# ASSASSIN'S CREED

## PC Game Review

**Assassin's Creed** is Ubisoft Motreal's signature game after their famous Prince of Persia (PoP) series. This game combines the best elements of PoP such as platforming and acrobatic moves with that of free-world exploration from Grand Theft Auto series in an easy-to-access game system. Originally debuted in November 2007 on Xbox-360 and PS3 gaming consoles, the game has been expertly ported on PC in April 2008, albeit with somewhat high system requirements.

### The Plot

The game depicts two parallel storylines; one takes place during the modern times (2012) featuring Desmond Miles who is kidnapped by a pharmaceutical firm, Abstergo. The other story takes place in 1191 during the era of Third Crusades, where a member of Assassin's Guild, **Altaïr**, is on a classified mission to eliminate various high-profile members of the society to maintain peace in the Holy Land.

The story of Altair actually takes place in Desmond's head as his memories are being accessed by Abstergo using a sophisticated machine called ANIMUS. Desmond is a vital test subject in this experiment as he happens to be Altair's descendant and thus his genetic-memories have crucial information about Altair which Abstergo wants to extract by any means necessary.

The player controls both of these protagonists alternately, although almost all of the game concentrates on Altair's assassination attempts. The story is engaging enough and you will surely want to play till the end just to see how it all unfolds. It does leave some important questions un-answered, however, and Ubisoft has already announced that Assassin's Creed will be a trilogy, so hopefully in the next installment, things will become even more clear.

### Game Structure

The nine assassination targets are scattered in three major cities of Holy Land, namely Acre, Damascus and Jerusalem. Any assassination attempt in broken down in thee parts. The *investigation part* consists of gathering clues about the target and his whereabouts like his current location, route of travel, number of surrounding body-guards and so on. This information can be obtained by doing interesting tasks such as interrogation, pick- pocketing, eavesdropping or by brawling. These activity-spots are initially hidden when you enter any city, but gradually get exposed as you climb on series of tall buildings and structures within the districts.

In the *preparation part*, the player is expected to clear the area of any potential obstacles between him and the target. He also needs to ensure a clear and safe way for his return travel once he assassinates the target, although this is optional.

The actual *assassination part* can be tackled in any way the player chooses. A stealthy approach is often more tricky and requires careful timing, but it is extremely rewarding. After all, you are playing one of the revered member of assassin's guild and secrecy is your best weapon. You can also opt for a frontal assault without any planning but then guards will surround you and will fight to death. They will also give you a chase after assassination, and this is easily one of the games most thrilling portion. Whole city is alerted
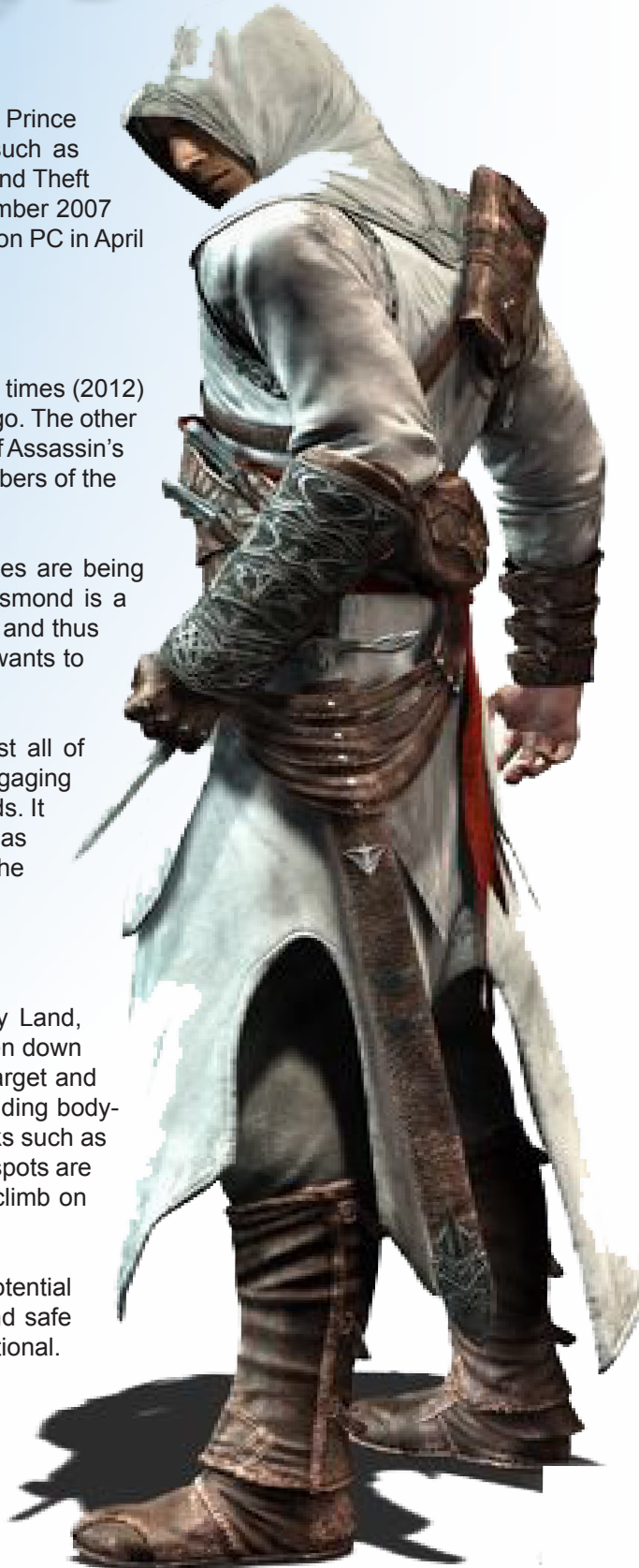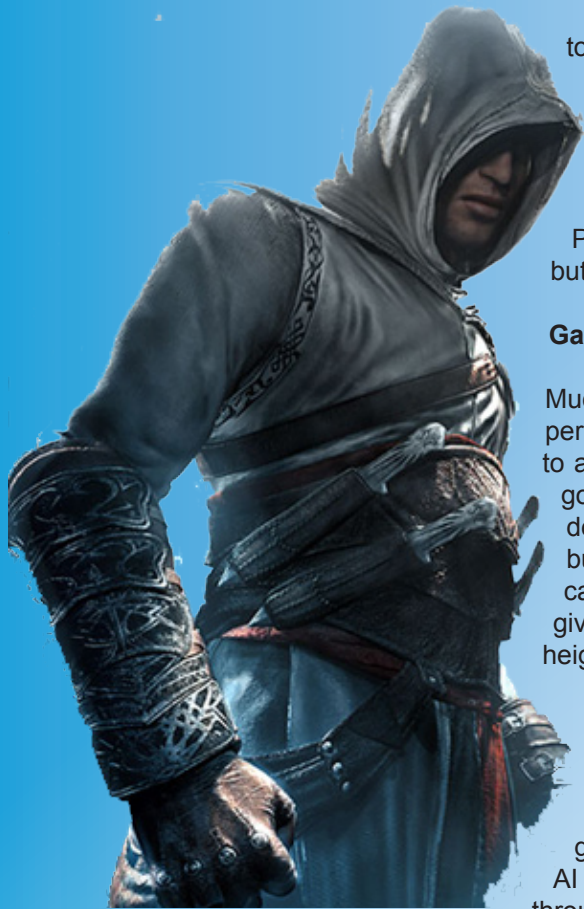
to your presence with the tolling of bells and your hop from one building to another as guards chase you ruthlessly.

