THE DOOM MASTER

ISSUE 21 - AUGUST 2023

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Introduction:

Oh boy, it's been a while, ladies, and gentlemen! But we are back at it. Doom is close to its three-decade anniversary, one hell of a milestone, and we are quite excited to see what the community is cooking for it. There are tons of ideas going around my head right now, all the stuff we could do to celebrate and all the awesome content awaiting to be released. But, of course, life isn't all about Dooming. I've gotten guite busy now with university consuming my soul more than the devil itself, but even then, I still find myself sometimes thinking just about Doom, about its awesome moments, and all the cool memories that I've made, and so many others, playing this little piece of gaming history. Now, the time is coming, and things seem guite good around the horizon. I have some ideas, doing some work behind the curtains, like writing the history book about Doom WADs, which is still a little far from finishing, but at a right pace (I hope), and other things that we might do. What would you like us to do, dear doomer? Gives us some ideas in the comments and let us know what you think would be a worthy way to celebrate, or just share your own projects and what you will be doing for Doom's birthday! For now, let's focus on the fact of the matter: New Wadazine motionicker!

Disclaimer: The Doom Master Wadazine laments the lack of recent activity and consistent publication, we partially blame the recent outbreak of demonic incursions in the headquarters at the UAC base of Central America, and we also believe that Jerry, the IT guy, is intentionally installing Minecraft in everyone's computers so we never get anything done. We are better than this. We believe in teamwork and group think, as such, we will now close all available vacation, pay days, and prepare and special operations team for designing purposes that will be under surveillance 24/7. We want to express our thanks to all of you who have supported this endeavor, and we'd like to ask you for human sacrifices and mortal souls. We own a bit to Satan. Help.

Serious disclaimer: Sadly, and tragically, the Wadazine has been hit hard by something called: real life. Most of us lack the time, energy and even the resources to return to our Pandemic-pace, back when constant updates were published, and we were capable of producing an issue a month. We've had many projects and various ideas coming and going, but, ultimately, the fact of the matter is that we don't have the time or the hands available. We still love this, and we still love our fans and follower, and of course, we still love Doom. We are not giving up, just resting a bit. While the Wadazine Awards 2022 won't be coming in full form, we will still publish the work we've managed to finalize. We, all of us doom nerds doing this, sincerely hope you guys enjoy our e-zine, and please, keep on dooming.

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And to all of our community artists and contributors, we thank you!

It's been a while, so there's chances that a name might have slipped past me! Apologies, and thank you all.







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BY BIODEGRADABLE

One might consider it a little gauche to begin an article explaining what on Earth playtesting is between the pages of an online publication with a readership largely comprised of **Doom** mappers, modders and indie game developers. However, for the sake of storytelling and to ensure nobody is left out, please allow me to be your Virgil. As with so many things, the giveaway is in its own name: Playtesting refers to the part of the development process where a game is played through many times over – sometimes to a sick-

ening degree - usually from in its earliest beta stage all the way to finalisation, making sure everything is in working order and take note of anything that appears wonky, exploitable, accidentally forgotten about or downright banjaxed and in need of a good tweaking. **Doom** maps are of course no exception and are run through this process rather extensively, both by their respective mappers and other volunteers.

The latter presents an interesting prospect as many maps are uploaded to the Doomworld forums in some

kind of beta-state with an open invitation for the community to look it over with its scrupulous eye and help push it across the finish line. Other times specific individuals may be invited to playtest closed betas, all very hush-hush and on the down-low, until it's time to unveil either the first release candidate or indeed the finalised product to the public. Given that the **Doom** community - Doomworld's chapter especially - is densely populated with talented individuals with many years of collective experience honing their craft and

studying every single nook and cranny of the game, analysing all its tricks and traps; what business does a hapless, technically-inept dope like myself with zero experience in game modification have being among them?



AN OPEN INVITATION FOR THE COMMUNITY TO LOOK IT OVER WITH ITS SCRUPULOUS EYE

When I joined Doomworld in May of 2020, I had been revisiting some of the old FPS games of my youth over the past year: Duke Nukem 3D, Quake [1 and II) and naturally Doom was next. I played through all of **Doom** and Doom II and would learn about its modding scene that was still miraculously buzzing with activity, positively bursting with it thanks to the success of **Doom** 2016 and Doom Eternal. At first, the only reason I made my account was to simply explore the community and the interesting content it had to offer. I was immediately astonished by the sheer wealth of content

the community had built in its near-30 year history, overwhelmed yet thoroughly impressed by its achievements, longevity and passion. Three years on, I continue to be astonished by the creative and technological prowess it continues to achieve with what some may regard as a wholly ancient game that may well have been long forgotten otherwise.



Things would start out quietly for yours truly, downloading a few single map WADs and later participating in the monthly Doomworld megaWAD Club, writing my thoughts about each map of the day and mingling with other members in various discussions. In June of that year, I would play a WAD called Frontier Hell that was posted a mere two days before my forum join-date. It would be the first of many maps for the rest of 2020 that would see both my friend Clippy and I play and review with little time in between us, a trend we would both become infamous for. However, it was on June 28th when I played

Posted July 1, 2022 Report post 🔩

Biodegradable Spooky Playtester



Registered: 05-20

Well, another month where nothing I really wanted won, but I miss playing with you guys and I guess after playing and really enjoying 180 Minutes

Pour Vivre last year, I should probably experience even more wild and woolly speedmaps our delicious friends from the French chapter of our community have to offer. So yeah, time for me to dust off my DWmegaWAD Club seat and join the fun!

MAP01: Crash

UV | Continuous | GZDoom

A cute little starter to get things moving. It's very quaint with half the enemy roster all piled into the entryway, but with plenty of hitscanners walking around, it's definitely not to be underestimated by any means. Progression is nice and straighforward, though one of the buttons tricked me into thinking I had already pressed it and got momentarily stuck, which was both funny and embarrassing! Not much else to say, though I did really like the broken door and the little DoomCute spaceship we flew in on, which even counted as a generous ammo cache secret. Everything about the map felt cute, quaint and chill with good texture work. It's a nice first impression, but I am very anxious moving forward because I decided to do this one on UV and I know our friends here will drop the gauntlet on me. Will I drop down to HMP at any point? Let's find out together!

Clippy's WAD, Monster Jail Mayhem – for the second time – that would change everything. Inspired by both DuckReconMajor and Clippy, I began screen recording my own play sessions and commentary.

A few other forum members and I managed to accidentally form a group of people who would go out of their way to find new maps posted to the WADs & Mods subforum and record our playthroughs for the mapper's benefit on a regular basis. There was the aforementioned Clippy of course, along with Zolgia, Timmy Brown, Horus, The Noob, Soulless and John Suitepee among a few infrequent others. During this time, I habitually tagged them in posts whenever I found a new map to summon the horde. This would ebb over the next two years with some members replacing others,

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but it was just Clippy and I who remained the only constants. Once I was added to Austinado's Active Playtesters thread, my inbox was inundated with private messages from mappers eager for me to play their WADs, which carries on to this very day. I had unwittingly carved a niche for myself as one of Doomworld's reliable lab rats, eager to be experimented on in the great cause of forging **Doom** creations.

I won't lie to you, dear reader, there have been times when I have secondguessed my usefulness as a playtester given my lack of technical aptitude. My knowledge as to how the game works on a deeper level, regardless of my attempts to understand it better, remains fairly limited and sometimes I feel I'm not nearly as useful as I could be. However, when my brain decides to be a jerk and bring up such thoughts, I always return to a conversation I had with Bridgeburner during one of his livestreams on Twitch. I expressed these feelings to him while he was playtesting Aurelius' level for Mapwich II and his reassurance

my purely playerthat based perspective, completely unclouded by deeper understandings of level design or game engine mechanics was just as valuable. Others have since echoed this sentiment and I've taken to heart. Regardless, I continue to try my best to get a rudimentary understanding of things and memorising all of GZDoom's console commands just so I can continue to prove my usefulness, even if it's only myself I'm still trying to convince.



T HAS FELT VERY REWARDING TO HAVE HELPED SO MANY PROJECTS REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

In my three years of playtesting **Doom** maps, I've really grown to have a somewhat better understanding of the work that goes into game development in general and certainly a deep and protective appreciation for the stunning amount of kindness and generosity the **Doom** community has afforded me both as a consumer of its works and as a member of its tribe. As such, I take every playtest request fairly seriously, though I am forced to remind myself that it isn't my job and I can't afford to play literally everything that's thrown at me and some stuff does fall between the cracks. Regardless, I try my best to respond to everyone on top of keeping an eye out for all the new maps that are uploaded to Doomworld every day. I know I can't playtest them all, but I'm still going to make the effort!

It has felt very rewarding to have helped so many projects reach their full potential be it from a fledgling mapper trying to hash out the vision for their very first project, to a team of seasoned community veterans

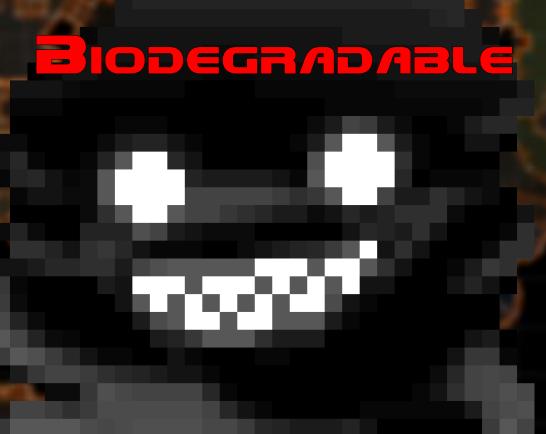
needing an extra eye to spot a misaligned texture, a sequence-break point or a misbehaving linedef. Aside from the unmitigated joy that comes with annihilating demonic scum on a daily basis, I get a lot of satisfaction from helping mappers fine-tune their work. It's noticeably fun to surprise them by accidentally breaking maps in ways they hadn't thought of, or discover exploits a player might take advantage of, or how I interact with each combat scenario; which helps them think more about player agency. The most recurring

element mappers have noted to me is how having someone play their map with no prior knowledge of where everything is, or how anything in the map works, can remind them of who they're building their map for. Being this tiny part of the process has also given me a somewhat clearer understanding of gameplay implementation - at least as far as **Doom** is concerned - when it comes to how level progression and combat are handled, along with the mechanics that make **Doom** as a game functions overall.

Admittedly I sometimes lament my lack of ability to contribute more to Doom such as writing a few lines of code for a source port, level editor or some other kind of utility; draw up some sprites or textures, animate weapons or even compose a few midis. Unfortunately, I'm far too technically-inept to code as my brain simply isn't wired to understand it, I can't draw to save my life and I have no musical talent whatsoever. I have managed to edit a few WAD

trailers and Doom-related YouTube videos, which has been neat and I do hope there will be more opportunities for it in the future. What I can do, however, is play **Doom**. The mappers continue to reassure me that recording myself bumbling my way through their creations is immensely helpful and entertaining to them, and the many workshopping sessions during my time at university has meant being able to provide them all with clear, concise and constructive criticism. I am grateful for what I do have here, I really am.

I may never win a Cacoward or have a Doom Wiki article written about me, but with over 1,900 videos recorded for various playtesting efforts and credits on The /idgames Archive now stretching over 4 pages, perhaps that's all I really need. I just like being helpful and giving back to a community that means a lot to and inspires me every day, even if it means going largely unnoticed in the grand scheme. I am a small cog toiling away in this grand old **Doom** machine, fuelled by passion and a love for this ancient video game. But I'm all too damn happy to help keep it trundling along in my own little way.



An interview with the legendary player,

ROGF

This community is full of fantastical members that range wide in abilities and skills; from legendary mappers that create gorgeous pieces of Doom beauty, to absolute speed freaks that break world records each month. There's no shortage of amazing doomers that have managed to leave their imprint in **Doom** history one way or another. A new challenge is always up over the horizon, and a challenger will always be ready to tackle on such thing. Achievements come in many ways and forms, with many cool ways to tackle your skills into the various worlds of Doom.

One particular skill is that of playing. Yeah, just playing. Despite being a near three-decade old game, **Doom** still possess quite the high degree of difficulty, both from a mechanical point and a skill point. The general basics are pretty

easy to follow, but there's a lot of nuance and complexity that can add up to some fantastical levels of depth and degrees when playing.

A good way to test your skills with other members of the community is going up against the DWIroman participants. Crazy players that combine speed and skills for maximum survivability in ultra-violence. Try playing an entire WAD without actually dying and you'll quickly notice that most maps will have you crawling from the very first minutes if you decide to go all crazy. Few actually manage to reach the finishing line and have their names chalked in the leaderboard.

One of those players is *Roofi*. Of French origin, *Roofi* has been dooming since a little boy, developing a fascinating towards the game that also comes with a new package of

amazing playing skills that mix patience with tactical acuity. For a long while, *Roofi* stood tall among the top five best DWIroman players in the world. That is quite one heck of an achievement to maintain for years.

But, of course, things change, and Roofi found a new addiction: The Endless Random / idgames WAD Adventures, also known as ERIWA. In these leek biweekly events, rather than been pitted against each other at max difficulty, players are instead encouraged to put on a blindfold, pick a shotgun, and jump straight into the abyss of **Doom**, where desperation, pleasure, and torture, all combined, await. The events consist in using the "random" feature on the /idgames archive page, where it randomly throws some god forsaken zip file at your face. As you can imagine, this is a pandora box



"Roofi is also a prolific mapper that has dabbled in a variety of projects from time to time"

full of some fantastically horrifying surprises. Sometimes you find a lost gem, hiding deep in the underworld, other times you find some stinky piece of shit that should remain fucking dead, and other times you find a random zip file with mysterious contents that are not quite there to the human mind.

It doesn't matter, for *Roofi* has tackled them all. With some insane patience and no fear to tread in utter darkness, *Roofi* has played over 1,000 random WADs ever since the events were premiered all the way back in March 2021. And he's been doing this daily, non-stop, like an absolute machine of sheer doom madness. As of writing, he has 6,820 total points in the ERIWA leader-board, more than twice the second place.

If that's not just crazy, I don't know what it is. *Roofi* is one hell of a player that has an insane amount of passion for our favorite game. He shows his love not only by creating, but also by enjoying the creations and tasting each one of them with a profound vanilla appreciation. Something all of us should try once in a while!

Yet, his tales don't stop there, for *Roofi* is also a prolific mapper that has dabbled in a variety of projects from time to time. Most notably, the <u>3 heures d'agonie</u> series of Frenchmade community projects, and other French spin-offs like <u>Tangerine Nightmare</u> and <u>180 Minutes Pour Vivre</u>. Add a dozen or so of standalone projects, and you have quite the prolific mapper that has been pumping content for almost a decade consistently.

Roofi is the kind of obsessive player that goes wide and deep into the **Doom** trenches. He knows no fears, no bounds, and his favorite flavor is vanil-

la. A sage of the massive world of **Doom** WADs, *Roofi* has quite the repertoire to show of.

Now, without further ado, here it is the man himself, welcome

Tell us, how does your story with Doom start?

The story is pretty standard, I was 4 years old, and my dad had **Doom** on his PC. I played it with a controller and the Cyberdemon scared the shit out of me in E2M8. I played almost exclusively with cheats, and I remembered spending a lot of time on "Go 2 It" from Plutonia with God mode and noclip.

Few years later, when I was 10 -11 years old in 2008-2009, I didn't play Doom at all, but I remembered being fascinated by old videos of Hell Revealed 1 and 2 posted on Youtube, because of their high difficulty compared to the IWADs. I ab-



"The French Doom Community hosts really talented mappers with their own style"

-Roofi

solutely wanted to play them but had no idea how.

Time passes.

It's towards the end of 2012 that I really put my foot down. I was 15 years old and I was trying to finish, with difficulty, a lot of known megawads I just downloaded: Hell Revealed 1 and 2, Kama Sutra, Alien Vendetta, Mars War, Claustrophobia series... I used to play exclusively on Skulltag, the only port I knew, which is quite funny because nowadays I love to play in the most "vanilla" possible.

So, my introduction into the Doom community was in successive steps. Also, I've only really been around Doomworld since 2016-2017. Before that, I used to spend most of my time on the French forum when it was more active.

2. How did you start creating maps for Doom?

I remembered in 2013, I created an extremely ugly and frustrating map. It was infighting centric and contained Nazis, in short everything you don't want.

I really started mapping in late 2016 for 3 Hours of Agony 3 project. Knowing that the time limit didn't help for a beginner like me, drawing small sketches before opening the builder was of some help.

3. How was your experience with the French community for the creation of WADs such as 3 heures d'agonie 3?

The experience was very positive overall. I was able to learn a lot from the mapping process, and in particular to rectify a lot of beginner's mistakes. The French Doom Community

hosts really talented mappers with their own style. I started mapping pretty late compared to them. I was also able to get support from the valuable reviews on my maps.

Honestly without those people, I might never have made a map or maybe just shovelware stuff that would have been quickly forgotten. Starting mapping is hard when you're not a "creative" person and I'm not able to create custom resources such as *FranckFrag* did for Tangerine Nightmare as well as other wads for instance.

