



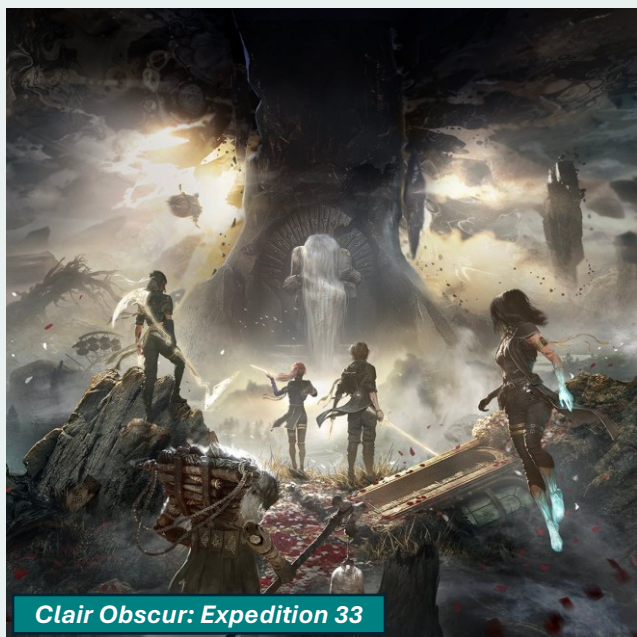
THE VIDEO GAMES GENERATIONS NEWSLETTER

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Issue #32 – December 13, 2025

Start Menu

Loading Screen	1
The Game Awards 2025	2
About the Awards	2
Game Award Winners	3
Trailers & Announcements	6
Collection Inspection - Award Nominees ...	12
Mini-Review: Clair Obscur - Expedition 33..	13
Mini-Review: Silent Hill f	14
The Final Stage.....	15
End Credits.....	15



Clair Obscur: Expedition 33

Loading Screen

I'm getting this issue out a little later than usual, since I couldn't write much of it until *after* The Game Awards, meaning it was too late Thursday, I worked Friday, and so I was only able to get started on it Friday night.

Most of the games I played from this year that were nominated in *any* category already got a mini-review in a prior issue, aside from *Silent Hill f*, which I only recently finished. I'll include that, plus a repeat of my *Clair Obscur: Expedition 33* mini-review from the very first issue, which was before I'd settled on a style for them.



The Game Awards 2025

My son and I watched the entirety of the 2025 Game Awards on Thursday night. Overall, there weren't many surprises, and it went like the well-oiled machine it's become.

Heath wasn't familiar with Flute Guy so I filled him in earlier. I don't think I've ever seen my son laugh so hard as when the GOTY medley was performed, and they kept cutting briefly to Flute Guy (Pedro Eustache of Venezuela).

It's like each time they cut away, he would quickly grab a different woodwind. His manic performance mixed with the constant rotation of different instruments (including ones my son described as a coach's whistle and PVC pipe from a bathroom) was pretty comical.



The mysterious door/statue thing was spoiled a couple days earlier when a trademark filing for a new *Divinity* from Larian Studios was discovered. Sure enough, it was marketing for the next game from the makers of the GOTY-winning *Baldur's Gate 3*. It's not *Divinity: Original Sin 3*, though. It was revealed to be called simply *Divinity*. Maybe a soft reboot?

The reveal started out with some cosplayers walking toward the stage, with a few of them getting whisked away on wires. It was a little awkward in practice. This was followed by a trailer for the game, which was unsettling with villagers cheerfully watching a dude being burned, a brief NSFW sex scene (but not graphic), and some kind of demonic plague released by the old guy they just burned.

About the Awards

The awards have become just a small part of the show. Some of them are done in rapid-fire fashion, with no acceptance speeches or anything (particularly during the pre-show).

I expected *Clair Obscur: Expedition 33* to win in every category where it was nominated except for Best Performance, where I thought it might go to Troy Baker for his spot-on *Indiana Jones* performance. It won there too (Jennifer English as Maelle) but lost in the Player's Voice category, which went to some free-to-play game called *Wuther Waves*. No shade to *Wuthering Waves*, but I suspect it was mainly due to an organized voting campaign that simply drowned out any possible competition.

It also lost to *Battlefield 6* for Best Audio Design, but swept all the rest of them.

It's amazing that the team at Sandfall Interactive hadn't released a game before and simply figured it out as they went along, resulting in the 2025 Game Awards GOTY.

Most years, my personal pick differs from the actual winner and often isn't even nominated (an exception being maybe *Elden Ring* in 2022). Last year, my favorite was far and away *Stellar Blade* (not nominated for GOTY). In 2023, it was easily *Atomic Heart*, although I also enjoyed *Starfield*, *Dead Island 2*, *Hogwarts Legacy*, *Alan Wake 2*, and others.

This year, though, *Clair Obscur: Expedition 33* was my personal GOTY. I suppose there are still a few games from 2025 I want to play that I know I'd enjoy but haven't gotten to yet, which *might* change my mind, but I doubt it. It really is an incredible, special game.

Game Award Winners

I'm going to skip categories that don't interest me at all, like Best Community Support, Best Sports/Racing, various categories related to Esports, and a few others. These are the rest of the results, with the winners shown in **bold**.

