



# 5 Notes on the PS5 Showcase



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Once again, all eyes were on Sony last night for their second major showcase of the PlayStation 5 and its software lineup. Across 40 minutes, audiences saw a handful of extended gameplay sequences, a couple of new announcements from prestigious developers and finally, the long-awaited price and release date. After what felt like an excruciating wait for many, here's a few personal takeaways from the event and how the system is shaping up for its fast approaching launch.

PS5

PlayStation 5

\$499.99  
€499.99  
£449.99  
¥49,980

PS5

PlayStation 5 Digital Edition

\$399.99  
€399.99  
£359.99  
¥39,980



## 1. Games, games, so many games

It's little surprise that Sony yet again emphasised the strength and breadth of PlayStation 5's software. The PlayStation 4's explosive success is commonly attributed to their compelling library of exclusive IPs: *God of War*, *The Last of Us* and *Ghost of Tsushima* are just a handful of examples. This showcase made it loud and clear that Sony plans on continuing this strategy for years to come. We were treated to lengthy in-game footage from first-party launch titles *Spider-Man: Miles Morales* and *Demon's Souls*, boasting visual enhancements made possible by the next-generation hardware. Harlem market stalls were illuminated by raytracing and densely populated crowds in the former, whilst Bluepoint's *Souls* remake boasted stunning lighting and environmental detail running at 4K 60fps. These two games alongside *Sackboy! A Big Adventure* and *Destruction All Stars* shape what is arguably Sony's strongest launch lineup in years, certainly trouncing PS4's tepid offering of *Killzone: Shadow Fall* and *Knack*. As far as first party is concerned, there's little to worry about.

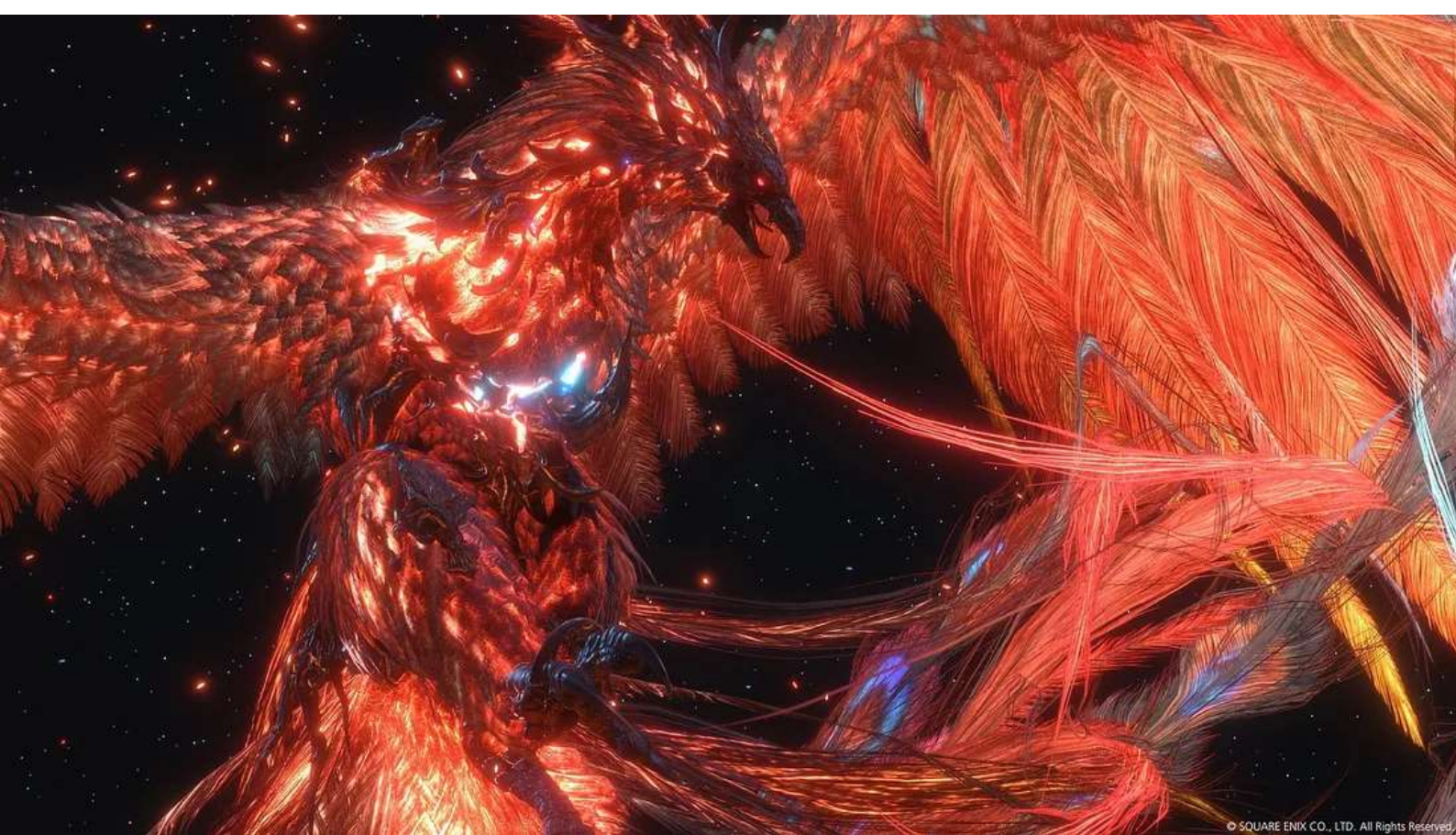


Spider-Man: Miles Morales will bring seasonal and next-generation cheer.

