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- BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD
- SF ALPHA 3
- RAYMAN 2
- BLUE STINGER
- MARVEL VS. SF
- TETRIS DX

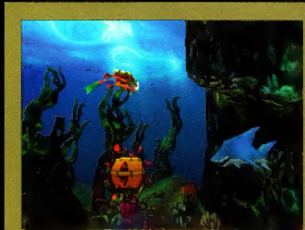


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Happy New Year, And Stuff Like That...

By John Davison • john_davison@zd.com



This month's Slick 50 feature is something that we've been looking forward to putting together for the past few months. So often we find that things happen throughout the year where we remember (while bumbling around at 3 a.m. on deadline usually) that we pretty much saw it coming. Every now and then an announcement is made, or a game takes advantage of a certain feature that makes us all sit up and ponder how influential it's likely to be. After this happened so many times this past year we eventually decided that we really should stop just talking about it, and actually write the damn things down and tell everyone. Thus, the Slick 50 was born...a list of all the things we think people are going to get excited about throughout 1999. Some of them you'll know already. Some of them you'll disagree with. And some of them are no-brainers...but we think all of them will affect our lives. Not in any deep, meaningful or earth-shattering way obviously; but definitely in a "playing Zelda until your girlfriend/wife/boyfriend/husband/dog/cat/budgie leaves you in disgust" kind of way. On top of that, they're pretty much all things that will help continue to push video gaming as an entertainment form that can sit alongside music and movies.

In a spectacular quirk of fate, this month's cover feature is a perfect example of some of these "Slick" concepts in action. Regardless of the success of the mighty

"Let's face it, if Nintendo will let the words "piss," "ass," "bastard" and "m***" (bleeped out obviously) screamed out in a game whilst the player is shooting a turkey in its asshole with a gun that fires toilet plungers, then things must be moving in the right direction."**

South Park franchise, Iguana's creation is significant on a number of levels. Not only is it a good-looking game which will sell bucket-loads regardless of whether it's cap or not...but it's also a big step for gaming.

By adhering to the same broadcast standards as the show, Iguana has produced something that is genuinely funny...because it doesn't hold back. And it's got facts in it. At last, the misconception that video gaming is entirely dictated by young kids is being shattered. Let's face it, if Nintendo will let the words "piss," "ass," "bastard" and "m*****" (bleeped out obviously) screamed out in a game while the player is shooting a turkey in its asshole with a gun that fires toilet plungers, then things must be moving in the right direction.

South Park will open the flood gates for adult gaming content next year. Hopefully, the more progressive developers will continue to recognize that "action games" can follow the same guidelines as "action movies" and we'll see all sorts of good stuff.

1998 has been a spectacular year for games and as we move into the new year we can rest assured that things will continue to push the boundaries both creatively and technologically. Game content is maturing, *Zelda* and *Metal Gear* are out and will change things forever, the Dreamcast is on the way and Sony is on the brink of announcing PlayStation 2. How much more good stuff could we ask for?

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THE 5 STAGES OF MR. DOMINO ADDICTION

As reported by OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE



1. CONFUSION

("What the hell is that...?")

2. CONDESCENSION

("heh heh. What a silly little game...")

3. DENIAL

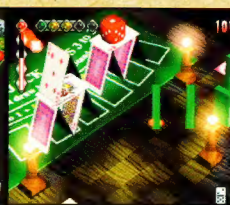
("I'm only playing until the next level.")

4. ADDICTION

("I'm only playing until I get to the next level
—and this time I mean it. DO YOU HEAR
ME MR. DOMINO??? ONLY ONE MORE!!!")

5. ACCEPTANCE

("I love you Mr. Domino.")



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YOU ARE LUKE,
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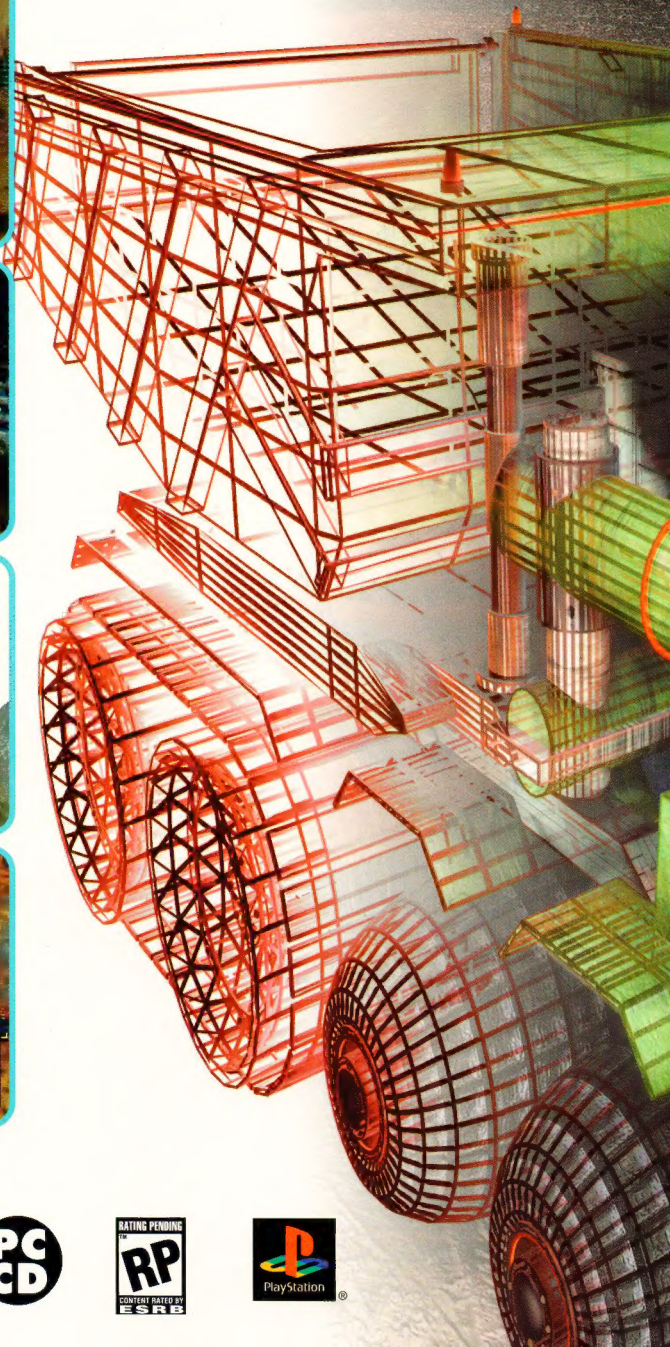
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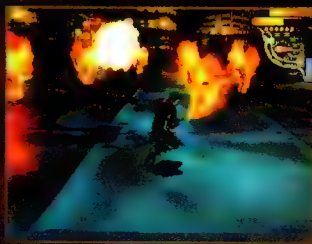
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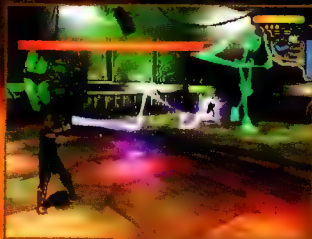
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TO DEFEAT THE FOUR HORSEMEN BEFORE
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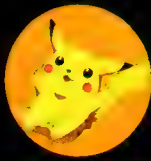
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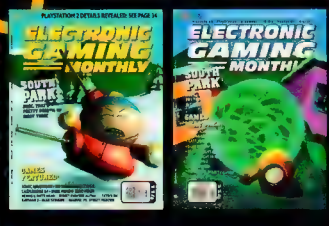
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The *EGM* Slick 50

A photograph of two men and a dog standing in a room. The man on the left is wearing a dark t-shirt and jeans, with his hands on his hips. The man on the right is wearing a white t-shirt and jeans, also with his hands on his hips. A black dog is sitting between them. They are in front of a large, arched window with a grid pattern, through which a bright, warm light is shining. The room has dark wood paneling and a dark rug.

All right, so you already know Crash creators Naughty Dog are slick. But who else made *EGM*'s list of the 50 trendsetting people, gadgets and concepts? Find out in our first annual Slick 50 feature.

THE ONLY GAME BIGGER



OH MY GOD! SOUTH PARK IS UNDER ATTACK!
THERE'S A GIANT COMET HEADING TOWARD
THE TOWN AND IT'S UP TO YOU TO SAVE THEM!
(YEAH, THIS GAME'S GONNA HAVE SOME PRETTY
%&!% -UP %#\$*.) WE GOT ANAL-PROBING
ALIENS, BIG EVIL CLONES, DEMENTED TURKEYS,
AND OF COURSE, TERRANCE AND PHILLIP. IT'S THE
ONLY GAME BIGGER THAN CARTMAN'S BIG FAT A**.

**SOUTH
PARK**

TM

This game is for mature audiences.



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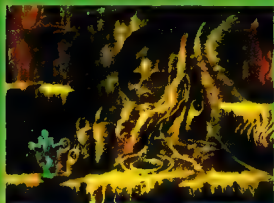
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got milk?



The Madonna, Stale Fish, and 720 McHawk. I've named my skateboard after...

...because milk has more nutrients than sports drinks. That's one of the best things I don't love to be upside down to enjoy.

got milk?



letters

see what we thought of this past year. The **1999 Video Game Buyer's Guide** not only has our reviews for the current systems, but it showcases our annual Good, Bad and Silly Awards. These awards in our **1999 Video Game Buyer's Guide** take a look back at, well, the good, bad and silly things that went on in this past year. See in our **1999 Video Game Buyer's Guide** who we thought was the hottest game babe, which game was the number-one game we love to hate and which game we thought Bob Vila would enjoy playing. Don't miss our **1999...** um...well, you get the idea.
On sale now.



We worked very hard on this here book. Why don't you check it out?

Princess Talk

You guys were total jerks for being mean to Kim (Princess Toadstool in *EGM* Letters, issue #113). You weren't even sympathetic toward her situation. She gives a compliment to Crispin and you guys dog her out. What's up with that? To tell you the truth, you guys are probably those dorks in the arcade.

Benny Fong
fong@uakron.edu

Somebody's being a little too sensitive, isn't he? Hitting a little too close to home for you, Benny?

If you were paying attention, you could see we weren't being mean to Kim. We were insulting the "dorks" who weren't noticing the eye-battings of a somewhat attractive female hardcore gamer.

I was reading *EGM* Letters in issue # 113 and couldn't help but remember the many happy hours I spent playing Super Mario Bros. 2 where the best character was Princess Toadstool. As far as I know, this was the first game to have a prominent, playable female character. I'll admit there was a time or two when Mario or Luigi would come in more handy, but Princess Toadstool could be used through out the game. Also, I think SMB2 was the first politically correct game in that, as stated, the best character was a girl and the last boss was defeated by feeding him vegetables. Anyways, keep up the good work.

FoolOnHi@aol.com

Yeah, SMB 2's floaty Princess was pretty cool (though I preferred using Toad because he/she could pick up bonus coins so quickly for use in the slot machines).

You Knew This Was Coming...

I have spent the past year being sickened by your worship of Metal Gear Solid. After seeing the perfect scores you gave this game, my feeling that you are becoming increasingly out of touch was confirmed. I'm not saying that I dislike the game, but to give it perfect scores is a joke. MGS is an above-average game.

Jeffrey Belmonte
jnl7071@worldnet.att.net

The next Metal Gear game to come has gone to the top of my wish list, surpassing even FF VIII. Way to go Konami!

BOINGO24@aol.com

I would like to say Metal Gear Solid earned all the credit it got from you. It deserved all four "perfect 10's" it got from you.

Barcrstony@aol.com

I guess I could tolerate up to two 10's for MGS, at most. But four?

Greg Kim
Staten Island, NY



You really don't want to know what happened to the last group of readers who disagreed with our reviews.

We stated before that a "10" doesn't imply the game is "perfect." Since no game could ever be perfect in every aspect (if you wanted, you can find flaws in any game), a "10" means the game is just plain excellent...It's the best of its kind, it's one of the best on the system, it's one of the best period. (It's just like how you can land an "A" in school without scoring 100% on every single assignment, paper and test the teacher gave you—you did a fantastic job, but you may not have been perfect.)

Also, please keep in mind that no ONE person or entity decided to give MGS four 10's. Four separate reviewers independently gave the game a 10. We didn't know the game got 10's all around until we gathered everyone's scores for print. It's not as if we sat down and decided, "Wow, this game is so great, we're going to give it four 10's." It just so happened four reviewers individually decided, "Wow, this game is so great, I'M going to give it a 10."

It All Ads Up

I just read the advertisement for Activision's T'ai Fu which reads, "Who you callin' a pussy?" When I read this, I was thinking how



Question of the Moment

What features would you like to see on PlayStation 2/Next?

Backward compatibility with the PlayStation
wet_paint@prodigy.net

More controller ports...why not six or eight?
ChiefAJA@aol.com

Rewritability and more RAM
liquid_snake@angelfire.com

I would like a fan inside the system. I plan on buying only one PlayStation 2!
Raysaber@webtv.net

An option to play imports
Mozippie@aol.com

Sony should incorporate a five-disc changer for all those HUGE Square RPGs.
Mustane@aol.com

The ability to download demos
DreamzCast@aol.com

It has to be gray! Why? Because every successful system has been gray!
dcho27@juno.com





Next Month's Question of the Moment: What is your favorite video game of all time? (one answer please)
Send your short but sweet responses to: EGM@zd.com with the subject heading: FAVE

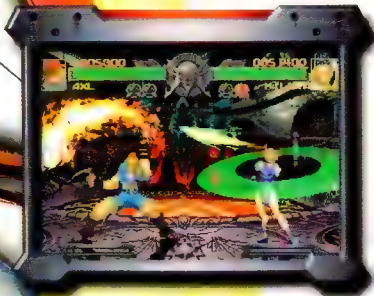
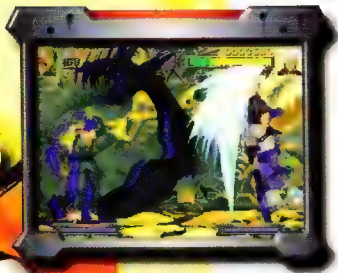
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the f*** can they put that in a magazine that kids read? Then I figured out tiger=cat and cat=pussy cat. People can learn a lot from video game ads.

Robert Preziose
address withheld

I was skimming through your November issue and a certain Eidos ad caught my eye. It was for Tomb Raider 3 and it pictured a very well-endowed image of the infamous Lara Croft. I looked it over for a few seconds as any average straight male would do and noticed that the white string for her pants was coming out of her belly button. Now I'm not exactly an expert on women's fashion, but I'm pretty sure that pants these days don't involve pulling the white string tie through the actual body and having it come out through their navel.

Is this just a graphical error by Eidos or is it something they find unique and sexy?

Sean Buck
maverick15@home.com

In issue #112 on page 30, there is an ad for Tomb Raider 3 with Lara Croft on it. Take a look at her belly button. What is that hanging out of there? Is it a piece of lint? Or a cut umbilical cord? Please don't tell me it's a belly ring. Can you solve this mystery?

Steven Nguyen
NNguyen96@aol.com

We have official confirmation from Eidos that that "thing" is indeed a belly ring. Hey, she's a happening babe...she needs to look the part, right?

I saw an ad in EGM for Electronics Boutique which showed the Zelda 64 box. I noticed the box had four controllers on it. Does this mean Zelda will be a four-player game? God, I hope so.

MATTBEN@prodigy.net



Nope, sorry. That was a mock-up box. Someone must've accidentally took that 1-4 player icon from another N64 game box.



Pre-Oops Oops

I just got my December issue of EGM, and I read it for about two hours straight. Just when I was starting to think that it was the best issue I have ever read, I found myself shocked and almost fainting at the horrible thing that I saw on page 278! I've never seen anything so terrible! You labeled GoldenEye 007 as a PlayStation game! I can't believe it! What did Nintendo ever do to you? (Later I discovered that Bomberman Hero was also marked as a PS game can have that one.)

Marshall Sumrall
marshall@astrofan.net

Umm...can we say...oops? We're trying a few new things (like the Tricks Top 20, Reader Reviews, Review Crew Archives) for the first time. As you can see, we have a few kinks in the system to work out.

OOPS

OK, let's get this over with. Here are some of our boo-boos from issue #113. And we don't want to hear any smack from any of you...

- The main character of Shining Force III Scenario 3 is "Julian," not "Justin" as we reported in the preview.
- We had some technical difficulties with the Review Crew Archive last month. As such, we misplaced a few of the awards (a bunch of them were one game off). Just go by the scores and ignore the awards.
- We know we told you we'd be reviewing The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time this month, but we're not. Before you send us death threats, hear us out. The reviewable Zelda arrived only a couple of days before we closed this issue out. Now if you've been following our coverage of Zelda, you'd know there's no way we can complete and review that game in two days. So instead of rushing out an inaccurate review to be timely, we pushed it back until next issue, giving us plenty of time to review the thing properly. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Letter Art

Where creativity, your favorite video game and a stamp can make you immortal!

WINNER

Carlos Lao
Staten Island, NY

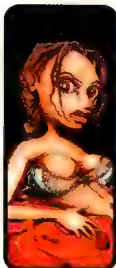
Congratulations, your prize is on the way—an ASCII Specialized Control Pad for the PlayStation. It features rapid-fire controls for all buttons and slow motion for those intense moments.



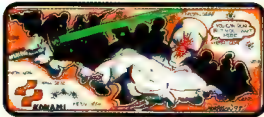
Close, but no controller



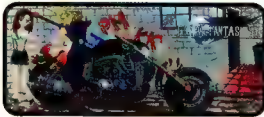
Andy Madolora
Wahiawa, HI



Andrew Creter
Cleveland, OH



Joseph Morrison—Pooler, GA



Phillip Martin—Broomfield, CO

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10 EGM Inside References You Don't Understand

No.	Word or Saying	Abridged Meaning
1	"Don't yank my crank!"	Former President Herbert Hoover's campaign slogan... well, the slogan we made up for him anyway.
2	"SWANK!"	Used in the same way one may use the word SWEET when referring to something that makes one happy.
3	"SWEET!"	Used in the same way one may use the word SWANK when referring to something that makes one happy.
4	"What the?!"	Using arm motions and a goofy face, News Editor Chris Johnston coined this phrase nearly two years ago at E3.
5	VBM	Visual Banjo (Kazooie) Music. This is the scientific term for what happens when one looks at a picture of something VERY happy (see opposite side for an example of VBM).
6	"Shoot me in the poophole!"	Used when one is very surprised about someone or something (e.g.- "...Well shoot me in the poophole!")
7	"Shut your pie-hole!"	Said in disgust when you want someone to stop what he/she is saying. Cake can be interchanged with pie.
8	"Why?" (said in a whiny, annoying manner)	Used as an incredibly annoying response to a simple request when no further discussion is really necessary.
9	"Hey gay..."	It's kind of like saying, "Hey happy..." Think of it as a standard greeting when talking to a friend or a neighbor.
10	"S'nice..." (pronounced as one word)	As in "That's nice." Usually used in a very enthusiastic manner when someone or something pleases you.

The Jeff Goldblum Macho Walk Club

A Shawn Smith original

A PHAT EGM
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What is the Jeff Goldblum Macho Walk Club, you ask? This question isn't easily answered. You have to not only see the walk, you have to experience it—feel it inside. It's more like a state of being rather than an actual walk. And it is totally heterosexual by the way—both men and women are welcome to join. Watch Independence Day, Powder and even Lost World to see the walk first hand. Then try hard to emulate it...but also try to feel it. Simply cut out the card to the right, write in a member number in the space provided (e.g.- 001017, 000021, etc.) and start spreading the word. Soon our club will be millions strong. Thanks and keep macho walkin'

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More gaming sites for ya'll to check out. Note: These sites are not affiliated with EGM in any way. We are merely listing these sites for your viewing pleasure. Enjoy them for what they are. Word? Word

- shell.ipoline.com/~elmert/videogames/
- www.gamearchive.com
- members.xoom.com/ffpalace/ffpalace.html
- fly.to/nintendoforever/
- members.aol.com/mps287/NDL.html
- www.rarenet.com
- paul.tierranet.com/kc6794/flashback/panic.html
- members.xoom.com/CyborgFly/Ghost.html
- www.angelfire.com/hi/x1998
- www.lunar-net.com
- www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Chasm/6639/
- cheats.questgate.net/codes.htm (for PC users)
- www.csolve.net/~rock_on/index.html

WEB SITES

AS COOL AS ICE

members.tripod.com/~HatPerson/weirdweb.html

Thank you to all who continue to send us sites. Here they are: the good, the bad and the frickin' weird. A very special thanks goes out to KIDVID237@aol.com for the URL above. Alright, now the list...

- www.horror.net
- www.pimpdaddy.com
- www.pl8s4u.com/TP.htm
- www.toshistation.com
- home.earthlink.net/~guppyman/
- www.ai.mit.edu/people/paulfitz/plank/index.html
- www.zoodoo.com/poopincan.htm
- www.biolet.com/Auto.htm
- www.clickhealth.com
- www.rocketusa.com
- www.spork.org
- www.geocities.com/SouthBeach/Docks/8531/
- members.xoom.com/elohir/rcheese.htm
- www.ktis.net/~bkmichel
- www.dude.com
- www.pangea.ca/~ryan_n/

*We cannot be held responsible for any of the material presented on the sites listed above. Parents or guardians may want to verify the content of the sites before allowing their children to venture forth. 'Ya' dig? Dig

3" x 5"

Lee Saito

1998



Happiness is...
Lee Saito

Lee Saito is a freelancer for EGM (and former employee) and recently landed a job at Idol Minds.

HOT & NOT

@ EGM





Once again our EGM Hot & Not list is here to get f-f-funky on the fresh as cheddar cheese tip. With that said, we present cool stuff we've been into and other stuff we would like to see destroyed...or something bad like that. Enjoy the list and sleep easier knowing it's here

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maxim in general • Richard Roundtree as the voice of Akujii • Yamaha DJX keyboard • The Slick 50 • The Dialectizer • Extreme Green Nintendo stuff • Hi-res anything • LEGO MindStorm • Original photography • Having a life away from work • Flag Football • Stop-motion Animation Christmas TV specials • Sega's Japanese Dreamcast commercials • 64 MB RAM free with new iMac • Dan Hsu's new home theater • Barricading disgruntled employees in their offices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90-hour work weeks • O.D.T. • Cracker Jack prizes • Speeding tickets • Not being able to find a copy of Pokémon ANYWHERE • Not being able to get colored Dual Shocks yet • People who disrespect MGS • Pan and Scan • DIVX • Low-grade beef • Live-action Christmas TV specials • Catching Dan Peluso's monthly deadline cold • Stinky and smelly pillows • Almost all prime-time network television shows • Male vocal groups |
|--|--|



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ASK sushi-



EGM **egm** letters

Who's the most hardcore gamer of them all? Why it's our very own Sushi-X, *Electronic Gaming Monthly's* top video game expert. If you have a game-specific question for our mysterious ninja freak, er, friend, write him! He'll pick out a few and answer them as only he knows how. Send your questions to:

Sushi-X
P.O. Box 3338
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3338
e-mail: sushi_x@zd.com

Sushi Sightings

Dear Sushi,

I just wanted to tell you that I was watching WCW Nitro on television and saw a sign that said, "SUSHI-X." It was in Pensacola, Fla. Was that you or a loyal fan?

Gerald Dalebout
Priest River, ID

Is Sushi-X advertising? I was watching WWF Raw Monday night, and I distinctly saw a sign that said, "Sushi-X Rules!" What's up with this? Sending people out to advertise your image...shame on you...

Mike Ekert
Spring Park, MN

I was watching my normal diet of glorified television violence (WWF Raw), when I noticed a disturbance in the force. Luckily I was taping it and after careful review, found the source. It seems in the crowd, there was some guy with a sign that read "Sushi-X." Hmm...I was wondering if he was the mysterious ninja enjoying some bloodshed, or was it just one of Sushi's minions? I've enclosed the video clip for your review.

MyKoSiS@hotmail.com



Wow! I had no idea I had such a following in the wonderful world of wrestling. Gary Mollohan, one of our freelancers, told me he even saw someone holding a Sushi-X sign...at an ECW event! Yes, I said ECW.

Thanks for the support everybody! I won't forget it. That is, unless you're holding up these signs for some other Sushi-X I don't know about. (By the way, I wasn't any of those people. If I did go out in public, I wouldn't be advertising my identity!)

I am merely an ignorant youth, unlearned in the ways of programming or marketing, and I was wondering if it would ever be possible to bring back Final Fantasy III for a different console. I say for a different console for many reasons. Namely, that many Super Nintendo machines are deteriorating so putting it on a new console would make the game available for those people who were foolish enough not to buy it when they first had the chance.

For a game that came out so many years ago, it is priced rather high (no doubt because of the shortage of copies and its high demand). If there seems to be such a demand for it, why not bring it back in the form of an exact translation?

WungusNoir@aol.com

It is definitely possible, from a technology standpoint. In fact, Square rereleased Final Fantasy IV (our American FFII) and V for the PlayStation in Japan, but they haven't made any announcements about redoing a Final Fantasy VI, which is the American FFIII that you're talking about. Square EA has been discussing the possibilities of bringing out older Final Fantasy games for the PlayStation here (including VI, which is again, our III), but right now, they're spending all of their energies on Final Fantasy VIII.

Is it just me or would everything be a little less confusing if they would've named the American Final Fantasy games the same as the Japanese ones, like they started doing with Final Fantasy VII?

What ever happened to the sequel to Return Fire for the PlayStation? It disappeared from your Coming Soon list a few months ago, and I haven't seen any more news about it.

Aron Brady
Point Edward, Ontario

Originally, MGM Interactive was supposed to publish the PC and PlayStation versions of Return Fire 2. MGM then went through some troubled times, so Ripcord picked up the rights to the PC game (they aren't interested in the console title). The PlayStation game, which is practically finished since it uses the same game engine as the PC version (so it'll take no time to port over), is currently on hold until Prolific, the developers, can find another publisher.

On a side note, Prolific told me the engine runs fine on the Nintendo 64, but an N64 Return Fire 2 would have to wait for some publisher to pick up as well.

In your July 1996 issue (# 84), you previewed a game exclusively for the PlayStation that was supposed to be the most revolutionary fighting game in console history. This game is (or was) otherwise known as Kumite: The Fighter's Edge.

So let me ask you guys something: Whatever happened to it? For two years we've been waiting for this revolutionary fighter. You specifically stated at the end of the article that you would keep us updated on this title. Unfortunately you haven't. I think you owe me, and all of us loyal and faithful EGM fans an explanation and some information on where this title has been.

fluid638@aol.com

Kumite's gone...forever. Here's what one of my friends at Konami, who wished to remain anonymous, told me:

"There will never be a Kumite. That product as your readers know it will never see the light of day. You may see some of its ideas surface in other products, though."

Boy, I hope that isn't Deadly Arts he's talking about. Anyway, Kumite's development team was dissolved, and there are other issues that "people really don't need to know about" (according to my friend). That's all I know. Sorry I can't give you any more details about the game's demise, but as you can see, Konami's pretty secretive, and sensitive, about this whole Kumite thing.

In your August issue, you listed Capcom Generations: 1942 to come out in September, but in the following issues, it was not listed at all. What's the deal here? Was the game cancelled by Capcom?

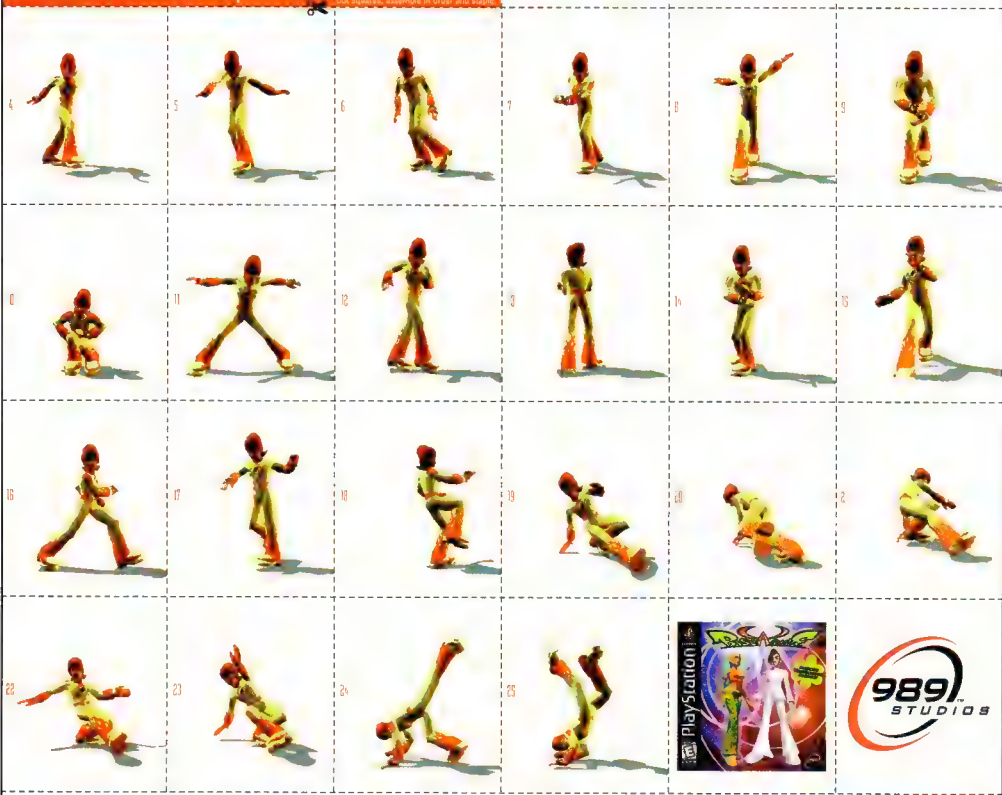
Name and address withheld

Unfortunately (very unfortunately), yes. In Japan, Capcom Generations: 1942 didn't sell as well as Capcom anticipated. So when it came time for Capcom to bring it out here, Sony Computer Entertainment America didn't approve it (naturally, they are only interested in games that make money). The only way for you to get the excellent compilation now is to import it.



Flip book

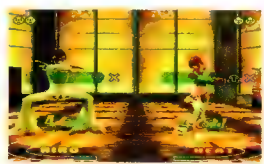
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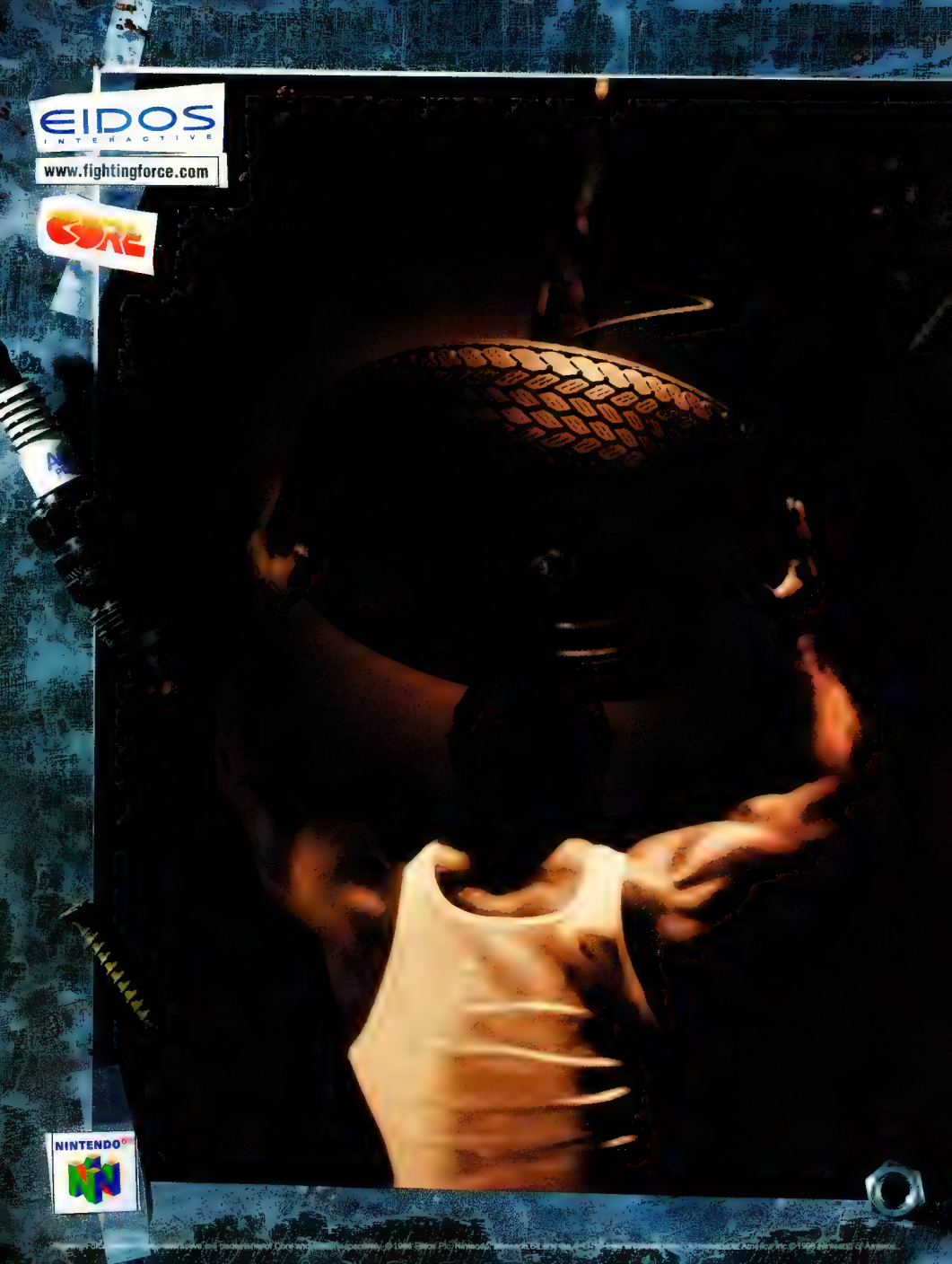


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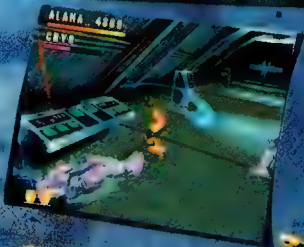
- Ben "Smasher" Jackson



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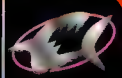
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Press Start

The hottest gaming news on the planet

Dreamin' 'Til Fall

Sega gives the press an early glimpse of its Dreamcast plans in the U.S.

Sega held a Gamer's Day on Nov. 5 in San Francisco to give the press an extended look at the Dreamcast prior to the Japanese launch and some early details on its U.S. plans. Sega is continuing its efforts with retailers and developers to gain support, changing the company's overall image. Here's a wrap-up of what we learned:

The system itself will come with a 33.6Kbps modem in Japan, but a determination hasn't been made yet for the U.S. market. We strongly suggested to Sega that it'd be a very smart idea to include it. Its multi-out on the back will support composite, S-Video and RGB outs and can be adaptable to work with display formats of the future including HDTV. GD-ROM, as a proprietary format, gives developers a lot more room to produce bigger, better games without having to spend more money on more CDs. One GD-ROM disc holds 1.2GB of data, double what a normal CD holds.

Online gaming is serious business for Sega—it wants it to be an almost-transparent component of the Dreamcast. To that end, it is working with Turbine Entertainment to create an untitled online sci-fi RPG that takes place on an alien world that allows more than 1,000 people to play at the same time in the same world. You can explore hundreds of miles of terrain. Paul Stathacopoulos gave us an example of a part of the game: Say you see a mountain in the distance. Not only can you go up to that mountain and climb it (watching it get closer), but you can go over it and take a look at other areas from the top—each of which you can travel to. It also has a character-creation tool, which lets you come up with different characters, each with its own form, function and abilities. You can also join parties of travelers and go around the world in a group. This title will be available around the time of the U.S. launch.

One of the more interesting aspects of the Gamer's Day was when Electronic Arts was brought up. Sega admitted that it is in talks with EA, and that EA has development kits.

Load time on the Dreamcast is about the same as the PlayStation. There is loading time, but it's fairly transparent and quick. Sega also confirmed and showed us the Dreamcast's Main Menu in English (it's selectable on the Japanese model) but wouldn't confirm whether or not the interface would be changed for the U.S. system.

Another interesting tidbit of news is that Sega is working on resurrecting one (and only one, at this time) title/character from the Genesis days for the Dreamcast. The company wouldn't say who or what it is, instead saying that it would be interesting to see old characters in new situations/geneses.



Dreamcast Tidbits

Atlus Announces First Title

Kouji Okada and Kazuma Kaneko of Atlus confirmed that the company is working on a Dreamcast title, but announced very little about the game itself, saying only that it would be very different from the Megami Tensei series. They said the game would not be a 3D-upgraded dungeon RPG. They assured gamers that Atlus would reveal more information around the launch of the Dreamcast in Japan.



Bizarre Coughs Up Furballs

Bizarre Creations has added a second Dreamcast title to its lineup. Furballs (originally known as Drive-By) has been in development for about seven months and is a cartoony action-shooter starring six original characters, each armed to the teeth with its own weaponry and skills. The gameplay will be a mix of third-person shooting and puzzle solving. The game has not yet been signed with a publisher, and will not be published by Sega like Bizarre's other title, Metropolis.

MDK Sequel to DC

Canadian developer BioWare is working on a sequel to Shiny Entertainment's MDK for the Dreamcast. MDK2 will be published by Interplay in the fourth quarter of 1999. The sequel will use BioWare's Omen Engine, and it says that the sequel will surpass the original in just about every way. BioWare's previous efforts include Shattered Steel and Baldur's Gate, both published by Interplay on the PC.

Panther on the Loose

Panther Software will release two games for the Dreamcast. Space Griffon is an updated version of the Sega Saturn first-person shooter/RPG Space Griffon VF-9. The other is a 3D action-adventure called Little Dream. A Pinocchio-like doll, Marionette Charlie, serves as the title's protagonist. Both games are slated roughly for next spring.



Sega Plans Dreamcast Rear

In addition to the modem, the back of the Dreamcast includes several outlets for future expansion. The system's current serial port has undefined uses, but could easily be hooked to a number of peripherals like digital cameras, printers, etc. A multi-out on the back can be adapted to handle TVs of the future.



Sony to Sega—Hit Me!

With the PlayStation 2, Sony may have what it needs to stop Sega

Amidst all the speculation about PlayStation 2 comes a ray of hope. In early November, Japan's *Nikkei Electronics Wire* reported that Sony and Toshiba are working together to develop a chipset for Sony's next console, the PlayStation 2. According to the report, SCEI will officially announce the next PlayStation console in Japan in November 1998, with a predicted end of '99 release. The chipset will be unveiled at the IEEE International Solid-State Circuits Conference next February (a chip maker expo).

Composed of two chips, the chipset is made up of a Digital Signal Processor (DSP) and a new RISC-based (Reduced Instruction Set Computer) processor. These two chips are believed to be for the PS2, although at this time there has been no official announcement regarding Sony's next machine.

The 10,500,000 transistor, 250 MHz DSP will combine 14 accumulators for floating point calculations that will help in the math processing of rich 3D graphics. Another rumor has suggested that Sony's PS2 will use a more advanced form of 3D graphics called NURBS (or Non-Uniform Rational B-Spline), thus evolving the look of computer graphics

to *Toy Story*-esque proportions.

NURBS is a technique that allows developers to specify 3D surfaces on objects in an environment. For instance, when a player is shooting at a wall, a programmer can make that surface take damage as it would in real life, creating new vertices for the polygons on the fly. This technique can create a very lifelike appearance. It doesn't mean that polygons are going away, it means they'll soon look more realistic than ever and be able to generate even better game environments.

Additionally, the DSP will also contain a hardware MPEG-2 decoder (used to decode DVD movies). If this report is true, gamers may be playing DVDs on a console in addition to playing games. Also running at 250MHz, the RISC microprocessor, using MIPS architecture, will be two-way super scaler, with more than 100 new multimedia extensions. Internally, the RISC chip will combine an 8K data cache, a 16K command cache, and 16K of internal RAM.

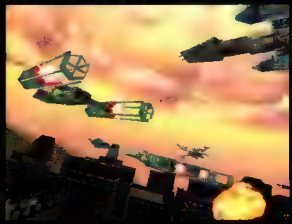
In comparison, the 64-Bit RISC-based SH-4 that powers the Sega Dreamcast, runs at 200 MHz. No word yet on what bit depth the new Sony/Toshiba chip will run at.

May The Force Be With Nintendo

Next year, *Star Wars* is going to be back in a big way. Among the anticipation for Episode I, Nintendo announced that it's secured a limited five-year worldwide exclusive agreement with LucasArts that will result in three new *Star Wars* titles, two of which are based on Episode I. The games, which Nintendo will distribute, will debut on the Nintendo 64, and be brought to the Game Boy Color as well. The first game for release under the agreement is *Rogue Squadron*.

The two games based on Episode I will feature a new cast of characters and settings, and will be developed and published by LucasArts, but the Game Boy Color titles will be developed by Nintendo. Nintendo

will hold exclusive rights to the titles for five years following their release.





Developer Profile

Pictured (left to right): Chad, Dave (with beverages); standing—Mark, Ken, Jason, Mick, Aaron, Joel and Noel; on floor, Silvio, Jason, Chris, Christer, Johnny, Sandy and Mike, three dogs are Tekla, Logan, and Maddie.

Neversoft Entertainment

Location: Los Angeles
Web Site: www.neversoft.com

Gameography: Apocalypse (for Activision 1998), MDK (PS version for Playmates/Interplay 1997), Skeleton Warriors (for Playmates 1996)

Next project(s): Watch our web site, we have a couple of things going for the PlayStation for Activision next year.

of employees: 17

The hardest part about finishing an incomplete project from another team is:

Apocalypse was really a perfect fit for us. We had solid PlayStation technology, and they had a good concept for a game (and Bruce Willis). We looked at what they had done and it was easy to see what they wanted. We took the ball and ran like hell. Things really came together, so it doesn't seem like it was that difficult.

The most difficult aspect about putting real Hollywood actors into a video game is:

When we put real actors in the game they got all testy and started talking crap about contractual obligations, union wages and the like, so we took them out and replaced them with real-time models that we did in 3D Studio. The models do exactly what you tell them to do.

A couple of features that we want the most in Sony/Sega/Nintendo's next system are: a bottle opener, Internet gaming, mesh technologies and backward compatibility.

During breaks from late-night programming sessions, we: watch poorly dubbed martial arts movies on laser disc, or "liberate" promo items from the local movie theaters.

Our favorite game to play at the office (not by us) is: practice oiling on the heads of the accountants below us, or watch people freak out when we target laser pointers at their heads from our roof.

Story behind our name: Pun Intended
Favorite snack foods: beer, burritos and bran muffins (from the gas station).

Music that inspires us: Spice Girls, Cradle of Filth, Ted Nugent, and everyone's favorite... "Ka Ching."

Motto: There is no such thing as excess, or "Kamikazes Anyone?"

EGM Grants a Special Wish

Last issue, we had a special Guest Reviewer, Jay Silvey. He is a 15-year-old from Golden, CO., who has spent years in and out of hospitals due to kidney failure. Earlier this year, the Make A Wish Foundation granted him one wish. At first he declined, feeling others in more critical conditions are more deserving. But when the Foundation insisted that he take it, he asked to visit the offices of *EGM* (hey, we would've asked for a million dollars or to fly in the Space Shuttle, but to each his own).

Jay hung out with the Review Crew for a couple of days. During that time, we had him

review *Wild 9* as the Guest Reviewer. Besides that, we put his gaming skills to the test as we spent hours and hours playing *GoldenEye 007*, *Blitz 99* and *Tekken 3*. How did he do? Well, let's just say he handed Shoe his hat in *Tekken 3*—Shoe's been crying, "But I haven't played that game in months!" around the offices.

"I had a great time," Jay said of his visit. "It's exactly like how I imagined it."

Currently, Jay is doing well, thanks to a kidney donated by his father. If this kidney cooperates, Jay will live a long and healthy life. Everyone here at *EGM* wishes him the best!

Nobody Understands Our New Technology

There's very little news coming out of VM Labs, with the exception of this tidbit. The company has officially changed the name of the platform from Project X to NUON, a name which VM Labs hopes will become synonymous with the future of digital entertainment. To christen the name announcement, VM Labs also opened a Web site at www.nuon-tech.com to promote the technology. Lexicon, a worldwide branding firm, developed the name NUON and The Beeline Group (responsible for the Nike logo) created the logo.

In case you're unfamiliar with Project X—or NUON, as it's now called—it's a

technology that will be built into DVD players, digital satellite receivers and digital set-top boxes to provide a wealth of interactive entertainment including movies and video games. NUON-compatible boxes will be manufactured by consumer electronics companies such as RCA and Thomson Electronics.



250,000

Number of gold cart copies of *Zelda 64* prepurchased before retailers were told to stop taking them.