However, the French community is also plagued by dramas, the most important of which occurred at the end of the design of "180 minutes pour vivre", which definitively broke the link with some members. I won't say more about it so as not to tarnish the atmosphere too much but that's why there was a bonus map 30 in this wad anyway.



The Underground Rats, Map by Roofi

Today, the French community is more silent but not dead! The NT project is still going strong, as well as a few others such as "Flesharmonic" in which I am participating as well as some new members!

4. I can tell you are a fan of vanilla! Why do you prefer this style/compatibility?

As I mentioned in my introduction to **Doom**, I'm currently a fan of vanilla, but that hasn't always been the case in reality. Of course, I've always liked vanilla wads, but I didn't necessarily pay more attention to them than to limit-removing or Boom wads. In reality there are two things to distinguish:

- The vanilla format has always been my favourite compatibility for mapping because I love creating with restrictions. "Limitations breed creativity" as we say. Nevertheless, I used to launch Chocolate Doom just for testing and played everything on Prboom+ instead.

- Nowadays, I love vanilla compatibility not only because I love the vanilla limitations but also because I want to play **Doom** as authentically as possible. Almost 2 years ago, I bought the game on GoG which runs on DOSBOX, and I fell in love with playing Doom "as it is". Big pixels, no access to stats in game... in short, a simplicity that I really get attached to even if I recognize that the ports offer more comfort.

The fact of playing directly on Doom2.exe gives me a particular feeling, it's a way to rediscover **Doom** after 10 years in the community, which is quite paradoxical since for older doomers, playing on the original exe was a mandatory first step and many of them absolutely not want to go back to

prehistory!

So, I can be categorized as a hipster but I'm glad that Doom can be appreciated in many forms. So, I love the vanilla compatibility because it challenges my creativity, and it fulfills my search for authenticity. I prefer old games in general in the same way.

5. Tell us about your history of participating in the DWIronman League.

I had done my first Ironman on UAC Ultra in December 2016 and I was immediately hooked on the concept. However, I had periods of activity and non-activity. I remember participating in 2017 and 2020 especially. I would like to return to the scene for this year. I am also pleasantly surprised that this event is lasting so long!

I won't list all my participations, but here are my two favourite "I'm known for having a very steady approach since I don't care about time in this sort of challenge"

-Roofi



ironman sessions:

- In March 2017, on the first episode of BTSX
- In July 2020 on the "Running Late 2" wad in which I spent at least 5 hours to reach the end! It was epic.
- In September 2020 on the "Hell Revealed" wad. 6h30 to reach map 26 and die! My eyes were burning but I was not disappointed with the journey.

6. What's your trick to be so damn good at these events?

The first reason is that I've been playing for a long time, and I've played a number of difficult wads: the Death-Destiny and TimeOfDeath maps come to mind. I recorded demos too even if I don't categorize myself as a speedrunner.

In reality I don't have a magic recipe. My best strategy con-

sists of to take my time. I think I'm known for having a very steady approach since I don't care about time in this sort of challenge. Many wads become much less difficult if you go slowly and take your time looking for secrets, collecting items and not wasting the most powerful ammo in easy situations. Also, I often try to cheese the traps as much as possible. Playing steadily sadly doesn't work in all wads but it often helps making the game a lot relaxed more on Ultra-Violence. I've no precious advice for Nightmare though.

When I see players die on a map, it's often while hurrying, since the movements in Doom strongly encourage speed. I like to play it as a kind of horror game where I have to be careful all the time. It also allows me to savour the wads more, whether it's ironman or other

events.

Sometimes, **Doom** maps don't test your skills but rather your patience, especially while playing continuous when you can accumulate stuff. Several times I have survived a difficult trap after spending several minutes reaching a hard-to-find secret.

7. ERIWA caught your attention from the beginning, what attracts you to these events?

Call it a coincidence, but I had approximately the same idea one month before the beginning of the event. The difference resided just in the absence of reviews. I contented myself to just play some wads and stop once I was bored or dead (in game of course!). Actually, I totally understand most people prefer to play the most influential wads which show the best things made by the doom com-

munity, but it's a bit a shame at the same time because idgames conceals a lot of hidden gems which got forgotten or even almost never played. As a mapper, some obscure wads provide unique ideas which got badly executed at the time.

The idgames archive has a ton of ordinary wads too. I like playing all the outstanding stuff presented by the cacowards but I love seeing how random people tinkered with the stock resources or even created new assets by their own. Clicking on "random file" on idgames feels like rifling through the garbage. Most of the time, you come across objects that are of no interest, but sometimes you stumble upon finds that have unjustly ended up there.

The fact that it is random adds a good dose of dopamine.

8. You are ERIWA's #1 player by a huge margin! How do you manage to be so consistent and play so much? Don't you get tired or bored?

I have a specific rule: "I play until I die or intentionally stop". Because yes, I'm sometimes bored or/and tired. I have a real job too, so I can't play dozen of wads every day. The length of my session can vary from a few minutes to a few hours. Sometimes, because I die in the first wad. Or because I don't feel continuing. This self-imposed rule helps to keep the momentum going, as I like to write a little sentence describing my death to end the session. Each time I die in the first wad I play; it represents an opportunity to take a small break and prevent a possible burnout.

I don't force myself to play a certain number of wads per day. It can be 0,1 or even 10 for the most productive days. I rarely play full megawads and I don't review each map about the multi-levels wads.

When I feel lazy, it's not about playing wads but rather writing the reviews. I'm not always inspired and, objectively, some wads are too devoid of content to be worth commenting and my English is pretty limited. Anyway, I don't try to be too perfectionist. I assume it's more a matter of quantity in quality about the Er/iwa. I don't like spending hours writing a review and, in that case, it's more hot off the press comments than accurate analysis. The most important things reside in playing various wads and express my feelings about them or just write a brief description. That's all.

That's how I managed to review at least 1 000 wads in one year and a half.

9. What cancelled or inactive events would you like to see return to the community?

I admit I have no specific idea but it's sad the newstuff chronicles isn't active anymore.

It's not really an event but I wish the ability to comment directly on idgames would come back someday. It's still possible to post a review via doomworld but it doesn't have the same charm in my opinion.

10. Which members of the community do you consider your biggest inspiration? A favorite mapper, for example?

Difficult question, sorry to not be specific enough, but each mapper which suceeds at finishing his project is inspirational to me. I can still drop some great mapper names but I will not develop how each of them influenced my mapping style, it



"'Goetia' from Tangerine Nightmare is my first ambitious great map and one of my most known entries" -Roofi

would be too long: Death-Destiny, TimeOfDeath, Gusta, Jonas Feragen, Likka Keranen...

Now, I think one of the most inspiring members of the doom community is probably Mtpain 27. He's not a doom mapper and he's probably a bit of an outsider but I became addicted to his review format and especially his grading system. Of course, it's impossible to give an objective grade to an artistic creation but it's a cool way to classify which maps you hated, you moderately enjoyed or loved. I don't say he invented the grade system, but I love how he implemented it for commenting Doom maps.

He's really one of the few video makers whose videos I've watched all of and I enjoy watching them again and again.

He also covered several community projects made by the french doom community and I can only be grateful for doing a such publicity!

11. Of all the maps you have made, which one do you appreciate the most?

I know I can only elect one map but let me list some of my best maps:

- "Ventôse" from Deadly Standards 3, an ultimate doom project, is my magnum opus among my released maps. I'm extremly proud of this map even if the extreme complexity and the resource famine can't please everyone.
- "Goetia" from Tangerine Nightmare is my first ambitious great map and one of my most known entries. I'm happy I managed to incorporate so many ideas.

However, I want to elect "Rêve Lucide" (translated lucid dream) from 180 minutes pour vivre as my personal favourite map. Unlike the two maps mentioned above, "Rêve Lucide" only took me 3-4 hours to create. I feel that I have never succeeded in condensing my mapping style and my influences as much as in this map. The battles are tense and explosive, with a cheerful atmosphere and a dreamlike landscape featuring my trademark sector trees. This map uses the music "Lightbulb Sun" by Porcupine Tree which is one of my favourite bands. I've always wanted to create maps using their music and I think I accomplished my dream with "Rêve Lucide".

12. What future projects are you working on now?

If you talk about mapping projects, I actually have "no super cool secret megawad project" at this moment. I'm an occasional mapper and working

with doombuilder doesnt represent my main activity!

But I have several projects that fit my endless appetite for wads:

- Continuing my adventures on the Er/iwa of course! I'm far from having discovered the whole idgames archive!
- I want to record longplays on vanilla wads with my favourite tool: DOSBOX.
- Quite an original idea ubt I want to create quizzes on wads that I know well, just to have fun and challenge the knowledge of others on known wads.
- Making more maps for various projects when I get inspired.

13. If you could have one Doom wish come true, what would it be?

I could give a basic answer like getting a cacoward or that the community stays active for eternity, but let's be a bit crazier.

With the development of Als, I would imagine a robot similar to Midjourney or Stable Diffusion, which would generate maps with prompts. It would be fed by the entire idgames archive and could recognise a

number of mappers in order to recreate their style.

When I was younger, I spent a lot of time generating wads on Oblige, I can't even imagine the excitement this kind of invention would give me nowadays.

However, I would like to remind you that all credit goes to the countless contributors to idgames and not to the prompt writers in case such a thing ever comes to exist.

14. Any last words for our readers?

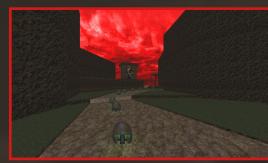
I would like to thank Endless for this totally unexpected interview as I have never released a real megawad or I am not a really known member of the community. The Wadazine is a great creation that allows us to highlight the latest news about Doomworld!

I would also like to thank all the readers of this interview, who have been able to get to know me better through these questions!

Interview by Endless











Maps by Roofi, from '180 minutes pour vivre'

ENERGY ENDLESS

HELL BENEATH

The sky is turned ablaze in orange hatred. Distant flames burn through the land as they turn hell asunder. The green marble bricks feel unnerving and oddly cold; the air smells acidic, the scent of melting flesh and decaying gore fills the senses with chemical rage. A wooden floor is the only remembrance of the distant Earth. A far cry echoes through the dark walls, recoiling from the gurgles of the possessed and the demonic. There is no safe place here,

no heaven, no rest. There is only hell, and a shotgun quietly waiting for a new hand to touch it. The shells are hot, thirsty, eager for death. A single wailing tone sets the scene, and now, you are in Hell Beneath.

Episode Four, MAP01: Hell Beneath, by American McGee, is the premier map to the last and final episode of **Ultimate Doom** - Thy Flesh Consumed. The primary reason as to why **Doom** fans have permanent PTSD from orange skies. E4M1 welcomes new and old players alike into a world of pain and suffering, marked by its sim-

plicity and beauty.

There are a ton of original levels created by the official id level designers and other contributors. A variety of levels have gotten immortalized through their popularity and permanence either by the fans themselves, or even popular gaming culture. One of the most famous examples of this is E1M1: Hangar. A classic, near perfect introductory level that pretty much kickstarted the world of FPS for many fans across the world. There are other levels that have managed to also reach this status, of course, either through their quality or uniqueness, but among that ocean of levels that range from the very first episode to the last map created by the Casali brothers, BEAUTIFUL

Doom is a simple game that has managed to endure thanks to a variety of reasons, chiefly among those is its consistent and enduring art style

which

h a s

think that Hell Beneath stands out among all of them.

E4M1 is a small, deceptively simple map that while looking charming and modest on the outside, has quite the ferocious bite and ambience on the inside. An enthralling imagery, the level opens episode four with a fantastic design that, to my own mind, has managed to capture the spirit of **Doom** in its most pure way. The word 'pure' might sound quite elitist and pretentious, but I truly believe that this level is, ultimately, the platonic ideal of what **Doom** is on its roots: Beautiful, bloody, and basic.

palpable charm that exudes 90s simplicity while still looking good. Its textures are not only mere low-resolution photographs from real life, but also handcrafted, pixel by pixel, designs that evoke feelings of dread, technology, darkness, gothic and hellish nightmares. Hell Beneath is a noticeable different in all aspects to the

very first level most people have played from **Doom**, that being E1M1. While the classical, impermeable style of the first episode is unquestionable, iconic to the brim, I do believe that it is episode four - the gothic, gloomy, marble-filled nightmare that brings to

life the game to its best identity. That one of spooky hell fortress filled with gore and demons contrasted with the beautiful architecture of

forsaken palaces.

Just as the iconic blue room of E1M1 welcomes us to what **Doom** is, the iconic orange sky, acidic pool and woodmarble mixture welcomes us to what **Doom** feels. It is so simple yet so effective at creating a beautiful hell locale that immediately tells you the dangers and powers of what you are about to encounter.



While the orange tint is quite the amazing sight to enjoy, it only gets elevated by the a wesomely crafted MIDI by Bobby Prince. Sign of Evil, one of, if not the

best **Doom** song ever created, and also one of the few that seem to have been purely arranged by Prince (rather than copied from other

BLOODY

The echo of the guitar prepares you for the sound of your own wailing as you suffer through acidic pain and a shotgunner symphony. E4M1

and attack you immediately. Because you only have a shot-gun and pretty much nothing else (other than the puny pistol) you have to retreat and attack tactically. As a blind runner, this map punishes your mistakes gravely. Move too fast

and you'll end up in the acid pool, surrounded on all sides; try to run away into the next room and you'll be facing off against a small group

of imps. While you might think that this seems to be anti-Doom, as the game is punishing you for being too fast, it still rewards you for quick thinking and fast reflexes. Taking cover, finding a good firing position, as well as quickly getting those few health items and ammo, is a skill needed to properly survive the map without getting blasted to hell.

Yet the more you play, the harder it gets, despite never actually increasing in size. The map has probably one of the smallest and tightest layouts in the entire game, but the way it is designed is by taking backtracking into account, it only takes seconds to fully traverse its entire length, yet in doing so you have to take account all the enemies surrounding you as well as the acid pools.

sources) with all the **Doom** beauty added to it. From the first moment I heard that guitar cry wailing in the distance, I knew I was getting into some serious ultra-violence.



shines only due to its bombastic introduction in the visual side, but also due to its extreme challenge when it comes to gameplay. This level has quite the infamous reputation for being exceptionally hard when compared to other of the **Doom** original levels. On ultraviolence difficulty, there are no medikits at all, only a few health bonus and that is pretty much it. That is all you have to survive through this little nightmare, and while there are not a lot of enemies, the map is carefully designed to play out against you.

From the start, the first room is a teleporter trap where once you move, you'll awaken a group of shotgunners that will start to teleport in your vicinity After you clear the first room, the next one surprises you by throwing a few specters at you in a tight space, forcing you

more. Barons of Hell, only a few of them, yet one is more than enough to utterly destroy you if you try to fight it in the closed room. You will most likely not have enough ammo to properly fight it, but

to a trap filled with imps, and if you aren't careful, you might get gangbanged by a group of Barons of Hell designed specifically to slaughter you. These are not survivable, at least not with traditional strategies. Once all that is done, survival

is ahead and you get into E4M2, which some consider to be even crueler than the first one.

Hell Beneath makes quite the honor to its title by throwing you straight into the gaping mouth of hell as your first try. It is a pity that most of the rest of the levels will not ever show the same considerations and challenges as this one did, as the way E4M1 is played is quite different from your usual, traditional **Doom** level.

to move around and shoot quickly. Yet, don't rush straight ahead or, once again, you'll get destroyed by the positioned shotgunners in the next room, which are positioned in a way that makes them act like sharpshooters. They won't follow you around, but they will pin you down to a spot with their potential for high damage output. If you do commit the mistake of rushing, and still survive, you are at risk of getting stuck in the acid river and mauled to death by more specters. Yes, I know it is actually nukage but in my mind I've always called it acid.

Once you survive these encounters, it is time for the first key, and the first deadly trap that increases the difficulty even

most people overestimate their strength against the first level, so a first death is quite common here.

Finally, you can go back to the initial room and open the adjacent area where the last key is found. A small corridor leads



It is challenge based around survivability and good decisions. A first timer will most likely die in UV, yet dethe smallest of Doom levels, even smaller than E1M1, yet in its short duration it manages to be more challenging, enduring, moody, and powerful than pretty much any other level.

It is

the challenge, it respite experienced players wards with several secrets that will make your life much, much easier, and much, much satisfactory. Here, the replayability is noted by offering you alternatives to your demise, or the demons' demise. Despite its small size, and compact layout, E4M1 manages to feel more grandiose than it is and kicks you in the ass even harder than the other larger levels.

While basic tends to be used to denote something generic and boring, here, for the sake of making it rhyme, I used it as a way to describe the modesty and simplicity of Hell Beneath. As said previously, it is among

perfect demonstration on how Doom cane make it work with the bare minimum. The motto: less is more, applies quite well here in pretty much every aspect. It has little item counts and weapons, a few dozen enemies at most, just four distinct areas, and a simple, linear layout that is evolving as you play. It doesn't try to be anything else other than an enduring and grueling welcome doomers that were expecting another breeze of an episode to finish the story. In a way, it is Doom's biggest twist: here the demons are finally getting to you, and you are now their prey.