Game of the Year

Clair Obscur: Expedition 33

Death Stranding 2: On the Beach

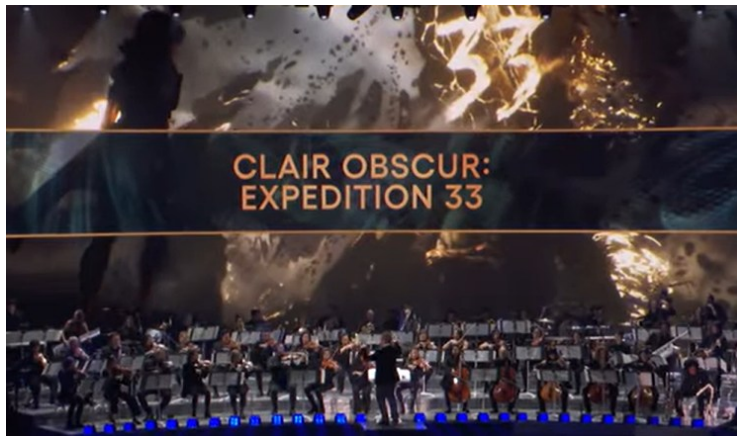
Donkey Kong Bananza

Hades II

Hollow Knight: Silksong

Kingdom Come Deliverance II

Like I mentioned, the winner was also my own pick. *Death Stranding 2* is probably my #2 for the year, although I'm a big fan of other games that didn't get nominated for anything, like *Hell is Us*, *Borderlands 4*, and *Lost Soul Aside*.



Best Game Direction

Clair Obscur: Expedition 33

Death Stranding 2: On the Beach

Ghost of Yōtei

Hades II

Split Fiction

Not that I didn't want *Clair Obscur* to win, but I would have been happy if the award had gone to *Split Fiction* or *Death Stranding 2*, both of which were directed by well-known auteurs (Josef Fares and Hideo Kojima, respectively). I haven't yet played the other two nominees.

Best Narrative

Clair Obscur: Expedition 33

Death Stranding 2: On the Beach

Ghost of Yōtei

Kingdom Come Deliverance II

Silent Hill f

This was another win for *Clair Obscur*. The story in *Death Stranding 2* was good too, but it wouldn't be my pick over *Expedition 33*. The narrative in *Silent Hill f* was... well, maybe I'll include my mini-review later to give my top-level thoughts after just recently playing it. I haven't yet played the other two nominees.

Best Art Direction

Clair Obscur: Expedition 33

Death Stranding 2: On the Beach

Ghost of Yōtei

Hades II

Hollow Knight: Silksong

It would be my pick here too, I think, given that I only played the first two listed. *DS2* looks great, yes, but in a more grounded way. The art style in *Clair Obscur* was just unexpected, different, and felt integral to the experience.

Best Score and Music

Christopher Larkin

Hollow Knight: Silksong

Darren Korb

Hades II

Lorien Testard

Clair Obscur: Expedition 33

Toma Otowa

Ghost of Yōtei

Woodkid and Ludvig Forssell

Death Stranding 2: On the Beach

I like the main vocal track (*Lumière* or *Clair-Obscur* – it has multiple variations) and pretty much the whole soundtrack, but another that really stands out to me is [Ancient Sanctuary – Entrance of the Village](#). *DS2* music is good too, but primarily for the licensed tracks.

Best Audio Design

Battlefield 6

Clair Obscur: Expedition 33

Death Stranding 2: On the Beach

Ghost of Yōtei

Silent Hill f

This was the only critic-voted category that *Clair Obscur* didn't win. I never have strong feelings about audio design. Good music stands out to me, sure, but I don't have an ear trained for the subtleties of rustling leaves, a creaking door, or the proximity of voices.

Best Performance

Ben Starr

Clair Obscur: Expedition 33

Charlie Cox

Clair Obscur: Expedition 33

Erika Ishii

Ghost of Yōtei

Jennifer English

Clair Obscur: Expedition 33

Konatsu Kato

Silent Hill f

Troy Baker

Indiana Jones and the Great Circle

My son's first question when they cut over to Ben Starr in the audience (and maybe it was before this award) was why it looked like he's wearing eye makeup. I had no answer to give.

My first play-through of *Silent Hill f* was with English voices, but I heard it in Japanese on my second playthrough. It's just tough to appreciate the excellence of a good voice performance when you don't know the language.

My pick was Troy Baker, because it was easy to forget he *wasn't* Harrison Ford. I don't know if that's a good enough reason to award a win, but I guess critics felt it wasn't.

Either of the other two *Clair Obscur* nominees would have been deserving of it as well.

Innovation in Accessibility

Assassin's Creed Shadows

AtomFall

Doom: The Dark Ages

EA Sports FC 26

South of Midnight

This is a category where I'm blessed and fortunate enough that it doesn't have to be on my radar. That's not true for some gamers, so it's great that The Game Awards recognizes accessibility as a category worth having.

I played the first two games and the last one, all of which I enjoyed. *AtomFall* is definitely one of my underrated gems this year, but my preference doesn't have anything to do with its accessibility features.