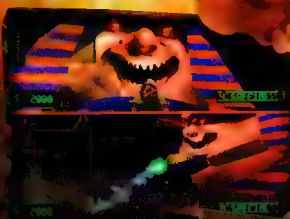
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January 1999

Coming Soon

Compiled by: John Stockhausen

-  PlayStation
-  Nintendo 64
-  Game Boy
-  Saturn

December

- Carrot Crazy - Infogrames
- Hexic: Ubi Soft
- NBA Jam 99 - Activision
- Power Quest - Sunsoft
- Quest for Camelot - Nintendo
- Tango Pocket - Sunsoft
- Trouble - Infogrames
- Zelda: Link's Awakening - Nintendo
- Bust A Move 3 - Activision
- FIFA 99 - EA
- Golden Nugget - Westwood Studios
- Nightmare Creatures - Activision
- SCARS - Ubi Soft
- South Park - Activision
- Star Wars: Rogue Squadron - LucasArts
- Virtual Pool 64 - Crave Entertainment
- Axup: the Heartless - Edos

- Action
- Strategy
- Sports
- Fighting
- Action
- Puzzle
- Action
- RPG
- Puzzle
- Sports
- Simulation
- Action
- Racing
- Action
- Action
- Simulation
- Action



- Animaniacs Ten Pin Alley - ASC Games
- Bust A Move 3 - Activision
- Invasion From Beyond - GT Interactive
- Kenshi - Sacred East - Konami
- Neo-Tanks - Military Madness - Jaeger
- Tai Fu - Activision
- Upswing X - 3DO
- Magic Knight Rayearth - Working Designs

- Simulation
- Action
- Action
- Fighting
- Strategy
- Fighting
- Action
- RPG

- Charlie Blast's Challenge - Kemco
- Fighting Force 64 - Edos
- Magical Tetris Challenge - Capcom
- Penny Racers - THQ
- Quake 2 - Activision
- Roadster 99 - Titus
- Starshot - Infogrames
- Tonic Trouble - Ubi Soft
- Army Men 3D - 3DO
- Big Air Snowboarding - Accolade
- Clock Tower II: The Struggle Within - Ascii
- Contender - Sony Computer Entertainment
- Dead In The Water - ASCII Games
- Destrega - Koe
- Eliminator - Prognosis
- Gods of Deceit - Prognosis
- Irritating Stick - Jaeger
- Lunar: Silver Star Story Complete - Working Designs
- Marvel vs. Street Fighter - Capcom
- Monkey Hero - Take 2

- Puzzle
- Action
- Puzzle
- Racing
- Action
- Racing
- Action
- Action
- Action
- Sports
- Adventure
- Sports
- Action
- Fighting
- Action
- Strategy
- Puzzle
- RPG
- Fighting
- Adventure



January



- Castlevania - Konami

- Adventure



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PLAYSTATION

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Eidos Crystal Dynamics	1 Action	75	December 1998
Web Address: www.crystallid.com			

Akuji the Heartless

Do You Do
Voodoo?
No, I Don't Do
Voodoo. But
I Do Do Judo

Akuji the Heartless, as you're no doubt aware, is being developed by Crystal Dynamics—the very same chaps who brought us *Gex* in his varied guises. *Gex*=3D action game, *Akuji*=3D action game... *Akuji*=*Gex* with different graphics? Well, um, no (thank God)—but it does use the same graphics engine.

Fortunately the team at Crystal has completely overhauled the engine from *Gex*: Enter the Gecko so much so that you'd be pretty hard-pushed to tell. It's not quite the complete hot-rod job that the forthcoming *Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver* is, but it is noticeably improved. *Akuji*'s levels are filled with atmospheric lighting, moody effects, dark and foreboding crevices, and spooky bits certainly not the kind of ambience that damn wise-ass gecko ever managed to generate. *Akuji*'s characters and environments are also far more solid-looking with some detailed textures creeping up throughout. Underneath it all, it's still a run-around, jum-on-things and (in this case) hack-them-into-tiny-little-pieces-before-stomping-on them job, but it does have a style of its own.

What sets *Akuji* apart from the deluge of similarly styled games set to hit the shelves this November is the subject matter. Something that a lot of games due for release this winter will suffer from is simple overkill. There are so many character-based 3D games kicking around that it's reached the point where as soon as a game is released, it's forgotten about. To try to ensure that doesn't happen here, Crysta has eschewed the usual cute, fluffy bunny approach to 3D action titles and has gone for a somewhat more, shall we say, "aggressive" tone.

Take the story for example. *Akuji* is about to get married to a girl from another tribe—their union will ensure a lasting peace in the land of Mamora. For an unexplained reason, *Akuji*'s brother doesn't like the sound of this so he sets about killing everyone at the wedding in the messiest way possible (the intro shows the



The *Gex* engine has been changed to accommodate the darker, more malevolent look to the game.

aftermath of the massacre with blood and goo everywhere) before ripping *Akuji*'s heart out in a voodoo ceremony (the "heartless"—geddit?) Nasty huh? *Akuji* is then banished to hell—which looks uncannily like a 32-Bit 3D action game—where he must hook up with the souls of his ancestors, and I dunno, chug some beer with them or something. Oh no, he's got to use their power to break the barriers between hell and Mamora.

The gameplay itself is pretty much what you'd expect: 3D environments, big spooky monsters, power-ups, simple "puzzles" (pull this lever, hit that switch) and lots of voodoo-inspired violence and magic. It may not score many points for originality, but at least it carries it off with a certain amount of style. ●

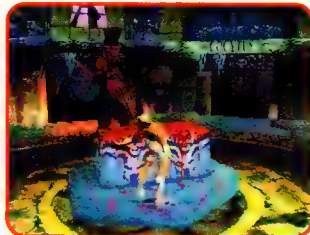
Factoid

Practitioners of voodoo believe that nothing in the world truly has a life of its own and that the universe is all one entity in which all things are connected. The term "voodoo" is derived from the French "vous deux," which translated means "you two," or, as often interpreted "you too."


My 2 Cents

I don't know about you, but I'm getting a bit sick of these runny-jumpy-hitty 3D "action" games. I think that most developers have pretty much hit the ceiling on what is possible to do with the PlayStation as far as technology goes. From now on, it's the content and the ideas that are going to make even more of a difference. While *Akuji* is hardly innovative in terms of gameplay, at least it makes a bold step with its content and tackles some darker and more "adult" themes than your usual *Crash*/*Gex*/*Tomb Raider* wanna-be.

—John Davison



A-a-a-a-choo! *Akuji* learns that sneezing with a nosebleed can get a bit messy.



After being
murdered
on your
wedding day...

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Final Fantasy The Movie

Square finally puts the Final Fantasy series where it belongs—on the big screen

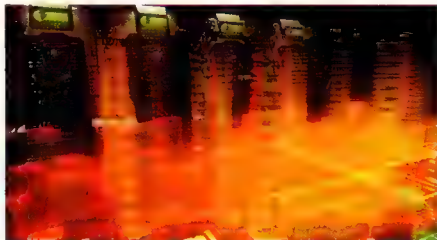
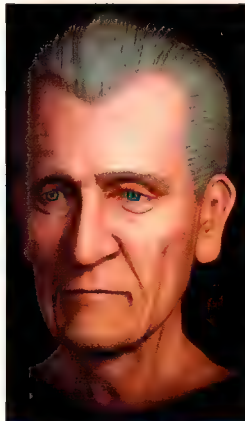
Square has finally made it official—*Final Fantasy: The Movie* will be coming to your local gigaplex in 2001. The company says that this will be the “first computer-generated, animated motion picture with photo-real human characters,” and from the looks of it, this is the first step a game company has made toward making a feature-length CG movie based around a game series.

Columbia Pictures will distribute the movie worldwide (except for Japan and Asia). “Those of us who have witnessed the phenomenal success of Final Fantasy VII on the PlayStation game console are delighted to be a part of bringing the film version to the public,” stated Chris Lee, president of production at Columbia Pictures.

Square says that the movie will be set on Earth circa 2065 and will be inspired by the Final Fantasy series of game titles in a story about life and death. Considering the recent successes of titles like *Antz* and its computer animation predecessors, *Final Fantasy: The Movie* has the potential to be an even bigger success, especially considering the game’s long history. Square’s ambitious goal is to be the first to simulate human emotions and movements through computer graphics.

“*Final Fantasy: The Movie* will be the realization of a dream to create a brand-new form of entertainment uniting computer games and motion pictures, using

the latest in CG-animation technology,” said Hironobu Sakaguchi, director of *Final Fantasy: The Movie* and president of Square USA. “With this film, I want to create entertainment that touches the imagination of new generations by setting the viewer on an exciting voyage of personal discovery.” Production of the movie is currently taking place at Square’s Honolulu studio. Pictures courtesy www.aint-it-cool-news.com



Arcade News

Taito releases new hardware

Taito, a company all but dead in the U.S., yet still going in Japan, has now released Taito G-NET. This motherboard has a compact design that employs the use of small cards to store games. To replace a game just insert a new card. Not only that, but the memory capabilities of this new system are far beyond that of older motherboards. Since a standard slot is used, expanding game features is easy—Taito could potentially add levels and characters to an existing title. The first game to utilize the G-Net will be Chaos Heat.



Three Wishes for the Sega...uh...Geniuses

Dear Sega,

As a once proud owner of the Sega Master system, and then the Genesis, I want to applaud you for having the guts and the vision to re-enter the market with Dreamcast. So far, Dreamcast looks very impressive, but then, so did the Saturn before its unceremonious fall from gaming grace. In hopes of giving Sega some hard, useful feedback before launch, I have three wishes for the Sega Genesis... er, Geniuses:

1. Don't forget about the loyal fans—who rushed out to buy the Saturn and the 32X because they believed in Sega and the quality of their products. No group would have been more predisposed to buying the Dreamcast, yet they have been the ones burned most by Sega's missteps. They're bitter, and are not likely to buy Sega again. You might want to even consider wooing them back with some kind of rebate or retail promotion for Saturn or 32X gear...

2. Focus on making great games. Internet access, multiplayer games and keyboards all sound cool, but at the end of the day, what we really want are great games—at launch. Godzilla and Pen Pen as launch games?

That's like Ferrari bringing out a new car and offering it as a sedan only with four cylinders. People want to see this system rock, baby, and the video game equivalent of Virtua Pong and Checkers just doesn't cut it. Remember how Saturn stumbled out of the gate?

3. Remember the media can be your friend, or it can be your enemy. The cloak-and-dagger tactics certainly didn't help Saturn's bungled launch. Nobody is more excited about a new console than those who play and read everything they can about video games in magazines or on the Web. Don't give us hype—give us hard facts, show us games, let us play them and we the press can spread accurate news and give positive feedback during the development process.

—Joe Funk, Editorial Director, ZDVG



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The Real Solid Snake

When we heard that David Hayter, the actor who provides the voice for Solid Snake in Konami's Metal Gear Solid, actually looks like the game's ass-kicking lead hombre, we just had to see for ourselves.

Turns out Hayter, 29, does indeed bear a striking resemblance to Solid Snake (check out his mug and see for yourself), and he's not the

only MGS cast member with a familiar face.

"The woman who does Mei Ling looks exactly like Mei Ling," Hayter told us. "Meryl looks kinda like Meryl. Naomi looks like Naomi. You know, they're all attractive young girls. And Campbell sort of looks like Campbell."

Hayter said the game's development staff even encouraged him to look the part during

the two-week recording session. "The Konami people gave me a bandanna to wear during the recording sessions," Hayter said, "and I had a little Metal Gear tattoo and everything. It was pretty funny."

And if Hayter, who moved to L.A. from Canada nine years ago, looks and sounds familiar, then you probably watch a lot of TV. Hayter starred in the film *Guyver II: Dark Hero* and voices Captain America on Fox Kids' *Spider-Man*, and has also worked on game projects including a Japanese sim-RPG called *FEDA II* and the pilot voices for *MechWarrior II*. He's currently producing two films, *Burn* (which is executive produced by Brian Singer, director of *The Usual Suspects*) and a western called *Wasteland*.

Hayter said he used his generic "tough-guy" voice when it came time to portray Solid Snake, although some obvious subconscious influences were apparently at work—namely from a certain John Carpenter film starring Kurt Russell. "Somebody pointed out that I was doing Snake Plissken, although I wasn't really conscious I was doing him," Hayter said. "Then I kinda added some Clint Eastwood."

A PlayStation owner himself, Hayter was busy playing through Metal Gear Solid when we contacted him. He says that although the game is fantastic, the recording process did spoil things a bit. "Since the game was already finished in Japanese when we worked on it," Hayter explained, "we were putting down our voices to a videotape of the cinematics, and so I now recognize certain scenes, like when [SPOILER ALERT] Meryl gets shot and when the DARPA chief and Kenneth Baker die...It ruins the drama a bit, but it's not a bad payoff."



Solid or Liquid, He's All Snake

Nikki Douglas, the GRR! Gamer takes a look at MGS' main man

So you think Lara Croft is the only video game character who makes the public a little weak in the knees? Well, then you are probably a guy, and although you may have played the new Konami thriller adventure Metal Gear Solid, odds are you didn't pay much attention to the fact that stealth assassin Solid Snake is a total hottie. But here's the news flash—plenty of girls are paying attention and the fervor is starting to get pretty intense.

The girls I talked to about Solid Snake were a little sheepish at first about owning up to the fact that not only does Snakey Boy sound like another famous Snake (Kurt Russell as Snake Plissken in *Escape from New York*) but he's also tremendously flirty with his co-workers and has some pretty sleek moves, especially when his back is to the wall. Snake is sexy, smoky, arty and definitely tortured—The perfect killer for hire and the kind of bad boy character for a girl gamer to get down on.

It's about time too, for women to finally have a game sex symbol of our own.

Unlike Duke Nukem, Solid Snake has this raw, down-and-dirty way of speaking, the kind of voice a girl can listen to and just drift on. I can't deny that I just kept waiting for pauses in the action so Snake could get a call in his ear and say, "What? Just the way he would say it. Luscious.

Put to the rest of the staff at Grr!Gamer it was a pretty quick vote, that hands down Solid Snake was the most hubba-hubba video game character to give a girl pause in the history of video games.

So who can play Solid Snake in the film version? He has to be a bit dark, slightly sinister, slim, but muscled, in great shape, basically have the kind of body a girl would crawl over shards of glass just to be close to. (Surprised? Yes, girls do think like this.) Brad Pitt was mentioned but he's too blonde, too pretty, his eyes too weepy. Solid Snake has to look like he's actually killed people and suffered for it. Joaquin Phoenix was mentioned but we agreed he's a little too laconic. Finally it came down to Keanu Reeves (who could look right for the part but can't act and no one knows if he's gay or not); Skeet Ulrich, and my nomination of Val Kilmer who basically could play Snake with one hand tied behind his back. Need I mention, Val WAS Jim Morrison in *The Doors* movie.

We predict the Solid Snake will to increase in the future, starting as a low rumble that builds to a crescendo as more girls turn on to Metal Gear Solid. Wouldn't it drive you all crazy if all you heard from now on about this game was how HOT Solid Snake is and how big his...snakeyness is? Call it polygonal

BACKLASH if you must, but I think it's time for the Snake to come out to play.

Nikki Douglas is the head grr! in charge of Grr!Gamer (<http://www.grr!gamer.com>), the world's only gaming publication for women and girls (or grrls).



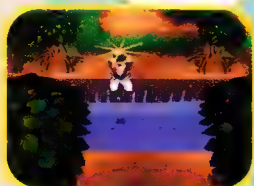
monkey hero



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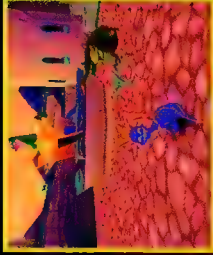
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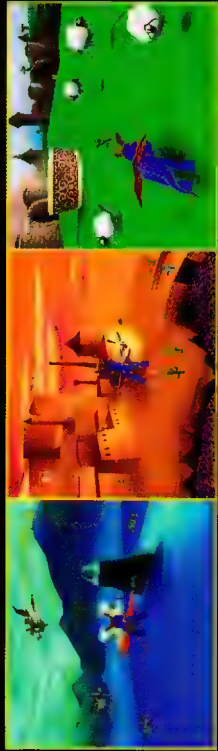
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Claims Spyro breathed fire on him.*



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UFO OR SPYRO?



Unidentified
purple object seen
gliding over L.A.



www.playstation.com

Under the Hood: Game Boy Color

Not just the same old pea-soup green video games

Game Boy Color isn't just the same old Game Boy in color—not really, it's not—it's a refinement of the older technology that will result, if all goes as planned, in color games with improved graphics over that of the original system (introduced 10 years ago). This issue we begin a Game Boy Color section, so we thought we'd give you a closer look at the technical aspects behind the system.

The GBC plays games in three different ways—Monochrome, Dual Mode and Game Boy Color.

Monochrome titles play just as you would expect—in the black-and-white fans of handheld gaming have come to know all too well. You can select from a range of 12 different colors by pressing buttons at the system's start-up, which give standard GB games color in a similar way to the Super Game Boy.

Then there's Dual Mode games, which can be done in three ways. First is to "colorize" a standard GB game, which takes the original programming and simply adds color to some

of the elements. Unfortunately, doing this gives programmers access to 7-10 colors, and keeps the game under the restraints of the original Game Boy. Secondly, Dual Mode games can be made to work with both the GB and GBC through a fork in the road at start-up called a Dual-Engine. When you turn on the game, it determines which system it's being played on, and then begins the appropriate version—monochrome or color. Two versions of the game engine are used in this case. Last is an Adaptive Mode which takes one game engine and picks the appropriate graphic enhancements and functions depending on which system it's being played on.

Titles made specifically for Game Boy Color can only be played on the GBC because they use more advanced features only available on the GBC. The Smurfs' Nightmare is currently the only GBC title that isn't playable on the standard GB. If you put this type of game in a Game Boy, you'll get a message that the game cannot be played.

So what are these enhancements that only the GBC can use? Due to its pumped-up CPU (a speedy 2.1 Mhz, double that of the original GB) and additional RAM (32k instead of 8k), games can be more complex and have smarter computer players. If you use the Game Link cable a lot, you'll be happy to know that the GBC's link port allows for a maximum transfer rate of 512/k a second, 64 times that of the original! This is in addition to beefed-up video RAM, high-speed direct-memory access, and background character mirroring, all of which result in a color picture that's far and away better than the pea-soup green of the regular Game Boy.



Crystal Gets Shaft

Crystal Dynamics recently announced that it will utilize two stars from television and film in its upcoming games, Gex 3: Deep Cover Gecko and Akuji the Heartless. Baywatch actress and March 1998 Playmate Marleece Andrada will become the voice of Gex's leather-clad sidekick Special Agent Xtra who gets kidnapped by Rez. Andrada will also help promote the title by appearing in print and in-store ads for the game.

Gex 3 should be released in March '99.

Shaft star Richard Roundtree is also getting into the act, providing the voice of Akuji in Akuji the Heartless, scheduled for release before the end of '98. Roundtree is known for his role as John Shaft, the star of the classic '70s action films: Shaft, Shaft in Africa, and Shaft's Big Score. The actor has accumulated a sizable



body of work in both TV and film and is currently working on an upcoming action-adventure TV series called Rescue 77.

Tidbits



Digital Video Pokémon

Pokémon fans, there's finally going to be a way to preserve the TV show episodes in a digital format. Pioneer and Viz Video are releasing the series on DVD beginning Dec. 13 (release date subject to change). Each volume contains three episodes (approx. 75 min), plus extras such as mini-comics, stickers, cards, etc., and the full Pokérap song.

Next Banjo Before 2000

Rare says we won't see the sequel to Banjo-Kazooie—Banjo-Toonie—until at least the fourth quarter of 1999. Currently it's known that the sequel will build off the first game in some way (whether it'll be DD or a lock-on game or something else isn't known). On its Web site, Rare tells players, "We'll release it when the team's happy with it." And in a perfect world, that's how every game's release date should be determined.

Hacking into Your Soul

Atlus recently announced that it would bring Devil Summoner: Soul Hackers to the PlayStation in Japan. The game will be a part of the original Japanese Saturn version with enhancements such as compatibility with the PocketStation. Currently, there's no release date. In the U.S., Atlus is polling gamers on whether or not they'd like to see Soul Hackers (an RPG in the same universe as the Megami Tensei series) come to the States. You can get more information via Atlus' Web page (www.atlus.com) or by e-mailing SoulHackers@atlus.com.

Game Shark Control?

We confirmed with Interact Accessories that the Game Shark for Game Boy and Game Boy Pocket does not work on games designed for play on Game Boy Color—Tetris DX, for example. It will work with the GBC if you're playing standard Game Boy/Game Boy Pocket titles on the GBC. Interact told us that they are monitoring the Game Boy Color market and may decide in the future to do a Game Boy Color-compatible GameShark.

EGM's Moving!

That's right. We're leaving the building where we've been ever since the first issue of EGM and moving to a new, better, decapitato-arena-equipped building. If you're dropping us a line, please use the following address:

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International News

Trouble in Dreamcast Land

Early delays plague Sega's Japanese launch

Up until late October, it looked like everything was a go for Dreamcast on Nov. 27 in Japan. However, after numerous rumors that the first batch of launch titles were to be delayed, and that there wouldn't be as many Dreamcasts to go around as Sega originally thought, the outlook is not quite as promising. The original plan of releasing a title a week up until the end of the year has been dropped in favor of a schedule which would give players new titles in three spurts—once at launch, a second right before Christmas (Dec. 23) and Jan. 14. You can see the full lineup of titles until mid-January as it stands now to the right on our Import Calendar.

According to Sega's official statement, the reason for the delays has to do with the Dreamcast's newest feature—online gameplay. Sega Rally 2's biggest selling point is online competition, but it is taking more time than expected to establish the facilities to handle the game and make sure the game is bug-free. Since Sega Rally was going to have to suffer a delay (and



it wasn't playable at TGS, so the delay is hardly a surprise), Sega decided to split up its release strategy. This puts Sonic Adventure much closer to Christmas—those who import the system and games may be able to have Santa deliver the title in time—but the delay is a negligible five days.

Additionally there have been rumblings that Sega would not be able to meet the demand for the system on launch day. Apparently an unexpected production problem has caused fewer PowerVR chips to be produced than Sega originally planned, and as a result, they will be shipping fewer systems than planned on the launch day. Some players who reserved Dreamcast systems at local retailers in Japan claimed that they have received calls from those shops saying that their order cannot be met.

Still, everything is going along as planned after a slight bump in the system's release date and plans. Let's just hope that it's smooth sailing afterward, and that Sony's upcoming announcement of PlayStation 2 doesn't rain on Sega's parade.

International Bytes

Saturn RE2 Canned

After months of wondering, Capcom has finally put the stake through the heart of Resident Evil 2 for Saturn. Shinji Mikami, the game's producer, explained that the reason behind the cancellation is so that they can produce a bigger, better Resident Evil game on the Dreamcast instead of devote resources to bring a game to the Saturn that's not an easy translation.

"We found out that it's difficult to achieve the same level of quality on the Saturn that the PlayStation version had," Mikami said.

Instead, he has turned his focus to Bio Hazard (Resident Evil) Code Veronica. He told gamers, "We are working like mad to make the game better than the PlayStation version visually, on the scenario side, and the overall game itself." Can't wait to play it, Mikami-san.

Game Boy Pocket Price Lowered

Nintendo Co. Ltd. lowered the price of the Game Boy Pocket on Nov. 14 to 3800 yen (about \$32). Nintendo of America says that they have no plans at this time to similarly lower the price of the GB Pocket in the U.S., but after the introduction of the Game Boy Color, they could.

Mario Versus Samus, Round II!

Wished that Nintendo would make a fighting game starring all of its famous characters? Your wish has been granted! HAL Labs is working on a game called Nintendo All-Star Dairantou Smash Brothers, which is just that—a fighting game starring Nintendo's characters. You can select from characters like Pikachu (Thundershock!), Mario, Ness (from Mother and Earthbound), Kirby, Yoshi, Donkey Kong, Samus, Link and other Nintendo characters. But not to worry, Nintendo hasn't turned these characters against each other. In this title, they're toys fighting against each other in a toy box. The game is currently slated for release in Japan in January.

Banjo Hijacks Train

Ready to jump on the Banjo-Kazooie bandwagon? Well, in Japan, Rail Nishi Nihon will be running a shinkansen (that's "bullet train") painted with the images of Banjo and Kazooie. The train will run from Dec. 5 through Jan. 31. It's targeted toward families and young kids, and trading cards will even be given to kids riding on the train during the campaign.

Import Calendar



Import Pick of the Month

Ridge Racer Type 4 - Namco's fourth game in the Ridge Racer series pushes the limits of the PlayStation to the very edge. If you're going to import, be sure to note that the JogCon controller (which R4 uses) goes on sale the same day and is actually offered packaged with the game. Everything a Ridge Racer fan could want is in this package—R4 and an enhanced Ridge Racer. Perfect for the holidays!

PlayStation:

- 11/19 R-Type Delta, Irem (shooter)
- 11/26 Poporogue, SCEI (RPG)
- 12/3 R4: Ridge Racer Type 4, Namco (Racing)
- 12/10 Densha de GO!, Taito (Train simulation)
- 12/10 Bomberman, Hudson (Action)
- 12/17 Thousand Arms, Atlus (RPG)
- 12/17 Ehrgeiz, Square (Fighting)
- 12/23 Street Fighter Zero 3, Capcom (Fighting)
- 12/23 Chocobo's Mysterious Dungeon 2, Square (Action)
- 12/23 Tales of Phantasia, Namco (RPG)
- Dec. Beatmania 3rd Mix (expansion), Konami (Simulation)
- Dec. IQ Final, SCEI (Puzzle)
- 1/7 The Next Tetris, Blue Planet Software (Puzzle)
- Jan. Bloody Roar 2: Bringer of the New Age, Hudson (Fighting)

Nintendo 64:

- 12/12 Pikachu Genki de Chu, Nintendo (Life Sim)
- 12/18 Mario Party, Nintendo (Party Game)
- Jan. Dairantou Smash Brothers, Nintendo (Fighting)

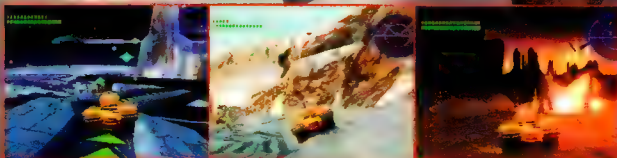
Dreamcast:

- 11/27 Virtua Fighter 3tb, Sega (Fighting)
- 11/27 Godzilla Generations, Sega (Action)
- 11/27 July, Sega (Action)
- 11/27 PenPen Trilcelon, Sega (Racing)
- 12/23 Sonic Adventure, Sega (Adventure)
- 12/23 Seventh Cross, NEC Interchannel (Adventure)
- 12/23 Tetris 4D, Blue Planet Software (Puzzle)
- 12/23 Evolution, ESP (RPG)
- 1/14 Blue Stinger, Climax Graphics (Action)
- 1/14 Sengoku Turb, NEC Interchannel (Action RPG)
- 1/14 Sega Rally 2, Sega (Racing)

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-Next Generation



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BOARD
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FLAMMABLE
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TWISTED METAL III

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- PlayStation 2 development
- Latest on Final Fantasy IX
- Capcom focuses on Dreamcast
- Castlevania on the silver screen
- Return of the funky duo
- Naughty Dog On PlayStation...??

Quartermann

The Q-spies' inquiries have brought up all kinds of goodies this month, but surprisingly there seems to be an awful lot of movie-related gossip going around. Anyone would have thought the games industry had got the tinsel-town bug well and truly shoved up its ass. Pretty much any games franchise older than five years seems to have some kind of chance at a movie deal these days.

At least there are some new systems on the horizon though, eh? Goodies have been coming in from all over the globe about the impending stampede of developer interest in both the PlayStation 2 and the Dreamcast...expect a lot of this news to become common knowledge at the beginning of next year.

The Rumor - There are already games in development for PlayStation 2.

The Truth - A number of high-profile teams are currently working on designs for PlayStation 2. The Q's spies understand that Naughty Dog is working closely with Sony, as are Insomniac, Jordan Mechner's team at Red Orb, and Revolution. A number of sources have already indicated that Broken Sword 3 will be an early PlayStation 2 release, and the design document is being worked on at the moment.

The Rumor - Capcom is taking a big step away from the PlayStation to focus on Dreamcast development.

The Truth - It's true that Capcom is putting a lot of its eggs in Sega's basket. By adopting Naomi as its new standard arcade unit, it's logical to assume that a lot of games will be easy ports to Dreamcast (as it's the same hardware). The announcement of Bio Hazard—Code: Veronica is viewed by many as a step by Capcom toward more advanced technology, and with the company's recent concerted move into PC development it would seem that the PlayStation is being left behind. Judging from the quality of the PlayStation 2D fighters from Capcom, especially when compared to the Saturn versions...who can blame them for wanting a change of development environment?

The Rumor - ToeJam & Earl will make a welcome return in a third game.

The Truth - Oh yeah...TJ&E developers Greg Johnson and Mark Voorsanger have stated that "there will definitely be a TJ&E III! Right now, it looks like the N64 and the Dreamcast are the most likely first versions, but there will be more. We're working on bringing you [ToeJam & Earl III] for most platforms. We've been discussing this with several publishers, but have not yet closed any deals. Anticipated versions include N64, Dreamcast, PlayStation and even Windows." Stay funky, people.

The Rumor - Final Fantasy IX is the "game of the film" currently being produced, and it will share rendered imagery and art.

The Truth - Square is characteristically quiet about any plans for future work. Usually when we ask for any kind of comment from the firm on an unknown subject, the standard response is usually "Square Soft doesn't have any plans yada, yada, yada..." The movie is currently scheduled for release through Columbia TriStar, and estimated timing for FFXIX would be the same year. Any connection between the two is pure speculation. We wouldn't feint from surprise though, would you?

The Rumor - There will be a really nasty, unrated version of the Resident Evil movie.

The Truth - Romero has recently stated, "Our plan is to shoot it balls out, so somewhere in the world there will be a harder version of the thing and maybe we can put a director's cut or release it in certain countries where restrictions aren't as tight." Resident Evil will be R rated in the U.S. when released and will be edited accordingly because of the large budget associated with it.

The Rumor - In more movie-related goings-on, the film rights for Castlevania have been sold.

The Truth - Apparently so, although it's not "officially" confirmed. However, the whole thing has only been "optioned" at the moment—so all that means that someone, somewhere has the option to think about possibly writing a script based on the game...or at least think about doing it. Don't hold your breath.

The Rumor - The Saturn is dead. Once and for all.

The Truth - You have to ask? In an interview with the *Daily Yomiuri* newspaper in Japan, Shoichiro Irimajiri, president of Sega Enterprises, confirmed the news that development for Saturn will stop at the end of 1998. Software production for the machine will continue through to the middle of 1999.

The Rumor - Early production Dreamcast hardware is defective, and won't boot properly.

The Truth - Well...we played Virtua Fighter 3b the other day...and the machine worked fine then.

The Rumor - Interplay, to help alleviate some of its financial difficulties, is looking to sell the rights to Earthworm Jim 3D. Grave has been cited as a potential buyer.

The Truth - Grave spokesperson, Jane Gilbertson, has officially denied rumors linking the company to a purchase of Earthworm Jim 3D. Interplay is funding the development of both the N64 and PC versions of the game from Scottish developer Vis Interactive and is said to have offered the property around in an attempt to redistribute its wealth. After bad sales of Wild 9 and delays for important products such as EWJ3D and Shiny's Messiah, the company is looking to regroup. Let's hope Jim's future is assured somewhere.

The Rumor - Naughty Dog isn't doing any more games for PlayStation—it will instead focus on PlayStation 2 games, and the first of these won't be a new Crash game.

The Truth - The next game from Naughty Dog won't be a Crash game...but it will be for the PlayStation. The team is currently putting together a project that is being headed up by Andy Gavin. No details have been released yet.

The Rumor - Konami is developing Castlevania Dreamcast.

The Truth - Yep, they sure are. But unfortunately, it's being developed by the U.S. side of Konami, and if you remember the last two PlayStation Contras, you know what KoA's track record is with giving a great Japanese-developed series to others to make new games out of. Bad idea. Plus, our online news hounds at videogames.com have found out there's a bit of a problem in the way Konami's handling the American side of development...

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















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Top 20

The Top-20 Best-Selling Games of September, 1998

1	Madden NFL 99 Electronic Arts		Last Month 8
2	NFL GameDay 99 989 Studios		Last Month 11
3	Parasite Eve Square EA		Last Month NEW
4	GoldenEye 007 Nintendo		Last Month 5
5	WWF War Zone Acclaim		Last Month 1
6	WWF War Zone Acclaim		Last Month 2
7	Banjo-Kazooie Nintendo		Last Month 3
8	NFL Blitz Midway		Last Month NEW
9	Crash Bandicoot 2: Cortex Strikes Back Sony Computer Entertainment		Last Month ---
10	NFL Blitz Midway		Last Month NEW
11	Gran Turismo Sony Computer Entertainment		Last Month 6
12	Spyro The Dragon Sony Computer Entertainment		Last Month NEW
13	Madden NFL 99 Electronic Arts		Last Month NEW
14	Twisted Metal 2 Sony Computer Entertainment		Last Month ---
15	NCAA Football 99 Electronic Arts		Last Month 4
16	NASCAR 99 Electronic Arts		Last Month NEW
17	Cool Boarders 2 Sony Computer Entertainment		Last Month ---
18	Tekken 2 Namco		Last Month ---
19	NASCAR 99 Electronic Arts		Last Month NEW
20	Tomb Raider Eidos		Last Month 16

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games, September, 1998. Call them at (616) 625-2345 for questions regarding this list. Top 5 game descriptions written by the EGM staff

Madden NFL 99 (PS)

1

EGM's favorite PlayStation pigskin game (well, except for Dean—he's a GameDay nut) makes its way to the top of the charts. It'll be interesting to see whether EA's other sports cash cow, NBA Live 99, can achieve the same success with the NBA lockout...

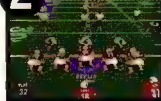
9.0 | 9.0 | 8.0 | 8.0

Dean | John R | Shawn | Sushi



2

NFL GameDay 99



For the second year in a row, 989's GameDay gets off to a great start, but still lags behind EA's goliath. Will it pull ahead before season's end? Stay tuned.

9.5 | 8.0

Dean | John R

8.0 | 8.5

Dan | Sushi

3

Parasite Eve



Square's cinematic RPG didn't quite live up to the massive hype, but it still made for an enjoyable, if somewhat brief experience. We want a sequel, Square!

7.0 | 8.0

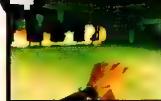
Crispin | John R

8.0 | 8.5

Shawn | John D

4

GoldenEye 007



It's over a year old now, and it's moving *up* on the list? This is insane! But of course, it's well-deserved. GoldenEye is one of the best N64 games out there...

9.5 | 9.5

Crispin | Shawn

9.5 | 9.0

Dan | Sushi

5

WWF War Zone (PS)



War Zone may have taken a bit of a dive after taking the #1 spot last month, but it's still holding strong at #5. We're surprised it seems to have outsold the N64 version.

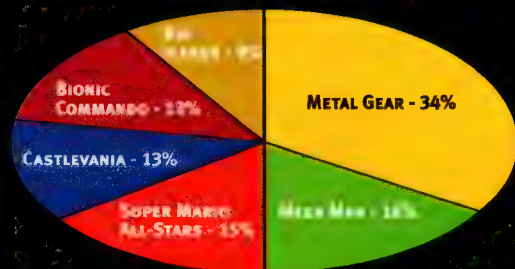
8.5 | 8.0

Dan | Dean

7.5 | 7.5

John R | Shawn

What NES game would you most like to see ported to Game Boy Color?



Source: Videogames.com Poll Nov. 11, 1998

cut your umbilical cord to mother earth

streak

hoverboard racing™

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Game Informer

"...another top notch title from SingleTrac"
PSX Nation

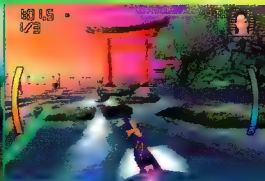
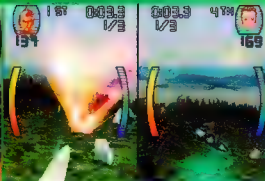
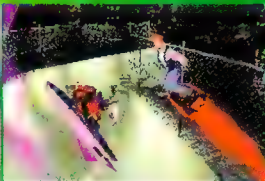
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Top 10 Editors' Picks

1	Metal Gear Solid Konami	
2	Crash Bandicoot: WARPED SEGA	
3	NBA Live '99 Electronic Arts	
4	Brave Fencer Musashi Square EA	
5	NCAA GameBreaker '99 989 Studios	
6	Xenogears Square EA	
7	F-Zero X Nintendo	
8	Rally Cross 2 989 Studios	
9	NFL Quarterback Club '99 Acclaim	
10	Street Fighter Collection 2 Capcom	

Top 10 Japan

Courtesy of Famitsu Magazine
as of Oct. 25, 1998

1	Marvel Super Heroes Vs. Street Fighter Capcom	
2	Slayers Wonderful Banpresto	
3	Beat Mania Konami	
4	Kasei Monogatari Asci	
5	Wario Land 2: The Stolen Treasure Nintendo	
6	Pocket Monsters (Pikachu Version) Nintendo	
7	Dragon Quest Monsters Sega	
8	Sampaguita Sony Computer Entertainment	
9	Simple 1500 Series Vol. 1: The Mahjong Culture Publishers	
10	Metal Gear Solid Konami	

Top 10 Arcade Picks

1	Soul Calibur Namco
2	Daytona 2: Battle on the Edge Sega
3	NFL Blitz '99 Midway
4	Gauntlet Legends Atari Games
5	Street Fighter Alpha 3 Capcom
6	Time Crisis 2 Namco
7	Street Fighter EX 2 Arika/Capcom
8	Sega Rally 2 Sega
9	Carnevil Midway
10	Marvel Vs. Capcom Capcom

Say What?

"If PlayStation 2 is released in April, I'll grow another dick."

— Games trade paper MCV's Editor in Chief, Stuart Dinsey

"If we can't move hardware with *Gone With the Wind*, I don't know what we're going to do."

— Howard Lincoln, Nintendo of America Chairman, likening *Zelda 64* to the movie classic *Gone with the Wind*.

"I think (consumers) are bored of the PlayStation. I think all the games, for the most part, look alike. When you go to the store and you see eight first-person shooters, what is the difference?"

— Sega CEO Bernie Stolar tells USA Today what he thinks of the current PlayStation market.



Abe Goes to Hollywood

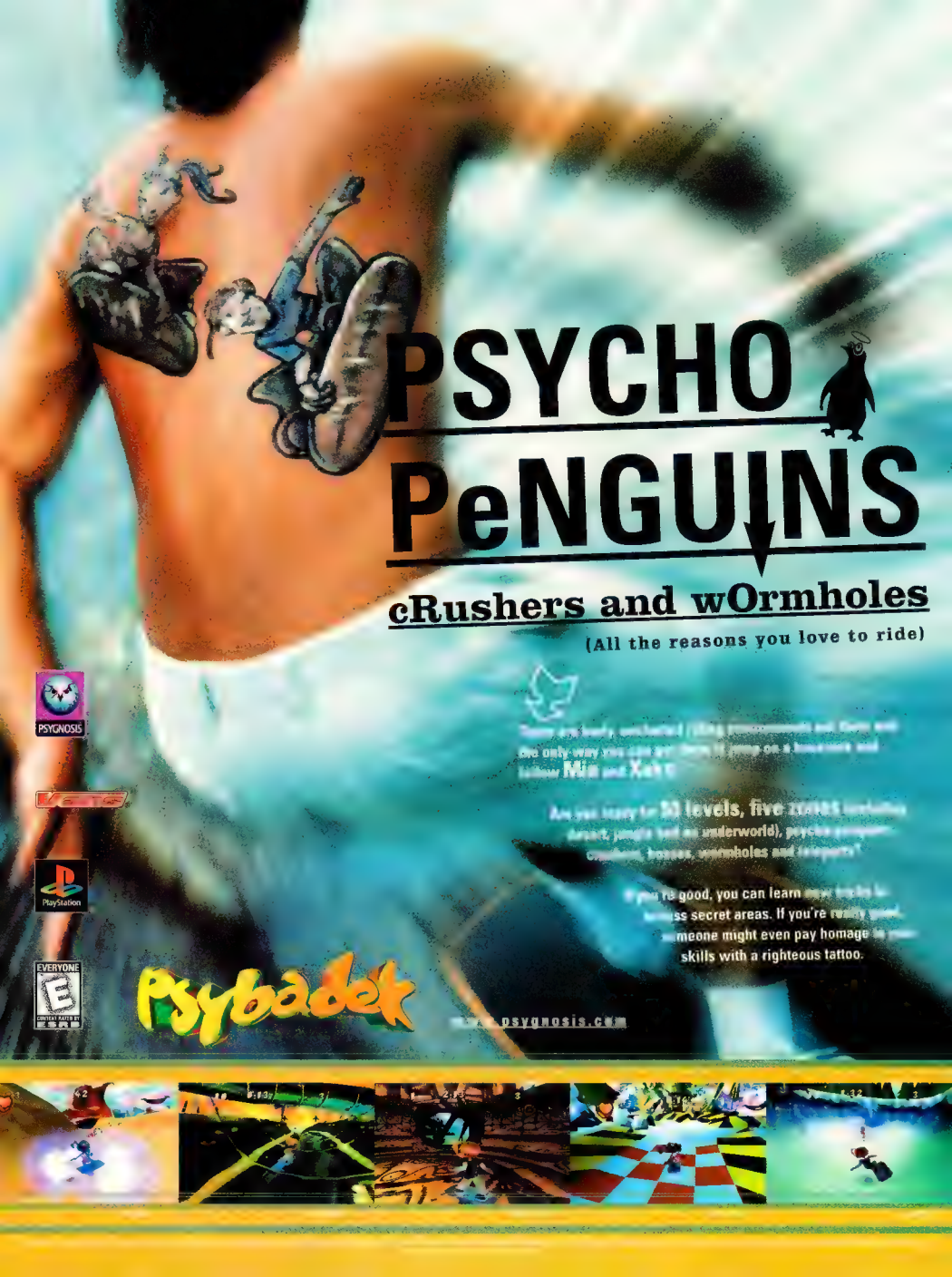
Oddworld Inhabitants makes its way to the Oscars

"I'd like to thank all the Mukodons who've helped me get where I am today," Abe should begin practicing his acceptance speech for Oscar night. *Oddworld Inhabitants* recently entered a short animated film based on the Abe's Exoduss video game into Academy Award consideration. It follows the quest of Abe as he tries to save his kind from extinction at the hands of an oppressive society.

Oddworld Inhabitants comes from a background in the TV and film industries. Sherry McKenna and Lorne Lanning both have a background in computer graphics in media, having worked on numerous films, commercials and theme-park attractions and together at Hollywood's Rhythm & Hues Studios. CG movies based on video games are becoming

ing more and more prevalent now that companies have refined their craft. It's rumored that Namco is working on a Tekken CG movie, and Square is already well into production on the Final Fantasy movie (see story this issue). With the popularity and advancements made in computer graphics technologies, it won't be long before more companies are submitting their films to the Academy Awards. *Oddworld Inhabitants* just seems to be the first to have done it.





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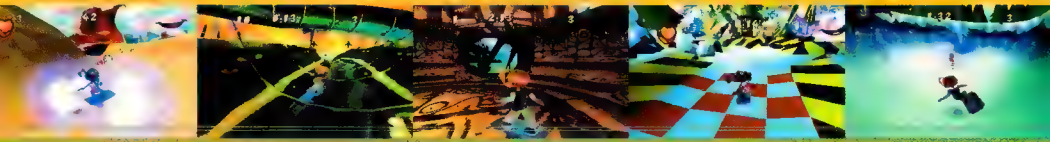


There are many methods (and combinations) out there with the only way you can get them is jump on a horse and follow **W** and **X**!

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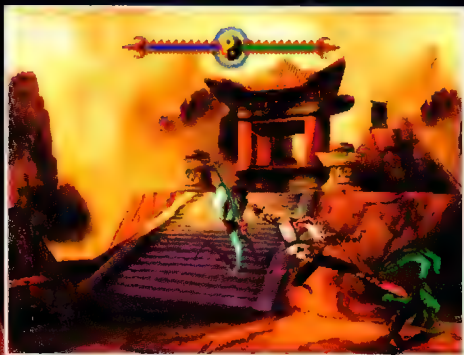


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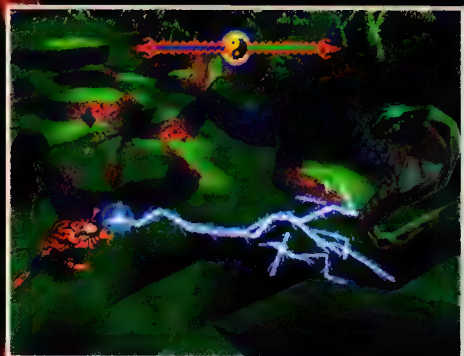
TEKKEN 3



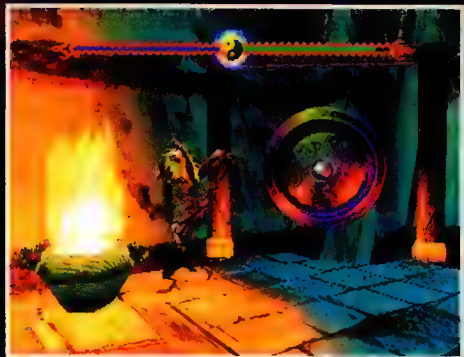
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Saturn

Marvel Super Heroes vs. Street Fighter

Warning: This is a preview of a Japanese title that may or may not be released in the U.S. It is designed to run on a Japanese system. Import at your own risk.