## 2. Divisive deals

All that being said, the showcase opener itself wasn't a first-party title at all. As the sweeping orchestral backing and army of Chocobos implied, Square Enix announced *Final Fantasy XVI* would be coming to the PS5 as a timed exclusive. When the next *Final Fantasy* instalment (eventually) releases, only PlayStation gamers will be able to experience the plentitude of stylised regal turmoil and beast fighting promised by the debut trailer. This deal is only one in a recent succession of aggressive business moves from Sony — others including timed exclusivity on Bethesda published titles *Deathloop* and *Ghostwire Tokyo* alongside Spider-Man as a platform exclusive class in *Marvel's Avengers*. The tactic certainly bolsters the assortment of exclusive titles but unsurprisingly isn't without its critics. Whilst *Final Fantasy* has a storied legacy with PlayStation, it's ignorant to refute the notion that *Final Fantasy XV*'s release on Xbox and Game Pass wouldn't have attracted new fans to the series; fans who have now been gated out from experiencing its

successor. If PS4 was ‘for the players’, PS5 appears to take that one step further and seclude those without brand loyalty. It’s for the PlayStation players.



Final Fantasy rises from the ashes once again.

### 3. Plus there’s more

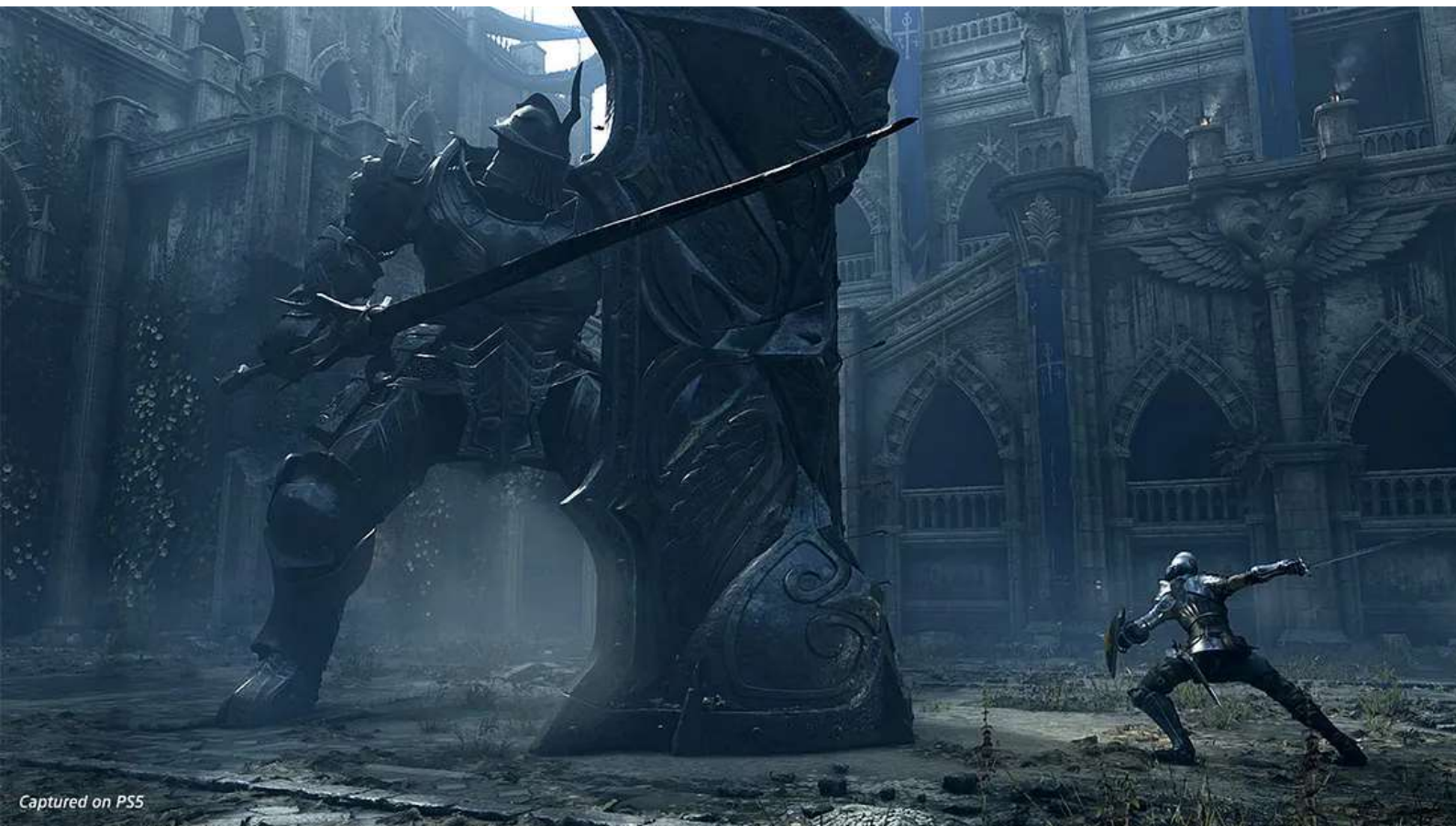
Sony is doing more than just timed exclusives to encourage Xbox players to make the console shift. The PlayStation Plus Collection represents both a quasi-Game Pass competitor and recap for new PlayStation users who may have missed out on the generation’s beloved exclusives. At no extra cost, PlayStation Plus subscribers will immediately get access to a collection of over 15 acclaimed PS4 titles. *God of War*, *Persona 5* and *Uncharted 4: A Thief’s End* are a few of the games on offer and whilst we don’t yet know if Sony will offer any PS5 enhancements, the mere prospect of booting up your new console and having an array of fantastic games is a tantalising one. It’s a smart way of indoctrinating new players into the well-moulded PlayStation brand of narrative-heavy, big-budget adventures whilst also combatting an issue that’s slowly creeping into our lives alongside the new hardware...