Games For Impact

Consume Me

Despelote

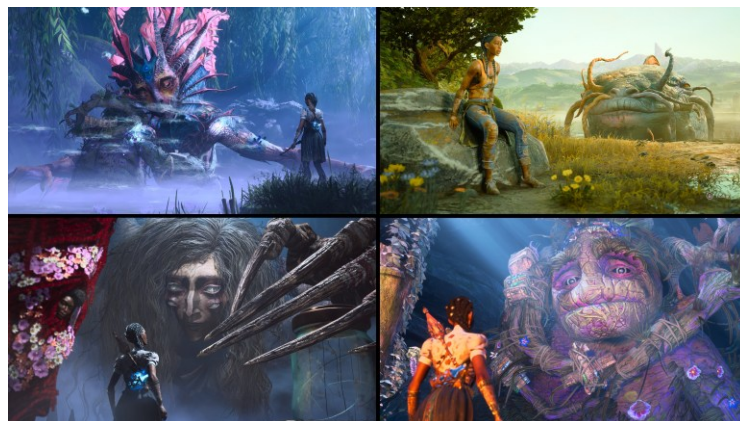
Lost Records: Bloom & Rage

South of Midnight

WanderStop

The category is described as being "for a thought-provoking game with a pro-social meaning or message." I'm surprised the anti-woke chuds aren't more vocal in their disdain for the category, seeing as how they hate anything with a pro-social message.

The only one of these I've played is *South of Midnight*, and while it's further down on my list of favorite 2025 games, I did enjoy it.



Best Independent Game

Absolum

Ball x Pit

Blue Prince

Clair Obscur: Expedition 33

Hades II

Hollow Knight: Silksong

Here's another of the few categories with six nominees. The winner, of course, was *Clair Obscur: Expedition 33*, but I know every other game listed garnered plenty of attention and plenty fans. The only other nominee I played was *Blue Prince*, and it's pretty great too.

Best Debut Indie Game

Blue Prince

Clair Obscur: Expedition 33

Despelote

Dispatch

The creator of *Megabonk* opted out after being nominated, because he released other games before under a different name and got the nomination by mistake. That's why there are only four games list. Although it's easy to see *Clair Obscur* as being in a different league than what one might expect of the first game released by an indie studio, it is indeed indie.

Best Action Game

Battlefield 6

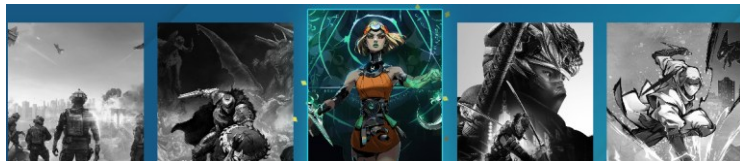
Doom: The Dark Ages

Hades II

Ninja Gaiden 4

Shinobi: Art of Vengeance

Having played none of these, I had no horse in the proverbial race. I want to play some of them – particularly the new *Doom* and the new *Ninja Gaiden*, but no idea when I will.



Best Action / Adventure

Death Stranding 2: On the Beach

Ghost of Yōtei

Hollow Knight: Silksong

Clair Obscur: Expedition 33

Indiana Jones and the Great Circle

Split Fiction

I'm sure the two I haven't played are also great, but the other three I did were all excellent. My vote (which was factored into audience voting at large and only weighted into the final tally at 10%, if I understand correctly) was *Death Stranding 2*. It would have been *Indiana Jones* after that, and *Split Fiction* after that, for me.

Best RPG

Avowed

Clair Obscur: Expedition 33

Kingdom Come Deliverance II

Monster Hunter Wilds

The Outer Worlds 2

At some point, I'll redeem an Xbox GamePass Ultimate code for *Avowed* and *The Outer Worlds 2* (and a few others), although it's tough to find the right time since I've been getting through games slowly since starting the newsletter, and I'd want to maximize what I'm able to play in a month or two. I also want to played *Kingdom Come Deliverance II*, despite not playing the first game, but I worry that my same slow pace would mean I'm invested for a couple months on it, at least.

Most Anticipated Game

007 First Light

Grand Theft Auto VI

Marvel's Wolverine

Resident Evil Requiem

The Witcher IV

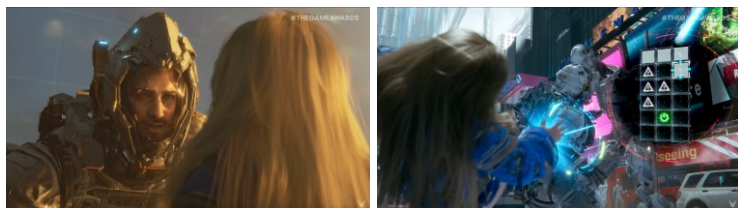
It's an odd category, but a fun one I suppose. All of these upcoming games appeal to me.

Trailers & Announcements

As I did with the awards, I'm just going to focus on the announcements that stood out to me. These picks may not always be listed in the order they were presented.

Pragmata [\[trailer\]](#)

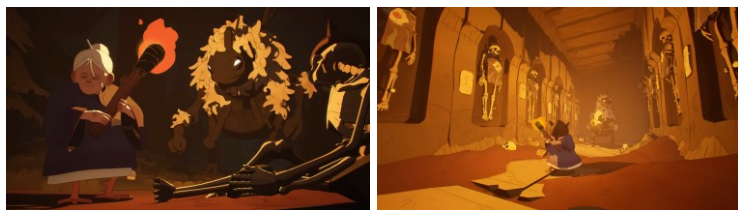
There was a new trailer for this upcoming Capcom action game, showing off what looks like a little gameplay, the futuristic world it's set in, and what appear to be various robotic enemies. It's coming out April 24th and looks to be exactly the kind of game I'm drawn to.