Previews

Marvel Super Heroes vs. Street Fighter

Capcom's
Final 4M
Saturn
Monster

DC-Bound

It had to happen sooner or later. The Saturn is finally winding down in Japan, and with it, so is our coverage. **Marvel Super Heroes vs. Street Fighter** is definitely a big Saturn release, but after it, the release lists look pretty grim. But fear not, Sega fans—there's good news to be had. This month, we're kicking off our brand-new Dreamcast section, with previews of all of the Japanese launch titles and more! See page 68.

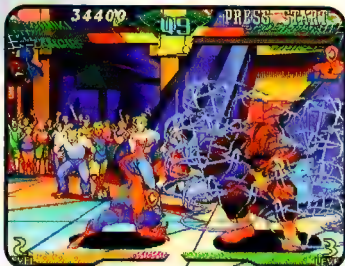
Well, it had to happen. The sun has finally set on Saturn. With the recent announcement by Sega of Japan that support for its 32-bit system will cease in 1999, the Saturn's gradual decline in the Land of the Rising Sun has finally concluded. Sad as that may be, one third-party developer has decided to end their Saturn career with an explosive bang: Capcom, with the Oct. 23 release of **Marvel Super Heroes vs. Street Fighter**, has delivered their best arcade-to-home conversion yet. Featuring all the animation of the arcade favorite (including the kaleidoscopic specials and eye-flaying background transformations) with none of the slowdown, **Marvel Super Heroes vs. Street Fighter** comes to the Saturn with every graphic element intact, unmarred by visible load times. Although the graphics suffer from dithering (a fault of the aging CPS2 arcade hardware from which the game was ported, not the Saturn), the game is so intensely hyperkinetic that you'll never notice.

In fact, the over-the-top substunts and full-screen splash effects make it easy to lose track of your character in the heat of battle, lending credence to the belief that the game is "spazzy." The sonic package is as excellent in execution as the graphics—like recent previous arcade-to-Saturn conversions by Capcom, all of the extensive voice is present, undamaged by the heavy compression and cuts seen in older conversions.

The character roster is quite impressive, with 18 marquee characters and five secret ones. Notables include the fan favorites Dan and Sakura, Marvel bad boys Shuma-Gorath and Blackheart, as well as the Capcom-ized rendition of a popular Japanese comedian, dubbed Norimaro. As with the arcade version, some character animation has been toned down when compared to previous **Marvel** titles, presumably to allow for the flashier background and splash effects.

The same combo-driven play you've come to expect from the **Versus** series appears in full force for this title, save for some much-needed timing changes to the air combo engine and juggles. These changes effectively prevent the infamous

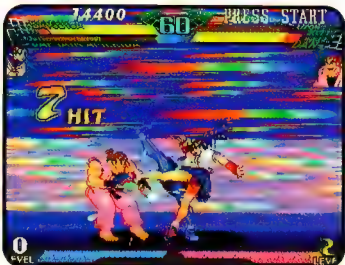
Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Capcom	1-2 Fighting	100	Now Japan
Web Address: www.capcom.co.jp			



Marvel Super Heroes vs. Street Fighter requires Sega's 4-Meg RAM Cartridge, but the result is just sooo worth it.

"infinite" combos that made **X-Men vs. Street Fighter** so notorious and allow for more technical play. Fans of the series generally agree that of the three **Versus** titles, **MSH vs. SF** is probably the most balanced, play-wise.

Note that all this arcade excellence comes with a price—you'll need the 4-Meg RAM Expansion (or a 4-in-1 cart) if you hope to play this title. Still, if you're fan of Capcom arcade titles and have the ability to play imports, you owe it to yourself to pick up **MSH vs. SF**, and witness some of the best 2D performance ever seen short of **Radiant Silvergun** and **Princess Crown**. The Saturn is dead; long live the Saturn!



EGM
66

Unlike the PlayStation port, Saturn **MSH vs. SF** is 100 percent faithful to the arcade game in every way.



Ok Pops, one more time: kiss off the 5-Ball, bounce off the pacemaker, around the dentures, down the walker, over the adult diapers, across Martha's cat, back on the table to the 9-Ball nothing but pocket!

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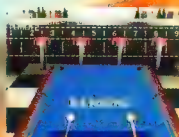
• 5 Carom games including: 4Balls, 3Balls, Free, 1 Cushion, 3 Cushion

• Grand Total of 14 different games

• Music CD Option: insert an audio CD of your choosing to enjoy your favorite tunes while chalk'in up the old cue

• Seven unique modes to choose from: Story, Pocket game, Carom game, Practice, Trick shot, Speed, Technical

• Vibration function compatible

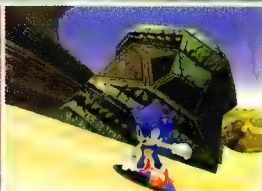
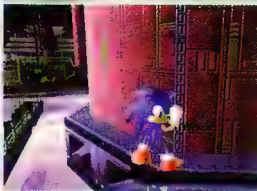
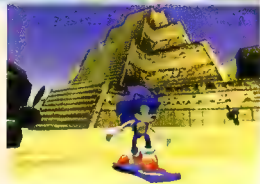
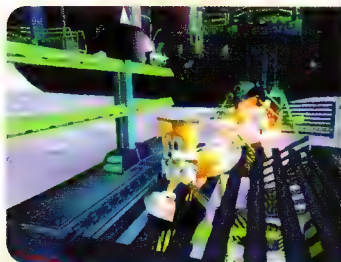


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Sonic Adventure

Seems like every week leading up to the Dec. 23 Japanese release of Sonic Adventure, new screenshots pop up showing off new areas of the game. Especially amazing is the killer whale smashing its way through the dock, all in 60 frames per second. Just looking at the way the dock flies apart as the whale goes after Sonic makes you wonder what else the Sonic Team has in store for gamers.



Buggy Heat

There's been a lack of dune buggy racers these days (where's Buggy Boogie on the N64?). CRI's Buggy Heat will soon change that. It is one of a handful of racers planned for the Dreamcast in early 1999. The game also has a four-player mode where you can make your friends eat dust!

Warning: These are previews of Japanese titles that may or may not be released in the U.S. They are copyright to run on a Japanese system. Import at your own risk.



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Smith clears the puck



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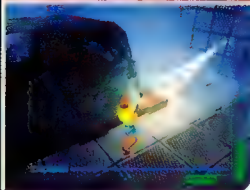
Steve Yzerman
1998 Stanley Cup™ MVP

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Blue Stinger

Climax Graphics' first DC title, *Blue Stinger*, is set for release on July 14 in Japan. The story goes like this: Something fishy's happening on an island just off the coast of Mexico. Seventeen years after the island first arose from the sea on Christmas night, creatures began taking over. As Eliot G. Ballard, it's your job to figure out what's happening. There are four main characters—Eliot G. Ballard, Dogs Bower, Janean King and Neffilm (an astral projection of a character actually in space).



Virtua Fighter 3tb

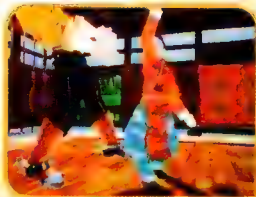
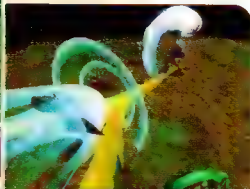
The biggest title Sega has for the Japanese launch is none other than *VF3tb*. AM2 has refined and rebuilt the game from the ground up, which is why some of the graphics don't look quite arcade-perfect. Gameplay is still tight and plays just like the arcade game. When Yu Suzuki's fighting masterpiece shows up on the Dream disc in Japan on Nov. 27, it will include a demo disc of his other Dreamcast title—*Project Berkely*.

Warning: These are previews of Japanese titles that may or may not be released in the U.S. They are designed to run on a Japanese system. Import at your own risk.



Grandia II

Game Arts' *Grandia II* is sure to please hardcore Saturn fans. Not much is known about the game at this time, but the level of detail in the towns as well as the graphic effects in attacks look great. Once the game is released in Japan, it'll only be a matter of time before someone picks it up to translate into English for the U.S. market.



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BACON
FOR BREAK



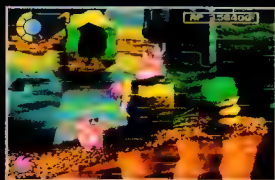
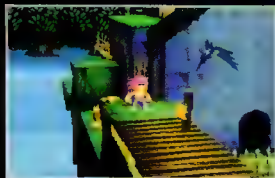
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Nintendo 64

Game Directory

- Castlevania
- Magical Tetris Challenge
- Duke Nukem: Zero Hour
- Rayman 2

Previews

Castlevania

A New Dimension Of Fear

Courage, don't leave." These words escape the lips of Schneider Belmont, heir of the ancient Belmont clan of vampire hunters, as he prepares to resume his family's timeless struggle against their sworn enemy, Count Dracula. It is the late 19th century in Transylvania's province of Wallachia. During this time of peace and prosperity, the people have become complacent and have returned to their wicked ways, stirring their evil ruler from his century-long enforced slumber. Sensing the mounting danger, Schneider Belmont sets out to meet his fate.

When Konami announced the first 64-Bit installment of its popular Castlevania series would be a 3D adventure, many long-time fans were skeptical; while it might be a decent game, they argued it would be virtually impossible to retain the gothic look and atmosphere of its 2D predecessors. In short, it just wouldn't be Castlevania. Having recently received our first preview copy of the game, however, we're happy to drive a stake through the heart of such skepticism; from the opening cinema on, the game's familiar music, enemies, weapons and creepy atmosphere make it a worthy heir of the Castlevania name.

Given their complexity, Castlevania's controls are surprisingly intuitive. While "A" and "B" still serve as Jump and Attack, any similarities to previous Castlevania titles end there. The most important new addition is a "Lock-On" button (R) that changes the focus of your attack. As N64 gamers learned in WCW vs. nWo, such a button is essential when battling multiple enemies in a three-dimensional environment. Individual buttons also are assigned for a secondary (sword) attack, special item attack, crouch/slide, item collect and camera change.

As for Castlevania's

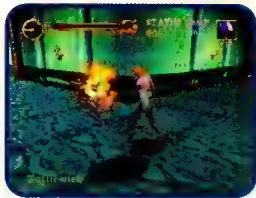
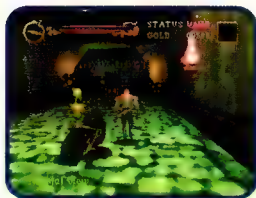
Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Konami	1	40	January 1999
Web Address: www.konami.com			



Fighting in three dimensions is a breeze with the game's lock-on system, which does the aiming for you.

gameplay, Konami has borrowed heavily from Tomb Raider; Schneider Belmont has acquired the Croftian ability to cling from ledges and to perform lateral shimmys and pull-ups. (No word on graceful handstands, however.) Like Tomb Raider, damage from falls is proportional to height. The game also employs Tomb Raider-style cut-aways to reveal the results of pulling switches.

Castlevania purists, however, needn't get too excited; the game retains far more elements from



In a scene reminiscent of the film *Young Sherlock Holmes*, a vampiric Schneider battles a stained-glass knight.



Anime-Inspired Cinemas

Castlevania's real-time cinemas have a stylized, anime-inspired look.



In addition to the traditional Belmont whip, Schneider is equipped with a sword, good for close combat.



after nightfall. Certain puzzle elements are believed to be contingent upon the time, as well. Lastly, and probably most significantly, time becomes critical if your character becomes afflicted with vampirism; not even a tanning lotion with an SPF rating of 1000 will save you if you step outside at high noon after being bitten by one of the Count's loyal blood suckers.

The ability to play as a second character, a young girl named Carrie Fernandez, should greatly pump up Castlevania's replay value. Unlike the famed Belmont clan, not much is known about Carrie, except that she is gifted with great magical powers. As her story unfolds, Carrie becomes an unwitting dupe in a coven of witches' plot to resurrect the slumbering Count. In contrast to Schneider, Carrie's primary weapon is a blast of energy she fires from her hands. Carrie's secondary weapons are a pair of magical rings she can use to slash through enemies. The developers also use Carrie to provide a bit of comic relief; unlike Schneider, who can effortlessly perform baseball-style sliding attacks, Carrie's slide is an awkward belly flop.

While there's already much to like about this 3D, 64-Bit Castlevania, the early build we received is not without its problems; awkward camera angles occasionally make it difficult to see enemies you are fighting and lead to many accidental deaths during platforming segments. The controls and collision detection need some work as well. Despite these flaws, however, Castlevania already looks like one of the most promising third-party N64 titles we've seen in ages.



Schneider can effortlessly hang from ledges, despite his heavy building superintendent's tool belt.

The game's analog control makes nasty traps like this a bit tricky to negotiate.

previous Castlevania titles than it borrows from Ms. Croft's adventures. You still get to shatter endless armies of skeletons with your trusty whip, secret items still can be found inside vases and torches, and for recovering from injury and fatigue, nothing hits the spot quite like a large leg of lamb. You'll also find such familiar projectiles as daggers, axes, boomerangs and vials of holy water.

Castlevania retains many of the role-playing aspects introduced in Castlevania: Symphony of the Night; while journeying through Drac's home, you'll encounter plenty of supporting characters, including a famed vampire slayer (at least in his own mind) and a beautiful vampiress. You can also find and purchase a number of special items, including special cards that instantaneously bring on nightfall or daybreak.

Time, in general, seems to play a significant role throughout Castlevania; areas that are relatively safe during daylight hours become positively nightmarish





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Publisher/Developer Players/Genre % Done Release

Capcom
Capcom 1-2 Puzzle 100 January 1999

Web Address: www.capcom.com

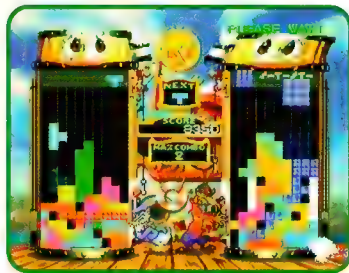
Magical Tetris Challenge

Tetris With A Twist

OK, so maybe it's not Street Fighter III or Resident Evil 64, but you have to admit—it's nice to have Capcom finally making N64 games. Their debut title may be a bit of an odd choice, but puzzle fans will be delighted to know that Magical Tetris Challenge is definitely one of the better home conversions of Tetris.

Magical Tetris Challenge features three modes of play, two of which are accompanied by a Story Mode that features Disney characters and a relatively cheesy, made-for-kids story that unfolds as you progress from stage to stage. The three Modes are: Magical Tetris (an all-new version of Tetris), Updown Tetris (the classic version that we've all played a zillion times) and Endless Mode (Magical Tetris or Updown Tetris without the Story Mode attached).

There are a few unique gameplay features that differentiate Magical Tetris from classic Tetris. First up are the new Magic Pieces. Whenever you clear two or more lines, that number of Magic Pieces are sent to your opponent's playfield. They get stored on top of the playfield, and fall down in place of normal blocks. Since they come in all-new odd shapes and sizes, they can really cause trouble if not placed properly. If you have Magic Pieces waiting to be dropped on your field, you can counter them by clearing lines on your side. This sends them back to your opponent's field, only bigger. You can counter blocks back and forth until they grow to huge 5x5 blocks—then, whoever gets the 5x5 pieces is stuck with 'em



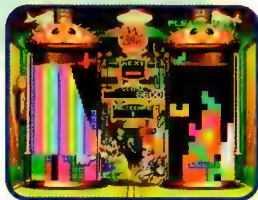
It ain't Street Fighter III, but Magical Tetris Challenge is still a surprisingly fun game nonetheless.

(uh oh). You can also score major points for "doubling up," which is basically clearing two or more lines several times in a row. It's like a reward for unleashing combo attacks.

There's also a new Magic Meter that builds up as you clear lines or when your opponent attacks you. Once the meter fills up, your playfield clears to become even with the height of the meter (the meter grows each time you clear it). Even better, you're left with a vertical line to get you set for a big comeback.

Finally, there's the new Temporary Landing System (T.L.S.). Designed by Arika (the Street Fighter EX folks), T.L.S. allows you to see where your block will fall before you drop it. As simple as it sounds, it's extremely useful—it's a wonder nobody thought of this feature sooner. Of course, Tetris purists can turn the T.L.S. off if they wish.

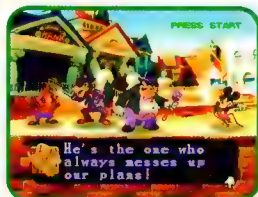
Magical Tetris Challenge supports the Rumble Pak and is due out in January. If you're a Tetris fan (and who isn't?), watch for it. ●



When your Magic Meter fills, everything above the top of your meter gets wiped off of your playfield. Nice!



Here you can see the T.L.S. in action. The transparent image below the falling piece allows you to see exactly how it would land if dropped there.



Magic Pieces

Magical Tetris Challenge features several new types of blocks, known as Magic Pieces, which are used to try to screw up your opponent's playfield after you've successfully cleared lines. They start off small, but if countered, they'll return to your end in even bigger form. Shown here is a selection of some of the most common Magic Pieces.



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But hide your fear. Because to win this battle, you'll have to hunt them... before they hunt you.

AKkaim

Playmates

Publisher/Developer Players/Genre % Done Release

GT Interactive 1-4 50 March 1999

Web Address: www.gtgames.com

Duke Nukem: Zero Hour

Time To Kill On N64? Nope...

47,444

Duke is a popular boy. This is the number of Web sites we found devoted to him on the Web.

You'd be forgiven for thinking that Zero Hour looks just a bit like the recently released PlayStation title, Time to Kill. Both games star Duke, both are full-on 3D fests and both could be pinned with the tag "Duke Raider." Upon closer inspection, the similarities are even more pronounced...both games are third-person action/adventure hybrids (although Zero Hour can be played in first-person mode too), both games have a lot of speech, and both deal with time travel as a major plot point. But they aren't the same game.

The story deals with aliens screwing around with the fabric of time in order to take over the world, and yet again (Time to Kill-style), one of their major goals is to kill off all of Duke's ancestors. As you'd expect from a multigame franchise star like Duke, his ancestors have all been terribly important figures in conveniently action-oriented periods of time. Cowboys, posh-people and Victorian dapper folk all make an appearance throughout the game as Duke is faced with variations on Pig-Cops decked out like native American warriors, outlaws and alley-dwelling muggers with switchblades. Play through the Victorian London level and you'll eventually end up on a certain overexposed ship just before it has its tiff with an iceberg.

The action doesn't just take place in the distant past though, Duke also has to travel to the streets of L.A. as seen in Duke Nukem 3D (the whole first level is in there) as well as present day and futuristic, post-apocalyptic streets of New York.

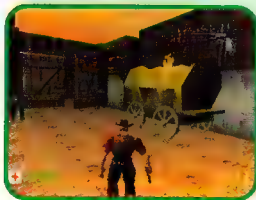
As far as the gameplay goes, this is looking to be pretty much what you'd expect from the Duke-churning-out-machine. He runs, he jumps, he shoots stuff, he blows stuff up, he wisecracks...he runs through a one-player adventure, or he lets you death(Duke)match with up to four players. It's nothing unexpected...but that's nothing bad. The Duke ain't broke, so there's no need to fix him. Yet.

It has to be noted that



The new graphics engine is much sharper than many N64 3D shooters; the lighting is slick too.

the graphics engine employed by developers Eurocom is actually pretty impressive. All of the locations in the game give a good impression of scale, with the streets of New York being worthy of particular note. Running along the streets and looking up at the sky really shows off the engine as the skyscrapers reach upward in a very convincing manner. Everything appears to be running in a resolution higher than your standard N64 blur-o-vision, and the team at GT assures us the game will support the 4-Meg pack to give the graphics an even sharper and smoother edge.



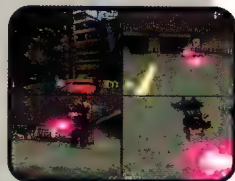
This game makes Nightmare Creatures on the N64 look a bit silly. Still, it looked a bit silly anyway.



Dukematch Fun

Fourplay Fun Festival

Duke Nukem wouldn't be Duke Nukem without some multiplayer options thrown in, would it? Well, just like Duke 64, Zero Hour features up to four player action, but this time there are a variety of modes offered. Not only can you battle it out in the now traditional Dukematches, but there are also co-op games that make things just a little bit more interesting.



Publisher/Developer Players/Genre % Done Release

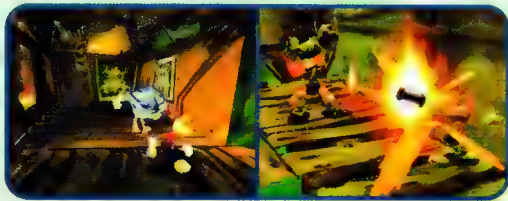
Ubi Soft 1 March
Ubi Soft Action 30 1999

Web Address: www.ubisoft.com

Rayman 2

Rayman is coming back to consoles for the Nintendo 64, PlayStation (both around February/March) and Dreamcast (to be determined) next year after a long time away from the video screen. A true sequel to the original Jaguar, PlayStation and Saturn game, Rayman 2 takes Ubi's mascot to the third dimension. This time around, Rayman must fight for freedom against a horde of evil space pirates who have enslaved his friends and are out to destroy him.

There are a total of 30 levels in Rayman 2, which range from exploration to fast-paced action. Ubi told us that they have tried to make most of the game fast-paced, much like Indiana Jones. The result is a mix of having to run-jump-swim-dodge, etc. and having to actually explore each level. Your objectives change as you go through the game as well. In one level, for instance, you have to waterski behind a snake, making sure to take the right turns and hit jumps without breaking your line. In another, you swim after a whale, collecting air bubbles it gives off until you've gotten to an underwater entrance to a pirate ship. Another has you riding a walking missile, being careful not to crash into anything. The graphics are nice, but still seem to have that N64 blurriness to them in some areas.



This time, Rayman's joined by a supporting cast of characters which includes the pirates, their secret weapons and bosses and Rayman's new friend, Globox—there are some cameos here as well from another Ubi Soft game. Cinemas in the game will run in real time, and the game's designers have really made Rayman 2 look like an interactive cartoon (and Ubi Soft is actually doing a Rayman CG-animated TV series in France that may eventually make its way stateside). Just like the first game, Rayman has a variety of moves to aid him in his quest, including his patented helicopter technique, which on a few levels can be used continuously. He also now shoots a ball of light which destroys his enemies.

Rayman 2 uses a new version of the Tonic Trouble engine, and looks promising even at this early stage. Ubi Soft has not decided whether the game will utilize the 4 MB RAM Expansion Pak or

Rumble Pak. Lacking music or sound effects, the game played just as you would expect a 3D version of Rayman to play. It's still early and there's tweaking and polishing to be done, but you can expect to see Rayman 2 on shelves next spring. ●



The backgrounds in Rayman 2 are finely detailed and make good use of the N64's texturing.

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DOMINATE. (REPEAT.)**

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NBA SHOOTOUT 99



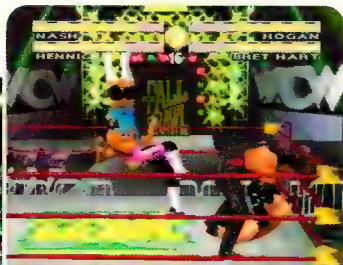
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NINTENDO 64

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Featuring over 60 WCW and nWo wrestlers (with their signature moves and taunts), real arenas and two-man commentary from WCW announcers, among other features, WCW Nitro from THQ is bound to be a hit with fans of the...um, sport. For those of you who have played the PlayStation version, expect the same game. It's scheduled for release sometime in the first half of 1999.



Snowboard Kids 2

Snowboard Kids 2 is on its way from Atlus in the first quarter of '99. In this one, race underwater, uphill and outer space in addition to the standard types of terrain. Other new additions include a modified control interface, an improved multiplayer mode, new courses, an array of new boards, four new selectable characters and new boss characters.



Vigilante 8

N64 owners out there who feel left out by all of the intense car destruction happening on the PS, prepare to get a healthy dose of automobile action in the form of Activision's Vigilante 8. The game is similar to its PlayStation cousin as far as gameplay and overall feel goes, but it has improved graphics, a four-player mode and other tweaks suggested by fans of the PlayStation version. For example, in the N64 version of V8, the alien character has its own story line to play through. Look for this N64 version of V8 sometime in March '99.

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Goemon 2

Remember Mystical Ninja Starring Goemon? Well, this is the sequel, except now the game plays mostly like a 2D platformer and has a two-player mode. Expect more of the same wackiness inherent in all of the Goemon games, along with varied types of gameplay (you still control Impact in some cases, and play several minigames). All four characters from the Goemon series are selectable. Look for it before the summer of '99.



Blades of Steel

Remember Konami's NES classic, Blades of Steel? Well it's back, better than ever. Don't look for any sprites here, though. BoS is a fully polygonal, 3D hockey sim with an emphasis on speedy gameplay and nasty fighting action. A full NHL license is expected as well as authentic stadiums, players and logos.



Hybrid Heaven

Scheduled for March '99, Konami's Hybrid Heaven gives you a mix of gaming genres—a little action, adventure and RPG—in a rather futuristic 3D environment below New York City. What sets this game apart from similar games is its interesting, mysterious story and mix of genres (similar to Parasite Eve in a sense). There are a number of cutscenes done with in-game graphics. In short, kill the freaks, save the president and go home happy.



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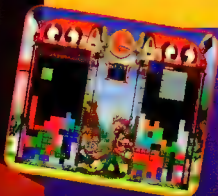
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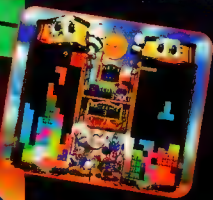
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It's deceptively simple...
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place as they fall. Play as
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Gem unfolds. Battle Pete,
Weasel, the Big Bad Wolf...and
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Game Boy Color

Game Directory
 120000
 120000
 120000
 120000

Previews

Tetris DX

From
 Russia
 With
 Love

It was 1989 when the original Game Boy made its debut, and right there alongside it (actually, bundled with it), was the system's very first game, Tetris. Now, nearly 10 years later, Game Boy Color is finally upon us, and not coincidentally, the first available game for the system is none other than the latest update to Alexey Pajitnov's classic—Tetris DX.

Fortunately, Nintendo didn't just update Tetris to a graphical level. They also went and added four new modes of play and some useful features to enhance the gameplay.

First of all, and most importantly, Tetris DX allows you to save your game data. Not only does the game save all high scores across each mode of play, but it also allows for up to four players to enter their names and save their personal stats to the cartridge. This is great for competitive Tetris junkies like most of us on the EGM staff. Oh, and best of all—if you want to stop play and continue later, just press Pause during play and turn off the power. When you return to play later, the game will ask you if you'd like to continue your previous game. Sweet!

OK, now on to the four game modes. First there's Marathon, which is pretty much the A-Type game from the original Tetris. You pick a starting level and play for as long as you can to rack up the most lines and/or points. Next up is Ultra, which gives you three minutes to score as many points as possible. Simple, but fun. Then there's 40 Lines Mode, which is similar to the old B-Type game. Basically, you adjust your starting level (1-9) and height (1-5), and then try to clear 40 lines as fast as possible. Finally, there's the Vs. Com Mode, which is probably the most fun of all the modes. It's set up just like the two-player mode, except you can choose to take on any of three CPU opponents (Easy, Normal or Hard), OR CPU versions of any of the real people whose names are entered at the Entry Screen (since each player is given a Power rating based on his/her overall performance, the CPU will play according to how well that user's rating is—a very cool feature). Of course, two-player play via the Link Cable is loads of fun, too, but remember—you need two Game Boy Colors, two copies of Tetris DX, and of course, a Link Cable, before you can play.

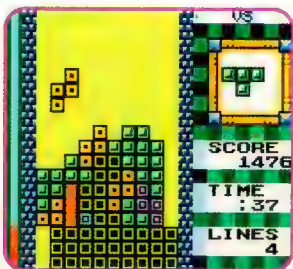
Ultimately you may be wondering if Tetris DX is

Nintendo
 Nintendo
 1-2
 Puzzle
 95
 November
 1998
 www.nintendo.com

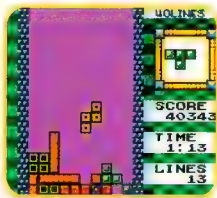
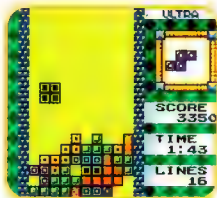


Tetris is back, and better than ever! Ironically though, Tetris DX is a wee bit easier in IP mode than the original Tetris was. Why'd they do this? No idea...

really worth it if you already have Tetris. The answer depends on what you're looking for. If you're the competitive type, it's great because of the various modes and the fact that it saves all records. Then of course, there's the color factor. If neither of these factors matter to you, you may as well stick with good old Tetris. It still is, after all, EGM's pick for number-one video game of all time.

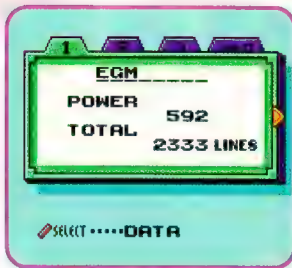


The two-player Vs. Mode is what it's all about. This is the mode where true Tetris masters can strut their stuff and really thrash their fickle opposition. Do it! Be a player-hater!



Each of the four gameplay modes in Tetris DX is as addictive and fun as the next.

Perhaps the best new feature of Tetris DX is its ability to save game data. Now the competition can really heat up!



Tetris DX Vs. Tetris

Judge for yourself!	Tetris DX	Tetris
# of Game Modes:	4	2
# of Music Choices:	3 (Average)	3 (Very Good)
Save Feature:	Yes	No
# of Colors/Shades:	56	4
Score a Tetris, it sounds like:	A siren	A goat having a really good time

Crave Entertainment
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1
Action

95

November
1998

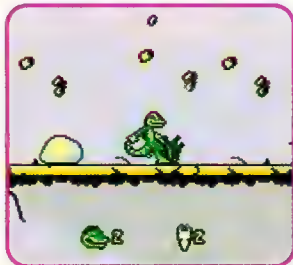
www.cravegames.com

Gex: Enter the Gecko

Enter The
Game Boy
Like That Is

If you've played a Gex: Enter the Gecko on any system, then you know the general feel this Game Boy and Game Boy Color version of Gex: Enter the Gecko has—except it's not in 3D, of course. As you'd expect, Gex is out to prevent his archenemy Rez from taking over the world's television broadcasts. Like the other games, Gex must find his way through a variety of levels—each being a parody of popular TV shows and movies—ultimately taking down Rez.

This 8-Megabit GB cart works on any version of the Game Boy, but is specially adapted for use on the Super Game Boy and, of course, Game Boy Color (you know: color, extra memory and a faster CPU). The game features over 26 levels of gecko goodness. Crystal Dynamics insists Gex: Enter the Gecko for the Game Boy will be "one of the largest and most complex Game Boy games available." Gex has all of his standard fighting moves found in other versions including tail whips, spins and bounces, fly eating, karate kicking and wall climbing, among others. And he'll need every one of them against the more than 20 different types of enemies he'll encounter (many of those found in the PlayStation and N64 versions of the game). Of course, there is no Dana Gould voice in the little cart since that is next to impossible.



O The number of things Dana Gould says in the Game Boy Color version of Gex. That's a good or bad thing depending on your perspective.



No funny Dana Gould clips here. Although if there were, he'd probably say, "And I thought jaws was ugly."



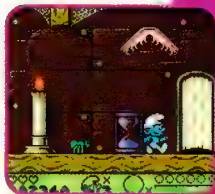
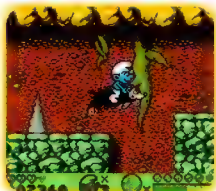
The Smurfs' Nightmare

Not only is Infogrames' The Smurfs' Nightmare one of the first third-party GB Color games, it's also one of the first to support the GBC's Dedicated Mode. This means it's designed to take advantage of most, if not all of the GB Color's new features, and it won't run on any previously released Game Boy system. At this point the game itself seems "OK" (it's a basic platform game), but the graphics

are gorgeous. If this is any sign of what's to come with the Game Boy Color, we're all in for a treat.

The Smurfs' Nightmare features 16 stages of platform action over six levels, each with puzzles, hidden secrets and lots of weird enemies. As Hefty Smurf, your goal is to travel through each world in an effort to free your fellow Smurfs from a sleeping spell cast on them by the wicked Gargamel. Generic? Of course. But still, for a portable game that's aimed at a younger crowd, it definitely could've been worse. There are two difficulty levels (Easy and Hard), and a password save system, too. (Why not institute a save feature? Passwords are so 1989...)

The Smurfs' Nightmare is nearing completion (the version we played seemed finished), and will be available this winter.



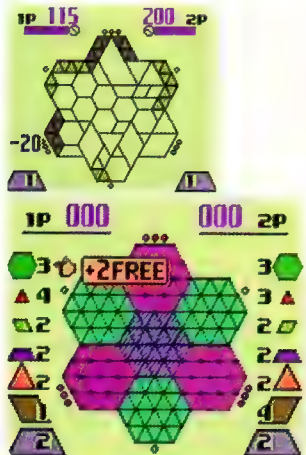
Wario Land II

Here we go! One of the best Game Boy games of 1998 is now re-emerging on the Game Boy Color in...color! (What a concept!) No firm release date has been set yet (it's out in Japan already), and there doesn't seem to be much new to the game aside from color, but it sure does look nice. If you don't own it yet, definitely wait for the GBC version.



Hexcite

Hexagons unite! In this Game Boy Color-compatible strategic puzzle game from Ubi Soft, you must fill a variety of hexagons by inserting various shapes into the correct slots to gain territory. There is also a two-player Link Mode as well. Hexcite is scheduled for a release by the end of '98.



Men in Black

Get jiggy with it in this Game Boy Color adaptation of the MIB cartoon. In Men in Black from Crave Entertainment and Tiertex, you control a rookie agent while kicking the goo out of a load of aliens—many of which are from the cartoon and/or the movie—with movie-inspired weaponry. Men in Black uses the Game Boy Color's 56-color palette. It's scheduled for release some time in the fourth quarter of '98 at this point.



Pitfall: Beyond the Jungle

Pitfall from Crave Entertainment puts Harry in a variety of environments, similar to those in other Pitfall games, and uses all 56 colors of the GB Color's palette. This, like many upcoming GB Color titles, is a side-scroller. It's scheduled for release late in '98.

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P layStation

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- 4x4 Ridge Racer Type 4
- Street Fighter Alpha 3
- Marvel Super Hero vs. Street Fighter
- Rivalry & Rivalry 2
- Jeff Gordon XS Racing
- Testamania 2nd Mile
- Army Men 31
- Wings of Lead
- Reaver
- RailCage
- Mast Racer
- Dead in the Water
- Kamen Rider Story Complete
- Amazing School

PREVIEWS

R4: Ridge Racer Type 4

It Just Keeps Getting Better And Better

We touched on many of the new features in the latest Ridge Racer last month,

but with each week we are learning more and more details about what is sure to be one of the first "big" games of 1999. After seeing the game at the Tokyo Game Show, the reports of R4 being the PlayStation's finest hour seemed less like hyperbole and more like fact. It truly is a gorgeous-looking game, but besides the extremely obvious cosmetic changes, Namco would appear to have pulled out all the stops in an attempt to establish R4 as the finest racer ever. Graphically it's certainly one of the most beautiful games on the system with amazing-looking visuals greatly enhanced by some of the most realistic looking lighting on any PlayStation game. Rumors abound that this may well be the last "AAA" PlayStation game from Namco because the teams can no longer push the hardware any further as yet to be confirmed, but it is hard to imagine many other developers surpassing the quality of this in the future.

As has been previously reported, R4 doesn't feature any official car licenses. While this initially seemed somewhat disappointing after the precedent set by SCEI with Gran Turismo, having played the game it doesn't really matter that much. There are, in fact, more than 300 different car "styles" on offer here, mostly made up by combinations of car manufacturer and race team management influence (which affects body style and weight implications). Full details are yet to be announced as to how this will

Publisher/Developer: Namco Players/Genre: 1-4 R4 % Done: 40 Release: 2nd Qtr. 1999

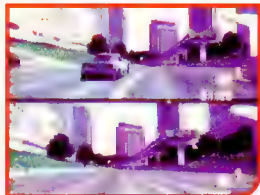
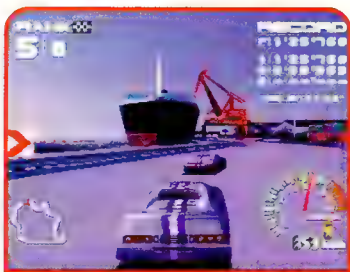
Web Address: www.namco.com

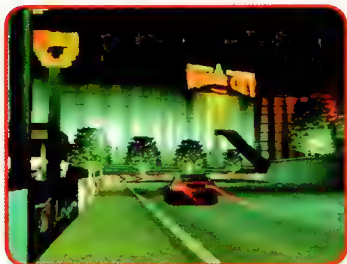


The new graphics engine is reputedly the very best Namco expects anyone to squeeze out of the PlayStation.

300

The number of cars available in R4. None of these are based on real cars though, and many are different combinations of body style and chassis.





Bonus

As if all this wasn't enough, R4 will also come with a second CD containing a rerelease of the original Ridge Racer. So what? Well, alongside the original there will also be an enhanced version running in hi-resolution mode and at 60 fps!



Two players, split screen on each system...link them together and play four-way. Cool.

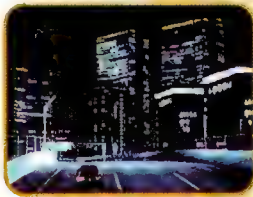
specifically work, but we can report that the PocketStation will feature in the gathering of all the cars (see sidebar "More than a game"). This sounds like it should be quite unique, but we'll wait and see before we pass judgement on the viability of this system. The game will be released in Japan in early December, so we will report on how well the system works next month.

Aside from the massive leap in the number of cars on offer, there is also a jump in the available number of tracks. Again, none of them are based on "real" courses, but the increase to eight available raceways will ensure that things are more interesting than Ridge Racer.

In terms of gameplay modes, the most significant addition is the new Grand Prix Mode. This will act as the main section of gameplay and will be significantly more than just a series of races. The mode places the player as a (to quote Namco's recent announcement) "freelance racing driver" who jumps into the fray by signing a

contract with one of four different racing teams before moving on to sign yet another contract with a car manufacturer. Performance in races is directly affected by combination of team and builder and the management of each. Once the player has the contracts, the racing begins and victories are rewarded with further cars being opened up. The quality of the new cars is apparently directly affected by performance and the general condition of the team within the Grand Prix.

Obviously the big question hanging over the success of R4 will be whether or not it is significantly better than Gran Turismo. It's obvious that Namco has taken a good hard look at the competition and has chosen to produce a very different kind of game, despite dealing with similar subject matter. While GT is very much a strict simulation set within a realistic play environment, R4 would appear to be going for a more "arcade" feel with a greater sense of progression provided directly by the game. ●



Moody lighting plays an important part throughout all eight of the game's tracks.

More Than a Game

Extra hardware support...

Along with the impressive list of features the game itself boasts, R4 will also be the first game to make use of a new controller, Namco's JogCon. This isn't all though, it's also set to be one of the first games to make use of the PocketStation too.

The JogCon is a new steering controller that features a VCR-style "thumbwheel" in the center of the unit. Units aren't available for us to look at yet, but rest assured we'll review the unit alongside the game when it ships in the U.S. next year.

The PocketStation support is even more interesting. Apparently the game is being designed so that the only way it is possible to collect all 300 of the featured cars is to swap specifications and body styles using the PocketStation. This will bring an unusual Pokémon-style twist to a genre of gaming that you wouldn't expect to see it in.



Heart-stomping, hair-



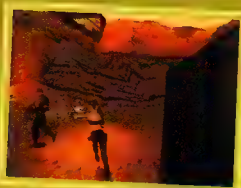
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CORE



straightening, mind-melting action.

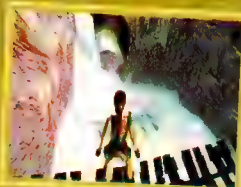
(Ready for level 2?)



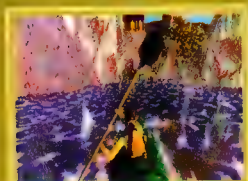
Plough through five continents with extreme prejudice. And a grenade launcher.



Discover what it takes to send shivers down your soul.



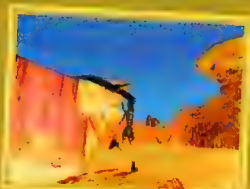
Check your gut in manic, eyeball-blistering action.



Play a variety of puzzles and traps that will test your wits.



Enjoy international diplomatic immunity with a set of 9mm's as your passport.



Annihilate your way through 15 levels of high-res mercilessness.

**TOMB
RAIDER**
ADVENTURES OF
LARA CROFT
III

EIDOS

Publisher/Developer Players/Genre % Done Release

Capcom
 Capcom 1-2 Fighting 50 March 1999

Web Address: www.capcom.com

Street Fighter Alpha 3

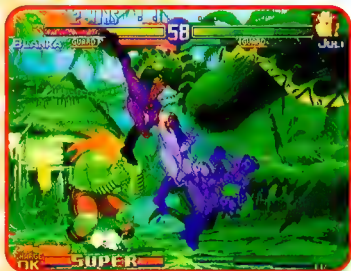
As Good As Street Fighter Can Get

Capcom fans who own a PlayStation are in for a huge treat. After the disappointing X-Men vs. Street Fighter, we'll soon get a great version of Marvel vs. Street Fighter and an unbelievable version of the hottest arcade fighter out today, Street Fighter Alpha 3! We recently got our hands on a very early version of SF Alpha 3, and even at this stage the level of graphic quality and animation is easily the best yet for a 2D fighter on the Sony console. Then there's the control...silky-smooth and responsive. This isn't as much of a surprise as the graphic quality because the entire Alpha series on the PS has controlled as perfect as the Sony pad will allow.

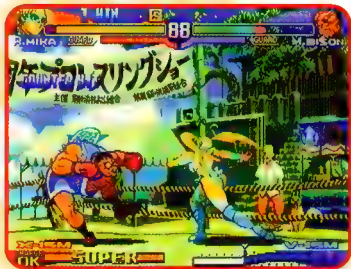
A great conversion is not the only thing to be excited about. In case you didn't know, Alpha 3 marks the return (or is it the debut? SF III/Alpha continuity is all screwed up) of some old favorites. The wild Brazilian Blanka, the sumo warrior Edmund Honda, the rough boxer Balrog and the vain Vega are just a few of the new additions. Following in Guy's footsteps, Cody from Final Fight joins the action along with two brand new saucy female characters. Old favorites like Ryu, Chun-Li, Ken and Bison come back with a few refined moves. As with any update in a fighting game series, there are new backgrounds and new music. So far, the background environments look great, but the music has yet to be implemented into the game.

Adding to the depth of each character is the ability to choose from three different special meter options. There was a similar system in Street Fighter III, but it seems to have much more effect in Alpha. You can be sure we'll have more on SF Alpha 3 soon. ●

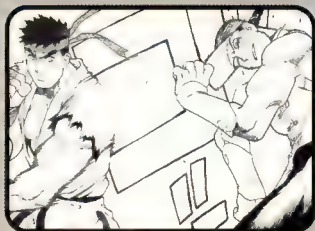
With the addition of Vega (pictured on the left) and Balrog, the original bosses are all back from SFII.



Love him or hate him, Blanka is back in all his cheap glory. Watch out for his electric shock and rolling ball.

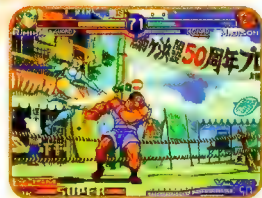
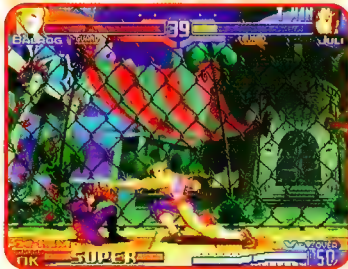
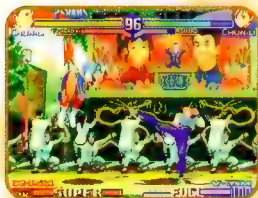
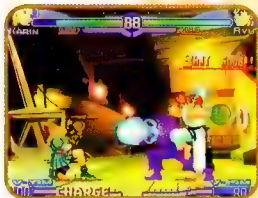


Who Designed Her?



