.



● SOULCALIBUR and Samurai Shodown are set for a cross-over some 20 years after both series first landed on the fighting scene. Guest characters from Sam-

urai Shodown are heading to Soul-calibur 6, with Hahmaru, the main fighter from Samurai Shodown, being the first DLC character as part of season two.

My twin challenge

MAKING the jump to co-op has come with some real challenges according to Tommy Tordsson Björk, the narrative designer on Youngblood.



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

He told STUART CULLEN: "It's been an interesting challenge. First and foremost you have to have the focus between two players and not be too intrusive with the story. "So what we are trying to do is have a solid framework of story with cut scenes that frame the story. Beyond that, we have a completely open and non-linear game where we don't want to take control from the player. "But we do have a bit of banter between the twins to strengthen the bond between them. That has been the theme of the game, that sisterly bond." But striking the right balance between the twins was also very important. Tommy said: "You don't want to force a certain playing style but at the same time you want different personalities as you don't want one to be more interest-

ing than the other, so it's a really interesting balancing act writing for them." But co-op has always been on the cards for MachineGames. Tommy said: "It actually started with plans we had for a co-op version of Wolfenstein during the development of the last game. We thought it would be a good chance to have the daughters of B.J. Blazkowicz be the stars of that game and we just ran with it. "We wanted your actions from The New Colossus to have an impact to the world, so 20 years later the Nazis have been pushed back to Europe having lost control of the rest of the world. It can be risky to do a time jump but for me the story is about the experience of the journey — even if you know how the story, you still want to know what happened during that journey. "It's like watching a movie based on a historical event — you know what happens but you want to see what the characters have gone through, not just know what happened."

A QUICK RUSH

WHAT happens when you get to take control of the machines of war that hounded you across the Wolfenstein series and turn them against their Nazi masters? Wolfenstein Cyberpilot is what happens. A standalone prequel to Wolfenstein Youngblood, it aims to fill you in on some of the background of the Nazis ruling Paris as well as setting you up for the main events in Youngblood. You play a cyberpilot hacker, tasked with taking control of a number of robots and mechs with one goal — stop the Nazis at all cost. This isn't an epic tale, as you'll be done in around three hours, but it's an enjoyable journey. There are four main missions, broken up by a bit of light puzzling between each battle when you're back at base. If you've already played a few VR titles, there will be very little here that you haven't done before. But the first time you get to

Wolfenstein Cyberpilot

PSVR £14.99

take control of a Panzerhund is a rush as you breath fire and crash around the streets — but it soon loses that feeling and the same goes for the other bots in your control. Great at first, but a fleeting rush. The sentry stealth missions are a great example of what could have been tense but end up more of a pain trying to find out where you have to go. Graphically the game is stunning, one of the best-looking PSVR games yet as it lifts some locations straight from Youngblood. Most of the story is handled over the radio and is well done if a little long-winded. If you're a diehard Wolfenstein fan Cyberpilot is well worth a look — and at £15 it's not a bank breaker.

STUART CULLEN



Killing Nazis is no bad thing

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

WHEN making a game based on fighting Nazis there is always some controversy but Jerk Gustafsson, executive producer on Wolfenstein Youngblood, feels politics should be left at the door and the adventure should be allowed to shine. He said: "By making a game about killing Nazis that have taken over the world, of course it's political and we can't say it's not really.

"We need to treat it with respect as it's a serious subject but at the same time we are also doing an adventure game where you fight the evil of the world — and in our game, the Nazis represent that evil. "So we can't really say that it's not political in any way but you play the game and its meant be an entertaining adventure for the player. Our vision is to make sure that the story you play gives you that feeling that you really want to liberate the world from that evil."

But Jerk sees Youngblood as a breath of fresh air for the Wolfenstein series. He said: "It's a spin-off to the main series from The New Colossus and we do see it as a fresh start in that sense.

"And the title refers to that in many ways but even though it's a spin-off it sits into the timeline that we are following with the lore and Wolfenstein IP in general.

"I can't really say anything about the future just now and what we plan to do beyond Youngblood but I wouldn't say that we will never see any more of B.J. Blazkowicz in Wolfenstein games."

With it being a spin-off, Jerk also feels that the studio have room to break away from what they are best known for and to try different things: He said: "We have been doing very heavily story-driven games for a long time, ever since we did the Riddick and the Darkness games back when we were part of Starbreeze Studios, which is

basically about 20 years of working on those types of games. "To be honest, we jumped at the chance as it was more in line with what Wolfenstein Old Blood was like. "It has grown over time and when we got the opportunity to work with Arkane Studios we couldn't say no.