Probably one of the reasons why I respect this level so much

is the fact that still, decades later, I find it exceptionally fun to play. Yeah, I already know all the tricks and tips to finish it quickly, smoothly and with everything at 100%, but I still manage to find myself going back to it. It is most likely nostalgia

mixed with a little melancholy for a platonic image of Doom, but, in a way, it is also an objectively gloomy experience that jus attracts me to the core.

It encapsulates the painfully enjoyable experience of playing an ultra-violent videogame filled with satanic imagery and gore.

To me, Hell Beneath is what Doom is. That being... your doom.

-ENDLESS



A LOOK INTO CLASSIC-CLASSIC DOOM IN 2022

Following a trend of major activity, this year saw a stream of releases that were both diverse and quite the surprise to wit-

ness, yet among the consistent quantity, this year was also highlighted by a noticeable increase WADs in made for none other than the OG, The Ultimate Doom. Community projects took the reins and resurrected and old school love for the simple modesty of the shotgun, in a gory symphony of fast ultra-violence paced against far too many

imps and former humans, and fuck, shit, that's, uh, that's too many lost souls, man.

One way or another, it was quite the stark contrast compared to previous years when releases for Ultimate Doom



were far in between. The love for Doom 2 in the mappers heart it is well justified, after all, from a mechanical point of view, is Doom to near perfection, closing the gameplay loop and adding the greatest shotgun of all time, a weapon

> so daring, so beautiful, that some people unabashedly call themselves SSG addicts. Yet, while the SSG is a weapon to truly be afraid of, its might and domination in the field is quite noticeable; yet the good ol' shotgun still manages to crack open a few brains here and there thanks to its fastpaced pump action

and well established, if a little odd, vertical precision. What better way to enjoy it than with Ultimate Doom?

In no orderly fashion, here's some of the various Ultimate Doom releases that brought us the goodness of nostalgia alongside the melodic rhythm of the single shotgun:



Anomaly Report

By valkiriforce

A fan favorite of the year and one hell of a journey, Anomaly Report is a fantastical piece of work that synthetizes the bests aspects of the original Doom; fast paced action, mod-

esty in the details, and well-placed enemies that can still kick your ass. A one-man-army megawad, this one is a must. Especially if you enjoy some realistic scenarios.



Solar Struggle

By various, led by ViolentBeetle

A raging community project that tells the story of a marine traveling across planets while destroying entire armies of demons. Solar Struggle is a fantastical conceptual megawad that's both pretty to look at and very enjoyable to

play, establishing a well-balanced curve that's got a little bit of everything, as cliché as that sounds, you have your very easy yet enjoyable first episode, and your ball-busting last episode. Just the way I like it!



Deadly Standards 4

By various, led by Walter Confetti

The final iteration in the Deadly Standards series, this community project takes on the last episode and, as such, ends on quite the high note. Taking inspiration from the original, each map had a different theme and goal, and each one possesses a different style of play that ranges from

quick combat to bombastic maps that are as huge as challenging. It is quite the showstopper at times!



PUSS XIII: TH1RT3EN

By various

Because who doesn't like hell? Well, have full five episodes of hell in Ultimate Doom! Part of the passionate PUSS series (that's not exactly the best acronym, is it? We have PUSS and ASS, how about that), this episode is a full

-blown odyssey across infernal palaces, hellish dimensions and dangerous lands of fire.



2022 A Doom Odyssey

By poorf et al

Speaking of odysseys, here's one that's going to take you across the world. The sequel to the iconic 2002: A Doom Odyssey, now twenty years later, updated and better than ever! Probably the biggest release of the year, at five full episodes, plus ten bonus maps. This is one hell of a trip that will take

you a long time to finish, but believe me, by the time is over, you will stare at the screen and reflect on how far we have come.



Malignant

By Sesamia

Now we have an Ultimate Doom mini episode that recaptures the spirit of vanilla flavor at its full capabilities. Simple looking visuals combined with lovely detailing and a variety of scenarios that complement each other while staying consistently fun. Don't have a lot of free time to play? Try this one then.



Stickney Installation

By Snaxalotl

Another Ultimate Doom megawad that brings the great beauty of a full replacement of all the four main episodes. Go through techbases, into a corrupted hell, and across infernal marble palaces. It has it all – you truly owe yourself to playthrough this lovely megawad.



The Ultimate TWANGO

By various

If you have the itch for the earliest days of Doom deathmatch, then you can now quench that thirst with a fully vanilla megawad for Ultimate Doom, full of multiplayer fragging delight!



Silence.wad

By Wilster_Wonkels

What's with the megawads this year! They are full of great surprises and each one feels like an early Xmas present. Here's Silence, one that's bound to make you shut your mouth and pay attention to the damn demons lurking around. Another one-person-megawad, this classic replacement is a great entry

by Wilster, and one hell of a great way to enjoy the classic gameplay of The Ultimate Doom.



Now here's some food for thought: Doom came out in 1993. If you were born that year, congrats, you're now 29 years old, and if you were in high school during the release of our unholy FPS father, double congrats, you're two steps away from the grave! And if you, IF you were already a college graduate or had children in 1993, then, honestly man, be careful with your hip.

If you're reading this, chances are that today is December 10 (if we didn't miss the deadline for the hundredth time, that is) and Doom just earned an extra level point, reaching 29 years of age since it's very first inception in the long-gone age of the 90s! Whoa, are we old...

Doom has come a long way since 1993. A plethora of new releases, community evolutions and a ton of content has been released since. Doom 3 kicked ass and gave trauma to all the ten years old of the 2000s, and Doom 2016 and Eternal brought back the king into the throne, declaring itself as one of the greatest FPS games of all time, forever and ever. Not to be confused with that one forever. In all honestly, Doom is an old as fuck game, and if you were one of

the lucky ones to enjoy this classic during its golden years, I honestly have huge respect for you and the fact that you have stuck with this little piece of gaming history for so long. Old age jokes aside, Doom, and its fanbase, is a testament to how true the adage is: If you take care of things, they last.

We have come so far, and there's still a lot to go. During all these years, this game has had a lot of eras or periods that have ranged from mild obscurity to bombastic reawaking, yet never have we had to face a truly dark age where Doom could have fallen into near death. Sure, the late 2000s were a desper-

time after years without news from id Software, but, as the community stood firm, resisting the passing of time, our prayers were answered. Ever since 2016, the community has achieved substantial improvements and produced a massive stream of content, nonstop for years. Every day there's a new WAD release, and every time we are greeted with a steady dose of pure hell madness, right into our bloodstream! I think it is fair to say that we, Doom fans, are quite lucky!

Here at the Wadazine, we want to celebrate this game. Our addiction, our obsession, and probably our doom.

Congratulations on 29 years of pure satanic madness! Here's for more 29 years, and more and more!

—ENDLESS

SINCE 1993 ...

A lot has happened since yesteryear. Doom became a 29yo grumpy uncle, and us, well, we are still kicking. If you're wondering what other things are becoming old, here's some few noticeable happenings, events and works, that might give you a glimpse of how long it has been, or how fast we move.

SINCE SEPTEMBER 30, 1994...

Doom 2 has been out for 28 years.



SINCE APRIL 30, 1995... The Ultimate Doom was released 27 years ago.

SINCE 1995... Maximum Doom was released 27 years ago, I think.

SINCE JUNE 17, 1996... Final Doom has reached 26 years of age.



SINCE MARCH 31, 1997... Doom 64 was released 25 years ago.



SINCE MAY 6, 2003... Masters of Doom was released 19 years ago.

SINCE AUGUST 3, 2004... Doom 3 was free from the shackles of hell, 18 years ago.

SINCE APRIL 4, 2005... Doom 3: Resurrection of Evil finished Doom 3's story, 17 years ago.

SINCE OCTOBER 21, 2005... the Doom Movie is set, uh, free, also 17 years ago.

SINCE MAY 26, 2010... Doom 2 is ported to Xbox 360, and with it, No Rest for the Living, 12 years ago.

SINCE OCTOBER 16, 2012... Doom 3: BFG Edition, sparks new life, 10 years ago.

SINCE MAY 13, 2016... DOOM (2016) is released to a roaring audience, and a new era begins, 6 years ago.

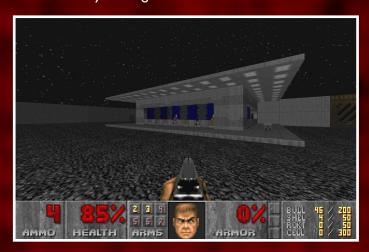
SINCE MARCH 20, 2020... Doom Eternal gave us a new life in hell, 2 years ago.

SINCE 1994,

It's no secret that Doom fans are crazy, and they have been giving us, for free, a steady output of fantastically made works that are, to this day, a joy to play. Since 1993, we have been given:

SINCE MARCH 7, 1994... Origwad, the first ever PWAD, was released 28 years ago.

SINCE JUNE 23, 1994... Doomsday of UAC, one of the first feature-advanced WADs, was released 28 years ago.



SINCE OCTOBER 19, 1994... Aliens TC, the first ever total conversion, was released 28 years ago.

SINCE 1994... NJ DOOM, the first ever standalone megawad, was released 28 years ago.

SINCE DECEMBER 19, 1995... Memento Mori was released 27 years ago.

SINCE MARCH 21, 1996... Icarus: Alien Vanguard, the first free megawad by Team TNT, was released 26 years ago.

SINCE APRIL 22, 1996... Hell To Pay,

one of the first commercial PWADs, was released 26 years ago.

SINCE JULY 26, 1996... Perdition's Gate, another famous commercial PWAD, was re-



leased 26 years ago.

SINCE JULY 27, 1996... Memento Mori Il hits the archives, 26 years ago.

Since February 22, 1997... Mordeth is premiered, and there is no sign of life for the next episodes, 25 years later.

SINCE MAY 2, 1997... Hell Revealed changes the world of WADs, 25 years ago.



SINCE JULY 4, 1997... Requiem comes to life, 25 years ago.

SINCE NOVEMBER 14, 1997... Eternal Doom makes history, 25 years ago.

Team Eternal and TeamTNT Present...

ETERNAL

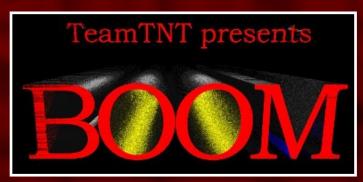
Now a full 32+ levels of Eternal challenges

SINCE DECEMBER 23, 1991... the source code was released, and that same date, DOSDOOM, the first source port ever, was released 25 years ago.

SINCE MARCH 6, 1998...

ZDoom was released, 24 years ago.

SINCE MAY 27, 1998... Boom was released, 24 years ago.



SINCE AUGUST 7, 1998...

Earth, an iconic realistic outdoors WAD, was released, 24 years ago.

SINCE MAY 21, 1999... Assault on Tei Tenga, one of the first ZDoom hub WADs, was released, 23 years ago.

SINCE NOVEMBER 12, 2000... Vrack is released, and an iconic series begins, 22 years ago.

SINCE NOVEMBER 14, 2001... Nuts.wad is released, and so a legend rises, 21 years ago.

SINCE DECEMBER 24, 2001... Alien Vendetta, one of the monuments of this community, was released, 21 years ago. What a time to be alive.



Doom Odyssey, is released, marking the end of an era, 20 years ago.

SINCE MAY 28, 2004... Deus Vult was released, and a new dawn begins, 18 years ago.

SINCE JUNE 2, 2007... Knee-Deep in ZDoom was released, 15 years ago.



SINCE AUGUST 24, 2008...
UAC Military Nightmare was released, and uh, stuff happened, 14 years ago.

SINCE SEPTEMBER 4, 2010...

Brutal Doom, the mod that shook the community and internet, was released, 12 years ago.

SINCE DECEMBER 10, 2012...

Back To Saturn X celebrates vanilla Doom with an epic release, 10 years ago.



SINCE JUNE 13, 2015... Sunlust, the WAD of WADs, is released, 7 years ago.

SINCE JANUARY 15, 2016...

John Romero releases Tech Gone Bad, his first Doom map in decades, 6 years ago.

SINCE MAY 8, 2016... Ancient Aliens surprises the world, 6 years ago.



SINCE DECEMBER 10, 2018...

Eviternity comes, a new monument to a rising golden age, was released, 4 years ago.

SINCE MAY 22, 2019... John Romero takes the reins and releases SIGIL, 3 years ago.



SINCE NOVEMBER 9, 2020...

Ar Luminae, the biggest map ever, was released, 2 years ago.

SINCE MARCH 25, 2021...

Heartland was released, giving new life to the Eternity Engine, 1 year ago.

And since December 10, 2022... Doom still lives...

Here's too even more **YEARS**, more decades, and more Doom, forever.

-ENDLESS



Absolute Dishonor By valkiriforce and 4003 2016

If you are looking to play into something Doomy and gloomy, look no further than Absolute Dishonor. A vanilla-compatible eight-level WAD created by the joint efforts of valkiriforce and 40oz. With a reverent atmosphere and tightly packed level design, this little WAD adventure is one that will entertain those that enjoy the crunchy side

of their meal, you know, with whole pixels and all that shit.

Absolute Dishonor is an interesting WAD that feels, at times, like an experiment. Two mappers with quite different styles of mapping but that cojoined to work in something that follows a similar patter with some interesting changes in pacing, design and visual look, while generally maintaining, at least to a degree, a certain cohesion when it comes to the overall gameplay of the mapset, yet, ultimately, both mappers differ quite greatly in what they offer and you can tell almost by looks alone, who did what.





Despite the generally palpable differences in level design, both level designers ultimately come down into terms when it comes to quality, and Absolute Dishonor ends up becoming an interesting meal that combines both fries with hamburgers. kiriforce takes the crown for its sprawling vanilla gigantic, nightmares that are exceptionally well detailed and superbly compacted while having an insane number of possible paths, secrets to explore, areas to enjoy and monsters to kill. 40oz on the other hand, feels more vanilla and down to the core, traditional. Fast-paced without the need to pay much attention to logical sensibilities, and rather focusing on providing fun, well-developed sets of encounters that are pure **Doom** goodness, almost 90s in spirit, while keeping quality in execution.

While some of the jumps between levels can be a little dauting, especially after valkiriforce's maps, which are gigantic, and 40oz are much smaller, Absolute Dishonor is lovely experience that evokes a sense of purity. Vanilla lovers and exploring enthusiasts will most likely find Absolute Dishonor, an honor to play. See what I did there? Yeah, I'm a fucking genius.





C2013) (SILLING) (SILLING)



Down in the depths of the Doom basement, lies a single, red box with rusty chains and a broken lock, waiting for a worthy sacrifice to be made. There, like a resting nightmare, lies SIGIL. The infamous mapset created by one of our lords and saviors, John Romero, was one that brought the **Doom** community to its knees, some paying, some crying, some begging. There is no denying that SIGIL was quite the impact back then, and it became quite the hot topic for a while due to its very challenging, unforgiving, and rather sadistic design. Just the way I like it. It dark and cramped corridors were a warm cup of tea that my hands welcomed back then, and even today, I still wait for the glorious comeback of its sequel. Yet, in the meantime, some mad doomers have taken upon themselves to provide me with the influx of ultra-violence that I need for daily sustenance.

The_SloVinator is one of those drug WAD dealers that manage to inject me right into the mood for some hellish adventuring in the Satanic pits of the old world of **Doom**. The meal of the day? Oculus Malus, a fantastical single

-level WAD for the Ultimate **Doom**, inspired by the nightmarish landscapes of SIGIL. This little piece of limit-removing goodness pays great tribute to the classic style of the Baphomet's Demesne level. It is dark, red, and violently cramped. Multiple enemies are awaiting right around the corner, and gameplay is mostly based around being tactical, slow and picky about where to and how to fight. All guns blazing might get you killed, otherwise. The level design is pretty much a fantastical homage to the new style created for SIGIL. From the infernal cracks on the floor to the hidden eye switches, the evilness here is one permeated through the fantastical landscape of a tight map that is pretty much down to the last detail, a SIGIL map. It is pretty cool in that department, and succeeds greatly at imitating the fifth episode.

The gameplay follows the same pattern as its inspiration; the level is based around tight paths that collide, evolve and mutate



throughout the whole duration of the map, with various traps, multiple monster closers and carefully positioned items. UV is quite the challenge and is going to require a few tries to get the hang of it, while HMP is still above normal difficulty while not being as overwhelming as UV. If you've played SIGIL before, you get the idea more or less of the kinds of combat encounters you will face against.

You better be ready for some fancy combat. The map gets hard-core from the get-go, and there's multiple areas where you'll be

as you face against different group of demons. The last area in particular is one big fight that I particularly didn't enjoy, as it includes some nasty puzzles that are a little breaking in the flow of the map, yet the locale and the ambience makes up for it by giving you a nice vista of hell.