Although almost all of the new characters you see in Capcom fighters were designed internally, one of the saucy female fighters in Alpha 3 was not. Karin, the pig-tailed girl in the school outfit was designed by artist N. Masahiko who currently does a Street Fighter comic that runs in the Japanese arcade magazine *Gamest*. Check out his stuff at:

www.bekkkoame.or.jp/n-masahiko/



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WELCOME TO THE CORE

Publisher/Developer Players/Genre % Done Release

Capcom 1-2 50 February 1999

Web Address: www.capcom.com

Marvel Super Heroes vs. Street Fighter

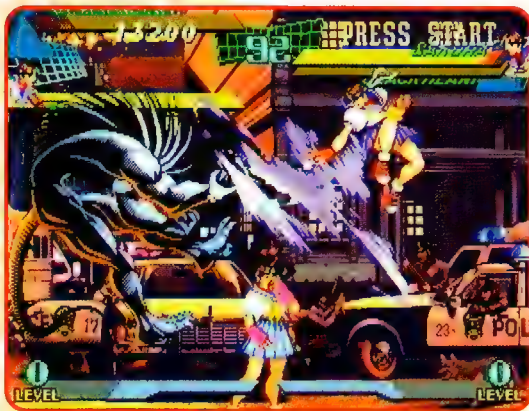
More High-Flyin' Action

The next edition in Capcom's popular Vs. series is almost here. *Marvel Super Heroes vs. Street Fighter* improves upon its predecessor *X-Men vs. Street Fighter*, and provides a great stop-gap before we move on to *Marvel vs. Capcom* (confused yet?).

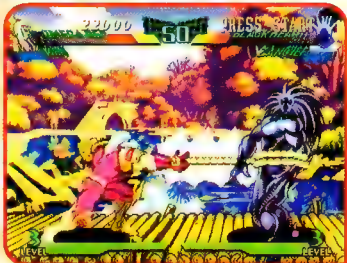
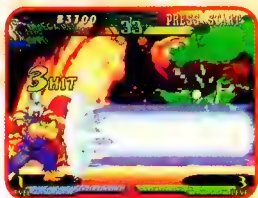
Marvel Super Heroes vs. Street Fighter stars Street Fighters Ryu, Ken, Chun-Li, Akuma, Zangief, M. Bison, Dhalsim, Sakura and Dan. The costumed hero cast consists of Cyclops, Captain America, Hulk, Wolverine, Spider-Man, Omega Red, Shuma-Gorath and Black Heart. In this PlayStation version, you pick one primary fighter with a back-up teammate who only comes in during Variable Counters (where your partner knocks the opponent back while you're blocking). Variable Combinations (team super combos) and the new Variable Assists (you can call in your teammate for a quick attack, which you can use in conjunction with your own combos).

Unfortunately, these are the only circumstances where the teammate comes into play. You still can't freely switch between fighters during battle, because the PlayStation only has enough video memory to store two sets of characters' moves per loading session. To help make up for this, MSH vs. SF has a Crossover Mode, which *will* let you tag team. The catch? Your opponent has to use the same two characters as you.

This game will have its limitations. Slowdown, no tag teaming and other drawbacks will keep MSH vs. SF from being a perfect arcade experience that it should be. Still, if you're a fan of the PS versions of *Marvel Super Heroes* or *X-Men vs. SF*, rest assured, you will enjoy this game. ●



The Crossover Mode (two characters vs. the same two characters) lets you play the game as it was meant to be played: with free swapping of tag-team partners.



Mech Gouki (Gouki is Akuma's Japanese name) is the game's final boss. He is one serious son of a <math>1+@#\</math>.



Hyper Cancels

Yeah it's a bit cheesy, but you gotta admit, Hyper Cancels are fun. The PlayStation MSH vs. SF, like the PS *X-Men vs. SF* before it, lets you interrupt one super combo to chain in another. Check out *Wolvie's* three-tiered *Weapon X/Berserker Barrage X/Fatal Claw* combo. If you pull it off successfully, you can dish out more than 37 hits!



Come on in, stay awhile... Mind if I cut your head off?



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-PSM

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-GamePro

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-Tips & Tricks

"A great game that's a blast to play and comes highly recommended."
-Videogames.com

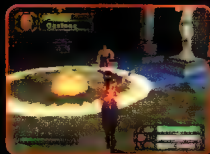
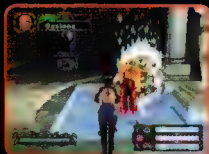
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www.989studios.com

Publisher/Developer Players/Genre % Done Release

GT Interactive 1 40 February
New Level Adventure 1999

Web Address: www.gtgames.com

Beavis & Butt-head

~~Get Big In
Hollywood~~

Beavis and Butt-Head are not role models. They're not even human. They're cartoon characters. Some of the things they do would cause a person to get hurt, expelled, arrested, possibly deported. To put it another way: **Don't try this at home.**

Well, actually, you can try it at home now. Although already stars of some latter-day SNES and Genesis games, Mike Judge's gruesome twosome have finally made the jump to 32-Bit. It was a long time coming, but it looks like developer New Level has gotten something of a handle on the whole thing.

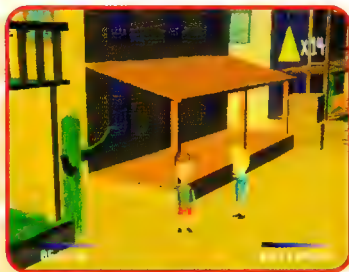
Humor is obviously the most important element of any game starring these two. Yes you need the graphics to be recognizable, but underneath all of the icing you need to ensure that the underlying game is rooted firmly in adolescent, ridiculous humor. And thankfully B&B Get Big...wood (ho, ho) has been designed very much with this in mind. Set in Hollywood from the guys have finished work on their next movie, they find that they don't have any money with which to get home, so they have to take odd-jobs on the film sets in order to make cash. Conveniently, there are all sorts of movies being made, so B&B can travel through some varied environments with vaguely "filmy" themes.

At its heart it's a fairly simple 3D graphic adventure with smallish locations that each contain tasks that meld platform elements with puzzles and stupid jokes. The gameplay in itself isn't particularly hilarious (although some of the puzzles are reasonably chuckle-worthy) but what really shines is the interaction between Beavis and Butt-head.

You don't just control one character or the other, you actually control both. By switching between the two, you can manipulate objects, lure things, push things around and distract people. It's not spectacularly original in concept, but it's refreshing to see the idea used in this context.

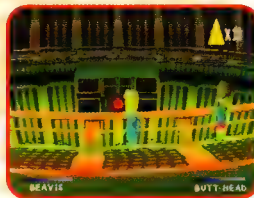
What makes it all so much more fun though, is the fact that the two guys are constantly abusing each other. And I mean constantly. If they're not slapping each other around or calling each other "buttmunch," they're venting their anger out of the game toward the player. "Can't you get someone cool to play this instead?" is one of the hundreds of insults that gets thrown around if you dare to make even the slightest mistake.

Thankfully, like this month's cover-star South Park, enough speech is being recorded to ensure



It's Beavis and Butt-head and what appears to be a man dressed as a cactus.

things don't get stale too quickly. We are assured that literally hours of dialogue has been recorded so that as you go through the game you don't get completely sick and tired of the same "huh-huh-huh" sample playing over and over.



Environments are small and contain a number of elements that contribute to an overall puzzle.

My 2 Cents

It had the potential to be absolute trash (let's face it, license games like this can descend into crappiness very easily), but from this early look, it would appear that New Level is going about things the right way. Keeping the humor level high, and using speech throughout to convey this is key to the B&B experience, so let's hope there are enough samples in the final game to make sure it doesn't get too old, too quickly.

-John Davison



Some Important Phrases

Learn the lingo...

Bunghole Your butt-hole.

Cut the Cheese To fart. Break wind. Let one rip.

Pull My Finger A game Beavis and Butt-head play sometimes. One of them will ask the other to pull his finger, then let loose a fart when he does. (See also: Cut the Cheese)

SBD "Silent But Deadly." A really nasty fart that makes no noise. Very high stink quotient.

Spanking your Monkey Masturbation. (Also choking your chicken, shining your helmet and many, many others.)

TP Toilet paper. As in Cornholio's shouting of "I need TP for my bunghole."

Woodrow An erection. Other terms used are "Morning Wood" (waking up in the morning with an erection), "Stiffy," "It's High noon on my sundial," "The Morning Glory," "Having a Baby's Arm" and "Getting a Boner On."

Publisher/Developer Players/Genre % Done Release

ASC 1-2 50 March 1999
 RealSports Racing

Web Address: www.ascgames.com

Jeff Gordon XS Racing

The Future Of Stock Car Racing

Bang fenders with three-time Winston Cup Champion Jeff Gordon in ASC's futuristic new racing game, Jeff Gordon XS Racing. Rather than a true NASCAR simulation, which many initially expected it to be, the game is an imaginative forecast of the future of stock car racing; ultra-aerodynamic cars travel at speeds in excess of 300 miles per hour, screaming through dangerous corkscrews and hurtling over towering jumps on their way to victory lane.

The game's branching, high-banked courses have more in common with slot-car tracks than the typical NASCAR oval. In addition to the aforementioned

jumps and corkscrews, each of the game's eight tracks is filled with colored and directional lighting effects, while each car is adorned with sharp-looking Gran Turismo-style environment mapping and spectral highlights. There's plenty of track-side eye-candy, too, including famous monuments, neon signs and roller coasters. Somewhat unusual for a racing game, all of the action in XS Racing takes place at night. According to the developers, this decision was made to show the game's advanced lighting effects to their best advantage.

In addition to acting as the game's co-designer and co-producer, Jeff Gordon also appears in the game. Initially acting as the player's mentor and driving instructor, Jeff eventually becomes your fiercest competitor. An avid gamer since the age of five, Jeff is taking a hands-on approach to the game's design. In addition to offering advice on track and car designs, Jeff plays every successive build of the game, offering expert feedback on control and handling. The main thing Jeff hopes to convey is the sensation of speed and the rush of adrenaline one gets while behind the wheel of a stock car. Accurate engine

sounds, tire squeals and track noise also have been added to enhance the illusion.

Jeff Gordon XS Racing's gameplay is highly arcade-like, favoring flat-out speed over technique. The game's cars are highly stable, allowing players to "bump-and-run" while jockeying for position, just like stock car racers of today. On tracks with branching cloverleaf segments, the player can opt to stick to the center oval or to utilize the outer loops, which



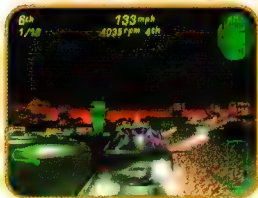
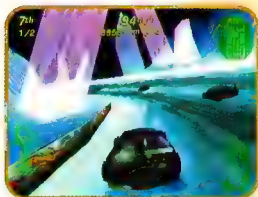
XS Racing's ultra-wide tracks allow up to three or four cars to race side by side. Note the 7-Eleven billboard in the distance.

are longer but contain speed boosts. On particularly high jumps, your car's rear spoiler extends to become a makeshift wing, allowing you to log some serious flight time.



At this juncture in the game's development, XS Racing still has a few wrinkles in need of ironing out. Control is a bit stiff, and the sluggish frame rate, which seems to hover around 25 frames per second, could use a boost. As a point of comparison, Fox Interactive's recently released Motorhead, another futuristic racer, manages an impressive 60 fps while racing among a four-car field. (The frame rate dropped to 30 fps, however, if the player opted to race against seven opponents.)

Count on Jeff Gordon's considerable star power and name recognition to give XS Racing an added sales boost when it hits stores this March. 🍎



Your car's rear spoiler automatically extends during high jumps, allowing your car to glide to a soft landing.



Jeff Gordon, Game Boy

An avid gamer since the age of five, Jeff Gordon takes a PlayStation with him on the road while traveling from race to race. When asked at a recent press conference what he might like to do when he retires from racing, Jeff half-jokingly replied he'd like to develop games full-time. Having recently won his third Winston Cup Championship, however, Jeff probably won't be making any career changes in the near future.



GIVE THE GIFT



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"Shadow Madness' story is easily comparable, if not superior, to the top titles of the genre..." — *GameFan Online*

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your own shadow,
but now you damn well better try.



...the
... piles of dust where
... And you've got to put a stop to it
... with complex battle scenarios,
... And three styles of magic. Because you're gonna
need all the help you can get. Shadow Madness strikes in February 1999.



Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Konami	1-2 Miscellaneous	100	Now Japan
Web Address: www.konami.co.jp			

Beatmania 2nd Mix

Bust Out The Phat Rhythms

If you've always wanted to try your hand at dee-jaying, with Beatmania, you can. Konami's entry into the music game genre is almost all but unknown here in the States (where it can be found in arcades as HipHopMania), but in Japan, the craze is on, with some arcades featuring three or more cabinets of the game.

The concept is simple—press the keys on the keyboard or scratch the turntable as corresponding bars fall from the top of the screen, much like a player piano plays. The game features three modes—Practice, Normal and Expert, with over 25 tracks, including Hip-Hop, Reggae, House, Techno, Ambient, etc., each varying in difficulty. Luckily there's also a Training Mode to help hone your DJ skills, and a Free Mode that lets you play all the songs in any order after you've unlocked them (play them once, they're unlocked).

But wait—don't just go freestylin' and pressing any key in any order. While in some cases you can add extra touches to the songs, the objective is to play them right. There's a volume meter, like an equalizer on a stereo, that gauges performance. Get into the red, and you're rappin' cool. Stay in the green and get booted off the stage. New stages are unlocked based on your score on the main disc, and based on which songs you choose for the included "Append" disc.

Graphically, Beatmania isn't that impressive. Let's face it, CD+G discs are more high-tech—but that's not what Beatmania's about. It's about music, and in that respect, Beatmania excels.

Konami also plans on releasing expansion discs for Beatmania 2nd Mix. The game itself comes with an Append disc that features new songs, including a remix of the Metal Gear Main Theme. The 3rd Mix arcade game was released in Japan last summer, and a disc for that will hit Japan before Christmas.

Unfortunately, Beatmania will not be released in the U.S. for the PlayStation, so grab the import if you can.



While the graphics in Beatmania 2nd Mix aren't high-tech, they're still fun to watch. You won't notice some of them unless you're watching someone else play.

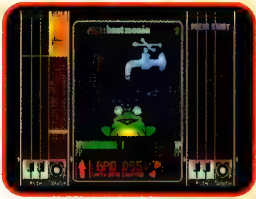
Mix it Up

Ascii has made a Beatmania controller which mimics the layout of the arcade machine. It'll set you back 4990 yen (about \$43), but it's a much easier and natural layout for the game. Although expensive, getting two might be a good idea when you want to play with a friend, or if you want to play Japanese-style—one player controlling both turntables and keyboards.



Big in Tokyo

Beatmania is so popular in Japan that there are already three revisions of the original. The second (which the PlayStation version is based on) and the third "Mix" have swept across Japan's arcade scene, with some arcades having as many as three to four machines. Next up? A Beatmania machine with three black keys and four white keys.

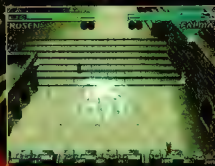
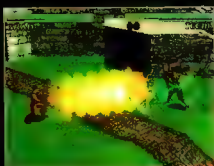


As you tap the keys, you'll be rated on your performance. Don't tap too quick!

Beatmania also has a Training Mode where you can watch the computer play.



LONG AGO, A SMALL COUNTRY WAS DESTROYED MYSTICAL OBJECTS POSSESSING MYSTICAL POWERS. BUT THESE OBJECTS, RELICS, WERE MUCH TOO POWERFUL. EVENTUALLY, THE EMPIRE DESTROYED ITSELF, SEALING ITS SECRET FOR ETERNITY. 1000 YEARS LATER, ONE MAN HAS UNLEASHED THE POWER AND ONCE AGAIN, THE CONTINENT FACES TOTAL DESTRUCTION. PIT RELIC AGAINST RELIC AS 12 INDIVIDUALS FIGHT FOR PEACE, POWER, GREED AND PROSPERITY. OBJECTS OF POWER FAIL, BUT THE SCARS REMAIN...



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DESTREGA



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Publisher/Developer Players/Genre % Done Release

3DO 1-2 January
3DO Action 50 1999

Web Address: www.3do.com

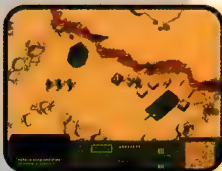
Army Men 3D

Melt Your
Enemy's Mouth
In Addition To
His Hands

Behind the Screens

Army Men for the PC

As you can see from the screenshot below, the PC version of *Army Men* is more of a traditional 2D real-time strategy game, although it still revolves around The Sarge's character. When designing the PlayStation version, 3DO decided to play to the system's strengths by making it three dimensional.



You melted them as a kid. You also blew them up and tortured them in other unspeakable ways. They're little plastic army men, and they're back for revenge in 3DO's *Army Men 3D*.

A marked departure from the PC version, a tongue-in-cheek *Command & Conquer*, *Army Men 3D*, as the name implies, is a 3D action game. Tan forces are mobilizing for an all-out invasion, and it's up to you to protect the Green way of life! The game stars all of your childhood favorites, including bazooka guy, flamethrower guy, about-to-heave-a-grenade guy and (my personal favorite) crawling-on-his-belly-like-a-reptile guy. While they aren't eternally frozen in a single position like their plastic brethren, these small soldiers do strike some mighty familiar poses during combat, sure to bring childhood memories flooding back. The game also includes a number of popular vehicles for you to commandeer, including jeeps, troop transports, tanks and those rolling death traps—half-tracks.

The player primarily controls The Sarge, who must traverse three deadly environments—Desert, Alpine and Bayou—to put an end to the Tan menace. Mission objectives include releasing Green POWs, traversing deadly minefields, knocking out communication towers and—this one is priceless—robbing an enemy plastic stockpile to manufacture reinforcements! Travel deep enough into the game, and you'll also encounter your brothers-in-arms, the Grays, in addition to those crafty guns for hire, the Blues. (Gray and Blue, in case you don't remember, were two other popular colors for army men.) While they're fewer in number than the Green or the Tan armies, the Gray and the Blue forces may prove powerful enough to tip the balance of power, so use them with caution.

While *Army Men 3D* won't provide as much of a mental workout as the PC version, your fingers will have to perform double duty; The Sarge can perform an impressive range of motions—including squatting, rolling, cowering, crawling and throwing. As in Konami's *Metal Gear Solid* or Activision's *Tenchu: Stealth Assassins*, players must use the terrain to remain unseen and/or to provide cover from enemy fire.

Army Men 3D is chock-full of humorous sight gags, too. When hit with a flamethrower, enemies writhe in agony, ultimately ending up a harmless puddle of plastic. Additionally, close

inspection of The Sarge's back reveals a small circle, the same mold

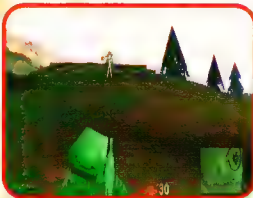


Use the flamethrower to reduce several nearby enemies to puddles of molten plastic.

imprint found on real plastic soldiers! Having completed the basic game engine and created the principle art assets, 3DO plans to use the remaining time to add even more sight gags and inside jokes.

As fun as the one-player game sounds, two-player contests promise to be even more involving. The developers are cramming in 10 two-player maps, including a Gulliver-sized child's bedroom, which the players are free to customize. Players must strategically deploy their limited troops and vehicles in addition to instructing them to assume an attack or defend posture. Then they are free to kick some plastic booty with their primary soldier.

While they never entirely disappeared from toy shelves, plastic army men are enjoying newfound popularity with a brand-new generation of kids thanks in part to DreamWorks' CG-animated film *Toy Story*. Such exposure can only benefit a game like *Army Men 3D*, which is scheduled to invade stores early this year.



A campy opening newsreel perfectly sets the tone for the rest of the game.



Tanks can kill with one shot, so beware. Commandeer one of your own to turn the tables.

Publisher/Developer Players/Genre % Done Release

Eidos 1 40 February
Crystal Dynamics Adventure 1999

Web Address: www.eidosinteractive.com

Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver

Raise
Some
More Kain
In Merry
Old
Nosgoth

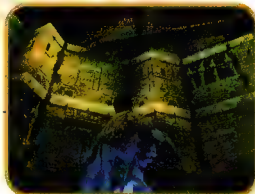
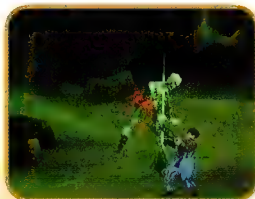
One of the most celebrated games at last year's E3 was Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver, the long-awaited sequel to one of the PlayStation's darkest, most original RPGs. Soon, gamers everywhere will be able to see for themselves what all the fuss was about when the game finally hits store shelves next month, courtesy of Eidos Interactive.

The events of Soul Reaver take place 1,000 years after the conclusion of the first game. A vampire apocalypse lead by the evil Kain has transformed the world of Nosgoth, interrupting the cyclical flow of life energy. The player assumes the role of Raziel, a former lieutenant of Kain's out to restore balance to the universe as well as to wreak revenge against his former master for severely mutilating his body.

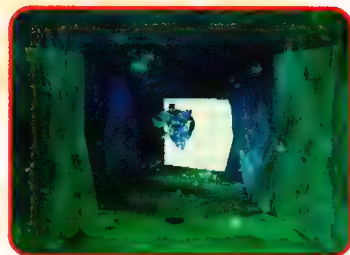
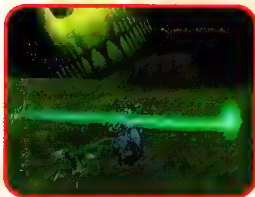
One of Soul Reaver's most unusual play mechanics is the ability to "shunt" or travel to a parallel Spectral World, a warped mirror-image of Nosgoth. The laws that govern physical reality are vastly different in the Spectral World, allowing Raziel to perform feats he wouldn't ordinarily be capable of. Only by traveling between the two worlds can Raziel solve some of the game's more perplexing puzzles and ultimately defeat Kain.

Unlike Legacy of Kain's protagonist, who fed on the blood of the living, Raziel feeds on the souls of Nosgoth's living dead, which he sucks through the cavity in his deformed face. Should Raziel run out of this life energy, he is automatically transported to the Spectral World, from which he must find an exit.

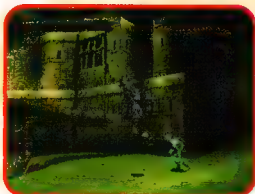
Soul Reaver's expansive 3D levels spool directly from the disc, eliminating the annoying disc access that plagued the original. The elimination of save points and inventory screens also should make Soul Reaver one of the most seamless, immersive role-playing experiences to date. ●



Raziel obtains sustenance by inhaling the souls of defeated enemies.



Raziel gains new abilities such as swimming by defeating the game's five clan leaders and stealing their powers.

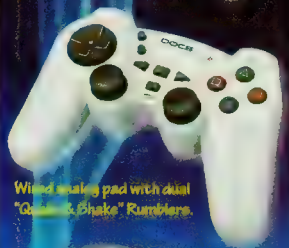


Although he can't fly, Raziel can use the tattered remnants of his wings to glide, Spyro the Dragon-style.

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if you
choose
not to accept
the characters
that others have
created,
you will learn
nothing,
remain stagnant,
and die
an early,
painful
death.

in the realm of gaming,

it is believed that
time can give you

will allow your gaming life.

It is now possible to achieve
border, online game, with
and be recognized as a deity
among players who gather
into the universe.

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and they can experience

and they can experience
code levels, characters, or items posted
off the web and raise your gaming
even higher.

play, time, trade.

good is good, but so is generosity,
because in this life, and the next,
what goes around,
comes around.

DexDrive

good, better



DexPlover

and more

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Psygnosis ATD	1-2 Racing	80	March 1999
Web Address: www.psygnosis.com			

RollCage

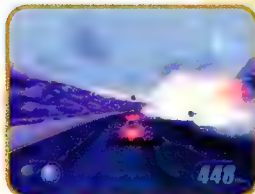
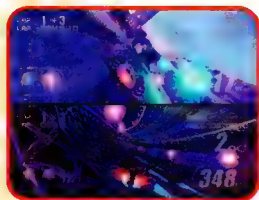
Expect
Extreme G's

From developer ATD, the U.K.-based team best known for supporting the Jaguar with games like Cybermorph, comes RollCage, an extremely snazzy-looking racer with some even snazzier gameplay twists. For starters, you can flip your indestructible car and still continue on as if nothing happened, thanks to its oversized tires that let it ride upside down. Even better, you can race up and along sheer canyon walls and along the roofs of tunnels, as long as you maintain a sufficiently high speed.

And that's just the beginning. You can also use projectile power-ups—or even the ramming force of your own car—to topple the buildings that line the raceway. As these structures smash to the ground, they blast apart in an explosive shockwave that can push your car along and send opponents flying. You can also carry two power-ups at once, each one keyed to a Shoulder button. Hence, you can unleash two weapons at a time, or even kick on two turbos for a mega-screen-blurring boost of speed.

RollCage's courses are set in four environments, including a futuristic city, a hilly coastline and even Mars, where the

lesser gravity makes racing particularly interesting. Of course, it also packs a two-player split-screen mode, as well as a Battle Mode that opens once you clear each circuit.

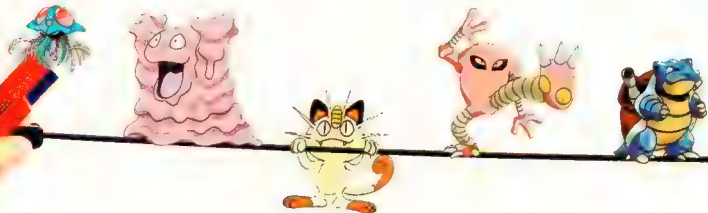


Explosions in RollCage are a good thing—when they're behind you. Their shockwaves will give you a boost.



And To Think Some People Collect Stamps.

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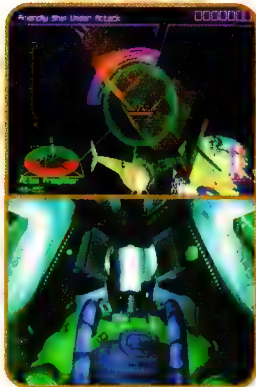


Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Psygnosis Psygnosis	1-2 Action	85	February 1999

Web Address: www.psygnosis.com

No, It's Not A Sequel To Colony Wars

Blast Radius



A game as successful as Colony Wars is bound to have imitators, however you wouldn't expect it to come from the same company. Blast Radius looks so similar to CW that it could pass as a mission disk for it. You play as a character named Kayne who is a mercenary working for an alien race called the Vorn. You're pitching in



Colony Wars? No, no, no—it just looks like that other Psygnosis space flight-sim.



Planets, asteroids and other distinctive space objects look great. Some of these cast neat lighting effects.

against some bad guys named the Kotan-Kai armed with the best weapons the Vorn can muster. You can choose between nine different spaceships with a total of 13 unique weapons. There are 37 types of enemy craft littered across 40 missions which make up 10 full sectors.

Of course there are differences between the two space shooters and they happen to be quite cool. There is a two-player Link-up Mode that lets you and a friend play cooperatively or an all-out deathmatch with four deathmatch-specific areas in addition to the regular arenas. It should be noted that Blast Radius looks quite good and has some very nice effects. It's just that they look like...well, you know. ●

Get Connected And Collect Them All.



"Got Ya!"

www.pokemon.com



Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
ASC Games	1-2 Action	85	December 1998
Web Address: www.ascgames.com			

Dead in the Water

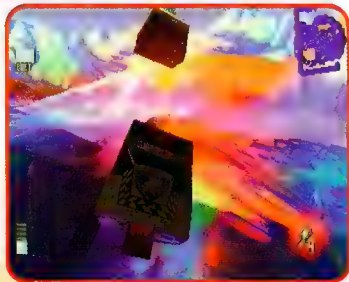
ASC Deep-Sixes
Vehicular
Combat

The ultrapopular vehicular combat genre hits the high seas in ASC's *Dead in the Water*. After receiving an invitation from a nebulous organization whose headquarters lies in the center of the Bermuda Triangle, 13 of the world's most anti-social boat captains gather for a winner-takes-all competition. The prize: the revelation of an age-old secret (plus a boat-load of cold, hard cash).

Unlike *Twisted Metal* or *Vigilante 8*, *Dead in the Water* offers two unique modes of play: Race and Battle. In Race Mode, players employ over a dozen weapons, secret shortcuts and any other underhanded tactics you can think of to cross the finish line first. The object of Battle Mode is even simpler: kill anything that moves. Both modes can be played as a single competition or in a tournament.

Dead in the Water's nine unique courses span such diverse locales as the Amazon River, Loch Ness and the Bermuda Triangle. Each arena is filled with power-ups and secrets, discovered by smashing through billboards, slashing through icebergs and blowing up temples.

In addition to your cutthroat opponents, you'll also have to battle the game's 3D waves and currents, which toss your boat around like a cork. The water also reacts to your weapons, producing huge geysers



The game's violent waves make it possible to vault above or "submarine" below enemies.

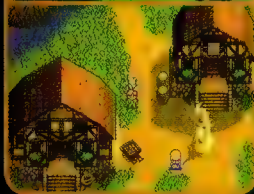
while assuring constantly changing race conditions.

In addition to the standard armor, engine and weapon upgrades, a number of bizarre accessories, such as fuzzy dice and wiggling hula girls, can be purchased at the game's shop. When bought in certain combinations, this so-called "funky stuff" has humorous and unpredictable effects on your craft.

Dead in the Water also offers two-player link and split-screen action, creating an unprecedented number of ways to play. ●

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Working Designs	1 RPG	50	January 1999
Web Address: www.workingdesigns.com			

Lunar: Silver Star Story Complete



One of the few bright spots during the brief life of the Sega CD was Game Arts/Working Design's *Lunar: The Silver Star*. The game's involved story line and memorable cast of characters made it a favorite among owners of Sega's short-lived peripheral. The game, however, never really received widespread recognition due to the Sega CD's relatively low installed base.

Fortunately for fans of classic role-playing action, a newly updated and expanded version of the game, entitled *Lunar: Silver Star Story Complete*, is coming stateside courtesy of Working Designs. Originally released for the Sega Saturn in Japan, the game tells the story of Alex, a young man obsessed with the legendary warrior, Dragonmaster Dyne. Accompanied by his friend Ramus and a wise-cracking baby dragon, Alex sets out to find the legendary warrior, who Alex hopes can rid their world of an evil sorcerer named Ghaleon.

In addition to improved graphics, *Lunar: Silver Star Story Complete* contains new cinemas, radically altered scenes, more supporting characters and more verbal jousting between lead characters

than the Sega CD version, making it well worth a look, even for gamers who completed the original.

Originally intended for release last year, Lunar's U.S. PlayStation release was delayed by Japanese developer Game Art's decision to rewrite the game's entire script. (Apparently, they were never completely happy with a few of the game's minor plot points.)

Anime fans will be interested to learn *Lunar: Silver Star Story Complete* also has over 45 minutes of theater-quality animation, making it one of this year's must-play RPGs.



Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Jaleco	1	85	January
Jaleco	Puzzle		1999

Web Address: www.jaleco.com

Irritating Stick

That's A Nice
Stick You've
Got There!

70

There are over
70 different levels
to challenge
your stick-
handling skills.

It seems as if they'll make a game about anything these days. Based on an old Japanese television show, Irritating Stick can loosely be described as a puzzle game. The premise of the game is to navigate a stick through a labyrinth without touching the sides. If you touch the sides, you'll receive an electric jolt, and you'll have to start over at the beginning, hence the irritation. For maximum effect, this game is best played using a Dual Shock controller. The analog stick makes maneuvering through the maze much easier, while the Dual Shock vibrates like mad when you screw up.

If this weren't wacky enough, there's a variety of play modes that will help add longevity to this title. There's a Television Mode that re-creates the feeling of the original game show, and an AI Mode that increases the level of difficulty depending on how well you do. Finally, there's a Course Edit Mode that lets you design your own courses, which can be arranged with windmills, churning pistons, moving chambers and more.

With over 70 courses and a two-player mode, Irritating Stick might be the perfect party game for families with lots of kids. Although some things may



change from the Japanese version, the simple premise is easy to grasp and may prove to be a hit when it arrives in January 1999.



These are the virtual hands that hold the stick. Strangely, they disappear when you start the game.



Easy does it! Easy does it! No! No! No!

My 2 Cents

It's amazing to think that you can make a game like this for the PlayStation. But hey, funnier things have happened. I can imagine it would be great for families with young children. Definitely not for the hardcore, but who knows?

-James Mielke

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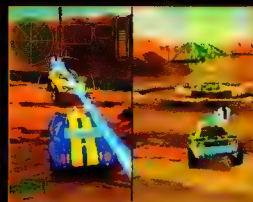
- Next Generation

"the new king of car-nage"

-The Official PlayStation Magazine

"Everything about this game demolishes the competition..."

- Game Fan



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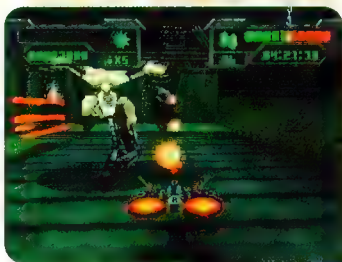
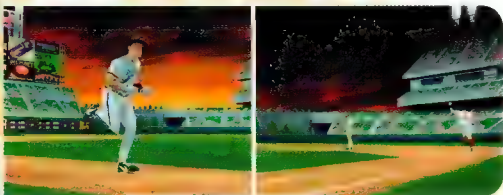
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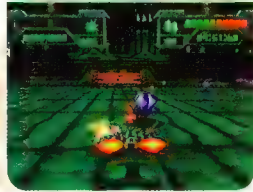
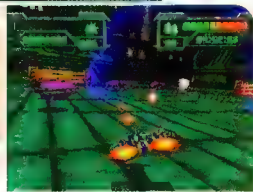
Baseball 2000

Baseball 2000 (sounds especially futuristic with that 2000 attached, eh?) from newly renamed Interplay Sports is quite an improvement—at least graphically, thanks in part to new hi-res characters—over previous versions. Besides the Create-a-Player Mode and a Tournament Mode (where you can draft your team from all existing MLB players), the game gives you tons of new animations, signature moves and a real-life announcer (whose identity is still unknown).



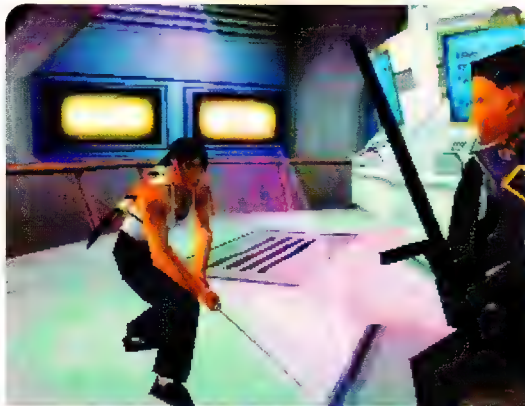
Contender

It seems like everyone is trying to outdo each other when it comes to sports games—even boxing. While EA has taken the sim route with Knockout Kings, Sony and Victor Interactive's Contender features classic arcade boxing action. The title offers 40 different boxers each with his own signature look, style and strengths. While Contender may not have real boxers, the producers promise it's very playable and exciting right out of the box. There is also an option to build and save your own boxers for custom two-player matches. Look for this one sometime in January '99.



Eliminator

Developed by Psynopsis' Liverpool office, Eliminator gives you fast action in the form of a futuristic racer. You'll have access to a large variety of flashy weapons and over 30 types of enemies to use them on. In addition, the game features eight levels of play and 16 different events to work your way through. Expect a pumping soundtrack and a load of special graphic effects.



Saboteur

Saboteur from Tigon and Eidos has unique elements that make it stand out from other 3D action/adventure games out there. For example, it is said to have a strong story line that focuses around a main character who is a ninja, and a variety of secondary characters to interact with, who then work with you against the enemy during gameplay. It should make it out in the second quarter of 1999.



Urban Chaos

Coming from U.K.-based Mucky Foot (see Slick 50 feature), this 3D action/adventure looks set to redefine the technological boundaries of the PlayStation. Like Gran Turismo, this game has been designed around the PlayStation Analyzer to ensure that there are more special effects than any other game of this type. Expect a blend of combat and adventure.

Dragon Valor

Namco is bringing us Dragon Valor, an action/RPG for the PlayStation. You're a warrior who travels to a variety of locales, doing battle with dragons. DV is in full 3D, with an RPG feel, but it also combines other genres. The plot is fairly nonlinear, allowing you to control several characters throughout the game's many chapters. A U.S. release date has yet to be established.



PLAYSTATION

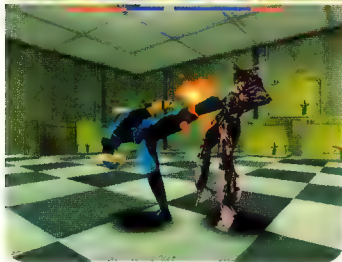
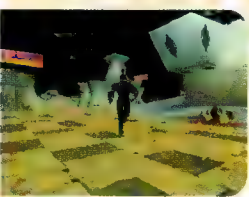
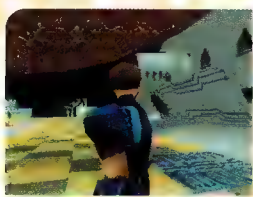
Shao Lin

Polygon Magic and THQ will be bringing us Shao Lin, best described as a playable kung fu flick, sometime in March '99. With four-player support, the game's ability to have numerous characters on screen at once and six realistic fighting styles, Shao Lin should be quite intense. In addition to its regular modes of play, this one features an RPG Mode which brings adventure/RPG elements into the mix.



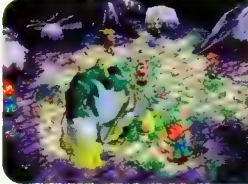
Omikron: The Nomad Soul

Enter a parallel universe known as the Phaenon in Omikron: The Nomad Soul from Quantic Dream and Eidos, coming to the PlayStation in the first quarter of '99. In this 3D action/adventure game you control a variety of inhabitants of Omikron, trying to make sure the evil Astaroth doesn't take over the world. A unique feature of Omikron is its virtual reincarnation. After dying, you become the last person you touched—whoever that may be. The object, of course, is to work your way to Astaroth and kick the snot out of him. The game is said to have a proper fighting engine in addition to its adventure elements.



SaGa Frontier II

Square's latest RPG announcement comes in the form of SaGa Frontier II, the sequel to last year's not-so-well-received PlayStation epic. This time around however, things are definitely looking up. SaGa Frontier II's graphics are a sight to behold, with beautiful hand-drawn illustrations taking the place of the prerendered backgrounds that were commonplace in the original game. The multiple quest format is back, and the battle scenes have been revamped as well. A U.S. release is TBD.



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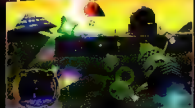
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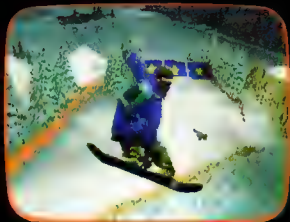
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Tech Romancer

From The
Creator Of
Macross

Capcom has always been the king of the 2D fighting game. Unfortunately, innovation has pretty much laid down for easy dollar signs as we are subjected to endless Street Fighter clones involving all but the Spice Girls. Recent news reports have stated that Street Fighter III: Third Impact and Street Fighter Alpha 3 are the end of those respective series, and Capcom is moving on to new stories (not that those games had much of a story anyway). Plus the arcade industry is slowly, slowly moving away from the fighting genre. Those fighting games that do succeed in today's market must at least offer something significantly different to keep people interested. Enter Tech Romancer.

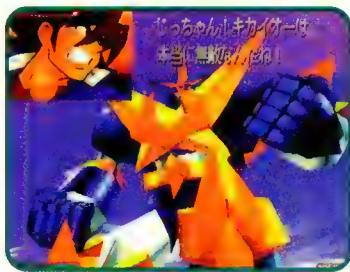
Virtual On was one of the first games to incorporate a basic fighting engine into more of a 3D realm. Throughout the past few years, games like Ehrgeiz and Die Hard Arcade are taking on more of an action game feel, and yet you as the player are still mindlessly bashing enemies with an array of punches, kicks and special attacks. The difference is the world in which the game is presented. At this year's AMOA show in Nashville, games like Sega's Spikeout, House of the Dead Side Story and Dynamite Deku (Die Hard Arcade) 2 took this action/adventure/fighting game idea to never-before-seen levels.

Tech Romancer is Capcom's attempt to enter this "new" genre, and it looks very cool. Created by Shouji Kawamori (the god of animation who created Macross, or Robotech to us mainlanders) and Studio Nue, this game has elements of an action

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Capcom	1-2	100	1st Qtr. 1999
Capcom	Fighting		
Web Address: www.capcom.com			



The characters in Tech Romancer are all unique—to a point. Some of the characters and their moves look a little like Star Gladiators.



G. Kaiser

Robot Type: Super Robot

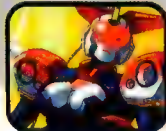
The matchless robot secretly created by Junpei's father and grandfather has both destructive power and solid Ironclad armor. It's invincible due to the super metal "Orihalconium." The origin of the metal is unknown.



Armored Angel

Robot Type: Super Female

She's a beautiful female robot that fights to defeat the evil Goldibus who desires to rule the world. Shockwaves and Optical Weapons are her speciality, and she takes pride in her high-tech midair mobility.



FX-0045 Dixen

Robot Type: Defender

The newest model of the Federation—it's still on trial runs. Equipped with various close to midrange bombs and a Fixer Cannon for super long-range attacks. This type of robot is known for its orbital fighting ability.



Twinzam V

Robot Type: Combinable

It's a link-type robot controlled by twin brother and sister. Combining two fighters transforms them into the giant robot Twinzam. The two very different fighters make for a robot with an array of fighting capabilities.





game, a fighting game and an RPG. The gameplay feels very much like Virtual On, where two 3D mechs duke it out on a battlefield. The mechs vary in size, piloting skill and weaponry. As in Virtual On, the larger the mech, the slower it is but also the more powerful. Each of the eight mechs has its own purpose, whether it be a defender, a military robot or even a transformer a la Robotech (anyone remember the walking F-14?). There are even ways to make your mech stronger.

Tech Romancer offers a variety of items you can pick up to enhance your mech. You are able to stock up five items in all and are equipped with three to start (two weapons and one offensive power-up). Three types of items can be acquired: Recovering Type

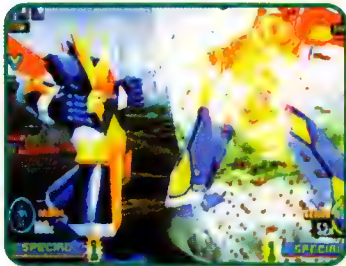
Items (Repair Module for damage repair, Armor Module for Armor Repair and Special Module to increase your Special Attacks Gauge), Ability Type Items (Offense Up Unit, Defense Up Unit, Speed Up Unit and Hit Booster for special abilities) and last, Weapon Items (there are three types

of weapons for each character).

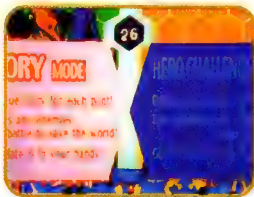
The powering up, recovering or usage of weapons is as important as selecting which items to stock. You can turn the tide of any battle using skill. To find power-ups, you might crash into an obstacle or knock down an opponent to take his stock. Some power-ups help you more in one mode of play than the other.

Tech Romancer also offers two different game modes. Story Mode leads you through a different story depending not only on the character you choose, but the way you fight. Every move you make influences how the story develops. A selectable story line leads you to a different tale, animation and ending, making for brilliant replay (and this is a Capcom game!). Hero Challenge Mode pits you against 12 opponents to rate your ability to become a "hero." The game will evaluate and rank you after every battle, and your rank will determine what sort of hero you are able to become.

All in all, Tech Romancer sounds like an incredibly innovative game from the company who is also known as the king of fighting game clones. **B+**



Each robot has a wide range of attacks as well as plenty of weapons.

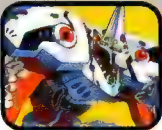


Romancer has two modes of play: Story Mode and Hero Challenge Mode.

Robot Type: Living Mobile

Pulsion

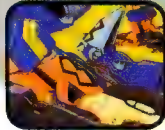
He suddenly appears to correct the crisis on Earth. With origins unknown, its purpose in fighting to save the Earth is a mystery. The only known fact is that it's not a robot but a complex organism part mechanical/part living.



Robot Type: Various Tactical

YF-37 Rafaga

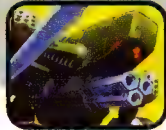
Belonging to the Air Force of the SHTO (Southern Hemisphere Treaty Organization), Rafaga is a variable strategic fighter that can change modes: Fighter, Combat and Soldier, according to the fighting situation at hand.



Robot Type: Military

GZ-56 Wise Duck

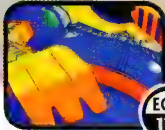
A military-type robot of the Army's Special Forces that can fight under any conditions, Wise Duck is equipped with a wide caliber cannon, multidispenser, "Bull Breaker" and more. Its huge body is constructed of weapons and heavy armor.



