

## Grid racing reviews

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Capturing intense moment-to-moment racing action, GRID returns with an all ...

Grid 2019, Codemasters 2019 10 Microsoft Windows PlayStation 4 Xbox One, 2019 11 2020 10 Stadia Amazon Luna,???? 2022 ...

Invigorating arcade racing let down by lightweight multiplayer and campaign modes.

After the precise simulation of F1 2019 and the outright terror of the Dirt Rally games, GRID sees Codemasters promise a return to the arcade joys of its beloved 2008 racer. Here, slightly mis-timing a turn isn't going to ruin your race, and taking the lead from the back of the pack is not just viable within three laps but encouraged. GRID is about enjoying the fantasy of being a racing driver rather than recreating the reality of it.

It's a promise partially delivered. On the track, GRID is frequently thrilling, less about pedal to the metal and more metal to the other metal, as you shunt and shoulder your way through tightly packed crowds of aggressive and occasionally unhinged AI drivers. Yet off the track, GRID is lacking in features and, in some areas, conviction, with several half-baked ideas that merited deeper exploration.

Initially, you might wonder what there is to complain about. After introducing you to its racing with a montage of three short events, GRID flings you straight into its career mode, presenting you with a literal wall of races. There are four main categories, including touring cars, stock cars, and a "Fernando Alonso" branded supercar category, each of which has fourteen events and somewhere between forty and fifty races. Add to that double the number of "Invitational" events, which let you race anything from Mini Coopers to Ferraris, and you've got around 30 hours of racing ahead of you.

The diversity appears impressive at first. You're allowed to hop between the different categories at will, and GRID responds with a seemingly wide range of locations and race conditions. The early Touring Car events evoke pleasant memories of the TOCA games from the late nineties, as you cruise around Silverstone and Brands Hatch under quintessentially British slate grey skies. From here, you can jump into a grunting muscle car and thrum along the graceful arcs of the Crescent Valley speedway, or head for the opulent GT category and slam a Porsche 911 along the harbourside of Havana.

Two locations stand out from the rest. The first is Barcelona, the streets of which have been recreated in painstaking detail, letting you race along the waterfront past the Columbus Monument, or through the cramped streets of its medieval centre, zipping past the bullring and the glittering fountains of the Palau Nacional. The

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main attraction, however, is Shanghai. Foreboding by day, at night Shanghai's skyline explodes into a forest of sparkling neon. Wrestling through the pack as the Oriental Pearl Tower glows in the background makes GRID feel more like you're playing Wipeout than a contemporary racer.

Although GRID is willing to indulge flights of fancy, a serious effort has gone into designing the feel of the cars. Each one is distinct in its handling and momentum. When barrelling through a corner, there's a world of difference between the sturdy grace of a Vantage, and the barely-controllable grunt of a Ford Mustang. My personal favourite is the now-mythical BMW M1 Turbo. Driving one of these rainbow-banded beasts is like holding on to a lightning-bolt. Racing sixteen such TC1-class cars through the streets of Barcelona had me leaning away from my screen, certain I was going to turn the car into a giant metal concertina at any moment.

For the first five-to-ten hours, GRID is a delight. But I found myself wondering what else GRID had to offer, and it's at this point where it stalled. That initial burst of locations isn't the start of some grand tour, it's all the locations thrown at you within a handful of events, which are then recycled for the following 20 hours. There are different track layouts, of course, but racing Brands Hatch backwards doesn't lessen the disappointment of returning to Brands Hatch for the fifteenth time when you're not even halfway through the career.

Bump into a specific car too hard or too often, and they'll become your "Nemesis", hulking out and attempting to run you off the road.

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