



ENTERTAINMENT ESPORTS XBOX



PLAYSTATION NINTENDO PC MOBILE

IN REAL LIFE RETRO

ADVERTISEMENT

10 Indies We Played At PAX Aus 2022 Still Living In Our Minds Rent-Free

Share



David Smith

Published 2 years ago: October 25, 2022 at 8:56 am



Contributor: Renee O'Flynn

To say the PAX Rising pavillion at this year's PAX Aus gaming convention was 'a bit larger this year' is an understatement. Though they weren't *technically* a part of the PAX Rising suite, the usual space it occupies had been expanded with a Tasmanian booth full of local produce, and a space for games made in New Zealand too. Among these booths were games that, though we only spent a short time with them, have stuck with us over the last few weeks since the show. Here are just 10 of the indies we played at PAX Aus that are still living in our minds rent-free.



Box Knight - Game Trailer



Box Knight

We Made A Thing Studios, South Australia

Box Knight is a 2D side-scrolling beat-em-up with rogue-lite elements. The premise: a white-collar worker has to fight waves of corporate-created monsters with nothing more than a cardboard armour and a cardboard tube sword for protection. It is ridiculous and that is entirely the point. Knocking coworkers out of their stupor leads to them giving the Box Knight a cold one, in the tradition of after-work drinks. Signs in the company warn workers of illness and injury. A sick worker isn't a productive worker. An injured worker isn't covered by health insurance. Starting off with the cardboard tube sword, I found myself quickly overwhelmed by the basic goblins. (Word of warning, the goblins may have penises.) After a few deaths, and saving some coin, I unlocked the cardboard tube spear. I found it a lot easier and was able to juggle the five different attacks easily. These are standard attack, special, heavy attack, air bash and execute. Execute requires that the box knight is not hit by attacks and air bash has a cool down. I haven't gotten far past the fourth room on my runs but I'm eager to try again. The demo is [currently available on Steam](#).

Skiers Landing Announcement Trailer



Skier's Landing

Platypus Peak, Victoria

A casual game about skiing down a hill as quickly as you can. Sound easy, right? Yeah, this game is anything but. When I asked the dev about the game's obvious comparison in *Skifree*, they had no idea what game we were talking about. When *Skifree*'s famous yeti antagonist eventually came up in conversation, the dev said they had considered maybe putting in a wombat to chase the player, or other, different animals depending on the location.

Skier's Landing is designed to be played in short bursts. Committing to longer sessions could easily leave you frustrated, especially if you're as short-tempered as I am. Watching someone else get frustrated, however, is a lot of fun and often leads to ridiculous moments. I watched a friend crash repeatedly crash out in the same spot across several runs. I wanted to see if I could do better. Before I could ask, he struck a rock, causing his character to ragdoll into the air and off-screen. The speedometer in the corner of the screen began to increase. Everyone present stopped talking, watching on as the counter rocketed past 400kph. Finally, after what felt like a long moment, his rapid acceleration began to taper off. "He's reaching the apex," a nearby dev remarked. Sure enough, the counter began to speed up again. We waited a while to see if the character would reappear on screen. They did not.

Cuisineer - Early Production Trailer



Cuisineer

Battlebrew Productions, Singapore

Play as Pom, an adorable cat girl who is put in charge of her family's restaurant and their massive debt.

The core gameplay loop is similar to that of *Moonlighter*: Pom will enter the dungeons to explore and discover ingredients. After the dungeon run, she uses the ingredients to make delicious meals for her customers. Pom can also run around town and make friends, and buy potions and additional weapons. I have to ask though, when does Pom sleep? Does Pom sleep?

What attracted me to *Cuisineer* initially was the art style. To say it's cute is an understatement. Each character is based on an animal, with cows running the bubble tea shop. I mean, bubble tea as potions is just amazing to me, but I am a bit of an addict. If only bubble tea healed in real life. There's also something so satisfying about using a spatula and a giant frying pan as weapons in the dungeons. Throwing plates like shuriken? It's so silly. I love it. I have a feeling it'll help scratch the *Harvest Moon/Stardew Valley* itch for me as well. Add *Cuisineer* to [your Steam wishlist here](#).

