Take five...

The OnePlus Nord series has always been about bringing a slice of the premium OnePlus experience to a more palatable price point. With the Nord 5, OnePlus isn't just slicing; it's serving up a whole chuffing platter.

₹34,999 / oneplus.in



For the first time, a Nord is packing a Snapdragon 8-series chip, promising flagship-grade grunt without the flagship-grade groan from your wallet.

Paired with a buttery-smooth 144Hz OLED display and cameras pinched from its pricier siblings, the Nord 5 looks, on paper at least, like a proper contender. But we all know that specs sheets are about as reliable as a chocolate teapot. The real question is, does it deliver the goods in the real world?

Unbox the Nord 5, and the first thing that strikes you is its heft. This is no waif-like wonder; at 211g, it's a substantial slab of polycarbonate which feels astonishingly like metal and glass to the untrained eye. It feels premium, solid, and reassuringly expensive in your hand.

I've been wafting around with the Marble Sands finish, and it's a proper looker. The back has a soft, velvety texture that shimmers as it catches the light, making it a crime to slap a case on it.

If the Nord 5's design is the fancy tuxedo, then its display is the crisp, perfectly tailored shirt underneath. For the first time on any OnePlus device, we're being treated to a 144Hz Swift OLED panel. And my word, is it smooth. Everything from scrolling through your social feeds to slicing up fruit like a digital ninja feels utterly seamless.

[**Words** Khumail Thakur]



1 A big view

At 6.83 inches, it's a generous canvas, and with a pin-sharp 1.5K resolution, everything looks incredibly crisp and detailed. The large display means anything you watch is super-sized. Netflix pops without looking unnatural.

2 Frame fame

I don't see the point of a 144Hz display because no game can push the frame rate. Even if you find a game that supports 144Hz, you might have to scale down the graphics because this is a budget GPU. I would opt for a newer processor with 120FPS.

3 Old is gold

Under the bonnet, the Nord 5 is powered by the Snapdragon 8s Gen 3. Now, some might sniff at this, pointing out that rivals like the Poco F7 and iQOO Neo 10 are rocking the newer Snapdragon 8s Gen 4. But in the real world, this is good too.

4 Game time

Gaming is where the Nord 5 really flexes its muscles. A few rounds of BGMI at the highest settings, and it maintained a rock-solid 40fps. Even a graphically demanding title like Grid Legends chugged along at a steady 30fps.

5 Warm embrace

A big part of this consistent performance is the frankly enormous 7,300mm^2 vapour chamber cooling system. While gaming, the phone barely got warm to the touch. It's clear that OnePlus has put a lot of effort into thermals.

24 hours with the OnePlus Nord 5

Good
Meh
Evil

- 2mins: This is a heavy phone at 211g. I wasn't expecting it to be so big!
- 5mins: Well, at least it feels reassuringly hefty and premium.
- 10mins: The 6.83-inch, 144Hz OLED is a stunner...
- 15mins: The dedicated portrait mode can be a bit weird and inconsistent.
- 1hr: The 50MP front camera is one of the best in the business.
- 2hrs: OxygenOS is better than the bloat-filled interfaces of its rivals.
- 3hrs: There's a big battery here, I guess that's the weight.
- 3.5hrs: Processor isn't the latest silicon on the block compared to some rivals.
- 5hrs: A massive vapour chamber helps in gaming.

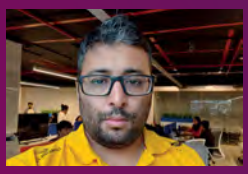


Tech specs

Chipset Snapdragon 8s Gen 3
Display 6.83-inch Swift AMOLED **RAM** 8GB / 12GB LPDDR5X **Storage** 256GB / 512GB
Rear cameras 50MP (primary) + 8MP (ultra-wide)
Front camera 50MP **Resistance** IP65

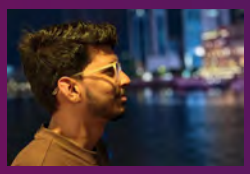
Cam worthy phone

The Nord series has steered in many directions and with the 5, it's moving towards gaming and camera



Selfie play

The 50MP front-facing camera is, without a doubt, one of the best you'll find on a mid-ranger. It produces beautifully detailed selfies with natural skin tones and excellent exposure control.



