DRIVEN MERCEDES E-CLASS LWB



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GADGETS / GAMES / GEAR

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SOUND SPHERE

Horizon series from Marantz ups the game

TESTED!

Samsung Galaxy Tab S10 Ultra
Casio G-Shock GBM-2100
Google Pixel Buds Pro 2
EA Sports FC 25



haymarket
ISSN 2250-2238
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HOTST


Smart-flea
You can use your phone as a key too! RE claims it will support fast charging and will also come with a simple 3-pin plug. Classic looks, modern brains. It will be available in late 2026 so hold onto your horses.
History lessons
Back in the day, the Flea was purpose-built for use during WWII and they were airdropped via parachute to provide lightweight, easy-to-use all-terrain mobility.

U F F

ALL THE BIGGEST STORIES FROM PLANET TECH

Flea, felt

At the heart of it all is the Vehicle Control Unit (VCU) which is especially developed for the FF, packing a custom chip that manages over 200,000 ride modes and even alerts if anyone dares to touch it.



HOT FIVE #1

WHERE'S THE THUMP BRO?

Royal Enfield Flying Flea

RE's electric bike endeavor is officially named the Flying Flea and comes with two bikes as of now. The first model under Flying Flea to hit the road next year will be the FF-C6. Taking inspiration from the original Flying Flea model, this is a modern interpretation with a sophisticated, distinct aesthetic coupled with class-leading technology. This beast is equipped with a forged aluminum Girder fork, a nod to the pre-1930s classics. Back then, the original Flying Flea turned heads with its sleek, rubber-band-style girder fork. Now, it's back, re-engineered with all the elegance and audacity of its heyday, but ready to take on the modern roads. The suspension is further accentuated by a flowing, forged aluminum frame. It's light, strong, and looks as timeless as a vintage watch. But it doesn't stop there. The magnesium battery case isn't just clever; it's sculpted like art, with fins that aren't just for show. Up front, you've got bold, odd-sequenced fins screaming "innovation," while the rear, with its even, more refined fins, whispers "heritage." And they twist and turn, meeting in a center wing-shaped motif—pure elegance.

As hot as... **a bug on a zapper**

₹tba / flyingflea.royalenfield.com

Intel is back

Well, Intel's answer to Qualcomm's rapid momentum in the laptop world is this!

₹1,74,990 / asus.com/in

■ Now with Microsoft pushing their Windows OS in support for Qualcomm's ARM chips, the conversation has now become a real head scratcher for the consumer. Do you buy the Intel and AMD based laptops for full software compatibility or do you go for Qualcomm laptops for the phenomenal battery life?

■ Here's the kicker, it doesn't outright beat the MacBooks and Qualcomm laptops that have 18 or more hours of battery life but the Intel is very close to the competition in terms of battery life. We clocked 13 to 15 hours of screen time with our regular email, writing and video conferencing use. We also were able to use all of Adobe's software on this laptop unlike the Qualcomm laptop.

■ Yes, you won't be able to upgrade the RAM in the future so it's best to pick a 16GB or a 32GB RAM size based on your workload before pulling the trigger. In exchange, you get reduced latency within the system and it's quite evident when you use the laptop.

■ Gaming is better, video renders are quicker and the overall power draw has reduced but performance is better. The Intel maintains a strict line of power draw to reduce your visits to the plug point.



Hello there?
The camera works 80% of the time to unlock the laptop using your face but in tricky light situations like a flight or low light place you will have to enter your passcode.

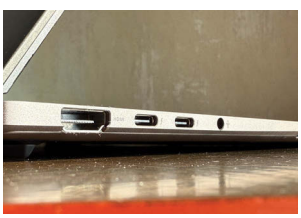
Tech specs

Processor Intel Core Ultra 7 Processor 258V **Graphics** Intel Arc Graphics **Display** 14inch, 3K OLED, 120Hz, 500nits **Memory** 32GB LPDDR5X **Storage** 512GB M.2 NVMe **Weight** 1.20 kg



■ It's a new arc

The SoC has a 16GB shared memory for the Intel Arc GPU and it's very impressive. *Ghost of Tsushima* and *Sifu* run at 45FPS with medium to high settings with Intel XeSS upscaling. The ZenBook runs at full power on battery.