Dredge - Announcement Trailer | PS5 & PS4 Games



Dredge

Black Salt Games, New Zealand

Fishing is such a relaxing pastime. *Dredge* perfectly captures that with its tiny fishing vessel on a beautiful archipelago, various islands each packed with lovely little secret areas and atmosphere. Lovely, that is, until night arrives. Then it's time for the hunter to become the hunted.

By what?

Who knows, it's hard to see at night.

It could be nothing, it could be something, it could all be the imagination. This constant dread flips the relaxing element completely. Interestingly, *Dredge* is a story-driven single-player fishing game, something that is not really out there in the industry. Fishing is often relegated to a mini-game status in other games, whether it's *Stardew Valley* or *Zelda*. It can't stand on its own. *Dredge* laughs at that idea and adds in the Lovecraftian mechanic at night for funsies. Of course, if fishing only occurs during the daytime, there won't be any concerns with what's in the water beneath the waves. Adding in a *Resident Evil*-style inventory system adds a puzzle element as well as a modicum of strategy. Do you sacrifice bigger engines (and speed) to catch more fish? Forgo lights to fit the bigger engines? Will that bite you in the arse when night comes? Find out with the first chapter [available to download now on Steam](#).

Fantasy Town Regional Manager

Cap Collective, Sydney

Upon seeing this game, I was immediately reminded of *Islanders*, a similar game that I happen to enjoy but be absolutely terrible at. I think I've only ever managed to get to the second island once. I was lamenting about it to one of the devs because, while it is fun, it was very easy to get frustratingly stuck. *Fantasy Town Regional Manager* doesn't seem to suffer from the same issue though. It seems to be more geared towards a casual audience rather than that of the hardcore city sims. The aim of *Fantasy Town Regional Manager* is to grow your town, attracting a variety of adventurers to it. Growing the town involves choosing between a variety of cards, each with a building and an explanation of what each building does. Of course, growing the town will attract more adventurers and with adventurers come lots of new problems. Each morning a paper will explain what quests are happening and give players a choice on how to deal with them. These papers are filled with humour. The game does not take itself seriously at all. This is accented by the bright cartoon art style. *Fantasy Town Regional Manager* is [available on Steam](#).

Where The Snow Settles

Myriad Games Studio, Tasmania

What attracted me to *Where The Snow Settles* was that it seemed like a very chill game, pun very intended. A short, but strong narrative game following the adventure of Aurelia and her journey into the reason the world is collapsing. But Aurelia can't do it alone, she needs to interact with not just the world, but the people and spirits she meets along the way.

Empathy and compassion go a long way to helping this girl make her journey home without the world ending in the process. This sort of story-driven game, similar to *The Vanishing of Ethan Carter*, may not take long to complete, but they often stay with the player for a long time afterwards. [Play it now on Steam](#).

A Space For The Unbound

Mojiken, Indonesia

A space for the unbound is a 2D side-scrolling storytelling-focused adventure with supernatural elements set in rural Indonesia in the 90s. Asian culture has some amazing supernatural myths and legends, as evidenced by the multitude of Japanese games featuring them. In recent years, Korean horror games and Chinese myths have also increased in popularity in the gaming sphere, so it is a shame that there isn't much interest in Indonesian myths which are just as rich. A space for the unbound can possibly change that. Everything is rendered in beautiful pixel graphics reminiscent of 90's games helping to cement that timeline in the player's mind. The game features a coming-of-age story for the main character Atma and his girlfriend Raya. Something supernatural rips the world as they know it apart and they must find a way to prevent the end of existence, even if it means uncovering the town's secrets. It also seems to feature a LOT of cats and I have been reliably informed that they can all be petted. It's the most important thing. I'm actually looking forward to jumping into the demo which is available to play on steam right now. The prequel [is also available to play now.](#)

Amberial Dreams

Lumorama, Sydney

A game 15 years in the making, originally released in 2007 and on flash, *Amberial Dreams* is a new version of this platformer where the player cannot jump. The main character, Amber is awoken from a long slumber to find her realm has completely changed. She occupies the golden sphere and takes a journey through dreams and nightmares to try and save the realm. There is a fully integrated level editor and it caters for both casual and hardcore players. The controls are just left and right. Making contact with the environment is how the sphere moves around. Considering some of the *Mario Maker* levels that exist out there, it's likely there will be some insane levels released by the end of the year. I was really taken by the sound design of the few levels I played. Contact with each different modifier makes a pleasing tink noise, with the sound changing depending on what the item's interaction does. I ended up suggesting something similar to *Rayman Legends*' Black Betty level to the dev who thought it was a great idea. *Lumorama* doesn't just want to release a game, they want to foster a community around the enjoyment of their game. Amberial Dreams came to Early Access on Steam on the 18th of October.