Flagship-y cams

Around the back, you'll find a 50MP Sony LYT-700 main sensor, the same one found in the flagship OnePlus 13 series. The main camera is a capable performer, delivering crisp shots in good light.



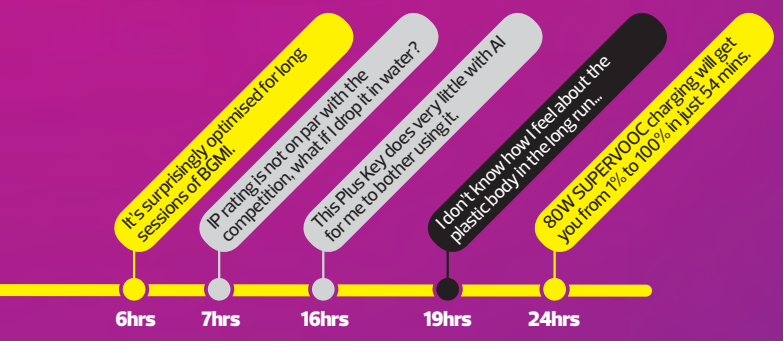
Portrait woes

Portrait mode strangely inconsistent, often adding an unnecessary layer of saturation. In many cases, I found that the main camera's natural shallow depth of field produced more pleasing results.



Night king

Lowlight is done much better than the Nord 4. It's astonishing how good the camera quality has gotten for budget smartphones in the last five years. It will take a good shot no matter the light conditions.





Sure, the processor isn't the very latest and greatest, and the GPU has to work a little harder than some of its rivals. But the Nord 5 is a shining example of how a well-optimised package can be more than the sum of its parts. If you're in the market for a mid-range phone that feels like a flagship, the Nord 5 should be at the very top of your list. *@khumailthakur*

STUFF SAYS ★★★★☆
From buttery-smooth performance to the blissfully clean software, this is for everyone.

The sibling: OnePlus Nord CE5

So your budget is below ₹30K? Well, here's the Nord option that launched.

₹26,999 / oneplus.in

With the Nord CE5, however, it feels like OnePlus has had a bit of a mad-scientist moment. While the core mission remains, they've gone and Frankenstein-ed a 7,100mAh tablet battery into a smartphone's body. The result is a device that promises to go on, and on, and on...

The plastic frame and back might feel like a slight downgrade to anyone who's clutched a metal-framed mobile before, but it keeps the weight down to a manageable 199g – impressive, considering the behemoth battery lurking within.

The Nord CE5's window to the world is a rather lovely 6.77-inch Super Fluid AMOLED display. It's a mouthful, but it translates to a bright, vibrant screen with a buttery-smooth 120Hz refresh rate. It's a cracking display for the price point, but don't expect it to floor you with colour accuracy and HDR tuning.

There's a 50MP Sony LYT-600 main sensor with optical image stabilisation (OIS), the same one found in the previous OnePlus Nord CE4. This means the camera quality is pretty much the same, which is a bummer.

Battery belter

We got a day and a half's worth of juice, leaving 20 to 30% left in the tank for day 2 almost everyday with power usage like texting and gaming.



Key specs

Chipset MediaTek Dimensity 8350 Apex **Display** 6.77-inch Super Fluid AMOLED **RAM** 8GB/12GB LPDDR5X **Storage** 128GB/256GB UFS3.1 **Rear cameras** 50MP (primary) + 8MP (ultra-wide) **Front camera** 16MP **Battery** 7,100mAh

If you're a power user who's sick of being tethered to a charger, the OnePlus Nord CE5 is a deeply compelling package. However, there's not a standout feature which makes it a boring phone of sorts. *@khumailthakur*

STUFF SAYS ★★★★☆

A mid-range marvel that crams in a monstrous battery



Tune out

I am not a fan of how the colour tuning is different between the Ultrawide and the main camera. The UW is a little on the saturated side, and the main sensor does a good job of bringing the colours back.