Robot Type: Super Patched

Bollon

A girl from the unknown "world of magic," she used her powers to create a patchwork robot. Since every part of the robot is made from buildings, the body itself is heavy but sturdy.



Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Taito Taito	1-2 Action	90	Available Now
Web Address: N/A			

Chaos Heat

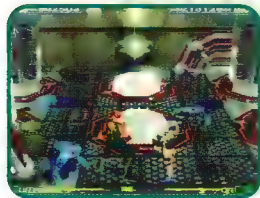
Final Fight Is Becoming The New Street Fighter

Yet one more in the realm of action/adventure is a game from Taito called Chaos Heat. This game is the first to utilize a new system entitled Taito G-NET. An SNK-inspired system, G-NET employs the use of a small card that plugs into a new Taito-standard harness. These cards hold the entire game and are easy to replace. Game memory has been increased, and expanded game features such as a level expansion or the addition of new characters are as simple to implement as plugging in the next card. There seems to be the possibility of upgrading via a network, so no one even has to open the cabinet.

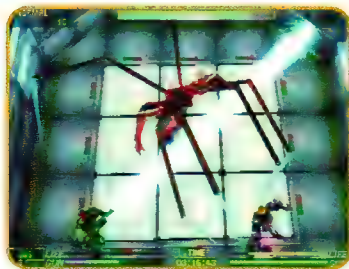
Chaos Heat plays a lot like Spikeout or Dynamite Deku. You can choose from one of three characters: Rickrider, Mitsuki and Vogt. All of the characters have attributes and abilities that make them special. They also have individual weapons: Vogt's flamethrower is powerful, but only able to be used at mid- to close range; Rickrider's energy weapon is powerful and has a better range; and the all-around best weapon is Mitsuki's machine guns, with sustaining firepower at decent range. All of the characters can pick up items throughout the game that will help you complete the adventure. The special weapons you can pick up are powerful, and some may even kill you if used in close quarters (such as the Pod and obviously the Launcher).

An intriguing story line changes depending on what character you are, who you defeat and what paths you take. The levels of the game are set up in "divisions," and your success is rated on how well you complete each of those divisions.

Chaos Heat's graphic engine looks the same, if not better than Naomi's House of the Dead Side Story. This is impressive considering the significant power behind the Dreamcast derived hardware.



The game style is similar to Die Hard Arcade, with graphics far superior.



The bosses in Chaos Heat are going to be difficult. They will, however, have discernable patterns.

Weapons and Items



Gas

Projectile explodes upon impact



Spark

Powerful electrical charge effective in water



Pod

Sensor projectile destroys enemies after impact



Search

Enemy seeking projectile



Launcher

Impact detonated projectile



Napalm

Fire impact projectile



Life Pack

Recover life



Guard Vest

Damage shield



Speed Pack

Gun energy recovery speed up

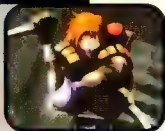


Cooling Pack

No gun energy depletion

Vogt

Close Attack:
Knife
Basic Weapon:
Flamethrower
Attacking Method:
Speed Type



Rickrider

Close Attack:
Punching
Basic Weapon:
Energy Launcher
Attacking Method:
Power Style



Mitsuki

Close Attack:
Kicking Maneuvers
Basic Weapon:
Forearm Machine Gun
Attacking Method:
Balanced Type





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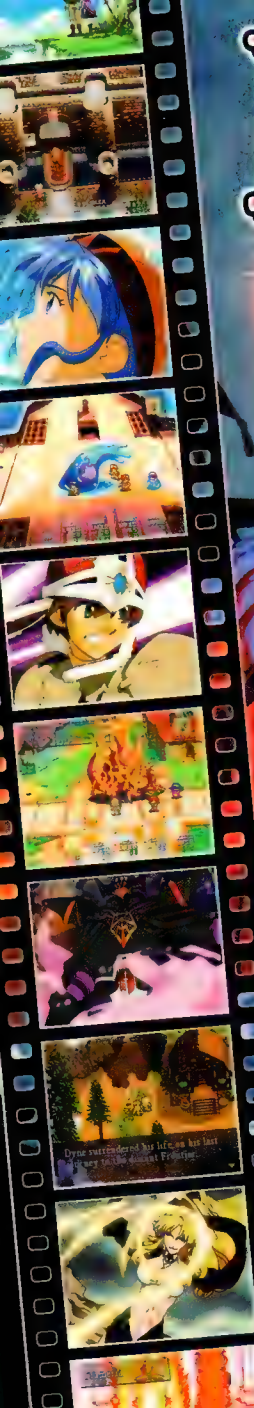


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Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Midway	1-4	N/A	January
Midway	Racing		1999

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Hydro Thunder

An All New
Meaning To
The Term
Wave Race

The Story

Hydro Thunder is run by an underground group called the Hydro Thunder Racing Association. This group, of course, is not endorsed by the official racing circuit. People are told about the race, they meet and are handed a map simply showing where the finish line is. Sounds like a plot ripped straight from *The Cannonball Run*, doesn't it?

Hydro Thunder is the result of 18 months of hard work on a game engine developed from scratch.

Created by Midway's San Diego team, this game is the ultimate in super boats—an area of racing mostly overlooked in the arcade industry. “I have looked at several boat simulators, mostly on the PC,” states Steve Ranck, head designer. “Even though they say on the box they use realistic physics, nothing stands out.” He’s right. Most “boat simulators” put you in the cockpit of a stationary object as tons of sprites and backgrounds come racing toward you. Hydro will be different.

What looks to be the ultimate boat sim focuses on three types of boats: Catamarans (a cool speed boat with two pontoons), Super Boats (your basic V-hull power boat) and Hydro Boats (those awesome two-pound boats that always look like they’re about to flip over). There are also a few secret boats, one of which will be a hovercraft, and another is a concept speed boat created by the team. This leads into the levels of difficulty. HT has three difficulty levels: Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced. Unlike some games where a ramped-up difficulty simply means harder competitors, HT offers more control over your boat. In the Beginner level, your vehicle is very stable. As you advance, you get into faster vehicles like the Hydro Boats, and you learn how to use waves to get to boosts hanging in the air or to jump to a higher placement.

The controls are simple enough as well. The steering is controlled by an almost airplane-style wheel. You either push the wheel in to go faster, or pull it toward you to slow down. Cool stunts can be performed by hitting turbos as you are pulling back on the wheel. Some boats are incredibly fast from the start, but do not utilize the hydro boosts as well as others. The other

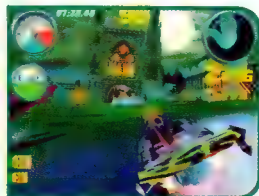
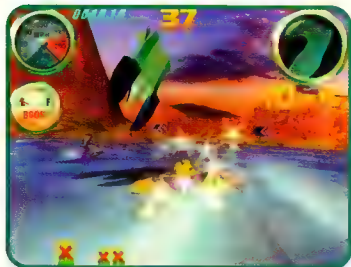
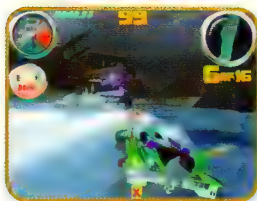


Hydro Thunder looks a lot like Midway of Chicago's Hyperdrive game. More impressive, however, is the attention paid to the physics engine.

boats may not be very fast to start, but really cook when hitting a boost. The boosts are controlled by a meter, which can be extended if Balloon icons are picked up. There is also a special boost called the Mighty Hole performed by simply holding turbos for a while. During the Mighty Hole, your boat will flash white and for a time you will be invincible. At this point you can bash your opponents as much as you want.

Midway created each track from scratch. There will be a minimum of nine straightforward tracks, a couple secret ones and possibly two loop tracks. Locations include Lake Powell in Utah, a lost island complete with tropical settings and exploding volcanos, the Arctic Circle where you get to pull a Titanic and dodge icebergs, the Greek Islands, Venice, the Far East where you race in China and an awesome ship graveyard where military battleships have long been laid to rest.

Hydro is linkable for up to four players, and it just looks awesome. The development team really seems to know what they are talking about when it comes to boats. Time will definitely tell if it will be as good as it looks right now.



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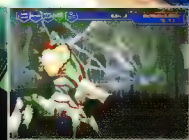
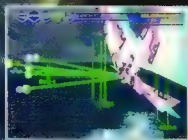
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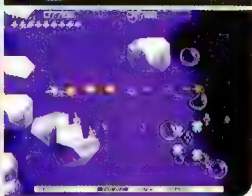
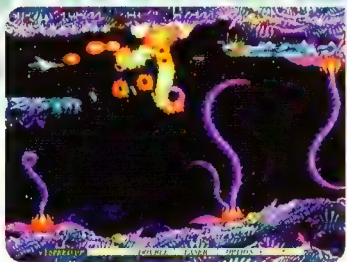
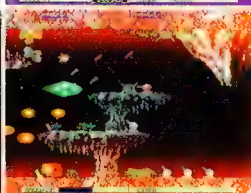
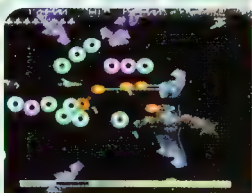
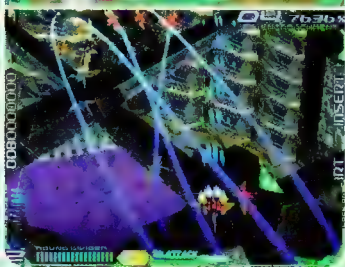
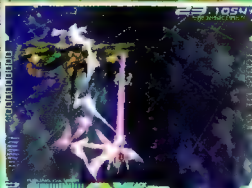
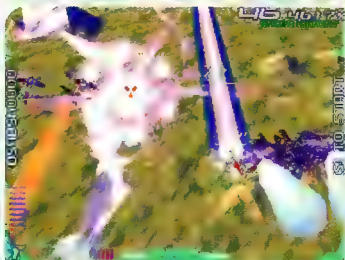
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Raycrisis

Raystorm has been out for a while for the PlayStation, and now the awesome-looking sequel is on its way to the arcades. The graphics are very clean and crisp, and there are no where near as many distractions on the screen at once. The bosses all look unlike as well. Raycrisis, like Raystorm, has a more 3D look to it rather than a top-down view. The weapons are all very cool with some spectacular effects.



Gradius IV

If you don't know what Gradius is, stop reading this and buy it for the NES. Originally an excellent arcade shooter, Gradius has seen many sequels over the years including the ever popular Lifeforce. Recently, Konami released a 3D version of the game called Solar Assault. Not to say that game was bad, but we're glad to see Gradius IV is 2D. The game is pure Gradius with weapon advancement, options and cool-looking bosses.

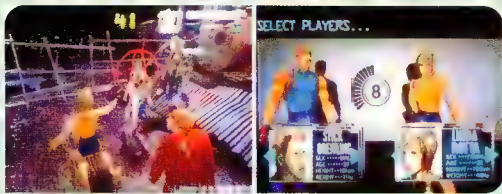
Dirt Devil

Sega Rally had a strong following, despite never reaching Daytona's star status. When the sequel was released, it seemed Sega had hit the pinnacle of off-road racing. Wrong! Dirt Devil looks spectacular. With tougher vehicles (especially compared to the sports cars in Rally) such as Hum-Vees, dune buggies and the like, Dirt Devil will probably surpass Rally in gameplay as well as graphics.



House of the Dead Side Story

Here are more pictures and some artwork for this upcoming Resident Evil-style game. The Naomi hardware allows for graphics superior to a Model 3 board as you can tell by these pictures. All of the backdrops are generated in real time, offering a far greater degree of freedom than previous games like this.

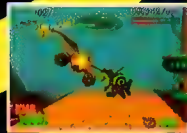
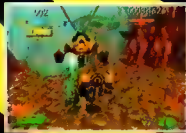
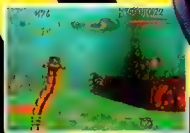


Ocean Hunter

This game should be in arcades when you read this. Here's a look at some more enemies you'll run into. Reports indicate that if you stop some of these "fish" from killing people, you will gain items or points. It is important to note, however, that you can't save everybody. In the first couple of minutes of play, you can't prevent the shark from eating the diver.



Buck BUMBLE



BEE PREPARED

The Herd is attacking and exterminating Earth's native insects! Only Buck Bumble, the most advanced fighting bee ever and the baddest bee in the hive, can save the day. Use Buck's cybernetic implants and stockade of deadly weapons to unmask the power behind The Herd!

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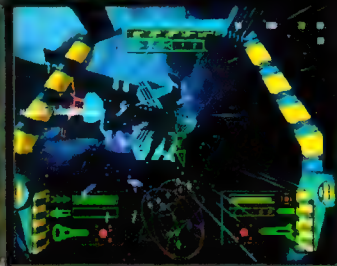
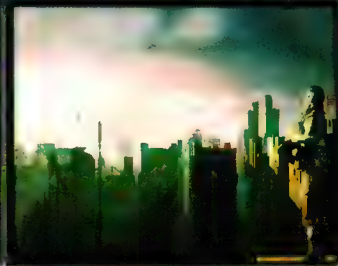
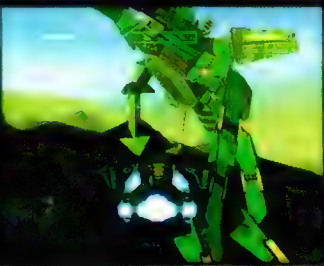


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THE EGM Slick 50

People • Hardware • Concepts • Software

Each year, we see a number of significant innovations that truly change the way we think about video games and the games industry from that point on. These trendsetters can involve anything from the rise in power of a particular developer or publisher, the acceptance of a new technology, the dawning of an entirely new concept or even the actions of an individual, and each year as we look back it's possible to pinpoint the slickest, most important elements in video gaming.

Well, with our new Slick 50 feature, *EGM* is looking to jump the gun a little bit by laying out our own set of predictions for what will be affecting the video game community over the next 12 months. From what we've seen so far, all of the people, gadgets, games and concepts that we highlight over the next 26 pages are significant enough to change the face of both the industry itself and how you are likely to interact with it. Whether it's Miyamoto's influence over game design or the integration of cyber life into more and more games, everything you read about here will be either a catalyst for future developments or settle into becoming more of the norm as opposed to the exceptions to the rules. Above all, if you haven't heard of some of the things on our Slick 50 list, we're certain you'll be familiar with them by the end of 1999. There's just no escaping this stuff.

Sure, not everything on our list is a brand-new gadget or concept or star developer you've never heard of before. Several entries are people and ideas that have been around for years—although their influence on the industry has yet to be fully recognized, until now. Then there were the dozens of slick nominees we had to weed from contention.

But alas, there can be only 50, and we'll know if we picked the right 50 in 12 months. Each year we'll return to the list and look back on whether we actually got it right or not, before again looking forward to future developments. Check back in 12 months to see our next batch of the *EGM* Slick 50.



Hideo Kojima

Metal Gear Mastermind

▶ We'd be foolish to overlook one of the most influential game producers of 1998, Metal Gear Solid guru Hideo Kojima. Having worked as producer and director on his epic for more than four years (and before that, the equally cinematic Policenauts and Snatcher, as well as the previous Japanese Metal Gear games), he is one of the first producers to truly apply movie-production values to interactive entertainment. And that only makes sense, considering Kojima originally wanted to work in the movie business.

Never losing site of the fact that it is a game, and not a movie, he was creating, Kojima provided us with a game that is arguably the most perfect piece of PlayStation software to date—and how many people can you say that about?

There is no denying that Metal Gear Solid is a work of creative genius, and we expect it to have a serious effect on the way games are presented in 1999. Watch for more thoroughly researched content, better scripting, characterization and camera effects in

games along with a more mature treatment of adult themes and acting.

A true innovator paves the way for others to follow, and Kojima may have singlehandedly opened the flood gates for truly "mature" game content. Finally we may see "action games" following the same road map as "action movies." In other words, at last we may see producers refusing to hold back on violence, sexual content and swearing in games, and Kojima has certainly been a catalyst for this.

Mucky Foot

Ever Hear of Them? You Will

▶ Formed by former Bullfrog stalwart Mike Diskett (the head guy on *Syndicate Wars*), U.K.-based Mucky Foot is already establishing a solid reputation. You may not have heard the name until now, but—trust us—in 1999 it will be one of “those” teams that people always remember.

Its forthcoming PlayStation game, *Urban Chaos* (snapped up by Eidos), is being developed using Sony's performance-boosting

PlayStation Analyzer, and even in its early stages this beat-'em-up looks set to push the technology to the limits in terms of both graphics and gameplay AI.



Infrared Linkups

Look, Ma—No Cables!

▶ With Sony's PocketStation (formerly the PDA) and the Color Game Boy being the only game gadgets making use of it right now, infrared-transmission technology is still a new, untested concept. And even though it has its drawbacks—namely, limited range of less than a foot or so—we see lots of potential for linking things together, sans wires, for short bursts of data exchange (real-world RPGs on the PocketStation, which would let you take

on enemy characters miles from your PlayStation, is our favorite idea). Heck, we wouldn't be surprised to see infrared linkups built into Nintendo's and Sony's next consoles.



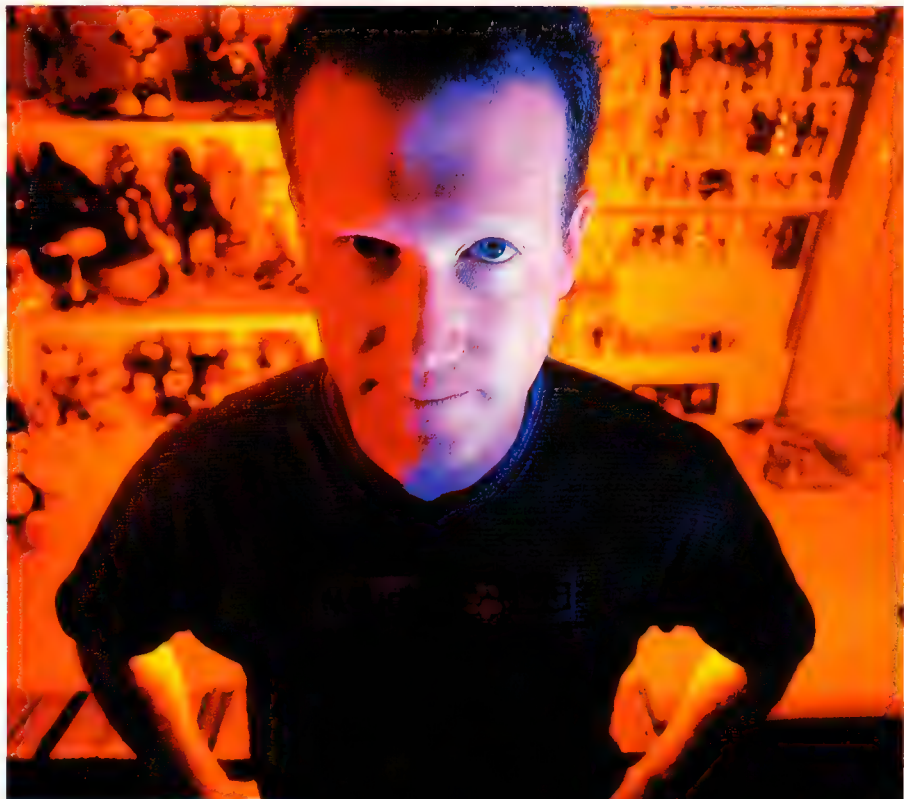
Ken Kutaragi

PlayStation Poppa

▶ Video gaming today wouldn't be the same without Ken Kutaragi. In 1995, few thought that Sony could issue a challenge to the dominant system worldwide—but that's exactly what happened. Kutaragi is the father of the PlayStation, and his invention has become Sony's most successful product ever and a household word, with a system in one in every 10 U.S. homes. Heck, this guy's baby has done what no other console could accomplish: The PlayStation has granted

video games a sense of mainstream coolness on par with the Discman and MTV.

Kutaragi also serves as CEO and chairman of Sony Computer Entertainment America—not only insuring continued success in the U.S. market but preparing for future conflicts with the other guys' consoles. When PlayStation Next is made public in 1999, it will carry his seal of approval. He recently told *EE Times*, “Our goal is a film-like graphics quality that won't make viewers conscious of or annoyed [by the fact] that they are indeed looking at computer graphics.”



Naughty Dog

Wild and Crazy Guys

Andy Gavin

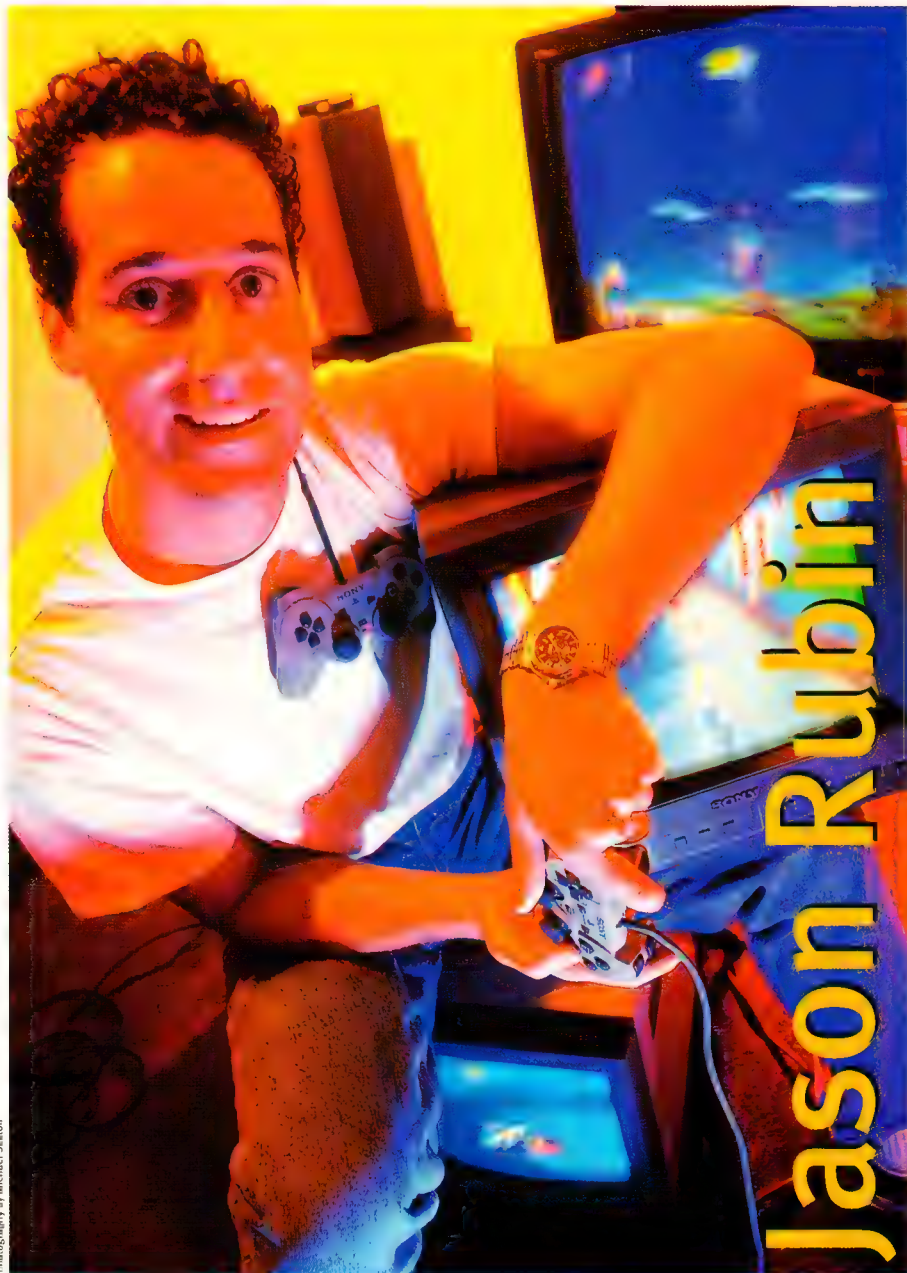
Photography by Michael Stanton

▶ Jason Rubin, president and founder of Naughty Dog, and Andy Gavin, head programmer and co-founder, and the rest of the Naughty Dog team developed Crash Bandicoot, the best-selling PlayStation game of all time. That could be why they're on this list. Crash Bandicoot combines impressive visuals with incredible gameplay that delivers a classic gaming experience. The first Crash has sold just under 2 million units in the United States to date, and Crash

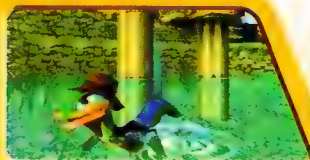
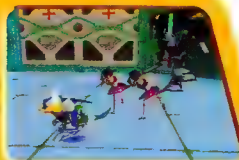
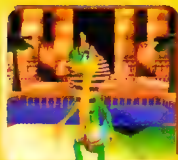
2 is just as successful. Rightfully so. Now Crash Bandicoot: WARPED is here and we're getting more marsupial goodness. But that doesn't mean the Naughty Dog is closing its doors and retiring of course. "There's more the PlayStation can do," Rubin says. Apparently, the Naughty Dog team is going to get 20-30 percent more out of the PlayStation with their next title than they did with Crash 3. Their next title, which is not a Crash game and has a tentative

release date of Christmas of '99, is something no one will expect from Naughty Dog, according to Rubin. The team has come a long way considering Rubin and Gavin's first game together was on the Apple II, landing them a \$250 profit. And who could forget their cult classic Way of the Warrior on the 3DO. Who knew? How do they continually wow us with their games? "Our strength is our focus," Rubin adds, "we're going to keep it tight."

Photography by Michael Sartori



Jason Rubin



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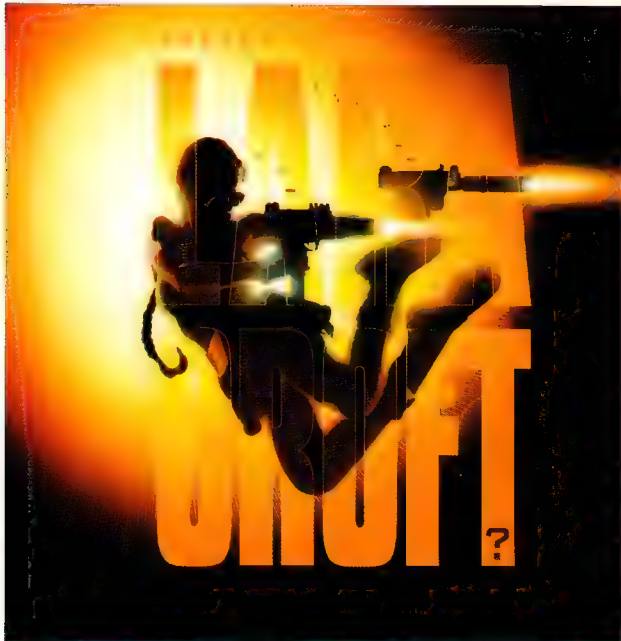




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Movies of Games

Save an Aisle Seat

▶ Let's be honest: Nearly every movie based on a game sucked. *Double Dragon* sucked. *Street Fighter: The Movie* sucked. And *Super Mario Bros.*—which packed too much snot-like fungus for our tastes—really, really sucked. And we understand completely if you were so traumatized by these celluloid disasters that you'll avoid the cineplex altogether and wait for any future game flicks to hit a 1 a.m. slot on Superstation WTBS.

But then you just might be missing something. With several high-profile, big-budget vid-game movies in the works—most notably *Tomb Raider*, *Resident Evil* and a CG Final Fantasy flick, with a possible Duke Nukem and *Doom* also planned—games are finally getting the proper Hollywood treatment they're due. We're betting a few of these films might (gasp!) actually be worth the \$8 admission.

Solid Snake

One Bad Mutha

▶ Here's why Solid Snake, the 30-something, cold-blooded "professional" of *Metal Gear Solid*, is the baddest hombre to blast bad guys in any game ever: He smokes in places clearly labeled as non-smoking areas. He snaps necks on a daily basis. He fights enemies so powerful they can read memory cards. His voice is a gravelly mix of Snake Plissken's and Clint Eastwood's (thanks to voice actor David Hayter's excellent portrayal). He thinks strapping C4 to an enemy's back is funny (OK, maybe only we get a kick out of that). Oh, and we hear he likes the ladies. Best of all, he does it all with such a remarkable sense of stoic, it's-just-a-job duty that we not only admire the guy, we wanna be him.

The ending of *MGS* left Snake's survival in question. We're bettin' he's tough enough to survive and kick more booty in the next game.





Tetsuya Nomura

Art with Character

Originally a monster designer on Final Fantasy V, Tetsuya Nomura has long been regarded as one of the finest character artists in the business and is certainly one of the most creative weapons in Square's arsenal. Chances are you're aware of his work—and probably have some strong feelings about many of his characters. Nomura's most

famous include the cast of Final Fantasy VII, and since then he has been responsible for Aya and the gang in Parasite Eve, as well as the characters in Brave Fencer Musashi. His current project is certainly what will be the biggest PlayStation game of '99, Final Fantasy VIII, for which he is providing more realistic characters than those of previous FF games.

Furby

Creepy Cool Fuzzball

Taking Tamagotchi technology to the next level, Furby is sure to be one of the must-buy toys in early 1999. Nauseatingly cute and yet undeniably ingenious, Tiger's Gizmo look-alike is a perfect example of technology for the masses. Sit two of them together and freak out as they begin to communicate.

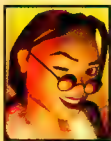


Over Exposed

You can never get enough of a good thing, right? Wrong. The games business is crammed with slick ideas that—thanks to multimillion-dollar ad campaigns and persistent marketing people—just come on way too strong. This stuff is everywhere. There's no escaping it. And all we can do is shout, "All right, enough already!"

Lara Croft

Sure, Lara's sexy, but if she keeps sticking her T&A in our faces all year long, people are gonna start thinking she's desperate.



Eidos

Eidos is huge and swallowing companies in single gulps. Run for your lives!



David Perry

Mr. Perry, we know you're an innovator. We know you have a fast car and a helicopter. You don't have to keep reminding us.



Crash Bandicoot

Crash stars in some great games, but we can't help thinking he's a Sonic wanna-be. Where's all the hype for poor PaRappa?



Lara Croft

Oh, did we mention Lara?



Namco

Sega's Foe Turned Friend

▶ Namco's not the most prolific developer/publisher of console games out there—especially for such a high-profile arcade-game developer—but its few releases each year are nearly always solid gold. We're talkin' 'bout the Tekken and "Racer" series, not to mention the ultrafun Point Blank and Klonoa. And with R4 and kitschy-cool Pac-Man 3D in the works, we see no stinkers ahead. And although Namco has jumped on board with Sega a bit late to do for the Dreamcast what it did for the PlayStation, we're salivating at the thought of what lies ahead from Namco's Dreamcast developers.



Ken Lobb

Nintendo Visionary

▶ You may not have heard of Nintendo's outspoken gaming guru before, but that's because most of what he does goes on behind the scenes. But don't think that he's any less important to Nintendo's success than Howard Lincoln, Minoru Arakawa or anyone else. Ken Lobb is the mastermind behind Nintendo's Treehouse product-testing depart-

ment, where Nintendo's best game testers spend a majority of their time testing, tweaking and providing feedback on Nintendo's first- and second-party games. It's because of Ken and his team that many of Nintendo's games (including Rare's) turn out to be so darn polished in the end. Too bad not every game company has someone like this guy.

Serial Games

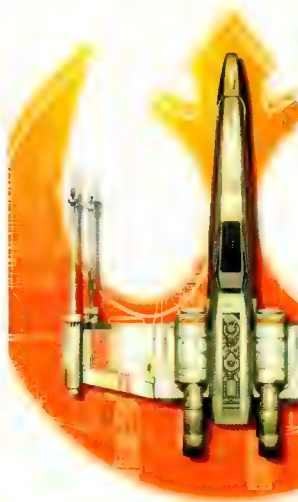
The Future of RPGs?

▶ Shining Force III was the first major game to show off just how cool a multipart RPG could be (even if parts 2 and 3 never did make it to the U.S.), and now Capcom's on deck with a 24-part serial game for the Dreamcast, to be unveiled next year. This new style of gaming is one that we hope takes off big-time. Imagine an RPG along the lines of Zelda, but spread out into a dozen 10- to 15-hour "chapters" that release over the course of a year. Would that not rule?

N64 RAM Pak

Plug Me In for a Good Time

▶ With its 4-Mb Expansion Pak, Nintendo is attempting a feat that has failed so often in the past: the release of a performance-enhancing add-on deep into a system's lifespan. But we anticipate only good things from this \$30 gadget, due for release Nov. 23. So far, developers are using the extra RAM to pump game visuals into hi-res mode, which at least keeps the N64 from looking too dated next to the Dreamcast. But we expect enhancements to AI, sound and texture quality once developers get used to the thing.



LucasArts

Use the Franchise, Luke

▶ Let's see how long we can go before mentioning that LucasArts controls the most lucrative franchise in the galaxy. Hmm. Well, LucasArts did publish that Ballblazer Champions game for the PlayStation, which was kinda fun. And then there's Herc's Adventure, not to mention a PlayStation Indy Jones game in the works and, umm...

Oh, there's just no denying that LucasArts' bread and butter is *Star Wars*. More specifically, the company is developing at least two games based on *Star Wars Episode One: The Phantom Menace*, the mucho-anticipated *Star Wars* flick set to premiere May 1, 1999. And while we're all looking forward to *Star Wars: Rogue Squadron*—the last LucasArts game set in the classic *Star Wars* universe—it's the thought of playing a prequel-based game that no doubt has most gamers feeling the Force. Set to be released exclusively for the Nintendo 64, these titles are yet more proof that, yes, a new wave of *Star Wars* movies, games and merchandise is on the way for a new generation of gamers. Why, it's enough to bring tears to the eyes of old-school gamers who grew up with the Trilogy.

Oddworld Inhabitants

It's an Oddworld After All

▶ Started in 1994 by industry newcomers Sherry McKenna and Lorne Lanning—both veteran special-effects artists—Oddworld Inhabitants broke onto the gaming scene with the PlayStation hit *Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee*. After playing the game and taking part in its engrossing story (which was both moving and humorous at the same time), no one could deny how cool the Oddworld experience was. Now Abe's *Exodus* has graced our PlayStations and we couldn't be happier.

Oddworld Inhabitants' corporate philosophy has always been to make games that give every type of gamer an all-encompassing entertainment experience, one that is artistically engaging but also with funny, embarrassing and ironic human-type qualities. Lanning mentions, "The game industry...is the most powerful entertainment medium that has ever hit this planet." With this mentality, the future should be bright for Oddworld Inhabitants—although we'll have to wait for the proper sequel to *Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee* to come out. Current technology just can't handle it yet.



Square Soft

Bringing RPGs to the Masses

▶ The Midas touch of Square doesn't appear to be showing any signs of going away. For every *Bushido Blade 2* that tarnishes an otherwise perfect record (and it wasn't really all that bad of a game), there are plenty of *Xenogears*, *Parasite Eve* and *Brave Fencer Musashi*s to ensure that everyone's lust for quality RPGs is satiated. And that's without even mentioning, un-Square-like games like *Einhänder*.

Raising the bar both in terms of production values and, more importantly, scripting and storytelling, Square has virtually singlehandedly made the RPG genre fashionable again in the United States—thanks entirely to the amazing success of *Final Fantasy VII*. And things are only gonna get better for fans of the EA-allied developer. Over the next year we should hear an awful lot from Square, as *Final Fantasy VIII* is still set for release in Japan in the first quarter of next year, with a U.S. release still scheduled for around September '99. Watch out for news on the *Final Fantasy* movie too, as Square once again pushes RPGs further into the realm of cool.

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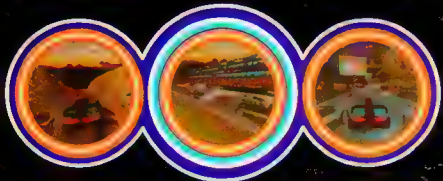


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PLAYSTATION RACING GAME TO DATE. -PS EXTREME MAGAZINE

Shigeru Miyamoto

God's Gift to Video Games



▶ He's the most successful and influential game designer in the entire world, and it could be convincingly argued that his list of credits reads like a substantial laundry list of the greatest video games of all time. He's the father of Mario, Zelda, Donkey Kong and a host of other video game characters that are known and loved around the world. Did you somehow think he wasn't going to make this list?

Originally hired as Nintendo's first staff artist in 1977, Shigeru Miyamoto has gone on to become one of the most recognizable "talents" within the video game industry. Frequently cited in just about every kind of forum you can imagine, his incredible game-design skills are appreciated around the world. Recently this talent was recognized in full, as last year he was commended by being the first-ever recipient of the Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences' Hall of Fame award for his contributions to gaming.

Certainly his most applauded gifts are those for attention to detail, perfectionism and an ability to create believable and absorbing worlds for players to immerse themselves in. More than any other games designer, Miyamoto appreciates the importance of suspension of disbelief—his games offer a degree of "completeness" that few others can compete with. By placing the experiences of the player ahead of everything else, his input into Nintendo's first-party lineup has always been visible. When it comes to the N64, he has had a hand in most of the system's classics with everything from Super Mario 64 to F-Zero X boasting some kind of input from him.

This year, his talents will be brought to an even broader audience, as arguably one of the most influential and important video games of all time is released. The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time (as *EGM* goes to press) already has more than 250,000 pre-orders and is well on target to break the 2 million sales mark, before Christmas—and that's just in the United States.

Aside from recognizing his talent as a designer, storyteller and "world builder," next year we'll no doubt be looking back at Miyamoto as the man who "saved the N64."

EA Sports

It's a Madden, Madden World



▶ Although it's had its pitfalls, the marketing label best symbolized by Madden's aging mug and the phrase "If it's in the game, it's in the game" has done more for sports video games than anyone else.

Besides just making great sports games, they paved the way for comprehensive sports licensing, made multiplayer sports gaming a standard, and raised the bar when it comes to complementing gameplay with great, in-depth features. Their latest feats include creating the best hockey game (NHL 98), engineering the most realistic football artificial intelligence (Madden NFL 99), and most recently releasing the PlayStation's first serious boxing simulation (Knockout Kings).

▶ Shockingly, for an area of entertainment with its feet very firmly rooted in "fun," there has been a distinct lack of humor in the majority of games. For years now, everything seems to have been taken far too seriously, but thankfully, as we move into 1999, some chuckles are on the horizon.

The obvious suspects for subversion are South Park and Beavis & Butt-head, but we are seeing a welcome "loosening" in terms of silly voices, funny scripts and unusual juxtapositions of images and sound in other games, too (such as in the retro sci-fi antics of Invasion From Beyond, from developer King of the Jungle). At last—we're seeing games that will intentionally make you laugh out loud.

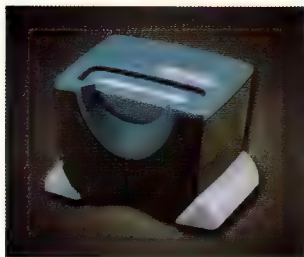
Humor In Games

C'mon, It's Funny



InterAct

Really Cool Stuff



▶ Although InterAct has put out some low-quality products in the past, this leading third-party peripheral manufacturer is blazing a trail for others. Not only does the company sell more accessories than Sony or Nintendo themselves, but this giant is bringing to the table some devices that will forever change the way you play games. The DexDrive, for example, will let you e-mail and download saved-game files, and future N64 and PS GameSharks will allow you to create your own cheats. InterAct's aggressive business model and innovative thinking have made it the fifth largest company in the gaming industry, only topped by EA and the big three.

Plus, they make some pretty kick-ass ads.

Game Boy Color

It's About Friggin' Time



Game Boy Camera

Coollest Toy Ever

▶ One is a seemingly immortal portable that's finally gotten its ultimate upgrade—a color screen. The other is a little digital camera combined with a surprisingly comprehensive photo- and animation-editing package. Both are slick on their own, but together, the Game Boy Color and the Game Boy Camera make the ultimate toy.

Forget about the camera's silly ability to modify your pictures with goofy clip art noses, eyes and such. The real draw here is its animation program, which lets you slap

together short flicks packed with cheesy special effects—eye beams and stop-photo animation being our favorites. Nintendo calls the whole process “Funtography.” Sure, we’ll buy that, but more than being just fun, the Game Boy Camera lets you flex your imaginative muscles more than any mere game. It’s the kind of thing we imagine James Cameron and Steven Spielberg would have treasured as kids, and we can only wonder what future filmmakers will credit Funtography for their fortunes.

And while the Game Boy Color doesn't colorize your pictures (well, other than adding Turnernision-esque hues), the system's super-crisp screen does make a huge difference for anything you slap into the cartridge port, whether it's an old game or one of the new color titles. (We can finally enjoy scrolling-intensive action games that were just too blurry on the previous Game Boy incarnations.) It's just the gimmick needed to keep the most successful system ever on top for who knows how many more years.

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Game Toys

Vehicles Sold Separately

► It's about time we hard-working gamer types are getting decent action-figure versions of our favorite video game characters. And it only makes sense when you think about it—most video game characters look like cartoons or toys anyway.

Ah, but there was a time when good-looking video game-related toys were only available by import from Japan, if then. Nowadays—thankfully—companies like

McFarlane Toys, Resaurus, Playmates, Toy Biz and others allow us to get our paws on a slew of highly detailed and generally pleasing figures. Even better, you usually only have to spend around \$10 to do it.

Some upcoming collectibles to note are Metal Gear Solid figures from McFarlane Toys (which will undoubtedly be the coolest video game-inspired toys to date), Zelda assortments from Bensusen Deutsch,

Turok 2 and Lara Croft sets from Playmates and Resident Evil 2 figs from Toy Biz, among others from several new companies. Already available are Resident Evil toys from Toy Biz and Crash Bandicoot and Duke Nukem packs from Resaurus, with Quake 2, Gex and possibly Castlevania on the way. These toys are just another way for us to willfully spend our money on stuff "normal" people consider a waste.



Reflections

Driving in Style

▶ Although not particularly well-known, developer Reflections was actually the team that produced both Destruction Derby games for Psynosis. Building on the immense success of these, the team has since been working on *Driver*—an incredible “get-away-driver simulation” that makes use of some very accurate city maps for level layouts coupled with an awesome 3D engine.



Driver will undoubtedly be responsible for a sudden leap in quality of this style of game on consoles. Expect to hear the name Reflections a lot next year.

Oh, and check out that cool logo.



Games for Cool People

No More Geeky Kid Stuff

DMA Design

And DMA Stands for...?

▶ Originality is a quality sadly lacking in many of today's video games, but from time to time a developer turns things upside down by producing something unique. In the past year Lemmings-developer DMA Design has brought us Grand Theft Auto, Body Harvest and Space Station: Silicon Valley—a trio of exceptional games that illustrate how far you can push game-play ideas. And from what we've seen of next year's titles, the DMA creative pool is far from dry.

Oh, and DMA stands for Doesn't Mean Anything, for those of you interested.



▶ Video games are no longer a niche market for anti-social teens to play while locked in their rooms. More and more companies are capitalizing on gaming's appeal to casual gamers, developing games that appeal to a mass audience. Take PaRappa the Rapper, for instance, which caught on not only with

hardcore gamers but also women and music fans. Puzzle games, meanwhile are the easiest lures to video gaming. 989's Bust A Groove, Konami's Japanese hit Beatmania, Tetris, Devil Dice and cinematic games like Final Fantasy VII and Metal Gear Solid are drawing more and more casual players into the fold as well.

Sonic the Hedgehog

Little Boy Blue

▶ So what if he no longer rules over an animal kingdom of mascots in waiting. Sonic's still the coolest game critter around, and Sonic Adventure may be the Dreamcast's killer app. Now let's hope we don't see Aero the Acro•Bat, Bubsy and other dude-with-tude wanna-bes popping up in Dreamcast games.





Sega Dreamcast

Better Than Blast Processing

▷ Whether it's a major success or not, Dreamcast is going to be the name on everyone's lips over the next 12 months. Sony may sell 50 squillion PlayStations and Nintendo may discreetly step back for a while, but everyone is going to be squealing about what the Dreamcast is capable of doing. To quote *Mucky Foot*'s Mike Diskett: "For Sega to fail to take a huge chunk of the console market will take a cock-up of Atari-like proportions, or a

worldwide recession leading to the end of civilization as we know it." Luckily, neither scenario seems likely.

The development community appears to be very firmly behind Sega this time round, and the easy portability of PC and Naomi code to the Dreamcast is going to help ensure a steady flow of titles throughout the system's first year—something that Sega desperately needs. This combined with the system's terribly fashionable online element

should ensure success for Sega, Sonic and all his furry friends.

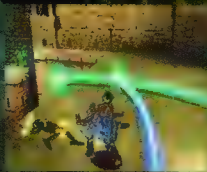
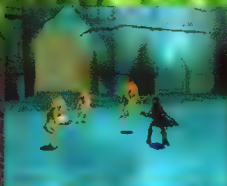
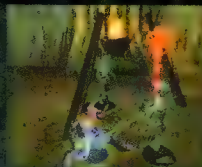
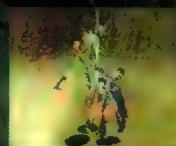
Despite a few apparent hiccups over the Japanese launch (rumored game delays, a shortage of systems, etc.), we fully expect the U.S. roll-out to be a huge affair with all the appropriate bells whistles and, most importantly, games. Mark our words—Sonic will become a household name again, and everyone will wonder how we ever went so long without Sega in our lives.

