

## House of the Dead 2&3 Return

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Shoot 'em in the head. There's your basic strategy in a nutshell. Not even zombies can survive that, fortunately (sadly for me, editors apparently can: it just slows them down and so after several months of inactivity I'm back writing long-since obsolete reviews). And in the House of the Dead, there are a lot of zombies.

<br>Back in the days when it was worthwhile to hang around arcade machines (which, coincidentally, was also the time there were actually arcade machines to hang around), there was one machine type in particular that either held great fascination or drew no interest at all: the lightgun shooter. And of all the lightgun shooters, one reigned supreme by a long-shot: Time Crisis 2. Oh yes! The pinnacle of a great series, nothing could quite top TC2. House of the Dead was sort of it's ugly cousin that only the really hardcore gamers could love with its fiddly shoot-off-screen-to-reload mechanics and its so-bad-it's-great voice acting that wouldn't seem out of place in a dubbed anime (burn!). So naturally when I saw that Sega had released parts 2 & 3 as a compilation for a rather sweet £27.99, I couldn't resist.

Ok, let's cut to the point. This is a very close port of the arcade machine. That means you don't have unlimited lives, you don't have unlimited credits, part of the replayability of the thing is the fact it's so bloody hard to beat. You have a problem with that? Stop reading. Now. It's only going to get worse.

So it's an arcade game, it's on-rails, it doesn't give you a save function or unlimited attempts like you're used to. This is a return to old-school gaming and it's all the better for it! Get a lightgun shell for your Wiimote and you're set for the most fun you can have with one (or two) person. Whilst HoTD2 follows a rather extended and complicated storyline with branching plot, bad voice acting and rock-hard game play, HoTD3 is a more satisfying game overall--more sophisticated and with purer game play and less annoying interruption from cut-scenes and characters talking (don't you just hate that?) Not to mention it also has shotguns.

And now for the ultimate reason you owe it to yourself to play these games: every other horror game in existence has borrowed from HoTD, including the ones released before it. Giant huge massive club-wielding monstrosities which need to be shot in the head? Check. Chainsaw-wielding leather face zombie? Check. Flayed-skin zombies running along roofs and down walls at high speeds? Check. Tentacle monsters? Uh...check (hint: shoot it in the head).

There's also a co-operative mode. Two players in a lightgun zombie-wrecking frenzy which can only have one outcome: pure awesomeness! Go out and play it. Now. You won't regret it.

And yes, we know the bosses are all named after Tarot cards. Stop thinking you're clever for working that out!