



Chasing Fowl

The *DuckTales* gang is revitalized for today's gamers.
by Jake Friedman

For many of us, nostalgia of the 1980s means more than conservative Reaganomics inundating our culture with wealth-seeking capitalists. It was also the dawn of the "animation renaissance," and for the first time in history, Walt Disney Studios had an animated television show that exploded onto the scene. Least of the reasons for its success was the richness of its characters (no pun intended). Uncle Scrooge was a self-made duck, a treasure-hunting opportunist whose love of having was surpassed by his love of getting. The vocal performances of top-tier actors like Alan Young (Scrooge) added as much to their characters as Walt's voice did for Mickey. Millions of us played the original *DuckTales* videogame by Capcom for the Nintendo Entertainment System in all its 8-bit glory. Sadly, the *DuckTales* characters haven't had much screen time in the last 23 years—until now.

Game developers at Capcom and WayForward have reunited the voice cast with original hand-drawn animation in *DuckTales: Remastered*, a new game which is exactly as it sounds. "WayForward took the original NES game as the blueprint and created the game in the WayForward engine in a way that behaves exactly like the original," says Rey Jimenez, Capcom producer on the game. "They were actually able to put an early version of the new

game and the NES version on the same screen and play both games with one controller. It was that exact."

Disney has remained invested in its fans for the game, and all the original voice actors have reprised the characters that they performed decades ago. "I've loved playing Scrooge McDuck," says Young. "I gave him a little character. I could not be detached from the him—the character's me. I was born over there in Scotland, so I gave him the Scottish accent, which was original and authentic."

Young is still at it (you can find him online at www.mister-ed.tv), bringing as much vitality to Scrooge as ever. "The character reminded me of old men I met back in Scotland," he says. "I was raised with Scottish people, and I met the cantankerous ones. They pretended to be so nasty, that they didn't like kids and so on, but they didn't mean it. They were very kind, very loving. I think deep down Scrooge likes to be loved, but he refuses to admit it."

Importantly to animation fans, the characters in the game move in the classic Disney style.

"In most 2D art in games that we see nowadays, art assets and pieces are reused, warped, skewed and rotated to create animation," says Jimenez. "This can have some very awe-

some results, but to me, it will always have a look that reminds me of Flash animation.

This just wouldn't do for Disney characters. In *DuckTales: Remastered*, every frame/digital cel is individually

created. Early implementations of the character animation started off as the stick and ball characters you would expect from early hand drawings. Many of the artists at WayForward have been trained in the Disney way of animation and some have even worked at Disney. The result is animation quality that meets the standards of Disney's own 2D animated features."

The game is also a repository of hidden references for the fans. "The art is full of them as the designs have inspiration from the cartoon, comics and various anecdotes from the artists," adds Jimenez. "The writers at WayForward are huge Disney fans and have several *DuckTales* world references in the writing."

Young has only gratitude for the fans that have kept the characters relevant all these years later. "I'm so grateful that the kids still like them and have learned to like them," he says, "because they were given in love and kindness and that's how they should be accepted. It's a corny way to phrase it, but it's sincere."

***Disney's DuckTales: Remastered* is coming to PlayStation 3, Xbox 360 and Wii U later this summer.**

