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Producer lifts veil on 'Gears of War 3'
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By John Powell - G4 Canada

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The upcoming 'Gears of War 3' is not just a great game. According to executive producer Rod Fergusson, it is "super, super awesome".

"We have the biggest campaign ever. We have campaign arcade mode for points. We've got Horde Mode 2.0. We've got Beast Mode. We have a multiplayer that's more polished than ever before. This is the best 'Gears' game that has ever been made," Fergusson told G4 Canada.

Published by Microsoft Games Studios and developed by Epic Games exclusively for the Xbox 360 system, 'Gears of War 3' is the final chapter in the current series story arc which has the Gears soldiers living on an aircraft carrier and going to war not only against the mutating Lambent but mysterious beings known as The Stranded.

'Gears of War 3' was originally scheduled to be released this month but Fergusson's production team was granted an extension. They have used that time to improve the game in many ways. One thing they decided not to do was cram in more last minute features. They felt that approach would definitely cheapen the product.

"For us at Epic, we think of features as children. When you are a parent, the more children you have, the less time you spend time with each child," Fergusson explained.

To further improve 'Gears of War 3' developer Epic Games is launching a beta test on April 25th. The beta testing process will last three weeks and give players a chance to try things out and send along their feedback. The special beta will feature many unlockables including a Beta Tester Medal, a Cole character variant, a Gold-Plated Retro Lancer and a host of other devious and destructive weapons.

For those who have for some reason or another denied themselves a "roadie run" or a "curb stomp", Fergusson says 'Gears of War 3' is the perfect starting point for new players. You don't have to have played any of the other instalments to enjoy the final act. From the graded achievements to the ability to gain experience points playing any of the various modes, the game has been modified to give newbies a fighting chance and a feeling of accomplishment as they negotiate that learning curve.

Some of the other improvements Fergusson discussed are:

Overhead map: You will be able to see where all of your teammates are positioned and where all the weapons spawn.

Mantle Kick: "We wanted to award the aggressor," says Fergusson. The Mantle Kick is a new attack which consists of leaping over (mantling) a barrier and kicking your opponent at the same time. The foe will be stunned for a brief moment and if you are quick enough, you can send them to Kingdom Come with a shotgun blast.

Spotting: Using the left trigger and stick, you can label an enemy with an icon above their head for a temporary period of time.

Bag And Tag: You can now put a grenade into a human shield and throw the explosive package at your enemy.

Sawed-off Shotgun: Described as having really, really short range.

Retro Lancer: A very powerful, very inaccurate firearm that acts like an anti-shotgun weapon.

Bayonette Roadie Run: If you have a Retro Lancer, you can run with your bayonette and skewer people.

"A great technique is to throw down a smoke grenade and then charge through," advises Fergusson.

Hammer Burst: A long-range assault rifle which zooms in when you aim.

Executions: Each weapon has its own execution: "My favourite is the flame thrower because you stick it in their stomach and the flames come out their mouths," laughs Fergusson.





'Gears of War 3' is due to hit stores on September 20th.

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