Creature comforts

To stop things getting toasty while playing BGMI at 90FPS, there's a large CryoVelocity VC Cooling system. And for all you digital hoarders, there's even a microSD slot for up to 1TB of extra storage.

[Words Khumail Thakur]

Three four fun

Your entertainment just got better with a big screen tablet and a big price tag to match along with a pair of TWS that puts the expensive one's to shame!

$699 / oneplus.com



[Words Khumail Thakur]

You remember the OnePlus Pad from 2023, right? The one with the rather unique aspect ratio that made your spreadsheets and your streaming sessions equally happy? Then came the Pad 2 in 2024, another solid contender that excelled at both work and play.

This new slab of tech goodness promises to keep everything we loved about its predecessors and cram in a whole lot more with software smarts. We're talking a bigger, brighter LCD, top-tier chipsets, oodles of storage, a whopping eight speakers, and all the OxygenOS smarts we've come to expect.

OnePlus seems to have raided the dictionary for words like "thin," "strong," and "captivating" when describing the Pad 3's design, and honestly, they're not far off. This is their thinnest tablet body ever, clocking in at less than six millimetres. That's thinner than my last slice of weekend pizza! But don't let that waif-like profile fool you; this slate is built to be super strong. They've used some fancy new aluminium which keeps the weight down.

Now, let's talk about that screen. We're looking at a 13.2-inch LCD beauty with a 3.4K resolution. It keeps that rather useful 7:5 aspect ratio, which is brilliant for getting more of your documents on screen without endless scrolling, and it makes movies look pretty spiffy too.



1 A bomb view

Add in 12-bit colour and a pixel density of 315 PPI, and you've got a display that's as sharp as a tack and as colourful as a carnival. It keeps up with my iPad Air M2 just fine while watching the Oppenheimer bomb sequence on Netflix.

2 Brighter but better?

Both tablets at max brightness deliver the same level of colour fidelity, however, the iPad has better local dimming. The OnePlus Pad 3 punches brightness all over the screen and washes the colour and blacks a bit at full brightness.

3 Sound of fun

The screen is paired with eight speakers. That's four woofers and four tweeters, all placed to give you an immersive audio experience that adapts to however you're holding the tablet. In practice, the tablet has impressive throw and detail.

4 Top shelf stuff

Underneath that sleek exterior, the OnePlus Pad 3 is packing some serious heat – or rather, serious power, kept seriously cool. At its heart is the brand-spanking-new Snapdragon 8 Elite chipset for powerful performance on the go.

5 Editor's joy

You can spec this beast with either 12GB of RAM and 256GB of storage, or go absolutely bonkers with a massive 16GB of RAM and 512GB of storage. That 16GB RAM will be particularly useful while editing heavier photo files.

24 hours with the OnePlus Pad 3

Good
Meh
Evil

- 2mins: This is the thinnest tablet body OnePlus has ever crafted.
- 5mins: Coming in at under six millimetres. Despite that, it's built tough.
- 10mins: It keeps the rather handy 7:5 aspect ratio, ace for both work and play.
- 15mins: Screen is bright and colourful but it can wash out the colours and blacks.
- 1hr: The brand-new Snapdragon 8 Elite chipset makes it a beast.
- 2hrs: You can even spec it out with a frankly bonkers 16GB of RAM.
- 3hrs: It's loaded with clever AI tools for writing and summarising.
- 3.5hrs: It also has new tricks to work with your Apple gear. Nice!
- 5hrs: The keyboard accessory feels a tad flimsy and rickety.



