

REVIEW

COMING SOON



Developed by: **Crytek**
 Published by: **Crytek**
 Genre(s): **Survival Horror, FPS**
 Platform: **Microsoft, PC**
 Cost: **\$39.99**
 ESRB Rating: **MATURE**
 Players: **2-12 Online**
 Release date: **August 27, 2019**
 Reviewed on: **PC**

8.8

HUNT: SHOWDOWN

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When I first learned about Crytek's Hunt: Showdown, it was set up to be a very different game. Something akin to Left 4 Dead and Evolve. Back when it was called Hunt: Horrors of the Gilded Age. Since then, it has grown into something special – a unique blend of the battle royal and survival horror genres.

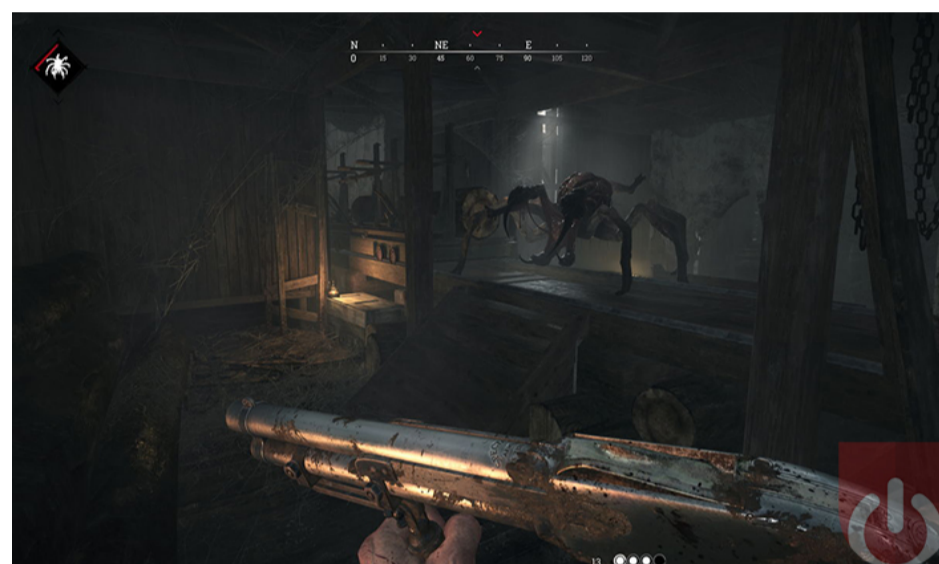
Hunt: Showdown transports players to an alternate 1890s, where bounty hunters make coin by hunting down and killing vicious monsters. It's a dangerous job. They're forced to traverse treacherous environments in teams of two (sometimes three), face a variety of undead foes, and tussle with rival hunters. All before reaching their target. If they're lucky enough to kill the creature, they'll then need to exorcise it from our world before collecting "proof" of their deed. From there, it's a lengthy sprint to a horse drawn carriage – their getaway vehicle of sorts.



The idea is to be the team (or random solo player) that cashes in the bounty. This is easier said than done. For one, there are six other teams looking to make a name for themselves. And considering the seemingly corrupt nature of Hunt's world, none of them are obliged to be civil about it.

Some hunters will lie in wait, ambushing a team right after they've exorcised the target. Others will be actively hunting their rivals, killing off potential threats as soon as they're spotted. A sniper's shot from a great distance. Several whacks from an axe up close. Regardless of play style, the mentality is to kill or be killed.

Taking down rival players isn't only part of the equation though. There's also the PvE/horror-based elements. Players will need to account for their limited ammo and supplies. They'll also need to utilize stealth. Stomping across broken glass, firing a gun, even talking to your partner at the wrong time can have dire consequences; everyone and everything can hear the noises you make.



Since "victory" requires a collected bounty, the hunt takes priority. This starts with discovering the monster's whereabouts. Using Dark Sight – an ability that highlights key areas/provides important information – players will race to different locations at the start of a match. Once at these locations, they'll (absorb?) the residual energy left by their target, blacking out *uninhabited* portions of the map. After three of these targets have been found, the monster's hideout will be shown.

It's at this point that players will opt to take on the target monster. Each one is different; they range from lumbering, animal headed butcher to a monster with body composed of various insects. None of them are pushovers, though they do have weaknesses. Assassin, the aforementioned insect monster, is susceptible to fire for instance.

The real challenge comes from trying to collect the bounty as it can only be done after banishing the enemy. This process takes time. Meanwhile, the game will notify the other teams of your attempt. And if that wasn't bad enough, every player using Dark Sight can see where the banishing is taking place. You're basically a sitting duck until the event is over.

Rival players can also see your general location after you've collected the bounty – again using Dark Sight. This leads to a mad dash across the map as you race to one of the wagons offered as an escape. Once there, you'll wait as a timer counts down before being extracted. It's exciting stuff.



At least, that's the case most of the time. The thrill of the last one standing is heightened by the inclusion of the hunts. That said, a lot of the tension comes from the game's permadeath mechanics. Players take on the roles of hired hunters that can be leveled up with continuous play; they'll earn more perks and acquire weapons/items purchased using the spoils of each hunt. If they die during a match however, they're gone for good. The same goes for their collected items.

This aspect of the game provides a unique way of building tension. In most instances, this is a good thing; hard fought victories are exhilarating to say the least. Unfortunately, there are times when the added tension results in high levels of anxiety. Where players are so afraid to die during a match that they forego the hunt entirely. Risks aren't being taken as everyone is playing it safe, leading to long and boring matches.

Hunt: Showdown mitigates some of this by offering account level upgrades. Money, perks and such that can be offered to new recruits, offsetting the dread of losing a hunter. There's also the option of leaving a match empty handed. If things are going south or you don't believe you'll be able to secure the bounty, you can head to an extraction point early. This doesn't necessarily keep everyone in the game, but it does encourage active play.



What's most encouraging is how the game continues to evolve. A new mode (Quickplay) that changes things up for a speedier option – it leans on the battle royale side of things, with a few added twists – was added during beta. It also got a performance boost that allowed players to tailor the experience according to their specific PC specs. Since launch, there's been new developments based around fan feedback.

Essentially, Crytek is working to keep Hunt: Showdown updated. And since the PvP/PvE formula largely works already, things can (seemingly) only get better. Those of you who are looking for a different kind of battle royale experience – or have grown tired of Apex and Fortnite – feel free to give Hunt a try. It's certainly worth checking out!

Gameplay: 7

Crytek has done a great job combining genres here. There are some undesirable side effects of the permadeath system. But shouldn't be enough to keep players at bay.

Graphics: 10

Hunt: Showdown looks great. The eerie environments and disturbing monsters help in selling the survival horror vibe.

Sound: 10

The sounds – ambient or otherwise – help to immerse players in Hunt's world.

Replay Value: 8

The permadeath system won't jive with everyone. That said, the game is entertaining enough to keep those unbothered players interested.

Final Score: 8.8

AD SPACE

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