"This opened up a lot of new opportunities and that's where the co-op came from as well as the VR. "We have always thought for a long time that adding another player into the combat would be fun and it's been something we have wanted to do.

"Working together with Arkane and getting the opportunity to explore these new ideas made perfect sense."

And Jerk feels that Youngblood is something totally new for even the most hardcore Wolfenstein fans. He said: "I really can't emphasise enough that Youngblood is very different from our past games. "It's not only that the game is co-op, which changes a lot in terms of things such as combat.

"There will be more enemies and the open-ended world will see you having some random encounters. "The focus for us has been to really concentrate on the weapons and the upgrades and the change here is quite a large one really.

"In past titles we may have had two or three upgrades per weapon, whereas now I think we have 150 upgrades and there are a lot of ways to customise your weapons and your character to complement each other when you're in combat. "So in that sense the core gameplay feels like our past games, especially that 'through the gun' feeling but the combat has been worked a lot to focus on fun scenarios for co-op."

STUART CULLEN



THE GIRLS ARE BACK IN TOWN

BRING ALONG FREE BUDDY

BUY the Deluxe Edition of Youngblood to get a free buddy pass, allowing a pal who doesn't have the game to play if they download a special limited demo.

IT'S no secret that co-op makes things better, so when we heard the news that Wolfenstein was heading in that direction with a spin-off we couldn't wait.

But does Wolfenstein Youngblood have what it takes to stand alongside the full-fat games in the series?

Well it's not just the game that's getting in on the co-op action as series developers, Swedish firm MachineGames, have teamed up with Arkane Studios, the team behind Prey and the Dishonored series, to work on Youngblood and Wolfenstein Cyberpilot too. Youngblood shakes things up with a time jump some 20 years on from the last Wolfenstein game to the 1980s. So one-man Nazi-slaying army B.J. Blazkowicz is, well, no spring chicken and his twin daughters, Jess and Soph, are teenagers.

That's not all that's changed — the Reich has been forced back to Europe after being

Wolfenstein Youngblood

Xbox One, PS4, Switch & PC £24.99

defeated in the US and the death of Hitler while former freedom fighter Grace Walker is now head of the FBI. Blazkowicz goes 'missing', but Walker tracks him to Paris and the twins, with the help of Walker's extremely dull daughter Abby, go in search of him.

And at the same time, they try to help the French Resistance to take back control of the city, one street at a time.

If you're here for the tale, beware. It takes a back seat a lot of the time and doesn't have half as good a cast as the past Wolfenstein titles.

But the gameplay picks up the slack. Moment-to-moment it's a blast as you take on the Nazi forces along with the

help of a buddy but there are a few new core changes that really impact the game.

As you complete missions and dispatch Nazism, you level up and unlock new powers and upgrades — but what's not great is that enemies below your level are all but cannon fodder whereas higher level ones are basically tanks.

And to get all powers

and unlocks it's going to be a grind, with you having to replay a LOT of missions.

This slows down the co-op fun. If you're playing with a lower-level buddy, they'll last about three seconds. That's a pain as you spend more time carrying them through missions than enjoying the action together.

And each weapon now has bonus damage against certain enemies. That's great, early on in the game when you need help, but it soon takes a back seat when you upgrade your arsenal, which is a shame.

All the series staples such as the power push and cloak are available which help spice things up as you can stealth your way through areas. Co-op wise, things run well with both friends and random players, though a lot of the doors and

actions need both of you to open them — it's no fun holding a door for two minutes while the random you're hooked up with runs around like a headless chicken.

Graphically, things look good and feel like a Wolfenstein game so fans will feel at home.

It's the same for sound, with Shelby Young and Valerie Lohman doing a great job as the twins. Wolfenstein Youngblood is a strange game. On one hand, it's more of what fans love, taking down the Fourth Reich with a buddy. But on the other, the story really lacks the charm and heart the series is known for.

But if you're looking for a fun, over-the-top co-op shooter, it's worth the buy.

STUART CULLEN



● STREETFIGHTER 5 is getting a few new brawlers as E. Honda, Lucia and Poison have now joined Capcom's much-loved fighter.



They'll be available as part of the Summer 2019 Character Bundle, which was released earlier

this week. The bundle also includes a few different battle costumes for each fighter as well. But a leak ahead of last week's Evo event put a stop to Capcom's plan to break the big news during the eSports fighting event. Wait till they catch the leaker...

BIG news in the world of streaming as Twitch star Tyler Blavins — aka Ninja — has left the platform and signed a deal with Microsoft to broadcast exclusively on its Mixer service.

