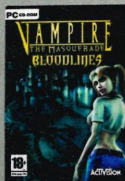


PC

WHAT IS IT?



A first-person action game by the makers of *Fallout*.

- Powered by *Half-Life 2*'s source engine
- 7 character classes
- Four fully detailed neighbourhoods in LA

HOW IT PLAYS!



IN GAME CLIP: We're about to visit a Vampiric clan, The Tzimisce. They're touchy, though, so bring presents, like 9mm ones.

CLAN AHEAD

Your most important decision comes first – what clan do you wish to be? This will impact your game hugely, so choose carefully.



The Brujah are the **hard-cases** of the vampire world, happiest tearing off heads.



Nosferatu are **stealth and information** experts. Not really people-persons, then.



For a different approach, try a Malkavian. Clinically insane, they talk utter gibberish.

VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE BLOODLINES

It's a lot of fun being a Vampire...

Their diet is unnatural, and those who consume it are shunned by society. If discovered, they're driven out by mobs waving pitchforks. Yes, *Monster Munch* and *Iron Bru-scoffing* games journalists are a hideous breed, and should be slaughtered in their sleep.

Vampires though, just as horrible and eighteen times as sexy, get their own videogames. *Vampire: The Bloodline Masquerade* differs from your average nibble-'em-up. Yes, there's superhuman powers of the undead and blood-drinking, as seen in *Bloodrayne*. But in this game there's also politics, talking and scheming. This is as much an adventure as it is an action game: think *Deus Ex* with vampires.

THE LADY IS A VAMP

You're given a choice of seven clans of vampires to play as, each with their own specialities. The game's different, therefore, if you play as a hideous Nosferatu, who hides from people in sewers, rather than as a beautiful Toreador, who charm their way to success. As you progress, you gain experience points with which to tweak

your character. And you'll need to, given the vivid array of hideous beastliness that waits in the dark.

But if it's so splendid, what's wrong with it? The main problem is that *V:TBM* is completely ridden with bugs. From minor things (graphic glitches) to mid-range stuff (regular frame-rate problems) to absolutely shocking ones (bugs that stops your progress, crash-bugs), it's infested. This becomes more obvious as the game progresses, and by the end of it you're left with a nasty taste in your mouth. Forget holy water and crosses, what we need here is a big patch, sharpish. But considering its other attractions, you can almost forgive this flaw. Almost.



Scary, overweight gentlemen are very 'now' in videogames this season.

"HIDEOUS NOSFERATU HIDES FROM PEOPLE IN SEWERS"

BEST BIT!



Character animation and expression is so impressive, its **never been better**.



FEATURING!
Jeanette, aged 76!

JUDGEMENT

GM LOVES

- Brilliant script, if a trifle adult. That is, a bit rude
- Facial animation makes characters incredibly expressive
- Good variety of blood sucking characters

GM HATES

- They could have found the time to finish the game
- Close-combat lacks punch, so to speak
- Becomes more like an action game as it progresses

GRAPHICS

Mostly excellent. A fair few animation and texture glitches, though.

GAMEPLAY

The best bits are straight out of *Deus Ex*, with multi-paths to a solution.

LIFESPAN

The size of an RPG, and gameplay alters according to character choice.

OVERALL
74%

It's almost brilliant. If the good bits were less fine, you'd hammer a stake through its heart, though.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN:*Bloodrayne*, 60%
WORSE THAN:*Deus Ex: Invisible War*, 80%
WAIT FOR:*Knights of the Old Republic*, February (PC)
BEST PRICE:£26.99, amazon.co.uk

Other Formats

Or try these:

XBOX	<i>Legacy of Kain 2: Defiance</i>	82%
CUBE	<i>Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance</i>	80%
PC	<i>PS2: Blood Omen 2</i>	75%



It's like the **house of the dead**, but more so, since you're dead too.



Downtown LA clubs. Dress code: plastic gimp masks and bad dancing, apparently.