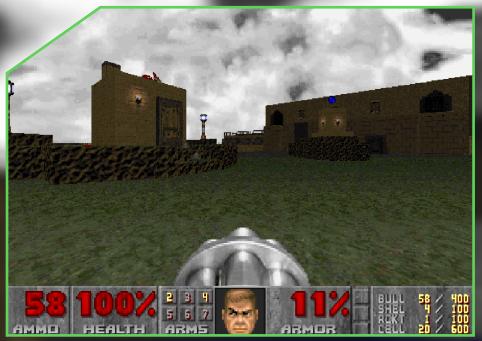
Oculus Malus is great example on how to follow a pattern, replicating it, and giving it enough polish to make it almost indiscernible from the original. Imitation is, after all, one of the greatest forms of flattery. Do take note, though: If you did not enjoy SIGIL in the first place, you probably wont enjoy this one. Those of you who like cramped spaces, Satanic imagery, brutal combat and a violent flow of explosive exploration, than take this WAD for a spin, it's going to like you, and you are going to like it. Toxic relationship to the best of its qualities. Help.



-ENDLESS

Vingle Chloride Volc/ANDO

By Velcrosasquateh



Time for some good reviewing of good limit-removing goodness! (isn't that what I just play nowadays?) with a fantastical large single-level WAD by *Velcrosasquatch*. Vinyl Chloride Volcano is massive, open-area map that ranges from large, intense fight, to carefully positioned encounters in underground pits of acid sewage.

VCV throws us right into some glorious action with a fantastical locale that's designed with serious attention to the ambience, creating a beautiful welcome to the players that are looking for some nicely done locales. In that sense, from a visual perspective, VCV does nail pretty much everything. It goes out of his way by theming the map around huge open-

areas, something that's not exmapping, since **Doom** does tend to look a little bare due to its linedef geometry, yet here, with careful planification and good usage of textures, the areas look natural, feel good to explore and allow for Doomguy full movement range, going easily above the 50 or so mph limit of constant ultraviolence. It combines both outdoor areas with interiors that mostly acts as connections between the different main areas. The interiors are nothing short of delightful with good spacing and nicely done texturing work





that exalts the geometry of the level. With a proper vanilla-ish port, VCV works to its fullest crunchiness.

As for a proper large map, there's also a proper number of demons to slay. At HMP, you can expect some good action with above 250 enemies, waiting for you. The exterior encounters are all about moving and avoiding incoming

projectiles. While hit scanners aren't used extensively, there's one particular area that did made me flinch for a second. The interior areas get a little tighter with carefully positioned mancubi and revenants. Velcrosasquatch likes using sniper nests, paying good attention to where the player will move and trying to outmaneuver us in a game of tactical pacing. It is pretty intense in that regard,

and, like any good level with a large range, it does change in pacing and style the longer you play, with some of the last areas offering the biggest challenges in the form of a beautiful party of gore. But worry not, if you are thinking of this level as being possibly too hard, it is not. It's pretty passable and any experienced doomer, and even newcomers, can take on it well enough.



In limit-removing fashion, Vinyl Chloride Volcano takes the simplicity of **Doom** and duplicates its scope to give us the best of the old school world in new world style. Go play it, take it on.





A break from my usual more traditional WADs, Bloom is a standout example of what GZDoom is best at, creating wild mods and total conversions that turn Doom into a completely different game. Bloom is a cool crossover concept where the worlds of Doom and Blood start merging, and the Cult is fusing demons with their monsters to create all sorts of insane creatures, and Doomguy and Caleb must go stop the merging of worlds in the Void. You will require GZDoom and the mod works fine with the latest version.

It should be noted Bloom will be very different from a typical **Doom** experience, and I find the gameplay gets closer to **Blood** than **Doom** and feels more like a BUILD game, but









that's not necessarily a bad thing. You will be able to jump, crouch, and even swim, and indeed this functionality is important like it is in **Blood** so it will not be a stiff setup like you get with typical Doom gameplay. Starting out you get the option of choosing Doomguy or Caleb each of course with their own weapon arsenal, but there are some additions especially with Doomguy later on so it's not all the same weapons. Each seems to play somewhat differently, Caleb seems to have a better rate of fire but you have a tendency to chew through ammo especially using altfires, whereas Doomguy seems to have a slower more powerful arsenal with the ability to toss grenades independently from

his selected weapon whereas Caleb has to pull out his dynamite to blow things up.



Perhaps one of the biggest gameplay changes though is the enemies themselves. BLOOM team did an excellent job of creating a great gallery of monster variants that will make your life miserable, and they provide a great challenge

even on lower difficulties. not everyday I can say a Revenant is charging at me while crying because it's fused with something else, and it has faster projectiles, and it's running VERY fast to punch me into next week...better give it both barrels. Also, gargoyle archviles...that's cursed. The enemies I think are one of the big selling points as it makes things fresh, they operate somewhat like how they would in **Blood**, but they also work how they might in **Doom**, it's a true fusion making fast pinky cerberi burning you to a crisp, and I don't think I have found all the variations that can murder you. I could go on about the monsters and what they do all day but I think it's best to experience it yourself.



The campaign of Bloom is a real high point of its design. The maps take various **Doom** and **Blood** maps and mash them together into maddening constructions where a wrong step can make you fall into the Void itself and die. You jump on crates from E2M1 while en-

zy and fun, and the joy in seeing what levels have been mashed together makes things interesting to explore and figure out where you are. So far I would say the game with the campaign goes toward **Blood** levels of difficulty so don't ex-

pect to do the usual **Doom** difficulty and make it through as easily I definitely suggest lowering it a notch or two for a smoother experience.

I highly recommend firing up Bloom, it's not difficult to get going and takes great advantage of GZDoom's modability to create a unique experience of giving us a crossover that I am sure many asked for. If you want to look into seeing some more of Bloom's gameplay this video by Mutant Mods which is the video that inspired me to play. If you want to see more cool mods and other works by the Bloom Team check out their website to see their other works. Now fire up Bloom and whip out your double barrel!

-FRIC CLAUS



PARIOUS ELLIE

The idea for Plutonia 2 originated back in 2000 when Sam "Metabolist" Woodman and a few other speedrunners starting throwing around the idea of a **Plutonia** sequel. We won't relay the turbulent development cycle of Plutonia 2 too much here, but it's safe to say that with the distractions from other projects, (Hell Revealed 2) and the departure of Woodman from the **Doom** community in 2004 - it was a miracle that it even ended up getting released. The final product ended up

containing several maps made by folks brought in after *Metabolist* left, and these were overseen by his partner in crime, Vincent "*Peroxyd*" Catalaa - perhaps the godfather of the ferocious French speedmapping that would become a more integral part of the community in the years after Plutonia 2's release.

All that meaningless context aside though, Plutonia 2 ended up pulling a Doom 2016, and turned out far better than anyone expected

from a project that was essentially torn-up and rebuilt from the ground up. The **Plutonia** hallmarks of sadistic enemy placement and emphasis on combat puzzles are still here to torment and terrorize any players foolish enough to try their luck with it.

What's more, Plutonia 2 clearly takes a cue or two from the primary influences of several of the main creators of Hell Revealed. No, you're not spending all your time shotgunning Barons, but you do find yourself gunning down large groups of monsters in some tight spaces, leaving behind the generally limited monster counts of Plutonia in the dust. So, as an authentic product, maybe it doesn't matchup.

Where it does matchup is the visual design. While it makes sense that multiple contributors would bring their own sense of style distinct from the Casali brothers, the fact remains that Plutonia's default textures are taken and dressed up in such a fashion that it



makes the work of the maps easy to admire. Bases, hellish fortresses, and even caves show a greater effort at creating a sense of place. Despite many maps being credited to multiple people, it's quite clear that everyone tried to put their best foot forward - especially with the combat. As stated before, Plutonia 2 owes a heavy debt to Hell Revealed, but most of that is from the generally fierce but largely reasonable difficulty found in most maps. Much of this is due to primary contributor Adolf "Gusta" Votja, the co-creator of the classic slaughter wad Kama Sutra, so perhaps that's not quite so surprising. He ends up putting in the overall strongest efforts, but it's certainly not as if the efforts of his co-contributors are disappointing especially in the maps where he has a co-author credit. Praise should also be given to Thomas van der Velden for adding some extra graphics and getting the project to the finish line, and Eternal, who normally makes maps a touch more exploratory than you might think fit in Plutonia, but he's still able to insert some cool secrets in his maps while keeping players on their toes.

All in all, Plutonia 2 is a classic megawad that helped to establish a tradition of more difficult wads that would be fully realized some years later by *Ribbiks* - and other mappers who enjoy torturing their players even more.

- LADYMISTDRAGON



THOMAS 'SCORPIUS' BRADEN - 2019

If there's one thing anyone that has read me for a while knows, is that I really, really like Thy Flesh Consumed. It's probably personal bias due to nostalgic reasons, but I've always found it to be the most evoking, eerie, and doom-y episode of them all. From the fantastical start of E4M1, to the very last map, even if it goes down in difficulty and general quality, each map has an special place in my doomed heart. So, you can imagine that whenever I discover someone, somewhere, made an entire episode of E4 inspired maps, then I get pretty damn psyched up. Well, here, Doom: Perdition, brings us just that. An entire episode replacement for Thy Flesh Consumed that pays tribute to the orangesky madness of the marble-filled landscape of the one, true, **Doom** hell.

Doom: Perdition does stay true to its word by being filled with different references to the original levels, some more obvious than others. For starts, the very first map is an obvious homage to the absolute ball-busting beginning of the original one, throwing you a dozen different armed enemies with little ammo, little health, and plenty of action to blow up. The rest of the episode manages to maintain this consistently in both visual style and gameplay, with good results that are just lovely to admire.

For even more surprises, some maps are actually inspired by SIGIL and follow similar pat-



terns of ultra-darkness in perilous areas. If you enjoy SIGIL, those might be a welcomed surprise for you. The visual quality in Doom: Perdition is top tier. It is highly consistent and well realized, as well as diverse and beautifully executed. It is not just a carbon -copy of Thy Flesh Consumed; it does its own thing, differentiating itself enough while also retaining some of the spirit of E4 with great attention to the way the atmosphere is created in the hellish landscape of the permanent dawn. Seriously, who doesn't love the orange sky from E4? It's perfect.

The gameplay, as you would expect, is hardcore. On Ultraviolence it can get quite rough and cruel, with very little ammo and items to survive. If there's one thing I wasn't particularly fond of, is the way the encounters are handled regarding ammo balance. At times it feels ridiculously tight due to the abusive use of barons of hell. There's too many of them when you are stupid low in ammo, and because there's no supershotgun at all, you'll have to be quite patience in dealing with these doors with HP. At times, the best choice is to just run around them and try to ignore them, since your ammo becomes quite scarce if you stay behind dealing with them. In a sense, there's some logical mapping philosophy behind this idea of enemy choices, but it also hurts the general playability and fun factor of the game. I like a challenge, but I don't like it when I'm chal-







lenged to fist punch five different barons of hell in a closed room.

Leaving that point behind, I don't actually have any major negatives about it. Doom: Perdition plays well, flows well and is consistently fun, while also having a great sense of hardcore gameplay due to its E4 nature of tight combat and tactical awareness. Every level has a different theme and style that makes it highly re playable, and the duration of it is just in the right spot for those that enjoy blasting through maps. I took me around an hour to finish it the first try, and that was hell of a fun.

Go perdition yourself into the good world of E4 inspired WADs. It is my favorite **Doom** world. It also shall be yours...

ENDLESS











PERFECTED HATRED BY PAGE666 - 2013

Hate. Let me tell you how much I've come to hate you.

They say that reaching perfection is a fool's errand; impossible, unfeasible, unthinkable. Yet if there's one thing, one thing alone, that we can perfect... that is **Doom**'s original themes turned to eleven with a twist of magical modern beauty. Perfected Hatred brings us just that. A vanilla delight that's a tribute to the original first maps of Thy Flesh Consumed, with the dials all turned to max and the violence smoothed in for our enjoyment.



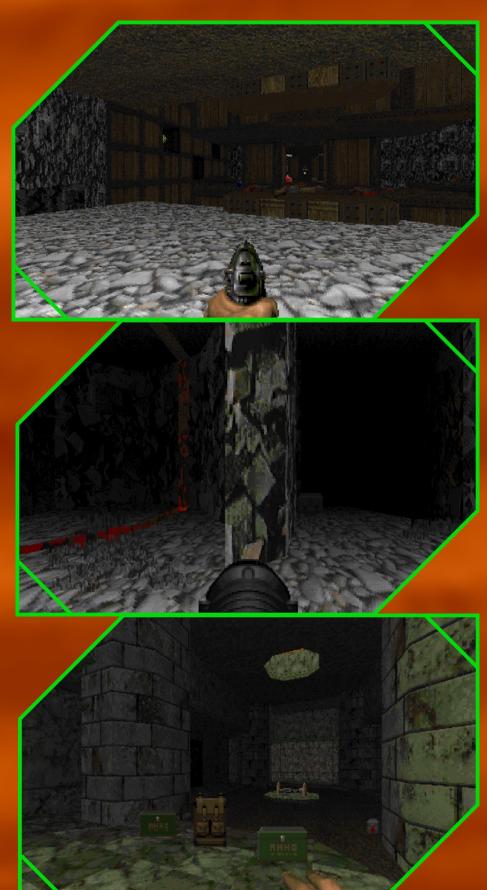
So, as you'd imagine already, yes, this is E4 inspired; marble landscapes filled with bloody pools, rivers of hatred pouring gore into orange skies of hellish gloom. The entrance alone

is one that is surely going to awaken a new instinct of survival in you, that, or some nostalgic admiration for the simplicity of old times, mixed with the polish of new times into a glorious result that looks good, feels good, and is good. Perfected Hatred manages to capture a classic idea and follows a good execution that is detailed in simplicity due to its vanilla constraints. The limitations work on par with the theme of E4 due to the simple yet well-known palette of colors and textures. It looks pretty good!



Gameplay is a little higher than what you would expect in the classic episode, while also maintaining a surmountable balance, although a very challenging one at that. The first areas are by far the hardest ones due to the surprise boss arena that happens right at the start; you'll get pretty spooked at first but you'll get the hang of it quite quickly (spoiler, just run away). The rest of the map makes use of traditional combat with a few surprises here and there, making emphasis in tight areas, closed quarters and using lighting as an ally, or enemy. Ammo isn't particularly low, but health can get tricky, and as usual with E4-inspired maps, you have to be careful not to get destroyed in seconds due to poor positioning. Other than that, you have a traditional flow that's both pretty sweet and beautiful to play. The various surprises that the map has are well combined with the general layout of the level, plus the geometry never gets on your way and the map feels constantly refreshing.

Perfected Hatred is a returning map after a long hiatus, and it showcases a solid level of understanding of both the thematic around the main topic of inspiration, and generally good



level design. It is a fun experience that's around 15-20 minutes long, and plenty worth if you are a fan of Thy Flesh Consumed.

Let me tell you how much I hate you.



DATACORE - 2016

Ultimate Doom madness? Datacore, from the French galore of talented mappers, has got you covered with a fantastical full megawad that replaces all 36 maps with some lovely new scenarios of daunting fun. It's not always you get a classic Ultimate Doom megawad that manages to be consistently fun throughout the whole duration of it, and yet, Endless Torture (despite its sadistic title) succeeds at it greatly.

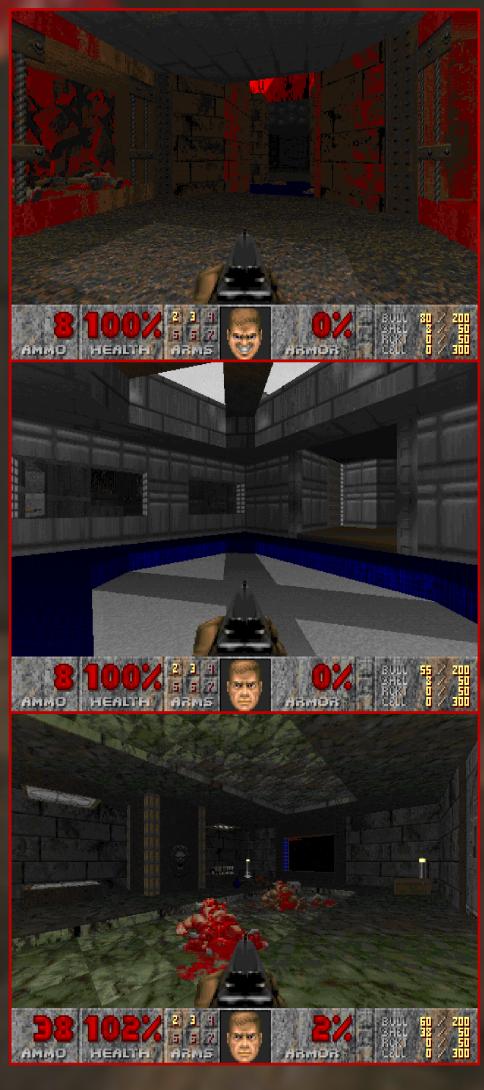




Endless Torture encapsulates the simplicity of the original game in its vanilla limitations and yesteryear inspiration. The megawad follows the traditional pacing of the original one, dividing each episode with its respective visual theme, finalizing with the grandiose brutality of Thy Flesh Consumed. Each map is carefully designed in style and essence, providing good visuals that are fun, sweet

and modest. As the saying goes: less is more. Yet, worry not; this is no mere regurgitation of the classic mapping styles of yore; it does its own thing while taking cues from the masters, recreating the levels with both spirit and charisma. Each episode is distinctive thanks to the variety of diversified arenas and encounters that you will be facing against. From simple techbase linearity to fantastical hellish exploration. If you are a fan of the classical style of Ultimate Doom, this megawad is going to check all your boxes with solid results.

