

My Favourite Game: Super Mario Galaxy 2

The year is 2010. You're a thirteen year old boy who really doesn't care that the World Cup is on, because there are more important things on your mind. A game. A Wii game. In fact, the first ever game you've pre-ordered. After waiting a good two years, the time had finally come. That's right; *Super Mario Galaxy 2* was on the horizon and that thirteen year old couldn't quite apprehend the experience that was to unfold upon him.

I grew up with that portly, perhaps slightly stereotypical Italian plumber. Coming from the infinitely wonderful mind of Shigeru Miyamoto came *Super Mario*, *Star Fox*, *Donkey Kong*, *The Legend of Zelda* and absolutely tonnes more franchises. From all of these wondrous series, my favourite just has to go the moustachioed fellow addicting to jumping on turtles. Being graced with a Nintendo 64 as a child, I, together with my brother, attempted to play *Super Mario 64* when I was six or seven. Of course, our skills were lacking, but we got better over time. Being highly thankful that the N64 saved data to cartridges, we tried the final battle on a file that had 100% completion – all 120 Power Stars. We failed. Unfortunately (well, for him), my brother slowly lost interest in the game due to frustration. I stuck to it. I can't tell you how long it took, but it was a while. So long, in fact, that I had managed to reach the same stage in the remake, *Super Mario 64 DS*. I completed the game on the original first, and was stupidly proud of myself (come on, I was about eight or nine). But that was my first true experience of the moustachioed hero. Given that I've been playing games since age five, when you experience something that great, you can't dismiss it.

There is one other portion of my life worth mentioning, and that's the inordinate time I spent playing *Mario Kart DS*. This was a game I had played on my cousin's DS before I eventually got a DS Lite. I remember so little of that experience – I definitely knew I needed it – but it was actually my brother who got it first. I borrowed it from him so many times that he caved and just let me have the game. So I played it to death, and constantly set the races to infinite, consequently causing my thumbs to fall off and my eyes to implode. Alright, may that bit isn't true, but it did pretty much kill my DS Lite, as the screen never stayed open anymore and flopped around. Thankfully I take great care of my consoles these days and avoid such events. *Mario Kart DS* wasn't the only game in the series I played a lot on DS. Others that took up (what is debatably too much of my time) were *New Super Mario Bros.*, *Mario Party DS* and *Mario and Sonic at the Olympic Games*. Obsessions growing unhealthy, I finally got a Wii.

It actually took me a little bit of time to get a Wii. I had played on one just a single time before receiving it for myself. The game was *Mario Kart Wii*, something I yearned for after I was taken away from it. Luckily, Christmas 2008 arrived, bringing a Wii with it. *Mario Kart Wii* had returned. Oh, and what's this? Christmas money? Off to GAME then. I bought the Wii version of *Mario and Sonic at the Olympic Games*, and something else. Something very special indeed: *Super Mario Galaxy*. It was new - the first original 3D Mario platformer I had played since *Super Mario 64*. To my surprise, it handled narrative in a Mario game incredibly well. Yes, Princess Peach was kidnapped. You know that. It's difficult to explain, though, how it did this so dramatically. Story in games doesn't interest me, but it was delightful to see something more cinematic this time. My first memories of playing *Super Mario Galaxy* are limited, although it was amongst one of the first games to reach a playtime of at least a hundred hours. In fact, it's also the first game I got an official soundtrack for, courtesy of Club Nintendo. In retrospect, I'm actually not the biggest fan of the first *Super Mario Galaxy*. Don't get me

wrong, I think it's a fantastic game, but nothing, and I really mean *nothing*, compares to the sequel. Or *Super Mario 64*... Or *Super Mario 3D World*... Alright, there are actually many games I like more than *Super Mario Galaxy*. But that doesn't undermine its brilliance.

The lead up to *Super Mario Galaxy 2* for me was quite an arduous one, to say the least. Sadly, I wasn't fully aware of what E3 was at the time, but it was announced at E3 in 2009. I have memories of seeing early screenshots that included Yoshi, and can recall watching its announcement at E3 later in the year. I kept up to date with details on the game, reading about it in *Official Nintendo Magazine*, and watching its various trailers. In fact, I watched one of the trailers via the Wii's Nintendo Channel so many times that it managed to freeze the entire console (more than once, to my despair). I even recall seeing the advert on TV whilst my brother was in the room, although he deliberately turned it off as he knew that my excitement levels were higher than Charlie Sheen.

The day had finally arrived. June 11th, 2010. School was dull. Returning home, it was there, waiting for me in the collector's tin, (but let's not talk about the whereabouts of its location now)... Forcing my brother to watch the worthless football upstairs, I had the TV downstairs to myself. Now, I could try and explain how minds are metaphorically blown, but I can't. Not when you've got something this special. In a word, it was enthralling.

Notes:

- "My huge cake... never got a slice" (deliberately put it in a smaller font)
- First game 100%ed
- YOSHI – Dash Pepper, Bulb Berry, Blimp Fruit, Bullet Bills, tongue swinging
- Orchestrated music (remixes and some reused stuff, Yoshi drums return)
- Green Stars
- Mention Shigeru Miyamoto (duh)
- The only perfect game
- Surprisingly beautiful for a Wii game
- Bird / rolling ball levels are fine (motion controls)
- Watching that trailer so much that my Wii froze
- Call myself stubborn and that it'll likely never be bettered
- 150 hours+
- Throwback Galaxy with the jazz and nostalgia (also Boss Blitz Galaxy)
- Lubba & Starship Mario – also mention new hub world layout
- COLOURS SO MANY MORE COLOURS THAN SMG1
- That God damn blue monkey's challenges (aptly named The Chimp)
- Toad Brigade (Treasure Tracker)
- The Perfect Run's difficulty
- Luigi (yay)
- Return of Rosalina / ending(?)
- I lost the damn collector's tin
- First three hour session – 20 stars got. No rush, I enjoyed everything (which doesn't happen anymore)
- Bowser Jr and that huge tank / tower thing (boss)

- Power-ups: Fire Flower, Cloud Mario, Rock Mario, Spring Mario, Boo Mario(?), Bee Suit, Rainbow Star
- Two-player mode is better than SMG – but no co-op? (Mention mod)
- Wii U's Off-TV Play = enhancements
- SMG2 stage in Smash Wii U! (Most played stage)
- Bought it straight away as a Wii U download (half price at £8.99)