Coven of the Chicken Foot [\[trailer\]](#)

This was my son's Game of the Show. I'm disappointed to see it's only coming to Steam, at least from what's been announced so far, but it does look interesting. It has a cell-shaded art style and you play as an old lady with a friendly monster companion. She's very floaty when she jumps, and the music in the trailer sets a perfect tone.

At first, I thought it might be a co-op game, due to the way she interacts with the monster for help and puzzle solving, but the first look at what may be gameplay has her coaxing the monster to follow along, so maybe it's more like *The Last Guardian*, where the companion is entirely CPU-controlled.



Bradley the Badger [\[trailer\]](#)

At first, I thought this was a cutesy take on *Bloodborne*, given the *Badgerborne* opening, but that just seems to be one of many games and genres spoofed (*The Last of Us*, *Kirby and the Forgotten Land*, *Cyberpunk 2077*, maybe *Katamari Damacy*, although he didn't look to be rolling anything up).

It ends with a weird live-action sequence that breaks the fourth wall, or maybe factors into the story of a developer turning into his game character or something.

It's only confirmed for Steam/PC right now, but I hope it comes to consoles. It looks like something I'd enjoy. Now more than ever, I'm in the mood to finally play through *Conker's Bad Fur Day*. Maybe I'll do that soon.



Ontos [\[trailer\]](#)

Frictional Games, the makers of the *Amnesia* series and *SOMA*, are making this first person game with an interesting, creepy sci-fi vibe.

Throughout the whole show, we kept noticing how many games the Kepler logo was on. Our guess is that after publishing *Clair Obscur: Expedition 33*, their resources and clout have skyrocketed. Then again, two of my favorites from 2024 were published by Kepler (*Flintlock: The Siege of Dawn* and *Pacific Drive*) and I didn't even realize it.



Stupid Never Dies [\[trailer\]](#)

This one had the vibes of *Lollypop Chainsaw* or any Suda 51 game, although it's being made by GPTRACK50, a new studio founded by Hiroyuki Kobayashi of Capcom games like other *Devil May Cry*, *Resident Evil*, and *Dragon's Dogma*. Much of the trailer is a pop music video, but it ends with gameplay that shows action melee combat very much in the vein of *Devil May Cry*. It's very over-the-top.



Decrepit [\[trailer\]](#)

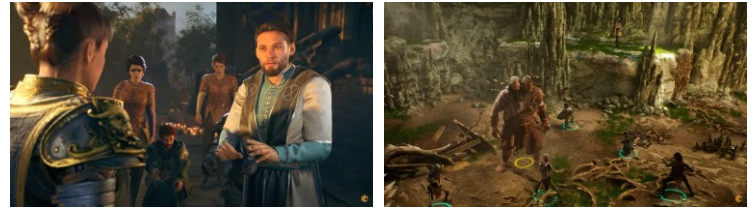
The trailer for this dark fantasy first-person action game (maybe RPG, but it's hard to tell) is barely a minute long, but shows a lot of gameplay that has a definite *Dark Souls* vibe.

It's another that has only been confirmed as coming to Steam/PC so far, but I'm interested in playing it if it comes to Xbox or PlayStation.



Solasta II [\[trailer\]](#)

Another Kepler-published game, and another that's seemingly confirmed only for Steam, it's a fantasy role-playing game that's apparently a sequel to a game I've never heard of.



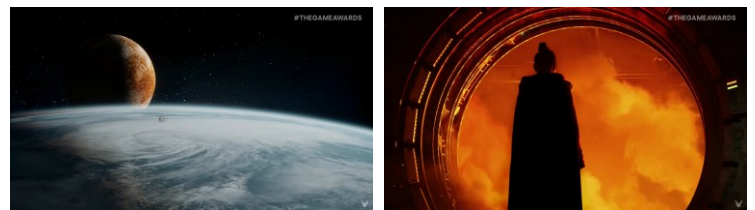
Star Wars: Fate of the Old Republic [\[trailer\]](#)

The trailer started without any indication that it was *Star Wars*, yet my son guessed it as soon as the first scene with a hand gripping a flight stick was shown. I was skeptical, since sci-fi space games tend to have certain similarities, but I was less skeptical when the ship's engine flame was shown, then the silhouette of a woman leaving the ship who looked reminiscent of Leia Organa, then a large wrecked ship in the background. After that, the blue glow and unmistakable sound of a lightsaber activating removed all doubt.

The audience apparently caught on as well, because that's when the cheering started.

It's being directed by Casey Hudson, formerly of Bioware, who worked on the *Mass Effect* series and of course the original *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic*. If this is a spiritual successor to *KOTOR* (and they're calling it *FOTOR*) then I'm super hyped for it.

Heck, even if it's entirely unrelated, I'm super hyped for it. It's probably many years away, and there was no indication of gameplay or genre, but it vaulted to the top of my hype list.



Gang of Dragon [\[trailer\]](#)

This immediately looked like a *Yakuza* game (*Like a Dragon*). My momentary thought was maybe it's a *Sleeping Dogs* follow-up, but no, it's a new game from *Yakuza* series creator Toshihiro Nagoshi and his new game studio.

It's entirely just cinematics, but it looks cool.



Divinity [\[trailer\]](#)

I mentioned this reveal already. It was the secret game behind the mysterious statue in the Mojave Desert. Larian most recently made the highly acclaimed *Baldur's Gate III*, but they're also known for the *Divinity* series. I could have done without the goofy live action bit at the beginning, but the trailer itself was deeply unsettling and weird.

