AugustAurora's Pathfinder 2E Remastered Swashbuckler Guide

Or

How I Learned to Buckle Up and Become a True Swashhead

Introduction:

Hey there! I'm August and this is my guide to the Swashbuckler class for Pathfinder 2nd Edition. I've been GMing and playing Pathfinder for the last several years. I have played a Swashbuckler from 1 to 20 in a campaign of the Strength of Thousands adventure path, and loved it, even with some gripes I had with the class. Now that Player Core 2 has come out with some extremely welcome changes, I felt it fitting to write this guide and hopefully help others build one of the most flavorful and impactful characters you can in Pathfinder 2nd Edition.

As there is a lot of material to cover this guide is a work in progress and likely always will be as PF2E continues to grow. I will be focusing mostly on Swashbuckler as a class, with some attention paid to notable archetypes as well. If you are looking for an in-depth look at ancestries and skills (outside of the Swashbuckler Styles), you would do best to look elsewhere. I would recommend the guide to guides as a starting off point:

Zenith Games: Pathfinder 2nd Edition: Guide to the Guides

I do also want to highlight that my experience with Swashbuckler is pre-remaster, which will affect my feelings on aspects of the class. Everything written here reflects my own experiences, unless noted otherwise.

With that said, if you have feedback, please feel free to leave a comment. Useful critique turns average works good, and good works great. I can only hope this guide will end up as the latter, but the former can still prove useful to people which is the ultimate goal of a guide, is it not?

Finally, I would like to shout out the following Swashbuckler guides, which provided me much help when playing one. Even if I don't always agree with them, these guides and their authors helped me a lot while playing this class:

Quick Guide to the Swashbuckler
Swashbuckler: The Art of Being Extra
VampByDay's Swashbuckler Guide

With all that said, I hope you enjoy this guide and find it helpful. Thanks for reading!

Guide Key:

Similar to other guides you may have seen, I will rank archetype, class, general and skill feats you can choose with the following ranking key as well as the Swashbuckler styles. I won't rate base class features because well, why? You can't opt out of them, and full comparisons between classes is outside the intent of this guide. So instead I will note possible synergies and uses of class features under each one.

Since color settings can differ and colour blindness is a thing, I'll include a star ranking as well. If I have missed this at any point in my guide, please let me know so I can correct it.

- **Purple (★★★★★)/(✪✪✪✪✪)** - best in its class, worth it to take at any time, and even at a later level if it has competition and you are able. Can open up great builds, or is an impactful generally useful ability.
  - ✪✪✪✪✪ **-** as above, but is something so good it's arguably or is straight up overpowered.
- **Blue (★★★★)** - not quite as strong as the above but you can't go wrong with picking it either. Keep in mind, you won't be put behind the expected curve of the game by picking it instead of a higher rank option, since 2E is a saner system. The five star options are just that good.
- **Green (★★★)** - decent option, lags behind the two higher ranks for some reason or another but is still a solid pick.
- **Orange (★★)** - either a flavorful option that lacks in mechanics, or a mechanic option without much extra 'oomph' to it. At the tail end of usability here.
- **Red (★)** - a straight up bad option, you would be better off with pretty much anything else.
- **Black (☆)** - unusable, or outright harmful to your character to take. Hopefully nothing is in this tier. *Hopefully.*

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1. What is a Swashbuckler?

To keep things nice and simple at the start, you are a martial class with a focus on high mobility, intensive skill usage and using those skills to unlock the ability to use your burst damage abilities that can put you up with the highest single target damagers in the game. You do all of this while being incredibly extra, and swaggin on your opponents with how much cooler you are than them (and your party as well, but don't tell them that, they might get sad).

Sounds interesting? Then please read on.

2. Glossary of Key Class Terms i.e. your bread and butter.

Panache

"You care as much about the way you accomplish something as whether you actually accomplish it in the first place. When you perform an action with particular style, you can leverage this moment of verve to perform spectacular, deadly maneuvers. This heightened state of flair is called panache.

You gain panache by performing actions that have the bravado trait. Tumble Through and additional actions determined by your swashbuckler's style (see below) gain the bravado trait when you use them. The GM might determine that a check to perform a particularly daring action, such as swinging on a chandelier or sliding down a drapery, can gain the bravado trait. These checks typically involve at least a single action and a non-trivial DC. Normally, you gain and use panache only in combat encounters; when an encounter ends, you lose panache.

Powerful finisher actions, including Confident Finisher, can be used only while you have panache and cause you to lose your panache."

So, panache depends on the bravado trait now (more just below). This means the Tumble Through action or any actions granted the Bravado trait via their style or feats grants panache. You may also ask your GM if a particular action is cool enough to count, but as that depends entirely on your game, your GM, and the encounter you find yourself in, I'll be sticking to the 'guaranteed' methods of gaining Panache.

Panache used to do more pre-remaster, but now it essentially gives you a bonus to your speed and lets you use Finisher actions. When you use a Finisher, you lose panache until you use an action with the bravado trait again (and don't critically fail). It's a simple resource game, where you gain it, use it as best you can then try to gain it again, rinse and repeat until you or the

enemy (preferably the enemy) is gone. Some other class feats you can pick make your Panache grant more effects, I will cover these in section 6.

The Bravado Trait

“Actions with this trait can grant panache, depending on the result of the check involved. If you succeed at the check on a bravado action, you gain panache, and if you fail (but not critically fail) the check, you gain panache but only until the end of your next turn. These effects can be applied even if the action had no other effect due to a failure or a creature's immunity.”

So as long as you don’t critically fail (i.e. rolling a nat 1 in all but the most extreme of cases, yes trying to grapple a Hekatonkheires Titan is an extreme case) you’ll still gain panache. Furthermore, unlike pre-remaster you can use Bravado actions on enemies who would otherwise be immune (i.e. trying to Trip a ghost or Demoralize a mindless enemy) and still get Panache as if you had succeeded against a regular foe.

Stylish Combatant & Vivacious Speed

“You gain a +1 circumstance bonus to skill checks with the bravado trait while in a combat encounter. While you have panache, you gain a +5-foot status bonus to your Speeds.”

REMEMBER: bonuses of the same type don’t stack in Pathfinder 2E. You take the higher one and that’s it. Circumstance is a relatively rarer bonus so this isn’t likely to come up much, but it is worth remembering for when it does.

You get a circumstance bonus to any of your actions that have the bravado trait. *This bonus increases to +2 at level 9, and at level 11 applies outside of combat.* This makes you better at succeeding on checks related to Acrobatics or your Style style, and so can gain Panache easier than before the remaster. Very nice all around.

Your status bonus to speed also increases as you level, as covered by the Vivacious Speed feature at level 3:

“When you’ve made an impression, you move even faster than normal, darting about the battlefield with incredible speed. Increase the status bonus to your Speeds from stylish combatant to a +10-foot status bonus; this bonus increases by 5 feet at 7th, 11th, 15th, and 19th levels. When you don’t have panache, you still get half this status bonus to your Speed, rounded down to the nearest 5-foot increment.”

So, you get a minimum of a +5 status bonus even when you’re standing around doing nothing which gets better at 11 and 19. When you have Panache you get even faster, meaning it’s quite a viable tactic to gain panache from an enemy, then go rush a squishier enemy in the backline. Here’s a handy table to show your speed status bonuses:

Level	Panache	No Panache
3	10	5
7	15	5
11	20	10
15	25	10
19	30	15

This feature makes you one of the fastest classes in the game. Enemy backline beware, that 50 feet of distance is but a Stride action away.

Finishers and Precise Strike

“Finishers are spectacular finishing moves that use your panache. Finishers can be used only with weapons that deal additional damage with precise strike (agile or finesse melee weapons or unarmed attacks, for most swashbucklers). You can use a finisher only if you have panache, and you lose your panache immediately after performing a finisher. Once you use a finisher, you can't use actions that have the attack trait for the rest of your turn. Some finisher actions also grant an effect on a failure. Effects added on a failure don't apply on a critical failure. If your finisher action succeeds, you can still choose to apply the failure effect instead. For example, you might do this when an attack deals no damage due to resistance.”

This is your main damage ability. While Fighters and Gunslingers get their increased accuracy, Barbarians have rage damage, Rogues get sneak attack and the Magus gets spellstrike, you get Finishers. They scale as you level and only work with the same weapons that your precise strike applies to, as stated above. Speaking of, precise strike itself states:

“When you make a Strike with an agile or finesse melee weapon or agile or finesse unarmed attack, you deal 2 additional precision damage. If the Strike is part of a finisher, the additional damage is 2d6 precision damage instead.

As your swashbuckler level increases, so does your additional damage for precise strike. At 5th, 9th, 13th, and 17th level, increase the amount of additional damage on a Strike by 1 and the additional damage on a finisher by 1d6.”

Your regular strikes will add an extra 1 damage, up to an extra 6 at level 17. Unlike pre-remaster, you don’t need panache for this extra damage. If you’re willing to ‘burn’ your Panache, you can use a Finisher instead which does more damage.

Pre-Remaster Rambling: Before this made for a somewhat interesting dynamic, with panache you gained bonuses to style checks and tumble through, gained increased mobility and had additional damage for striking. It was a viable strategy to keep panache on and never use it for finishers, instead relying on more consistent damage from precise strike and your increased bonus to checks. However, you could also give up those bonuses for a burst damage finisher, which could have other effects depending on feat and style choice.

I won't say I will miss this old version too much, but it is clear that panache is now a resource to be used more often, with the only consideration being if you need extra speed, or if you have a feat like Derring Do (see class feats later).

For finishers, we have 2d6 to start with, up to 6d6 damage at level 17. Even with the limitation of agile or finesse weapons this is nothing to sneeze at, especially when we remember that on a crit we double our damage. One d6 averages to 3.5, so we do an average of 7 extra damage on a hit, 14 with a crit. Six of those d6s is an average of 21 and when we double that we get 42. An *average* increase of that level on top of our normal weapon crit damage? Very nice indeed. It gets truly disgusting when we get to some of the feat exclusive finishers, more on those later in the class feats section.

In addition, finishers tend to have extra effects as well. The first finisher you unlock, Confident Finisher will apply half of your precise strike damage on a failure (but not crit failure). If an enemy has weakness to the damage type of a particular weapon you have, this can be a very potent combo if they're also annoying to hit.

You also get an extra effect on your finisher depending on your Swashbuckler style at level 9. I will cover each of these effects in the respective Style section.

Stylish Tricks

"At 3rd level, 7th level, and 15th level, you gain an additional skill increase you can apply only to Acrobatics or the skill from your swashbuckler's style. You also gain an additional skill feat at these levels. This feat must be for Acrobatics or the trained skill from your swashbuckler's style."

A very nice and much needed addition to the class with the remaster, you are now free to level both your Style skill and Acrobatics or focus entirely on your Acrobatics/Style skill and increase other skills as well. This feature keeps your Panache generator keep up with your leveling, as well as granting access to other feats and abilities unlocked from skill increases.

Degrees of Success (i.e. Success vs Failure on Checks & Save DCs)

This feels like a good section to include, as so much of what the Swashbuckler can do depends on successes on their checks, it would do well to explain how these work in Pathfinder 2nd Edition.

A check is essentially any action you take in PF2E where the result is uncertain. You roll a d20 and add whatever relevant modifiers there are to the roll. When you roll for a check, you will often be comparing the result of your check to a DC (Difficulty Class) value. The GM will set this value, but it will typically be against a set DC for the level of the thing (activity/creature/object) you are rolling against, or against the Fortitude/Reflex/Will/Perception DC of a creature, which is equal to the modifier for those plus ten.

The latter tends to be what determines the DC of your skill checks in combat. Say you are fighting Beatrice the Witch. You wish to Demoralize Beatrice. To do so, you would use the Demoralize action then roll to see what the result of your check is.

Beatrice has a Will modifier of +30, so her Will DC is 40 (30 + 10).
You have an Intimidation modifier of 25, so to succeed on your check you would need to roll a 15 (as 25 + 15 = 40).

If your check is equal to or greater than 40, congrats, you succeed.
If you succeed by 10 or more against the DC, you critically succeed.
If your check is less than 40, you get a failure.
If you fail by 10 or more, you get a critical failure.

These are what we refer to as ‘degrees of success’, critical success, success, failure and critical failure. In PF2E these determine the outcome of checks, with the action for that check itself telling you what the outcome for each of these degrees is.

There is another layer to this as well. A result of 1 or 20 on the d20 you roll will automatically adjust the degree of success you achieve.

A 1 will **downgrade** your degree of success.
A 20 will **upgrade** your degree of success.

Let’s take another example with Beatrice. Her Will modifier is +30, but this time your Intimidation is +35. You roll a 1 on your d20.

Your total result is 36, which isn’t 10 below Beatrice’s Will DC making it a failure. However, because you rolled a 1, your degree of success is automatically reduced by one stage, making it a critical failure.

And in the first example with your modifier being +25, you would be unable to get a Critical Success on any result but a natural 20. This is because no result you could roll from a 1 to 19 would create a critical success. But because your result of 45 (20 + 25) beats Beatrice's Will DC, it is a success, which is then upgraded to a critical success by the roll of 20.

There are some other ways of increasing degrees of success. One such way is via the incapacitation trait, while another would be the various forms of save increase player classes get, such as your own confident evasion, which makes you the top tier at dealing with Reflex saves in particular, upgrading your successes to critical successes, and later critical failures to failures.

3. The Good, The Bad and The Ugly of Swashbuckling

Here's a quick rundown of what to expect from a Swashbuckler, either because you're completely new to the class or just curious to learn what they're all about. After this section, I'll lay out the actual features.

THE GOOD

You're fast*:* Swashbucklers have innate boosts to their speed, and they just keep getting them as they level. You are going to be faster than everyone on the team that isn't a Monk. And speaking of Monk…

You're tough: A starting HP of 10, plus the ability to grab AC boosting feats for a buckler or dueling stance puts you in the higher tiers of defenses. In terms of armor class, only the Monk as well as Champion get better, and in terms of raw health only the Barbarian is better than you at this. Throw in Master in Will and Legendary in Reflex saves and you're rarely if ever taking damage from Reflex saves and can more often than not shrug off Will saves too. Your one weakness is Fortitude saves, but even then you start off with Expert very early and get to let that ride the whole time.

I want to stress this point, Legendary Reflex saves means you are dodging a crazy amount of damage the game throws at you. Even on a failure you take half damage, and successes mean none at all. The odd crit failure becomes a mere failure as well, and with your high base HP you can swallow a couple of those without much worry (but you won't be crit failing regularly enough for that to be a problem). With your great AC, very little can take you out of a fight quickly.

You're dangerous: You are a martial class. You do really good damage when your Finishers are set up and land. Bleeding Finisher especially does a disgusting amount of damage to anything that bleeds, which is a large number of creatures thrown at you. In addition, before you had to balance landing Finishers vs keeping Panache and choosing to Strike normally for your flat Precise Strike damage bonus. No longer, with the Remaster Swashbuckler gets this to all strikes they make with valid weapons. No Panache needed, swing away.

THE BAD

You are afraid of them ghosts: Precision immunity, my beloathed. Your Precise Strike and Finisher damage is classed as Precision, and so anything with Precision Immunity completely ignores it. This can be a frustratingly large number of creatures normally, and in some campaigns makes playing an Investigator, Rogue or Swashbuckler miserable.

(Author's note: in my group of players, we've done away with precision immunity and it hasn't made any of those classes feel oppressive, it's just an incredibly frustrating mechanic imo. However, my games are not yours so this is something to consider before committing to playing a class with Precision Damage as a large part of their damage output. Speak to your GM about it before play, if they're looking to use a lot of creatures with immunity, either accept your fate or pick another class. For ghosts I've seen the homebrew of allowing precision damage to work with weapons that have an Astral or Ghost touch rune, which seems sensible to me. If nothing else works, suggest that.)

You're really going to hate Fortitude saves*:* You're a Martial and have the second highest tier of base HP, behind only the Barbarian, so you will be better off than most other classes. That still doesn't make Fort saves something you can ignore however. At level 17 and with the Canny Acumen General Feat you get Master in the saves, which is good, but you will never upgrade your successes to crit successes like with your other saves, so expect abilities that target Fortitude to cause pain throughout your character's life.

