

Assassin's Creed 2 details apparently revealed from Game Informer article

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Next week, April 16th to be exact, is the day that the veil on Ubisoft's Assassin's Creed 2 was to be lifted just slightly; likely enough to whet out appetites until E3. Game Informer has the first details on the anticipated sequel in the new issue, and it looks like the magazine has already reached some subscribers and naturally they have done what good gaming fans do in their position: leak everything onto the internet. Provided that the following is legitimate, Assassin's Creed 2 is going to be a vast, vast improvement over its predecessor - which really was a strong tech demo for what Ubisoft Montreal wanted to do with the IP. If it's all fake, then shame on you, internet.

According to the details, the sequel is set during the 1400s in Italy - as rumored - and opens up in the year 1476. That alone reveals that Altair is no longer the protagonist that you will be playing as. Instead, you now take on the role of Ezio Auditore de Firenze, a nobleman of Florence and another ancestor of Desmond Miles - the modern day descendent of the assassins. In case you've forgotten, Assassin's Creed placed you in the shoes of Altair via a genetic memory-reading device called The Animus, which lets a person essentially "relive" the past, virtually, through the eyes of their ancestor.

Ezio will be taking to the streets of locales including the Tuscan countryside, Saint Mark's Basilica, The Grand Canal, The Little Canal and the Rialto Bridge. As you may have deduced from that last bit, yes, Ezio has the ability to swim - a gameplay feature that was leaked by Ubisoft over a year ago. Hinted at during the flash screen on the game's new teaser website, Da Vinci plays a role in Assassin's Creed 2. The inventor's workshop in the game, and Ezio will be able to take flight using his winged flying machine. Flight and swimming? Impressive. Other big characters that make appearances include the likes of Machiavelli, Caterina Sforza, and Lorenzo de Medici - the latter of which will be the subject of an assassination attempt by the player.

Combat is being ramped up exponentially, too. Weapons included this time around include axes, hammers, maces, spears, a spear-axe, two types of swords, and of course knives. Each reportedly has a unique special attack. Ezio also has the ability to disarm his opponents, taking and using their weapons against them. Players have the option to take up hiding positions in (oddly placed) bales of hay, but now you can attempt to stealthily assassinate people from inside. Be warned, as this may expose you, alerting guards. If you take too much damage during a fight, you must seek out doctors on the street to heal you. Speaking of guards, there are new enemy types: "Brutish" armored troops that carry 2-handed swords, as well as enemies that will stick their spears and swords into various hiding spots looking for you. And topping that off, a new awareness/notoriety system will affect how people react towards you. Hopefully better than before where you could kill a guard, turn a corner and then re-emerge right in front of his comrades and walk away clean.

Players still have the exploration capabilities (it can be assumed that the excellent parkour mechanics are being ratcheted up a few notches), and the hidden flags spread across the game world return - this time joined by statues and gold coins. Finding hidden objects like the flags will reward you with in-game bonuses. Riding horses to cover more ground and the random tower/building climbing all make their valiant return. There will reportedly be 16 unique mission types (a far cry from the paltry selection of the original game), and two of the least enjoyable mini-missions, eavesdropping and pickpocketing, are now axed. And that's probably a good thing, because who would want to try and attempt those during the game's new nighttime setting?

Sounds good. Provided everything here is true, it's got my seal of approval. Way to listen to gamers' feedback, Ubisoft.