

Apple's best games and apps of 2019 for iPhone: Picks pay homage to the past

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The best games of 2019 are a throwback.

That appears to be Apple's take on things, anyway, as evidenced by at

least some of the company's picks for the best apps and games for its hardware platforms.

Consider Apple's choice for the "game trend of the year." App Store editors lumped a variety of apps into a category dubbed "Blockbusters Reborn," essentially fresh takes on familiar, and in some cases, decades' old franchises.

You'll find "Mario Kart Tour" from Nintendo in this select grouping, along with "Minecraft Earth" (Mojang), "Pokémon Masters" (DeNA Co), "Assassin's Creed Rebellion" (Ubisoft), "Gears POP!" (Microsoft), "The Elder Scrolls: Blades" (Bethesda) and "Call of Duty: Mobile" (Activision Publishing).

The company's selection for the Apple TV game of the year, meanwhile, also represents an ode to the past. It went to "Wonder Boy: The Dragon's Trap," a reboot of an '80's title designed for Apple's set-top box.

In choosing its "best of" compilations, Apple's editors said they were looking for apps that are beautiful, culturally interesting and fun. How many times an app was downloaded was also considered but was by no means a determining factor.

And in finalizing selections, Apple said its editors argued. "A lot."

As you would expect, not all the chosen apps paid homage to yesteryear. Here's a list of other winners:

iPhone Game of the year

"Sky: Children of the Light by thatgamecompany (free with in-game purchases). This animated kingdom lets players "soar and explore 7 dreamlike realms" to uncover a mystery.

iPhone App of the year

"Spectre Camera" by Lux Optics (\$2.99). This photo app uses artificial intelligence to let you capture long exposures.

iPad Game of the year

"Hyperlight Drifter" by Abbylight (\$4.99). A role-playing adventure in which you explore a "world riddled with dangers and lost technologies."

iPad App of year

"Flow by Moleskin" (free; in-app purchases). Think digital version of the popular Moleskin notebook.

Mac game of the year

GRIS by Devolver/Nomado Studio: (\$9.99). Solve puzzles while helping a young girl named Gris overcome a tragic loss.

Mac app of the year

Affinity Publisher by Serif Labs: (\$34.99). Professionally-oriented desktop publishing software.

Apple Arcade game of the year

"Sayonara Wild Hearts" by Annapurna Games (free with Apple Arcade subscription). This arcade [game](#) finds you riding motorcycles, skateboarding, wielding swords and more—at 200 mph.

Apple TV app of the year

"The Explorers" by The Explorers Network (free with in-app purchases). This collaborative app features exquisite videos and still imagery meant to showcase an "inventory" of the planet Earth.

App Trend of the year

"Storytelling Simplified." The vastly different selections that help define this trend include the "Anchor" podcasting (Anchor FM), the "Unfold" collage maker (Unfold Creative), the "Steller" Instagram storyteller (Expedition Travel Advisor), the "Over" wallpaper and card creator (Over, Inc) and the "Wattpad" reading and writing app (Wattpad).

Most downloaded apps of 2019

While the apps chosen above feature arbitrary selections made by Apple editors, the most downloaded apps of 2019 are the names you'd expect. The list of most downloaded freebie iPhone apps is topped by "YouTube," "Instagram," "Snapchat," "TikTok" and "Messenger."

Meanwhile, "Facetune," "HotSchedules," "Dark Sky Weather," "The Wonder Weeks" and "AutoSleep Tracker for Watch" are the most downloaded paid apps for the iPhone.

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