Tech specs

Chipset Snapdragon 8 Elite **Display** 13.2-inch LCD (LTPS), Up to 144Hz adaptive refresh rate, 600nits **RAM** 12GB/16GB LPDDR5x RAM **Storage** 256GB/512GB UFS 4.0 **Rear cameras** 13MP **Front camera** 8MP **Battery** 12,140mAh, 80W SuperVOOC

Can this be my laptop?

With big power comes big accessories and those can unlock some interesting multitasking chops...



Stamina boy

I have not charged the tablet for 3 days and I have watched YouTube, played Grid Legends and even sneaked in a few rounds of TFT (Team Fight Tactics) while working, and it's still not down to 50% yet!



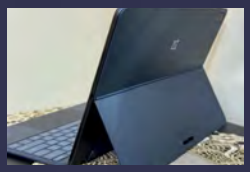
Share the love

It plays nicely with the latest OnePlus phones for quick sharing and screen mirroring. They've also introduced new apps and functionality to help you get the most from your Apple devices.



It's a typo

The keyboard accessory sports larger, spaced-out keycaps for a better typing experience. However, it's rather flimsy and feels like a retrofitted solution to keyboard and kickstand solution.



Do I want two things?

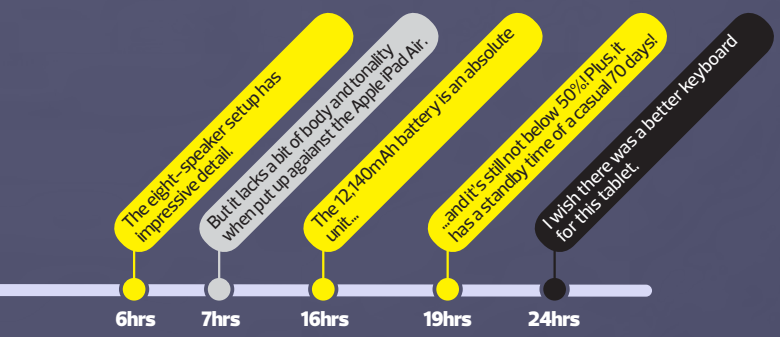
If you want to attach a keyboard, there are pogo pins at the back that connect to the keyboard, and a hole in the kickstand lets you lock the keyboard in place when shut. It's a very rickety solution.



This thing is shaping up to be a multitasking and gaming beast. And that battery! Seriously, 12,140mAh is no joke; I've been trying to drain it for three days with a mix of YouTube, gaming, and work, and it's still not hit 50%. It's powerful, has a marathon-worthy battery, and boasts a lovely large display which doubles for work and entertainment. *@khumailthakur*

STUFF SAYS ★★★★☆

The most battery efficient tablet we've tested, you can work and play on this without a worry.



The add-on: OnePlus Buds 4

In the relentlessly churning sea of true wireless earbuds, it takes something special to make a splash. And these here are very special.

₹5999 / oneplus.in

Let's get this out of the way: for the money, the OnePlus Buds 4 sound remarkably grown-up. They're powered by a clever coaxial dual-driver system — basically, a big 11mm woofer for the rumbly bits and a separate 6mm tweeter for the sparkly bits.