■ All the right moves

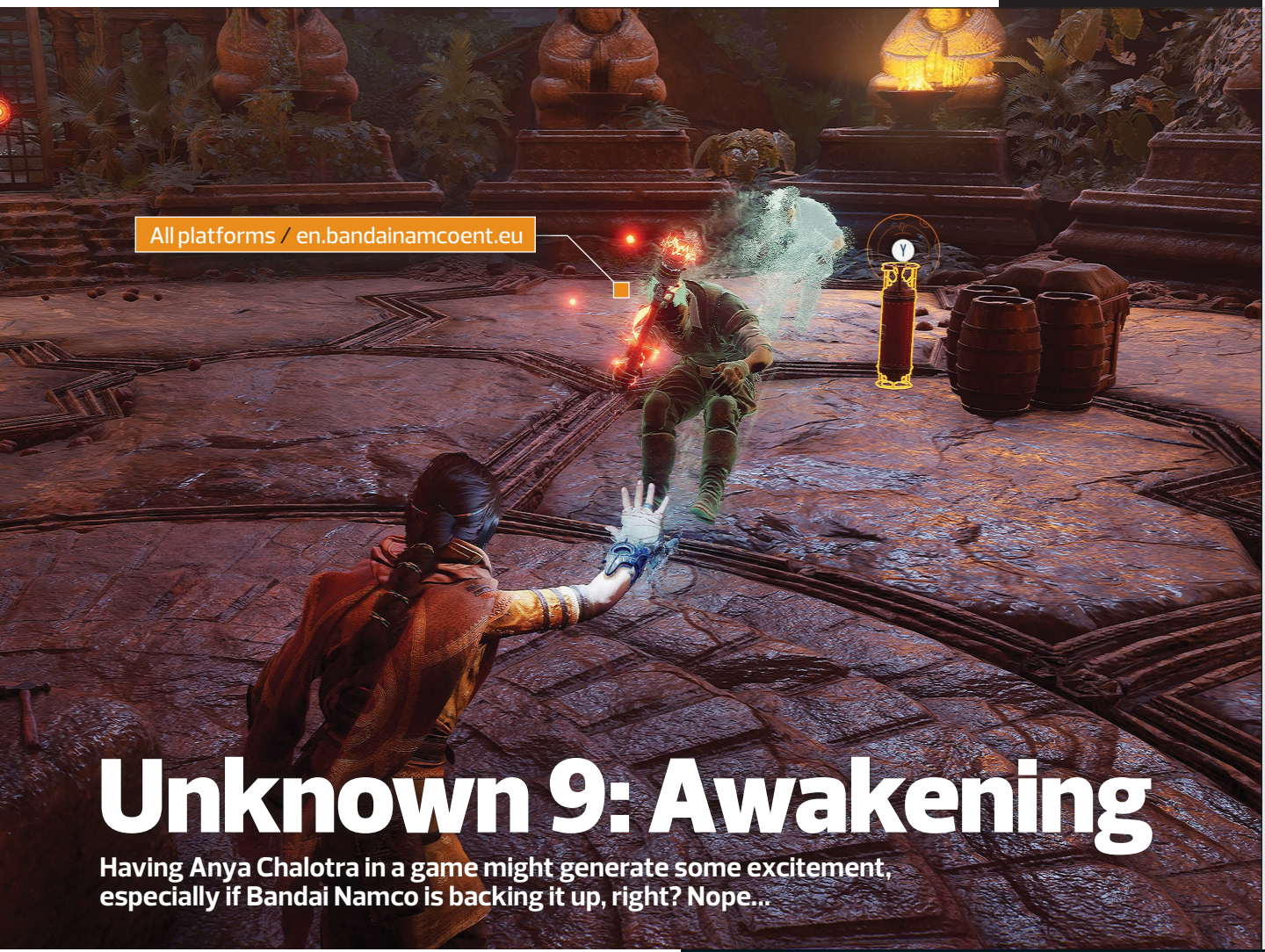
The overall fit and finish on this laptop can even put Apple to shame. It's a beautiful laptop and very functional too. Sort of like a fashionista with a swiss army knife, the S14 OLED doesn't skimp out on the port selection.