THE UGLY

You're locked in with certain skills: Before the remaster you had no additional skill increases for your Style or Acrobatics. This meant you had to invest the same skill increases everyone else (except Investigator/Rogue) gets into having your core class features function. This sucked. Thankfully, with Player Core 2, a Swashbuckler now gets extra skill increases at 3, 7 and 15 for their Style skills and/or Acrobatics, meaning you can increase either one to Legendary while also increasing other skills you may be interested in. This would have been in THE BAD section before, but you do have options. Just make sure to increase those skills and invest in items to further boost them, more than any other class (except Alchemist and Inventor with Crafting), you need these skills to function.

You're a slow burn (maybe)*:* My experience with Swashbuckler is overall very positive, *but*…

I felt that my class was just a worse Rogue/Fighter from levels 1-10. I could have just played one of them and pretty much improved my experience instantly. My damage felt so much more limited, especially with combats where generating Panache just did not work, which feels miserable. I was squishier than a Fighter, but didn't have the extra tools a Rogue gets either, so I was playing the worst of both worlds.

Having said that, from 10 onwards the class just felt *right*. Everything gelled together, my base HP finally felt like it mattered with my Con being high enough, Buckler Dance meant I could have higher AC without draining precious actions each turn and my damage began feeling monstrous as Bleeding Finisher kept racking up over rounds of play. However, that was still 10ish levels of feeling like the odd duck out, and if you're starting early or not reaching levels 10 onwards, I feel like Swashbuckler is harder to recommend.

However. (I am throwing twists and turns with this part aren't I?)

The Remaster changes things, generating Panache is much easier with the Bravado trait and a constant Circumstance bonus to Tumble Through and Bravado actions which increases from +1 to +2 at level 9. Even without Panache you get additional damage from Precise Strike at all times, making just striking like a martial much more viable. You have a nicer selection of feats which also make it easier to generate Panache as well. All in all, the class is just much easier and nicer to play. So, those early problems I had may very well not exist or be much more manageable than before. I can only speak for my experience, which was pre remaster. Basically, have fun but keep in mind what I've said. Oh and get off my lawn or something, you darn youngin.

You're not willful*:* It bears mentioning, you get Master Will at 17. This means you're more vulnerable to them for 16 levels. This isn't a small thing, but you're miles better at them than Fort at least. Consider items or ancestry options for Will effects that have the controlled, fear or mental traits. The feat Charmed Life is also very good, but I will cover that later.

You've got a bum reaction*: Opportune Riposte.* I hate this ability so much. I played a 1-20 Swashbuckler and the number of times it was triggered was in the single digits. Worthless ability, even more so if (more like when) you get reactive strike. Plus if I had used my Finisher on my last turn my strike had no precision damage, so even if it could work it was often pointless to even try.

Why is this not in the bad section then? Well it was buffed in the remaster. It now has the bravado trait and you will always add precise strike to your damage as well, so it doesn't matter if you had panache or not. Furthermore, if you've taken a level 1 feat, you gain a circumstance bonus to your Disarm attempts. So if an enemy critically misses you, you can attempt to Disarm as a reaction with a bonus and possibly stop them making further attacks or penalize their future attacks. Also, Disarming them makes their attacks more likely to miss, and therefore more likely to critically miss.

Now to be clear, I don't think this is good still. When you successfully Disarm someone, they can use an Interact action to readjust their grip. Guess what reaction Swashbucklers get at level 6 which can be used when someone uses an Interact action? If you're seeing the issue here, well done. If you Disarm on your turn successfully we have some outcomes:

A) They use an interact action - you use reactive strike on them, or wait for them to do that action then attack you and hope they roll low enough so you can riposte.
B) They don't use an interact action - you don't get to trigger reactive strike, but still need to hope they roll low enough so you can riposte.
C) They decide attacking you isn't worth it and run away - you get to trigger reactive strike, no riposte can ever happen here.

Do you see the issue here? We have 2 outcomes where reactive strike is guaranteed to activate, and 2 outcomes where riposte has a *chance* to activate.

Enemies critically missing you is quite unlikely even with enemies at or below your level. When you have reactions like Charmed Life or Reactive Strike I'm never going to take this seriously. But for disarming builds, I would definitely look at this with some consideration and I will write more on it in the Gymnast section and later when I suggest builds.

You ain't got a six shooter*:* This is purely personal but no gun support Paizo? Really? *Really?* Pirates are literally known for Swashbuckling! And what kind of person thinks of duels without thinking of a showdown at noon? I understand guns are Gunslinger's niche but *come on.*

The Actual Features of the Class

Here I'll include a list of features you gain by level, as well as relevant sections of the guide where you can find more info.

Level	Class Features
1	Ancestry and background - see section 4.1 and 4.2 below Attribute boosts - see section 4.3 below Initial proficiencies - see the image below for what you start with at level 1

Perception

Expert in Perception

Saving Throws

Trained in Fortitude
Expert in Reflex
Expert in Will

Skills

Trained in Acrobatics
Trained in one skill determined by your swashbuckler's style
Trained in a number of additional skills equal to 4 plus your Intelligence modifier

Attacks

Trained in simple weapons
Trained in martial weapons
Trained in unarmed attacks

Defenses

Trained in light armor
Trained in unarmored defense

Class DC

Trained in swashbuckler class DC

Panache
Precise strike
Stylish combatant
Confident finisher - for these four, see above glossary in section 2. Confident finisher is the default Finisher which does half your Precise Strike Finisher damage on a Strike failure (but not critical failure).

Swashbuckler's style - see section 4.4 below

Swashbuckler feat - see section 6 below for advice on class feats to take by level, at level 1 and then at every even level, you get another Swashbuckler class feat.

2	Skill feat - see section 5 below, you get a skill feat every even level
3	Fortitude expertise - you become an Expert in Fortitude saves. Note this is as high as these get for you without taking optional feats. General feat - see section 5, you get an additional one at 7, 11, 15 and 19. Opportune riposte - see above section in THE UGLY. Skill increase - you can increase a skill from trained to expert, or from untrained to trained. Stylish tricks - you can increase Acrobatics or Style skill proficiency, and take a skill feat for an Acrobatics or Style skill. Vivacious speed - your status bonus to speed increases.
4	Skill feat Swashbuckler feat
5	Attribute boosts Ancestry feat Precise strike 3 (3d6) Skill increase Weapon expertise - your proficiency in simple and martial weapons becomes expert.
6	Skill feat Swashbuckler feat
7	Confident evasion - you become a Master in Reflex saves, and any successes on Reflex saves are automatically upgraded to critical successes. General feat Vivacious speed Skill increase - as before, but you can now increase a skill from expert to master as well. Stylish tricks - also allows you to raise Acrobatics or your Style skill to master.

	Weapon specialization - your weapon damage increases, then increases again as you get Master proficiency.
8	Skill feat Swashbuckler feat
9	Ancestry feat Exemplary finisher - Precise strike 4 (4d6) Skill increase Swashbuckler expertise -
10	Attribute boosts Skill feat Swashbuckler feat
11	Continuous flair General feat Perception mastery - Skill increase Vivacious speed
12	Skill feat Swashbuckler feat
13	Ancestry feat Assured evasion - your Reflex saves become Legendary, and any critical failures you get on a Reflex save become failures instead. You also take half damage from failures on Reflex saves but note this doesn't apply to crit failures upgraded to failures from this feature. Light armor expertise - Precise strike 5 (5d6) Skill increase

	Weapon mastery - you obtain master proficiency in simple and martial weapons.
14	Skill feat Swashbuckler feat
15	Attribute boosts General feat Greater weapon specialization Keen flair Skill increase Stylish tricks Vivacious speed
16	Skill feat Swashbuckler feat
17	Ancestry feat Precise strike 6 (6d6) Reinforced ego - your Will save increases to Master, and any successes on a Will save are increased to critical successes. Skill increase
18	Skill feat Swashbuckler feat
19	Eternal confidence - General feat Light armor mastery - Skill increase Vivacious speed

20	Attribute boosts Skill feat Swashbuckler feat

What to Do in Combat

The very simple game plan is this:

- Gain Panache using actions with the Bravado trait, feats you've taken, or by doing a particular daring action (last one up to GM discretion).
- Engage the enemy (get to them via Tumble Through or other movement actions) and frontline for your backline or strike at the enemy backline if your team is in a good position. If you have Reactive Strike, positioning becomes even more important, as you want to trigger it as often as possible.
- Strike the enemy
    - I would encourage you to use a Finisher here, but there is an argument to save your Panache depending on build. More on that in a bit.
- Repeat as necessary.

To get more complex:

Evaluate: which enemy can give you Panache? If you have a debuff, then targeting a foe you are then going to engage is a great tactic. But there are times when a weaker foe is in range and will be easier to generate Panache on than the foe you're going to engage.

Position: you are a martial character who is primarily designed to engage opponents in melee. If your party has squishier characters in the backline (such as casters or those with low AC), you should position yourself in such a way that the enemy will want to engage you *first*, before going for the more vulnerable backline. However, this is not always the case, and there are times where threatening the enemy backline is where you should be.

This really comes down to your party composition, so it's hard to give concrete advice. If you think your backline is well defended or can handle themselves at the moment, then go ahead and ruin the day of those pesky enemy spellcasters or other ranged opponents. Just keep in mind that you may need to run back to your allies to help them (or for them to help you).

Attack: which enemy needs to go down first? This is very much a judgement call, and can vary depending on how you and your party plays. Personally, I quite like to take out weaker enemies and use that momentum to take on the tougher ones. I find this method stops those weaker foes from harassing the rest of the party, dropping a nasty ability on us during a pivotal moment, and/or healing the bigger enemies who've been wrecking shop.

But there's also an argument to be made to directly engage the boss/elite enemies, as it focuses their attention on a tankier party member, and you can do good damage to them directly while your party (hopefully) supports you and takes out the other enemies.

The latter strat has debuffs really start to matter, sure the -1 to everything the enemy does may not seem much. But then you avoid being crit because of it, or it allows you to hit or even crit them due to the lower AC, it all begins to add up. Debuffs let you take out weaker enemies even quicker (or even instantly depending on the debuff), and even the odds against stronger ones too. Braggart is great here for their Demoralize focus, but other Styles can debuff too, such as Gymnast locking opponents down, or Wit shredding Will saves.

Basically, every combat situation is different, and you will need to think on your feet and take what you know your team can do and put it against whatever you know about what the enemy can do. But more than just that, you need to really know what *you can do, and maximise the value out of every action you take.*

What do I mean by that? For example, if you're going to focus on an enemy, make sure you keep focusing on them *unless the situation demands you switch focus.* An enemy at full health, and an enemy at 1 HP is just as dangerous. Don't split your damage around multiple foes and give them multiple more turns to turn things to their advantage.

Another example, if you debuff a foe, make it the first thing you do before using other actions on them. The number of times I've seen someone throw out a third action debuff which would have changed the outcome of their previous two actions for the better is saddening.

Finally, when you have access to reactions like Reactive Strike, make sure you position yourself well to use them. Keep in mind your range, and where enemies are placed. If someone wants to make a beeline for your party, make them pay for it. If an enemy is a dangerous spellcaster, make them waste actions getting away from you first so they don't have to worry about their spell being disrupted and punish them if they do cast within your reach.

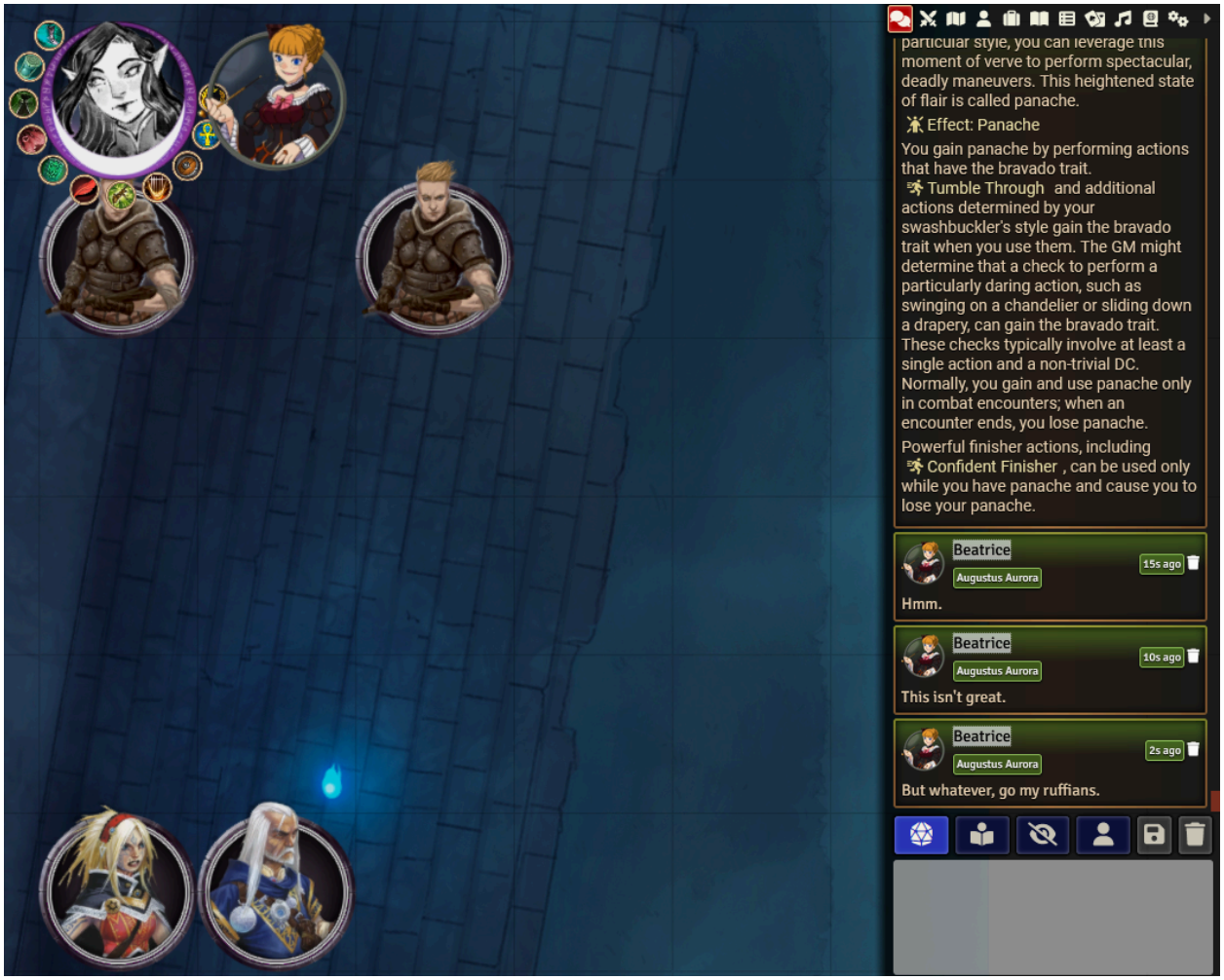
At times, this means saving your reaction for when it matters. Sometimes I've let weaker enemies go without attacking them, waiting for a more dangerous opponent's ability. Other times, I've not used a defensive ability for the same reason. Obviously don't get too risky with this mindset, but do keep in mind where you spend resources like your reaction and why. This leads into:

Repeat: consider not just what you can do in your turn, but how your turn can set up subsequent turns for you and your allies. Fighting a dragon? Try and not group next to people so it has less or even no good options for its breath weapon. Allies go down a lot? If you have a free hand for a healing potion, carry one, or if you have healing spells/effects, keep in a range where you can use them to help people up.

There’s another dynamic that’s important, and that’s working as a team. Let’s look at a scenario that better conveys what I mean by this:



Here we have my Swashbuckler (purple token), positioned between her backline (the iconics, Ezren and Seoni), and the enemy, two dastardly ruffians and Beatrice the Witch from earlier. Let’s say we make a beeline for Beatrice immediately.



We've cornered Beatrice, yes, and also have another ruffian next to us. If all goes well they focus me, and my backline can do their thing, right?

