

The Best Video Games of 2013

Adapted from an article by Erik Kain on [forbes.com](#)

2013 was a really great year for video [games](#). Maybe not the best year of all time, but a year packed with ambitious, surprising new titles.

It was also a year of new benchmarks, with games like *Grand Theft Auto V* breaking all previous sales records, and two new consoles from Sony and Microsoft.

And now that 2013 is at an end, it's time for us to pick the very best of the best.

Here at Forbes we have many writers and tastes, and no two writers' "Best Of" lists are alike. For our official Forbes Best Video Games of 2013 list, we compared our own personal picks to decide which games took the top spots.

We were aiming for a Top 5, but due to some tie-breaking, this is in fact a Top 6.

6. *The Legend of Zelda: A Link Between Worlds*



"A *Link Between Worlds* does what *The Legend of Zelda* has always done best," [writes Andy Robertson](#), "it revisits a familiar location and make it feel fresh and new."

In this case, the familiar is the old SNES game *A Link to the Past*. And in many ways, playing this new 3DS game is like visiting an old, familiar friend. Of course, all the basic components of a

Zelda game are here: Hyrule, Zelda in need of saving, the threat of Ganon, the puzzles and dungeons and bombs. A sword and a shield.

The game also topped the [Forbes list of Best Handheld Games of 2013](#).

5. *Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon*

Dave Thier called *Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon* "a triumph" in [his review](#).

The game also made the Forbes [Best Open World Video Games of 2013](#) list, in which Thier writes "Ubisoft gave us a rare example of a world that felt distinct, engaging and fun all at the same time."



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Many here at Forbes would agree, myself included.

“Neon pink, over-the-top, and mechanically sound, *Blood Dragon* is not only one of the best shooters of the year but one of the best games period,” [I wrote recently](#).

4. *Tomb Raider*

In fourth place we have the reboot of the popular *Tomb Raider* franchise, a game which at first inspired didn’t impress me but eventually gave way to genuine fun and admiration. It’s a visually breathtaking adventure game, with wild stunts, that starts a bit slow but quickly becomes a joy to play.



[Dave Thier](#) praised the reboot and origin story of Lara Croft, saying that it’s “wonderfully executed—you feel like you’re assembling a video game legend from scratch.”

[Paul Tassi called it](#) “the best game in the series in over a decade”.

“The best single player games are *experiences*,” [writes Daniel Tack](#), “and *Tomb Raider* provides an experience in excess.”

3. *Assassin’s Creed IV: Black Flag*

I didn’t expect to like *Assassin’s Creed IV: Black Flag* after the disappointment of *Assassin’s Creed III*.

I couldn’t have been more wrong. I called it “a fantastic game of high seas adventure and swashbuckling fun” in [my review](#). It also had [one of the best endings](#) of any game out in 2013.

Already the winner of Forbes’ [Best Open World Video Games of 2013](#) list, now the game slides into third place in our Best of 2013 list, and deservedly so.

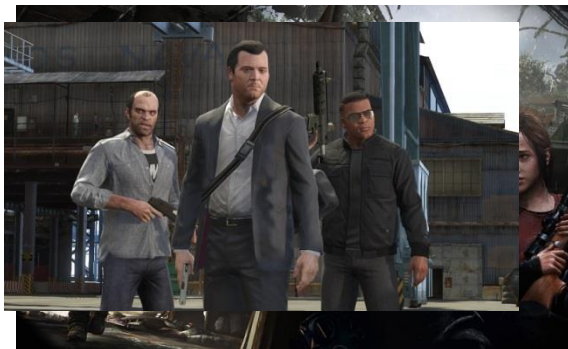


Black Flag’s Caribbean is vibrant and alive, and there’s no shortage of exploration, assassination, and naval combat to keep you occupied for hours upon hours. Fortunately all those hours are spent with the wonderful Edward Kenway, a far better protagonist than last year’s Connor.

2. *The Last of Us*

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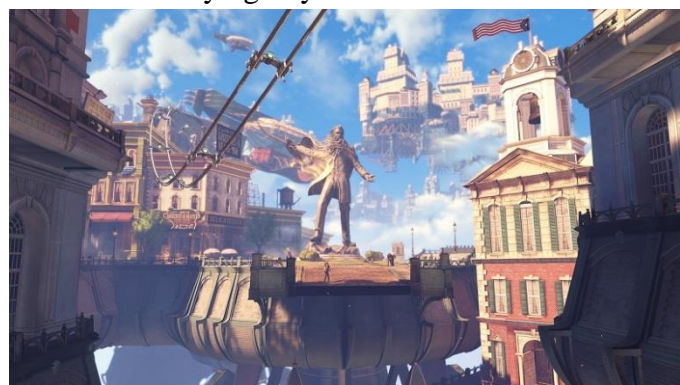
Naughty Dog's bleak, post-apocalyptic adventure was one of the most deeply moving gaming experiences of the year, with one of the more surprising and controversial endings of any video game I can recall playing.

Paul Tassi [described the game as](#) “visually astonishing, beautifully acted and exciting to play”.

I agree wholeheartedly, [noting in my review that](#) “the story is among the best I’ve encountered in a video game. We’re asked hard questions about what we value and what we would do when presented with hard choices about the greater good. The answers we’re given are ambiguous at best.” Ambiguity in a video game is a rare find, though hopefully less rare as video game stories mature.

Game of the Year – *BioShock Infinite*

For me, personally, that moment when you first walk into the flying city of Columbia and see the carnival, the hover-craft with the barber-shop quartet singing Beach Boys songs in entirely the wrong era...I can’t really recall another moment like that in all my years playing video games.