STUFF SAYS Want a Windows laptop with a MacBook's battery life? Buy this! ★★★★★

Isn't this a bit too expensive?
khumailthakur



Yup, it's hella expensive but the S14 OLED is a powerful and stylish laptop that offers a compelling blend of performance, battery life, and design. The Intel processor delivers impressive speed and efficiency, while the stunning OLED display and sleek Ceraluminum chassis make it a joy to use. Though the speakers could be better, the overall package is hard to beat for those who need a versatile machine.



All platforms / en.bandainamcoent.eu

Unknown 9: Awakening

Having Anya Chalotra in a game might generate some excitement, especially if Bandai Namco is backing it up, right? Nope...

It starts off like a snoozefest, all about revenge and stuff. But then, it takes a wild turn and gets super interesting when it starts dealing with things way bigger than the main character. Mysterious realms, powerful entities and secret societies lend intrigue and substance to its story but unfortunately, it never hits the mark in its presentation or execution.

The story follows Haroona, an Indian girl played by Anya Chalotra and her affinity to the mystical realm called the Fold. She can tap into the Fold and use Jedi-like powers to take down enemies.

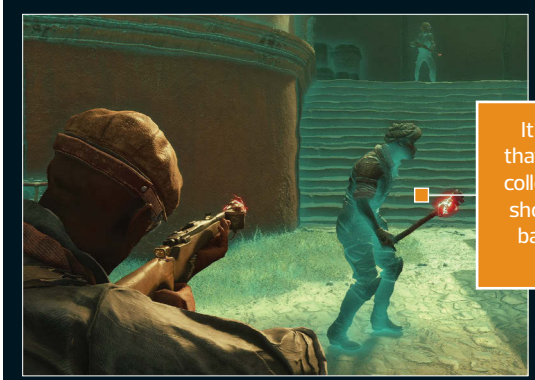
The map is mostly a series of small areas that you clear to get to the next. Enemies can either be taken out using stealth but if you get detected then everyone quickly surrounds you. The combat has its moments of fun when you combine your stepping ability and Jedi powers with the conveniently placed explosives.

You can 'step' inside the mind and take control of them and make them attack each other or send them to their death by making them strike an explosive barrel. Or if you want to take the stealthy approach, then you can do that too but it's a little boring.

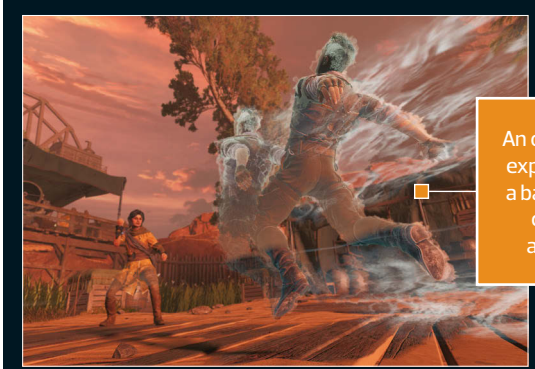
The combat system is kinda cool, but it doesn't really get any better than what you see in the trailers. The attempt here is to be a game like Uncharted or Tomb Raider that combines personal struggles with fantasy history lessons but the execution is as janky as a skateboard rolling down the stairs.

Exploration and item collection are also boring. For a story that is going for an Indiana Jones-esque vibe, the environments and artefacts don't seem all that interesting. The artefacts are far and few inbetween for a game that deals in the archaeological sense of wonder in mystic and otherworldly intentions. There are just boring letters and coins scattered everywhere which don't have the wow factor like Tomb Raider and Uncharted games.

Khumail Thakur



It's always that one work colleague that shoots in the back for no reason.