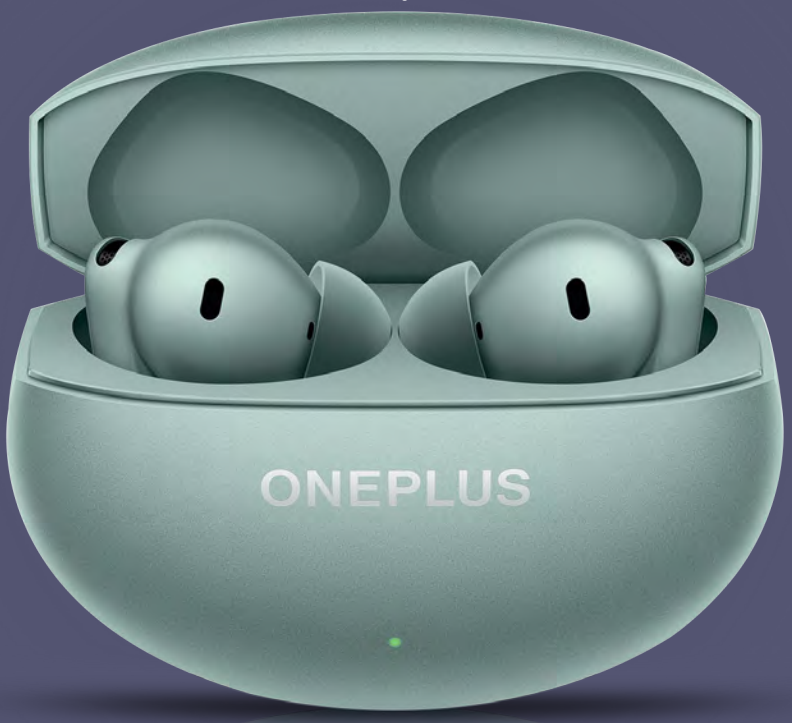
Spinning up A.R. Rahman's Dil Se Re, the complex layers and thumping bassline are delivered with a tightness and control that feels like it's coming from much pricier picks. For the best results, stick to the 'Balanced' EQ preset.

These buds are proper detail detectives. Listening to Peter Cat Recording Co.'s I Deny Me, the sound is rich, and the subtle decay of the snare drum comes through with startling clarity without trampling all over the vocals. They can seriously punch, delivering energy and detail even at lower volumes.

They offer more texture and sonic resolution than even an Apple AirPods 4, though they can stray into brightness at times, pushing the higher frequencies forward. The AirPods, by comparison, sound more neutral and airy.

Happy new ear

The ANC munches through low-frequency hums and office chatter with ease, making your commute significantly more tolerable.



Key specs

Drivers 11mm woofer + 6mm tweeter **ANC** Yes **Codecs** LHDC 5.0/AAC/SBC **Connectivity** Bluetooth 5.4 **Battery life** 40hrs (ANC off) **Weight** 4.73g

These are a fantastic pair of earbuds that get a lot right. They deliver a detailed, energetic, and surprisingly mature sound that punches well above its weight, making both music and movies a joy to listen to. *@khumailthakur*

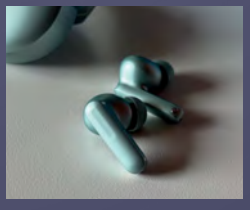
STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

Top-tier sound for bottom-tier cash, grab it now!



Hear and now

Mic quality is fantastic as well. It's good enough to have a conversation with anyone, even on a Mumbai local train. It smartly cuts out the ambient noise while talking and does a good job.



