

GAME CONNOISSEUR

GRAND THEFT AUTO V - ONLINE MULTIPLAYER REVIEW

---DR. ANTHONY BETRUS
THE GAME CONNOISSEUR

Since the Grand Theft Auto V single player review a few months ago I have been casually playing the online version of the game. During this time I have also dabbled with a few other games, including my first Xbox One title, Dead Rising 3 (with SmartGlass technology). I have only just gotten into it, but my first impressions are good, and I will have a review of both the game and the system in the coming months as I get more into them. In my single player review I got some help from my pro-gamer friend Steve, and while he plays a wide variety of games, he pretty much sticks to first person shooters for online games. As such has been playing early access DayZ and Rust, and I will soon have more to tell about these titles as well.

So for GTA online I turned to my friend Jeff, who is pretty much an expert on all things Rockstar. Most of my online play has been with him, and we even have our own small crew. In a lot of ways playing online like this is the 21st century version of golf, where you get together with your buddies to play a round or two, all the while shooting

the breeze about whatever comes up (via in-game mic). Unfortunately my initial online impressions were tainted by the inane ramblings of the teen--and judging by the sound of some of them, pre-teen--players we were grouped with. Fortunately Jeff pointed out that I could set the audio voice messaging to 'friends and crew only,' which was a godsend (if only there were a way to mute the golfers on the next tea when putting for birdie). With this taken care of, he toured me around the game, and explained to me many of the ins and outs of online play.

The most obvious difference between single player and multiplayer is that you create a customized character. Like most other online games, there is an RPG system where you can level-up. In GTA this translates to improving your driving, flying, and shooting skills, gaining access to high-powered weapons, and otherwise making yourself more powerful in the world. Along with a customized avatar, you can buy your own apartment with an attached garage. While you can not change the contents of your apartment, you can store most of the cars you steal in your garage to drive later. There are, however,

a few expensive cars that you will need to buy with in-game cash if you want to keep them. And speaking of in game cash, while the primary reward for in-game activities is the experience needed to level-up your character, you usually receive a cash reward as well. Cash can be used on things other than apartments and cars, including vanity items like haircuts, tattoos, and clothes. Currently there is no real-world for in-game cash option, although the overwhelming success of these types of microtransactions in games like FIFA and League of Legends leads me to believe that we will likely see something along these lines in GTA soon.

For now, I have a level 11 character with a studio apartment and a 12 car garage. I only have two muscle cars and an SUV, and I have yet to upgrade my cars. Jeff, on the other hand, is level 68, has a penthouse apartment, and a garage full of the most sought after cars in the game. He has customized his vehicles with extra armor, upgraded handling, and improvements under the hood. These fully-loaded cars, along with his maxed out driving stat, makes him a pretty formidable racer (one of the many

ways to make money is to compete in and win races). The fact that he is level 68 and still finds new and interesting things to do is a real testament to the both breadth and depth of the game.

But leveling up and acquiring property is not the only measure of success in this game. Keep in mind that this is a virtual world, and in the end experiences rule the day. At times I found myself a bit like Alice tumbling down the rabbit hole, wondering just how deep it went. Tonight, for example, I base-jumped from the Vinewood sign (think Hollywood sign) into Los Santos (think Los Angeles), listened to some witty talk radio as I took a leisurely drive down a coastal highway, flew shotgun in an attack helicopter with infrared sighting, watched the sun rise and burn away the morning fog covering the city, boosted some meth off a drug dealer, played chicken with some random strangers, and rescued a kitten from a tree. OK, so no kitten, but I could list another dozen unique things that happened, and a dozen after that. And there has yet to be any significant add-on content, so the best is likely yet to come.

40th Annual
International Kang Duk Won

KARATE CHAMPIONSHIPS



MARCH 29, 2014

10:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. at Jefferson Community College
Outer Coffeen Street • Watertown, NY USA

Students and instructors of American Kang Duk Won Karate from the U.S. and Canada will gathered to perform at JCC on Saturday, March 29th. This marks the fortieth consecutive year American Kang Duk Won has held traditional martial arts competitions in Watertown, NY. Students of all ages will compete in formal exercises (kata), free sparring, and weapons divisions.

COMPETITION IN FORMS-SPARRING

SPECIAL DEMONSTRATIONS WILL BE CONDUCTED THROUGHOUT
THE DAY BY AMERICAN KANG DUK WON BLACK BELTS

American Kang Duk Won offers a wide range of community oriented safety and fitness programs in the North Country and Central Region of New York State, as well as in Ontario, Canada.

For information about classes available in your region:
call 315-788-8402 or visit www.americankangdukwon.org

ADMISSION: Adults ... \$5.00 • 18 Yrs & Under ... \$4.00 • Under 6 ... FREE

March Events At DeKalb Amvets

Every Wednesday-Ladies Auxiliary lunch and dinner from noon- 7 followed by an acoustic jam session from 7-9 hosted by Dan Cole.

Friday, March 14- Fish Dinner with fries, mac and cheese , cold slaw and drink.

Every Friday- Karaoke with Larry from 8-12.

Saturday March 1- Music and dancing with Amarillo from 9-1.

Saturday March 8-Music and dancing with Pure Country from 9-1

Saturday March 15- Music and dancing with Special Effects from 9-1.

Saturday March 22- Music and dancing with Charlton Brothers Band from 9-1.

Saturday March 29- Music and dancing with The New Buckskins from 9-1.

For further information call the club at 347-3099.