They're describing it as their biggest game yet, which is a big claim given how epic *Baldur's Gate III* was. I played a bit of *Divinity: Original Sin II* but ended up not enjoying its difficult, hard-to-figure-out systems, but I'm up for another great dark fantasy RPG, I think.



Control: Resonant [\[trailer\]](#)

This was one of the longer trailers of the night. *Control* was among my favorite games of 2019 and I knew a sequel was in the works, but I had thought it would just be called *Control 2*.

This was also one of several games where my son wanted me to explain the genre and compare it to similar games, which is tough to do. I told him *Control* was a third-person action adventure first-person shooter with a really cool premise and story – or something to that effect. I don't know if he'll stick with it (he bounced off several of my other suggestions, like *Hogwarts Legacy*, *Hell is Us*, and *Dead Island 2*) but he said he's enjoying it so far, after taking my suggestion to play it.

From what I gather, this one focuses on Dylan, the brother of Jesse Faden from the first game.

What little was shown of the combat, it looks to be more melee-focused, with punching and a huge hammer weapon, where *Control* was mostly a first-person shooter. It's scheduled for release next year, and I can't wait.



Warlock [\[trailer\]](#)

The new *Dungeons and Dragons* video game was introduced by Trisha Helfer, who has starred in a number of things but will always be the main Cylon from the *Battlestar Galactica* reboot to me. She plays the main character, and it's slated for a 2027 release.



Exodus [\[trailer\]](#)

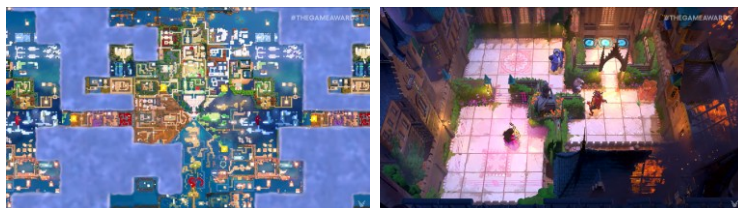
Warlock wasn't the only Wizards of the Coast game featured at The Game Awards. The announcement itself wasn't new, since we've known about *Exodus* since it was announced at the same event in 2023, but it's a new trailer. It's a sci-fi game with the main character voiced by Matthew McConaughey.

It looks very *Mass Effect* to me, with various alien races, space ships, and even the mention of having the right crew, which is a good thing. I don't know what RPG elements will be present, or if it's strictly a third-person action adventure, but either way, I'll play it.



Order of the Sinking Star [\[trailer\]](#)

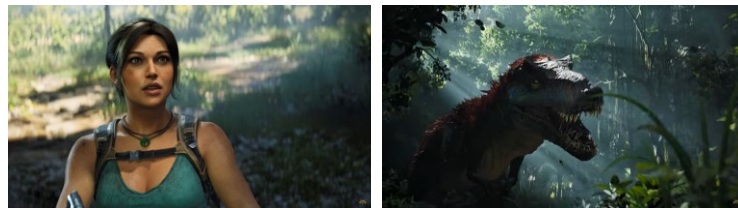
I think I expected the next game from Jonathan Blow (*Braid*, *The Witness*), who is incidentally almost exactly the same age as me (older by barely two weeks) and his Thekla Inc. studio, to be another first-person game building on the foundation and style of *The Witness*. Instead, it's a top-down puzzle game seemingly structured on an interconnected map. I'm less interested in pure puzzle games these days, but both of his prior games would suggest there's more to it than *just* puzzles.



Tomb Raider: Legacy of Atlantis [\[trailer\]](#)

Didn't the first game already get a remake, in the form of *Tomb Raider: Anniversary*? Well, no matter. I'm for sure interested in this one. The most recent reboot trilogy was great, and this looks to bring it up to a modern standard.

It was interesting to see not just Crystal Dynamics linked to the game, but also Flying Wild Hog, makers of the *Shadow Warrior*, *Trek to Yomi*, *Hard Reset*, and *Evil West*.



Tomb Raider: Catalyst [\[trailer\]](#)

In addition to *Legacy of Atlantis* (which has a vague release window of sometime in 2026), a second *Tomb Raider* is in the works for 2027. They only showed cinematics, but that's fine.



Resident Evil: Requiem [\[trailer\]](#)

From the start, I didn't need to be sold on this game any more than I already am. The news here is that series favorite Leon Kennedy is a second playable character.

It's a lengthy cinematic trailer showing very little gameplay, but I think I know what to expect from *Resident Evil* gameplay at this point. It's just two and half months away from release now.



Forest 3 [\[trailer\]](#)

I haven't played *The Forest* or *Sons of the Forest*, but I always thought they were survival horror games set in... a forest; maybe with some *Blair Witch* vibes or something. Through the entire trailer for this third entry, this series wouldn't have been my guess if I had been given a hundred thousand guesses.

That said, it's weird, colorful, and ends up on a strange alien planet with monsters and a freaky half-woman creature thing that might give me nightmares. Provided it's a single-player game, I'm looking forward to this one.



007 First Light [\[trailer\]](#)

My only worry with this game is in wondering how long it will take me to warm up to a much younger James Bond that isn't based on any of the actors in the film franchise. I've been looking forward to it for as long as I've known it was in development, mostly because I've enjoyed the movies since *Goldeneye*, I really liked the *Goldeneye* game on N64, and I liked IOI's *Hitman: World of Assassination*.