An out of body experience or a bad trip, this could be anything!

STUFF SAYS Promising but is let down by poor execution and a lack of polish ★★★☆☆



EA Sports FC 25

New exciting modes, smarter AI and an in-depth tactical system that might make you change Ten Hag's strategies for Hansi Flick's. Is this year's EA Sports FC deserving of your money?

Behind all the realistic movement and player behaviour that EA calls Hypermotion, the actual sense of something new this year comes from the incredibly in-depth tactical and positional system called FC IQ and this particular game mode I fancy a lot called Rush.

First off, FC IQ adds a level of depth to individual players' roles that impact the collective cognition of the entire team. Say, you wish for Rashford to play on the Left Wing and during attack you'd want him to cut inside and become an 'Inside Forward', well if EA FC has assigned a plus or a plus plus sign on Rashford or Garnacho for that role then you can play them in that role. Bruno on the other hand will get options like Half Winger and Playmaker. The Half Winger Role moves him to the wing to support Rashford with crosses during an attack.

Remember Volta? Well, Rush is that but more fun and tactical. Think about a 5v5 turf football match with an interesting offside rule, a blue card that gives a 1-minute suspension, and an AI-controlled keeper. Rush works when up to 4 players form a team together with the fifth one being the AI-controlled keeper, which the captain of the team can call forward if need be.

There's also a special stadium made in partnership with Nike called the Nike Air Zoom Arena, which is designed to look like a futuristic stadium inspired by Nike Mercurial cleats. I really like it, but after a few days, the stadium starts to feel like old news.

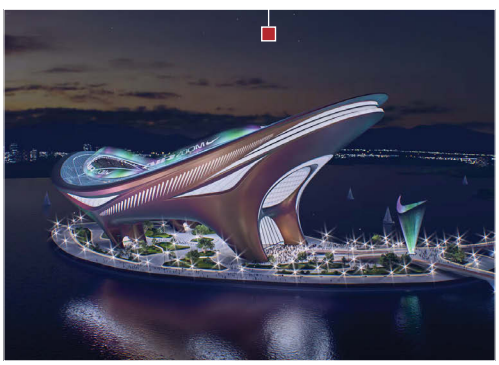
EA Sports FC 25 is a bit of a bummer. It doesn't bring much new to the table, and the old problems still remain which are just plain annoying. They're really trying to push players toward spending money on Ultimate Team microtransactions, which is a bit of a turn-off. The Rush mode is a nice change of pace, but it's not enough to make up for the game's old problems which still persist.

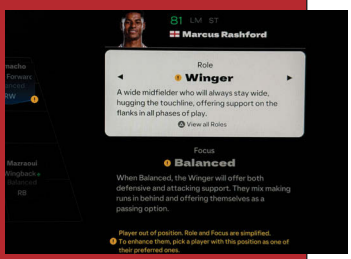
Khumail Thakur

STUFF SAYS It's a rush, but will leave you in a penalty box if you're coming from FC 24 ★★★★☆









Play your Role

After assigning your players the Role, you also have to give them a Focus which dictates how they manage attack and defence. If you assign PlayMaker and Balanced to Bruno Fernandes, then he will stay central during attacks and also drop into defence in a balanced manner.

But if you assign him an Attack Focus, then he will slip between the lines and move between the opposition defence to create more chances. Both Role and Focus dictate how your individual players move on and off the ball, and if you don't structure the formation according to individual players' IQ, then you might easily lose the ball to a superior tactic. My counter-attack strategy with the 4-4-2 formation from the SAF era was easily overloaded centrally by Madrid's Gegenpressing.

FC IQ gives you immense control over how you want to play with your team rather than just filling the team with top talent. You can customise the strategy for your team on a per-player basis, which might overwhelm folks who just want to pick up and play. Thankfully, you don't have to visit the deep end of tactics for local fun. However, in Ultimate Teams and Career Mode, these things will dictate the overall performance of your team.