Now, where Endless Torture shines is with its gameplay. It's bombastically fun while keeping simplicity at the right balance. It moves at racecar speeds, always pushing you forward into the fray of grueling combat. While the title of the megawad seems to imply a high degree of difficulty, most of the maps are respectful towards newcomers and have a precise balance of ammo and enemy ratio. Positioning is designed carefully and there's always a second chance at lower difficulties. Playing in Hurt Me Plenty! feels like a stroll through a park filled with demons; beautiful, but spicy. It



works just right into the spot of being a fast-paced megawad that's reminiscent of Scythe style of gameplay: punchy and short maps that are cohesively stitched together by a great understanding of what makes Doom Ultimate fun: the flow. In a way, you are going be constantly dancing against the hordes of hell, while singing a symphony of shotgun violence. But fear not, Datacore isn't one to abuse tanky enemies and pit you with only eight shotgun shells. There's plenty of ammo, plenty of options to engage your enemies, and plenty of ways to kill

them, all in a very uncomplicated manner.

Once again, the French surprise me. The romance connoisseurs are, ultimately, some of the best at creating levels that fit like a ring into the mechanical beauty of **Doom**. Endless Torture is a surprisingly well-done megawad that feels superbly fun from beginning to end. I actually managed to finish this entire megawad in just four days, playing an episode per day. I've come to a point in my life where finishing long megawads gets rough and tedious, but I was very pleased to find Endless Torture to be, an endless pleasure. Plus, it gets extra points for using such a cool word. Somebody should use that as its nickname. Would be a cool guy, huh?

Looking for an underrated and almost obscure piece of super fun Ultimate Doom? Endless Torture is your best bet. Download, plug in, and play it. Time to return to our old home.

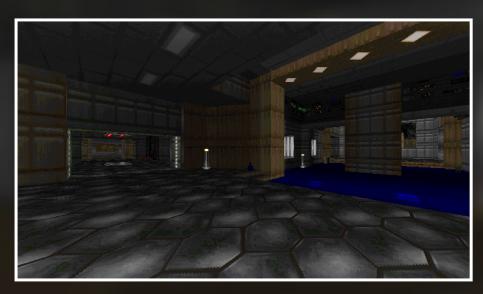




A DOOM ODYSSEY

BY PCORF, KRISTIAN ARO AND CHRISTIAN HANSEN

Let's go back in time. It is the year of our doomed lords, 2002. It's a new era, and a new age. **Doom** fans are eagerly awaiting the arrival of **Doom** 3, while various other games sweep the king's place in an attempt to fight for the throne. Meanwhile, a man, a legend, a myth, by the name of *pcorf*, is working on a new, massive project with the help of some friends, a lot of enthusiasm, and plenty of passion. That year would see the re-



lease of 2002: A Doom Odyssey, one of the most iconic megawads of all time. It would cement its place in the annals

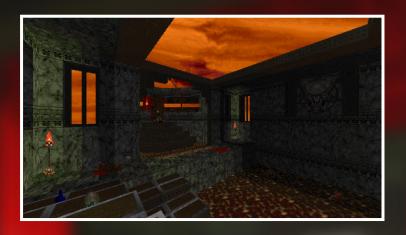
of **Doom** history, by being fun, lovely WAD. While outdated by modern stands and suffering from layout perspective, it's still worth checking out. And now for the fun part. Two decades later, pcorf is still here, and he has brought us a fantastical surprise: the sequel!



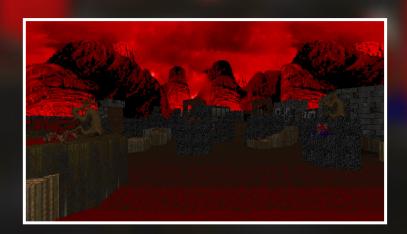
2022: A Doom Odyssey does tremendous honor to its title. This megawad (or gigawad) contains 50 boom-compatible maps, designed for **Ultimate**

Doom, replacing not only the original four episodes, but also adding an extra, and five bonus compatible through maps UMAPINFO. Most of the maps were designed by pcorf, with several contributions from Kristian Aro and Christian Hansen, the original trio making an epic comeback. An actual odyssey as you blast through a variety of levels and arenas that range from classical simplicity to hellish beauty. 2022 ADO is a gigantic beast that will take you a while to fully beat, but once you do it, it's glorious. And, as you can guess, it contains a collection of original MIDI music created by pcorf, as well as various handpicked tracks by Jimmy for the SIG-IL-inspired 5th episode.

The first episode sees you dancing through techbases infested by demonic invaders, while the second episode shows you the corruption and spread of hell through the marine bases, to be finally destroyed in the third episode, the most "classic" of the bunch, and a perfect homage to Inferno. But of course, you still have to send the final payoff in the fourth episode, where a hellish orange landscape awaits you hidden behind green marble walls and doomed chambers. If that's not enough for you, don't worry, the fifth and final episode sees you ravaging a surreal











land where hell is but a thought, and the mind is the killer. White skies and shadowy phantoms follow you around until the final arena, where retribution is granted. Aaaand if that's not enough, there's five extra maps that you can access by the console on UMAPINFO-compatible sourceports. These bonus maps are tributes to the old era of 90s shovelware, and they offer you a quite distinctive presentation and gameplay form that sees you challenged by a variety of puzzles that range from the simple to the slaughterish.

In other words: there's something for everyone. This gigantic piece of a megawad deserves a playthrough by those that enjoy a good vanilla ride, with the mechanics of a modern mapper that knows how to make fun maps. The original 2002 ADO suffered from being quite rudimentary in the gameplay department, even back in 2002, but the sequel doesn't make the same mistake and it succeeds at showing you a great set of short-medium levels that are so fun to play.

2022 ADO is an ancient echo with new life. It's the sound of the past with new notes; a symphony resurrected. Not exactly a tribute to ancient times (like Pandora would be), 2022 ADO is a fantastical banquet that hits the right spots. It's a fun, fast-paced adventure that feels like a classic epic.





One of the great things about **Doom** as an artform is that it's constantly building on itself. Whenever there's a new innovation in aesthetics, combat, or technology, artists swarm like flies to explore every nook and cranny of the technique. That's why over the years, plenty of up-and-coming mappers

have described their WADs as being inspired by Romero, or *Ribbiks*, or *Skillsaw*, or Malde.

But despite the fact that 2014's Going Down is widely accepted by those in the know as one of the great WADs of all time, **no one** imitates Cyriak "mouldy"

Harris. Because let's face it: no one else can do what this man does.

How blessed we are then, that **Doom**'s most inimitable talent brought his avantgarde sensibilities to bear once more with this year's Overboard. If Going Down was the corporate grind at





its most feverishly hellacious, Overboard is the break Doomguy so or so packed with memorable combat, sunny summertime vibes, and more sector ships than you with me most are the visuals, which manage to coherently balance inverting horror with genuinely funny visual gags (including a hi-



larious runner involving secret toilets.)

So if your idea of a relaxing vacation is rocketing hordes of imps into gooey piles of raspberry preserves - and let's be honest, would you be reading the Wadazine if it wasn't? - Overboard is the set for you.









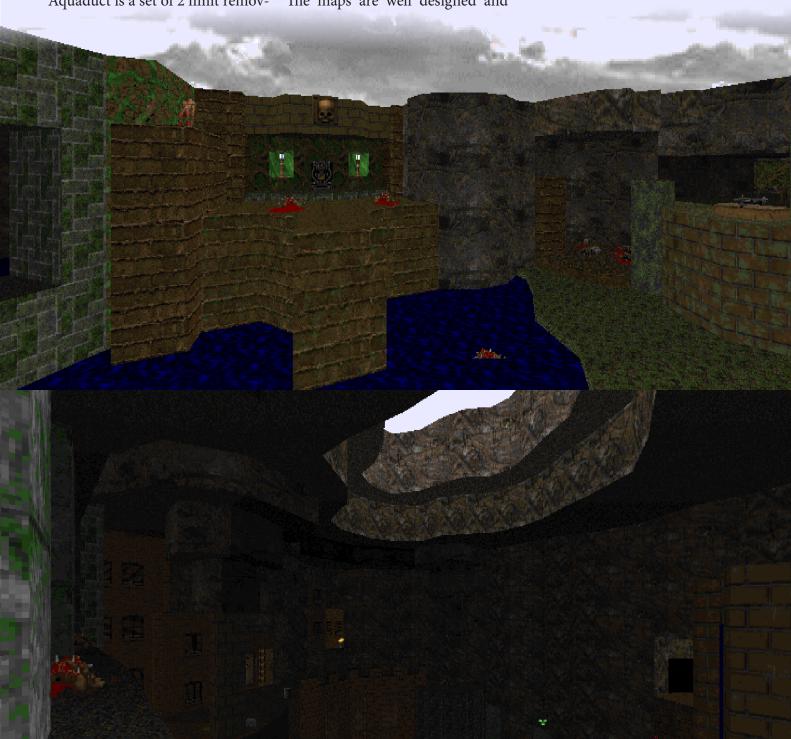
forests and into green infernos, infested with a hundred chaingunners waiting for your arrival. Pretty much the quintessential Plutonia experience, or at least that's the gist. Here, Dopaminecloud, a relatively new face to the scene, bringing the big guns. Aquaduct is a set of 2 limit remov-

AGUADUCT
(2022) By Dopaminecloud

ing-compatible maps designed for Plutonia, and, as you can tell, it makes honor to the tropes by adding an influx of challenging, fastpaced difficulty and greenish landscapes that are quite the sight.

A feast of modest, yet impeccable proportions, Aquaduct is a great set to challenge yourself for a little while, without having to add too much suffering into the mix. The maps are well designed and look lovely; the green tints and exterior landscapes creating an affordable mood that contrast with the red splatter of blood that you shall provoke. If you're feeling with the need for speed, fire up Plutonia, open Aquaduct, and go blast some demons. Special shoutout to that cool as hell cave in the first map!

- Endless



> Untitled.wad

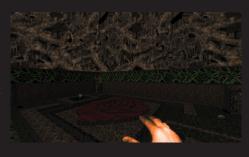
(2022) By Cristiana "Thelokk" Montanari

Thelokk's original pitch for this deathand-decay-themed mapset included the following question: "What kind of world could I create for a Doomguy who is well past their prime, who now clutches their shotgun as a useless anchor in the face of an enemy who does not care about bullets?" Probably the highest compliment you can give **!Untitled!** is this: it absolutely delivers on that premise.

Clearly our protagonist has little in common with the immortal Doom Slayer canonized by the bulk of our niche community, and likewise <code>[Untitled]</code> has little in common with Doom as we know it in 2022. Most "hard" WADs as we know them today are highly-optimized, tightly-wound slaughtermaps that pay out like clockwork to anyone who's wise to their tricks and traps.

Conversely, **IUntitled1** is hard because it has fights that are straight-up unwinnable even on lower difficulties. And because it has extremely unintuitive progression requiring a mix of puzzle-solving and good old fashioned 90s-style wall-humping. And because it has softlocks. A LOT of softlocks. Enough to require either constant savescumming or constant cheating. While we're on that subject, it has an entire map that can only be reached by cheating. And if all that's not enough to turn your stomach, MAP10 even commits Doom's cardinal sin by intentionally lacking an exit.









So "hard" is the wrong word for **IUn-titled1** – a better word would be simply "unpleasant". All the music has been replaced with the sound of shallow breathing that makes you intimately aware of your own lungs; all the colors have been replaced with washed-out grays and tans that make it even harder to find the way forward; the normally thrilling Doom combat has been replaced with terrified pacing along cramped, revenant-stuffed chasms. Computer Area Maps show you places you cannot reach and even the central boss fight is designed to be fled without firing a shot.

So why has such an "un-fun" W A D made it onto our best of the year list? Simple: because these are the most memorable maps you can experience in 2022. Not everyone will love **[Untitled]** or even be willing to push through its first miserable level but for those who do, for those who love the sense of helplessness you get from similarly boundary-pushing WADs like A.L.T. or The Mucus Flow, for those who prefer their Doom with an actual sense of doom, there's nothing else like this.

I have never been so aware of my own body and mental state while playing a Doom WAD, watching in horror as my favorite avenue for escapism was replaced with a grim prison that burrows into your heart and your lungs and your brain and refuses to be forgotten or ignored until you've bullied and cheated your way to its open-ended conclusion. I don't know Thelokk personally but just from playing this work I feel like we have had a similar journey through this infernal hellscape known as life. The themes of [Untitled] are at once impenetrable and universal, alien and deeply human. And no matter how many more WADs we see over the coming decades, to me this will forever be Doomguy's great final sendoff.





SOLAR STRUCK

Before this year, you could count me among those philistines who had no real interest in The *Ultimate* **Doom** or its mapping community. Why would you limit yourself to a smaller selection of monsters and weapons when **Doom** II is sitting right there with its agitating skeletons and mighty super shotgun? Why box yourself into a bizarre episodic structure when **Doom** II offers so much more flexibility and scale? And what's with all that ugly green marble?



Among the many excellent WADs that proved us Doom One doubters wrong in 2022, Solar Struggle stands out not because it's a great work in its own right, but because it shows how just a few extra textures, some nifty skyboxes, and a whole lot of artistry can transform a 30-year-old formula into something that feels truly epic and modern. It doesn't just make a case for Ultimate Doom as a game, but for Ultimate Doom as a medium through which a thousand new stories are waiting to be told. And "stories" really are the key to this planet-hopping community project. When you visit a map called "Hangar" or "Refinery" in the original Doom, you know you're in for another series of boxy, abstract arenas where combat and progression are the mapper's only priority. But when you visit "Stock Exchange" in Solar Struggle, DFF takes you to what is unmistakably an actual interplanetary stock exchange. Everything about this map from the literal red carpet that leads you to the main room to the fine art in the hallways silently tells you that this was recently a place of wealth and excess, now eerily silent save for the screams and howls of the demons who emptied it.



Conversely, Death Bear's Mineral Processing is a grimy, slimy industrial nightmare that makes you feel sorry for the poor working-class bastards who had to work here before getting zombified. Here too there's a beautiful open area, but you don't get to spend much time in it – there's work to be done and your pink demon bosses are already pushing you into grinding industrial equipment and chasing you down cramped cargo holds.



The beauty of a really great community project like this is that each map was somebody's baby, so each mapper was extremely thoughtful about how the detailing affects the narrative, combat, and pacing of their work. Every single map in Solar Struggle feels like a complete adventure in miniature, with architecture that's not just aesthetically pleasing but also truly lived-in to a degree rarely seen in **Doom**. And this is without neglecting clever boss encounters and incidental combat so damn fun that it proves once and for all that ten monsters is more than enough in the hands of great artists.



I'd love to go on about how amazing it felt to hijack the last spaceship from a corpse-choked spaceport or jump through a portal in the core of a dwarf planet or just stare in awe at Venusian cloud cities and lunar space elevators, but really, you owe it to yourself to experience the journey of Solar Struggle firsthand.



Released in April of this year Pagodia is a set of 9 maps that is vanilla compatible and indeed can be played in Chocolate Doom so plenty of other source ports will work. For any features it is recommended to disable mouselook, crouching, and jumping for the best experience. There are some dehacked shenanigans so make sure it's getting loaded correctly by your port -merge is recommended for Chocolate Doom and other ports will probably load it by default from the WAD.



Immediately on playing Pagodia it's strange aesthetic leaps out at you with a large emphasis on green and purple. While this is strange it is striking and works with shades that are not typical in Doom mapsets, and the textures are very nicely done. Pagodia's aesthetic also takes a large influence from Japanese culture and cyberpunk themes using Kanji and other characters throughout as decoration and art inspired by or pulled from anime that have been incorporated into the textures in a nice way. Pagodia doesn't skimp on custom music either with some nice tunes thrown in that while a little more lighthearted in sound works well with the art style. The layouts can vary between each other with different map makers with each block of 3 maps having a theme that leads into a more industrial and city setting as you go.

In terms of difficulty expect to have a rough time if you are not a highly skilled Doom player. Even on lower difficulties the encounters can be rough, but a challenge can be its own appeal for some so those looking for something harder to run through will probably hop right in and feel at home.

Overall Pagodia is a great project to check out if for just the texturing and music alone, and you wouldn't be badly served if you just wanted to run through the maps with no monsters and explore. I feel it is a worthy honorable mention for this year's Wadazine awards and hope you will try it out!

-Eric Claus



Every once in a while, a forgotten legends rises from the ashes. Projects that sometimes take so long, we kind of forget about them and keep with our lives. Slowly but surely, like a seed growing, these projects came to fruition and a new breath of new life is gifted to us.

Or is it old life?