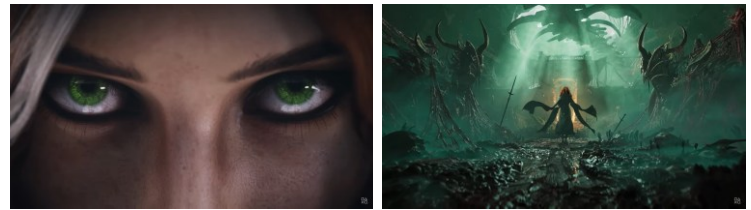
The news here is that singer Lenny Kravitz has been cast as a villain, which commenters on the YouTube video seem opposed to. My hunch is that it's only a small part of the story; maybe an opening mission or a side mission or something. Even so, I don't see a problem with the casting. Unnecessary? Sure, but he's not the first celebrity cast in a video game.



Lords of the Fallen II [\[trailer\]](#)

Okay, I was a fan of the original *Lords of the Fallen*, which might have been the first *Dark Souls* clone (or *Souls*-like) ever released. The more recent follow-up, also called *Lords of the Fallen* with no number or subtitle for some reason, was bigger and even better.

I do want to play this, but it might not be a day one purchase for me. I was a little annoyed by the developer's publicized anti-DEI stance, but it's more that I'm just looking for different gaming experiences lately; or, at least, a dark fantasy *Souls*-like no longer pulls at me to prioritize playing it above everything else.

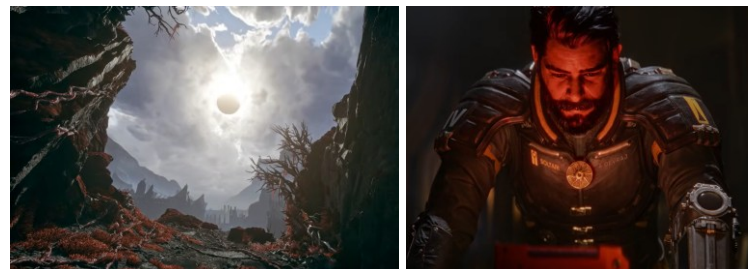


Saros [\[trailer\]](#)

I was a fan of Rahul Kohli in *iZombie*, and it would be fun to play a game he stars in. The problem is, I hated *Returnal*, the previous game from developer Housemarque.

Well, no, maybe I didn't *really* hate it. I put at least 20 hours into it (the time it takes some people to finish it entirely), but I felt I wasn't getting anywhere. I made it to the third biome boss a few times, but that either takes a long time or you can skip ahead via shortcuts, but then you're underpowered and ill-equipped to survive the level. Ultimately, I gave up and decided it wasn't the rare kind of roguelike that I actually enjoy.

Would *Saros* appeal to me? It looks like my kind of game, but I just can't go through the frustration of losing progress over and over.



No Law [\[trailer\]](#)

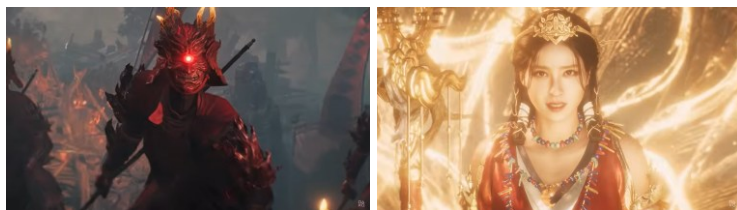
Maybe I was late getting back from a bathroom break when this trailer played, because I don't remember it *at all*. It looks cool, though.

Oh wait, no, I do remember this. A guy shot in the head from above completely explodes. I guess it just got lost in the sea of other trailers on the night of the show. I'd play this.



Nioh 3 [\[trailer\]](#)

The first game was really good. The second game was great. My only hang-up is probably just *Souls*-like fatigue. Team Ninja does it a little differently, though, and I'll check it out.



Star Wars: Galactic Racer [\[trailer\]](#)

The second *Star Wars* game at The Game Awards is probably not one I'll play, since I'm not normally a fan of racing games, but it sure *looks* high-quality. It seems like a spiritual successor to *Star Wars Episode 1: Racer*, now with more than just floating chariots pulled along by dual engines (pod racers).



Mega Man: Dual Override [\[trailer\]](#)

I fully expected the title reveal at the end to proclaim *Mega Man 12*, but no. By every appearance, it looks like it might as well be.

If this had been revealed during Summer Game Fest, it would have scored me 3 points on my SGF predictions from VGGN [issue #4](#).



Out of Words [\[trailer\]](#)

The first time I saw *Out of Words* was during the Summer Game Fest announcements earlier this year. It takes planning and the right mood (mostly for me, not him), but my son is usually up for a co-op adventure like this one appears to be. The stop-motion visuals and hand-crafted characters make it look unique.



Phantom Blade 0 [\[trailer\]](#)

It's an action game (not a *Souls*-like) and it looks fantastic. It now has a release date of September 9th next year. I suppose if you're going to get into a sword fight while holding a baby, it helps to be a really good swordsman.