Swipe up for more

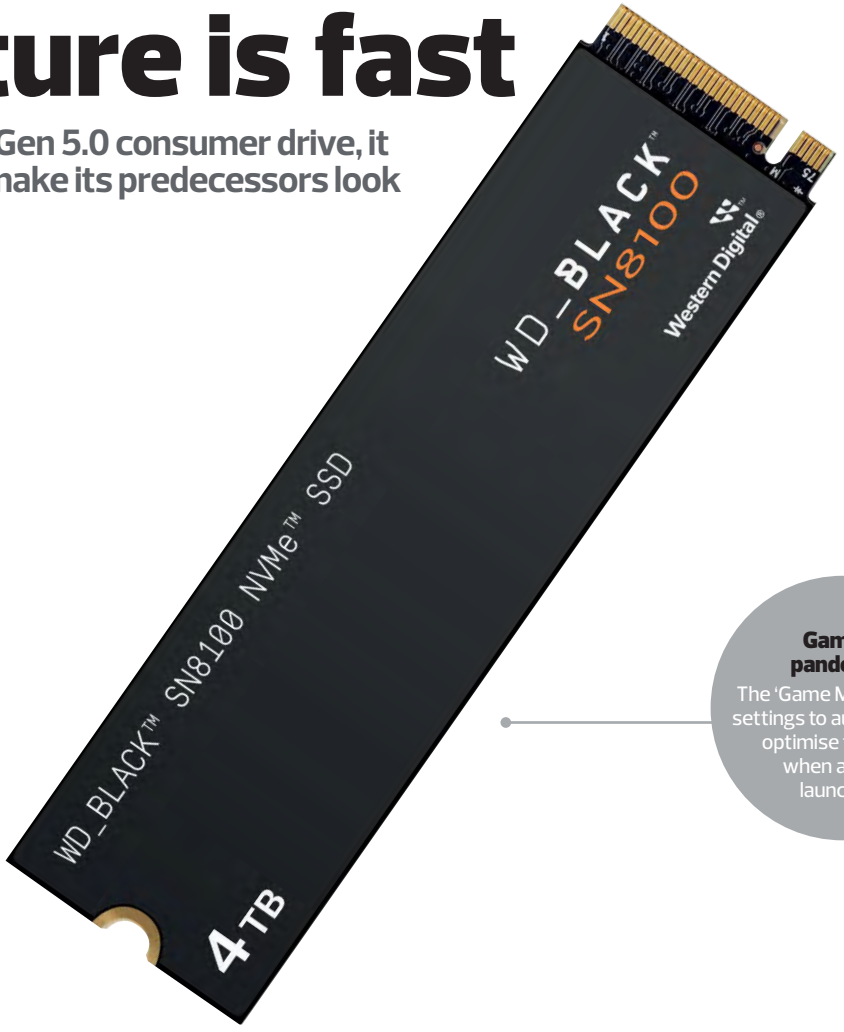
My absolute favourite? Swiping up and down the stem to change the volume. It's simple, it's intuitive, and it works flawlessly every single time. Very few TWS do it and at this price, its great!

[**Words** Khumail Thakur]

The future is fast

As Sandisk's first PCIe Gen 5.0 consumer drive, it promises speeds that make its predecessors look positively pedestrian.

₹44,064 / amazon.in



■ Early Gen 5 drives were notorious for high power consumption and the thermal characteristics of a small furnace, but the SN8100 appears to have addressed these teething issues. The real question, however, isn't whether it's fast, the numbers confirm it is, but who, in 2025, genuinely needs this much speed?!

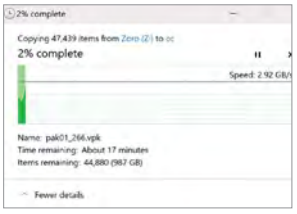
■ On paper, the specifications for the 2TB model are impressive. It's a standard M.2 2280 single-sided drive built with Sandisk BiCS8 TLC 3D CBA NAND technology. The performance metrics according to the spec sheet are 14,900MB/s Sequential Read and 14,000MB/s Sequential Write. Sandisk also says the Random Read IOPS is 2.3 million and the Random Write IOPS is 2.4 million. Meanwhile, the endurance is rated for 1,200 Terabytes Written (TBW).

■ In our testing, the SN8100 delivered a random read speed of 14,196MB/s and a write speed of 12,490MB/s. This is almost exactly double the performance of the WD Black SN850X we tested recently, which clocked in at 6,954MB/s read and 6,670MB/s write speeds. The generational leap is, therefore, not just a claim but a measured reality.

Tech specs

Capacity 2TB **Form Factor** M.2 2280 **Sequential Read** 14900MB/s **Sequential Write** 14000MB/s **Warranty** 5-Year **Random Read/Write** 2.3M/2.4M IOPS

Gaming pandering
The 'Game Mode' offers settings to automatically optimise the drive when a game launches.



