

God of War, Wordle lead a bumpy year in video games

December 14 2022, by Lou Kesten



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

It's been a bumpy year for video games, in part thanks to the ongoing repercussions of the pandemic. Some major releases got delayed (2023 could be a doozy), but enough crossed the finish line to keep gamers

happy. Indie developers held up their end, delivering innovative challenges and fascinating stories. Here are the games we enjoyed the most in 2022:

1. [God of War: Ragnarök](#): The latest chapter in the saga of surly Spartan warrior Kratos delivers everything you could ask for in a AAA Sony PlayStation blockbuster. There's bone-crushing combat against awe-inspiring mythical monsters. There are clever environmental puzzles to solve when you need a break from the mayhem. There's a surprisingly moving story about fatherhood, regret and the battle between fate and free will. And there's the year's best voice performance, by Richard Schiff (Toby from "The West Wing"!) as a droll, manipulative Odin. Epic in every way.
2. [Wordle](#): On the other end of the spectrum is this simple yet seductive word and logic [game](#) that you can play in a few minutes while you're eating breakfast. Created by software engineer Josh Wardle for his partner's amusement, Wordle became a phenomenon when he added the ability for players to share their successes (and failures) on social media. Some fans grouched when Wardle sold his creation to The New York Times for a reported seven-figure payday, but it remains a tasty daily snack for language lovers.
3. [Horizon: Forbidden West](#): Back to the epic. Sony's other big release of 2022 is this sprawling postapocalyptic adventure. In 2017's "Horizon: Zero Dawn," fearless heroine Aloy discovered why civilization collapsed; now she has to stop a mysterious enemy from wiping out humanity for good. The result is a spirited journey across an often breathtaking American West, where the robotic buffalo roam while our descendants patiently try to rebuild culture from the mess we've created.
4. [Pentiment](#): It's not often that you see a [video game](#) in which a major plot point revolves around Martin Luther and the Protestant

Reformation. But such is life in 16th century Germany, the setting of this thought-provoking whodunit. It starts with a murder in an abbey, and your choices as you investigate the crime have irreversible effects on the people in the surrounding village as the decades go by. It's a provocative examination of faith, history and unforeseen consequences, told with beautiful graphics that evoke the manuscripts and woodcuts of the medieval era.

5. [Norco](#): A young woman named Kay returns to her Louisiana hometown after her mother's death in this absorbing mystery. Norco—an actual town, built around a giant oil refinery—is a desolate place, damaged by flooding and decades of pollution, but it takes on an odd kind of beauty thanks to vivid pixel art reminiscent of classic LucasArts games of the 1990s. And as Kay searches for her missing brother, there are lively characters and moments of rueful comedy that balance out the sense of melancholy. It's one of the most thoughtfully written games in years.

6. [Return to Monkey Island](#): Speaking of LucasArts, one of the mad geniuses of its golden age, Ron Gilbert, came back this year with an uproarious reprise of his most famous creation. Stumbling wannabe swashbuckler Guybrush Threepwood is determined to finally learn the Secret of Monkey Island that was promised in the 1990 original. (Spoiler: It's very silly.) The puzzles are as demented as ever—one involves repairing a laundry machine so you can flatten a talking skull—and every encounter is crammed with jokes. Even if you're new to the franchise, it's a cruise worth taking.

7. [Elden Ring](#): Since 2011's Dark Souls, Japan's From Software has built a dedicated fan base for its notoriously difficult—some would say sadistic—adventures. Elden Ring is a bit more welcoming, at least giving newcomers time to get their bearings and build up their strength before taking on its most fearsome beasts. It's still challenging, but the studio's

move from gloomy, claustrophobic castles into a more colorful, inviting open world at least gives less masochistic players a chance to explore its singular take on sword-and-sorcery.

8. [The Case of the Golden Idol](#): The tiny studio Color Gray Games (essentially two Latvian brothers) made a splash with this ingenious mystery linking 12 gruesome crimes into one big conspiracy. Each case gives you a series of mostly static screenshots, and your job is to figure out not just whodunit, but what the heck happened in the first place. It'll make you feel like Columbo—albeit in the 18th century—as you piece together bits of evidence to assemble a coherent narrative. Golden Idol has more "a-ha" moments than most big-budget games, and I hope the brothers have more cases up their sleeves.

9. [Marvel Snap](#): There are tons of collectible card games and just as many superhero games, but somehow the studio Second Dinner (formed by a veteran of the card battle classic Hearthstone) has combined the two in a completely unique way. Each player has a handful of Marvel characters that are played onto three locations that have different effects; the goal is to take over two of the three spots. One game takes just a few minutes, but it's easy to lose hours playing just one more as you try to assemble a killer deck.

10. [Kirby and the Forgotten Land](#): Nintendo's best Switch game this year finally takes Kirby into a 3D world, opening up some new skills and challenges for the adorable pink blob. Kirby's talent—he can inhale enemies and take on their powers—has always ensured plenty of variety, but whoever expected him to vacuum up an entire car? Forgotten Land is easy, but it's fun to play co-op with younger kids, and there are enough hidden secrets that you'll want to replay each level after the kids have gone to bed.

© 2022 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not

be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: God of War, Wordle lead a bumpy year in video games (2022, December 14) retrieved 18 July 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2022-12-god-war-wordle-bumpy-year.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.