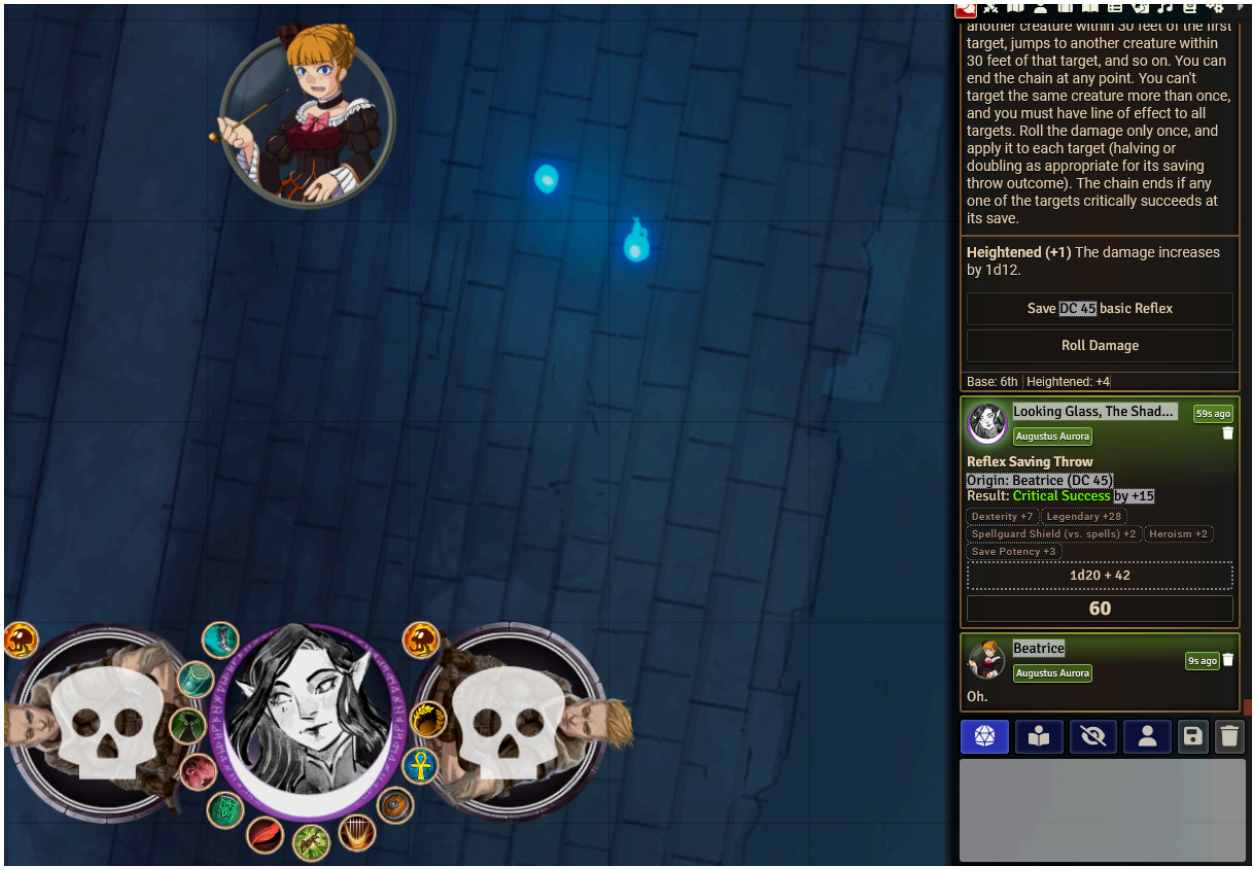


Not quite, yes I've run up to Beatrice and can strike her down for her witchy ways. But in doing so the enemy ruffians have been free to run up and beat up my own casters, putting them into a world of hurt and unable to fully act. Was it a bad strategy to prioritize the enemy caster? I don't think so, but there's a maxim you should always remember: *your fellow party members want to have fun too.*

Now, there's a lot more complexity here of course, your allies have their own abilities to defend themselves and deal with the ruffians here. You can gain access to reactive strike, which makes enemies less likely to want to run away/past you to easier targets. But my overall point here is this: protect *your party members, it's good tactics and good manners.* Help them help you, they can drop vital buffs on you, help you if you land in trouble and can use their own abilities to apply damage/debuffs on the enemy. So let's do this from the top.



As you can see, I've swiftly taken care of the ruffians using ultra violence, leaving me and my party to take on the witch by her lonesome. Seeing herself outnumbered, Beatrice decides to get out of my Swashbuckler's range and cast a spell. Wanting to drop my squishier party members (who we'll say have been blasting Beatrice and vice versa while the ruffians died), she runs back and casts Chain Lightning, targeting me first to hit the other party members.



It doesn't go well for her. As we can see, I've drawn aggro to myself and completely avoided the Chain Lightning, which also prevented it spreading to my allies. We're now free to all focus on Beatrice and hopefully take her down without any further issues.

This is of course all simplified white room theorizing, and in reality, actual combats are much more complex. But I am basing it off my own experiences in the past. I have found that acting like a lightning rod for enemy attacks works well on Swashbuckler. You have the stats to deal with it, as well the damage & utility to make sure they can't ignore you. This lets your allies then use their own abilities, which further lets you do yours, and so on and so on.

4. Character Creation

4.1 Ancestries and Heritages

I will not spend long here, other than to say boosts to your **Dexerity** and your **Style** stat are vital if your character is still using the pre-remaster ancestry stat boosts. If you are using the two free boosts of your choice, then you are much more flexible when it comes to ancestry. I'd also avoid aquatic races unless it's an aquatic campaign, for somewhat obvious reasons. Though if you want to wear a fishbowl the entire time you do you.

My only other real advice is to watch out for your ancestry/heritage feat selection, some get a great selection, while some are sadly much more limited and don't even get feats past 13. However if your game isn't going to level 17 anyway, this may not matter at all. Other than that, go ham, have fun, make whatever Swashbuckler you wish!

I may update this section with a more thorough look at the game's ancestries and heritages, but there are a lot of them and I'm very biased towards playing elves and humans, so have little experience with other ancestries. In time I would like to go through the options as a theory crafting exercise, or update the guide for particular synergies with ancestries (e.g. hobgoblins have some nice fear options so Braggart would be nice on them), but that will come at a later date.

4.2 Backgrounds

My advice here is similar to the ancestries section, ensure that you use a background boost on your **Dexerity**. This is a bare minimum so you hit +4 at level 1 (equal to 18 for pre-master) in your Key Score. A background with skills or feats that compliments your style is useful to consider but not vital to making a solid character.

However, please make sure you at least look at a background that lets you boost Dexterity and whatever other stat you need for your style. It is less critical in the remaster than before, but you still want to be succeeding on your Bravado checks for Panache to be as effective as possible so consider backgrounds that let you boost both, unless you're a **Rascal** then just Dex is fine.

4.3 Attribute Boosts

This is where you will need to really start considering your Style. **Gymnasts** will wish to use one of their boosts on Strength, while all other Styles will want to boost Charisma, *barring* **Rascal** which can be considered SAD (single attribute dependent) on Dexterity.

For your class boosts, the advice is basically this - always boost Dexterity, then boost Strength if you are a **Gymnast** or Charisma if your Style skill uses it.

Dexterity (★★★★★): There is no argument here, you need it, boost at every chance you get. I will repeat this as often as I have to, so please just do it.

Charisma or Strength (★★★★★): This depends on your Style. If you are a **Gymnast,** boost your Strength. If you are not, boost your Charisma. A **Rascal** can pick either to boost due to their SADness with Dex, but you're also in an easier position to prioritize Constitution and Wisdom over them.

Charisma is used for the various Charisma skills and these are very useful skills to have generally. Diplomacy is obviously used to persuade people, Deception to lie to them, Intimidation to scare them and Performance is when you want to be weaker. However, in a less social game or one where there's mindless enemies running around everywhere it does have less value.

Strength is used primarily for Athletics, melee weapon damage and your bulk limit. Athletics is a great skill, whether for movement options such as jumping, swimming or climbing or for the *very strong* maneuvers such as Grapple and Trip. However, unlike most other classes that use Strength, your Key Ability Score can never be Strength. You will be behind the curve because of this, never being able to reach a max of +7 like the Monk, Barbarian etc. However in Gymnast's case they get a circumstance bonus to athletic maneuvers that puts them on par if not higher than those classes for decent chunks of the game.

Constitution (★★★★): Boost Constitution for Fort Saves and HP. You are a 10 HP per level frontliner class, and your base class chassis means you are going to be tankier than anyone that isn't a Barbarian, Champion or Monk, even if early on it doesn't feel like it.

Wisdom (★★★): Finally, your last boost should be spent on your Wisdom for Perception and Will saves. It's always useful to go first, spot hidden things and not have your mind controlled.

Charisma or Strength (★★): What to do with Strength as a Charisma Style Swashbuckler, or Charisma as a **Gymnast** Swashbuckler, or both as a **Rascal** Swashbuckler? The truth is, nothing for the first two cases, and whatever you wish for the third. You get four stat boosts at levels 1, 5, 10, 15 and 20. That is both a lot and all too little when you need to raise Dex, Con, Wis and your Style Stat. These four are too important to give up, so you sadly will lack the ability to raise another one. There is an exception, which is going past level 10, and even then you will need to plan for it, likely by not boosting another stat until later. More on that later in the builds section.

Intelligence (★): Last and sadly least, this is just no good for a Swashbuckler. Nerds need not apply to heroics and daring deeds I suppose. A ***Rascal*** could get away with it, but why? You don't get feat support with Swashbuckler feats, nor does any style give you skill increases for Intelligence skills or feats for Intelligence skills. Unless you have a highly specific character concept, avoid Intelligence. And honestly if you do have that concept, why not just play a different class like Mastermind Rogue or a Recall Knowledge Fighter with Wizard/Witch archetype?

4.4 Styles

Your choice of Style essentially dictates the flavor and play style of your Swashbuckler. Every Swashbuckler can gain Panache from Tumbling Through, but each Style gives you proficiency in a specific skill and grants Panache when using an action or actions associated with that skill in combat by giving it the Bravado trait. Some styles also grant you an additional skill feat as

well, typically for skills where those feats are required for a reliable method of using that skill in combat.

Remember, you gain a circumstance bonus whenever using an action with the Bravado trait, so your Style choice will heavily influence which skill you will be using most on your character.

Exemplary Finisher:

Putting this section here to give context to the additional section at the end of each style. At level 9, Swashbucklers gain an additional effect when a Strike they make with a finisher hits a foe. The effect a Swashbuckler gains depends on the style they chose at level 1, so if you are intending to play a level 9 Swashbuckler and beyond, it bears to keep in mind what your style gives you here. Just keep in mind, your Finisher needs to **hit** to get the Exemplary FInisher effect.

Battledancer (★★) - Performance:

Skill Feat - Fascinating Performance (☆)
Bravado Action - Perform (☆)

I have to just come out and say it: Performance is the worst skill in the entire game. Time and time again I have been baffled by how poor it is, and yet it continues to find new ways to disappoint me. With Battledancer Swashbuckler, the Perform action becomes usable in combat, but I can count on one hand the times it did anything in a fight in a 1-20 campaign. The one benefit of this style, was that Perform can target multiple enemies in a 30 feet range. This means you only had to beat one enemy's Will DC to generate Panache. It was pretty nice for that, even if Performance itself did nothing.

However, the remaster has made earning Panache much easier, but in doing so, it has worn away one of the advantages Battledancer had: easier Panache generation than the other Styles. Now you can gain Panache even on a failure, which while making the class stronger, has made this subclass comparatively weaker, even if it still has an easier time of succeeding on a Bravado action using Perform. So why have I rated it a C and not lower?

Simple: I'm incredibly biased towards Battledancer. My 1-20 Swashbuckler was one, and I loved the class fantasy, it was just incredibly fun. If I had the chance to replay as a remastered Swashbuckler with the same character, I'd change nothing even if I'd be mechanically stronger with a different Style.

Do I recommend you follow me in this path? Absolutely not, as I said, Performance is an awful skill with near no redeeming features without archetypes. However, there are some nice feats a Performance Swashbuckler can take, such as the new Enjoy the Show or Leading Dance. *But these aren't Battledancer exclusive.* If you have the opportunity, any other Style can take those feats and use them, they just need to level Performance to do so reliably. I really wish the remaster gave Battledancer in particular some more love, along with the overall Swashbuckler

changes. While a rising tide raises all ships, Performance is a boat with a rotten hull, so you will always be weaker than other Charisma styles barring Fencer.

Exemplary Finisher - you can Step as a free action immediately after the finisher.

A decent effect, but I find that Step loses value as an action as you get higher in level. There are two reasons for this, the first is that enemies tend to have greater reach and so step will often not put you out of range for a Reactive Strike. The second is that difficult or greater difficult terrain becomes more and more common I find, so unless you take the General Feat *Feather Step* you can't Step at all. This isn't the worst cost in the world but if you can take a feat like Toughness, Fleet or Incredible Initiative instead, then Feather Step is too niche to compete unfortunately.

Still, this is basically free and part of your combat routine anyway, so it does have some use. In addition, there's some great synergy to be had with the Tiger Stance feat which lets you Step 10 feet. This is a really nice stance that gives you a great attack for Swashbucklers, but beware it does require an archetype to access, requires you to be unarmored and locks you out of other strikes while in the stance.

Braggart (★★★★★) - Intimidation:

Skill Feat - N/A

Bravado Action - Demoralize (★★★★★)

Intimidation is a great still, and this Style kicks it into overdrive. For debuffing your enemies, you get rewarded with a buff for yourself. Demoralize inflicts the Frightened Condition, which applies a penalty equal to the frightened check to all checks and DCs of the frightened creature. This means your saves against their effects are better, their attacks are less likely to land, your actions made against their DCs are better and your Strikes are easier to land as well. Basically, everything you do against a frightened creature becomes more effective, while everything the frightened creature does is less effective.

Frankly, I don't think there's a martial class that doesn't love the Frightened condition on their opponents, you hit more and get hit less. It's a strong useful effect, and is only negated by mindless enemies or enemies that are immune to fear effects such as Sakhils. Braggarts are even better at it by default than most other martials, with their focus on Charisma and Stylish circumstance bonus, you'll easily be succeeding if not crit succeeding against foes. The Terrified Retreat skill feat is a great pick up here, you may be able to win whole encounters by sending half the minions fleeing for the hills.

Really, Demoralize only has one weakness, enemies become immune to repeated Demoralize attempts after the first for 10 minutes. (this immunity is creature specific meaning Creature A can Demoralize Creature B, and then Creature C could also Demoralize Creature B, but A could not Demoralize again until 10 minutes had passed).

SIde note, I had a great amount of success Demoralizing on my Battledancer, so even if you're not a Braggart, feel free to invest in Intimidation if you can.

Also Scare to Death is honestly broken, try it sometime, it's hilarious.

Exemplary Finisher - If the foe was temporarily immune to your Demoralize, their temporary immunity ends.

So hey reminder a whole couple of sentences ago? An incredible effect, you can debuff your enemy, gain Panache, use a finisher and then debuff the enemy again for an endless loop until they're defeated. Demoralize is great, so being able to by-pass the immunity for 10 minutes as part of your normal routine is fantastic. I cannot stress enough how good this is. With the very useful Demoralize skill feats, you will be a damage and debuff machine, able to reset your debuff cooldown as you deliver frightful burst damage.

Fencer (★★) - Deception:

Skill Feat - N/A

Bravado Action - Create a Diversion and Feint (★★★)

Deception is a weird skill for a Swashbuckler. It feels like it should be amazing for a daring hero who uses their brain to get the best of their opponent, a duelist with a quick wit and a sharp blade. But in all my experience, I'd say a Rogue clears Swashbuckler in using Deception to their advantage. A Rogue with the Scoundrel racket makes enemies off guard for longer with a successful Feint and can even make enemies off guard to allies with a critical success. They also can Step before or after each Feint attempt. Rogue in general gets plenty of feat support for Deception (perhaps too much, but I digress).

Both Create a Diversion and Feint suffer from doing nothing to Mindless enemies, and unlike Demoralize, these effects aren't particularly strong on their own. The former can allow you or allies to hide, but you're a tanky martial character. Your squishier allies should be hiding, but you shouldn't. How else can the world see you flex on it if you're not visible? Create a Diversion also has diminishing returns until a later skill feat (Confabulator) reduces the bonus enemies get for repeated attempts, all the way down to nothing when you're Legendary. But that's a long way away if you're starting at early levels, and even in an 11-20 campaign that's roughly half your playtime with a small but noticeable disadvantage to using your skills repeatedly, which is what a Swashbuckler should be doing.