Uncharted 4 is one of several titles made free for PS+ subscribers on PS5

#### 4. A rich future

Our favourite hobby just got more expensive. Sony unceremoniously dropped the bad news amidst a round-up blog post declaring that PS5 games could be as expensive as \$/£70. That's \$10 more than the standard and even more rough on European markets, where the conversion rate equates to roughly \$90 for a single AAA game. It's not shocking that publishers are starting to charge more; game development budgets are on the rise and studios have presented the ultimatum of higher prices or shorter games over this past generation. However, it's hard to ignore the sting of \$70 games when Sony and Microsoft are heavily touting digital-only consoles to accompany their disc-based counterparts. These systems will have one unified storefront for titles with prices controlled by Sony or Microsoft: they won't be cheap. Suddenly, Microsoft's subscription-driven ecosystem doesn't sound so bad (7 months of Game Pass now equates to one Sony first-party game).



Demon's Souls looks impressive but its beauty comes at a cost.

## 5. Mixed messages

It wasn't just pricing hikes that were snuck into blog posts. Sony stealthily announced after the show that anticipated PS5 titles Spider-Man: Miles Morales, Sackboy! A Big Adventure and Horizon: Forbidden West would in fact also release on PS4. Cross-gen titles have been a staple of generational shifts for decades now, but this news particularly came as a blow given the nature Sony had marketed these games back in June. A healthy portion of Sony's 'future of gaming' can be played on old machines and while they'll lack enhancements like raytracing and 3D audio, it comes at the cost of designing around antiquated hardware. Yet, the logic here is also sound. One can't ignore the 100m+ PS4 install base that's likely to keep Sony afloat for the years to come as they gradually transition to PS5. As visuals produce diminishing returns too, cross-gen enhancements will become evident in areas other than graphics. PS4 versions of *Spider-Man* or *Horizon* may be feature-complete but won't boast the ultra-fast load times or high frame rates

of their peers. It's impossible to ignore the contradictory messaging from Sony however; the company that insisted on distinct generations not two months ago is now advocating for a slower transition that accomodates both camps. Combined with a sudden pre-order fiasco, Sony's night quickly became rocky at best.



Horizon: Forbidden West's PS4 version has surprised PlayStation fans.

I have (luckily) been able to preorder a PS5. There's no denying my excitement for November 19th either when I'll finally be able to feel the haptics in the DualSense, hear the details of the Tempest Audio Engine or swing around New York as Miles at 60fps. If Sony manages to stick to its planned release schedule, the PS5 will have a stunning first-year lineup packed with hotly demanded exclusives and an enormous breadth of genres for all players alike. All this in mind, the public perception of PS5 is at stake. Are we slowly but surely returning to a hubristic Sony who carelessly dodge details and backtrack promises for monetary gain? Maybe. However, Sony aren't blind to what they have to lose. As Game Pass gains traction and Microsoft diverges forth into a brave new world of open-platform subscription gaming, the divide between the manufacturers has never been

so stark. There's room for both in the industry; the question is if they'll want to share.

*Jacob Heayes is a freelance writer specialising in coverage and thinkpieces on the video game and film industry. Follow his Medium for more independent insights or his Twitter for quickfire musings. If you have any writing opportunities or would simply like to get in touch, contact me: [jmheayes@gmail.com](mailto:jmheayes@gmail.com)*

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