EEP IN ZDOOM

In the making for a decade, more or less, KDiKDiZD is now known for two things. One: it suffers from having a terrible acronym, and two: this is some absolutely crazy wizardry that will leave your jaw dropped. Just for a little context: the original KDiZD was a project specifically designed to showcase the capabilities of ZDoom, and all the new cool tricks that you could do with it, meaning it was quite the complex task and it showed how far the Doom modding community had gone.

KNF

This was all the way back in 2007, and even if you play it today, you'll still find some very cool effects that, while more common today, were quite the amazing standouts back then. Now, Knee-Deep in KDiZD, tries to the a different take while also following the same idea: what if we push the limits of Doom... but this time for vanilla? Well, dear doomers, then you have one of the most fascinating efforts in recent history. One that shows you how,

with a little of street smarts and patience, you can get vanilla to play as if it was ZDoom. How? I have no idea, and yet I love it.



Knee-Deep in KDiZD is an interesting experiment and journey, all in one. You'll experience the reborn nostalgia of faked-modern-

ism, and the fantastical journey of a new yesteryear experience. It is 2022, plays like 2022, and feels like 2022... yet it is 1994? Knee-Deep in KDiZD Cat, if you will, for it is both one, and the other, and none at all. It's an expression of intricate cleverness. While

I'm not a professional on what the engine can and can not do normally, you just have to play it to see it for yourself. It doesn't require a Doom expert to experience the sheer awesomeness that this project does.



Knee-Deep in KDiZD is a fun, unrelentingly creative experience. One that was being quietly developed (to the point I originally thought it was an abandoned project) and then dropped straight from orbit into the homes of the doomers of this world. Merry Xmas, you demon lovers, this WAD here is bound to give you some well de-

served dosage of Doom greatness.

- Endless







By Esselfortium et al (2022)

Haraman Annie Maria Mari

Five years in the making, Atonement is 33 maps for Doom II in that epic, gloriously sweet vanilla flavor. This is a direct injection of the legendary commercial era of WAD shovelware, without the bad quality, but with as much quantity. Atonement feels like a homage to those old school partial conversions that wanted to bring something fresh to the table. With small tweaks and some color grading changes, it is quite amazing how much you can change the vibe and feel of the game. From a fast-paced action shooter to a horror survival experience ala Doom 64. Atonement aims for a middle ground that has you battling across a series of Mars-inspired settings that range from sprawling, massively complex tech-





bases, to tall cities and surreal islands.

An exhilarating experience from beginning to end, Atonement is a complete journey that will take you some time but will leave a nice mark on your shoulder as you say goodbye to this lovely piece of passion work. Get ready to atone your sins with this one! What Moustachio has done here is nothing short of amazing! Vanilla-ish lovers will find this to be a very nice piece that adjusts the cords between modern polish and classical goodness.

- Endless



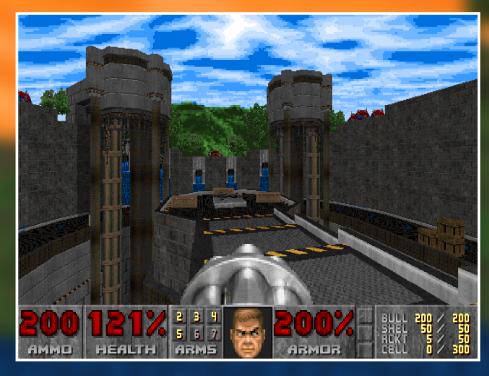






HYDROSPHERE By Bri - RELEASED IN 2022

I remember reviewing Hydrosphere some months ago, closer to its release date. Bri became one of my favorites of the 2020s ever since his Attack on lo WAD, and when Hydrosphere was released, I was ready to enjoy this little piece of art that Bri has managed to craft.







Six maps for Boomcompatible ports, you can easily see the cyan based design that this fantastical adventure will bring to your PC. Themed around techbases and natural exteriors with a lot of water, Hydrosphere flows like a river into your senses with a great sense of progression and constant action that reveals itself like a beautiful piece of









a BBC documentary. You can imagine David Attenborough narrating your magnificent massacre as you blast your way into the final chapter. Hydrosphere stands out among other maps that make usage of traditional visual tropes by switching the set into a more natural and realistic landscape of sweet proportions. From the depths of processing stations, across train tracks, and to the top ocf an artificial lake - Hydrosphere feels and plays like drinking water from a leaf.

Revisiting it, it is a worthy contender that deserves an extra mention. If you are looking for a fun yet different adventure, this mapset has got you covered. Bring a glass or two of water with you! You'll get thirsty with all the bullets flying across Bri's cyan landscapes!

ENDLESS



The sun rises, the body wakes, yet the mind is still sleeping. As the world starts moving a new day begins, your body demands energy; a rush of adrenaline to shoot your nerves up and propagate that sweet release of anxiety. What better way to do than with caffeine? Straight into the veins, these MBF 21-compatible maps are here to bring you your needed rush. Don't let the need for speed defeat you!

Created by the talented and gloriously aesthetic Misty. This 5-level WAD is a compilation of various maps and outtakes from a variety of other projects. A mix of various levels, you'd think that it would feel inconsistent and frivolous in





style, yet you would be wrong. Caffeine Injection is a simple yet highly attractive set of levels that are both consistent in style and gameplay. A vibrant and gloomy dichotomy of lovely slaughter, these levels play like a heavy metal song at 150 bpm, while still giving you a little bit of room to breath and admire the natural-tech scenery, combined with a few glints of neo-neon lights.

With a high difficulty that is still manageable, Caffeine Injection honors its title by being a fast-paced and action-packed set of nicely balanced proportions that is worth playing all the way through.

ENDLESS







Ethereal Breakdown Mod of the Year 64

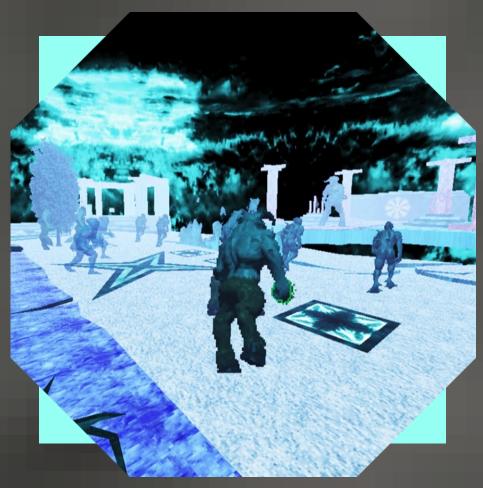
This is the year of Doom 64's 25th anniversary (1997-2022) and with that comes many high-caliber releases to celebrate the occasion. The **Doom 64** community is a smaller subset of the classic **Doom** community, where there is a lot of crossover of people helping out on each other's projects including members of the Wadazine staff. Thus we established a selection committee to help decide the most impactful releases of the year. The way a release is viewed ultimately comes down to the players who play it, so we have brought on board the most-prolific modern **Doom** 64 streamers and video producers by the way of Steppskie, Zoyahu, and Twilightsoul 1. It took a month of discussion (and replaying each WAD) where we collectively decided the Doom 64 WAD of the year is Ethereal Breakdown!

Initially started as the "25th Anniversary Map Jam", Ethereal Breakdown

is a community project celebrating 25 years of **Doom 64**. New and long-time names in **Doom 64** modding spent around a year putting together 33 new maps for the official **Doom 64** Remaster, **Doom 64 EX**, and **Doom 64 EX**. Originally slated to release at the end of March 2022, it was delayed until October 2022 when prospects of a full **Doom 64**-sized megawad became within reach. This project was organized by the team of agony ZENITH, *Immorpher*, *Neigh Winny*, *Jetx_121*, and *United*

VirusX with contributions from established **Doom 64** modders such as Atomic Frog, DeXiaZ, hard-core_gamer, Impboy, Jason Dagenet, the_kovic, Scwiba, and many more.

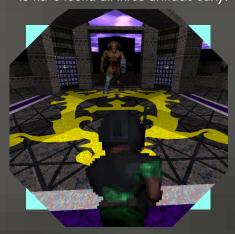
Ethereal Breakdown takes place after the fateful decision to remain in hell was made at the end of **Doom 64**. Hell itself and its endless hordes of demons could render anyone insane. However, a creature lurks in the shad-



consciousness and proliferates madness. Once a victim's sanity is broken they become consumed by the beast. Only those of strong will, who can regain their sense of mind, spirit, and nous will find their way to confront this monster. It is up to the player to find these artifacts of self, which have been scattered amongst fragmented memories at the edges of madness.



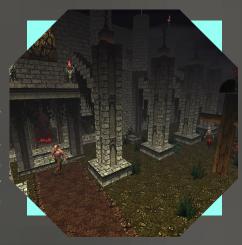
Once booted up the player is greeted with an introduction sequence celebrating 25 years of Doom 64 modding, with homages to past and present WADs and engines; the memories of horrors and conquests. Once a new game is started, the majority of levels are accessed from a hub and can be played in any order. Within the levels are the opportunities to find an artifact of either mind, spirit, or nous. Once all three of these are recovered, the final battle with the horror that haunts hell becomes accessible. Theoretically the player does not need to beat every level to reach the final battle if they are skillful enough or lucky enough to have found all three artifacts early.



There are approximately 5 opportunities to find each one scattered throughout the levels.

The greatest strength of Ethereal Breakdown is in its diversity of ideas and levels. Even the hub layout with the demon key scavenger hunt (interestingly compatible with the vanilla password system) is a first for **Doom** 64. Some of this was made possible by the_kovic updating Doom Builder 64 during the construction of the WAD. There are short levels (Blood Temple, Desiccation, and Switchless) for new players, and big levels (Death Gate, Putrid Palace, Waterlogged Castillo) for experienced players. Then there are traditionally-inspired **Doom** 64 levels (Diverged Fates, Devolving Being, and Secondary Engineering) and also levels inspired by other games (Escape the Castle, Residence of Evil, and Hollywood Holocaust). Some push new visual styles (Castle of the Damned, Frostwave, and Living Walls) and some push new progression styles (Haunted Eye, Fabrication Labs, and MAP NOT FOUND). And there are many more levels which contain a combination of ideas such as Consumitur Insania where jump pads make their first appearance in **Doom** 64. Given such a diversity, not every player will like every level, but every level is of sufficient quality it will appeal to a player of a certain style and experience. Fortunately the hub progression system allows players to avoid levels they may not like.

For the short time that Ethereal Breakdown has been out (only a couple months at the release of this magazine) it has had an impact on the **Doom 64** mapping scene. During its development, techniques to fix bugs (i.e. texture hashing and transparency) and the creation of new mechanics (jump pads, directed tracers, and more) were found, which now appear in other mods. Projects that were previously dormant or just ideas, such as Corrupted, Dreamblood, and Tribulation of



Treachery, have now moved back to full production after some of their ideas were successful in the Ethereal Breakdown. Unexpectedly, the hub structure allowed the player to start each level anew, and this allowed the level designers to focus on expressing their ideas to the fullest potential in a map without having to consider previous levels. Even though Ethereal Breakdown can be inconsistent in terms of style due to its format, it provides levels that outdo individual levels of more consistent Doom 64 experiences. It is a "something for everyone" approach that is invested deeply into its strength: the freedom of level designers to express themselves. Ethereal Breakdown encouraged the modders to push the vanilla **Doom** 64 engine to its limits and cemented its impact this year.

Immorpher Steppskie Twilightsoul1 Zoyahu

DOM FY RELUADED



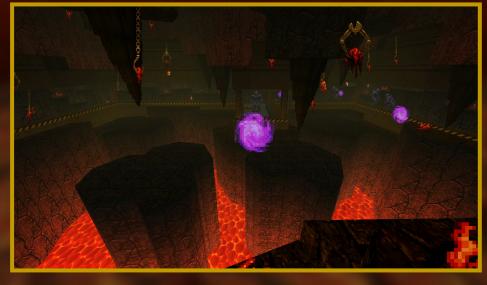


loaded is this: what could Doom 64 be if it wasn't limited to the early N64 hardware? We don't know exactly what the desires of the development team were at the time; they probably just desperately wanted the game out the door. However, Atomic Frog (previously known as kr00za) has been modding **Doom 64** for over a decade and gathered plenty of ideas and inspirations from the '64 mines. This WAD is for the official Doom 64 remaster, Doom 64 EX, and Doom 64 EX+ which means it mostly keeps true to what the engine is capable of,

and oh boy does Reloaded demonstrate how beautiful the engine can be! There is considerably more geometry, noticeably more textures, and the lighting is so smooth sometimes that it looks like a light map. Also, the soundtrack has been

doubled in size, where each and every level has a new background track. This WAD "reloads" more than just visuals and sound; it touches on a bit of everything where various members of the modding community have also contributed here and there. Although not fully finished until 2023 (thus a contender for 2023's awards), Doom 64 Reloaded was still a fully-playable WAD in 2022, so it deserves a mention.

Atomic Frog took care in maintaining the core **Doom 64** gameplay where if he made one thing easier, he compensated by adding difficulty else-



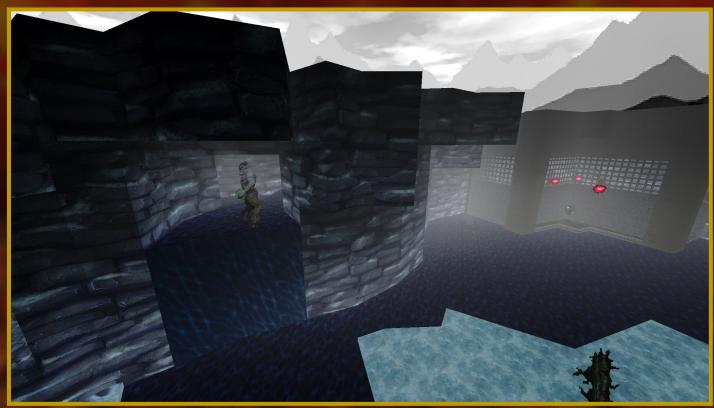
where. Many of the classic puzzles, which required new players to look up guides, now have more indicators hinting at the mechanics of the puzzle. However, if you fail at some of these puzzles, the traps can be far more dangerous, especially the crushers. There are plenty of new areas within levels and secrets to find; but there are also some surprise enemies lurking around too. It's all a slight rebalance to smooth out the experience for new players and give something new for long-time players. Speaking to this, we personally love the updates to Final Outpost, and perhaps it is one of the best rebalanced levels of the set. Now, some purists may not want a new player to play modded Doom 64 for their first experience, but we're long away from the days of playing Doom 64 on a fuzzy CRT TV with a single-analog-stick N64

controller. Sometimes you have to package things a bit differently for modern players to take a bite!

Besides changes to existing levels, there are many new bonus levels too. Here the number of levels has expanded to 48 (and is possibly still growing), with a few new campaign levels, a few new secret levels, and a few new fun levels too! Some of these levels are brand new, some were inspired from Doom 64 Absolution TC, some PS1 Doom, and even a remixed Panic from Doom 64 Remaster shows up. The Marshes, Club Doom, and the Catacombs are particularly unique levels, with the Catacombs being inspired by the old "Beta Pyramid" that was cut from the original Doom 64. Atomic Frog has shared his unique vision of what the Beta Pyramid may have contained and it is truly

legendary! Also, for those wanting a challenge right away, there is the death run that replaces the lost levels which is a series of "fun" style levels, which can be attempted as a "speedrun" for an added challenge. We particularly recommend seeing Carousel of Chaos even if you have to warp to it! Keep in mind, each additional level has had a makeover, Reloaded style, to seamlessly fit together. So even if you have seen one before, it will still be a new experience this time around. In a way, the heritage of Midway, Nightdive, and the modding community all are honored in this WAD in one way or another.

A discussion of Doom 64 Reloaded is not complete without talking about some of its secrets, so let's crack open Mulder's X-file on this case. For the most part, the level pro-





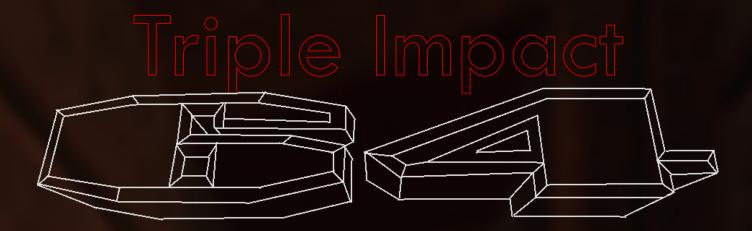
gression is about the same, that is until you go searching for the demon artifacts or the unmaker. Two of the artifacts are hidden in new levels, while the third has a surprise waiting for you, but you'll have to figure that one out for yourself. Also, if you want an unmaker early, well it's hidden away in secret levels too! Do you remember the shrines honoring the mod developers in the Doom 64 Absolution TC? Well they have made a return, but with highly entertaining death traps (get to Hectic to enjoy more of those)! Then there are homages to other prolific **Doom 64** modders and streamers hidden deeply throughout. There are so many little secrets that Atomic Frog admits he has forgotten many of them himself. If you happen to be a good investigator and find all three demon artifacts, you will now be able to unlock a new level with a new ending.

Yes, Doom 64 Reloaded has multiple endings! It is for sure a WAD that has massive replay value so you can go back and see what more you can find again and again.