Feint also suffers a pretty severe penalty for critically failing, which isn't shared by actions such as Demoralize. Wit's Bon Mot does, but it also would require an enemy to take advantage of your weaker Will save and you can clear it by just succeeding on another Bon Mot attempt. The penalties for skill actions for Gymnast are also severe if you critically fail, but their rewards are so much greater (and often give the same effect as Feint, with the Grapple and Trip actions also making enemies off-guard).

It's not all doom and gloom, off-guard is still useful and you'll definitely be able to use the condition to great effect, as it makes hitting your enemies with your high damage Finishers even easier. But I definitely expect more from my choice of Style than this. If you really want to play a Deception based character, I'd recommend Scoundrel Rogue instead.

Exemplary Finisher - The foe is off-guard until your next turn.

Incredible…ly mid, I might even say this is outright bad. At this level you should have access to plenty of ways to make an opponent off-guard. Furthermore, Create a Diversion and Feint, the skills your style encourages you to use will already make enemies off-guard to you in the first place. Your Finishers also prevent you from making further attacks after using one, so you can't benefit from your own effect unless an enemy triggers a reaction of yours. Even using a dueling sword to really fit the common fantasy of a fencer clashes with this effect, as when you score a critical hit with a sword you already make foes off-guard due to the critical specialization effect.

Your team could benefit from this for sure, but as I said first, you and your party should have plenty of ways to make an opponent off-guard by now. It's 'free' so that's nice, but I'm definitely ranking this as the worst Exemplary Finisher effect.

Gymnast (★★★★) - Athletics:

Skill Feat - N/A

Bravado Action - Grapple, Reposition, Shove, and Trip (✪✪✪✪✪)

The Strength focused Style, where you utilize the very effective Grapple and Trip actions, as well as the less commonly useful but still decent Reposition and Shove actions. All of them have the Attack trait, meaning you take a penalty of -5 for your second action during your turn that also has the Attack trait, and it increases to -10 for third or more. This penalty decreases to -4 and -8 respectively for weapons with the Agile trait (which your default unarmed attack counts as).

Athletic combat maneuvers are really good. MAP on your finishers is not so good. If you want to do a MAPless finisher while also having an opponent grappled or tripped, you will need to wait until your next turn and hope the opponent doesn't break free. This isn't even a bad thing, you've inflicted MAP on an enemy for escaping or made them vulnerable to reactions based off movement if they stand up. Both also cost an opponent valuable actions, which is always good. But it is a bit more setup vs the more 'plug and play' tactics of other styles, whose methods of gaining Panache don't have the Attack action (aside from Rascal). Agile weapons can also help with this, but your Finishers are still going to be less accurate when used with your style actions.

There is another pain point for Gymnast. Unlike other Grab/Trip action users, your Strength score is not your Key Ability Score (KAS). The highest you can raise it to in character creation is +3. This does put you behind the curve, even if your circumstance bonus does compensate for it. But dedicated Barbarian and Monk builds can also get similar circumstance bonuses and offer better defences (in terms of HP and AC, respectively) than Swashbuckler. This isn't to dissuade you from running a Gymnast, far from it, but it is worth considering. Swashbuckler has

its own advantages over Barbarian and Monk, such as being able to use concentrate actions and being able to use martial weapons, as well as access to Derring-Do, a must have feat for Gymnasts. All in all Gymnast is great but these are some awkward points that stop me from putting it at a higher rank.

Exemplary Finisher - If the foe is grabbed, restrained, or prone, you gain a circumstance bonus to the damage roll equal to double the number of weapon damage dice.

Ouch. This is a very nice damage bonus, especially since your Strength is already putting your damage over other Swashbucklers. Double of two dice is 4 at level 9 when you get this feature, three dice at 12 is 6 and four dice at 19 is 8. Double that on a crit and your finishers are hitting the hardest out of any Swashbuckler, no questions asked. A great effect.

Rascal (★★★) - Thievery

Skill Feat - Dirty Trick

Bravado Action - Dirty Trick (★★★)

The new style that has been introduced with the remaster. As your skill is Thievery you can go mono Dex with this style, and not require any Charisma or Strength investment, giving you more freedom in where you invest your stat boosts.

Their skill feat is Dirty Trick, another addition with PC2, which inflicts the very powerful Clumsy condition on enemies. You use your Thievery skill against a foe's Reflex DC to determine how successful you are, less dexterous creatures are more vulnerable while the more agile foes you fight are harder to get. Clumsy gives a penalty to all Dex based stats, this means lowers AC, reflex saves and reflex DCs (making Trips easier for example), and attacks that involve Dexterity. If you have a Blaster Caster or a Grappler character, they will love to have a Rascal on the team.

It's not all roses though, Dirty Trick has the Attack and Manipulate traits. This means any use of Dirty Trick deals with the MAP mechanic, if you use it first thing in a turn, your other attacks or actions with the attack trait have a -5 penalty for your second action, and then a -10 for further actions after that. If you use it after other attack trait actions, you run a higher risk of failure, or even the painful crit failure effect, going prone. The Manipulate trait opens you up to Reactive Strikes, and if a Reactive Strike crits you, it disrupts the action. This means you lose the action, and still incur MAP as well.

Clumsy is a strong condition to inflict, especially if you can crit succeed: the foe will then have to use an Interact action to remove Clumsy, which opens them up to Reactive Strikes or other abilities that inhibit Interact actions, and also drains the opponent's action economy. However, for Swashbuckler, the Attack and Manipulate traits here can be quite devastating, your Finishers or your skill action will be less successful if you use both on the same turn, and tougher enemies can make your life miserable with reactions. I have given it a rating of C because I'm just not sure how the Dirty Trick feat works in action, I haven't seen it all so far since Remaster.

There is one other thing, you can go full cheeselord with the Kip Up skill feat. Master in Acrobatics and one skill feat as an upfront payment, lets you then completely ignore the critical failure effect, as you can stand up from Prone as a *free* action without toggling a reaction from the enemy. This is a bit outside the intended usage of Kip Up I feel, but it is RAW, so if you have it, feel free to spam -10 Dirty Trick attempts. The same applies for the Trip action, but as a Dex mono user who has less reason to invest in Athletics, you have an easier time investing in Acrobatics instead (but hey Gymnasts, feel free to steal this strat too).

Exemplary Finisher - The foe takes a –10 circumstance penalty to its speed until the start of your next turn.

Very nice way of limiting a melee opponent's options. Combining this with another way of limiting movement, such as difficult terrain, slow/stunned or a grapple/trip is a fantastic way to have an enemy waste entire turns getting to your team. This is of course of less use against ranged enemies (but if you're able to inflict a finisher on them they have bigger problems than this) and enemies with truly outrageous movement speeds, such as dragons. Still, it's a nice option when it's needed.

Wit (★★★★) - Diplomacy

Skill Feat - Bon Mot

Bravado Action - Bon Mot (★★★★)

Diplomacy is a great stat, and this style opens up new avenues for it as well. Bon Mot is a powerful effect, reducing the Perception and Will saves of your target by 2 on a success and 3 on a crit success. As allies love Rascal for their weakening of Reflex saves, allies will love a Wit Swashbuckler for their lowering of Perception and Will: Perception is great for illusion users or characters who employ stealth, while powerful mental effect users such as Arcane and Occult casters will love lower Will saves.

Having said that, Bon Mot does come with some restrictions. Like Braggart and Fencer's skill actions, this one also has no effect on enemies immune to mental effects. Furthermore it has the Auditory and Linguistic traits as well. Creatures outright immune to the former are very rare, but if you can't speak you can't use Bon Mot. The latter means you need to share a language with the creature you are targeting, which either be trivial or quite difficult depending on the campaign. The Translate spell upcast to 3rd level might become your best friend in campaigns with many different languages used, and skills like Multilingual or even boosting your Intelligence score might look inviting for the extra language learned.

Still, Bon Mot is a great effect. Just remember it tends to help your team out more, unless you also invest in other abilities that target Will Saves, such as spellcasting or Demoralize, Feint etc. It's because of this that I've rated this lower than Braggart, Demoralize just 'works'. It supports what you as a Swashbuckler want to do, and sets you up to keep doing it. Bon Mot would make it easier to continue using Bon Mot on an enemy, but it's not also lowering their AC or attack rolls against you, not without other actions being involved.

All that is to say, this is a powerful effect, you should just consider that unlike Braggart, it will take a bit more work from you and your team to get full use out of it. There is another Diplomacy based action Swashbucklers can get at level 1 called One for Al which is fantastic for Wit Swashbucklers, but more on that in the Class Feats section.

Exemplary Finisher - The foe takes a –2 circumstance penalty to attack rolls against you until the start of your next turn.

Great for tanking or just facing down a dangerous enemy. Combine this with Buckler Dance or Extravagant Parry and you become obnoxious to hit, and much more likely to turn deadly crits into normal hits or even hits into misses. I suppose this is also a useful effect if you want to use Opportune Riposte a lot, but I personally would just take the nice bonus to your Finishers and leave it at that.

5. General and Skill Feats

General Feats:

Choose between Fleet, Toughness, Incredible Initiative, Canny Acumen (at level 17 it changes Fort saves to Master Proficiency). If you have taken any of these options already, do as you wish, though feats like Adopted Ancestry, Ancestral Paragon, Diehard, Feather Step, and the new PC2 Robust Health are worth taking a look at.

You can take a skill feat instead of a general feat, but I would not recommend this, as you cannot do the reverse.

Skill Feats:

There are too many skill feats to really cover all of them in this guide. Instead I will be focusing on Acrobatic skills and the skills associated with each style. For now, I will simply list good feats for each skill, as well as their requirements.

Some archetypes have really nice feats for certain skills but I will cover those in the Archetypes section (7).

Acrobatics:

*Trained: Cat Fall (reduces fall damage as proficiency increases, Legendary removes fall damage completely), Slippery Prey (reduces MAP for repeated Escape attempts, Legendary you take no MAP on Escape attempts at all **but** remember you do still have MAP for other actions with the Attack trait)*

Expert: Nimble Crawl (can't honestly say I've used the Crawl action more than once, but the benefit at Legendary proficiency is amazing)

Master: Kip Up (really good feat, this completely negates reactions when standing up from Prone)

Legendary: none, but remember Cat Fall, Nimble Crawl and Slippery Prey get additional effects at this level of proficiency.

Athletics:

Trained: Slippery Prey (do note, unless you completely neglect Acrobatics, that skill will likely keep ahead of Athletics by sheer fact of being Dexterity based), **Titan Wrestler** (mandatory for grappler builds, upgrades to creatures 3 sizes larger than you at Legendary proficiency), Quick Jump,

Expert: Powerful Leap

Master: Quick Climb & Quick Swim (if you're doing any of these a lot, they're worthwhile, and at legendary proficiency you get a climb or swim speed respectively), Water Sprint

Legendary: Cloud Jump

Deception:

Trained: Lengthy Diversion

Expert: Confabulator (mandatory if you intend to use Create a Diversion often)

Master: Slippery Secrets

Legendary: Reveal Machinations (this is a very good but silly feat flavorwise, you may want to change the flavor depending on your GM and style of campaign)

Diplomacy:

Trained: Bon Mot *(you get this from Wit style for free)*

Expert: Discreet Inquiry & Half-Truths (for the intrigue games)

Master: Evangelize

Legendary: Legendary Negotiation (this feat is weird, I took it as a Sorcerer in a game and just never felt like there was a good time to use it)

Intimidation:

Trained: Intimidating Glare

Expert: Intimidating Prowess, Terrifying Resistance

Master: Battle Cry, Skeptic's Defense, Terrified Retreat

Legendary: **Scare to Death** *(nerfed and it's still one of the best skill feats in the game)*

Basically every single Demoralize skill feat and Scare to Death (the Intimidating Prowess feat is of note here, it is useless for a Braggart Swashbuckler, but potentially very useful for a Gymnast who already has the Strength for it and does not get a circumstance bonus for Demoralize like Braggart does)

Performance:

There are no good Performance skill feats. Turn back.

Thievery:

Trained: Dirty Trick (Rascal gets this for free), Pickpocket

Expert: Wary Disarmament (if you're on trap duty)

Master: Quick Unlock (I've never had a time pressure for locks, but maybe you do or will)

Legendary: Legendary Thief (make your character a true CRPG PC, and steal the armor off someone's back)

Other Thievery feats are really dependent on if you want to pick locks or pockets, disable devices such as traps or if you want to smuggle things easier. I find this is a niche skill set, it's useful when it pops up, but that's not often in the campaigns I play. Your mileage may vary.

6. Class Feats

Feats that have not been reprinted in Player Core 2 will be noted, though there aren't many of them. Ask your GM if these are allowed, as this may vary from table to table.

I will describe what the feat does in *italics first*, then go into more detail on the feat below that. If any feat is missing this format, or you have a better suggestion for readability, please let me know.

Level 1:

> **NOTE:** the level 1 human feat Natural Ambition, allows you to take a level 1 class feat. This is a really good option, and can open up some great builds. Instead of me having to explain this over and over again, I'm noting it here. If you see some feats here you really like, this ancestry feat is a great way of taking two of them without sacrificing higher level class feats.
>
> For non-humans, feats such as Adopted Ancestry allow you to take Human ancestry feats. The general feat Ancestral Paragon also lets you take a level 1 ancestry feat, so that with access to human feats gives you Natural Ambition.

Disarming Flair (★★★) - *gives your Disarm attempts the Bravado trait.*

So you now get the circumstance bonus when using the Disarm action and using Disarm generates Panache. This is really a love it or leave it feat, you either want to Disarm regularly in which case it's mandatory, or you don't, then you ignore it completely. This is a nice pick up for Gymnasts, as it offers yet another action (which received a very nice buff in the remaster) to your arsenal which gets better with Athletics and Strength. If you want to yell "ENGARDE!" and send the opponent's weapon flying, grab this.

Elegant Buckler (★★★★) - *when you raise a buckler, you get a +2 circumstance bonus to your AC, instead of the regular +1 for bucklers.*

This is a great way to increase your AC. Swashbuckler and feats like this really incentivise you to use one-handed weapons, with either nothing in your other hand or a light item such as a potion, scroll or other item.

Extravagant Parry (★★★★) - *an alternative to Elegant Buckler. Unlike Elegant Buckler, this feature allows you to grab something or wield a second one handed weapon, and still get a bonus, though the bonus is lesser than Elegant Buckler at a +1 vs a +2. If you are wielding a weapon with the parry trait, you get the +2 as well.*

Do note, this feat requires you to be holding 1 or more one handed weapons when you use it. If you don't have your weapon drawn or get disarmed, you're out of luck until you grab it back. This feat seems to imply you can grab with your other hand and still get a +2 to AC if you use a weapon with the parry trait in your other hand. I will try to confirm this.

Flashy Dodge **(★★★★)** *then lowers to* (★★) *as more reactions become available - as a reaction, gain a +2 circumstance bonus to your AC before an attack is made and if the attack misses you gain panache.*

Not bad for a reaction early on, but as you gain more useful reactions, the value of this feat decreases. This used to be called Nimble Dodge (same as the Rogue feat), but given the addition of granting Panache if the attack misses the name presumably had to be changed.

Note the circumstance bonus here, if you have a buckler or shield raised, or are parrying, this would not stack with the bonuses from those.

Flying Blade (★★) *- allows you to add your Precise Strike damage and use Finishers with your thrown weapons.*

Mandatory if you want to throw weapons obviously, but if not then you're not missing much ignoring it. Still, it's a neat backup plan if you really need to hit a flier or even rarer, an enemy is out of your movement range. I don't think thrown weapons really offer enough to justify the feat investment, but hey if you want to play Bullseye…

Focused Fascination **(☆)** *- in combat you Fascinate a target on a success, not a critical success with the Perform action. Requires the Fascinating Performance skill feat.*

Absolutely awful. Avoid.

Goading Feint **(★★★)** *- when you succeed on a Feint, you can instead give the next attack the target makes against you a -2 circumstance penalty to the attack roll. On a crit success, it lasts for all attacks the target makes against you until the end of its next turn.*

Useful tank ability, I'd call this a mandatory pickup for Fencers, as it makes you that much better at dueling. Ideally, you want this and one of Elegant Buckler or Extravagant Parry to really lower your foe's chance to hit you but they're both competing for the same class feat. I'd rec one of those two feats over this one, simply due to them not requiring you to succeed against an enemy to get the benefit.

