

# GAME CONNOISSEUR

## 2014 PAX EAST ROUNDUP

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WITH JOHN PAYTON, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE  
POTSDAM VIDEO GAMING CLUB

Each spring Penny Arcade holds a gaming expo in Boston covering console games, pc games, and tabletop games. PAX East, as it is commonly referred to, is the largest gaming convention on the east coast. This year the Potsdam Video Gaming Club (PVGC) sent 20 students to the convention, which was held April 11th through 13th at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center. The convention is an opportunity for the press, fans, and general public to get a taste of upcoming game releases. With the help of PVGC vice president John Payton, we'll be going through a list of some of the more noteworthy titles from this year's convention.

1) Evolve (4th Quarter, 2014) - Turtle Rock Studios, who developed the Left 4 Dead series, has created a next gen (Xbox One, PS4, PC) co-op shooter. John had a chance to play this game, where he took control of the "beast," while four opponents were pitted against him. He started

off as a hulking ape-like behemoth, which boasts a basic skill-tree and leveling up system. His four opponents played the roles of medic, trapper, assault, and support. The emphasis is on teamwork and strategy vs. brute force and aggression, and every game plays out as more-or-less a boss battle.

2) Borderlands: The Pre-Sequel (Fall 2014 - Xbox 360, PS3, and PC) - Gearbox Software will be expanding the Borderlands universe with a "pre-sequel" that takes place in-between Borderlands 1 and 2. The story takes place on Elpis, Pandora's low gravity moon, where there is no natural oxygen. Built into the gameplay will be oxygen acquisition and storage. Weapons continue to be the core of the Borderlands experience, and plans are in place to add cryo and laser weapon types. At this point there are four playable characters: Wilhelm, Athena, Nisha, and Claptrap.

3) Lichdom: Battlemage (PC early access now on Steam) - Indie game developers Xaviant has licensed CryEngine 3, and have produced a gorgeous fantasy fps. Essentially they have taken the mage from Skyrim and put him front and cen-

ter. They eliminated the traditional mana system, allowing for a more powerful mage experience. Spellcrafting allows for traditional fire, ice, and eight additional spell categories. Basic spell attributes are modified by essences of the enemies you defeat.

4) Wolfenstein: The New Order (May 20, 2014 - Xbox 360, Xbox One, PS3, PS4, PC) - This is the first title from the Swedish game development studio MachineGames. The game is set in 1960 in an alternate universe where the Nazis were victorious. Current emphasis is on the single player experience, with nazi robots and super soldiers among your enemies.

5) Dawngate, Heroes of the Storm, and DC Infinite Crisis: New MOBAs on The Block (PC) - PAX East may have been the MOBA (Multiplayer Online Battle Arena) coming out party. League of Legends is currently the dominant MOBA among both casual and professional gamers, although Defense of the Ancients 2 (DOTA 2) and Heroes of Newerth (HON) are two competitors, especially in e-sports. Predictably, the big hitters Electronic Arts (Dawngate), Blizzard (Heroes of

the Storm), and DC (Infinite Crisis) are weighing in with their own titles.

6) Star Citizen (PC) - Chris Roberts and his independent startup Cloud Imperium Games are working on this spiritual successor to the Wing Commander series. There are nearly 35,000 backers and over \$2,000,000 supporting his new Space combat simulator. Perhaps the biggest media event at PAX East showed a live demo of the the game, which featured realistic starship inertia and pilot blackouts. Additional features include a FPS component that allows you to board and take over enemy capital ships, as well as a persistent universe. With all of the hype surrounding this game, let's hope that he can deliver.

All in all PAX East was a great fan experience, and again did not fail to impress. Along with the strong lineup of large developer releases, there was also a strong indie game presence. It is in these generally smaller scale games that some of the more innovative and interesting concepts are featured. The games listed above are only a small sample, so whatever your tastes, you have plenty of reason to be excited about what is to come.



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