PS5, XBX, PC / en.bandainamcoent.eu

Dragon Ball: Sparking! Zero

This is the new Budokai game that you were hoping for, and if you're a Dragon Ball Z fan, it's packing 182 characters from the start of the Dragon Ball franchise to the end with Jiren and the fighters from the Tournament of Power.

I'll be honest, I was a bit disappointed by the game not having a long set of moves like *Tekken* or *Street Fighter*, but after playing for a few hours, I realised that it's actually better to not have a spreadsheet's worth of moveset for 182 characters.

Sparking Zero plays on the fantasy of 'looking' like a Dragon Ball Z game rather than mimicking other fighting games. You'll mostly be mashing square and triangle to land hits while teleporting behind the enemy to dodge attacks and blocking perfectly to counter. It gets increasingly intense as you manage your Ki metre and make sure your power abilities land.

Characters also do different things depending on your distance from the opponent. The X button will work as a dodge button, cartwheeling Goku into the periphery of the opponent, but if you're at a short distance, then X will quick dash you closer to the enemy, and if you're far away, then you can either move towards the enemy or dash around the arena into an advantageous spot.

It's a fighting game where timing is everything. If you get the timing of the block button right, you can punish anyone who's just mashing buttons. Holding down the O button makes you dodge all physical attacks like you're Ultra Instinct Goku. Tap the R1 button at the right time, and you'll teleport behind the enemy. Using your Ki to execute abilities triggers a cool little animation of your character before they unleash their move.

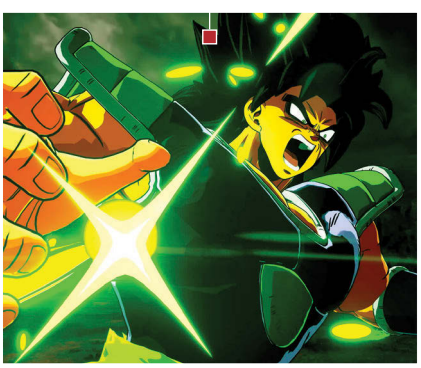
When everything comes together, every fight feels like a well-choreographed scene from an anime. It's like you're transported back to the early 2000s, when watching your favourite blonde character scream for five minutes straight was the ultimate hype. Its fast-paced, accessible combat, while not overly complex for newcomers but has plenty of nuance for the battle-hardened Saiyans.

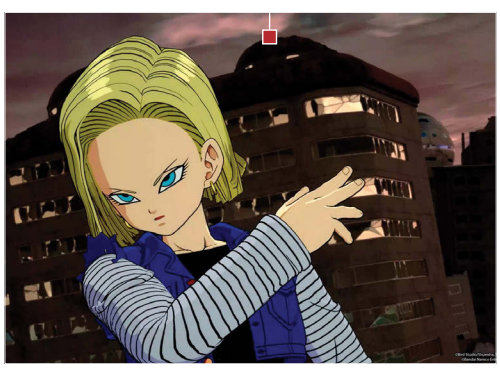
Khumail Thakur

STUFF SAYS Line up Budokai Tenkaichi fans! This is the DBZ you grew up to but better! ★★★★☆

If bad anger management was a character, Broly would be ideal for it.

Can the Tesla Bot fly around and blast things with Ki? I think not!







When the story goes sideways...

Sparking Zero has a cool cast of characters and a story mode that lets you follow their journeys from beginning to end. It's like the classic DBZ experience, but with some fun twists and turns. If you complete a mission in a certain way, you might end up on a different path, facing new enemies and unlocking new power-ups. We won't give away any spoilers, but Dragon Ball Sparking Zero has some really awesome moments in story mode. Make sure you play through all of them!

This game is very well optimised for it. However, the menu is very clunky. Goku flies from one place to another when you switch between sections in the menu. However, Sparking Zero has increased the animation speed since the launch. The sluggish animation felt delayed and unnecessary.

That said, the in-game animations are done with such care and love for the franchise that it's hard to put down the game after playing it for hours. In earlier games where only main Ki abilities collided to create a button-mashing quick time event, Sparking Zero brings a quick time button-mashing bonanza! There are multiple instances to trigger a QTE in a fight.