One for All **(★★★★)** *- you can Aid an ally within 30 feet using Diplomacy for one action.*

This is incredible, and near mandatory on any Wit Swashbuckler. Even on non-Wit chars this is a great feat, due to how powerful the bonus from the Aid action is. On a success with Aid, you give an ally a +1 circumstance bonus. On a critical success this becomes a +2, and if you are a

Master in the skill you are using to aid it becomes a +3. At Legendary it is a +4. If you understand how 2E's math works, then you know how great this is even with a +2, getting up to a +4 is bonkers. And it's a spammable action that gives you Panache? This feat is one of the main draws for Charisma characters to multiclass into Swashbuckler, it's that good.

The one downfall of this feat is that Aid does use your precious reaction when your ally uses their aided action, which can be a hefty cost at higher levels. But the bonus is so often worth it, it won't be often you feel like you wasted your time.

Plummeting Roll **(★)** *- gives you the Cat Fall skill feat and a reaction for when you take no damage from a fall to stride up to half your speed.*

I'm very much opposed to using a class feat to gain a skill feat, even when they give some extra benefits. Plus, falling requires a terrain setup that can be hard to come by. I suppose if you're going to be doing **a lot** of parkour this is possibly useful, but unless that situation comes up regularly, you're best avoiding this.

You're Next **(★★)** **(★★★)** if you are able to consistently down enemies and have spare reactions *- when you reduce an enemy to 0 HP, you can Demoralize a creature with a +2 circumstance bonus within 60 feet as a reaction. When Legendary in Intimidation, you can Demoralize as a free action.*

I want to like this feat, but I think it's held back by its own design. First off it becomes less useful over time, as your reaction has multiple triggers competing for its use, with Charmed Life or Reactive Strike (see level 2 and 6 feats respectively).

In addition, if you've used your reaction, you can't use this. If your attack leaves an enemy at 1 HP and they get defeated by a rock falling on their head after your turn, you can't use this. The Style best at Demoralizing, Braggart, doesn't actually benefit much from the +2 bonus either, with it becoming defunct at level 9. I suppose using your Braggart Exemplary Finisher in conjunction with this feat is a neat combo, but I wouldn't rate it as a particularly great one.

The Legendary Intimidation upgrade is good but at that level I'd most likely have another feat in its stead anyway and certainly wouldn't have it without Legendary Intimidation, as your reaction is far too valuable at that point to use on this. Having said all of that, if the stars do align, and you have Legendary Intimidation and can consistently defeat enemies, then this becomes quite good.

Level 2:

After You **(★)** *- you go last in initiative when it begins, and in exchange you get Panache.*

I found this to not really be worth it pre-remaster. Now that panache is generated much more reliably and easily, I'd avoid this feat completely, especially given its competition.

Antagonize **(★★★) (★★★★)** *for Braggart at level 9 - when you Demoralize a creature, it cannot automatically reduce its frightened condition to zero at the end of their turn if they haven't attempted a hostile action against you.*

This gives you a pseudo "taunt" mechanic, with enemies being punished for ignoring you. There is also a clause the creature must be able to obverse or sense for at least a round, otherwise the effect breaks, presumably to stop you Demoralizing someone then running away behind a dozen walls.

A nice effect, but remember, a creature becomes immune to Demoralize after the first use of it, for ten minutes. You won't be able to keep this going if the enemy attacks you once then just runs off to hit someone else, or targets you with an area of effect or other ability that affects multiple creatures. A Braggart Swashbuckler can keep using Demoralize at level 9, due to Exemplary Finisher but that's a fair few levels to go from here.

Brandishing Draw **(★★★)** *- you draw a weapon, then Strike with it, or you can use a one-action Finisher instead if you meet the requirements for that Finisher.*

This is basically v2 of the Quick Draw feat, as you can use a Finisher instead of a Strike with it. Action compression is always nice, but you tend not to wander around without a weapon drawn in Pathfinder 2E from my experience. If your table has the party with sheathed weapons going into combat a lot, then this feat becomes a lot more valuable. **Also** remember, the Interact action can trigger Reactive Strike, and furthermore this can be interrupted on a critical hit. Be careful using this on or near scarier foes.

Charmed Life **(★★★★★)** *- when you're about to attempt a saving throw, you can use your reaction to gain a +2 circumstance bonus to your roll.*

This is a very powerful effect, held back only by it requiring your reaction. You will need to weigh up the pros and cons of using your reaction on this, or saving it for Reactive Strike or even which saving throw to use this on, if multiple serious threats are present at once. But a +2 in PF2E is amazing, and this has saved my Swashbuckler's life more than once. Highly recommend taking this, especially if you are heading to level 18, as it is a prerequisite for Incredible Luck, an even stronger feat.

Enjoy the Show **(★★★★)** *- you use the Perform action, and enemies get a penalty for attacking anyone but you.*

You know how I trashed Antagonize? Yeah this feat is what Antagonize wishes it was. This is a very nice way to draw 'aggro', and since it gains the Bravado trait no matter what your Style is, you'll be quite good at doing this and it's a good way to gain Panache. This and doing good

damage with a Finisher is a damn good way to get a creature's attention. Of course if you don't care about your party or they're all tanky martials then this is a bit less valuable.

This is purely personal preference, but I kind of wish this was a Battledancer exclusive. It's a bit strange anyone can pick this up but alas. Battledancers will likely be better at using this than other styles anyway, unless you have an archetype that gives you Performance skill scaling (or you actually level Performance, in which case you deserve something at that point).

Finishing Follow-through (★★) *- when your Finisher drops a foe to 0 HP, you regain Panache.*

Using a Finisher 'burns' your Panache, so the idea behind this is to execute low health enemies and regain Panache all in one action. It's a nice idea, but like all feats that proc on dropping an enemy to 0 HP, it will proc much more rarely than you'll like. This is a feat that I think had a lot more value pre-remaster, but now with Panache being easier to generate, it loses a lot of luster.

Retreating Finisher (★★) *- if you miss a target with this Finisher, you can Step.*

Can be nice to reposition after a failed attack, but I wouldn't spend a class feat on it.

Tumble Behind (★★★) *- when you successfully Tumble Through a creature, it becomes off-guard to the next attack you make against it before your turn ends.*

If you find yourself Tumbling Through a lot, then this is a very nice pick up, especially if your party isn't near you for flanking or to help Trip/Grapple the enemy. Since Tumble Through has the Bravado trait, this is a quite reliable way to generate Panache and have your Finisher land easier. Just watch out for opponents with Reactive Strike, since that can proc on Tumble Through (remember nested traits exist!)

Unbalancing Finisher (★★★) *- if you use this Finisher and hit, the enemy becomes off-guard until the end of your next turn.*

It makes an enemy off guard to more creatures and for longer than Tumble Behind but Tumble Behind provides movement and benefits from the Bravado trait. I think either can be a good pick, it really just depends on your party composition.

Non-PC2

[Lost Omens - Pathfinder Society Guide]
Fane's Fourberie (★) *- you enter a stance and can treat Playing Cards as thrown daggers or darts.*

If this wasn't a stance I'd think it was an underwhelming flavor feat. It also costs an action and not allowing other stances for such a weak effect is just sad. Flavor is free people, just say your darts/daggers are sharpened cards and call it a day. This isn't rated worse solely because I can imagine having a fight break out at a casino where you've been disarmed, and finally this feat does something. But imagination and reality are sadly never fated to meet for feats like this.

Level 4:

Dastardly Dash **(★★★★)** *- you stride up to half your speed and while moving can attempt to Trip or use Dirty Trick on a foe if you have that skill feat.*

A quite nice action compression feat, and half your speed may often be faster than some character's full speed. Great for positioning, making an enemy off-guard then using a Finisher on them. Plus if you have Reactive Strike you can then punish a foe for standing up. If you've specced into either Athletics or Thievery, I'd take this and enjoy pushing over nerds for their lunch money.

Even the Odds (★★) *- if you're being flanked at the start of your turn, you can gain Panache.*

As with many other Panache generation class feats, this has lost a lot of value since they added the Bravado trait. WIth how specific the trigger is, unless your GM loves to swarm you every combat, this is frankly not going to trigger enough to be useful, and with how much easier Panache is to get, it seems redundant.

Flamboyant Athlete (★★) **(★★★)** *if your GM throws endless cliffs and swimmable terrain at you - if you are an expert in Athletics and have Panache, you get a number of benefits such as a climb & swim speed, and your jumps/leaps are better.*

These are nice benefits, but remember, Panache only lasts until an encounter ends. Rules as written, you won't get these benefits out of combat, meaning no climb speed when scaling that sheer cliff.

Guardian's Deflection **(★★★)** *- while wielding a one handed weapon, if an ally within range would be hit by an attacker you can see and a +2 bonus to their AC would make a difference to the degree of success, you can use your reaction to give an ally a +2 circumstance bonus to their AC. This turns a crit into a hit, or a hit into a miss. It also gives you Panache until the end of your next turn.*

A pretty nice reaction since it's guaranteed to work when triggered. You will always be reducing enemy damage, either by turning crits into just hits or even making enemies miss entirely. Note that this works within your weapon's range, so a one handed weapon with reach is especially useful here. However, note that it can only be activated if a 1 or 2 bonus to AC would change the outcome of an attack. If your allies are being hit incredibly easy consistently this won't activate. Furthermore, it will compete with your reactive strike in 2 levels.

Further note: if you really like the idea of protecting your allies, look into the Champion class or Amulet Thaumaturge. For a Swashbuckler, archetyping into these is a lot more doable than other classes. See the Archetype section later.

Impaling Finisher **(★★★)** - *if you're adjacent to an enemy, and another enemy is adjacent to and directly behind that enemy in a straight line from your position, you can make one Finisher attack against both opponents. If you hit both attacks, you roll damage once. This increases your MAP as if you had attacked twice.*

A very nice Finisher, if you can set it up. This does require some additional positioning to work, as not only do two enemies need to be next to each other, but you need to be positioned so that you can form a straight line through both of them. Still, it's a very strong Finisher if you can achieve that, and funnily enough the next feat is quite useful on setting this up.

Leading Dance **(★★★)** - *when adjacent to an enemy, you can make a Performance check against their Will DC. If you succeed, you and the target move 5 feet (10 on a crit success) in a direction of your choice.*

This movement is notable for not triggering reactions from the **target** creature, so no need to worry about their reactive strike or similar abilities but do keep an eye on their friends in case they have a nasty reaction in store.

This also has the Bravado trait now, a very nice buff from before. So why is it only a B rating?

Frankly, I just didn't find this feat all that useful when I tried it out. On paper it seems great, repositioning is a strong ability, especially with no MAP attached. But in practice, I never felt like I got much use out of it, and eventually took another feat instead. This might have just been a result of my party comp or the enemies we were facing however. I would recommend any Battledancer take this feat and see how it feels. If you like it, then great, I hope you get more use out of it than I did. If not, then I know how you feel.

Swaggering Initiative **(★★)** - *you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to your initiative, can Interact to draw a weapon and if you're first in initiative you get Panache as well.*

These are nice benefits, but for a class feat I'd expect something more than what a General feat can offer you. I can't imagine the Panache benefit will apply that often either, not unless your team neglects their initiative bonus.

Twirling Throw **(★★)** - *a thrown finisher that ignores ranged penalties up to the third increment and returns to your hand so long as you don't critically fail your Strike.*

This seems decent, but how often will you need the range and have no other way to retrieve or replace a thrown weapon?

Non-PC2

[Lost Omens - Firebrands]
Devrin's Dazzling Diversion **(★★★)** *- if you are trained in Deception and successfully Feint a creature, it becomes dazzled until the end of your current turn, or the start of your next turn on a critical success.*

If you fight creatures who mainly rely on their visual senses, and are a Fencer or other Feint user, this is a great upgrade. The dazzled condition makes creatures concealed from the dazzled creature, meaning they need to pass a DC5 flat (d20) check to successfully target concealed creatures. A 20% chance to lose an action can and will matter, it's just a matter of keeping it up, which this feat allows you to do on a crit success. If you can make the crit success occur regularly, this is great. If not, then unless you like running past enemies with Reactive Strike on your turn, I'd avoid this one.

Do note, that Firebrands feats in particular don't have a great reputation concerning balance. They are better after errata but do not be surprised if your GM does not allow them.

[Lost Omens - Impossible Lands]
Masquerade of Seasons Stance **(★★★)** *- if you are trained in Performance, you can enter this stance as an action and gain resistance 5 to one of the following traits: water, fire, negative (void) or cold. You can also use an action to reenter this stance and change the resistance you gain. This resistance increases to half your level at level 12.*

A very flavorful feat and versatile stance, but it does compete with some other very good stances a Swashbuckler can get. If you are a 2 hand weapon wielder feel free to pick this up without worry, but otherwise I would check out the other stances available first and consider your options.

[Advanced Player's Guide]
Twin Parry (★★) *- if you are wielding two melee weapons, one in each hand, you can gain a +1 circumstance bonus to your AC, increasing to +2 if one of those weapons has the parry trait.*

A nice benefit but I'm rating this lower because of how much later it becomes available than the other two feats you get at level 1. I believe this is also redundant with the new Extravagant Parry feat.

Level 6:

Agile Maneuvers **(★★★★)** *- 'your Disarm, Grapple, Reposition, Shove, and Trip actions have a lower multiple attack penalty. Even if your weapon or unarmed attack doesn't have the agile*

trait, the penalty is –4 if the action is your second attack on your turn, or –8 if it's your third or subsequent attack. If your weapon or unarmed attack is agile and you have panache, the penalty is reduced further, to –3 if it's the second attack on your turn or –6 if it's the third or subsequent.'

Mostly copied unchanged from the feat itself since it felt warranted. Mandatory pickup for Gymnasts or the rare Swashbuckler with a different style that still wants to use Athletic maneuvers. This makes your subsequent actions much more likely to work, and avoid horrible critical failure effects. Just note the agile part does require Panache, but this can be incredible with a latter feat called Derring-Do (see level 10 feats).

If you want to focus on your Maneuvers, pick this up at some point.

Combination Finisher **(★★★)** *- you lower the MAP on your finishers to -4 or -8 if made as a second or third attack on your turn. If you make your finisher with an agile weapon this penalty is lowered to -3 or -6 respectively.*

Also in contention for Gymnasts as well as Rascals. If you want to regularly use your Style action and Finishers in the same turn, this makes the Finishers much more reliable to actually land. If you are okay alternating turns between the two, you have better options here.

Precise Finisher **(★★)** *- your Confident Finisher still applies your full Precise Strike Finisher damage on a failure, instead of half.*

If you can make enough Confident Finisher attacks and miss, then you can defeat any enemy given time. But that's how losers think. Pick another feat. Seriously though, this is a nice damage boost but I never felt myself lacking damage on a Swashbuckler. Reactive Strike especially will provide much more damage and area control over your character's career.

Reactive Strike **(★★★★★)** *- if an enemy uses a move or manipulate action, you can make an attack against them as a reaction.*

Pretty much the mandatory pickup for this level. Even for Gymnasts, I'd be loath to not pick this up, it's that good. If not, either get it from somewhere else (Fighter archetype lets you get it at as a level 4 feat) or pick it up later (but not too much later).

Reactive Strike is a gamer changer as a martial, and why early level Fighter is such a menace. Your MAP doesn't apply to this reaction, so you get full accuracy and can do damage outside of your turn, and also have the chance of critting and making your opponent's life so much worse.

Vexing Tumble **(★★★)** - *as an action you Stride up to half your speed, and roll an Acrobatics check, then compare the result to the Reflex DC of each creature's reach you started in or moved into during your movement. A success means your movement doesn't trigger reactions,*

while anyone you critically succeeded against becomes off-guard to you. On a critical failure, your movement immediately ends whenever you entered that creature's reach. This action has the Bravado trait.

A nice way to try and dodge scary reactions that proc on movement. Just be wary of the crit failure effect, though the Bravado trait makes this less likely with the circumstance bonus you get. It can also lead to nice set ups for your Finisher. Also of note is that while the feat doesn't list any effects on a failure, you would still trigger reactions based on movement.

Non-PC2

[Lost Omens - Impossible Lands]
Pirouette (★★) *- a follow up feat to Masquerade of Seasons Stance. As a reaction when an enemy targets you with a Strike, you can gain a +2 circumstance bonus to your AC against the attack. If this misses you, then you can Step immediately. On a hit, you reduce the damage you take by half your level, after applying weaknesses, resistances and immunities.*

I like this feat a lot, but I fear it's outclassed at this level by its competitors.

