



Developed by: **PlatinumGames/Armaturo Studio**
 Published by: **SEGA**
 Genre(s): **Action**
 Platform: **Microsoft, Sony**
 Cost: **\$39.99**
 ESRB Rating: **MATURE**
 Players: **1**
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7.5

BAYONETTA & VANQUISH 10TH ANNIVERSARY BUNDLE

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It's all about the R's nowadays. Reboots, remakes and remasters are almost as dominant as sequels. It's all thanks to nostalgia; the ability to provide access to older games on newer tech is big business. Microsoft and Sony's recent thoughts on backwards compatibility – coupled with a legion of welcomed Switch ports – echo this sentiment.

That's not to say that there aren't a ton of new IPs being announced at any given E3. It just means that fans *love* to repurchase their favorite games. That's certainly the case with Bayonetta and Vanquish, both of which have been rereleased/ported several times. The latest of which being their 10th Anniversary Bundle.



Being a fan myself, I can understand the appeal. Sliding under bullets in a battle suit while a giant, anthropomorphic tank readies a barrage of missiles is my definition of action-packed. Over the top and crazy; playing as a witch who fights using four guns (with two strapped to her feet), hair-based attacks, and time manipulation powers is always entertaining. Even if none of these things are new.

What is new is relative. While Armaturo Studio did a great job of porting the PC versions to the Xbox One and PS4, they didn't add many new features. Bayonetta's previous version already supported 4K visuals for instance. That said, it's good to see the games running at 60 FPS with 4K resolutions on console.

Some new bells and reworked whistles are nice. And one wouldn't expect a complete overhaul of mechanics. This is a classic bundle. The idea is to deliver what fans remember but with certain modern elements. That means that the action-packed gameplay, corny and/or convoluted narratives, and odd design choices are still present. For better or worse.



Like I said, I still enjoy playing as Bayonetta. Her stylish moves and lengthy combos are fun to execute. Light RPG elements provide more of both; halos dropped from slain enemies can be used to upgrade her abilities. New weapons are created/unlocked by turning in found objects. Essentially, she starts off a badass and continues to grow in kind as things progress.

The action plays out like similarly designed action adventure games. Where the near constant combat is broken up by cutscenes, hub areas (for upgrades and such) and mini-games. Most of it is great. Though a sometimes-unwieldy camera causes frustration. Getting hit offscreen or having your view blocked by a wall is made worse when you're trying to dodge attacks and spin the camera.

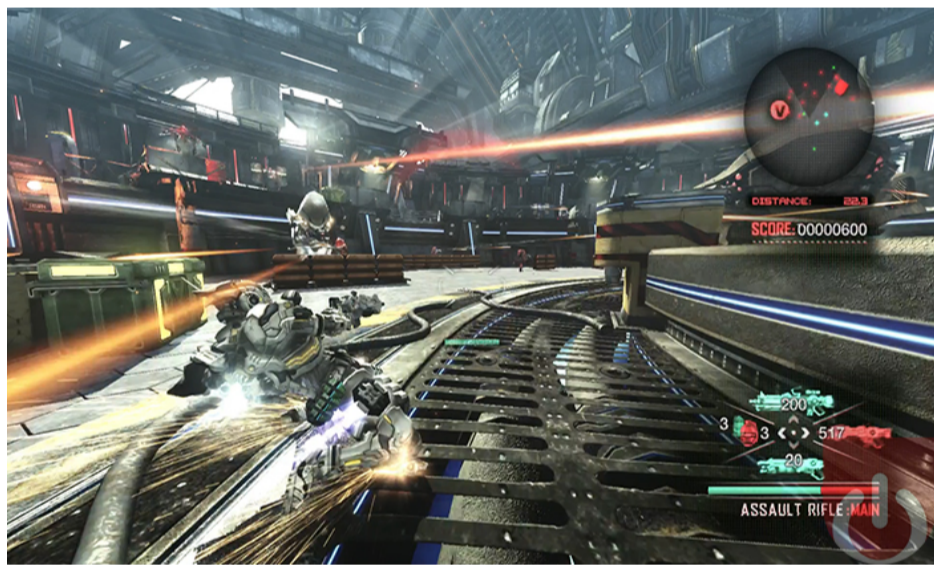
Bayonetta's story is still convoluted. The fruit of a forbidden union that's also the key to saving the world? Angels, demons – PlatinumGames wore their Devil May Cry inspirations on their sleeves. This is to be expected given DMC's former director and founding member of PlatinumGames, Hideki Kamiya's involvement.



Vanquish's story is worst. It boils down to US space marines infiltrating a stolen space station in order to stop a rouge Russia faction from blowing up New York. There's a lot of shooting and characters yelling things. All of it is utterly forgettable. Thankfully, Vanquish's gameplay more than makes up for the lackluster plot.

Like Bayonetta, Sam Gideon is a blast to control. His Augmented Reaction suit allows him to slow time to evade attacks or land hits on moving targets. The main attraction is the suit's boosters though, which lets Sam quickly slide around the environment. Pulling the trigger while sliding will cause him to manually slow time and stylishly, riddling whatever is in front of him with bullets.

All of these years later and the slide-in-shoot combo is still a cool thing to do. Which is good, considering these types of maneuvers are somewhat mandatory. The enemies don't pull any punches. They'll flank Sam, toss grenades, destroy cover – basically try their best to end the player in brutal fashion. That goes double for bosses. Their long-life bars and powerful attacks are nothing to play with.



The moment to moment shooting is mostly fun. It can get exhausting though. Missions are comprised of small, interconnected areas filled with enemies. Each encounter is lengthy. Some of them have mini-bosses. A few QTE's and walking segments break up the monotony. Still, there isn't much down time between shootouts. And the speedy nature of play means you're always on your toes, anticipating another surge of enemy fire.



Bayonetta and Vanquish both feel dated. They lack newer elements, some more important than others, and their narratives aren't as memorable as I once thought. But for the most part, they're still strong action games. Fans will be easily entertained. Newcomers should enjoy what both games have to offer as well. Basically, the bundle is worth the purchase.

Gameplay:	8
Bayonetta and Vanquish are fun to play. They do feel a bit dated though. The repetitive nature of Vanquish's combat grows exhausting over time.	
Graphics:	7
Both games look ok. The framerate and 4K visuals help in this regard.	
Sound:	7
The music and sound effects are ok. The voice overs are rough (was it always this bad?).	
Replay Value:	8
Depends on the person. Newcomers might return for the harder difficulties. Longtime fans will keep playing regardless.	
Final Score:	7.5