■ Fast but not power hungry

More notable than the raw speed is the efficiency. The drive is reportedly over 100% more power-efficient than its Gen4 forerunner, with the 2TB model averaging 7.0W during write operations. This is a significant!



■ Heat is not a problem

With repeated CrystalDiskMark tests, it hit a maximum of only 68°C, staying comfortably below the drive's thermal throttle threshold of 85-90°C. Even while gaming the temperature never exceeded 65°C.

STUFF SAYS The fastest, most ridiculously capable SSD we've ever tested! ★★★★★

₹44 thousand for 2TB? Excuse me?
khumailthakur



It's for the enthusiast who needs benchmark-topping bragging rights or the professional whose specific workflow can leverage every drop of sequential performance. So, unless you're a video pro shifting terabyte-sized files for breakfast or a benchmark-obsessed enthusiast, your current setup likely can't keep up. It's an aspirational bit of kit, a beautiful, pricey postcard from the future.



PS5 / playstation.com

Death Stranding 2: On the Beach

Death Stranding 2 has had a significant delivery upgrade! This sequel cuts down on the faff and throws you right into the glorious, desolate landscape, letting you figure out how to traverse its treacherous terrain with admirable haste.

If you're a seasoned porter, you'll be happy to know the narrative picks up right after the first game's finale. Sam is living out his days in the hills with Lou, his now all-grown-up (and utterly adorable, by the way) Bridge Baby. But, because this is Death Stranding, peace is about as stable as a stack of cargo in a gale. Something goes awry, and suddenly, you're tasked with connecting the entire continent of Australia to the Chiral network.

For the uninitiated, imagine a post-apocalyptic hiking simulator where your goal is to link isolated pockets of humanity via an invisible, supernatural internet. Sounds simple, right? Wrong. The story is anything but digestible at first glance, but it remarkably makes sense as you play. It's a concoction of the deeply philosophical and the utterly bonkers, often driven by its stellar music and background score that elevate key story moments.

Your biggest adversary in Death Stranding 2? Forget Higgs, forget the BTs for a moment – it's the damn terrain. Gravity and the unforgiving landscape are your constant companions, and mostly, your enemies. Navigating rocky slopes, rushing rivers, and sheer cliffs is a puzzle in itself, requiring careful planning of routes and judicious use of your traversal tools.

In its best moments, the game offered me action to satiate my trigger-happy side (it can be done with stealth too!). It also made me calculate my resources to build effectively while traversing the map, taking into account that I wanted to avoid a trackback from my mission area to a nearby facility, and it genuinely intrigued me with a story that is random but digestible this time around.

Khumail Thakur

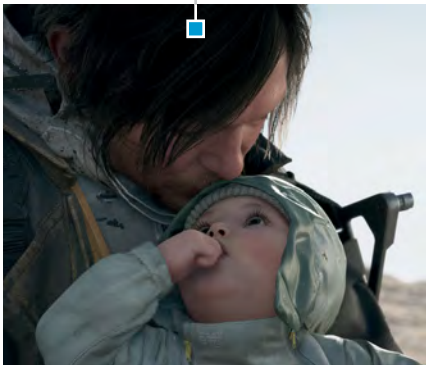
STUFF SAYS A weird, wonderful, and surprisingly balanced package that delivers. ★★★★★



Troy Baker has really nailed this guitar-wielding joker role to the fullest!



Baby Lou is the best but this is not another dad-game.





A delivery station is never quiet

Things are incredibly cinematic and cool, with a lot of inspiration clearly coming from movies. Chapter 5, in particular, looks absolutely crazy beautiful, pushing the limits of even the base PS5.

You can sense Kojima's many interests within the game; his tastes in music, his interests in movies, and his choices of directors and actors are all very evident. He's put all his favourite actors and directors as cameos, and somehow, this whole thing comes together remarkably well.

Even Kojima's habit of tweeting regularly and being very active on social media is quite apparent in how he built the social aspect of Death Stranding 2. This works through a 'likes' system for appreciating a well-placed bridge, a helpful electric charger, or a well-positioned ladder.