The impact of Doom 64 Reloaded on players, truly, canbe understated. Even not though such a project can't please all purists, it gives fans and new players a chance to look at **Doom 64** again. Heck, it even has a Spanish translation. For the past year, if you were to randomly catch someone live streaming a Doom 64 mod, it was most likely Doom 64 Reloaded (with Doom 64 CE a very close second). At the Wadazine, we have been covering this WAD for two years. Back in issue 9, Doom 64 Reloaded was just a single episode of "remastered" Doom 64 tech bases when it was first featured. Then, earlier

this year, issue 18 covered its full release where the full **Doom 64** campaign was "remastered" with many bonus levels and all. Doom 64 Reloaded is still being updated with a new level as of the end of 2022, so we will likely cover it again, but it has been a welcoming presence in the community for players of all skill-levels

MMORPHER
STEPPSKIE
TWILIGHTSOULT
ZOHAHU



What a year it has been for Doom 64! There were so many projects and releases that, for the first time, the Wadazine wasn't able to cover them all. However the Doom 64 selection committee wanted to highlight three projects that have kept the modding history of Doom 64 alive and going into the future.

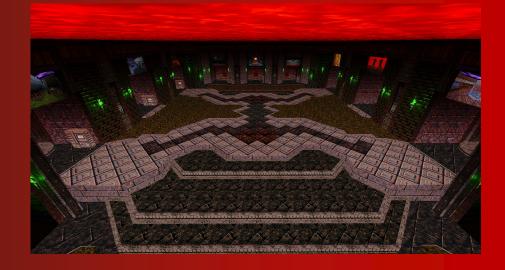
Doom 64 CE Expansions

Doom 64 CE is an adaptation of **Doom 64** to the latest GZDoom engine with a focus on the most accuracy possible within the engine's ZScript limits, then injecting it with options to enhance the experience in impressive ways (i.e. upscaling, smooth animations, and dynamic lighting). If it were not for the UnMaking, and its masterwork the creative in gamespace, Doom 64 CE undoubtedly would be the Doom 64 mod of the year for 2021.

primary force behind The Doom 64 CE, Molecicco, is not just content on representing Doom 64 on GZDoom but has been working hard in the mapping mines to convert as many of the influential **Doom 64** mods into this adaptation. A talented programmer, he has been able to make his own utilities to do a lot of the work beforehand; although some manual adjustments are always needed. The first megawad adapted over this year was the aforementioned UnMaking, where the best aspects of the

EX and remaster versions were combined to perhaps create the ultimate version. Given this year was the 25th anniversary of Doom 64, Molecicco then assembled and adapted the most influential maps released for Doom 64 EX and the official remaster in a set entitled the "Rumble Pak" (in honor of the Nintendo 64 vibration device). We did cover the Rumble Pak in the previous issue, but wanted to mention it again as many players whose computers no longer support Doom 64 EX, can now play many of the

"Unsurprisingly it has become the goto adaptation for a lot of players"



classic custom Doom maps in GZDoom. Adaptations like this not only appeal to players with its quality of life improvements, but also preserve some of the history of modding when other ports age. Further, Doom 64 CE was updated to enhance its mod compatibility over the year by cleaning up the IWADs it uses. For example, combining it with Corruption Cards, which randomizes the player's experience, has become a hit with video game streamers over the last year. In fact so many streamers were playing Doom 64 CE with Corruption Cards, that the Corruption Cards creators added a streamer mode option for them. Doom CE is a package which also contains adaptations of the Playstation **Doom** releases. And to treat Doom 64 players, the Molecicco added a gameplay mod which lets players play the PS1 Dooms with **Doom 64** assets with gradient lighting on top. It is a bit like if the classic **Doom** was ported to the Nintendo 64 by Midway, which, ironically, many people thought Doom 64 was anyway! It has been a very productive year for Doom 64 CE and unsurprisingly it has become the go-to adaptation for a lot of players.

Doom 64 EX+

Doom 64 EX was *Kaiser's* first partially-reverse engineered engine for **Doom 64** which



"He is also
emphasizing
modability
with a variant
of DeHackEd
support"

began slightly over a decade ago. Due to its support of the native **Doom 64** map format, it has been the workhorse of the **Doom 64** community with the most custom maps released for it out of any other port and adaptation. However the past few years have not been kind to it where it increasingly has issues and crashes on modern computers. Thus Kaiser's official remaster of **Doom 64**. released in 2020, has slowly begun taking over its space. This open-source engine looked to be on its last legs if it were not for Gibbon, who has revived its codebase for modern computers under the name of Doom 64 EX+. According to Gibbon, "history shouldn't be forgotten but preserved." Not only are many bugs fixed, but it has Linux support and some versions support macOS too, which has brought Doom 64 to a much wider audience. The recent reverse engineering efforts of Erick194 at the GEC Team, have also been used to

make Doom 64 EX+ more accurate to the original Doom 64 than EX was. Gibbon is not content to just patch up this classic engine, he is also emphasizing modability with a variant of DeHackEd support. For the first time enemy behavior can be customized on vanilla-style **Doom 64** maps. And if that wasn't enough, the engine has native support for some of the missing enemies such revenants as and chaingunners. Some of the rapid development of Doom 64 EX+ it is due to it being open source, where people wolfysdl have been contributing to its progress. In fact, Styd051 has used this engine as a base and forked it to bring back the custom monsters of Doom 64 Absolution TC. Having an open-source community engine with a focus on accuracy and modability like Doom 64 EX+ means **Doom 64** has a bright future in custom content.

Doom 64 Absolution Remastered

Two decades ago, the first adaptation of **Doom 64** was released by Kaiser and friends under the name of Doom 64 Absolution Total Conversion (Absolution TC for short). It was a conversion of the ¡Doom/ Doomsday engine with ripped Doom 64 assets from emulators. It featured all of the original levels, with some new additions, and brand new levels as well. Kaiser would be unhappy with the accuracy of the engine to Doom 64 and would create Doom 64 EX. Even as Doom 64 EX was released, Absolution TC still remained popular. But old engines become harder and harder to run as people upgrade to new operating systems. Eventually the combination of brand new source ports and adaptations of the mid to late 2010's sent Absolution TC into obscurity. Although some of the new adaptations would include the new levels, a lot of the original additions and campaign sequence was missing. Thus Styd051 became determined to restore this missing content for a whole new generation.

There are two versions of Doom 64 Absolution Remastered, one for the Doom 64 Remaster and one on a custom fork of Doom 64 EX+. The



"The best of both worlds: the bonus content of Absolution TC, and the unrivaled accuracy of modern Doom 64 ports"



Doom 64 Remaster version contains all of the Absolution TC updates to the main campaign levels, but also contains the bonus levels based on conversions by Footman. So casual players on Steam, GOG, or Epic Games can play these levels and changes easily. However, this version lacks the Absolution TC custom enemies as the Doom 64 Remaster doesn't support the addition of new Therefore enemies. Styd051 forked Doom 64 EX+ to make a version that restores these missing enemies, such as the nightmare cacodemon. This new fork also contains updates to the sprites and one version of it even has the previously-missing reloading animations too! Here Styd051 perhaps has achieved the best of both worlds: the bonus content of Absolution TC, and the unrivaled accuracy of modern **Doom 64** ports (with a few bonus features on top).

Immorpher
Steppskie
Twilightsoul
7 ovahu

NEWSTURF

@Focus UAC@

Vanilla. A shockingly solid, if entirely unmemorable map from a newcomer. Good mix of Doom 1 tech and Doom 2 tan. Shockingly strong command of detailing. And combat actually feels quite active and not in a massively difficult way either.

#Castle of Lunacy II#

Vanilla though it won't run in DSDA Doom for some reason I think pampoo on Doomworld may have mentioned this map in passing, however, it was uploaded to /idgames only recently (as of this writing, probably less than 2 weeks ago, when this goes to press...eh July?). Anyways, it has the same solid construction as the other pampoo map reviewed in this space some months back, yet progress and exploration felt just a touch more cumbersome and there was definitely less visual inspiration. There's no serious fault to find otherwise.

#Earth's Last Defence#

For GZDoom. An incredibly strong first wad, consisting of seven somewhat inconsistent but almost entirely entertaining maps. Ok, some key placements are a touch laughable and the visuals get quite ugly in spots on the last map. Still, Chested Armour establishes an identity early as someone willing to establish several gimmicky situations, many of which involve going slaughterlite in spots at a surprisingly early place (Map 03). Use of traps is also quite neat in a way you don't expect at all from early mappers. The Doomcute trucks feels like the chocolate chips (ok, maybe buterscotch chips). Definitely a good GZDoom wad to check out.

\$Liminal Waters\$

For GZDoom. I must admit to feeling a certain amount of joy every time I see a new Doom-Revolver map has been released, even though no one else does. And I guess starting your title with 'liminal' won't win any converts. Too bad. The prevalence of gray brick and water everywhere along with quite a few aqauducts as well



Earth's Last Defense

as columns really manage to fantastically render a Greek theme. Yes, there are some use of liminal spaces in spots but you have to admit it gives maps an extra sense of surreality. Progression is quite a bit simpler than Doom Revolver's last few maps with essentially 3 different paths leading off from what you can say is the hublike aquaduct region. Combat might also be tougher, with a heavy slide towards Skillsaw style of throwing hordes in your direction. The sense of scale of most Doom Revolver maps remains though. Arch-vile use is somewhat on the weak side, yet it stil has moments of effectiveness. Chaingunners on the other hand wil harry you when you least want them to. At least Doom Revolver is fairly generous with supplies though. Another excellent map.

\$Interstellar\$ -

For GZDoom. There was a time where VRACK-style maps were extremely popular, to the extent that people still discuss the theme over two decades after they first dropped. Every so often, an intricate space station map will be released by someone as a tribute to this theme. Although it's been some time since anyone made a serious attempt at a VRACK map, the frequency in which the topic comes up occasionally Doomworld underscores impact. This specfic map is a respectable continuation of that legacy. Despite around 800 enemies on UV, it's not terrifically challenging. But with the aid of GZDoom's advanced lighting effects, the space station here is given a life and sense of place just not possible in the past.

\$Ex Inferus\$

For limit-removing ports. A 1person megawad roughly 8 years in the making, Ferdinand describes himself as 'obsessive' in the text file which can only be a good thing for a project like this. And he doesn't disappoint whatsoever! While claiming to be a slaughter wad, the difficulty's probably more akin to a slightly harder Struggled: The Antaresian Legacy or midgame Speed of Doom than wads like Flotsam or Swimming with the Whales. It's still consistently entertaining, but it's something to keep in mind. While you run into some nasty ambushes (in Map 05) for instance that almost earn the 'slaughter' billing, that simple doesn't describe enough of the fights for that to mean much. Still, Ferdinand maintains a vast command of detailing and intricacy that lasts throughout the entire megawad. Traversing a military base, you then move to some mysterious wooden palisades, an industrial area, an urban area, a massive cathedral, and then, some ruins and the void. Last 5 maps finally earn this wad it's label. Definitely worth your time.



Ex Inferus

#The Wicked on Every

Side#

Boom-compatible. A 9-map episode featuring a largely slaughter style and a aesthetic borrowed from Thy Flesh Consumed, this is overall quite solid. The opening maps seem stupidly easy by slaughter standards (enemy counts are below 200), and I almost wondered if this was a sort of less visually-impressive Rush. Map 04, there's a higher proportion of stronger enemies, and two maps in the last third specfically feature enemy counts I guarantee will make your eyes go massive (and quite unsuitable for playing in GZDoom unless you use hardware renderer mode supposedly). Not to mention the balance is seriously off, and the Dead Simple clone is one of the stupidest excuses for challenge I've yet to see. Still, I can't really complain too much about the rest. The aesthetic isn't exactly popular in modern slaughter, but it still might be worth your time if you like the genre and are highly sadomasochistic.

\$Mayhem Underzone\$

For GZDoom. DoomRevolver returns with this map smaller and more compact than his

previous efforts but perhaps more challenging at the same time as stronger enemies are stacked in much greater density, at least on UV. Despite this, DoomRevolver continues to display an impressive command of detailing and visuals a la Use3D (hint hint). Definitely still worth your time

#Spooky Scary Skeletons

For GZDoom. a jokewad, playing the infamous Andrew Gold song in the background and pitting you against various variants of skeleton enemies in a mansion. It gets a little repetitive admittedly, but the lighthearted and mocking tone really go a long way to selling this. Besides, it's clear from the visuals that much effort went into this. And it's quite rare to find a jokwead with actual decent gameplay.



#Ravenger#

For GZDoom, ChestedArmour once again returns with this slightly experimental map. Although pushing a bloodwall near the start is pretty stupid, things improve from there. While the lesser-clothed Revenant and naked Baron enemy that's seemingly titled "fiend" don't really seem like too much, it could be worst. The rapid-fire rifle replacement's a clear winner here as you move into the final area, containing some natsy fiend placement. The ending is basically a joke though, since no weapon you've got will be strong enough to pierce the Maurauder's shield (yep, that infamous Doom Eternal foe is here to waylay you). Just head to the exit. Not so impressive visually, and the start areas are frankly weak, but still slightly more than decent.

#Meatblock#-

A HandsomeFridge

For GZDoom. An awesomely atmopheric effort, utilizing CC4 textures and GZDoom's advanced lighting and scripting features to create something that's both entertaining and immersive. The titular meat-blocks form quite an imposing

sight. Little earthquakes and the use of bloodfalls to effectively teleport you around are some of the best aspects easily. The map also follows Zelda rules in that you often have to kill every enemy in a given area before proceeding. Problem is that fights starting out feel rather cramped and boring, plus it's a little weird how the Spider Masterminds are frontloaded before you reach the final and imposing nighttime outdoor area. I guess the latter is probably harder due to the presence of sniping chaingunners and the fact an Arch-vile will eventually teleport in. I did laugh at the SS ending. Honestly, it goes down better than someone placing a single former human at the gate.

@Casting of Bones@

Vanilla. Originally created for the 64 vertices project but ended up getting cut when it was clear it would exceed the limits, Casting of Bones is a nice and stylish cavernous hell map featuring a cool midi from the first Lands of Lore that might be from the last dungeon, if the visual theme here is any indication. The bit near the beginning and the ahotgunners in front of the fire with the the Invisibility sphere is kind of fun.

Though there's plenty of other foes so you may want to leave that alone. Gameplay itself is rather tedious since you'll only get a chaingun in addition to a shotgun unless perhaps you explore a bit I suppose. And the strafejumping can get quite annoying. Still, it's a zan-zan-zawa-veia map so at least it'll be interesting for a bit.

#Want Some Cotton in Your Free Doom?#

For GZDoom. A single map for Free Doom that's actually shockingly effective, featuring some small rectangular corridors and some various innovative ideas. For instance, the last key is located in a seemingly large and empty room where you'll depend on torches to guide your way. They're pretty glitchy admittedly, but you can always cheat and look at the automap if you're feeling disoriented. Also some cool teleport use and generally tight combat with some fun little ambushes. Final battle is set in a temple of sorts with a custom Mastermind and far more ammo than you'll really need for them. I enjoyed this one.



\$The Ninth Circle\$

Doomy Doom

Boom-compatible. A simple concept, 9 separate and different circular areas featuring some incredibly stimulating if almost hopelessly claustrophobic combat. Some puzzle moments but it's impossible to feel safe with the various fierce assaults that greet you. The constantly teleporting Arch-vile in circle 3 will give you no end of trouble, even if you figure things out quickly. Definitely recommended for lower skill levels if you're a casual player.

#Dungeons and Monsters#

Kenon

Vanilla. An replacement for E1 of Heretic that's solidly designed but doesn't have too much else to say. If you're not a huge fan of Heretic, this won't convert you. There are some soldily-designed locations and it's more fun than something like A History of Fruit for instance. Difficulty rises smoothly but there aren't many stand-out encounters. And I'm pretty sure textures used are largely vanilla. Fairly good overall.

\$Never\$

tei tenga

Limit-removing. If it's anything that pushes a wad to the top of a recommendation list, it is its unique personality. Which this one had in spades. Granted, it's quite a robotic industrial EBM sort of feel, as underscored by the sountrack, but wow, does this wad really wear it well! Consisting of maps hardly more difficult than Doom II, this one features some extensive dehacked work, one being a reworked pistol that does 3 times the damage and does this cool flip-up-and-fire animation and the other being a machine pistol that fires a little faster than the chaingun but is probably a touch weak-There are also two-Dehacked enemies, a Cacodemon variant with some MAS-SIVE teeth and a deadlier attack than the fiend, and Lost Souls that shoot Caco fire and have no melee attack. Combat can be best described as hardly overwhelming, but with plenty of well-stages ambushes. A particular fight regarding the yellowkey in Map 04 stands out. Grab it and the tight corridor around you suddenly lowers, creating an incredibly hairy situation with Mancubi

and an Arch-vile with some curious yellow markings on the floor.

@ Flamethtrower from Wolf3D@

Alex S.

Vanilla Plasma rifle has been replaced with the flamethrower from "Wolf 3D" (I'm pretty sure a flamethrower only appeared in Spear of Destiny though). It's undoubtably fun to use, but there's not too much to really distinguish it from other Doom weapon mods that incorporate flamethrowers in some form.