The characters, Booker DeWitt, Elizabeth, Comstock, even the Songbird—each of them was memorable, developed, and unique. Each was beautifully acted. But perhaps the greatest character of all was the city itself.

I described the game [as something of a page-turner](#), calling it “the first game I’ve played in quite a while that I really didn’t feel like putting down at any point. I wanted to play it right through to the end, and when it was over I wanted to talk about it over drinks, to understand what it all meant.”

And that is one of the game’s best qualities: Like *The Last of Us*, it inspired some truly great discussion, debate, and other conversation. It’s a game that makes you think.

2013 was a remarkable year for ambitious games, both great and small. Far too many to list here, so we’ll end with the runners-up.

Runners Up:

Rayman Legends - Ubisoft’s quirky platformer was especially charming on the Wii U. The lovely visuals and manic level design led to one of the most entertaining games of the year. I

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[called the game](#) “a marvelous, hilarious, gorgeous 2D platformer that never stops moving relentlessly forward.”

Gone Home - This oddly controversial game won high praise and faced fierce criticism both for its *avant garde* approach to gameplay and its apparent lack of any gameplay whatsoever. One of those titles people love or hate. “Most of all,” [writes Daniel Nye Griffiths](#), “*Gone Home* is a hugely accomplished first game from a small studio.”

Grand Theft Auto V - While it may go down in history as the fastest-selling game of all time, *Grand Theft Auto V* was also a masterpiece of open-world game design. At the time of its release, [I called the game](#) “a triumph of escapism and variety.” And I still think that about sums up the game’s strengths.

Super Mario 3D World - The Wii U’s first real “system seller,” *Super Mario 3D World* is an enormously polished, well-designed game. Gorgeous presentation and fun challenges make this one of the best Mario games in years. Andy Robertson, while [praising its focus on collaboration](#), called it “a game packed full of imagination and entertainment.”

Gunpoint - This stealth indie puzzler probably flew under far too many radars in 2013. It’s a wonderfully challenging, addictive experience, though.

Papers Please - Speaking of addictive indie games, this seemingly-mundane game of border-crossing management is surprisingly emotional and engaging, earning it [Forbes’ Best Indie Game of 2013](#).

The Stanley Parable - I haven’t played this one, but [Daniel Nye Griffiths writes](#) that it “is an important game in part because it highlights the gap between video games and some other forms of critical discourse”.

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The Worst Video Games of 2013

Adapted from an article by David M. Ewalt on [forbes.com](#)

Video game developers achieved [some spectacular heights](#) in 2013 –games that entertained, enlightened, and elevated the medium.

These are not those games.

These are the losers, the stinkers, the games that wasted the time and money of everyone involved. These games aren't just boring or buggy, but fundamentally broken: They're not so bad they're good, they're so bad it's offensive.

I've taken this list from Metacritic's ranking [of the best games of 2013](#). The editors of that site take scores from multiple web sites, and assign every new game a "[Metascore](#)" that captures the feelings of top reviewers. I scraped that article for the lowest rated games and picked out the ones that made me laugh.

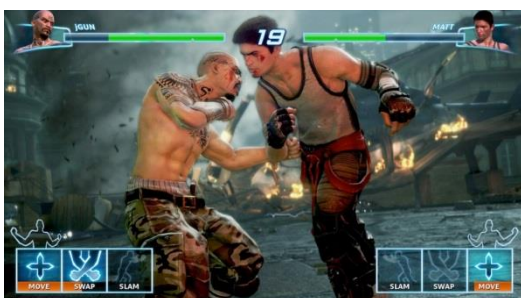
To provide a little context: the average Metascore for all games in 2013 was 69 out of 100, indicating "Generally Favorable Reviews." The top ranking games of the year were Grand Theft Auto V with a score of 97; The Last of Us (95); BioShock Infinite (94); Super Mario 3D World Wii U (94); and Fire Emblem: Awakening (92).

The average ranking of the five games below? 21 out of 100.

Ride to Hell: Retribution

[Metascore: 19](#)

Sample Review: "Ride to Hell: Retribution is a spectacular monument to failure. If failure were Paris, Ride to Hell would be the Arc de Triomphe... At some point, the people working on the game realized they didn't have the skill to create any of their grand designs, so they shamefully put together all the assets and mechanics they had into a confusing, barely finished game. It's like you hit your cat with your car, then taped it back together and tried to convince all your friends it was still alive." - [EGM](#)



Fighter Within

[Metascore: 25](#)

Developer: Ubisoft

Sample Review: "At one point, I stopped throwing wild punches mid-match in order to take some notes. As I stood perfectly still and typed on

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my phone about how awful this game is, my character continued to attack my opponent without any intended input from me.” -

[Gameinformer](#)

Double Dragon II: Wander of the Dragons

[Metascore: 17](#)

Developer: Cyberfront Korea

Sample Review: ”The interactive equivalent of irritable bowel syndrome and one of the most bizarrely awful video games ever made.” -

[Metro GameCentral](#)



Fast & Furious: Showdown

[Metascore: 22](#)

Developer: Activision

Sample Review: “This feels like the bare minimum for what it takes to be a racing game. Are there cars? Yes. Is it interactive? Yes. Is it possible to complete? Yes. Is there even the slightest modicum of entertainment to be found within its soulless shell?

Absolutely not.” -[IGN](#)

R.I.P.D. The Game

[Metascore: 26](#)



Developer: Atlus

Sample Review: “R.I.P.D., much like the movie of the same name, is about the afterlife, and thus it’s appropriate that playing it is like suffering through a little version of hell.” -

[Gamespot](#)

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