BEING BETRAYED

BY YOUR CREATOR

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- † Engage your creator, Kain, in an epic struggle for dominance
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Yu
Suzuki

King of Fighters

Illustration by Alan Diaz



Yuji Naka

King of Hedgehogs

▶ Just as Nintendo has its extremely short list of game-design gurus, so, too, does Sega, whose Yuji Naka and Yu Suzuki are the brains behind the Dreamcast's biggest, most important games.

Heck, if it weren't for Yuji Naka, the Sega Genesis wouldn't have had a key component that made it a hit stateside. Naka is widely recognized as the Father of Sonic the Hedgehog, Sega's mascot and blue blur that gave the company the right "attitude" it needed to challenge the behemoth known

as Nintendo. During the days of the Saturn, he headed up Sega's NIGHTS and Burning Rangers, neither of which reached the level of popularity Sonic did. Nevertheless, Naka and Sonic Team are Sega's best bet to overtake today's industry behemoth—Sony.

Yu Suzuki is the other high-profile game director at Sega. Suzuki is a celebrity in Japan, the driving force behind the most successful Sega arcade development team—AM2. Suzuki's gameography is easy to remember, since it's essentially the list of

major Sega arcade hits, including Hang On, Space Harrier, Out Run, After Burner, Power Drift, Virtua Racing and the most popular of his creations, Virtua Fighter. The game was considered so revolutionary that it won a place as a 1998 selection into the Smithsonian's collection of innovative information technologies in Washington, D.C. Suzuki's influence on Sega's new Dreamcast system is evident in its highest-profile launch title, Virtua Fighter 3tb. Expect to hear a lot more about both men in 1999.

PDA's

Our Tiny Dot-matrix Friends

► Sure, none of the console PDA's are really gonna be called PDA's anymore, but we're still gonna use those initials to identify the slick, pocket-size portables being readied for the PlayStation and the Dreamcast. And since the Dreamcast was developed with its tiny plug-in VMU system as part of the overall concept, we're sure to see numerous games that allow you to integrate gameplay elements that can be transported back and forth between both Dreamcast and Naomi arcade environments. Developers seem very receptive to the system, and the majority of early DC games utilize the VMU in some way.

Sony's PocketStation (formerly known as the Sony PDA) is also catching on. There are already 31 titles in development for the tiny system with concepts varying from fighter training to play editing and—our favorite—RPG character development. As each new idea is introduced throughout 1999, it will only serve to strengthen the concept and ensure that future consoles will adopt transportable elements as readily as they have adopted rumble technology.



Raziel

Dark Man, Too

► Think of him as a Solid Snake for the undead crowd. Raziel, the renegade soul-sucking star of Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver, is just the type of bad-ass, take-no-guff, not-quite-a-hero hero we like to see in our games. The key to this guy is more than just his rugged, rotten looks. Raziel's got a backstory so completely deep and sinister he's sure to become the poster boy for the Goth generation. Once a trusted lieutenant of the evil vampire king Kain (your alter ego in the first game), Raziel is now an exiled, scarred shadow of his former self who must suck souls to survive. Heck, he's a bad guy even bad guys are afraid of.

Oh, and his game's really cool, too. In fact, Soul Reaver looks like such an amazing sequel, we expect to see lots of similarly dark games starring similarly dark characters.

Crystal Dynamics

The New Weapon in Eidos' Arsenal

► Crystal Dynamics seems to do no wrong. This forever-strong developer keeps bringing out solid titles and has so far avoided the crap that most companies are occasionally prone to pushing. This past year, Crystal D treated us to a great 3D update of Gex for the PlayStation (let's ignore Gex 64 for a moment here...) and The Unholy War, a modern-day version of Archon (a true classic). But what we're really psyched about is Crystal's

upcoming Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver, a game that really has Crystal D reaching deep down into the PlayStation's bag of

tricks. Graphically, this game is stunning, and you already know about its brooding hero, featured above for his own slickness. With Soul Reaver, Crystal Dynamics has raised the bar in visual standards, and we're sure Soul Reaver will force a few competing developers to rethink the way they're programming on the PlayStation.



Rewritable Media

Save the World

▶ Despite suffering something of a major setback with the delay and subsequent U.S. cancellation of the 64DD, the idea of rewritable media for games on consoles (rather than PCs, where it's a matter of course) is flourishing. Memory cards are being used more imaginatively in the short term, but expect future generations of consoles to incorporate ways of saving large amounts of data such as custom levels, stats, characters and maps. MiniDisc for PlayStation 2 perchance?



Developer Alliances

United They Stand

▶ After years of being overshadowed by the bureaucracy of the publishers, the true talent of the game industry—the development community—has lately begun growing significantly in power. A handful of teams are already in powerful positions; id, Bullfrog, Shiny, Naughty Dog, but others are learning that they need to unite to establish creative authority.

In the past couple of years a number of

alliances have developed—the most high profile of which has been the Gathering of Developers, something that has since mutated into a “United Artists” style publisher. Elsewhere, though, the Scottish Games Alliance, which includes DMA Design, Vis Interactive and Red Lemon Studios, has emerged along with ESP in Japan, a group that gathers Treasure with GameArts, Sting and

numerous others.

These alliances are striving to ensure that game design continues to develop as a creative and universally accepted art while at the same time striving to gather new talent by pushing for specific educational resources for aspiring designers.

SGA

SCOTTISH GAMES ALLIANCE



Real Bands In Games

Bang Your Head

▶ Because of budgetary limitations, the adoption of bands to provide games soundtracks has been a slow, creeping road. But ever since White Zombie exploded from 3DO's *Way of the Warrior* we've seen numerous artists handed over to game developers by more forward-thinking music labels.

WipeOut was obviously a major catalyst in this area three years ago, but this year we are seeing more examples than ever. Accolade's

new games use Gravity Kills, KMFDM, PitchShifter and SevenDust, while Rob Zombie (pictured left) rears his video gaming head yet again in *Twisted Metal 3*. Elsewhere, in a surprisingly non-metal move, GT Interactive has signed the Mighty Mighty Bosstones for *Rogue Trip* to lend a somewhat jollier, less stereotypical ambience.

Until now, like many movie soundtracks, most game scores have been simple cut-and-paste jobs with well-known tunes. It's only a matter of time before we see unique remixes and even complete songs produced specifically for a game. Who knows—something as nauseating as Aerosmith's “Don't Want to Miss a Thing” could be produced for *Resident Evil 4*.

Yoshitaka Amano

A Final Fantasy Legend



▶ Many times, the artwork behind a video game can be just as beautiful and inspired as the game itself. One artist in particular stands out in our minds for two reasons: First, his art has a distinctly unique, refreshingly rich style unlike any we've seen before, and second, he's responsible for the design of some of the most well-known characters in the video game universe. Do the names Cecil, Rosa, Kain, Golbez and FuSoYa

ring a bell? How about Lock, Terra, Shadow, Edgar and Sabin? Or for those of you who are more import-savvy, do you recall some folks named Butz, Lenna, Galuf and Faris? All of those characters (and many, many more) hail from the Final Fantasy universe (FF I-VI, to be exact), and all were designed by this man, Yoshitaka Amano.

Although he stepped down from the role of character designer for the FF series when

Square made the jump to polygonal characters (Tetsuya Nomura's the new man in town), Amano still does select art for the games. He's also been involved in other projects (most recently Atlus' *Kartia*), and is rumored to be working on art for a new Dreamcast game.

His artwork is beautiful, his dedication is obvious, and his creations have touched the hearts of millions of gamers everywhere.

Game Customization

Have it Your Way

► It's not exactly a new idea, but it is one that seems to be cropping up in more and more games lately—and it's definitely



something we'd like to see more of. We're talking about in-game customization, those special modes that let you design your own tracks (as in *Moto Racer 2* and *Rally Cross 2*), craft unique puzzles (see *Bust-a-Move 4*) and even build characters. In fact, it's *WWF War Zone*'s insanely fun *Custom Wrestler Mode* that, more than anything else, has us craving more customization in our games. (And if you need proof of that, check out *Elephant Sak*, our favorite custom wrestler, to the left).

With Ascii's "maker" series—which includes *RPG Maker* and *Fighter Maker*—canceled in the States, it looks like in-game customization met with a bit of a setback here. Let's hope someone else picks up this very cool idea and runs with it.



Aya Brea

Blue-eyed Girl

► We figure Aya Brea, the fair-haired star of Square's *Parasite Eve*, is hardly your typical NYPD rookie. For starters, she unravels a gore-filled mystery so convoluted and crammed with so much sci-fi mumbo jumbo that even we had a hard time following it at times. (Of course, she did have a few flashbacks and her own mutations to help her along.) And on top of all that, she's not exactly hard on the eyes, either.

But that's what makes Aya so slick. Unlike some buxom other female game characters, Aya's appeal is driven by more than just long legs and massive measurements. She's a smart, sexy, deep character, and, fortunately, future game gals seem to be following in her diminutive footsteps (instead of going the total T&A route). Take *Joanna Dark*, for instance. The star of next year's N64 sure-to-be blockbuster *Perfect Dark*, *Joanna* exhibits the same poise, beauty, smarts and style (at least from the screenshots we've seen). Aya, it looks like you're on to something, girlfriend.

Iguana

The N64's Tyrant Lizard

► Acclaim's "in-house" development studio is increasingly becoming the premier third-party developer for the N64. Singlehandedly bringing Acclaim back from the brink with the original *Turok*, the team has consistently built on past successes. Aside from the increasingly impressive sports lineup (most notably *NFL Quarterback Club 99*), *Turok 2* has shown once and for all that teams other than *Miyamoto's* are capable of squeezing every last drop out of the system. With this as a baseline it's something of a no-brainer to consider the impact that the team is going to have on developments throughout 1999.

Don't forget *Iguana* is responsible for the *South Park* game too; somehow it has managed to convince Nintendo that adult humor can be acceptable in a game for the N64. With any luck it will also have been singlehandedly responsible for moving both Nintendo and the video game market in general toward more mainstream entertainment values.

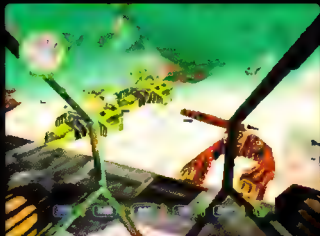




**It's a different battle
every time you play.**



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"Packs serious action - plentiful gameplay with great graphics and sound." - PSM Online



"...one of the most advanced games on the PlayStation." - Gamer's Republic



"...unlike anything PlayStation gamers have yet seen." - Gamecenter.com



The smell of burning corpses,
however, never changes.

UPRISING™

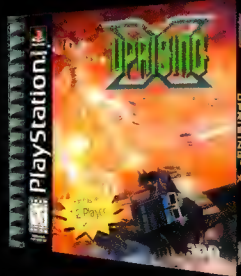
"Plays fast and chaotic. Literally dozens of units can be on the screen at one time, and the battles that take place are epic."

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Slick Disasters

Sometimes, the only thing that keeps a cool gadget or concept from becoming a slick sensation is a little bad luck. Hence, for those of you who slow your car to gaze at traffic accidents, we examine these spectacular failures that were only a few degrees from becoming slick...

64DD

With game customization being such a cool thing, we really wanted to see the DD. Now we're just getting really big carts instead.



Intensor

A bass speaker positioned near your crotch? Sounds like the greatest idea ever. Too bad the chair's a pricey piece of crap.



Saturn

Not enough games, a lousy launch, weak 3D hardware, shoddy marketing—the Saturn had a rough life. The end.



Game.com

It's a slick little system with a cool touch screen that plays terrible games. It does play a mean game of solitaire, though.



Dreamcast Launch

So the DC's launch in Japan isn't really a disaster, but game delays are never a good sign. Still, the U.S. launch will rule.



Rumble Technology

Shake, Rattle, Roll

▷ Nintendo pioneered this idea with the Rumble Pak, and then everyone refined it until it reached its pinnacle with the Sony Dual Shock. Effectively bringing a third sense into the gaming experience, being able to “feel” things in a game ups its immersiveness and

assists the suspension of disbelief.

Simple rumbings are all well and good, but the coming year will see sensory feedback become far more integral with the gameplay as seen in Metal Gear Solid or Zelda. Audio and visual cues will be supplemented by feedback that will help point out weak spots in an enemy, or the location of hidden secrets. And Namco's new “jog” controller (released with R4) will up the ante in console force-feedback technical sophistication.



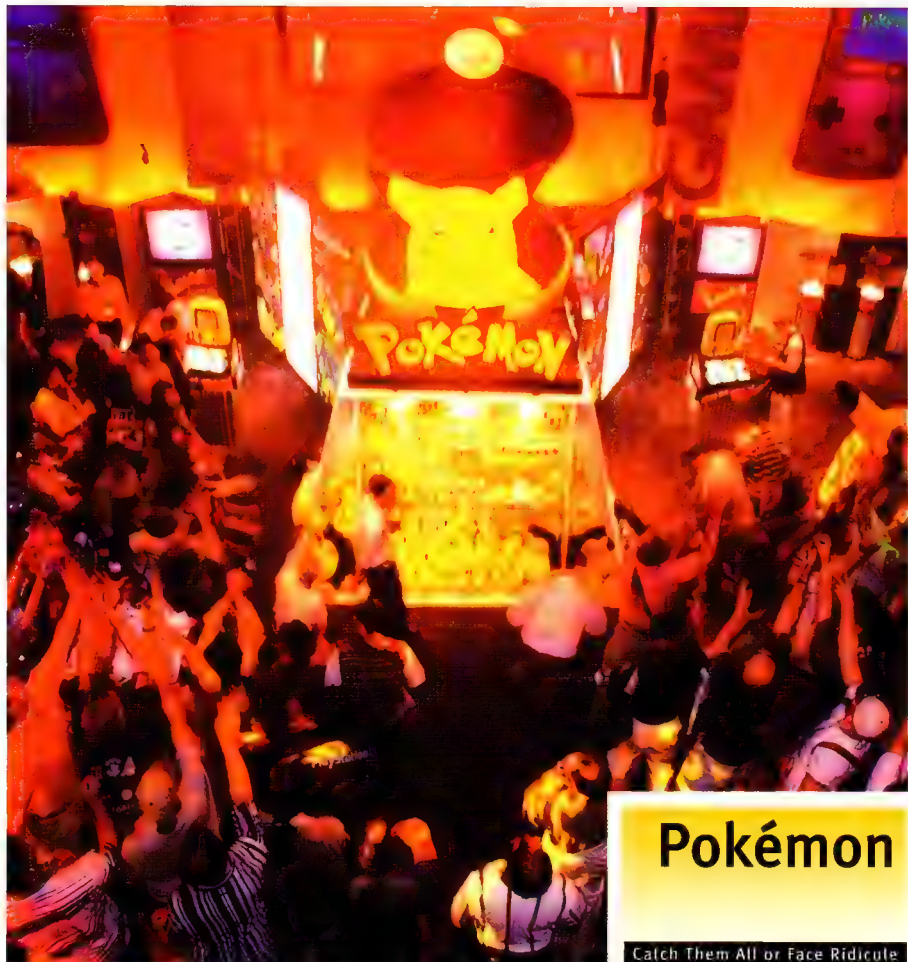
MGS Dialogue

Solid Snake Speaks

▷ In most games, we're usually lucky to get dialogue that at the very least isn't laughably bad. Then Metal Gear Solid came along and singlehandedly transformed game dialogue and voice acting to an art form. The credit here goes partially to freelance translator Jeremy Blaustein, who spent six months translating the screenplay-like script, as well as co-directed the voice-recording sessions. (Blaustein's credits include the translation for Castlevania: SotN and the upcoming Sulkodon 2.) Kris Zimmerman, a veteran voice director based in L.A., directed MGS's recording sessions, which lasted two weeks and involved nearly 20 actors (most of which she chose for the parts). Of course, Konami deserves the ultimate credit for not skimping on MGS's translation and voice work. We're hoping other developers will follow Konami's lead.



MGS voice director Kris Zimmerman



Pokémon

Catch Them All or Face Ridicule

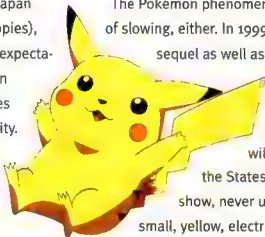
▶ It stomped Tamagotchi like a 500-foot Gila Monster on steroids and continues to grow in popularity. Nintendo's Pokémon (that's a shortened version of "Pocket Monsters") has spawned a hit TV show both in Japan and the United States and a multi-billion-dollar industry of toys, comics and records in Japan (not to mention some of the craziest marketing and ad campaigns we've ever seen). While Nintendo 64 sales are lean in Japan, Nintendo is bulking up on anything and everything Pokémon and living high off

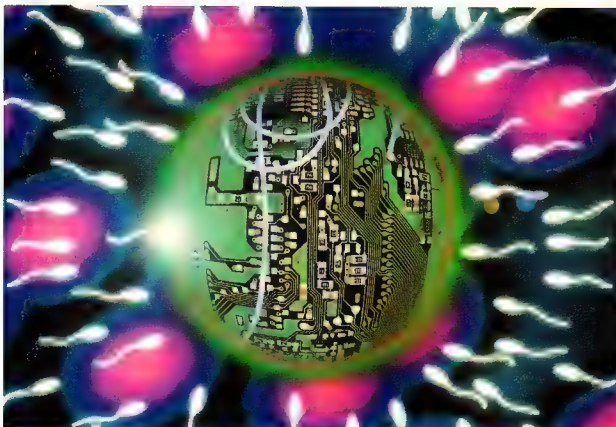
the fat of these cute little monsters.

It's still too early to tell if Pokémon will be as big a hit in America as it is in Japan (where it's sold over 10 million copies), but it surpassed Nintendo's own expectations when it was released here in September, selling 200,000 copies in the first two weeks of availability. The cartoon show supporting the title is a hit by itself. One day in October, it beat out *The Today Show*, *CBS This Morning*

and *Good Morning America* in ratings in the New York market.

The Pokémon phenomenon shows no sign of slowing, either. In 1999, a Game Boy sequel as well as another N64 title are coming to Japan. If popular, those games will likely show up in the States too. Just goes to show, never underestimate a small, yellow, electric rat.





Cyber Life

Tamagotchi Grows Up

▶ Creatures you can breed, warriors you can train, AI that learns from simple stimuli—call it what you like. A-life, Cyber Life or Artificial Life, this is something that has been creeping into games for the past couple of years in multiple guises, from *Monster Rancher* to *Tamagotchi*. The coming year should see it finally flourish further as more mainstream games embrace the technology. We expect the VMU and PocketStation to boost Cyber Life's popularity, as well.

Rare

Nintendo's Best Pal

▶ We imagine that at least once a day, every executive in the upper echelons of Nintendo's corporate structure kneels and gives thanks for Rare. Funded by Nintendo, Rare is by far the best N64 developer next to the big N itself. (If more N64 games were as good as Rare's, the system would be unstoppable.) With an amazing track record that includes *Banjo-Kazooie*, *Diddy Kong Racing* and—of course—*GoldenEye* (and that's not

including the more than 90 games Rare created for Nintendo's 16- and 8-Bit systems), these guys do not make crap.

Rare's mastery at game design no doubt has much to do with its development philosophy—which, appropriately enough, mirrors Nintendo's: Rare will not release a game until it's ready. That means delays, sure, as the various Rare teams tinker and tweak their games for months on end. It also means that when their games finally do hit, we're treated to a nearly flawless gameplay experience. It almost makes the wait for *Conker's Quest*, *Jetforce Gemini* and *Perfect Dark*—perhaps the N64's last great game—bearable. Almost.



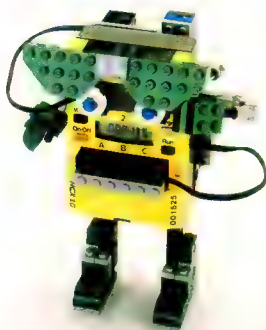
Robots

They're Taking Over

▶ Let's face it, robots are just plain rad. There's just something about having a little mechanical friend at your side that brings back warm memories of the movie *Short Circuit*...or maybe not. Seriously, back in the day we had *Verbot*—which was a pretty sweet robot at the time—but he was really just a klunky piece of plastic that took about as many batteries as the Space Shuttle (well, if the Shuttle used batteries for power, that is).

These days, with the arrival of such products as R.A.D. from Toy Max (see this month's *Get Some!* for more info), the incredible LEGO *Mindstorms* and Sony of Japan's eerie but awesome Entertainment Robot (an oddball 'bot with varied appendages that Sony may eventually bring to the States), it looks as if robots are once again coming into the mainstream.

No, these crazy, fairly expensive items may not be directly related to video games, but they certainly do look cool, and if you can program them—as you can with LEGO's *Mindstorms* and the Entertainment Robot—then there's certainly an interactivity to them. Let's just hope the little fellas don't get too smart, though. Remember *Runaway's* acid-shootin' spiders?





Do-it-yourself Cheats

Cheaters Always Win

▶ After a generation of 8- and 16-Bit Game Genies and another generation of 32- and 64-Bit GameSharks, we're now ready for the next step in cheating: devices that let you find your own cheats in video games. The current GameBoosters and Game Boy GameShark already let you make cheats for many Game Boy titles (as will future Nintendo 64 and PlayStation GameSharks), and accessories from companies like Rocket Game Products (namely, the SharkLink and Cheat Factory) and USA Blaze (Xploder) will allow you to hack into your favorite PlayStation or Nintendo 64 game with the help of your PC and blaze your own trail of 1-Ups, unlimited lives, level skips, Easter eggs—any cheats you want.

Make sure to check out this month's How To Cheat Like A Pro feature for more info on cheat devices.

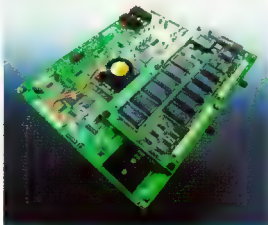
Arcade Revolution

All is Not Lost

▶ Let's face it. Arcades just aren't what they used to be. The once bustling and exciting industry is now a stagnant pool of reshaped sequels and clones.

But that's all about to change. With the help of arcade PCs (a technology with potential although so far underutilized) and Sega's new Naomi board (which is basically a Dreamcast), arcade game development is easier and more enticing than ever. Now when developers create games, they are actually doing it on two platforms for the

price and efforts of one. (Hey, if you're going to make a DC fighting game, why not make it for Naomi as well? It's practically already done.) Plus, we're seeing console/coin-op hybrid technology, like the Blitz 99 N64 Memory Pak reader and Naomi VMS compatibility, that can only help rekindle gamers' interest in arcades.



Link

The Last Boy Scout

▶ Of all the game characters we've dubbed "slick" in this feature, Nintendo's Link is the most squeaky clean. He doesn't smoke. He doesn't swear. He doesn't make crude remarks to chicks. He doesn't brandish assault weapons and fire off cheesy one-liners. Heck, despite appearing in four games, the guy has barely grown past puberty (the oldest we've seen Link is in the new Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, in which he time warps to 17-year-old near adulthood).

And you know what? We wouldn't have it any other way. Link's boyish looks, goofy clothes and golly-gee attitude help bring out the kid in all gamers. Shigeru Miyamoto's Zelda games are so immersive that, when we play 'em, we are Link. We are kid explorers in a fantastic, dangerous world. We can put down our virtual guns, declare cease fire on the typical alien-monster-type bad guys of

most games and just be kids again.



NA@MI

DEAD IN THE WATER

LIVE FAST ... DIE WET

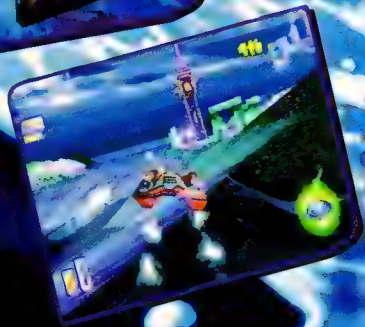
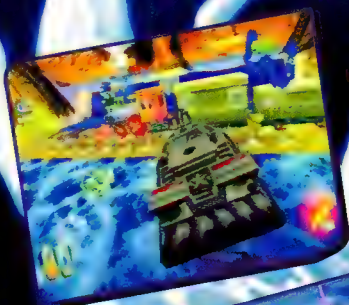
"I WILL destroy you in the Battle mode
I WILL destroy you in the two player split screen mode....
I WILL destroy you in the combat cable link mode
I WILL DESTROY YOU MAGGOT !"
-SGT.Steel

"When the flag goes down baby
your gonna feel the funk of my
Disco Fever Ray , You'll be
hearin' "Stayin' Alive" til' ya die"
-Ebony Justice

"I will continually upgrade my sinister
hearse boat and weapons to extreme
necropotent porportions and your
weak pale flesh will ROT IN PIECES"
-Dr.Graves

"Look here Son, I WILL use your head
as an anchor and your butt
as a seat cushion"
-Officer J.B.Nightstick

"We're like totally prepared to like
race and win on like all umm... 9
courses , ya know ? so like totally get
outta our way"
-Brandi,Mandi & Kandi





- 13 'Off the Hook' characters to choose from.
- 9 Blazin' aquatic tracks to tear up.
- 3D rendered waves like you've never seen before.
- An arsenal of high powered, high tech customizable weapons and boats - all fully upgradeable.
- Two player split screen or combat cable link.



www.deadinthewater.com

"In the past year South Park has spawned a second series, a movie deal, a video and DVD lineup, [and] more merchandise than the average blockbuster..."



"Now it's time for some Police brutality."
-Officer Barbrady



"ooh, you're so naughty... you're asking for a drive-by slapping."
-Big Gay Al



"I'm going to clone you a new ass."
-Mephisto



SOUTH PARK COMES TO THE N64

“DUDE, THAT’S PRETTY F#@%ED UP RIGHT THERE!”



By John Davison

Comedy Central president Doug Herzog was quoted in the February '98 issue of *Rolling Stone* as saying, "South Park is the Michael Jordan of basic-cable series." At the time it was the network's biggest show by a considerable margin and was drawing a massive share of the all-important 18-24 age group. The 1997 Christmas special drew 4.5 million viewers, more than seven times the typical audience for a Comedy Central show.

At the time there were two distinct camps when it came to passing judgement. There was the vast majority of people over the age of 14 and under the age of 40 with an even remotely puerile sense of humor who thought it was great, and then there were people who just didn't get it. Usually these were the parents of the other group.

Back in late '97 and early '98 people were chucking the word "zeitgeist" around in connection with the show like they actually knew what it meant. The same people were also speculating that the show would burn itself out in no time at all while also using the expressions "paradigm shift" and "youth-cult phenomenon" with equal pretentious abandon.

Well...they were wrong. And they still probably don't know what zeitgeist really means. In the past year *South Park* has spawned a second series, a movie deal, a video and DVD lineup, more merchandise than the average blockbuster, an album with a budget of \$2 million that features Master P, Primus, Devo and Isaac Hayes and, most importantly (for us anyway), a video game.

The gaming rights to the franchise were actually being touted around at about the same time as that early article in *Rolling Stone* and were soon snapped up by Acclaim with its typical franchise-snagging fervor. The aim: presumably to get a game out quickly, just in case the *South Park* bubble burst. Gamers and fans of the show around the world, elated that a game had been signed, were equally disturbed by the news at first. Let's face it, most games of license products like this are, not to put too fine a point on it, crap. And Acclaim has had its fair share of barrel-scrappers in this particular area. Batman anyone?

"YOU WILL RESPECT MY AUTHORI-TAY" — Cartman

Fortunately, Acclaim put its best team to work on the project. Fresh from the success of *Turok* on the N64, Iguana was being pushed to produce a number of new products that would help signify the "new Acclaim," not least of which was *Turok 2*. *South Park* is a huge product for the team, but is by no means an easy one. And not just 'cause one of the first systems it is to be available for is the N64. Erm...isn't Nintendo going to be just a bit touchy about the words "fat ass," "piss" and "crap" slotting in alongside even stronger stuff that's bleeped out? Surely you can't do a *South Park* game without the dialogue?

"Nintendo was obviously a little concerned about the title at first," offers project leader Neill Glancy, "especially concerning the adult nature of the game, and we negotiated with them for a good few weeks about some of the finer points. We ended up reaching an agreement where we got to say everything that we wanted to within the game. It was something that might have been a sticking point, but Nintendo worked with us—they realized the importance of the integrity of the product and the importance of letting us do what we needed to. After negotiating with them, we came to a conclusion where everyone was happy, and where we didn't have to make any compromises. We had a number of phrases that we thought Nintendo would have some objections to, and they did air some concerns to start with, but ultimately the integrity of the *South Park* license was held to and Nintendo was terrific. I think you'll be surprised."

The game is shockingly close to the series. As we booted up an early version in the EGM offices, there was an audible sigh of relief from the gathered throng of onlookers as the expressions "Dude, that's pretty f****d up right there" and "Oh my god, they killed Kenny. You bastards!" were aired within the first minute of game time.

"There'll be things in the game that will make you think, 'Wow, we didn't think they'd be able to do that,' but

ultimately we didn't want to produce a watered-down product," continues Glancy. "We can't let down the fans of the show."

Considering the short time period between contract signing and playable product, the game is surprisingly impressive. Anyone with concerns that a) it's not going to be funny and b) it's going to be a really crap game, can rest assured—there's nothing to be worried about. By taking the essence of the series and shoving it kicking and screaming into a simple, 3D action environment, the team has achieved an excellent balance. Matt and Trey were quoted in *Rolling Stone* as saying, "There's this whole thing out there about how kids are so innocent and pure. That's b****t man. Kids are malicious little f****s. They totally jump on any bandwagon and rip on the weak guy at any chance. They say whatever bad word they can think of. They are total f****g bastards..." Fortunately, the game manages to convey their feelings just as effectively as the show. There's no holding back here. Think *Doom*/*Quake*/*Turok* and imagine the essence of that gameplay mixed with simple but very clear cartoon-quality visuals, a broad selection of very vocal characters, and an even broader selection of bizarre and sadistic gadgets.

"It's been a very quick project to put together," offers Glancy. "It's been only about nine months in development. We've been using the technology from the T2 [*Turok 2*] engine as a base and then we've basically added to that. Destructible buildings, lip syncing, facial expressions...we altered the engine so we could make the game play like a show."



**"WELL SPANK MY
ASS AND CALL ME
CHARLIE...ISN'T THIS
EXCITING?"**

—Mr. Garrison

"The story deals with several days in the life of the town," Glancy continues. "There's this evil meteor approaching the Earth that has something of an influence over certain creatures and characters within the South Park universe. The basic premise of the gameplay itself, though, was always to produce something with a lot of action. We wanted to produce something of a twitch game that was fast-paced and fun with lots of funny, wacky gadgets and amusing comments from the kids.

"We got to do a lot more with the one-player aspect of the game than we thought we could. It basically has the kids starting at the town, and they have to make their way out toward the enemies who are heading in with the intention of destroying South Park itself. The kids simply have to stop the threat before it destroys the town.

"The enemies themselves are broken up into two distinct character types. We have the standard minion enemies. If we use the first level as an example, it leaves us with a turkey analogy; you have the standard turkey minion, and then you have the next layer up, which is the kind of "tank" enemy, which in the case of the turkeys is the *Braveheart* turkey. The larger tank enemies move through the landscape, navigating the terrain (using a special pathfinding AI routine that we wrote) toward the town. As they do so, they are constantly spawning off the smaller enemies along the way—so the object is to destroy the tanks before it's too late. You have to nuke the big guys to stop the little guys."

As first levels go, South Park kicks things off

in as surreal and amusing way as it's probably possible. The player starts off in a really believable 3D interpretation of the town before heading out into the wilderness to face the turkeys. Now, throwing snowballs at turkeys is a pretty damn weird start to any game, but throw in the fact that most of the sound effects are the voice actors imitating certain sounds—rather than actual sounds—and things get even funnier. The turkeys are nothing short of hilarious as they scream "gobble, gobble, gobble," while the kids hurling their usual torrents of abuse around only add to the genuine humor of it all. And when the tanks start firing stuff out of their asses...well, it may be childish, but it is funny. As you progress through the levels, the available gadgets for wiping out the bad guys get more and more elaborate and sadistic. Although still to be confirmed as we go to press, everything from drain plunger-firing weapons to pissballs (snowballs...with, well, y'know) and a yet-to-be-confirmed cow-firing implement are on offer to supplement the more "normal" arsenal of snowballs.



"At the end of each chapter," continues Glancy, "you get a tally of how many of the big tanks got to the town, and how many you destroyed. I think if I was forced to give a most basic analogy of the idea behind the game it would be Missile Command, only in a 3D environment. You're protecting a location from enemies who are heading toward it, and you are rated on how much of the threat you manage to eradicate.

"Not every level involves the tank-style strategy though. Some levels are simply all-out action, while in others you find some more covert elements. For example, in episode three you are encountering the alien visitors for the first time, as well as the cows that they are affecting. The level is really mad because the aliens are abducting the cows and flying off with them, so sometimes you'll see characters wandering around and cows are falling from the skies onto their heads. In the third chapter of episode three the kids encounter the alien mothership and it's a really huge object in the landscape. As the chapter begins you see that the mothership is being patrolled by the alien visitors, so the only way to get in is to take these guys out from a distance. Fortunately at this point you are given one of the game's special gadgets, the sniper chicken, a covert weapon where you can zoom in on the enemies and knock out the bad guys without them seeing you."



**"FART JOKES ARE
THE LOWEST FORM
OF COMEDY"**


—Philip

There are many things in life that are actually funnier than farts, and the crew behind South Park are fully aware of this. Any opportunity to throw in a fart noise is firmly grasped, and every menu and option screen in the game is accompanied by a suitably varied collection of fartulent samples.

South Park isn't the first game to firmly promote the comedic value of the fart though. For those of you seeking a little more variety, we've got...



Albert's Chilly Party
Abe's Exodius
Banjo-Kazooie
Glover
JoJo's Bizarre Adventure
Wattle Arena
Boogerman
PlayFighter
(63 1/3% of South Park's
Least Vikings
Beavis & Butt-Head
Ren & Stimpy
Monster Ranch
Samurai Shodown
Primal Rage
Tomb Raider
Wolf: The Game (2001)



IT ALL BEGINS
WITH A RAY OF LIGHT
EXPOSING A WORLD YOU EITHER
RECOGNIZE OR MUST LEARN.
WITHOUT EVER FORGETTING...
ONE WRONG BLINK
AND YOU'RE
DEAD.

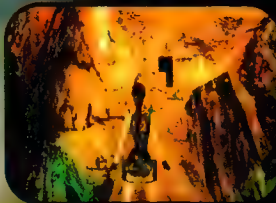
[PUPIL OF HUMAN EYE]



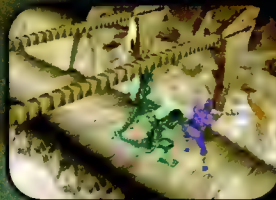
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TOMB RAIDER III



NINJA



AKUJI THE HEARTLESS



LEGACY OF KAIN: SOUL REAVER

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YOU'VE BEEN WARNED



South Park creators Matt Stone (left) and Trey Parker (right) have played a significant part in the creation of the game. Both big game fans, they reworked much of the script, recorded original voice work for the majority of the characters and provided suggestions for the product.

**"I'M HELLA COOL."
—Cartman**

Much of the concept work for the game is very much in the spirit of the show (let's be honest—would you be surprised if a chicken was used as a sniping weapon in the show?). So, was all of the work done by the team at Iguana, or did Matt Stone and Trey Parker play a big hand? "When it came to piecing the whole concept together," explains Glancy, "we came up with the skeleton story and split the whole thing into five different episodes in which there are further individual chapters or levels. We wanted each of the different episodes to have its own individual story, while at the same time contributing to the whole global idea behind the thing. Once we'd done that, we came up with a basic script kind of thing with some of the elements that we knew we needed the characters to say, and then we submitted that to Matt and Trey through Comedy Central."

So what happened then? "The two guys were actually very helpful, indeed. They've been extremely involved in the whole project and have overseen a lot of it. I spent a lot of time speaking with them to discuss different aspects and to try to make the whole thing fit in with what they wanted it to be. They are actually both very big games players themselves so it was really fun to work with them because they knew what they were talking about."

Did they change much of the project as it was developing? "What happened was that they went away and rewrote portions of the script and fed suggestions to help with the overall flow of the thing. They actually suggested each of the individual episodes should end with an amusing closing scene with the characters where they could put in

some funny one-liners. That was easy for us to do, because we could just produce it using some of the tools we have in-house for producing cinemas from within the engine.

"Each episode will begin with an opening scene setter, where the boys go and talk to Chef and he tells them the basic idea of what they're going to be doing. They then go off into the level to perform the tasks at hand and they'll eventually find that Chef lives in a special location within the map. If you find him again he'll impart various pieces of advice and tips and there'll be a lot of witty stuff thrown in, too. There's a lot of stuff that was written specifically for the comedy element alone. Once all of this was scripted, the four voice actors (Matt, Trey, Mary Kay Bergman and Isaac Hayes) went into the studio to record it all for us. There isn't any speech in the game that wasn't recorded in a custom session for the product. Everything in there was recorded for the game. It was a lot of work to get that done, but it's made a huge difference."

"DUDE, THAT'S PRETTY F**D UP RIGHT THERE."
—Stan**

One of the many concerns that fans have about the transition from TV show to video game is the way the speech will be handled throughout. For a start, no one wants anything where the script has to hold back—and this seems to have been addressed, but how can you possibly get enough speech into an N64 cart? "It goes without saying that the speech in the game is a very large part of the experience," begins Glancy, clearly proud of what the team has achieved, "and it was something that we were very conscious of getting right. We didn't want to kind of wimp out on the speech and do a half-assed job. We dedicated an awful lot of cart space to the speech and sound. We're going to ship on a 16Mb cartridge, and of that about 9Mb of that is going to be just speech. A good proportion of that is actually RAX'd too...RAX is our proprietary compression technology for speech (and I've no idea what it stands for) so I think we worked out that if you had all of the speech samples uncompressed, it would be, I dunno, about 25Mb of sound."

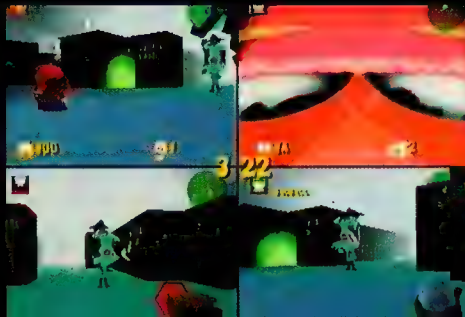
It shows too. The variety of



SOUTH PARK DEVELOPMENT TEAM



- | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Justin Norr | 11. Jeff Everett | 21. Trevor Lemoine |
| 2. Cheesey Poofs | 12. Randy Buck | 22. Kim Lum |
| 3. Peyton Duncan | 13. Kris Pelley | 23. Cubbie |
| 4. Cow | 14. Darren Mitchell | 24. Joe Willis |
| 5. Neill "Alien Overlord" Glancy | 15. Jim "Jimbo" Richardson | 25. Mike Janke |
| 6. Gregg Hargrove | 16. Jon Mayfield | 26. Mike Daubert |
| 7. Marc Schaefergen | 17. Jonny Garrett | |
| 8. Carl Wade | 18. Mat Kraemer | |
| 9. Scott Brocker | 19. Chuck Karpiak | |
| 10. Chuck Lupher | 20. Dave Smith | |





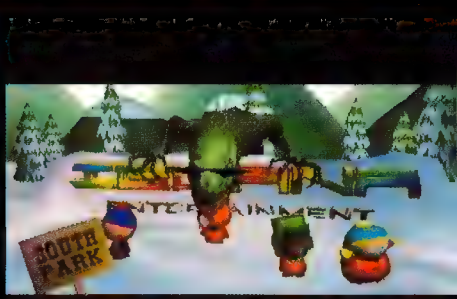
comments spewed from all of the game's characters' mouths is impressively diverse. Every single character has a number of "stock" comments as you cruise around the environments, but they also have certain expressions that they will make when faced with different situations. It's all pretty cool.

"We've implemented a lot of our own custom technology to let us do things that weren't previously supported [in the T2 engine] such as lip-syncing from within the engine and adding emotional states to facial animations," adds Glancy. "Basically what we do when we get the speech back from Matt and Trey, and then of course Isaac Hayes and Mary Kay Bergman, is go through all of the scripts and flag what kind of emotional state a character needs to be in as they say it. So, if Cartman is saying, 'Quit that you butt-licker,' his facial expression is appropriate for what he's saying. This way, as they're walking around and interacting in different ways, their facial expressions and 'moods' appear to be correct.

"The speech in the game is all split into two main

sections. The one-player game is the proper 'story' mode and this has the kids talking to each other, Chef helping you out and basically all of the work that the four voice artists performed. Then we have the second module, which is the speech for the multiplayer mode. This is basically the introductions for each of the numerous characters that we've put in there, of which there are about 20, as well as additional quotes for hits, flinch reactions and stuff like that. When we were planning the multiplayer mode, we simply submitted a list of characters that we wanted to put in there, along with a list of phrases that we'd like to see crop up. Pretty much all of the favorite characters are in there. Every character has original dialogue and there are numerous secret characters that can be accessed."

Based on the version of the game we've had here at EGM, there are already some firm favorites. Hearing Big Gay AI mince his way through the levels has to be heard to be believed ("Ooh, you're so naughty...you're asking for



a drive-by slapping"), while Terrance and Philip make a welcome appearance too.

"There are a lot of multiplayer levels," continues Glancy. "In fact, there are nearly 20 different maps which are set in the town, and some are arenas that you uncover in the one-player game. There are even sections out in the wilderness and even in the alien mothership. There's a variety of both indoor and outdoor levels."

Thankfully, it would seem that Iguana has pulled off a multiple-coup with South Park. Not only is it shaping up to be a more than respectable 3D action game, it's also one of the most honest and daring licensed games we've seen on just about any system. Add in the fact that it's yet another game that supports both four-player fun and Nintendo 4Mbit RAM Pak (for hi-res), and it would seem to be guaranteed success. In the words of the South Park kids... "This kicks so much ass."

SOUTH PARK EPISODE GUIDE

Season One

Cartman Gets an Anal Probe
Weight Gain 4000
Volcano
Big Gay Al's Big Gay Boat Ride
An Elephant Makes Love to a Pig
Death
Pink Eye
Damien
Starvin' Marvin
Mr. Hankey, The Christmas Poo
Tom's Rhinoplasty
Mecha-Streisand
Cartman's Mom is a Dirty Slut

Season Two

Terrance & Philip in "Not without my Anus"
Cartman's Mom is Still a Dirty Slut
Chickenlover
Ike's Wee-Wee
Conjoined Fetus Lady
The Mexican Staring
Frog of Southern Sri Lanka
City on The Edge of Forever
Summer Sucks
Sheriff's Salty Chocolate Balls
Roger Ebert Should Lay off the Fatty Foods
Clubhouses
Cow Days
Chef Aid



if you
don't find this PEARL

and save
an ENTIRE city,
things are gonna
get
UGLY.



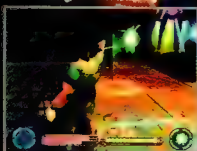
LT. IKE HAWKINS:
A military-trained weapons expert



SOLARR:
A strange and powerful magic healer



JULIA CHAMBERS:
A cunning, fast and powerful sniper



MAX HAVOC:
A loner with incredible strength & endurance



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- Round-trip shuttle bus service between hotel and BlastCamp USA.
- Entry to BlastCamp and use of paintball equipment and facilities at North American O.D.T. Paintball Championship.

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PC
CD
ROM



The citizens of Calli are about to be wiped out by a deadly epidemic. But to find the mystical green pearl that can save them, you must run a suicidal gauntlet through a massive tower. There are only two ways out: Alive and very dead. And there are plenty of hideous creatures in your way who are voting for dead. One thing's for sure, survival isn't pretty.

- Plunge into the bizarre 3-D worlds of O.D.T. It's part magic, part mayhem.
- Make your way through 8 intricate levels and more than 70 treacherous sectors.
- O.D.T. is an intense action adventure game that lets you choose from four characters — Lt. Ike Hawkins, Julia Chase, Maxx Havoc and Solar — with different strengths, abilities and special moves.
- Confront your own mortality with endless fighting combinations, including hand-to-hand, weapon or spell combat.

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How-To Cheat

How-To— Round Four...

This month, we're going to take a close look at the multitude of cheat tools on the market. Need to play a bit unfairly? We'll tell you what you'll need. Keep watching for more How-To features in upcoming issues of *Electronic Gaming Monthly*.



Like a Pro



Of course you and I don't cheat. None of us does. We're all hardcore gamers, and we all play our games fair and square. No way would we ever resort to cheating. Cheating is for wimps.

I mean, you bought that new GameShark because you needed some invincibility codes, right? Not because your skills are lacking, mind you. No, of course not. You bought the thing because those damn game developers are making their video games too artificially tough. How dare they!