[Lost Omens - Firebrands]
Stella's Stab and Snag (★★) *- if you are an Expert in Thievery, then for two actions you can Stride up to your speed without provoking reactions based on movement. During this movement you can strike an opponent within reach. If this strike is successful, then you can make a Thievery check to Steal from the target.*

I don't think Stealing is that good in combat, but movement without proccing reactions and being free to Strike at any point during that movement is a nice effect. Rules as written the Steal attempt should fail automatically because the feat itself doesn't make an exception, but that's Firebrands baby. Rules as intended it should obviously but some GMs will go with RAW.

Level 8:

Bleeding Finisher (✪✪✪✪✪) *- you perform a Finisher and any Precise Strike damage done by this finisher also applies as persistent bleed damage.*

Insane feat. You basically apply your Precise Strike damage twice with this Finisher (3d6 at the level you get this, then 4d6 at level 9 right after). **On a crit, this damage doubles too.** So by level 17, a critical hit Bleeding Finisher will do a whooping 12d6 extra damage on top of your weapon critical damage, **and** then do 12d6 persistent bleed damage to the opponent as well.

In addition, it has a decent chance of continually proccing on top of that, as by default it's a DC 15 flat check, which is a 30% chance at the end of each turn to end. Even if they do succeed, you can just reapply Bleeding Finisher again, so long as you have Panache. Oh hey, look

what's easier to get with a Remaster Swash? This feat was arguably overpowered pre-remaster, now you can reliably use it every turn, I shudder for the DMs who have fleshy blood filled foes for their Swashbuckler to face.

This is a mandatory pickup I fear. Get it, I don't care what other feat you were planning on taking. Unless every foe you face is some manner of construct, undead and/or elemental chaos being, this is too good to pass up. Of note, physical resistance does apply to bleed damage, but I find this comes up rarely, and even then, you'd be having issues with that type of opponent anyway, due to your martial chassis.

Honestly, I shouldn't even rate the other feats at this level, as that might lead some people to picking anything but Bleeding Finisher. But you might take one of these feats later or as part of a Swashbuckler archetype at 16 and above, so for completeness sake I'll continue.

Distracting Toss (★★) *- a two action Flourish which does a few things. First, you can Feint against a creature within 30 feet of you, if they become off-guard because of this Feint, that condition applies to your thrown weapons. You may then draw a thrown weapon and make a thrown weapon Strike against that creature, and so long as you didn't critically fail your Feint, catch that weapon if you have an open hand.*

I suppose this is nice for Deception focused thrown builds but I must admit, this feels like a strange feat. Surely you'd want this earlier, and by this level you should have access to a Throwing rune or another item to make thrown weapons more viable. I suppose Feinting for ranged attacks is nice, but it's tough competition at this level. Seek other ways to make enemies off-guard would be my preferred approach.

Dual Finisher (★★★) *- a Dual Wielding finisher, allowing you to make two Finishers, each against a different opponent in reach. If the second Finisher isn't made with an Agile weapon, it takes a -2 to the attack.*

This is really nice, allowing you to basically double your Finisher damage with the only downside being that you need 2 enemies in reach.

Flashy Roll (★) *- upgrade to Flashy Dodge, allowing you to use it before attempting a Reflex save. If an attack misses you when you use Flashy Dodge, or you succeed or better on a Reflex save, you can Stride up to 10 feet as part of the reaction.*

Movement outside of your turn can be a powerful tool, forcing an enemy to spend extra actions to chase you, or moving yourself into a better position. However, for this level of feat I'd definitely expect more than a +2 to Reflex saves (Charmed Life at level 2 does the same thing but also works for Fort and Will saves) and movement on a reaction with a condition. This movement will also proc Reactive Strike, so be wary.

Possibly weird rules interaction, if you move using Flashy Dodge, the reaction gains the move trait. By RAW, this means creatures with a reaction that can disrupt actions with the move trait can cancel out your bonus to AC or Reflex saves entirely I believe, as well as making you take an extra hit. I would avoid this feat entirely if such enemies are common for your group, even if rare otherwise.

Stunning Finisher (★★) *- a Finisher that forces the opponent to make a Fortitude save, with the incapacitation trait. On a critical success, nothing happens, while a success removes its reactions until its next turn, a failure causes them to be stunned 1 and a critical failure is stunned 3.*

If you recall the degrees of success section from before, the incapacitation trait means higher level enemies automatically increase their degree of success by one stage when making saves against effects with this trait. So if you hit an enemy with this finisher, and it is a higher level than you (as your level determines the level of the incapacitation effect in this case), even if it were to roll a failure, which is already unlikely, it will get a success instead.

I want to rate this higher, but the dreaded incapacitation trait makes this a lot less likely to work on higher leveled opponents, and against on level or lower enemies Bleeding Finisher is going to put them out of the fight faster without risking them passing saves.

Vivacious Bravado (★★★) *- for an action, you gain your level + Charisma modifier in temp HP if you gained Panache this turn.*

This amount of temp HP is very nice per turn, but the action costs adds up over a combat if you use it every turn, and if you have to gain Panache each time, you basically have to spend 3 actions per turn, one gaining Panache, one using this feat and one using a Finisher so you lose panache to repeat next turn. It's a strong combo, but it's very action intensive and you won't always be able to do this consistently from turn to turn. It's great if you have some method of becoming Quickened for movement, or have another way of moving into range of opponents.

Non-PC2

[Lost Omens - Legends]
Flamboyant Cruelty (★) *- whenever you make a melee weapon Strike against an opponent two of the following conditions: clumsy, drained, enfeebled, frightened, sickened, or stupefied, you gain a circumstance bonus to your damage roll equal to the number of these conditions the target has. If your Strike hits, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus on Tumble Through checks or Style actions that grant Bravado until the end of your turn.*

So to begin the second part of this is redundant in the remaster. Secondly, I find all of these conditions but Frightened or Clumsy with skill feats incredibly unreliable to inflict on an

opponent. If you have an allied spellcaster it becomes more likely, but is that enough to take this feat? No.

[Lost Omens - Impossible Lands]
Grand Dance (★★★) *- another follow up to Masquerade of Seasons Stance. For two actions you can Stride up to your speed, and during this movement walk on air as if it were solid ground. You can move up and down at 45 degree angles. If you end your movement on a surface that cannot support you, then you fall.*

Possibly great movement option, but the two action cost is high. If your GM loves throwing enemies that fly or have terrain height advantages, this is tempting.

[Lost Omens - Knights of Lastwall]
Knight's Retaliation (★) *- if you are trained in Athletics and an undead creature within reach critically fails an attack against you, you can Disarm, Shove or Trip that creature.*

These are good actions to have on a reaction. But I can't believe I'm going to say this - Swashbuckler already has a built in reaction for if an enemy critically misses you, and you can Disarm as part of that reaction already. You could take this for the odd chance it procs for the Shove or Trip, or grab a different feat and just disarm/stab a skeleton in the eyehole for missing you. Your choice.

Level 10:

Buckler Dance (★★★★★) *- you can enter a stance to maintain the effects of Elegant Buckler instead of having to use an action each turn to raise a shield.*

Fantastic way to boost your AC and keep it boosted for an entire fight. Remember, you can only have one stance at a time, and they end when combat ends or you are knocked unconscious. Otherwise, enjoy having as much AC as shieldless Monk or Champion.

Derring-do (✪✪✪✪✪) *- when you have Panache you roll twice and take the higher result for actions with the Bravado trait.*

This is an insane feat for Styles that have good Bravado actions or great Critical Success effects. Braggart and Wit will love this, Rascal will like it, while Battledancer and Fencer will find it much less useful without other Bravado actions outside of their Style.

Gymnasts take this great feat and utterly break the game's spine with it. It's honestly ridiculous how good this is for Athletic maneuvers. Trips are already great, so making them more reliable is awesome. Grapples with this become a menace, you will succeed more often, and crit successes become more likely, effectively incapacitating an opponent until they escape. The feat Disarming Flair is also great with this, since the Disarm action got a great facelift with the Remaster.

I have sung this feat's praises, but it does have a drawback. You must have and maintain your Panache to gain access to it, making using Finishers a bit more complicated, since they will remove the benefits of this feat on use. If you want to combine Finishers with Derring-do, note that you will really need to consider your actions not just on your turn, but on your next even more than usual to make full use of both.

Reflexive Riposte (★★) *- you gain an additional reaction which can only be used for Opportune Riposte.*

Remember my big rant about how I don't like Opportune Riposte? This feat gives you a second reaction you can only use for Opportune Riposte, giving you more flexibility in using it and other reactions. Sadly I'm still underwhelmed by Riposte in general, but if you do like using it, then consider this feat mandatory.

Stumbling Finisher (★★)*- if you hit with this Finisher you move your target 5 feet back, 10 feet on a critical success.*

This is a nice position tool and damage option, just note the rules on forced movement. I would probably just go with Leading Dance myself if I was looking to reposition enemies without worrying about MAP.

Switcheroo **(★★★★)** *- if you have Panache, an enemy is adjacent to you and a ranged attack targets you, you can attempt to Reposition the adjacent foe to take the attack for you. A critical success on your Reposition makes the foe take the attack, a success does the same but they get lesser cover, a failure means you lose Panache and a critical failure makes you lose Panache and become off-guard to the initial ranged attack.*

This is really nice for Athletics minded Swashbucklers, instead of having to worry about a powerful ranged attack, just turn their allies into convenient body shields. It becomes even better with Derring Do, just note you can only pick one at this level, and failing to reposition an enemy causes you to lose Panache.

Targeting Finisher (★★) *- you can choose to make an enemy enfeebled 2, stupefied 2 or inflict a -10 status penalty to its speeds until the end of your next turn on a hit, with a critical hit applying half the values of these effects for a minute.*

Some nice effects but this feels like a poor man's version of Rogue's debilitations. Still, if you are able to keep reapplying this finisher, this does make one enemy miserable, which can be game changing in a boss fight. The stupefied condition does apply to Will saves, so this can set up either your own Will targeting actions or those of an ally.

Non-PC2

[Lost Omens - Knights of Lastwall]
Corpse-Killer's Defiance (★★) *- if you destroy an undead enemy, you can use a reaction to give your allies that can see you a +1 status bonus to attack and damage against undead enemies for one round, doubled to +2 for two rounds if the destroyed undead was your level or higher.*

In an undead killing campaign this honestly sounds appealing. On its own though? You have enough competition for reactions as is, and features that only proc if you deal the final blow to an enemy are inconsistent to proc. If you want a consistent status bonus to attack or damage, I'd give Marshal archetype a look instead.

[Lost Omens - Firebrands]
Dazzling Display *(✪✪✪✪✪) - you can attempt to Demoralize all foes within 30 feet, with a +1 circumstance bonus if you critically hit an enemy or have reduced one to 0 HP that turn.*

The bonus does nothing for a Braggart, but even without it this effect is honestly ridiculous. You AoE debuff every foe within range, and if you're a Braggart can Demoralize them again after using your Finisher on one of them. Sure, Dazzling Display has a cooldown of a minute per enemy, but honestly who cares? The damage has been done by that point.

This, Derring-Do (which does require an additional class feat) and Terrified Retreat can solo end encounters as lower level enemies are sent fleeing. This is from Firebrands, which charitably can be considered not the most balanced book released, so ask your GM if this feat is allowed. And don't be surprised if they nerf or ban it afterwards.

[Advanced Player's Guide]
Dueling Dance (Swashbuckler) **(★★★★★)** *- Follow up feat to the level 1 Extravagant Parry (which used to be the weaker* Dueling Parry*).*

Strangely not reprinted in PC2, leaving Extravagant Parry in a weird place post remaster in comparison to its Buckler or Dual Wielder sibling feats. If your GM doesn't allow you to take non-PC2 feats, and are going past level 10 with Extravagant Parry, I would highly recommend either switching to a Buckler for Elegant Buckler. Alternatively, you can grab the Duelist Archetype for access to the PC2 version of this feat which is exclusive to Fighters and the Duelist Archetype at level 14, but that is both four levels later and an additional archetype feat investment.

Level 12:

Cheat Death (★★★) *- if damage would reduce you to 0 HP, you can use a reaction to be reduced to 1 HP instead and gain Panache. In exchange, you increase your doomed condition by 1 which lasts for 10 minutes.*

This feature can be a literal life saver. In particular, the wording means you can avoid death effects which PCs often have little recourse against. An enemy Disintegrate or spells with the death trait become a lot less scary with this as an option.

Do note however, the doomed condition means if you are dropped to 0 HP and begin dying, the dying value which kills you is lowered by 1 for each stack of doomed, meaning you die much more quickly. If your maximum dying value is reduced to 0 you die instantly even if not at 0 HP. I would recommend the Diehard general feat if you take Cheat Death for a little extra insurance against this possibility.

Get Used to Disappointment (★★) *- if you are at least an expert in Intimidation and an enemy failed an attack roll or skill check against you on its last turn, as a free action as your turn starts you may attempt to Demoralize them.*

Free action Demoralize is a very nice feature, but this can be a bit inconsistent, it really depends on how often your enemies fail against you.

Mobile Finisher (★★) *- you Stride (or Burrow, Climb, Fly or Swim if you have those movement types) and make a Finisher attack.*

Good action compression, a bit late for my liking though, and I find Swashbuckler tends not to need much movement compression anyway.

The Bigger They Are (★★) (★★★) *for a tiny or small PC - you attempt to Tumble Through a creature at least one size category bigger than you, on a critical success if you are able to move through the creature's space it gains half your level in weakness to your precision damage until your turn ends on a critical success, or to your next attack on a success. On a failure your movement ends and you trigger reactions as if you had moved out of the square you started in, and on a critical failure the same happens but you drop prone as well.*

If you are regularly fighting larger enemies this can be a great flat damage boost and movement option. It has the Bravado trait so even on a failure you gain Panache, and you of course get your +2 circumstance bonus to your check as well. For smaller ancestries, this applies to a lot more enemies, most enemies you face will be medium or bigger, greatly expanding the use cases of this feat.

I do have to admit some of the wording confuses me here, so until I clarify what the intention and meaning of this feat is I will reserve full judgement.

Level 14:

Flamboyant Leap (★★) - *for two actions you make a Leap, High Jump or Long Jump and at any point during this movement you can use any Finisher you have except Mobile Finisher. If your fall distance is no more than your jump height you take no damage and land upright.*

If you have a fly speed and Mobile Finisher this does seem a bit redundant, but otherwise this can be a great way to deal with annoying terrains, enemies and/or fliers. Skill feats such as Cat Fall, Powerful Leap, Quick Jump and Cloud Jump give this feat extra value, as they make leaping & jumping even easier and less risky.

Impossible Riposte (★★) - *you can use Opportune Riposte against foes outside of your reach, and if used on a ranged attack and you hit, your Strike damage is changed to the damage type the triggered attack used.*

You use a bad reaction at range. Neat.

Perfect Finisher (★★★★★) - *you make a Finisher strike and use the higher of two rolls.*

This is basically having a permanent Sure Strike Finisher, and dramatically boosts your accuracy. I would recommend you use this all the time if Bleeding Finisher didn't exist. However if you want increased accuracy (such as if you use actions with the attack trait before your Finishers), are facing a bloodless opponent or want to go crit fishing then this is the Finisher to go with. Exemplary Finisher effects should be noted especially here, as some of them you will really want to activate (Braggart), or are more difficult to proc with your Style actions (Gymnast and Rascal).

Also of note is the level 15 feature Swashbucklers have, Keen Flair. This feature means you increase your degree of success on strikes on a roll of 19, not just 20. By itself this is an increase to 10% over 5%. With an effect like Perfect Finisher or Sure Strike/True Target, your chance of 'critting' becomes 19%, or just under one in five. I like those odds very much. Just note that it merely increases your degree of success however. A strike that would miss merely becomes a success instead of a critical success, and a critical miss becomes a miss instead. You will still need to manage your MAP with this finisher, it just makes it easier to do.

Non-PC2

Twinned Defense (Swashbuckler) (★★★) - *you enter a stance and gain the effects of Twin Parry until exiting that stance.*

As with the other defensive stances, this is a great effect, it just comes online so much later for dual wielders. This was also not reprinted in PC2 so as always ask your GM if you can take this feat.

