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## Review of Mordhau, Game Inspired by Chivalry: Medieval Warfare

Mordhau, made by the multinational video game developer Triternion, is an online multiplayer FPS game with a strong emphasis on melee combat and realistic fighting in the same vein as 2012's Chivalry: Medieval Warfare. Plenty of parallels can be drawn between the two games given that Mordhau was developed by Chivalry fans, but Triternion took everything that was good about Chivalry, slapped a fresh coat of paint on it, and cranked everything up to 11.

### A Clash of Blades

Mordhau has received plenty of praise from critics and players all over the world due to its extremely satisfying melee combat and robust character creation system. Every swing has a heft to it and the bigger the blade, the heavier the movement. Hitting enemies (or teammates) with melee results in a satisfying 'thwack' or loud thump depending on what armor the other guy is wearing. The combat doesn't just play great, it also feels great, and the plethora of character customization options the game presents you with gives you everything you need to make your warrior unique.

Almost every weapon in the game can be used differently, featuring different stats that are more suited to different situations. A longsword can be held in the titular mordhau grip to counter heavy armor, a halberd can be flipped around to use the other side of the blade for a different set of damage stats, and an axe can be gripped closer to the blade to enable faster swings at the cost of range. The game's take on how weapons function is a welcome tribute to realism and the old ways of combat.

The aesthetic of Mordhau's brutal battles is complemented by a well-rounded and interesting combat system that builds upon Chivalry's original mechanics. Tactics like camera dragging to accelerate or decelerate swings are still available in Mordhau, but it brings its own tools to the table for players to mess around with.

Mordhau introduces two new mechanics that are sure to make every medieval fighting game enthusiast giggle. Instead of Chivalry's usual loop of swing, feint, block and counter, Mordhau lets its players counter enemy attacks with swings of their own and use mind games to their advantage by using Morphs or Chambers. Morphing, which is essentially a 'soft feint', works much like a normal feint; a player can smoothly turn a swing into a stab and vice versa without the additional button press of a normal feint and, more importantly, the lack of a pause in animation means the odds of throwing off other players are higher. Chambering, on the other hand, lets players block enemy attacks with attacks of their own, much like how Hollywood does their sword fights. Imagine trading swings with an enemy knight, the sound of steel hitting steel, resounding with every chambered attack.

The additions to combat and changes to the existing system result in a more visceral and satisfying experience. Sparks will fly off as sword hits sword and new opportunities to attack open after every parry, and two players will dance against each other with split-second blocks

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and intricate swordplay until someone's head hits the ground.

## **To the Fields of Battle**

Mordhau features a 64-player gamemode called Frontlines which is similar to Chivalry's Team Objective mode but this time, objectives can go both ways. The gamemode plays a lot like a tug of war where two teams fight over one main objective at a time, which will unlock the next objective. Frontlines departs from Team Objective's one-sided, attack-and-defend scenarios; the defending team in Mordhau can stop the enemy team's entire assault by turning the tables on them, instantly depleting their reinforcement count if their base is captured. This feature can close out otherwise lengthy games, especially if the defenders are winning.

The game's dynamics change completely according to Frontlines' hectic nature. As Rock Paper Shotgun points out in their review of Mordhau, fighting in large groups usually devolves into a slaughterfest and while that's not particularly a bad thing, it can be quite frustrating for new players.

Mordhau also has separate Deathmatch, Team Deathmatch, Horde and even Battle Royale modes. Servers that host either of the deathmatch modes are often branded as 'Duel Servers' which makes the game's unspoken code of honor more official and hold more weight. People would often fight one-on-one while someone else waits for their turn. Often, deathmatch feels like a giant bar fight; people are screaming, some are playing lutes on elevated platforms, and there are fistfights everywhere.

Horde mode pits players against waves upon waves of computer-controlled enemies that gain better gear as time goes on. Players will often start fighting against a bunch of farmers and end up facing a battalion of armed knights in full plate armor. The gamemode is nice for players to get familiar with the game before heading out into the other game modes.

The Battle Royale mode is exactly what anyone would expect it to be. It shares the same concept popularized by PUBG and Fortnite but in a medieval setting. Unfortunately, there isn't much to say about it, especially since the other game modes are more populated in the first place.

## **Same Suit, Different Tie**

In many fronts, Mordhau feels like the sequel Chivalry never got. Everything from the gameplay, gamemodes, and overall experience feels similar but heavily improved. Whether it's the visceral melee combat, spectacular battles, or the rough learning curve for new players, Triternion took the medieval FPS formula to the next level and made a game that will leave you feeling awesome with every fight you win.