

RACE DRIVER GRID 2

A promising mash-up of fact and fun • Words: Nick Pino

01 SLEEK
Grid 2 is one of the first games I've played in native 4k resolution, and, boy, does it look sexy.

02 EDGY
 Cutting corners can either be the fast track to first place, or an absolute game ender.



Racing can be a strangely divisive genre. Stick or manual. Street race or circuit. Simulation or arcade. You have to make all these choices before you even hit the pavement. If only there was a game that could drift the fine line between them and let us trade paint regardless of our automotive preferences.

Shift to Codemasters' sequel to its outrageously fun, entirely accessible 2008 racer, *Race Driver: Grid*. *Grid 2* follows in its predecessor's tracks, and takes everything I liked about that speed king—its sizeable, yet not overwhelming, collection of cars and its realistic, but not so-real-that-it-borders-on-joyless, gameplay—then ratchets up both the visuals and

intensity. Each and every clash between cars shot painted steel across the lanes, causing chaotic discord as beautiful to watch as it was to create.

Like in the original *Grid*, we'll again see the muscle car mechanics of the U.S., the drift kings of East Asia, and the best circuit drivers from Europe's F1 League compete to see who's really the best behind the pedal. That's where the similarities end, however. This time you're not the faceless gear jockey stealing the spotlight, but rather the game's up-and-coming main attraction (see "If You Ain't First..." sidebar).

In my hands-on time, I got to fly down the sun-soaked Red Bull Ring circuit course in Austria, race against time in a Camaro SS under the EL in Chicago, and even test my mettle against aggressive adversaries in an eliminator match in Barcelona, Spain.

Like every good simulation-style racer, each car drove differently. The torque-heavy Camaro definitely didn't feel like the nimble BAC Mono, and though it took a few rounds to get into, once I mastered the loose—and occasionally too touchy—controls, first place was as good as mine. ☺

OPPONENTS DRIVE DANGEROUSLY AND EVEN KNOCK YOU OFF THE ROAD