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[Command & Conquer 3: Tiberium Wars](#)

Probably the game of the year

I'm sure everyone can remember the beautiful feminine voice in Tiberium Wars that accompanied us for so many years. The company back then responsible for the immense success was Westwood and not many are aware that the original recipe used in Command and Conquer was in fact borrowed from Dune II, one of their previous titles. The title became one of the known founders of the real time strategy genre that we play even today, 12 years later. In 1998, Westwood was acquired by Electronic Arts and further developed Red Alert 2 which was also well received and further strengthened the position of the studio. Unfortunately for them, their next title, Command and Conquer Renegade was almost a complete failure and after Earth & Beyond (the studio's attempt to the MMO genre) their faith was sealed. Westwood was liquidated and the remaining employees were absorbed in EA. The death of Westwood didn't mean the end of the franchise, as some quickly foretold; the next titles released under the C&C flag were Generals and the later add-on Zero Hour surpassed even the most optimistic expectations. Their success represented the foreplay of the game we're analyzing today. Command and Conquer: Tiberium Wars. The reason I made this small history lesson is because the game is a lot more like the one developed 10 years ago. It's like someone over there suddenly got melancholic of the good old days and decided it's time for a comeback. I really don't mind as the game is simply a masterpiece.

Story:As the name suggests, the game is once again centered on the mysterious Tiberium resource which is believed to be the terraforming component of an alien race named Scrin. Nothing is certain, except that it is spreading quickly across the world and the two major factions remained, GDI (Global Defense Initiative) and NOD (also known as The Hand of Nod) are fighting for what is left on the planet. GDI is the militarized branch of the former United Nations and now it's fighting to preserve the way of life as we know it. The NOD on the other hand (through its charismatic leader Kane) believes that Tiberium could become the next step in human evolution and it's trying to throw the world into total chaos to catalyze this belief more quickly. If I know anything about games is that the developers never cease to search for twists and turns and I'm quite sure we're in for a surprise. Besides the known gameplay features which made it famous, there is another crucial characteristic present: FMV movies. If you are unfamiliar with this term it's because they are never well received and the acting quality is usually more like a Sunday chore than a job. The latest mistake belongs to EA (what a surprise), in the Need for Speed series. FMV stands for Full Motion Video and replaces those beautiful rendered and probably expensive in-game movies with real actors and sets. I was surprised to see big names like Michael Ironside (the voice of Sam Fisher in Splinter Cell) and Grace Park (known for her role in Battlestar Galactica as Sharon) and more surprised to the fact they are doing a good job. I'm saying good and not excellent because I was not that impressed with it. I will give them a thumbs up for the effort though. **Gameplay and Video:**From the first screen and until I exited it, I went from one "wow" to another (you two in the back, sit down, it's not World of Warcraft). I was expecting a certain gameplay and a certain quality to it but I wasn't ready to be slapped silly. The build concept has returned to its origins and we can use it again without the help of those pesky peasants (aka tractors or whatever). The entire interface resembles the one in the original and it's completely idiot proof. The concept remained the same and on some levels I felt completely transported in the past just to be awakened by some explosion like I've never seen before. There were a couple of things I found annoying in the gameplay like the unit pathfinding which I'm sorry to say it hasn't been evolving in these past years and some animation glitches at the foot soldier level. Another negative feature is that most of the initial

infantry you have to build initially and a couple of other weak units quickly become useless. Their attributes (like good against infantry) are turned obsolete with just a couple of tank upgrades. Sometimes I felt that playing with the GDI only meant reaching the Mammoth Tank level; once developed, the AI is too weak to stand in your way. This unit is complete: it quickly kills any infantry or armored units (especially when in a pack), has sol-air and sol-sol missile and fantastic resistance. Fortunately, the AI is not as dumb as it could have been and sends wave after wave with varied units so you don't get bored. Nonetheless, the entire experience seems to be a little too easy even on the medium difficulty. The graphics engine used is SAGE (Strategy Action Game Engine) and if you can believe it's been used in Command and Conquer Generals. Granted, SAGE has been heavily modified to the point it's almost unrecognizable. I can say without any doubt that it's the most impressive engine in existence, used in a real time strategy. Maybe it doesn't hold the most units of the map and it's not DirectX 10 and Vista ready, but I don't really care. I simply can't find the words to describe the pleasure of tearing down a building, ripping it apart brick by brick or simply watching the heat haze from the helicopters. I hate clichés but I will say only this: "No one can be told how Tiberium Wars looks like; you'll have to see it for yourself".

Multiplayer: This chapter is still a little fuzzy. From what I can tell and from their announcements, the multiplayer experience will be at least as durable as the original game. There is the skirmish, online games and lan. I don't know if there will be any possibility to import third party maps but I'm sure the community will get its chance and that will be playing this game for yet some years to come.

Conclusion Although it's not the complete version, now I have greater expectations than ever before. I'm not exactly thrilled about the FMV sequences but the gameplay and graphic effects are more than adequate. I would bet good money that Tiberium Wars will be considered in no time the best in the series and it will steal from the original title whatever fans it still had. EA has stroked gold and it's up to them to make the final product the best game we will see this year.