Luckily, we have good people at companies like InterAct and Rocket Game Products who are willing to provide tools to fight against unfair AI being programmed by the malicious game designers of today. Luckily, we have people looking out for us.

These companies are putting out more cheat products

than ever. It's a multimillion-dollar industry, after all. InterAct is selling four and a half times more GameSharks than it was a year ago. Rocket Game Products is putting out more cheat memory cards than you can cram in your trunk. And a new player on the field, USA Blaze, is about to stir things up with its own hopeful GameShark killer.

With so many of these cheat peripherals on the market, it could get pretty daunting shopping for one, so we thought we'd help you wade through the mess. Here's a look at some useful (and some not so useful) products that can help you get past that certain pesky boss or help you finally see that elusive ending from the bitch of a game that you could never quite beat. Some of these devices have just about every cheat imaginable for your favorite games, but wait until you see the newest line of peripherals that will allow you to create your own cheats and codes for games. It's a cheater's world, my friend. Might as well learn how to do it with the best of them.

(By the way, just so you know...EGM editors DO NOT use any types of cheats—via codes, hardware or any other method—during the review process.)

Ha
unchea



Thankyou@Deal.com
www.dealoftheday.co.uk

Famous Cheaters

See if you can identify these famous cheaters in American society.

Girl, You Know It's True

This queer, long-haired duo cheated their way to a Grammy award, then later lapsed up and admitted to lip-synching their "music." **Lame.**

Stick it to 'em

In 1994, this athlete had her bodyguard take a stick to the knee of her Olympic teammate. Seems people will do anything to win a championship or medal these days.



The Big Boys

If you're looking for something that will supply a gazillion cheats for a gazillion games, then the following peripherals are for you. Some are better than others though...



PS GameShark

GameShark

Systems: N64, PS, Sat, GB
Price: \$49.99 (N64, PS, Sat), \$29.99 (GB)
Distributor: InterAct

What does it do? The GameShark is the ultimate cheater's tool. It provides hundreds of pre-assigned codes that'll do everything from letting you Always Rap Cool (PaRappa The Rapper) to letting you play Paint Ball (GoldenEye 007) to letting you wear a Monkey Suit (Shining Wisdom). Plus, you can input more codes that can come from several sources: game magazines (like say, oh I don't

know...EGM?), InterAct's gooo#, www.gameshark.com and *Dangerous Waters*, InterAct's bi-monthly newsletter. You can permanently save these new codes (complete with names and descriptions that you assign to them) directly to your N64, PS or Saturn GameShark, so you won't have to reinput these codes each time you play.

Does it do it well? Yes. Very well. Since the GameShark's been around the longest (of the current batch of cheat machines), InterAct has worked out most of the kinks. And because the GameShark is doing so well at the moment, you know that InterAct will be backing it for a while to come. Don't worry about your GameShark becoming outdated anytime soon.

What else should I know?

- You can update some GameSharks without having to spend 50 bucks for a new one. For the PlayStation version, you can obtain upgrade CDs that load new codes right into the flash ROM. You can send the N64 GameSharks in to be programmed up to date.
- The N64 GS has compatibility problems with a few titles. It'll still work, but you may have to enter a special keycode to get your games to work.
- The PlayStation GS lets you customize saved game icons. Useless, but fun.
- The Saturn GS lets you play most Japanese games on your American Saturn (provided the game doesn't need the 4-Meg cart). Just stick the import disc in and start the game without any enhancements.
- GameSharks aren't the most hearty of peripherals we've seen. We have had a couple poop out on us over this past year.

For Official Use Only

Not all of these products will work 100 percent of the time. Some of them will work some of the time. None of them will work none of the time.

Let me tell you a little story. When we were testing GameShark codes for Final Fantasy VII, we ran into a few snags. First, the GameShark's money code didn't work on our saved games; we had to start a new game from scratch to utilize that particular cheat. Second, we tried using some unofficial codes we've found at various fan sites. They worked all right...until we had to swap game discs.

When using game codes, your best bet is to use official ones released by the companies. If you want to input user-found codes, be warned that things can go wrong later in the game, especially on multidisc games.

GameShark
ENHANCEMENT CD V.0.0

GameShark
Enhancement CD



N64 GameShark

Famous Cheaters

They are:



Milli Vanilli. Look at the guilt on their faces.

She is:



Disgraced Olympic skater Tonya Harding (on the left) with teammate Nancy Kerrigan.



Saturn GameShark



Game Boy
GameShark

Poll

Do You Use Cheat Devices (Game Genie, GameShark, etc.) When Playing Video Games?

62%

No, I would never cheat

23%

Yes, I use cheat devices

15%

Yes, I use cheat devices, but I don't consider that cheating

videogames.com online poll results for Sept. 18, 1998.

Xploder

System: PS (N64 version coming soon)

Price: \$39.99

Distributor: USA Blaze

What does it do? Xploder is the first major cart to go after GameShark's title as king of the cheat cartridges. It offers pretty much the same features: hundreds of codes for a wide variety of PlayStation games and the ability to enter (and save, with names and descriptions) thousands of your own. You can even use GameShark codes on the Xploder (the few we tested worked great).

Does it do it well? Yes. And no. A lot of cheats are cool and work well, but we found several that didn't. For example, the Resident Evil 2 codes are absolute crap—half of them have no visible effects while the other half produce some Mickey Mouse changes (like alternative costumes). Compare that with the PS GameShark v. 2.3, which can give you the super weapons and infinite health. It's too early in this cart's lifespan for us to recommend it. If you decide to be an early Xploder adopter, you're taking a big chance. Who knows when updates are coming?

What else should I know?

- This thing has "unprofessional" written all over it. Gran Turismo? Command & Conquer 2 (that's coming out for the PC later this year, boys)? Misspellings, vague descriptions for codes, etc. all plague this cart.
- Their Web site, www.xgeargames.com has no new codes. Yet.
- You can get new codes via *XPLOSIVE!*, the bi-monthly newsletter for Xploder. Or so they say (we didn't get an issue in time for print).
- You can also get codes from a non-premium rate phone line. It may be a long-distance call, but it's much cheaper than InterAct's 900 line.
- The biggest thing Xploder has going for it is Xlink. Xlink is freeware you can download from



PS Xploder

the XGear Web site. The program, with the help of a standard printer cable (which connects the Xploder to your PC's LPT-1 port), will allow you to do all sorts of fun stuff: create cheats, save games to your hard drive, e-mail save game files, download new cheats and more. Sounds good, right? Sure...if the software were ready... At the time of this writing, XLink is still under construction.

• USA Blaze and InterAct are undergoing legal warfare. InterAct claims USA Blaze is using GameShark technology. USA Blaze says that's bull (some of the team responsible for creating Date!s Pro Action Replay, which is the GameShark in the U.S., broke off and created Xploder). Bottom line: If things go InterAct's way, Xploder will have a short-lived life here in the U.S. market.



Nintendo 64 GameBooster

GameBooster

Systems: N64, PS

Price: \$49.99

Distributor: Rocket Game Products

What does it do? The GameBooster lets you play Game Boy games on your N64 or PS. Included in the carts are a ton of Game Boy codes and a Game Trainer, which lets you create your own cheats.

Does it do it well? The playing-Game-Boy-games-on-the-N64 part? Yes. The playing-GB-games-on-the-PS part? No. The providing-tons-of-cheats part? Yes. The Game-Trainer part? So-so. The GameBooster, like the Game Boy GameShark, has an easy-to-use cheat creator. Unfortunately, it doesn't always work when you think it should. It'll take a lot of practice and a lot of trial and error to find the cheats you want. But at least it's much easier to use than the Cheat Factory's cheat maker.

What else should I know?

- Both GameBoosters don't play sound effects. The N64 one plays the most annoying looping music you've ever heard in your entire life. The PS one lets you play music CDs, which is an awesome feature.
- Too bad the PS GameBooster runs GB games like crap.

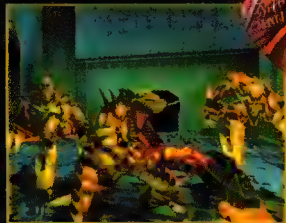
Famous Cheaters

Shagadelic, baby!

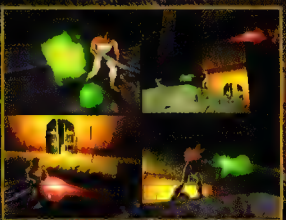
This English actor got caught being paid "lip service" by a Hollywood ho. We still don't get why he'd want to cheat on his hot, supermodel girlfriend...

The Queen

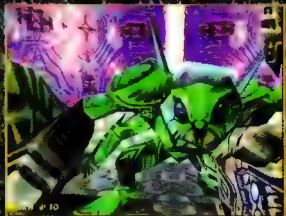
This woman got in serious trouble for tax evasion and mail fraud. Hey, it's not her fault she cheated on her taxes. "Only the little people pay taxes."



Real-time body impact physics—
blow off arms, legs,
and even heads!



Hunt other players in one of three
multiplayer deathmatch modes.



30 terrifyingly realistic enemies,
built with SOFT-BODY technology.



"The best first-person shooter
for the NG4"

—GamePro

TUR SEEDS OF

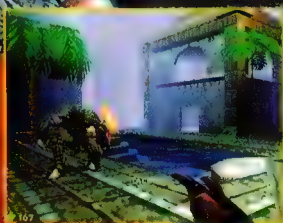


GAMEBOY

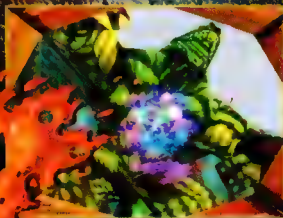


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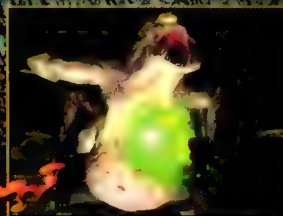
TUROK EVIL™



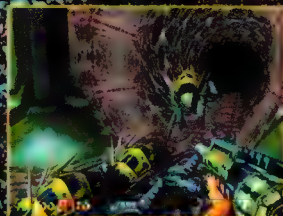
30 square miles of monstrously immersive and hyperreal single and multiplayer environments.



Sniper mode—gun your enemies down before they know you're there.



Over 24 devastating weapons—from the War Blade to the Cerebral Bore.



"An absolute must have!"
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

—Next Generation

AVAILABLE NOW!

Acclaim

www.turok.com

Cheat Factory

System: PS (requires PC)

Price: \$39.99

Distributor: Rocket Game Products

What does it do? This very cool device is a PlayStation memory card that has a long cable that plugs into your PC's serial port. With the included software, you can transfer save game files back and forth between your computer's hard drive and the Cheat Factory, modify files (to cheat, of course), alter memory card icons, re-label save files and generally cause a lot of havoc with your saved games. (Please back everything up before giving anything the Cheat Factory treatment.)

Does it do it well? Yes, once you get the hang of things. The lack of thorough documentation and a tutorial means you'll be learning about the Cheat Factory through a bit of trial and error. But once you do figure things out, the Cheat Factory can be a great tool...for everything but creating cheats itself. You see, the online instructions never properly explain how to create cheats in a friendly manner. All the instructions do is warn you about the dangers of messing with powers you can't comprehend. So the Cheat Factory really gives you no direction on how to modify files to your advantage (but it does explain in detail how to make your own animated save-game icons...). Use this thing to help you cheat by trading save game files with your friends. Why bother trying to open up tracks in TOCA when your friend has done it already?

What else should I know?

- Make sure you have a free serial port. The box gives no warning about this.
- This same box also claims thousands of cheats are available on the Internet. That may be true, but none of them are from Rocket Game Products (their online Code Archive at www.rocketgame-products.com is "coming soon" at the time of this writing). No way I'm gonna download cheats that came from some internet hacker dork named DickCheese327.
- The software comes bundled with a bunch of cheats, but they suck big-time. They aren't labeled, they're poorly organized, some are duplicated, some are useless and some are actually corrupt. I loaded up 10 different Tekken 3 game files only to find three useful ones (all characters, all movies and Ball Mode). And who on Earth would want 28 Tenka cheats???



- You may run into a few snags copying these included cheats from the Cheat Factory to your normal PlayStation memory card if you already have saves there from the same game. The Cheat Factory's Tekken 3 file didn't want to copy to my personal memory card, until I deleted my own Tekken 3 save.

Famous Cheaters

He is:



Hugh Grant

She is:



Leona Helmsley, the Queen of Mean

The Little Boys

If you want something simple that'll help you out with just a few select titles, take a look at these memory cards. They're a much cheaper alternative to the "Big Boys."

SharkByte

Systems: N64, PS

Price: \$19.99

Distributor: InterAct

What does it do? The SharkByte, as you can guess from the name, is a dummed-down GameShark. It's a memory card/controller pak that holds a few select cheats for a specific title. Current ones out there include Mortal Kombat 4 (PS, N64) and Quest 64.

Does it do it well?

For Mortal Kombat 4? Absolutely not. For 20 bucks, the MK4 SharkByte will give you 127 continues, let you

fight only one round to win, and let you perform easy fatalities (the PS SharkByte will also let you view the cinemas). That's almost all but useless in our book. Spend the extra dough and get a grown-up GameShark. But what about Quest 64's SharkByte? That one's a bit more useful, since it provides a variety of save points with a more experienced Brian. But it's Quest 64. Who cares?

What else should I know?

- Don't save a game to these SharkBytes by accident...you'll ruin your good paid money for.
- Upcoming SharkBytes will cover better games, namely Konami's Metal Gear Solid and Eidos' Tomb Raider 3.



Game Killer

System: PS
Price: \$29.99
Distributor: Rocket Game Products

What does it do? The Game Killer has a couple of good cheats for a specific group of games: Cool Boarders 2, Resident Evil 1 and 2, Rebel Assault 2, Soviet Strike, Masters of Teras Kasi, Tekken 1-3, Tomb Raider 1 and 2, WCW Nitro and WCW vs. The World.

Does it do it well? Sure, but you only get one, maybe two or three codes for all of the above listed games. Is that worth the money? Not really. Why not just splurge for a GameShark and get more codes for a more up-to-date roster of games instead?

What else should I know?
• If you want cheats for any one of the games we listed above, you're better off looking elsewhere. See if a Game Champion for that title is available instead.

PS Game Killer



PS Game Champion

Game Champion

Systems: N64, PS
Price: \$19.99
Distributor: Rocket Game Products

What does it do? The Game Champion, like InterAct's SharkByte, provides cheats and saved games for one specific game. Right now, you can get for the N64: Quest 64, WWF War Zone and MK4. For the PS, you can get a Game Champion for WWF War Zone, MK4, Gran Turismo, Tekken 3, Final Fantasy VII, Tenchu, Resident Evil 2 and Metal Gear Solid.

Does it do it well? Yeah. Very well. We only got to test the RE2, Final Fantasy VII and Tekken 3 Game Champions, and they all worked great. For \$20, you really get a bang for your buck. You can play the Hunk or Tofu missions, get a lot of weapons, or skip around the stages in Resident Evil 2. You can also skip around in FFVII. You can start the game with an omnipotent level 99 Cloud, or you can skip right to the Northern Cave. And for Tekken 3, you can open up all the secret modes and every character. This little card will even open up your Tekken 1 and 2 cast!

What else should I know?
• Nothing much, only that these are the best one-game cards we've found.

Racing/ Combat Champion

System: PS
Price: \$19.99
Distributor: Rocket Game Products

What does it do? Like the Game Killer, the Racing and Combat Champion cards provide a couple of cheats for a group of games—this time by genre. Racing Champion covers some pretty crusty games: Destruction Derby, Micro Machines V3, Need For Speed II, Porsche Challenge, Rally Cross, Ridge Racer, Ridge Racer Revolution, Peak Performance, Jet Moto and Motor Toon Grand Prix. Combat Champion covers crust as well: Toshinden 3, Loaded, Soul Blade, Tenka, Star Gladiator, Tobal No. 1, Alien Trilogi, Tekken 1-3 and Duke Nukem: Total Meltdown.

Does it do it well? Umm...sure. But see our notes for Game Killer.

What else should I know?
• If you're still playing the above games enough to where a Racing or Combat Champion would come in handy, it's time for you to start saving money to update your PlayStation software library.

PS Racing Champion



PS Combat Champion

Famous Cheaters

No Heart and Soul

This Canadian athlete was stripped of his 1988 Olympic Gold Medal when he tested positive for drug use. He failed another drug test five years later.

The Con Man

He's a con man. He's a card shark. He basically cheats his way through life. This 1950s' TV Western character was revived for a 1994 movie.

The CoolBoys

If you want the ultimate cheating tools, look no further. The hardcore gamers at the Ziff-Davis Video Game Group can get you through just about anything you can imagine. Hey, a little shameless self-promotion never hurt anybody.

Trickman Terry

Systems: All of them
Price: \$100 an hour. Or you can throw Trickman an obscure Japanese puzzle game once in a while.
Distributors: Trickmom's and Trickdad's loins. Ewww...

What does it do? Trickman Terry gathers all the codes, tricks and cheats for *Electronic Gaming Monthly* and *Expert Gamer*. That's a lot of work, you know. At least that's what 'TT tells us.

Does it do it well? Sure! All you have to do is tell the thing how many pages of tricks you need, and voila...the pages appear, full of new codes, minutes before deadline is up. It's uncanny.



What else should I know?

- Trickman, along with Sushi-X and Quattermann, have been with *EGM* longer than anyone with an actual name. Why do you think I insist people call me "Shoe"? It's all about job security.

Whatever Happened To...?

Remember the Game Genie? Galoob's little accessories for the 8- and 16-Bit systems were the most prominent cheat devices around in the U.S. before InterAct's GameShark came and ate up the market. Game Genie made it big when the famous SNES *Street Fighter II* "air moves" code (C4AA-6767) first appeared in the pages of *EGM* (issue #43, February 1993).

Eventually Galoob bowed out. They told us they didn't go after 32-Bit business because they were too unsure of the next-generation market to know whether they would do well or not. Should we tell them that InterAct has sold over 1 million GameSharks in the U.S. to date? Nah.



Famous Cheaters

▶ We is:



Ben Johnson: sprinter, steroid fan and big-time cheater

▶ We is:



Bret Maverick, played on TV by James Garner and on the big screen by Mel Gibson

Expert Gamer

Systems: Anything and everything
Price: \$4.99 an issue. Or look for those annoying subscription cards for special deals.
Distributor: Ziff-Davis Publishing

What does it do? XG gives you the most up-to-date codes, tips and strategies for tons of games each month. In here, you can find maps, secrets, GameShark codes and a whole slew of other stuff the average gamer will never see in his/her games.

Does it do it well? It better, seeing how half the XG staff live in our offices and never bother to go home. If they spend that much time here, the strategies better be good. Plus, they have several industry veterans working there.

What else should I know?

- Remember what we said about the XG staff never going home? Well, we don't have showering or bathing facilities here in the office.

Codes • Tips • Strategies

EXPERT GAMER

Formerly EGM



You put the two together (if you dare). At least you know the guys working on the strategies that you're reading are dedicated. Maybe a bit too dedicated...

The PC Connection

You may have seen these toys at a local import shop: the PC Link or PC Comms Link. Datel makes the official one.

You might also see another version that comes in a cheap box (pictured to the right) that reeks of Third World black market-ness (look for the misspellings and poor grammar on the packaging).

Anyway, the PC Link is an ISA card with a cable that plugs into a PlayStation or Saturn Pro Action Replay (the international version of GameShark). It's supposed to let you upload and download game saves, find and create cheats and more. Would we recommend it to you, the aspiring cheater? In a word, no.

With the new wave of cheat devices coming out, you really don't need this contraption. You can find a lot of the PC Comms Link's features in newer, more user-friendly products like Rocket Game Products' Cheat Factory.



Videogames.com

Systems: Anything current

Price: Free with Internet access. Whoever heard of paying to visit Web sites? Oh wait, we know of a few...

Distributor: Ziff-Davis and GameSpot Media

What does it do? www.videogames.com gives you in-depth game guides, codes (including those for GameShark) and more.

Does it do it well? What do you think we're going to say here? :) Anything associated with *Electronic Gaming Monthly* must be da bomb.

What else should I know?

• Everything videogames.com covers is archived, so when you visit the site, you can look up cheats and strategies for older games. Handy, ain't it?

Up and Coming

It's not over yet. A few products down the road will make it so you'll never have to play fair again. We can't give you a hands-on analysis (since we didn't get these items in time for print), but we can give you an idea of what they're promising.

DexDrive

Systems: N64, PS (requires PC)

Price: \$39.99

Distributor: InterAct

What does it do? Like the Cheat Factory, the DexDrive allows you to transfer save-game files to your hard drive. From there, you can e-mail them to your friends (or strangers, if you're into that sort of thing). Unlike the Cheat Factory, the DexDrive does not have to be hooked up to your gaming system. This portable device simply plugs into your PC's COM port and accepts your memory card or controller pak.

How will this help me cheat? Think about it. You'll be able to send and receive any number of save-game files to and from your friends. Plus, InterAct is working with a few major publishers to provide saved games for you to download. Someday, you might be able to download a super team for Madden or a super car for F-1 2000 onto your memory card/controller pak. Check www.gameshark.com for some of the plans InterAct has for the DexDrive.

What else should I know?

• The DexDrive will come bundled with Cheat Explorer, a Windows Explorer-like interface for Windows 95 that will let you move files around real easy-like.

Shark Link

Systems: N64, PS, Saturn (requires PC; N64 system requires the Cheat Development Kit as well)

Price: \$49.99

Distributor: Rocket Game Products

What does it do? A bunch of things: create GameShark codes, transfer save-game data back and forth from your PC, and even upgrade your GameShark via downloads.

Should I get it? We don't know yet. We haven't seen one in action.

What else should I know?

• Rocket Game Products is a licensed InterAct distributor, so don't be afraid to buy GameShark-related peripherals from them. There are unlicensed products out there that interact (no pun intended) with your GameShark, but we would shy away from those, as most of them probably come from some unmarked factory/warehouse in the jungles of Southeast Asia.



Cheat Development Kit

System: N64 (requires PC and Shark Link)

Price: \$89.99

Distributor: Rocket Game Products

What does it do? The Kit has a cartridge that allows the Shark Link to communicate with your Nintendo 64 games.

Will it be useful? Preliminary info indicates the Cheat Development Kit doesn't do anything on its own. But it will give you access to the Shark Link's features.

What else should I know?

• This Kit is supposed to include a 4MB Expansion Pak
• It doesn't take a dummy to figure out this Kit really costs \$140, since you'll need the Shark Link for it to do anything useful. But since we know that there are some dummy gamers out there, we thought we'd point out the big, combined price tag. You're welcome.

Famous Cheaters

So Here's to You...

In a 1967 classic flick, this married woman has an affair with young Dustin Hoffman's character, who ends up falling in love with the woman's daughter.

Smoke 'em if You Got 'em Cigars. The Oval Office. 'Nuff said.

Where to go next:

For more info on the products covered in this feature, visit the following Web sites. You can also catch these companies' ads in current issues of EGM. Happy cheatin'!

The screenshot shows the InterAct website with a navigation menu on the left and several product sections. The main content area features a 'Play It First' section with a game controller image and a 'Play It First Again' section with a game box image.

www.interact-acc.com

The screenshot shows the GameShark website with a navigation menu on the left and several product sections. The main content area features a 'New codes' section with a list of codes for various games, a 'The Rankings of CodeBoy' section with a forum link, and a 'Kato's Komer' section with a photo of Kato.

www.gameshark.com

Famous Cheaters

She is:

Mrs. Robinson (played by Anne Bancroft) in *The Graduate*

He is:

U.S. President, Bill Clinton

The screenshot shows the Rocket Game Products website with a navigation menu on the left and a main content area featuring a 'Cutting Edge Gaming Products' section with a game box image.

www.rocketgameproducts.com

The screenshot shows the X-Geared Games website with a navigation menu on the left and a main content area featuring a 'GEAR FOR GAMERS' section with a game box image.

www.xgearedgames.com

The Professional

So just how exactly do you cheat like a pro? We thought we'd ask a real-life professional cheater: Bill Kaufman, a.k.a. "CodeBoy," lead product support specialist for InterAct Accessories. This is the man who hacks into the games you and I play, to create cheats for America's most popular cheat machine: the GameShark. We went to visit CodeBoy at InterAct's corporate headquarters in Hunt Valley, Md. There, in his bleak and barren workspace, the man with the tell-tale tattoos and a strong online following talks to us about the GameShark, hacking, and taking dumps.

EGM: How does a GameShark create cheats, like an invincibility code for instance?

CodeBoy: It tracks down the memory location in the game where it stores information, like health for example. Let's say we find the line [in the game's data] where it stores the info for health, and it reads 100. The GameShark writes to this line so it always reads, and has a value of, 100.

EGM: So the GameShark is always overriding game code—it's not finding original programmer debugging code and accessing those?

CodeBoy: It really depends. It's a lot easier for us to go in and narrow down what the values are for health and such and overwrite those. It's very uncommon for us to find debugging code. It's not an easy thing to dig up.

EGM: How would you then go about looking for that line that tells you what health is?

CodeBoy: We first download all of a game's memory (take a dump of the full memory) when you have full health. Then we take a second dump after you've taken a few hits and lost a little health. We take a dump of all this memory again and compare it to the first. We then look at the values that went down. By comparing what stayed constant and what changed, we're able to narrow it down to what is health. Our software can figure all of this out for us.

EGM: How long does it take you to get every GameShark code for a particular game, like infinite lives, infinite ammo, etc.?

CodeBoy: If there are no problems...I got about 50 codes so far for Metal Gear Solid, and that took me maybe an hour. But then you have problematic games. Some games are programmed quite interestingly. They're not quite as easy to figure out. War Gods was absolutely hideous. That was the worst game I had to hack. The game took, I think, 50 lines to figure out the players' health, and then it would run a random number generator to pick, for each round, which line would hold the health information. The number for health was constantly jumping around.

EGM: Why would the programmers do that?

To mess with you?

CodeBoy (laughing): I have no idea. I'd like to think that it was for me, but I doubt it. Seeing the rest of War Gods...[that messiness] was on par for that game.

EGM: So how long did it take you to find all the GameShark's War Gods codes?

CodeBoy: It took me two weeks to find six codes. I ended up using some of the programmers' cheats.

EGM: Will InterAct be releasing the software you use to find cheats?

CodeBoy: The Game Boy GameShark has hacking software built in. That seems to be doing well. We hope to incorporate something like that in future versions of GameShark.

EGM: Does it worry you that more and more cheat devices are letting people do at home what you basically do for a living? Are you worried that your job will no longer be necessary?

CodeBoy: I'm not worried about that at all. I actually brought someone in from the GameShark Code Creator's Club, which is a bigger site than ours on the Internet right now. He got our software, was a great hacker, so I brought him over. And the more people hacking, the better the GameShark will do.

EGM: Do you ever cheat on games that you play for fun?

CodeBoy: Every once in a while. But I'm really more of a pool and pinball type of person outside of work.



You can say hi, among other things, to CodeBoy at www.gameshark.com.

EGM: Are you looking at the Dreamcast for another GameShark?

CodeBoy: Heh...we're looking at it...

EGM: How did you become a professional cheater?

CodeBoy: When we first got the GameShark, we used to buy the games, ship them to England, have them hack them then have them returned to us so we could test the codes before releasing them [editor's note: Datel Electronics in England created the Pro Action Replay, which became GameShark here]. That whole process took about two weeks, so I just decided to give it a shot. It was a lot quicker to hack the games here.

EGM: Is it easier to work with the PlayStation or the Nintendo 64?

CodeBoy: The PlayStation is easier. The memory dumps are about half the size, and since it has been around longer, the programming's a bit cleaner.


EGM: Last question: Have you ever cheated on a loved one?

CodeBoy (laughing): Well, let's just say I've visited extra levels one time...

Seven Reasons Why Guys And Grrls Dig Pokémon:

Men Are From Pallet,

Who's Got the Biggest



Chris Johnston
Resident Pokéboy
and EGM News Editor

Trading Pokémon is cool.

Like collecting and trading sports cards, you can't complete a Pokémon collection without trading with a friend. Trading is serious business, and like a sports card collection, you don't want to give away a Jordan rookie card without getting something good in return. Plus, trading puts your Pokémon's evolution on the fast track to becoming more powerful.

You can't be a master without training.

Once you've got a Pokémon collection, you have to build them up by training and teaching them attacks if you want to become the best. Did Mike Tyson become the best overnight? No. Training in the game is no different. Teaching your Pokémon new and different attacks can help make those tough battles a cakewalk, and it varies your attacks and skills from other trainers. There's nothing like doing a victory dance after destroying an opponent with one attack.

Defeating trainers earns badges.

Whether it's Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts or Indian Guides, or maybe just gold stars in third grade, we guys like to be recognized for our achievements. In Pokémon, for defeating each gym leader, you get a corresponding badge to show that you've schooled someone in the ring. You can also show off your collection of badges to trainers who haven't yet reached that level.

Conclusion

The world of Pokémon is fun and challenging, but it brings some things from when we were young (like the joy of playing a game that can be played together. That's why we play the game.)

You can't play Pokémon alone.

Pokémon isn't a game that you can stay locked inside a room to play and be perfectly happy like Final Fantasy VII or Metal Gear. You've got to have someone else to trade and battle with. Plus, there's always the possibility of having a massive "Grris vs. Guys Tournament" at school or work for the title of Champion of the World. Who knows, maybe the person you'll end up playing a game of Pokémon with will be a grrl, and there's nothing more attractive than one who trains Pokémon, don't you agree?

Fighting for Pokémon supremacy is fun.

Fighting over who's going to take out the garbage? Who's going to wash the dishes? Who gets to claim shotgun at work? She won't let you go out and buy that expensive high-tech stereo system? Why not decide among couples, siblings or friends through a Pokémon duel. Strategy and knowing what attacks to use against which Pokémon is all part of becoming a master trainer. Linking up and battling is a lot easier way to decide things like this than say, Rock Paper Scissors or flipping a coin.

Pokémon evolve into big, bad battlin' beasts.

Screw cute. Pokémon are made to be evolved into vicious, rock-'em, sock-'em fightin' machines! Squirtle may be small and "cute," but Blastoise, his evolved form, kicks ass and takes names. Sure, you could stop evolution, but why would you want to trap a powered-up Pokémon into a tiny body? Big and powerful Pokémon can easily crush any opponents and are intimidating in battle. Of course, there's no shame in keeping a Pikachu from evolving into Raichu or blurting out "Pika pika!" once in a while, is there?

Hunting elusive Pokémon is in our nature.

As men, we're the hunters, and in the world of Pokémon, hunting and catching them all is what it's all about. There's 150 Pokémon to be found and captured, and running up and hugging the cute ones won't make you a master (unless you've got a vicious hug). Capturing them in Poké Balls is also much more humane than using traps or weaponry. As a mature '90s man, you have to be "sensitive" to the needs of the animals you're trapping.

Women Are From Cerulean Poké Balls?

An EGM Point/Counterpoint Feature



Nikki Douglas
Editor/Publisher
www.grrlgamer.com

▶ The Game Boy is so tiny!

Let's face it—grrls like cute, tiny things. Game Boy Pocket is the most wee little thing, and the little characters and Pokémon on the screen are adorably diminutive. It make us want to squeal really loudly and hug them.

▶ Pokémon are collectible.

Remember your sister's Barbie collection? Didn't it drive you crazy and make you wonder when you might have time to introduce Mr. Tonka Earth Mover Truck to Barbie's pretty little head? Well get ready to be annoyed again! Grrls are collectors, and Pokémon are highly collectible. Obviously some of us would rather be collecting diamond jewelry or Ferraris than Pokémon, but the fact that Pokémon are collectible and you can trade them with your friends makes them that much more appealing.

▶ Pokémon can trounce on boyfriends.

Seat left up? Underwear hanging on the doorknob? Towels left on the floor of the bathroom? Wet towels? Well, here is the chance all grrls have been waiting for—a way to settle the battle of the sexes without having to call 911 at the end. Just hook up those Game Boys and do battle, a grrl's best Pokémon against the guy's best. This works equally well if a grrl has found out that a guy is cheating on her with her best friend or sleeping with her Uncle or something completely terrifying. Though those Pokémon have to be careful they don't end up as guests on Jerry Springer, shouting out from their monochrome screens, "we were just PAWNS in their sick masquerade!"

▶ Pokémon comes in blue or red.

Grrls love color choices, because frankly some colors look better on us than others. And really the Game Boy is kind of an accessory, right? A grrl's ability to accessorize is, after all, what separates us from the beasts. Now that it comes in different colors, grrls want to make sure they are not clashing or anything.

▶ Pokémon are unique.

Exclusivity and status are great fun too! Imagine being able to say to your best bud, "Ha! I got the cutest and most nasty, unique little Pokémon and YOU don't!" What a way to taunt your friends. Pokémon is nothing if not a social game!

▶ Pokémon bitch fights.

Say an ex-best friend steals a grrl's boyfriend. Do they duke it out outside of a trashy dance club called Twits with press-on nails a blazin'? Or do they fire up their Game Boys and go head-to-head in the ultimate grudge-match Pokémon fight? The double benefit to this is a grrl's manicure stays safe and no one breaks a sweat, 'cause that would be, like, gross.

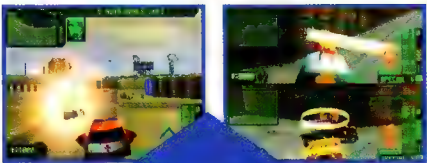
▶ Pokémon need nurturing.

And grrls just love to nurture, right? In fact, few things are much more satisfying than training your adorable little Charmander to become a precisely trained Pokémon bully! It's great to see that nurturing put to good use, like making other harmless little Pokémons faint all over the place. Oh, to be a mom. Sigh.

Conclusion

Pokémon ultimately is the kind of game that brings a sense of joy and excitement to a grrl's life. This is why grrls love the Pokémon that is.

Here's the story so far: SingleTrac, the developer of Twisted Metal 1 and 2, was bought by GT Interactive in 1997 and lost the rights to TM3. Instead, the publishing and development duties were turned over to Sony's 989 Studios. Flash forward to today. With SingleTrac's suspiciously TM-like Rogue Trip and 989's TM3 now in stores, which game delivers the real Twisted Metal experience? This month's Grudge Match answers the big question.



Both games feature identical control setups, but RT's cars handle much better. For starters, you can turn your vehicle when it's standing still or in midair (things you can't do in TM3), and the game's arcade feel is just more fun and fruer to the TM series.

RT builds on the multiplayer modes that SingleTrac stuck into TM2. The Co-op Mode returns for the Vacation (tourist) part of the game, and you can now use the link cable for four-player deathmatches. Our favorite is the two-player Getaway Mode, in which you both go after tourists.

Not surprisingly, both games have similar weapons, although RT's track a little better. But what really sets RT apart is your ability to upgrade your weapons on the battlefield with the cash you find or earn.

Rogue Trip Producer Scott Campbell says...

"Because we created this genre, it has naturally put us in the ultimate position to develop the most addictive car combat game ever—Rogue Trip. We have optimized our game engine and perfected key components such as controls, environment design and weapons. In addition, we added a strategic gameplay element with the tourist character that totally complements the mayhem and destruction. RT KICKS ASS! But don't just take my word for it, play it and be your own judge."

Aside from all the wacky stuff you can find by blowing nearly everything up, RT also packs two cool bonus courses and five secret vehicles (including a helicopter gunship and several bosses). Heck, we just like killing the killer whale in the SoCal arena.



Control

Multiplayer

Weapons

Secrets

Remember 989 Studios' last Twisted Metal physics as a pilot, but you won't too stray about it. The cars flip over the easily and are fast vehicles.

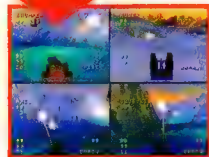
The big plus here is the four-player Collection Mode, which runs pretty smoothly unless you activate CPU opponents. Like RT and TM2, TM3 supports co-op for the Tournament, and you can also use the link cable for a four-player deathmatch.

Like we said, the weapons in both games are similar, as are the combos you can pull off with the joystick. A few weapons here, especially regular and the rain rockets, are hard to use.

TM3 definitely could use more secrets. The hidden areas are easy to find. The mega weapons are really cheap in multiplayer. You only get two secret vehicles and the two hidden arenas are nothing special.



Twisted Metal 3 is just as fun as the last. 989 Studios' last Twisted Metal game was Twisted Metal 2, but this one is a real improvement, adding new characters, better graphics, and a better engine. It's a real shame that the game is being canceled. It's a real shame!



TM3 Producer Ken Riege says...

"The concept behind the Twisted Metal games originally came from our parent company Sony, and Dave Jaffey, producer of TM 1 and 2, inspired us as a consultant for TM3."

The Winner Is... Rogue Trip

Review Crew

EXCELLENT

10

9

8

7

6

AVERAGE

5

4

3

2

CRAP

1



Platinum Awards go to games that get four 10's, the best possible review a game can get.



Gold Awards go to games whose average score equals 9.0 or higher.



Games that average at least an 8.0 receive Silver Awards.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

EGM rates games based on how they compare to other titles on the same system. The highest score we'll give a game is a 10. When a game receives a 10, you can rest assured it's one of the best games ever made—a revolutionary title that truly stands above everything else in its genre for its time. At the other end of the spectrum sits the lowest score a game can receive: a 1.0. This is the kind of game you want to avoid at all costs. It's pure crap, as our scale (above) explains.

In the middle lies the average grade, 5.0. We Repeat: 5.0 IS AN AVERAGE GRADE. Simple, ain't it?

Current Favorites

Crash Bandicoot: WARPED
Brave Fencer Musashi
Magic Knight Rayearth
Mr. Domino

Favorite Genres:
RPGs, Action

Crispin Boyer

Since Crispin's cubicle lies across from Dan "Masta Cheata" Hsu's, Cris had to put up with the unsettling sight of Shoe's incessant cheating for an entire month. Now Cris wants to make it clear that he refuses to use cheat devices except for the occasional rude code. To make matters worse, Shoe's Jungle-Madness-induced fits of insanity made napping particularly difficult for Cris during deadline.



John Davison



Unhappy that final, complete and reviewable copies of Zelda and Turok 2 were unavailable before we went to print (despite what you may read elsewhere), John has been consoling himself with the fact that, from what we've seen so far, people buying the games in late November most likely will be disappointed. Both look set to more than fulfill their potential and will help make for some very happy holidays. Merry Xmas!

Current Favorites

Metal Gear Solid
Zelda: Ocarina of Time
South Park
Brave Fencer Musashi

Favorite Genres:
Action, Adventure

Current Favorites

Knockout Kings
NCAA Gamebreaker 99
Rally Cross 2
NCAA Football 99

Favorite Genres:
Sports, Racing

Dean Hager

Dean's not one for cheating in games unless you count some of the early GameDay and NCAA Football titles. Even then it wasn't really cheating. It was just extensive use of "money" plays. Now that the cheap plays have been cleared up, Dean has to do it with real skillz. That's fine, it's better preparation to take the Cornhuskers all the way in the office-wide, NCAA Football 99 tourney, he says.



Dan Hsu



Crispin's been calling Shoe a cheata ever since Shoe started working on this month's Cheat Like a Pro feature. This is driving Shoe, who's never touched a GameShark before this feature, a little crazy. Combine that with 100-hour work weeks, and we have a seriously demented fool on our hands. The only thing that can cure his Jungle Madness is Wendy buying him a Game Boy Color for X-mas (hint, hint).

Current Favorites

Zelda: Ocarina of Time
Metal Gear Solid
MSH vs. SF (Saturn)
Castlevania (N64)

Favorite Genres:
Strategy, Puzzle

Current Favorites

Zelda: Ocarina of Time
Metal Gear Solid
Brave Fencer Musashi
Crash Bandicoot: WARPED

Favorite Genres:
RPGs, Action

John Ricciardi

John's not a big fan of cheating, though he did rush out and get an NES Game Genie on the very day it hit stores. C'mon! Can you blame him? Who *didn't* need to find out exactly what lurked beyond the flaggpotes in Super Mario Bros.? John's all for using cheat devices to breathe life back into old games, but for new ones, it's all about playing through on your own—the way the games were meant to be played.



Shawn Smith



If Shoe's the Masta Cheata than I'm a monkey's uncle! I've seen Shoe cheat on just about everything, and although he's quite good, he's no Masta. He's around the Semi-Pro level at this point, and has like one or two more belts until he makes it to the Masta level. Anyway, I'm working my way up the circuit right now and hope to take on Shoe sometime later in the year, World of Cheatas unite!

Current Favorites

Crash Bandicoot: WARPED
Extreme-G 2
Zelda: Ocarina of Time
Metal Gear Solid

Favorite Genres:
Action, Adventure

Current Favorites

Virtua Fighter 3tb
Street Fighter Alpha 3
SF Collection 2
Tenchu

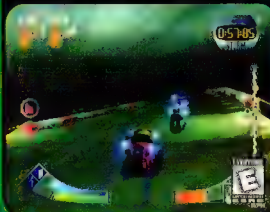
Favorite Genres:
Fighting, RPGs

Sushi-X

Sushi has been going through an emotional roller coaster as of late. Last month he was doing backflips over Activision's Tenchu, which did a great job of simulating what Sushi does best. This month however, he's been moping around, hanging his head in shame over the travesty that is Eidos's Ninja. "I can't believe anyone would associate this loser with me!" said Sushi. Poor guy. That's just plain playa-hatin'.



EXTREME-G 2



Publisher: Acclaim

Developer: Probe

Featured In: EGM #172

I have to say, I'm surprised at how much of an improvement over the original XG this is. It's still not up there with the likes of F-Zero X, but this is certainly a good step in the right direction. It has a few problems, like some erratic collision detection, but I don't think it warrants the degree of hatred Dean is venting at it. The particularly maddening features of the first game are all pretty much gone.

There's none of that infuriating grinding to an absolute halt that we had before, but this does seem to have been replaced with an odd tendency to flip you round so that you're facing the other way. The tracks are all well-designed, and feature a few alternative routes, although basically they're pretty simple. Visually it's up there with the likes of Forsaken; moody lighting and industrial-looking levels fly by at considerable speed, and usually do so pretty smoothly. **The game is so fast in places that it gives you that sense of reckless abandon you feel on a particularly mad roller coaster.** The on a par with this though is that sometimes the action is a touch too fast for the graphics engine to keep up, especially if you have a high-speed crunch, and things get really choppy in the frame rate department. If you want to see choppy though, check out the four-player mode, which gets terrible.

John D

If you like the first Extreme-G, then you'll dig this sequel—even if it does suffer from a few new problems. It just seems a bit choppier than the original, although the graphics are improved. Draw distance has been increased, the bikes themselves look much better and the busting-the-sound-barrier effect is very cool. Battle Mode gets a makeover of sorts, but it's still boring. Many power-ups are useless and you'll end up ditching 'em.

Crispin

I'm probably in the minority here but I'm not very impressed with Extreme-G 2. Yes there are more bikes, more options and many more courses but it seems choppy, and its appearance is overly grainy. On top of that, the courses don't have that intense roller coaster-like feel. **Also, the turns are too sudden, making it tough to keep a constant speed.** Sure, breaking the sound barrier is cool but I like the original Extreme-G better.

Dean

The more I play Extreme-G 2, the more I like it. **There are areas in the game when the frame-rate gets quite choppy (in turnmets, when a lot of bikes are on the screen, and basically all of the time in the four-player mode)** but overall the game's impressive. The control is solid once you get used to it, although flipping around when barely tapping an obstacle or tunnel wall gets old REALLY quick. Still, it's worth a look.

Shawn

VISUALS 7 SOUND 7 INGENUITY 7

FS COLLEGE HOOPS 99



Publisher: Fox Interactive

Developer: Z-Axis

Featured In: EGM #172

It's getting increasingly hard for the little developers to nudge in on the "big two" sports video game publishers. I'm speaking of EA and 989 Sports. Their dominance of the genre is growing to the point of MONOPOLY! That's fine, they put out great games. It's just that publishers like Fox Sports Interactive have really got their work cut out for them.

College Hoops 99 tries to resemble NBA Courtside but I wouldn't put it on the same quality level. This Freshman entry has more than a few problems. For starters, the appearance of the polygonal players, while not horrible, is not as advanced as Live 99 or NBA Courtside. The player animation is a bit "herky-jerky" as well. When a man is defending a ball handler they can appear very stiff and stick-like. The game's AI is the most guilty. Often computer players don't seem to be in the game at all. They hover near their man, block him out and then the two lay back and watch the action. When two or three sets of players do this, it starts to look like roller coaster night at the YMCA—not much action. The game isn't terrible by any means. Advanced moves such as the first-step and alley-oop combos are very cool. The on-the-fly defense option is nice as well. If Z-Axis can clean up the AI and advance the animation a bit, next year this title could be decent.

Dean

Fox Sports College Hoops 99 has one thing going for it: It's the only college hoops game available on the N64. Unfortunately, even if you're the biggest college b-ball fan in the world, there's no way I can recommend this stinker. The graphics are OK, but the animation is horrid (the frame-rate stinks), and the AI is totally unbalanced. Both Courtside and NBA Live are MUCH better games. If you must play ball, don't play it here.