Bilkins' Folly

Webbysoft, Tasmania

Bilkins' Folly is a treasure hunting game where players will find the real treasure was the friends they made along the way. And treasure. And missing family members. Maybe. Bilkins, treasure hunter extraordinaire, has gone on a journey to find his missing family members. Instead, he ends up shipwrecked with the family dog. Making the best of a bad situation, Bilkins decides to hunt for treasure and build a bond with his doggo companion. There is no combat in *Bilkins' Folly*, rather it has puzzles with a basis on cartography. Step counting is a very useful ability in this game! Dreyton, the dog, doubles as the skill tree for treasure-hunting abilities. Fostering a bond with him allows the player access to more abilities. See? There's the real treasure there. It's also possible to pat a variety of the wildlife. It seems that dogs and cats are fine with pats, crabs are ambivalent and drunk patrons do not appreciate it. Finding maps, reassembling maps, deciphering maps, all major game puzzles. Ever wanted to live out your treasure-hunting dreams? *Bilkins' Folly* can be [wishlistled on Steam right now.](#)

Blurgh

Inkster Games, Victoria

This one is a bit of a cheat as it's not a video game, but a card game! The original is *F**k: The Game*, but due to the obvious issues, game stores either refused to sell it or would hide it behind the counter like some kind of illicit drug. Due to this, the creator decided to rebrand while making the party version. The rules of the game are simple. Say the colour of the background, not the black word. Say the colour of the word, not the word itself. The words are also a colour. If swearing appears, say the swear, unless it's a Fuck, otherwise say the colour of the background or colour of the word. It messes with the left and right portions of your brain and actually counts as brain training. If a player gets the answer wrong, or takes too long to answer, other players must slap the pile. The successful slapper gets to give two cards to other players and the player that got the answer wrong ends up with the rest. The party pack adds extra cards that can be added or removed to increase or decrease difficulty. Things like skip cards, swap hands, and a variety of other wacky cards. It is chaos but it is a LOT of fun. On top of that, Blurgh comes with 80 scratch cards allowing people to customise their games. For ours, we had to draw the person to the left of us. Ever drawn on a scratch card? It's hard. They looked bad, but that didn't matter. The rules for those cards were if it was a drawing of you, you said fuck. The first person to run out of cards wins.

There were many more indies that I could've talked about, but the article would end up ten pages long. These are just the ones that appealed the most to me personally. There are definitely a lot of great ones I didn't have space for here — *Grist*, *Dros*, *Tinker & Spell* and

Conscript, just to name a few. It’s worth taking the time to check them out. Any indies catch your attention at Pax? Anything interesting here? Tell me about it in the comments below!

The Cheapest NBN 1000 Plans

Looking to bump up your internet connection and save a few bucks? Here are the cheapest plans available.

At Kotaku, we independently select and write about stuff we love and think you'll like too. We have affiliate and advertising partnerships, which means we may collect a share of sales or other compensation from the links on this page. BTW – prices are accurate and items in stock at the time of posting.

More From Kotaku Australia

- [Shuhei Yoshida, One Of The Fathers Of The PlayStation Console, Is Coming To PAX Aus](#)
- [Community Review: PAX Australia 2017](#)
- [Australian Indies At PAX Are Keeping Local Multiplayer Alive](#)
- [5 Major Publishers Gave PAX Aus A Miss This Year, But Nobody Seemed To Mind](#)

Related Topics:

au pax indies pax australia australian games

About the Author



David Smith Post LinkedIn Twitter Email Website

SHARE THIS STORY



GET OUR NEWSLETTER

[Subscribe](#)

Comments

9 responses to “10 Indies We Played At PAX Aus 2022 Still Living In Our Minds Rent-Free”

[READ THE COMMENTS](#)

Leave a Reply

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked *

Comment *

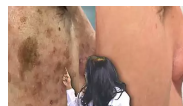
Name *

Email *

Website

Post Comment

You May Like



Surgeon
Reveals: ...
Miami M.D.



Sleep
Apnea: ...
myhealthyha...



Government
Rebates: A...
Health Insura...