Collection Inspection – Award Nominees

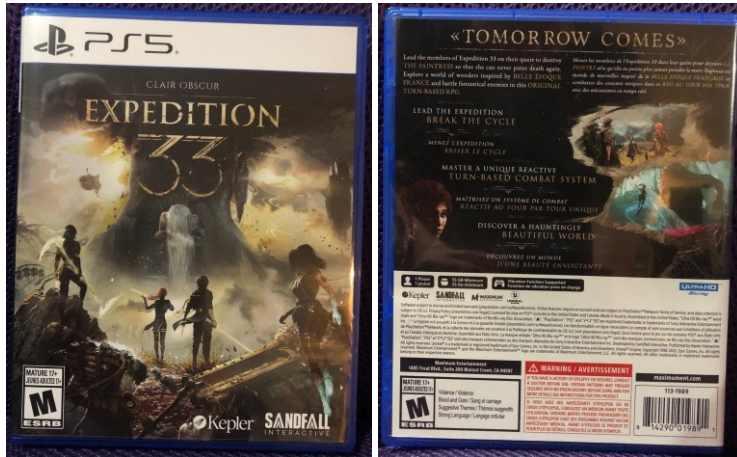
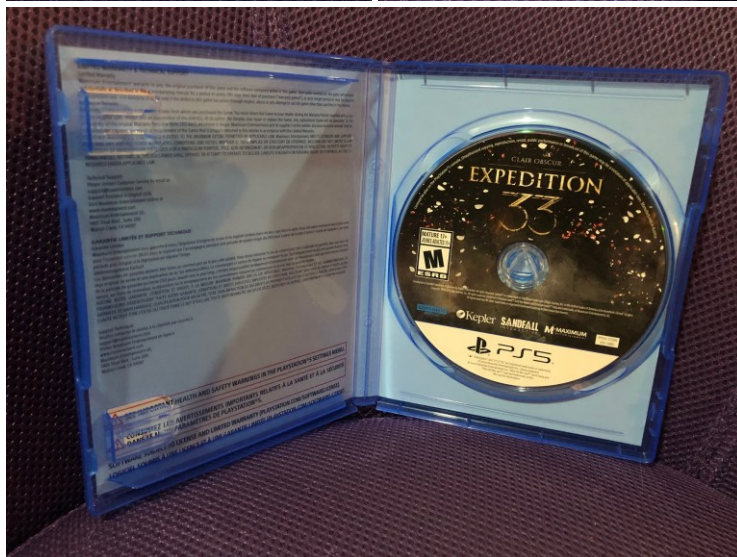
This edition of the weekly peek into my game collection isn't very exciting, since none of these are special editions or collector's editions and today's standard editions are just a disc in an empty case, but I wanted to at least stick with The Game Awards theme.

All of these were nominated for at least one award at the TGAs, but I *think* only *Clair Obscur: Expedition 33* was a (big) winner.

Clair Obscur: Expedition 33

Platform: PlayStation 5 / **Edition:** Standard

Comments: This isn't just the Game of the Year at The Game Awards 2025. It's also my personal pick for GOTY and my son's as well. He enjoyed it and got the platinum trophy, just like I did. A repeat of my mini-review for the game is up next (I included it originally in the very first issue of VGGN), this time with all the screenshots from the original version I posted online.



Split Fiction

Platform: PlayStation 5 / **Edition:** Standard

Comments: Actually, this one *did* come with more than just the case and disc. There's a cool keychain that was offered as a pre-order bonus at Best Buy.



Death Stranding 2: On the Beach

Platform: PlayStation 5 / **Edition:** Standard

Comments: This is (so far) my second favorite game of the year. I liked the original, but everything about the sequel is on another level. It's really good.



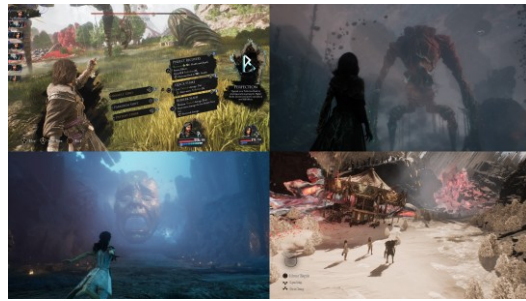
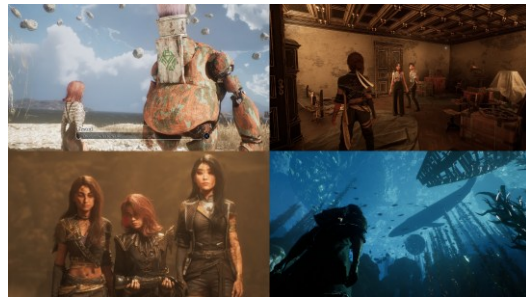
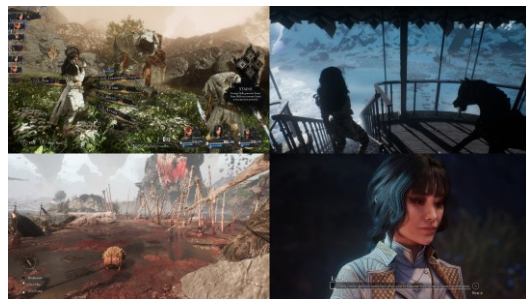
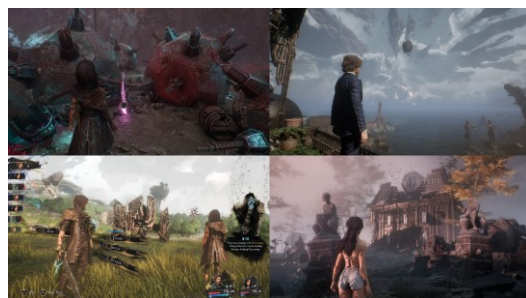
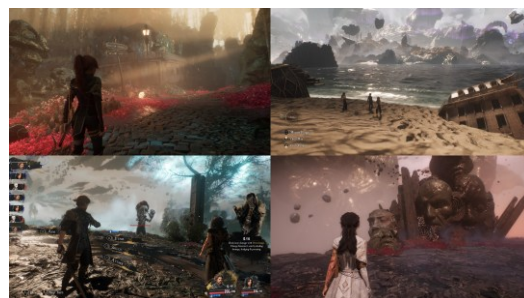
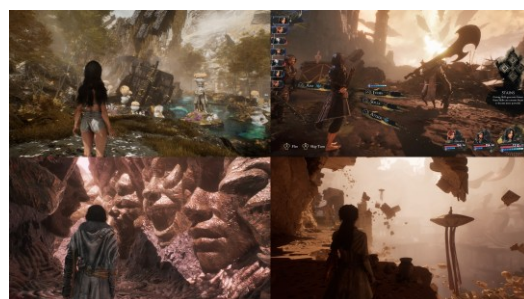
AtomFall