In itself, these tasks build enough excitement for you to perform them but soon you will realize that you have to repeat exactly the same steps in all the remaining assassinations! This does get extremely monotonous after, say, third assassination. PC version adds three more types of investigation missions that you can carry out, but they don't help in breaking the sameness much.

## Gameplay

Much like in Prince of Persia, the player is required to traverse the landscape as well as perform acrobatic moves on rooftops and tall structures. However, he is not restricted to a fixed path and can roam around freely. The streets are always busy with people going on about their activities and can prove to be either a blessing or a hindrance depending upon the situation you are in. You can blend with the crowd at a touch of a button and fool the guards. But when you want to break the pursuits, the same crowd can block your way and make you stumble. Vertical scaling of the tallest buildings gives a thrilling experience, unseen in any game so far. The view of the city atop these heights is simply spectacular.

The player can choose to get engaged in fight with the city-guards to force the entry in a restricted place. Altair gains access to 4 types of weapons: a long sword, short sword, throwing knives and a hidden blade. He can also perform various combat moves such as dodge and counter-attacks. Sword-fighting is rhythm-based and gets progressively harder as you proceed through the game, mainly due to increased AI alertness and tactics. The game also provides option of horse-riding for traveling through the vast kingdom. Horse-controlling is handled very precisely and smoothly. Additional mini-games like collecting a particular number of flags and killing all of the Templars are challenging as well as fun.

## Graphics and Audio

The game utilizes an in-house game engine which provides incredibly wide draw-distances. It looks beautiful and runs amazingly smooth even on a moderately powerful system, as long as you meet the minimum system requirements. The recreation of all the three cities is historically accurate and the developers have taken great efforts to make it feel alive. The character models, especially that of Altair, is true-to-life. The animations are strikingly realistic and the transition between them is totally believable. The musical score is minimalist yet melodious, with more emphasis given on the sounds of hustle-bustle of city life. As you scale the towers, the city-noise gradually fades and the sound of gentle breeze envelopes, instantly multiplying the immersion factor. The game looks even more beautiful on PC compared to its console version, due to addition of anti-aliasing and high resolutions.

## Conclusion

Fans of Prince of Persia will feel right at home while playing this game and will certainly admire the advantage of free-roaming in the world. Anyone else looking for a great platforming action coupled with a gripping story, precise controls and ultra-realistic graphics shouldn't look elsewhere. A must-buy!

| PROS | CONS |
|------|------|
| • Gripping story | • Repetitive gameplay |
| • Amazing visuals | • High system requirements |
| • Smooth controls | • Story leave loose-ends open |
| • Vertical scaling | • Quite short! |

**Minimum System Requirements**

**OS:** Windows XP with Service Pack 2 or Windows Vista, **CPU:** Intel Pentium D 2.6 GHz or AMD Athlon 64 X2 3800+ (Dual Core) processor, **Memory:** 1 GB (XP), 2 GB (Vista), **Hard Drive Space:** 8 GB, **Graphics Hardware:** 256 MB DirectX 10.0 Graphics Card or DirectX 9.0–compliant card with Shader Model 3.0 or higher, PCI Express, **Sound Hardware:** DirectX 9.0 or 10.0–compliant, 5.1 channel surround (Rec)