Things can even be shared with other gamers to complete specific tasks and deliveries, fostering a unique sense of community. While the cutscenes are like tiny movie clips where Kojima is trying to fulfil his movie fantasies, the in-depth delivery and building mechanics, coupled with combat and traversal elements, make it an outstanding video game.



Elden Ring Nightreign

Elden Ring Nightreign is not Elden Ring 2. It's not even Elden Ring 1.5. Think of it more as a riotous, roguelite-infused afterparty to the main festival.

Forget everything you know about the Golden Order and Queen Marika's dysfunctional family. Nightreign spins a yarn in a parallel universe where things went even more pear-shaped. Now there's no underlying story as such for why things are happening and even if there is one, VaatiVidya and the rest haven't uncovered it and we certainly haven't either. So think of it as everything, including the Erdtree and the land, are now put into an eternal, creeping night. And you're thrown into a place called Limveld which is a remixed Limgrave, that's also shifting slightly every run.

You and your chums play as Nightfarers, a ragtag bunch of warriors plucked from time and space to have a crack at pushing back the gloom. The narrative is kept light and drip-fed through 'Remembrances' of each characters, which you unlock. It's more of a cracking premise to get you into the fight than a deep, soul-searching epic, setting the stage for endless cycles of glorious death.

Nightreign is a PvE and a strictly three-player affair. No duos, no sprawling fellowship, just you and two other souls against the world. This is where the game both soars and stumbles. The core loop is a mad dash against time. Each 'day' gives you roughly 15 minutes to hoover up runes, level up your pre-set character, and tool up before facing a boss. Day 1, kill the boss. Day 2, rinse and repeat. Day 3, you're off to face the big cheese, the Nightlord of the cycle. It's breathless, frantic, and utterly addictive.

The catch? Try doing that with a couple of randoms who've wandered in from the internet. With no in-game chat or even a simple ping system, coordinating with strangers is like trying to teach a cat to do your taxes. It's nigh on impossible.

Khumail Thakur

STUFF SAYS A frantic and furious co-op roguelite that's essential with friends ★★★★☆

PS5, XSX, PC / bandainamcoent.com





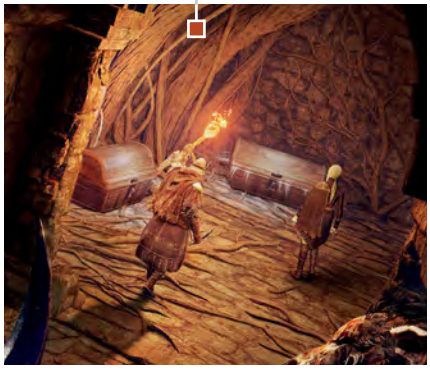
Touristin' the night away

This is a game that practically begs you to jump on Discord with your mates. Our sessions went from chaotic scrambles to well-oiled machines once we could actually talk to each other. This is where Nightreign truly sings – as a collaborative, strategic scramble for survival.

Like Fortnite and many other battle royales, there's a circle that slowly shrinks till you fight the Day 1 and Day 2 bosses and repulse the night each time to explore the map again. If you lose any of your runes outside the circle on Day 1, you can always get them back after defeating the Day 1 boss. The game lets you revive teammates by hitting them, and each time they fall in combat, it gets longer (and harder) to revive them.

The loot system is fast and loose. You find weapons, pop them in your inventory, and their passive abilities are yours, no matter what you're holding. It strips away the deep RPG fiddling of the main game for something that works in its high-speed context. Relics, permanent upgrades you purchase back at the Roundtable Hold, add a lovely sense of progression between runs, making each failure feel like a step forward.

Oh, look lovely loot boxes! None with a hidden mimic in sight, a great day (night).



Listen Mr. Farer, this ain't your family dinner table. Go out there and fight.