Level 16:

Deadly Grace (★★★★★) - *your Strikes with agile or finesse weapons gain the deadly d8 trait if they didn't have the deadly trait already. If they did have deadly, you double the number of dice from the deadly trait.*

This feat leads to some utterly disgusting burst damage if you crit. My Swashbuckler critting on finishers with Rapiers led to some hilarious numbers, with an average of around 120 damage with two damage property runes on the rapier. If it was a Bleeding Finisher crit, then add another 12d6 damage on top of that 100 damage plus hit. If you want to smugly rival your Magus party member, pick this up and start rolling dice.

Felicitous Riposte (★★) - *your Opportune Riposte attacks are rolled twice with you taking the higher number.*

My opinion of OR has not changed, so you know what I feel about this feat. Let's move on.

Revitalizing Finisher (★★) - *if this Finisher hits you and all allies within 30 feet gain half your level in temp HP, and on a failure you alone gain this temp HP.*

Not a bad way to boost the party's survivability but it's boring and a bit underwhelming for this level. If it was equal to your level it'd be more tempting, but at this tier of play damage sources are easily in the 40-50 benchmark at minimum, so 8 temp HP is super lackluster compared to the previous finisher options.

Level 18:

Incredible Luck (✪✪✪✪✪) - *upgrade to Charmed Life, you get the 2+ circumstance bonus to your save, AND can roll twice and keep the higher result.*

Jesus christ.

If you want to never be affected by a Reflex save this is the feat for you. If you want to laugh off the BBEG's Dominate, this is the feat for you. If you want Fortitude saves to stop draining your HP, this is the feat for you. Rolling with a +2 was already great. Rolling a +2 with two d20s and you take the better result? Incredible. If you took Charmed Life take this feat. If you didn't take Charmed Life and hit this level, look at your build again.

Lethal Finisher (★★) - *you make a Finisher and force the target to make a Fortitude save if it hits, and their degree of success is one degree worse on a critical hit. The amount of precision*

damage the target takes from this finisher depends on this save, ranging from 6 to 6d6 to 12d6 to 18d6. This Finisher also has the death trait.

The damage numbers on a failure or worse are nice but don't be fooled. You're introducing an element of chance into damage that was already guaranteed and the odds aren't even good. On a success you were already doing 6d6 precision damage, but now the opponent can crit and take 6 instead. Yes, they could fail and take 12d6 or 18d6 on a crit fail, but that isn't likely. And on a crit, sure the degree of success they can obtain is worse, but a normal Finisher would be doing 12d6 anyway, so you only come out ahead on a very rare critical failure with the fort save. Lethal Finisher feels like a badly made copy of Bleeding Finisher, just use that if you want to do big damage, not this.

I will say though, the death trait can be a very convenient way to 'double tap' annoying enemies, such as ones with regeneration that can't be easily turned off. If your GM spams these types of enemies, this becomes more interesting.

Parry and Riposte **(★★★)** *- if you have damaged a creature with a Finisher on your last turn, and are currently benefiting from the parry trait OR Extravagant Parry, you can opportune riposte on failed strikes that creature makes against you, not just critical failures.*

An actually solid riposte feat. If you've made it here, congratulations, take your good feat and enjoy it. Just don't look at Incredible Luck. With Perfect Finisher and the Braggart Style for the frightened combo, or the Wit Exemplary Finisher, I can see Opportune Riposte actually activating often. I think this is way too late, but if I ever get a chance this could be a fun build to play in a one shot or incredibly short high level campaign.

Level 20:

Illimitable Finisher (✪✪✪✪✪) - as long as you are not fatigued you can Step and perform a Finisher, this finisher has the Bravado trait, if you regain Panache from this finisher you can then immediately make another Finisher, ignoring the usual restriction of using attack actions after a finisher.

This might be one of the most insane class feats I have ever read. You Step, use a one action Finisher, and so long as you don't critically fail, you can then immediately regain Panache and make another Finisher. You apply MAP to the second Finisher, but this is so good I don't even care. Every finisher that isn't Lethal Finisher can be considered one step higher in rating if you've taken this feat. If you can think

I will need to confirm if you can use Perfect Finisher here. I initially thought not due to the rules on Fortune effects, but I was told I may be mistaken. I will confirm and edit if you can or not.

Also, the first Finisher has to be a one action Finisher, but the second Finisher merely says it is done as part of the Illimitable Finisher action. I will need to clarify if the one action Finisher rule

applies to both finishers. As a GM I would rule it does for sanity's sake, but as a player gremlin I would love to hear otherwise.

Inexhaustible Countermoves (✪✪✪✪✪) - at the start of each enemy's turn, you gain an additional reaction that can be used for Opportune Riposte or Reactive Strike.

My Swashbuckler took this at level 20 and it didn't disappoint. I swapped my weapon to a whip using a shifting rune and just went utterly apeshit on our enemies, with the reach trait gaining even more mileage. Combined with Deadly Grace my damage output was monstrous, as was my ability to limit spellcasters. I could both punish them for casting in range, and still save a reaction for my buffed Charmed Life if any scary saving throws came my way. Honestly, picking between this and Illimitable is a horrible choice to have to make. I'd pick the latter, but that's due to me already having fun with Inexhaustible Countermoves. You couldn't go wrong with either in all honesty.

Panache Paragon **(★★★★)** *- you are permanently Quickened, granting you an extra action to use Tumble Through or any other action with the Bravado trait.*

Amazing for gaining Panache every turn, or just having an extra action to use when you do have Panache. Styles with great Bravado actions will love this feat. I just love the previous two feats more.

Non-PC2

Vivacious Afterimage **(★★★)** *Source: Fists of the Ruby Phoenix Adventure Path (spoilers for that AP in link) - when you have Panache you can spend an action to stride, and leave an afterimage in a space you stride with, which can flank with allies. Enemies can attempt to roll against your class DC to disbelieve it.*

Cool feat but I wouldn't take it over any of the other level 20 feats available.

7. Archetypes

Archetypes can really expand what you do well on a specific character (such as Wrestler with a Gymnast), or can give you more options (multiclass archetypes are quite nice here). Due to the sheer number of archetypes available, this section will definitely be a work in progress for the foreseeable future, but I will focus on the archetypes I think synergize well with a Swashbuckler first.

Also remember, unless stated otherwise, when you take an archetype dedication you need to take two feats from that archetype before you are able to take another archetype dedication. And if an archetype gives you training in a skill and you already have that skill, you can typically get training in another skill instead.

A note on Free Archetype

This is a common enough variant rule that it feels useful to have a mention in this guide. With Free Archetype, at every even level, you receive an extra class feat that can only be used to take archetype feats (and not archetype skill feats, since that has caused confusion in the past).

It's difficult to recommend archetypes for use with this rule, as it's dependent on the restrictions your GM sets on it, if any. In general, using it to prioritize Swashbuckler class feats over archetype feats is a good way to go, as you can take archetype feats in both, but can't take class feats in both.

Multiclass Archetypes

NOTE: the level 9 human feat, Multitalented, gives you a multiclass dedication feat you can qualify for. You ignore the usual limitation of needing two feats from your current archetype before taking another one. In addition, those with the aiuvarin (half-elf) versatile ancestry can ignore the stat qualifications you would typically need (e.g. if you only had +1 in Wisdom, and needed a +2 for Cleric archetype, aiuvarins can still take Cleric multiclass with Multitalented while others would need to meet the stat requirement). Aiuvarins who take Multitalented can consider all archetypes that can bypass the stat requirement for as one grade better generally.

This is pretty good for an ancestry feat, and frees up delightful possibilities for builds, especially ones without Free Archetype. As with Natural Ambition, keep it in mind if you are playing a human* and are looking at multiclass archetypes.

*or have Adopted Ancestry (Human), or a similar feature that lets you take human feats

Remember:

- **Purple (★★★★★)/(✪✪✪✪✪)** - best in its class, worth it to take at any time, and even at a later level if it has competition and you are able. Can open up great builds, or is an impactful generally useful ability.
  - ✪✪✪✪✪ **-** as above, but is something so good it's arguably or is straight up overpowered.
- **Blue (★★★★)** - not quite as strong as the above but you can't go wrong with picking it either. Keep in mind, you won't be put behind the expected curve of the game by picking it instead of a higher rank option, since 2E is a saner system. The five star options are just that good.
- **Green (★★★)** - decent option, lags behind the two higher ranks for some reason or another but is still a solid pick.
- **Orange (★★)** - either a flavorful option that lacks in mechanics, or a mechanic option without much extra 'oomph' to it. At the tail end of usability here but is still usable, you just have better options.
- **Red (★)** - a straight up bad option, you would be better off with pretty much anything else.

- **Black (☆)** - unusable, or outright harmful to your character to take. Hopefully nothing is in this tier. *Hopefully.*

Alchemist (★):
Requirement: +2 Intelligence

Animist (★★★):
Requirement: +2 Wisdom

You gain one of the Apparitions an Animist can choose, which gives you scaling proficiency up to Master in two lore skills. This Apparition can be changed after one day of retraining. You also get divine spellcasting. Solid but I would look to Charisma casters over Wisdom on Swashbuckler, unless you're a Gymnast or Rascal, who have more freedom on stat increases.

Barbarian (★★):
Requirement: +2 Constitution, +2 Strength

You become trained in Athletics and can **Rage**. On other martials this is a nice damage boost at the expense of your defense and ability to use concentrate actions. On a Swashbuckler it's pretty poor however, Rage damage halves when used on Agile weapons, and the stat requirements are rough for non-Gymnasts. A Gymnast who just wants to grab and hit things might like this though, there are some gnarly grab feats later.

Bard (★★★★):
Requirement: +2 Charisma

You become trained in Occultism and Performance. You can cast occult spells, and also get a Bard's muse which can affect any Bard feats you take as an archetype. This is a great archetype, especially on Performance heavy Swashbucklers, as Bard actually lets this skill be useful. The Occult spell list is also solid, but the real standout are the Bard exclusive composition spells such as Courageous Anthem or Dirge of Doom.

Champion (★★★★★):
Requirement: +2 Charisma, +2 Strength

You must choose a Deity and Cause as a Champion would, and are bound by the anathema of both, as well as the Cause's edicts. You become trained in Religion and your Deity's skill. In addition, you gain Medium armor proficiency equal to your Light Armor proficiency, and if you have Medium armor proficiency already, get Heavy Armor proficiency equal to your Light Armor proficiency instead.

An infamously strong archetype, due to the incredibly good Champion reactions given by the various causes. As well as the armor proficiency, and reactions, you also get access to great focus spells such as Lay on Hands or Shields of the Spirit. There's a lot to love here.

Cleric (★★★):
Requirement: +2 Wisdom

Like Champion, you become trained in Religion and choose a Deity, becoming bound by that Deity's anathema and becoming trained in that Deity's skill. You get divine spellcasting. As with Animist, this is solid but I would look at the Charisma casters first.

Druid (★★★):
Requirement: +2 Wisdom

You choose a Drudic order, becoming bound by their anathema as well as a Druid's anathema. You become trained in Nature as well as the Order's skill, and learn the Wildsong language. You can cast primal spells. Much as Animist and Cleric, Charisma is a more natural choice for spellcasting than Wisdom.

Exemplar (✪✪✪✪✪):
Requirement: +2 Dexterity OR +2 Strength

You gain an ikon and become trained in martial weapons. The latter is meaningless to you, the former is obscenely powerful. If your GM allows this archetype, then look through the list of ikons and pick one. Don't be surprised if they ban it later.

Fighter (★★):
Requirement: +2 Dexterity and +2 Strength

You become trained in martial weapons and your choice of Acrobatics or Athletics. Pretty much worthless. But you can get reactive strike at level 4 with this archetype, as well as other nice Fighter feats. It's just worth deciding if you can afford the initial dead feat.

Gunslinger (★★):
Requirement: +2 Dexterity

The good: guns are neat and you pick a Gunslinger's Way, becoming trained in that Way's skill. The bad: guns are janky as hell when you're not a Gunslinger. The ugly: you don't have any synergy with guns. Seriously what the hell Paizo?

In all seriousness though, I would recommend just grabbing Flying Blade if you're desperate for

a ranged option.

Inventor (★) :
Requirement: +3 Intelligence

A higher base stat requirement and abilities that give you very little you'll be good at. Avoid.

Investigator (★) :
Requirement: +2 Intelligence

You become trained in Society and another skill of your choice. You also gain the Pursue a Lead activity and Clue In reaction. Not bad for a dedication, but sadly Pursue a Lead is a circumstance bonus, and so doesn't stack with the abilities you want to use it on as a Swashbuckler. There are some okay feats, such as Investigator''s Stratagem, but I would recommend other archetypes even still.

Kineticist (★★★):
Requirement: +2 Constitution

You become trained in Nature and can use a weaker Elemental Blast. You pick an element which dictates your blast damage and what archetype feats you can take. For combat abilities this isn't amazing. But if you're looking to grab Kineticist feats for pure utility and ignore their save based actions then you've got some amazing options to poach here.

Magus (★):
Requirement: +2 Dexterity or +2 Strength, and +2 Intelligence

You become trained in Arcana and can cast arcane spells, gaining a spellbook. Spellstrike, even a once per combat one from this archetype, is great. But unfortunately I don't think you really benefit much from it, your Finishers do great damage already, and fitting in Spellstrike with your skill actions will be a tough sell. And if you want spellcasting then just pick a full caster.

Monk (★★★):
Requirement: +2 Dexterity and +2 Strength.

You become trained in Acrobatics or Athletics. Your base fist attack is upgraded to a 1d6 and can make lethal attacks. Monk archetype was nerfed in the remaster, with you now no longer getting Flurry of Blows, you get a version of it with a 1d4 round cooldown. Still, the stances and monk focus spells are pretty solid, so if you really want to be an unarmed Swashbuckler, check this out. Just mind the unarmored requirements before 10. You may also want to check out Martial Artist as well.

Oracle (★★★★):
Requirement: +2 Charisma

Become trained in Religion and the skill associated with your oracle mystery. You can cast Divine spells. Oracle got a major facelift in the Remaster, for better or worse. It does make it much better as a multiclass archetype though, just be careful your Oracle curse isn't too punishing for your playstyle and you should be fine. There's some amazing class feats to pick up here, even on a martial.

Psychic (★★★★):
Requirement: +2 Charisma OR +2 Intelligence

You are trained in Occultism and choose a conscious mind. You gain a focus pool of two focus points, and these focus points can be used to amp your psychic cantrips. You can cast occult spells. Some great options here, The Unbound Step in particular for its Warp Step spell.

Ranger (★★):
Requirement: +2 Dexterity

You become trained in Survival and can use the Hunt Prey action. Ranger has some nice focus spells and support for dual wielding if that's your thing. If not, look elsewhere.

Rogue (★★★★★):
Requirement: +2 Dexterity

You become trained in light armor (useless) and gain the surprise attack class feature (this is not bad on Fencers). You also become Stealth or Thievery, as well as another skill of your choice. You also gain a skill feat. Some nice features, but the real meat and potatoes are the Rogue feats such as Mobility, Twin Feint, Strong Arm for thrown builds, Dread Striker (really good for Braggarts and anyone who uses Demoralize) or the recent Haft Striker Stance to name a few (though Fighter and Ranger also offer this as an fyi). You also can get a limited 1d6 version of sneak attack when you hit an off-guard creature, but hey damage is damage. The skill mastery and uncanny dodge feats should also be looked at as well.

Sorcerer (★★★★):
Requirement: +2 Charisma

You choose a sorcerer bloodline and become trained in that bloodline's skills. You can cast whatever magical tradition that bloodline offers. Another spellcasting archetype, but this time you can choose any spellcasting tradition to use with Charisma. The versatility is key here, as the class feats themselves don't offer you much as a martial, though some bloodline focus spells are nice.

Summoner (★):
Requirement: +2 Charisma

You gain an eidolon like a summoner does. It's weaker than the typical eidolon for somewhat obvious reasons. I'm sure there's some brilliant strategy you can pull off with this, but this just seems like giving the enemy an extra punching bag that shares your HP. Avoid unless you have a better understanding than me, then come back and tell me if this is secretly good.

Thaumaturge (★★★★):
Requirement: +2 Charisma

You pick an implement, and can later take a level 6 archetype feat to get that implement's initiate benefit. You also become trained in your choice of Arcane, Nature, Occultism or Religion. An implement can be a very powerful tool if you're a one handed weapon user. I'd recommend having a look to see if any work with the Swashbuckler you intend to play, amulet or chalice are good for defense, while mirror and weapon are good for offense, and others like lantern or tome provide useful utility. Feats like Scroll Thaumaturgy are also great if you just want to use any and all scrolls.