#Pain Black#

SlayerUwU

Plays in GZDoom, maybe Eternity set. A solid debut, largely consisting of smaller but highly impactful monster counts, a la community legend Malcolm Sailor. For some reason, most maps consist of interlinked areas that you can't backtrack from. Still, slayerU displays an incredibly solid grasp on detailing, and in the second to

last map, they're obivously taking pages from Sigil's book with the red cracks in darkened rooms. One note: these maps have minimal at best consideration given to pistol-starting so play continous for the best experience. Still, pretty good.

\$Suffer the Punishment of Inferno in 1024\$

El Inferno

Limit-removing. Oh no, El Inferno has made a map in 1024. I am gonna hate myself so much for playing this. Not to worry though, you'll love this if overthe-top slaughter action is your thing! Despite the incredibly small playing area, detailing in this corrupted chapel of sorts is quite lovely. As if to emphasize his sadism further, El Inferno also places a linear bit of damaging floor in the center. If you just love to torture yourself with chaotic and claustrophobic maps like these, please play this! It may be a touch more over the top than I'd normally go, but this is really good!

#Unseelie Hours#

evil_scientist

Plays in GZDoom. Designer of little cute maps evil scientist has not made anything in a while. To overcome mapper's block, they made this surprisingly solid small map, containing secrets that are actually somewhat cool, set amidst a sort of castle/cave combo with some tech elements located throughout. Combat perhaps relies a little bit too much on shotgunning mid-range enemies, but it's solid in every other way. And evil scientist's midi is actually a surprisingly cool ambient track with hints of industrial in the background! Worth at least a few plays

@Underground Hideout@ BonziG4132

Limit-removing? So this is a sort of simple and short starter map, consisting of caves with serious use of verticality some surprisingly well-rendered castle rooms. In one particularly roomy chamber, there are even cots on the floor! The green key room might be the most visually impressive though. Collect the key and drop into a series of rooms, many with gold on the floor. Despite obvious signs of design inexperience, some

things are are truly impressive. Combat and visuals are nothing to write home about, but it's rare someone inexperience actually makes an effort at a Heretic map that isn't half-baked.



@New Base@

Cr1ppling

limit-removing. Cr1ppling takes a less ambitious approach in his second map that bears more of a resemblance to the sort of corridor crawling best expressed by Kim "Torn" Bach of Scythe "I Dunno About Torn" fame. Though there's no Archviles to be found anywhere, the Jimmytrack chosen here is incredibly good, and the ending which steals the Icon of Sin exploding effect to create an explosion that once again destroys a base that probably cost a billion dollars to build, feels strangely satisfying.

\$Doom II Changed\$

Boom-compatible. Good joke wads are rare and even fewer are the ones by one person who keep a largely consistent quality throughout the entire 32 -map run. From blatantly obvious HOMs to placing Invulnerbilities behind hitscanners while Arch-viles unleash their firey wrath upon you to silly-ass exit fakeouts that are incredibly difficult to enter without voidgliding or something, this wad has it all! What's more, it's clear LoD is actually someone with a fair bit of competence, as there's at least 1 map that you can only complete through void-gliding. Other maps show surprising signs of competent if incredibly constrained and repetitve combat, a la something like Afterburn, played a month or two ago. Some maps with example of this are 9 (Armpit City, a surprisingly clever parody title if you know anything about the original Doom II map/midi in this slot) 15 and 27 (Monster Condom). Perhaps one of the best bits are the secret maps, which both play "Never Gonna Give You Up" by Rick Astley, and contain some seriously jokey design. Map 32 specifically has a mechanic where you'll shoot a

switch and a metric ton of enemies on some floor below you will be squashed. The music and message replacements are also great at complementing the tone. If I have any serious complaints, it's that certain gags can get a tad bit repetitive, especially if they involve Arch-viles. "Arch-vile Sex" (don't ask for details, just play it) was funny though, and so was "Mr. Sex" (a Scythe 2 reference that we'll just say...won't go as you expect). Despite a few one-note gags and reliance on overwhelming players at times, this is overall worth your time.

#Tectonic Rift#

thelamp

Boom-compatible. A short and small, but shockingly difficult map, probably drawing some influence from Going Down but ultimately going for a muchmore simplistic approach. Hitting the computer console in the central room once will cause one set of surrounding doors to open, and believe me, you do NOT want have more than one enemy group attacking you at once as they can get quite overwhelming. At a certain point, a central blue pillar will be left, revealing switches that will each open doors to the out-

side. Mancubi and Lost Souls are the primary foes here, not the most intimidating perhaps. But once you've traveled through the blue door, edging your way through some rubble, you should prepare for more intimidation, as another door will trigger a series of teleporters involving Arch-vile mainly who will then set to resurrect your fallen foes. There are plenty of supplies along the way to help you against them, but there are also some nasty surprises when you attempt to collect them. Despite that it doesn't have the greatest visuals, this is a solid map.



#Small But Deadly#

Pezl

Limit-removing. Pezl is not someone that we'd expect to make slaughter but here we go! Quite bold to feature a beginning with high fireblue walls which wil hosts a total of three fights as you'll return here a few times. Though I'm not so certain you can't skip several of them, as you get the blue key

fairly quickly. Overabundance of supplies will probably annoy most, although careless enemy placement doesn't help ether. Yes, the opening fight is fun, as well as the last Caco cloud you dispatch, as well as the bit behind the blue door with the Arch-vile, Spider Masterminds, and Cyberdemon, but the rest seems a bit less thought out. All the same, it's a slaughter map, it's easy and thus impossible to not recommend

#Spooky Scary Skeletons 2#

for GZDoom. Hot off the success of Spooky Scary Skeletons is Spooky Scary Skeletons 2! Starting off facing off against bony ones like the last entry, this one then moves on to tech bases as you seel to hunt down notorious troll Terry and end his reign of terror! In many ways, this is a sendup of common Terry wad features, including enemies that'll kill you in 1 hit (at least on the higher difficulties), incredibly immature humor, and the most hated feature of all, the Terry trap! The bosses are stuffed with HP to further bolster the obnoxious tone. In the last few levels, discord comments relating to Terrywads are actually posted on the walls. The last map basically freezes you for a few seconds, but then teleports you through a series of arenas while fighting increasingly overpowered bony enemies. As a final tribute, you'll get a crash message after completing the last map. Frankly, the gameplay is not the greatest, but this is still a nice sendup of the Terrywad

#The Demented Trials#StupidBoiEthan

For GZDoom. A Supercharge-enhanced map, and those of you whov'e played Technicolor Antichrist Dreambox and False Paradise should be familiar with what that means! A very lengthy slaughter map, featuring some excellent use of OTEX textures and a series of massive fights. The fights all blend somewhat together, but on the other hand, some of the temple structures are absolutely jaw-dropping and purple's always yay!

#Feazy Boom# FrezyWarr

Boom-compatible. A fairly simple map, but one utilizing some excellent use of relatively narrow heights and using different texture themes that complement, rather than clash with each other. Secrets generally take some effort to find, and despite the modest beginning, has a serious difficulty spike when you pick the yellow key up and an Arch--vile or two appears back in the central room. The final outside room is then a seriously difficult battle.

1 B a d M a p # dashiefrickintyan

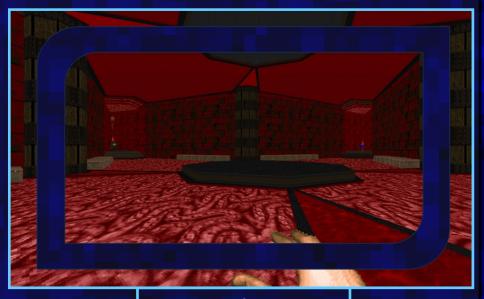
Boom-compatible. The name may have been stolen fron Spendragoran's most humorous and 8-bit styled set, but this actually contains a more standard look. Which isn't bad at all, the look very much serves the purpose, which is killing demons! The beginning is some entertaining circlestrafing with two Arch-viles teleporting in at some point to

create an absolute ruckus. But the real fun begins when the outer ring opens up, and you're greeted with fireblu trim, along with Arachnotrons on the upper ledges. It all turns into a delightfully claustrophobic mess, two Cyberdemons mixed with Revenants, Hell Knights, and Mancubi really ram this home. And don't press the switch on the outer ledge before everything is dead because you won't be able to get back, not to mention the 'cheeky' ending will therefore make things worst.

Doom II Intermission Maps-

oliacym

GZDoom. An idea I've been absolutely screaming for ever since I learned how wide-



1 Bad Map

spread Doom custom content really is, someone has finally made intermission screens for the maps in Doom II! And they do very much fit the themes of each seperate section of Doom II. Even better, these are genuine high-quality. All the little details and obvious attempt at high-quality is very appreciated. Even better, there's an HD version for those who demand nothing less than than optimum quality. Sorrynotsorry, but this whole concept just makes me squeeee. If you like to replay the originals, then this is an absolute must

\$Irkalla\$

Stormwalker, et al

Boom-compatible. Stormwalker's last release was 4 years ago with the Chex Quest 3 map, Assault on Chexopolis. But he has not been dead! Other than perhaps working on Plutonia 3(just a guess!), he also just finished this 11-map Inferno-themed set! Clearly drawing from E3 of Doom on the visual front, the darkened narrow reddish canyons create ambience like nothing else. with the darkened shade for the Imps contributing to that... Yet, the combat is not a throw-

back but rather contains a strong modernist bent. It definitely maintains a much stronger sense of the limited ammo of Inferno's first two throughout. But perhaps Stormwalker wasn't quite up for making 11 maps by himself, so he brought in several other folks, 25 Years on Earth designer Phobus, project lead on all the best DBPs Super-CupcakeTactics, and the somewhaty unappreciated DBP contributor Peerdolius, who actually has two maps in this collection. Even though Stormwalker is well-capable of making difficult maps himself, the presence of the other contributors really helps give this wad some extra spice. Whether it's the voidbase and subtly dangerous nature of "Chaos" (it's ironic to me that an English bloke wouldn't use a more unusual word, considering the names of many of the other maps), the generously-detailed bullet hell of a Cuppy map, or the tactical, slaughter-lite leans of Peerdolius, this really keeps me from saying again "that was nice, but didn't get good until

the last half" or other silly statements like that. Check it out!

@Unstable Reality@

Codename_Delta

Tested in Crispy, but should work in vanilla. So, here's kind of a cute little map. Visually unremarkable but with some nice use of cramped corridors. Also a couple of good very teeny slaughter sections (when you pick up the rocket launcher for instance). Stupidly linear, but overall not bad at all.

#Doom: Dam-N8# Ragher

Limit-removing, probably. It works on Boom engines HOM-free at least. Anyways, this is a fair sort of Doom facility map, set amongst a high mountain and a healthy amount of suggestive detail. Beginning is quite stiff, but some wandering will being you to a large mob of Imps across a slime lake, along with a rocket launcher to take them out with! Designer really likes to go hog-wild with



them in certain locations for some reason. Also, there are annoyingly many Revenants in tight and narrow spaces. It's not too bad at all, despite the fact that you may be searching for the blue key far longer than you'd like. Seeing the blown-up middle part of the dam is pretty nice though.

@ Sector 66@ ASO3000

Vanilla. Apparently made at some point last year and only now just released to the archives, this replaces E1M1. For a map with such limited sectors, this has some pretty cool uses of detail, including the slime pool at the beginning and some little generator structures inside. Not really tough until you get to the end though. A nice sort of flash in the pan.

#Fort Carnage# ChippiHeppu

Vanilla A Dead Simple clone's a Dead Simple clone, but this honestly isn't too bad! Pretty challenging, though probably not for those who've played some of the later Alien Vendetta maps. You've got plenty of room to move around. Make sure to kill the Mancubi before everything else is dead, that way, you can get all sorts of

juicy infighting going between the remaining enemies and the Arachnotrons on the nowesposed sandstone ledges.

#Assault on Nukeway Enterprises#

InTraining

Limit-removing with any complevel 9 supporting port. InTraining's "Nukeway Library" was a strong debut, despite the presence of more than a few rough edges. Now step-

ping up their game, they now brings us this map of 7 maps (including a secret 1)! First map is a laid-back Tyson sort of affair, but difficulty steadily increases, along with the presence of well-staged traps. Map 05 proves to be the crowning achievment in more ways than one, while Map 06 takes a somewhat more laid-back but still fearsome approach. If you're jonesing for a vanilla fix, Assault on Nukeway Enterprises should largely satisfy you!



Dynacrium



Fort Carnage

\$Dynacrium\$

RockyGaming4725

Boom-compatible. I was unfortunate enough to miss Rocky's last map. However, this mistake has been ameiliorated! Containing over 600 monsters, there are a series of large, explosive fights with more than enough resources to handle everything! Be careful though, Rocky likes to open up closets Revenants a n d Chaingunners right next to you when you cross random linedefs or push a swich. The red key fight is incredibly nasty, and the Cyberden homage at the end can be very tricky, especially when it comes to finding the blue key. A fun romp all the way through!

\$Afterrain\$

Nefelibeta

Boom-compatible. Nefelibeta graces us with this little atmospheric baby here, made some time before the Mucus Empire, though more influenced by Grove this time, if not quite as much as the Mucus Empire by the Mucus Flow. A night-time setting, with darkness and trees all around, and a stone building clearly patterned after a similar structure in Grove, this



Afterrain

nevertheless has a fairly distinct identity of its own, if the lack of crypticness and midi are any indication. Difficulty is quite mild when compared to Nefelibeta's other efforts, with perhaps only the very last main fight approaching their usual fare. Progression is also nonlinear as you can gather keys in any order. Disturbing ending though. This is the prequel to Afterlife obviously (but which one?).

a somewhat different approach with a hellish theme and 300+ enemy count. Still it feels like the most-polished map easily. There's lots of weird angles and design which can't really be called intuitive with the weapon placement and everything arrayed against you. Still, it could be much worse.

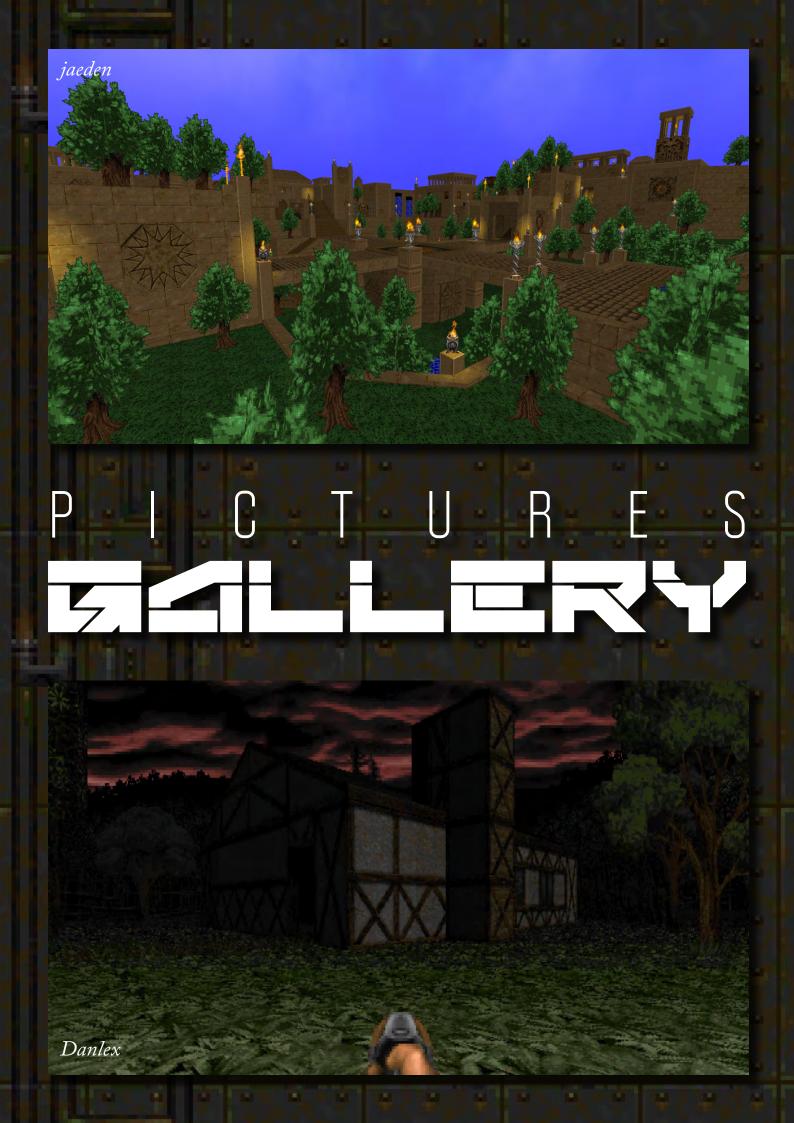
@Bijogavoning@

bobstremglav

Boom-compatible. 3 maps in varying states of completeness. Three of them emphasize tight combat over slaughter but are nevertheless quite difficult. The Doomcute is quite interesting to say the least (ya like card tables?) but provides food for thought at least Map 28 takes





















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