● DARKSIDERS fans are in for a real treat as the game has made the jump to table top. The Forbidden Land is a new co-op dungeon crawler board game for up to five players. But this board game will also be the first time in a Darksiders series that all Four Horsemen will be play-



able at the same time. THQ Nordic say the game features an entirely new story set in the Darksiders' universe as well as 61 pre-painted minis and customisable decks of cards for each rider. But it will set you back £349.99 as it's only available with the all-singing, all-dancing Darksiders Genesis Nephilim Edition.

● GHOST-BUSTERS: The Video Game Remastered will be hitting stores on October 4. It stars Dan Aykroyd, Bill Murray, Ernie Hudson and the late Harold Ramis.

● IF you're looking for some classic thrills at home both Pac-Man and Galaga are getting the ArcadeUp treatment with new arcade machines coming this month. These officially licensed cabs feature the original artwork and



styling of the classic 80s cabinets. Although the ArcadeUp machines are ¼ scale but you can boost them to full-size using risers. Both are priced £349, joining Asteroids, Rampage, Space Invaders and Street Fighter II Championship in the range.

TOP 5 GAMES THIS WEEK

- 1 Fire Emblem: Three Houses
- 2 FIFA 19
- 3 Crash Team Racing Nitro-Fueled
- 4 Super Mario Maker 2
- 5 Madden NFL 20

● AFTER two mass shootings in the United States at the weekend President Donald Trump and the Republican Party have once again tried to link video games with gun violence. Trump said: "We must stop the glorification of violence in our society. This includes the gruesome and grisly video games that are now commonplace. It is too easy



today for troubled youth to surround themselves with a culture that celebrates violence. We must stop or substantially reduce this, and it has to begin immediately." The President has previous of "blaming" gaming for mass shootings but at no point has he blamed the availability of firearms and how easy it is to obtain them over the counter for these atrocities.



NEW MUSIC

By Jim Gellatly

KERRI WATT

WHERE: Glasgow. **FOR FANS OF:** Sheryl Crow, Alabama Shakes, KT Tunstall. **JIM SAYS:** As Kerri Watt approaches the release of her debut album, things are looking rather exciting.

I've been a fan for a while, giving her early airplay some six years ago. She has a background in dance and musical theatre and toured in the musical Jekyll & Hyde with Wet Wet Wet star Marti Pellow, but her sights soon turned to making music.

She said: "I picked up the guitar during time backstage and instantly fell in love with learning and playing. Songwriting came quite naturally and it wasn't long before I moved back to Glasgow from London. I went on to play every bar, pub, open mic that would have me."

Back in London she hooked up with pop producers and writers for early recordings. She said: "It resulted in me releasing music that was a little further away from what I felt in my musical soul. Since moving back to Glasgow, I've found my groove with writing on my own again. "I was naturally drawn back to blues, country and rock. I've kind of come full circle, making the music I wanted to make five years ago."

A couple of years ago she secured a major record deal. It didn't come to much, but she soon started working with indie favourites Embrace. She had met singer Danny McNamara at one of her early gigs and the band ended up playing on her recordings.

She even sang with Danny on last year's Embrace single Never and guested with them supporting Coldplay. Kerri now finds herself on the same label as Embrace. She said: "I'd been without a label for the last couple of years, which gave me time to do all the fun stuff with Embrace and finally write an album. It wasn't until this album was finished that Cooking Vinyl got wind of it. I now have the support of a very artist-friendly label who were happy to put it out just as I envisioned it."

Previously she's dabbled in pop, folk and Americana, but new single Cut Me Loose goes down more of a rock route. Perhaps not a surprise since Grammy-nominated American producer Machine worked on the record. His credits include Lamb Of God, Shinedown and White Zombie.

Kerri said: "People will be surprised, but I wanted to take a risk. I'm so excited about how the album ended up sounding."

Recorded in Austin, Texas, it's a very personal record. She said: "Over the course of about five weeks last year, I wrote close to 40 songs. They are a collection of everything I was feeling at the time, from the sadness of losing my granny, moving back up to Scotland and being in love and wanting to start a family. I narrowed 40 songs down to 15 which I took to Texas. We turned them into a solid album of 11 strong tracks."

The album is set for release next year. If Cut Me Loose is anything to go by, it's going to be pretty special.

She added: "Plans are to keep teasing out the new sounds in the form of singles, music videos and live shows before we do the big debut album reveal."

MORE: www.kerriwatt.com ● Jim presents a weekly showcase of New Music on Amazing Radio: Sundays 2-4pm. www.amazingradio.com www.jimgellatly.com

Watch a video of Kerri at thescottishsun.co.uk