Witch (★):
Requirement: +2 Intelligence

You choose a patron and gain a familiar, becoming trained in your patron's skill. Like Sorcerers you can choose your magical tradition. That's where the comparisons end though, as this is an Int casting class. Avoid, though this isn't as bad as Wizard, as you do get a familiar and some feats like Witch's Armaments provide a great unarmed attack, which is incredibly useful if your hands are full. Aiuvarins take note.

Wizard (★):
Requirement: +2 Intelligence

You become trained in Arcana. You can cast arcane spells. We all know this song and dance now. Don't take this archetype.

Other Archetypes

Acrobat - do you want auto scaling proficiency in Acrobatics? Take this and never look back (though there are actually some good feats here, such as one that lets you Trip once every minute using Tumble Through at level 10).

Marshal - particularly great for Braggarts or Wit Style, this archetype becomes especially potent if you have other teammates in melee with you. You can gain an aura that boosts attack with a status bonus (Diplomacy focus) or boosts damage (Intimidation focus).

Martial Artist - kind of like a stripped down Monk, but if all you wanted from Monk was to punch people you won't notice much.

Shadowdancer - pretty nice for a Battledancer, though this does require Master in Stealth annoyingly. Still, Greater Darkvision and some shadowy focus spells, one of which scales depending on your Performance skill.

Wrestler - outstanding on a Gymnast, as you gain access to plenty of feats that emphasize and reward Grapples and Trips.

8. Equipment

Weapons

I'll be honest, the standout options for Swashbuckler seem to just be the Rapier for pure damage, a Whip for reach and a Shortsword for versatility and the Agile trait. I used all of these to great effect, as well as a Nunchaku for bludgeoning damage. Still, I shall list out the martial weapons that best suit a Swashbuckler (Finesse weapons only for now, but you can technically use Strength based weapons with the Agile trait), as well as Advanced weapons at a later time. I'll be ignoring Simple weapons as they are outclassed by Martial ones, which Swashbucklers can use just fine.

I have also tried the two handed play style for Swashbuckler. It was okay, but I definitely felt better rewarded for embracing a one handed play style instead, using a Buckler to great effect with my one handed weapon(s) of choice. I could also carry scrolls, potions and other useful items in my buckler hand as well. Still, I will also list good options if you would prefer a two handed Swashbuckler.

One Handed

For one handed weapons your damage die will typically be 1d6 at most. The more traits your weapon has, the more likely it will be a 1d4 instead. This can be a worthy tradeoff, or useless if you have no use of the trait(s) given. Pick a weapon that's useful for your needs, whether it's damage or has traits you can readily make use of.

I myself think the Rapier and Whip are stand out choices, the Rapier has great damage on a crit and the Whip offers the ever useful Reach trait, allowing you to Strike enemies at range.				
Weapon	Damage Die and Type	Category	Traits	Group
Fangwire	1d4 Slashing	Martial	Agile, Backstabber, Deadly d8, Finesse, Grapple, Kobold, Uncommon	Brawling
Fighting Fan	1d4 Slashing	Martial	Agile, Backstabber, Deadly d6, Finesse, Monk, Uncommon	Knife
Kukri	1d6 Slashing	Martial	Agile, Finesse, Trip, Uncommon	Knife
Main-gauche	1d4 Piercing	Martial	Agile, Disarm, Finesse, Parry, Versatile S	Knife
Nunchaku	1d6 Bludgeoning	Martial	Backswing, Disarm, Finesse, Monk, Uncommon	Club
Rapier	1d6 Piercing	Martial	Deadly d8, Disarm, Finesse	Sword
Shortsword	1d6 Piercing	Martial	Agile, Finesse, Versatile S	Sword
Starknife	1d4 Piercing	Martial	Agile, Deadly d6, Finesse, Thrown 20 ft.,	Knife

			Versatile S	
Whip	1d4 Slashing	Martial	Trip, Reach, Finesse, Nonlethal, Disarm	Flail

Two Handed

As with one handed weapons, two handed weapons have a tradeoff between damage and traits. Pick a damage type you want to deal, and look for weapons which deal that damage type and have the traits you're looking for.

Of these I'm a particular fan of the Bladed Scarf and Dancer's Spear, though the Whipstaff also looks interesting.

Weapon	Damage Die	Category	Traits	Group
Bladed Scarf	1d6 Slashing	Martial	Disarm, Finesse, Reach, Sweep, Trip, Uncommon	Flail
Combat Grapnel	1d6 Bludgeoning	Martial	Finesse, Grapple, Tethered, Thrown 20 ft., Uncommon	Flail
Combat Lure	1d6 Bludgeoning	Martial	Finesse, Tethered, Thrown 20 ft., Training, Uncommon	Flail
Dancer's Spear	1d6 Piercing	Martial	Backswing, Finesse, Reach, Sweep, Versatile B	Spear
Dueling Spear	1d8 Piercing	Martial	Disarm, Finesse, Uncommon, Versatile S	Spear

Elven Branched Spear	1d6 Piercing	Martial	Deadly d8, Elf, Finesse, Reach, Uncommon	Spear
Elven Curve Blade	1d8 Slashing	Martial	Elf, Finesse, Forceful, Uncommon	Sword
Rope Dart	1d4 Piercing	Martial	Disarm, Finesse, Sweep, Tethered, Thrown 20 ft., Trip, Uncommon	Dart
Spiked Chain	1d8 Slashing	Martial	Disarm, Finesse, Trip, Uncommon	Flail
Whipstaff	1d6 Bludgeoning	Martial	Agile, Finesse, Monk, Parry, Sweep, Uncommon	Club

Unarmed

Essentially everyone gets a basic Fist attack. However, some ancestries or heritages will give you other natural weapons. Other class or archetype feats can also give you access to unique unarmed attacks or stances which give you powerful unarmed attacks. Their weaknesses are the feat investment required to get them (Martial Artist or Monk archetypes) and their competition with powerful stances Swashbuckler also get.

Weapon	Damage Die and Type	Category	Traits	Group
Fist	1d4 Bludgeoning	Unarmed	Agile, Finesse, Nonlethal, Unarmed	Brawling
Stumbling Stance (you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to Feints, and	1d8 Bludgeoning	Unarmed	Agile, Backstabber, Finesse, Nonlethal,	Brawling

enemies who hit you become off-guard to your next stumbling stance attack)			Unarmed	
Tiger Stance (you can Step 10 feet in this stance)	1d8 Slashing	Unarmed	Agile, Finesse, Nonlethal, Unarmed	Brawling
Wolf Stance (flanking in this stance gives your stance strikes the trip trait)	1d8 Piercing	Unarmed	Agile, Backstabber, Finesse, Nonlethal, Unarmed	Brawling

Armor

Swashbuckler gets Unarmored and Light Armor proficiency by default. This means they are Untrained in Medium or Heavy Armor, requiring other feats to gain proficiency with these types of armor. As such, I will for now focus on Unarmored and Light Armor, and as with the weapons section, fully update this section too in due time.

You don't get Armor Specialization as a Swashbuckler, but if you do somehow get it from something else, I've included the Group of the armor so you can see what effect you get.

Armor	Dexerity Cap	Strength Requirement	AC Bonus	Traits	Group
Unarmored					
Explorer's Clothing/Gi	5	0		Comfort	Cloth
Scroll Robes	5	0		Inscribed	Cloth
Unarmored	5				
Light Armor					
Armored Cloak	3	1	1		
Armored Coat	2	2	2		
Buckle Armor	3	1	2		

Chain Shirt	3	1	2		
Kilted Breastplate	3	1	2		
Leaf Weave	4	0	1		
Leather Armor	4	0	1		
Leather Lamellar	4	0	1		
Mantis Shell	3	1	2		
Padded Armor	3	0	1		Cloth
Quilted Armor	2	1	2		Cloth
Rattan Armor	4	0	1		
Sankeit	3	1	2		
Studded Leather Armor	3	1	2		
Medium Armor					
TBD					
Heavy Armor					
TBD					

Other Items

For everything else you may need in your Swashbuckler career. Just remember, you will typically need a free hand to Interact with items to draw and activate them. The Interact action can trigger reactions so be aware of where you do so in combat. Carrying items in a free hand solves part of this issue, but if you have no free hand then things become a bit more complex.

If you are wielding items in both hands then you could swap one of them to an item you need, then draw the original item when you are done using the swapped item. If you are two handing something then you can shift your grip as a free action to one hand it, and do the same thing, with it costing an action to two hand something again. You can also just drop whatever you are carrying as a free action, but if you want it back you'll need to pick it up again at some point.

Potions & Elixirs

Single action ingestible consumables, which you typically need to hold in one hand, then spend an action to consume to gain the effects. These can be fed to allies, but you need to be in range of them and spend an action as well to do so. Also note, when you have the Sickened condition, you can't willingly ingest anything, so no life saving potions until you get rid of it.

Healing Potion - tried and true classic, this has various tiers, with the more expensive ones healing more. I would always keep a handful of the cheap stuff on me in an emergency, and save the good stuff for when I really need a lot of HP quickly.

Potion of Quickness - gives you the effects of the Haste spell for a minute. For the action cost and price, this is a great effect. If you can use these in combat without too much action juggling, do so.

Potion of Flying - gives you a fly Speed of 40 for a minute. Great for if you need to fly obviously. A more expensive version lasts for an hour, which is great for extended combats in the air, or whatever other situations call for longform flight.

Potion of Resistance - for one hour, this gives you resistance 5 to one of the following types of damage: acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic. Has higher priced versions that give more resistance.

Invisibility Potion - you become invisible for 10 minutes until you perform a hostile action.

Elixir of Life - a great alternative to Healing Potions that work on even creatures with void healing. They also give an item bonus against diseases and poisons for 10 minutes. More expensive ones have more of an effect. As with healing potions, I'd keep some of these on me just in case or if you a party member with void healing.

Bravo's Brew - gives an item bonus to Will saves for an hour, with an increased bonus for Will saves against fear effects. Has higher priced versions with increased bonuses for both effects.

Cat's Eye Elixir - for the next minute you ignore the flat check to target concealed creatures, and reduce the flat check to target hidden creatures from 11 to 5.

Scrolls & Wands

Scrolls can only be activated if you can cast spells matching one of the traditions of the spell inscribed on the scroll, or if you use the **Trick Magic Item** skill feat. The latter is action intensive in combat, but can be a great way to use some longer lasting spells before a fight breaks out.

Wands work much the same way, but while scrolls are a one time use, wands can be used once per day. They can also be overcharged for an extra use, but this comes with the risk of permanently destroying the wand.

Typically, wands are only really worth it if you intend to cast a spell more than 10 times, as wands cost 10 times more than a scroll of the same level of spell. For spells you cast in this way, you will want to look at ones that don't rely on your Spell DC, as this will be lower and won't succeed enough to rely on, though sometimes a hail mary is worth the effort.

Arcane

1st: Sure Strike
2nd: Illusory Creature, Invisibility, Resist Energy, Thermal Remedy,
3rd: Haste, Heatvision, Time Jump,
4th: Dimension Door, Fly, Invisibility (lasts even after you use a hostile action), Mountain Resilience, Resilient Sphere (useful to 'capture' allies in danger or enemies with poor Reflex that fit), Resist Energy, Thermal Remedy (longer duration, another benefit and increased effects for chosen benefits), Unfettered Movement,
5th: Shadow Walk, Wall of Stone,
6th: Disintegrate (sometimes you really need a wall gone *now*), Heatvision, Mountain Resilience, Truesight (for when an enemy is using illusions, requires a check but better than nothing),
7th: Contingency, Haste (targets multiple creatures), Resist Energy, True Target (Sure Strike but for 3 extra people),
8th: Disappearance, Maze (sometimes you really need an enemy gone for a turn), Mountain Resilience,
9th: Foresight
10th: Freeze Time, Gate, Manifestation, Mountain Resilience,

Divine

1st: Harm & Heal (get as many different spell ranks of one of these as you can, both if your party has vitality and void healing), Bless, Protection,
2nd: Resist Energy,
3rd: Heroism, Protection (now an emanation around the target),
4th: Resist Energy,
5th:

6th: Heroism (+2 bonus now)
7th: Resist Energy,
8th:
9th: Heroism (+3 bonus)
10th: Avatar, Gate, Manifestation

Occult

1st: Protection, Soothe (slightly weaker Harm/Heal, but gives a minute long bonus against mental effects), Sure Strike
2nd: Resist Energy,
3rd: Heroism, Time Jump,
4th: Resist Energy,
5th:
6th: Heroism (+2 bonus)
7th: Resist Energy,
8th:
9th: Heroism (+3 bonus)
10th: Freeze Time, Gate, Manifestation,

Primal

1st: Harm & Heal (get as many different spell ranks of one of these as you can, both if your party has vitality and void healing), Protector Tree, Sure Strike
2nd: Resist Energy,
3rd: Heatvision,
4th: Mountain Resilience, Resist Energy,
5th:
6th: Heatvision, Mountain Resilience
7th: Resist Energy,
8th: Mountain Resilience
9th:
10th: Mountain Resilience

Misc.

There are a great number of other items, too many to list but let's try anyway. I'll add to this as I find (and remember honestly) items.

Boots of Bounding - an item bonus to Speed is great, everything else is gravy. You get a +2 item bonus to High and Long Jumps, as well as increased distance on your Leaps. The higher level version of these increases the item bonuses you get.

Charm of Resistance - like the potions of energy resistance, but permanent as long as you're wearing and have invested them. More expensive charms, more resistance.

Retrieval Belt - for when you need some extra storage or want easy access to a particular item.

Spellhearts - slap one on your armor, and one on your weapon for some useful effects and spells.

Tattoos - more good options but for now I'm just going to rec what my Swashbuckler took and call it a say. Soaring Wings and their variants, good.

9. Build Suggestions

Battledancer:

Ancestry:
Background:
Class Feats:
Ancestry Feats:
Skill Feats:

Ancestry:			Heritage:		
Background:					
Class Feats					
Level 1:		Level 12:			
Level 2:		Level 14:			
Level 4:		Level 16:			
Level 6:		Level 18:			
Level 8:		Level 20:			
Level 10:					
Skill Feats					
Level 2:		Level 12:			

Level 4:		Level 14:			
Level 6:		Level 16:			
Level 8:		Level 18:			
Level 10:		Level 20:			
Ancestry Feats	Level 1:	Level 5:	Level 9:	Level 13:	Level 17:

Braggart:

Take Derring-do.

Fencer:

Gymnast:

Rascal:

Wit:

10. Concluding Remarks

I hope this guide was worthwhile to read, and has given you some new understanding of the class. If you have any feedback, or if I have made any errors in this guide, please reach out to me. I'll be submitting this guide on /r/Pathfinder2E, which I will check semi-regularly. I'll also likely upload it to the Paizo forums, but I will be less likely to check there as well.

https://old.reddit.com/r/Pathfinder2e/comments/1jzdl2s/augustusauroras_guide_to_the_remastered/ - reddit thread, if you have any feedback or wish to contact me, feel free to leave a message there or PM me.

11. Changelog

v1.1 : 16/04/2025	• Changed the five star and above rating color from gold to purple for readability. • Minor typos corrected. •

12. Other Resources

As mentioned near the start, these guides were very useful while I was playing:

Quick Guide to the Swashbuckler
Swashbuckler: The Art of Being Extra
VampByDay's Swashbuckler Guide

In addition, these other sources are quite useful:

https://2e.aonprd.com/ - the Archives of Nethys are an invaluable resource for Pathfinder 2nd Edition. Where this guide, or the game itself, would be without it, I don't know nor do I want to think about it.

https://zenithgames.blogspot.com/2019/09/pathfinder-2nd-edition-guide-to-guides.html - great resource for PF2E guides, if you want to do a multiclass archetype, reading some guides for that class is a great way to find useful feats or features to pick up.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PraeywIt8OpFBNnP0zSZM27zaTAlKDmnBgq8N1X59fA/edit - a guide to weapon choice in 2E, great if you want a rundown and are unsure where to start.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vTM1aBK2R2JYUHGie7C93kbODLO6nh79no8QQj4tgGLfXIqNYOaFQAKjXKTCL0RKO8MscnBRPbEPLjZ/pub#h.ga9awjdkaxrn - if you're looking for more information about spells, I've found Gortle's guides to be incredibly helpful.

13. Mythic Rules

This will be a later update after the main guide is complete.