Platform: PlayStation 5 / **Edition:** Standard

Comments: In a year filled with great games, gems like AtomFall (and others) will sadly be overlooked.



Mini-Review: Clair Obscur – Expedition 33



I can't imagine what could take the place of this as my Game of the Year for 2025. It's a turn-based RPG, but real-time dodging, parrying, and skill boosting demand quick reflexes a la Paper Mario, especially against tough bosses or at higher difficulties.

If there's an opposite of generic in regards to video games, *Expedition 33* is it. Everything about it is stylish and creative; the world, the story, the flashy combat, the enemy design, the art style, the music -- especially the music, because it sets a tone and enhances everything from emotional scenes to combat to general exploration.

The developers at Sandfall Interactive just get it.

Maybe hyperbolic, but this has the makings of a modern classic. It may become some people's favorite game ever.

I love love loved it.

Played on console: PS5 Pro.
Originally posted: 05/05/2025.

Mini-Review: Silent Hill f

SILENT HILL *f*



I'm annoyed, in part by the game, but mostly with myself. I enjoyed my leisurely, thorough 15 hour play-through until the abrupt, unsatisfying ending. You're supposed to play again on NG+ to get the "full" story, which I knew, and so I did.

My second game was mostly the same, aside from minor variations to a few cut-scenes and some small new areas. No spoilers, but I got the sword and I did the purification for it (mainly for trophies - I didn't know it was tied to the ending) but I still got the exact same ending with no variation or decision points.

It turns out, there's something you're *not* supposed to do, and I must have done that thing very early on. I hadn't looked at the new "endings" menu before starting NG+, which tells you this. So, I'm just going to get the rest of the story from YouTube.

*Played on console: PS5 Pro.
Originally posted: 11/30/2025.*

The Final Stage

Sandfall Interactive

I **envy** and don't envy the studio that made *Clair Obscur: Expedition 33* at the same time.

On the one hand, their debut game just made history at The Game Awards with its number of nominations and wins. That has to be a great feeling – a feeling of relief, reward and satisfaction after the years of development.

On the other, they'll release a new game. Whether it's a sequel, a same-world follow-up, or something completely different, they set such a high bar for themselves with their debut game that it seems impossible to meet the expectations fans will have.

Worse, it's exactly the kind of scenario that certain joyless fools in the gaming community love. One slip-up on social media by a single staff member, or one character the anti-woke chuds view as "not pretty enough", or a game that's too ambitious and suffers even a little on a technical level, and they'll see how wild, exaggerated, and unreasonable that sect of the gaming community can become.

Even aside from that, it's just going to be tough to follow up such a spectacular hit. It's impossible not to compare a new game to that developer's prior games. I do that myself, whether subconsciously while playing or on purpose when I write a mini-review. I wish them luck. They have to repeat a masterpiece.



My Big Vacation

Although I do get burnt out after decades doing basically the same job, I can't fault the company I work for when it comes to perks and benefits, such as the (get this) 10 paid holidays, 5 personal days, and a whopping 25 days of vacation time every year. The good salary, annual bonus, lifestyle rewards and affordable health care are also great to have.

As I do every year, I'm taking off work the second half of December. From the 19th through the 4th, that's 17 days of gaming and relaxation (I hope). My two competing plans are to play a bunch of N64 games, or to catch up a little on my 2025 backlog (finish *Metroid Prime 4* then play *Cronos*, *The Alters*, *The Outer Worlds 2*, *Doom Eternal*, and others that... yeah, okay, there's just no way to get through all that and work on VGGN too. I'd be happy for just a year without any new games.

Next Week

It's the last issue before Christmas, so my plan is to write about games with a Christmas theme or a Christmas-themed level. I haven't played any of those "save Santa" games I've seen for cheap on the Switch eShop, but I hope to find enough examples from what I *have* played to make it an interesting read.

End Credits

The VGGN controller logo with multiple "X" buttons and some occasional other artwork was made using <https://openart.ai>.

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Most of the images used in the articles about The Game Awards are from The Game Awards website or the presentation itself. A set of four images from *South of Midnight* were from my review.

Images of the physical games in the *Collection Inspection* feature are photos I took of games in my own collection and weren't sourced from the internet.

Screenshots used in my video game mini-reviews and some screenshots used in other articles or features that weren't already attributed to a different source were captured by me in-game and are used here in what I believe is "fair use".

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