John R

You know something's wrong when people are laughing their heads off...while playing a basketball sim. This game is that horrible. The ball physics and players' movements are unrealistic and erratic. The frame-rate is terrible. It's impossible to steal the ball (you'll foul at almost every attempt). The dunks look ludicrous. Anything fun here? Sure...watching the players go through their ridiculous animations before shooting a free throw.

Dan

Ever since Nintendo's impressive NBA Courtside came out, the bar has been raised for N64 roundball sims. Unfortunately, Fox Sports College Hoops doesn't come anywhere close to that bar. **The control isn't that good, and there are AI problems which really bring the experience down.** The graphics are also disappointing and lack any serious visual punch. It's not as bad as In the Zone '98, but it's still pretty bad.

Sushi

VISUALS 4 SOUND 5 INGENUITY 4

GLOVER



Publisher: Hasbro Interactive

Developer: Interactive Studios

Featured In: EGM #173

As sloppy as Glover is at times—mostly thanks to a crappy camera—and as lame as the story may be, it's still pretty fun. Glover combines a little bit of action with adventure and throws in a dash of puzzle for good measure. But this is some culmination of genres is what makes the game lose its identity. I wish it would've been just a puzzle game, or just a 3D action/adventure. And really, that's how the entire game makes me feel in general. I found myself saying, "I wish this game had..." often, whether it was in regards to a more solid self, a better camera, more interesting enemies and bosses, or one of the game's other letdowns. Glover himself is a great main character and is quite original, but the world he lives in is just too sloppy for me. Good points? Glover has an awesome concept, and as tedious as controlling the ball is sometimes, I like it because it's different. Also the levels have loads of puzzle elements and are designed well, generally. But then the camera comes back to haunt me. It often ends up causing a fall to either you or your ball—either way, you're dead. It's too bad. I imagine the sequel to Glover will be pretty darn good, and I hope there is one...one that's better than the original. Overall, Glover is a good game that could've been better. Definitely rent it—you might like it.

Shawn

To me this is really an annoying concept for a game. **Learning to manipulate the hand and ball through Mario-like environments is like using chop-sticks to eat soup.** I'm sure the idea is to get really proficient but I finally lost interest after futilely batting the ball against the side of a pool for 10 minutes. To me it's another game that hides under the cloak of the "kids' game" genre. Is it boring because it's for kids or is it really just boring?

Dean

Glover comes as a pleasant surprise—and not just 'cause it's one of those outta-the-blue games that just happens to be really fun. This addicting hybrid is big on puzzle and exploration elements, with a heavy dollop of Marble Madness plopped in. It all makes for a surprisingly deep game with lots of secrets and techniques to master, even if the steep learning curve throws you into the thick of things a bit too quickly.

Crispin

I'd love to be able to wholly recommend this for its original, perspective on a tired genre, but it's let down by niggles that can't be ignored. The controls seem to rely more on luck than judgment, not in the least because Glover himself and the ball seem to operate under different laws of physics. On top of this the camera system is incredibly obstructive and often makes solving the simple puzzles more difficult than necessary.

John D

VISUALS 7 SOUND 6 INGENUITY 8

Number Of Players: 1-4

Best Feature: Really, Really Fast Gameplay

Worst Feature: Occasionally Choppy Frame-Rate

www.acclaim.net

Number Of Players: 1-2

Best Feature: College Atmosphere

Worst Feature: Opponent AI

www.foxinteractive.com

Number Of Players: 1

Best Feature: Glover (The Character)

Worst Feature: The Stupid Camera

www.hasbro-interactive.com

NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB 99



Developer: Acclaim

Developer: Iguana

Featured In: EGM #112

I'm really surprised that Acclaim waited this long to bring out QB Club, but at least they didn't rush it out the door. They've addressed most of the problems that we had with last year's game, and fixed them with varying results. Acclaim brought in Jets' coordinator Charlie Weis, and it appears to have paid big dividends. **QB Club is infinitely smarter than last year's game (which wasn't very smart), even though the improved AI still has some major flaws.** No matter which quarterback you use, you can still consistently scramble out of the pocket for sizeable gains. Also, some other oddities hurt the game, such as horrible clock management by the computer, weird ball physics, and flawed play calling (a QB sneak on 1st and 10⁷). Aesthetically, the game looks beautiful. The graphics look even better than last year's game, even though the frame-rate is still a little too choppy. And while you can use the new Expansion Pak, it doesn't do anything to improve the jerky player animations that stick out like a sore thumb. Still, the atmosphere of the game is surprisingly good thanks to loads of commentary by Randy Cross and tons of other sounds ranging from crowd noise to QBs barking audibles. If you're all about realism, buy Madden, but otherwise QBC is probably the best bet for most football fans.

John R

QB Club 99's AI is much improved, but there's still a few oddities, most obviously the quarterback rollout. Simply call Shotgun and roll out right or left for 10-20 yards a pop. Plus, punt and kick returns can be unusually long due to the "train" effect. Overall though, I'm impressed with the graphics, the new engine and the killer animation. Create-a-Team is fun as is using the European clubs. It's not quite a Madden NFL 99 killer, but it's close.

Dean

Acclaim took its time bringing this out and for the most part it looks like time well spent. This year's game is much better graphically, and a lot of the gameplay flaws have been fixed up as well. The atmosphere is much better than Madden 99's—there are more sound effects, better audio commentary, and the players look much sharper. Now if they could only make the graphics less choppy, this would be a fantastic football game.

Dan

I like playing my football sims aggressively. QB Club 99 is great for the long bomb passes and impressive running plays. It's a little cheap though—you can pull off some long runs just by using the Turbo button. It's fun, but not very realistic. As far as graphics go, it's top-notch. You'd be hard-pressed to find a better looking NFL-sim game. I like the improvements made thus far. At this rate, by next year it should be awesome.

Sushi

NIGHTMARE CREATURES



Publisher: Activision

Developer: Kalisto

Featured In: EGM #112

I wasn't exactly thrilled with the PlayStation version of this game, so you can imagine my delight at having to play through it again on the N64. Adding to my dismay is that both the camera and control seem to have suffered in the porting process. Instead of being floaty (a forgivable flaw of the PlayStation original), your character's movement is now jerky and imprecise, particularly when it comes to jumping and locking on to enemies. And while your special moves are all still easy to perform, battling more than one enemy is a supreme chore. The camera rarely knows which monster to focus on, and your character turns sluggishly to face other threats. Visually, Nightmare Creatures has improved several notches. The textures look particularly clean, and the fog and short draw distance only add to the game's creepy, dark appeal. Monsters look especially good; the game's nearly worth playing just to see these H.P. Lovecraft-inspired beasts leap out from the scenery. The levels themselves are true to the PlayStation version, meaning they're mostly straightforward excursions from point A to point B, with lots of combat, a few switch-based puzzles and some annoying platform bits in between. It makes for mindless beat-'em-up action with a few cool frights, but not much else to keep you playing.

Crispin

When Nightmare Creatures was released on the PS it could be forgiven for being a failed attempt at trying to blend Tomb Raider with RE. As a second attempt on the N64, though, it's just unforgetably crap. The graphics are OK, but you end up fighting the atrocious camera system more than you do the tedious 3D Final Fight-style gameplay. Run, hit, run, hit, run, hit, yawn. Forget it. It sucks. Big time. And the monsters look silly.

John D

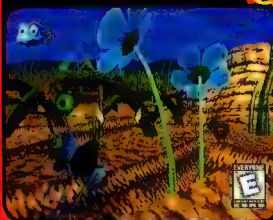
Besides the graphical changes to Nightmare Creatures, there isn't much that's changed from the PlayStation version. Consequently, I realized I don't like this game. The enemies are ridiculously hard, the control could've been much better, the camera sucks 90 percent of the time and the overall feel leaves much to be desired. It just isn't fun to play. I do not recommend buying this game. Save your dough for something good, like Zelda.

Shawn

A fan of the PlayStation original, I expected to be similarly pleased with this port. Too bad. The N64 version suffers from herky-jerky control and animation, making it tricky to lock on and battle enemies. The numerous fighting moves are still easy to pull off—as long as you use the digital pad—but jumping attacks are as useless as ever. Still, half the reason **this game is for its creepy atmosphere**, which is well-portrayed in this port.

Sushi

A BUG'S LIFE



Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment

Developer: Traveller's Tales

Featured In: EGM #112

Like most movie-licensed titles, A Bug's Life packs hefty production values—namely when it comes to the music and voice acting, which have been ripped right from the flick. (Still, the main character's repetitive quips get old quick.) Oh yeah, and also like most movie-licensed games, A Bug's Life sucks. If I didn't know better, I'd say the person in charge of the control scheme here never played a video game before. The hero, plucky ant lad Flik, has a nasty tendency to keep on moving after you let off the joystick. You're thus forced to anticipate where his momentum will take him when you near a ledge and let off the stick extra early. Fun. The camera has a serious attitude problem, too. It never seems to look where you need it, forcing you to tinker with it about once every 10 seconds. And it pans so slowly it makes the sluggish camera in the Tomb Raider games seem turbo-charged. Most of the levels are tedious, with annoying puzzles that involve you dragging seeds everywhere, while the bosses themselves are about as stupid as real bugs. At least the graphics are nice. Actually, they're downright amazing, even if the game suffers from occasional slowdown that bogs gameplay into surreal slow motion. The cinemas hit every plot point, so, do not play A Bug's Life till you've seen the movie.

Crispin

This game annoys me most because it actually could've been a decent kids' game if the damned camera worked right—which consequently makes controlling little Flik a real pain in the gaster. Well, then there's the respawning enemies (did somebody say annoying?) and the below-average graphics. OK, so I guess the game does have its share of problems. Overall, I might recommend this to kids, but not serious gamers.

Shawn

Obviously this game is cashing in on the appeal of the movie rather than its own quality. To be fair, it's good-looking and the control isn't horrible or anything. It's just too simple and repetitive. Many of the bosses simply stand still letting you to pummel them to death. Plus, little bees and well-placed clues practically save the levels for you. It's a little too cross-promotional for me. Naturally, little kids may like it anyway. Go figure.

Dean

Being from the old-school, I know games based on Disney-animated movies can be worthwhile. So what happened here? There's nothing I hate more than some average 3D action/adventure that I won't remember a few weeks from now. Maybe little Shiks out there will get a kick out of all of the cartoony insects but I sure didn't. I like to think of myself as open-minded, but there's no way I can recommend this, even to kids.

Sushi

Number Of Players: 1-4

Best Feature: Gorgeous Graphics

Worst Feature: Still Some Holes In The AI

www.acclaim.net

Number Of Players: 1

Best Feature: Atmospheric Graphics

Worst Feature: Camera Problems

www.activision.com

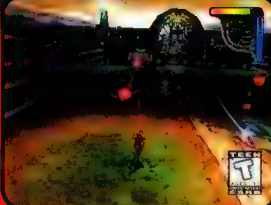
Number Of Players: 1

Best Feature: Party Graphics

Worst Feature: Pool Control

www.playstation.com

APOCALYPSE



Publisher: Activision
Developer: Neversoft Entertainment
Featured In: EGM #111

Considering the game's troubled, delay-ridden history, I wasn't really sure what to expect of Apocalypse. Turns out I was pleasantly surprised—at least at the beginning. Apocalypse's first few levels whip along at an explosive, rapid-fire pace and work extremely well with the Robotron-style control scheme (for which you'll need the Dual Shock to fully appreciate). The rooftop level at the game's midpoint is easily the best stage, with lots of crates and structures to blast apart (this level will certainly appease every gamer's desire to blow stuff up). Then the **whole thing turns to crap**. Later levels become way too platform intensive—especially for a game that likes to shift camera angles when you least expect it. Heck, the developers seemed to even anticipate players making a frustrating amount of misjudged leaps, because you often find extra lives at the beginning of tricky platform bits. It's the final stage that really hurt this game's score. Platforms here are atrociously narrow and unforgiving and don't work well with the too-touncy analog control. The Bruce Willis stuff is not a big draw, either. His motion-captured appearance in the cinemas is stiff and downright creepy, and his wisecracks are too repetitive. I imagine they had to cut many of Willis' lines when his role switched from second banana to star character.

Crispin

Contrary to Crispin's feelings on Apocalypse, I thought the game was good. Granted, it may have some camera problems and a few strange graphic glitches, but I enjoyed how it conveyed the action—very much like Smash TV thanks to its controls—while also providing a fairly interesting story line. Like One, Apocalypse still gives that uneasy feeling when near a ledge (since it's so easy to fall and die) but all in all I like this game.

Shawn

It's all carried off with class, but underneath all the gloss, Apocalypse is a simple shooter with an identity crisis. Gameplay dramatically swings between frenetic action and hypersensitive platform game precision. Often you get caught by still being in "blasting" mode when you should be treading more carefully. As you progress, this gets increasingly frustrating, especially when the erratic camera system conspires against you, too.

John D

As a 3D, run-around-and-shoot-stuff type game, Apocalypse isn't bad. Decent control and functional camera angles keep things exciting. The story line is as well as the title would allow even with the screwy voice work. Early on, the levels are fairly creative with a good balance of enemies and obstacles to overcome. But in the later stages, things become disjoint and "platformy," and the game loses its personality.

Dean

VISUALS 7 SOUND 7 INGENUITY 6 REPLAY 6

ASTEROIDS



Publisher: Activision
Developer: Syrox
Featured In: EGM #115

The PlayStation version of Asteroids is basically the original game, with a couple of new features and snazzy graphics. Other than the slightly repetitive gameplay and an unfortunately lame two-player mode, Asteroids is a blast. It provides the simple but surprisingly addictive feel of the arcade classic, while updating the visuals by leaps and bounds. Though honestly, vector graphics compared to pretty much any other graphical style is a major improvement. The addition of power-ups—some of which look incredible when unleashed—and all of the various kinds of asteroids and debris also add a lot to this title's longevity. But like I said, blowing up asteroid after asteroid can get a little repetitious after awhile. Luckily, all of the fancy effects and nice-looking backgrounds in this update add a great deal to the mostly average arcade Asteroids experience (which is what this 3D version ultimately boils down to). I would have liked the control to be a bit more intuitive but it's not horrible—chances are you'll get used to it. Also, the cinemas and "story" are a nice touch, but they aren't particularly necessary since this game basically revolves around blowing stuff up. But thankfully, the various enhancements, both in the gameplay and graphics departments, allow me to do it in style.

Shawn

Asteroids delivers pretty much everything I'd want from an update to the classic coin-op. It packs cool power-ups, excellent visuals, a good variety of 'roids to blast—all while maintaining the tension of the original. The themed levels and interactive backgrounds keep things from getting too monotonous, although—true to its nature—Asteroids is a repetitive game. You'll wanna fire this sucker up, blast rocks and zone out.

Crispin

As a "you," Asteroids was by far my favorite arcade game. This fancy 3D incarnation does a good job of capturing the same general feel of the original while offering a nice new look and tons of new variables. The question is: Is it deep enough to warrant the \$49.99 price tag? Basically, it's a good update with decent gameplay but it's still an old-school idea recycled for the '90s. If it were \$20, I'd buy it. But since it's not, rent first.

Dean

Dear Activision, Thank you very much for not making this a fully 3D, open space game. Thank you for sprucing it up with snazzy graphics and polygons, while keeping the gameplay in two dimensions. Thank you for including the original Asteroids. Thank you for keeping the classic Asteroids formula intact. Thank you for not screwing up this game like you did Pitfall. Thank you for an awesome, addicting shooter.

Dan

VISUALS 8 SOUND 7 INGENUITY 6 REPLAY 7

BRAVE FENCER MUSASHI



Publisher: Square EA
Developer: Square Soft
Featured In: EGM #111

Although not a particularly radical product, BFM really is something of a departure from the usual sprawling, lengthy and linear efforts that we have seen from Square recently. Having more in common with Goemon than Final Fantasy (right down to a cast with silly hair), the action is a hybrid of exploration and simple puzzle-solving with old-school arcade action. By throwing a mixture of game styles at you with some regularity the game rarely gets staid, and like all Square games there are frequent "set piece" scenes that show off both the imagination and the graphical talents of the Square team. Some spectacular boss fights see you throwing creatures through walls and smashing up scenery, while a white-water rafting scene typifies the kind of welcome arcade action that follows the often plodding and dull periods of exploration. Like all Square games, you are expected to stick with the story—and in this case it's something targeted at a younger audience. Voice acting is used throughout the more important scenes, and the talent has been given some rope to be more humorous than you'd normally expect; a valley-girl princess and a gay librarian add some chuckles to the proceedings. Not Square's greatest creation ever, but definitely a welcome change from the norm.

John D

More proof that Square is on a roll and still full of surprises, BFM is a superb-looking, superb-playing action/RPG that actually involves a lot more action than RPG elements. At nearly every turn in its extremely linear adventure, you'll be confronted with platform-style bits, clever puzzles, o'zarr minigames and some really cool Bosses. The game's tone is on the light side, so don't expect Xenogears-style drama.

Crispin

BFM is a nice change of pace from the typically serious, "traditional-style" RPGs that we're used to from Square. As an action/RPG it's definitely solid, but it never really achieves the level of depth of say, Zelda or Secret of Mana. Still, it's not afraid to poke fun of itself (the humor in the game is great), and even though it's relatively short, it is fun to play. The whole passing of time thing is well-done, and the music is great.

John R

I agree with John D to some extent. Brave Fencer has a fairly unique feel to it...but it's also somewhat childish. I like the action and exploration, but the voices and overall feel, though funny at times, is kind of like a Disney movie or something. Still, there's nothing like a good Square game, and Brave Fencer is one of those—it's made really well. Overall, if you want an entertaining and interesting action/RPG, BFM is a solid buy.

Shawn

VISUALS 8 SOUND 8 INGENUITY 7 REPLAY 4

Number Of Players: 1

Best Feature: Rooftop Level

Worst Feature: Platform Bits

www.activision.com

Number Of Players: 1-2

Best Feature: Addictive Gameplay

Worst Feature: Two-Player Mode

www.activision.com

Number Of Players: 1

Best Feature: Variety Of Gameplay Styles

Worst Feature: Story Targeted Toward Young Audience

www.squaresoft.com

BRIGANDINE



Publisher: Atlus

Developer: Hearty Robin

Featured In: EGM #113

Atlus touts Brigandine as a hybrid of Ogre Battle and Dragon Force, but I'd say this game is more a combination of Dragon Force's world map and Master of Monsters' battle system. The result? **A strategy/RPG that is as easy to get into as it is engaging.** I fell in love right away. The overworld part of the game is so similar to Dragon Force's, fans of that excellent Saturn title will feel right at home. I would've liked to have seen visual indications of armies moving around the continent (but if Brigandine had that, it'd be too much of a DF rip-off) and a more efficient, more intuitive interface (it's very clunky—managing and studying your armies involves too many menus, sub-menus and button presses). The combat system will remind you of Master of Monsters' fights, only much improved. Now the battles play out in 3D, and if you choose to skip the fight animations, you can see how much damage is being exchanged on the battlefield overview screen (unlike in MOM). Just be warned, fights can take a long time, even when you turn on every shortcut and let the CPU play for you. In the end, Brigandine doesn't come anywhere near Dragon Force's quality, story line and excitement, but it's a hell of a game, nonetheless. If you're looking for a fun strategy/RPG, don't overlook this little.

Dan

I spent a long time trying to figure out why I absolutely adored FF Tactics and Tactics Ogre, but could not get into Brigandine. (This was the case with Dragon Force, too.) Ultimately, I think it boils down to the more complex nature of Brigandine, and the lack of pulse-pounding excitement that came standard throughout FFT and TO's emotionally driven battles. Brigandine is by no means bad—it's just not my kind of game.

John R

Compared to most other strategy/RPGs out there, Brigandine is average. Even with its dated-looking graphics in the overhead map, plain-looking 3D fight sequences and effects, and incredibly long battles (even long for this style of game), Brigandine does the genre fair justice. For those of you out there who don't mind spending hour after hour duking it out with lizard men, unicorns and other such creatures, consider Brigandine.

Shawn

If you've been waiting for a tactical strategy game that had phenomenal graphics, you'll have to wait a little longer. Brigandine does provide fluid, three-dimensional battles, but the rest of the game is strictly 16-Bit. Still, the game is fun and with a choice of five different rulers, there's lots of replay value. The ability to upgrade classes of everything including monsters is a nice touch and the stories are interesting. Rent it first.

Sushi

VISUALS 4 SOUND 7 INGENUITY 6 REPLAY 7

CAESAR'S PALACE II



Publisher: Interplay

Developer: Rune Craft

Featured In: R/A

I was really critical of the original Caesar's (which I gave a 3.0 to in issue #102). Caesar's II is much improved. Interplay addressed many of the shortcomings I pointed out. This time around, you have many more games to play and many more variations of them (I had no idea a basic game like Keno could be played in so many different ways). It's also nice to see a healthy variety of slot and video poker machines this time around. The best improvement for this series is the Live Coaching option. If you want, you can have the CPU (as authenticated by a Ph.D. expert statistician) tell you if you're making a good bet or not. This handy feature can actually teach you how to real-life gamble more wisely, if that's possible (although on a few occasions, I didn't agree with his video poker advice...but who the hell am I to argue with a Ph.D.? If I were actually that good at gambling, I probably wouldn't be here reviewing this game right now). So on almost every level, this game is a big improvement over the original. So why isn't my score higher than it is? **Caesar's II, like the original, is extremely dry.** Here, you simply go to a menu and pick the game you want to play. Most 16-Bit gambling games are more immersives, interact ve and fun, letting you explore the casino or talk to fellow casino patrons.

Dan

I don't know. Maybe it was in retaliation to all of the crap games we had to review this month, but I spent a lot of time on Caesar's Palace II. The game design is quite tight and really does give the feeling of being at a real casino—although I would've liked a real poker table instead of different video poker machines. The load times can get annoying when going from one game to the next, but overall CP II is a lot of fun.

Shawn

What we have here is the ultimate trainer for would-be gamblers about to make their first trek to Vegas. Not only do you get more games than in the original, everything here is amazingly authentic, with the option to turn on a gambling coach who guides you every move. Even the manual is educational. But all this authenticity leaves little room for personality. Forget any story elements—you're just gambling for gambling's sake.

Crispin

Am gambling. There's nothing like wasting your money and life away in search of the elusive jackpot. Caesar's Palace II lets you feed your dirty habit right in the privacy of your own home and that's all right with me. There's a lot of different games to choose from, each with detailed instructions and tutorials that help you avoid common mistakes. It would have been nice if there was some more personality. Not bad.

Sushi

VISUALS 6 SOUND 7 INGENUITY 5 REPLAY 8

CRASH BANDICOOT: WARPED



Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment

Developer: Naughty Dog

Featured In: EGM #111

Jason Rubin, president of Naughty Dog, once said Crash: WARPED (or Crash 3) is the game Naughty Dog set out to do four and a half years ago—that it's the ultimate Crash Bandicoot product. After playing the game, I believe him. If you want a game with tons of character, a load of gameplay and some of the best PlayStation visuals ever seen, then get this game. It's overall the tightest, most solid action game of this sort on the PlayStation. **I had more fun playing Crash 3 than I did making my way through Spyro the Dragon,** and I liked Spyro quite a bit. Sure, the majority of Crash 3 may not be free-roaming but I don't care. The game is a hell of a lot of fun, totally free-roaming or not. And that's what it comes down to in my opinion. Besides, the new levels that are totally 3D (including the motorcycle, jet ski and bi-plane levels) kick major ass. Also, there aren't too many games on the PlayStation that give you as many elements of gameplay: you have to find boxes, fruit, gems, more gems, power-ups and relics (through an insanely difficult time-trial mode) to truly finish the game. In addition, you have the gorgeous and fun levels themselves to experience. The only problems I have with the game are its easy bosses and a couple of instances of cheap "fall off the ledge" deaths. Great game.

Shawn

Crash 3 teaches the already twice-learned rule that it really is impossible to not like a Crash game. While the levels are built from only a few old-school, clever Miyamoto-inspired themes, the control, graphics and overall presentation are so slick and refined that the game is amazingly addictive to watch as well as play. Heck, **Crash 3 is just plain of fun,** and its secrets lend it replay of nearly Super Mario World proportions.

Crispin

Without a doubt one of the finest examples of this style of game. What it lacks in innovation, it more than makes up for in graphical flair and beautiful but simple level design. **There aren't really any genuine gameplay surprises—it's mostly tried and tested stuff here,** but the new "open" levels are welcome additions to the Crash formula. Ultimately, it's the slickness of the whole thing that's stuck you in. A gorgeous game.

John D

I don't know what else to say. Crash: WARPED is awesome. The first Crash was "OK," and Crash 2 was excellent, but WARPED is easily the best of the bunch. The gameplay has been polished to near-perfection, and the graphics are incredible. The new free-roaming levels are very well-done, and the game has the same cozy atmosphere that made the first two games so enjoyable. It's classic platform action, but it's done right.

John R

VISUALS 9 SOUND 9 INGENUITY 8 REPLAY 8

Number Of Players: 1

Best Feature: Deep, Engaging Gameplay

Worst Feature: Graphics, But Who Cares?

www.atlusc.com

Number Of Players: 1-4

Best Feature: Coaching Tips, Lots Of Games

Worst Feature: Dry Presentation

www.interplay.com

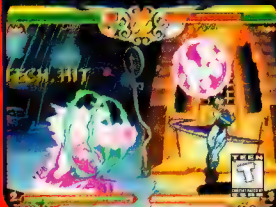
Number Of Players: 1

Best Feature: Incredibly Tight Gameplay

Worst Feature: Naughty Dog's Last Crash Game

www.playstation.com

DARKSTALKERS 3



Publisher: Capcom

Developer: Capcom

Featured In: EGM #109

Don't let that score lead you into thinking I didn't like this game as much as I did. Darkstalkers 3 is one of the top 2D fighters to come out for the PlayStation, rectifying the moribund version of the original Darkstalkers that was dumped on us earlier. The action is fast and controls are as they should be.

Darkstalkers is one of those games that needs outrageous animation, and although there is quite a bit intact, it loses much of its punch with the larger characters. That said, the overall colors are very rich and take full advantage of the large palette. The music is haunting and in line with what we've been accustomed to from the earlier installments of the series. There is a nice Training Mode that's not available on any other system too. Many characters are available for the choosing, including the ones from the Japan-only arcade "half-sequel" to Vampire Savior. Considering there hasn't been a great version of this classic series on the Sony console, it's hard to go wrong with Darkstalkers 3. Again, I should emphasize how much smoother this game plays when compared to the PS version of X-Men vs. SF. The only people who should stay away are hardcore Capcom heads who demand absolute perfection, or those who just don't get 2D fighting games. For the rest of you, DS3 is worth checking out.

Sushi

I've always liked the Darkstalkers series for its outrageous animation and cool character designs, but somehow, DS3 just doesn't do it for me. The port is very nicely done, with only subtle animation loss and some minor slowdown, but the game itself isn't all that spectacular. The new Dark Force options are cool, I admit, but the Original Character Mode's lame and the graphics aren't as impressive as Night Warriors. Wait for SFA3.

John R

For such a sprite-intensive game (I'm talking about flashy, colorful ones...and lots of them), Darkstalkers runs pretty fast on the PlayStation, much faster than the disappointing X-Men vs. SF. The animation is still missing several frames, but it's fairly tolerable. The gameplay and controls are right on as well. In my opinion though, the series is getting a bit old. It doesn't have the same longevity as the SF series has.

Dan

As with previous Capcom games, the PS version of Darkstalkers 3 is a poor cousin to its arcade and Saturn counterparts. Although the game art is stunning throughout, and the gameplay is blindingly fast, the animation is really choppy and can get so bad in places it makes things genuinely confusing. As with other DS games, the character design is imaginative and different, but underneath it's just yet another SF-derived fighter.

John D

VISUALS 7 SOUND 6 INGENUITY 5 REPLAY 7

Number Of Players: 1-2

Best Feature: Graphical Style

Worst Feature: Some Animation Loss

www.capcom.com

EGGS OF STEEL



Publisher: Atlus

Developer: Enix/Rhythm & Hues

Featured In: N/A

To truly appreciate Eggs of Steel I think you need to be able to drink, on medication or very young—not that those things should ever go together. It's just that this game is so weird, that being in another state of mind or not having a fully developed brain is the only way I can imagine somebody could enjoy playing it. EoS is a strange cross between an action and a puzzle game, kind of like Lost Vikings—except a lot more insane. There's a certain comedic appeal to EoS but that certainly isn't worth the time and energy—not to mention the cash—you'd have to sink into the game to go through it. Granted, EoS is mostly designed for children in mind but even with that said, the game's just not that good. Besides the game's sub-standard graphics you have its poor excuse for gameplay. You have to punch a series of time clocks and secure four keys in order to ultimately reset machines in the mill (order to earn egg night watchman by the way...don't ask). Of course, while going through level after level of floating girders, broken catwalks and twisty tubes you realize just how little fun you're going to have in the process. Oh, and those cinema...wow. Annoying is the best way to describe the overall experience unless you're like one or two years old. Maybe then it would be somewhat amusing.

Shawn

As if you couldn't tell by its name, this is one seriously whacked-out game. It's so foreign and strange, but that gives it a lot of its appeal. The surreal level designs and FMV are far out and cute at the same time, making this a good, entertaining title for the twisted youth of today. Speaking of the levels...although interesting, the multiple paths and non-intuitive layouts can get a little confusing. Still, it's not too bad.

Dan

Eggs of Steel is one of the most bizarre, truly surreal games I have ever played. It definitely gets points for originality. Even though it's primarily aimed at kids, I found it oddly addictive in the several hours that I spent with it, even though I never really gets all that challenging. The control could've been a bit tighter, and the FMV scenes are pretty cheesy, out on the whole. I somewhat dig it. Please tell me I'm gonna be OK.

John R

What's up with this game? I'm not sure if it's designed with kids or druggies in mind. Looking past the game's strangeness, I find it to be rather entertaining, in a mindless, goofy sort of way. Sometimes, it gets a bit hard to tell what's going on, or what I'm supposed to be doing. The strange camera angles don't help one bit. But you're looking for something incredibly silly that's not too hardcore, check out Eggs of Steel.

Sushi

VISUALS 6 SOUND 5 INGENUITY 8 REPLAY 6

Number Of Players: 1

Best Feature: Wacky And Funny As Hell

Worst Feature: Might Be A Bit Too Weird

www.atlusc.com

FORMULA 1 98



Publisher: Polygram

Developer: Visual Sciences

Featured In: ACM #81

Unfortunately new developer Visual Sciences has had a tough job making any obvious improvements to this series. F1 97 was probably about as good as you're ever going to get with a PS F1 game. It was fast, smooth and packed with all the necessary goodies. So why buy this? Well, the new season is in there—so if you subscribe to the current sports mentality, chances are you'll want all the right teams, cars and drivers. Fair enough. Here they are. And if you're in the market for your first F1 game—you might as well get the most timely. But new stuff? Well, the split-screen, link-cable combo for four players is a fine addition, but the new graphics engine is nasty. There are some serious texture warps and polygon tears that detract from the fact that this is one of the fastest-feeling racing games around. Ben and Jerry would be proud of the number of different gameplay flavors, although Arcade Mode is probably a bit too arcadey for my liking. Call me old fashioned, but I've never been a big fan of F1 cars powersliding, regardless of how slick the controls are. The Sim Mode is tough, crank the difficulty and it's a serious challenge thanks to some not-too-shabby opponent AI. Unlike previous games, other drivers actually get out of your way and don't just mindlessly stick to the racing line.

John D

I don't know why this series has been so augmented since the first two editions but it's totally different now. Out are the sharply detailed cars. In are bigger, polygon offerings. Along with that, there's some unsavory in-draw-in and weird textures. Driving a quick race on Arcade Mode isn't bad but using the Sim Mode is just plain frustrating. Overall I agree with John '97 was the best year for this Formula One series.

Dean

Maybe I'm a weirdo, but I liked playing Formula 1's Arcade Mode and driving around all crazy like, taking shortcuts off-road when I could and pushing my opponents around to make them spin out. The graphics are really sweet, and I like the controls, quite a bit, but I can't say I enjoy the Simulation Mode at all. Overall, for those of you out there who just want to race (and don't care about the sim stuff) F1 98 isn't bad.

Shawn

Seeing as how I know very little and care even less about F1 racing, I play die-hard sims like this for one reason—to see if they can up my interest in the sport. Last year's model of F1 did; this year's did not. The Shoddy graphics are part of the problem, but even worse is the hefty difficulty of the full-on Sim Mode. It just isn't fun. The Arcade Mode, however, is enjoyable & fun, but then other games do arcade racing better.

Crispin

VISUALS 7 SOUND 8 INGENUITY 7 REPLAY 7

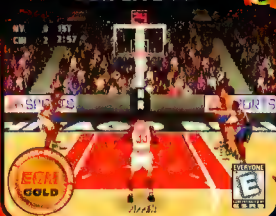
Number Of Players: 1-2

Best Feature: Slick Driver AI

Worst Feature: Texture Warping and Polygon Tear

www.polygram.com

NBA LIVE 99



Publisher: Electronic Arts

Developer: EA Sports

Featured In: EGM #113

Yes! I was thinking I would never see a great basketball game until the new systems came out but here's one right on the PlayStation. NBA Live 99 incorporates all the fanciest bells and whistles in the book and somehow manages to be a great-playing simulation. The control is classic Live with new tweaks that take advantage of the Dual Shock. Everyone has some type of "showtime" button, but Live takes it several steps further. You can perform fake crossovers, fake passes, shots—just about anything. The cool part is, it works. There's also a new move that lets you back into the defender, then execute a quick turn and leave him in your dust. This move isn't automatic and takes skill to master, especially in tougher AI levels. The players look great with lots of animation and even facial features like grinning and opening their mouths. I can go on and on about all the neat little touches, but all of it wouldn't mean diddly if the game didn't play right. **The AI, the controls and the overall speed of the game are down pat.** I feel like I'm gushing a bit too much, but you just can't understand how frustrating it's been playing through games like Shoot Out and Kobe Bryant and knowing how close those games were to being truly great. Luckily, Live has stepped in and showed them how it's done.

Sushi

After several years of having ridiculously easy CPU AI in their NBA Live games, EA seems to have finally gotten it right. Not only have they improved their game on all aesthetical levels (the player faces are a kick, even if they're not very useful), but **they've actually made it somewhat challenging, too.** The new moves are easy to pick up, and make offensive control even better than before. Too bad the lockout is killing my enthusiasm.

John R

Wow, I'm impressed. First off, the players look great. Extensive shading along with real facial expressions make them look very convincing. New mo-cap animation has done wonders for realism as well. **But more importantly, the "easy gameplay" syndrome of the past has been fixed.** No more repetitive cheap jams, it's all strategic now. Honestly, this thing looks and plays better than any other basketball sim on any platform.

Dean

EA's NBA Live series always has taken a step backward for every one forward, but Live 99 has nothing but improvements. It comes packed with a ridiculous amount of features, great-looking graphics (the players even change facial expressions), and a smart computer opponent. The only major fault with the game is that the player animations and frame-rate are a little choppy. This is the best PS basketball simulation out there.

Dan

NCAA GAMEBREAKER 99



Publisher: 999 Studios

Developer: RedZone Interactive

Featured In: EGM #113

GameBreaker 99 has undergone the same polygon pump-up as its big brother GameDay 99. The engine is all-new, and a bunch of new animations were added as well. So at this point you know the drill—"If you like GameDay 99, you'll also like GameBreaker 99." For the most part that's true, but I've found a few minor flaws in the game. Some of the play formations in the Selection Menu don't match up with the actual plays. For example, you may choose a play in anticipation of throwing to a certain wide receiver but when they line up, he's not even on the correct side. This is also evident in defensive plays (mostly goal line stuff). It's not a big deal but it does throw one off a bit. My other complaint has to do with quarterbacks overthrowing their receivers. Occasionally, on long pass plays, your QB will throw far ahead of the intended target. Most often into a crowd of defenders. One last bitch—players slide too far after a tackle. **Oh I've purged my system of complaints. Now let me reassure you—GameBreaker 99 is a lot of fun to play!** I've been a big fan since the first edition and I can honestly say this is the best yet. It's hard-hitting and a bit exaggerated but that's the best part of the game. Poppin' a receiver hard after a catch is awesome. The game plays like butter my friends. Go get it fast.

Dean

GameBreaker was my favorite pigskin game last season, and '99 is just as good. **For the casual football video game fan like myself, this game is great**—it's well-animated, it controls well and it's exciting. I wish 98 would stick in a few minor features, such as letting you know what the results would be if you accepted or declined penalties. Otherwise, this is a great game, even if it isn't dramatically different from last year's chapter.

Dan

Man, what a year for College Football fans! First EA's awesome NCAA 99, and now this. **GameBreaker 99 is a big step up from last year's game in every way.** The graphics and animation are excellent, the presentation is much-improved, and the gameplay is fast-paced and exciting. As far as realism is concerned, I still prefer NCAA (money plays still haunt GameBreaker), but for multiplayer play, GB is a blast.

John R

Usually, I prefer the college pigskin games to the pro ones, but this year that's not the case. GameBreaker starts off great, but as I got further into my season, I started to find a lot of holes in the AI that led to some totally unrealistic stats and scores. But on well, the main reason I play these games is for multi-player play, and in that respect, **GB 99 rocks.** The engine is fast and fluid, and it's just a lot of fun to play.

Sushi

NINJA



Publisher: Eidos

Developer: Core Design

Featured In: EGM #108

Sometimes games can conspire against you. I got stuck with having to provide the big review of this mainly because of my image. So now I have to sit through hours of this tedious garbage. You may already be unfortunate enough to own a copy of Ninja...with it's impressive pedigree (of being developed by Core Design) you'd expect something special. The game's been in stores for well over a month now, and I'd like to take this opportunity to apologize for us not reviewing it sooner. It seems that Eidos was concerned that we'd think the game sucks, so told us that it "wasn't reviewable" last month...and then we found it in our local store a couple of days after deadline. Seems that Eidos' concerns were right though. **It really does suck.** It's a linear, badly presented and poorly executed 3D update of Shinobi. Unfortunately though, it doesn't have the excuses that Shinobi had when it comes to technology. The camera angles are terrible; half the time you can't see what's going on, and besides that the graphics are mostly atrocious. The characters are badly drawn and the bosses all look completely ridiculous. Add in the cheap gameplay elements—traps appearing out of nowhere, enemies pushing you off platforms, etc.—and you have a really unenjoyable experience. Core should be ashamed.

Sushi

Now I see why Sushi's been so upset. Ninja could've been cool (taking a game like Shinobi and trying to provide an updated variation) but it's not. **The gameplay is cheap and irritating throughout,** especially the "cunning" traps that only seem to be in there to annoy you. Graphically it's all a bit "first generation" with only the magical effects really raising things above the level of "bad." Not what you'd expect from Core.

John D

This game is the epitome of God-awful game design. Cheap, unavoidable hits, poor camera angles, imprecise controls...this is a decent idea for an arcade-type game turned really bad. **A well-designed game tests your skills and reflexes—this game tests your patience.** You'll know it when you die for the hundredth time because some incredibly cheap and lame invisible trap sprang on you. And why the hell can't this Ninja swim?

Dan

In Ninja, you control a—you guessed it—Ninja whose mission is to apparently put you to sleep. OK, maybe that's not the real point of the game but it might as well be. **The game's just not very good.** Playing it is kind of like cleaning your room or apartment—you don't necessarily want to but...ah, you might as well. You know, kind of a mindless activity. Plus Ninja has a lame camera and an overall sloppy look and feel. Don't bother.

Shawn

Number Of Players: 1-8

Best Feature: Improved AI

Worst Feature: Not Enough Cheerleader FAVs!

www.easports.com

Number Of Players: 1-8

Best Feature: Hard-Hitting Gameplay!

Worst Feature: Formation Problems

www.999studios.com

Number Of Players: 1

Best Feature: Some OK Special Effects

Worst Feature: Cheap Gameplay!

www.eidosinteractive.com

PSYBADEK



Publisher: Psygnosis

Developer: Psygnosis

Featured In: EGM #112

There's someone at Psygnosis who is under the delusion that this is actually fun. Whoever thought that strapping a plank of wood to the feet of two characters in a bad Crash Bandicoot rip-off, under the misapprehension that it was "cool," needs striking up. We watched Psybadek throughout its development and had some serious worries about the gameplay mechanics from day one. Believe me, they weren't sorted out. Is it A) a snowboarding game? Is it B) a platform game? Is it C) a tedious, repetitive, boring, misguided and pathetic attempt at cashing in on the snowboard fad? I'll have a C) please. At some point it was obviously thought that the naff, linear levels needed spicing up—so a "trick landing" feature was thrown in. You can't do tricks like in a "normal" snowboarding game you see... Did that make it interesting though? No. To make things even more "fun" a bunch of brain-numbing "different" bits were chucked in. Frankly, the first one will bore you into submission; spinning in a circle and shooting 60 (yes...60) penguins kind of sets things up for the entertainment-void to come. If you survive beyond this without having some kind of aneurysm, you're treated to further "mini-games" that will have you begging for mercy. I hate it. I hate it. I hate it.

John D

Psybadek is comprised of a hodge-podge of ill-conceived puzzles and races loosely connected by one overall objective—to fight the final boss. Kind of nebulous to say the least. In fact the whole game seems like it was pieced together rather haphazardly...that's to say nothing of the poor graphics and suspect gameplay. To cover for the weakness I'm supposed to be "psychedelic." Come on, you can't blame this one on drugs!

Dean

Psygnosis had the right idea, but technically, it didn't work out too well. My main gripe is with the controls. The game wants you moving forward all the time, but I found myself constantly stopping because I missed a jump, or missed a pick-up, or, etc. The game needs Crash Bandicoot's continually flowing style of gameplay and accurate yet forgiving controls. This game does have a lot of levels and very cool music though.

Dan

I think this game could've done without hoverdecks. Why? When I'm on one, I want to race, not stop to pick up items or to pounce on enemies. Identity crisis aside, the game's pretty boring. Nothing in it makes me want to go back and play more. Also, what's up with the poorly designed stunt meter? It's too simplistic (they should've used controller combos), but at the same time, it's hard to land the exact stunt you're looking for.

Sushi

Number Of Players: 1

Best Feature: Vans License

Worst Feature: Repetitive And Cheap Gameplay

www.psygnosis.com

RALLY CROSS 2



Publisher: Sony Imagesoft

Developer: Idol Minds

Featured In: EGM #119

Here's an example of a sequel done well. RC2 retains all the flavor of the first edition while improving in almost every category across the board. New things like better cars, a track editor and sharper graphics are nice, but are overshadowed by the much-improved gameplay. The frame-rate is so much better, it makes the first edition seem slow. It wasn't though, it's just RC2 is just that much faster. For proof (should you decide to buy this game), fire up the old jungle track, which has been improved. You'll be amazed at the difference. Also making a major impact is the vehicle physics and collision detection. The cars are much stiffer and don't bounce around as much. Nor do they get hung up on walls or fences as badly as last year. As far as AI goes, most races are kept relatively tight when even all seems lost. A few good laps will usually get things close again. That's not to say it's too easy, it's just balanced well. And while it may not be the most realistic rally game, the excitement of launching off ramps, power-sliding and flipping over bumps and hills overrides any realistic elements that may be lost. The 2P Mode works well. Not much slowdown, if any at all. I miss the four-player option but it's no biggie. It's a tough call, but I actually like this game better than Sega Rally, which was my former favorite.

Dean

I was completely taken aback at how great this turned out to be. It wasn't a particularly big fan of the original, but this is superb. Graphically it's not the greatest thing ever (they're not great, and there's a lot of polygon tearing) but it's smooth, and more importantly, it's fast and the controls feel great. The thing that really brought a smile to my face though was the track editor—it's easy to use, and adds hours of life to the game.

John D

I wasn't too happy with the first Rally Cross, and even though Rally Cross 2 is obviously a big improvement over the original, "I'm still not all that blown away by it. There's plenty of depth (lots of cars and tracks), and the game is well-balanced, but I don't like the touchy feel, and I can't stand how the cars flip over. It was lame in RC, they should've cut it out entirely for RC2. On the other hand, the Track Editor is real impressive.

John R

Rally Cross 2 is a very impressive improvement over the original, which wasn't a bad game in the first place. The sequel's faster, smoother and most importantly, more fun. In particular, I like the track designs. You can race them in a fairly straightforward fashion, but you can really spend some time learning the tracks' nuances to improve your times. Nice, clean graphics and controls only add to this already solid package.

Dan

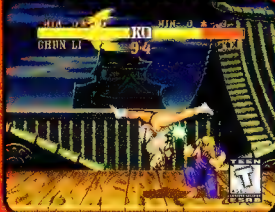
Number Of Players: 1-2

Best Feature: Racing Gameplay

Worst Feature: Annoying Music

www.99studios.com

SF COLLECTION 2



Publisher: Capcom

Developer: Capcom

Featured In: EGM #109

This is the collection fans have been waiting for. Street Fighter Collection 2 is certain to evoke many memories of intense arcade excitement that defined the Street Fighter II craze. Follow that wave of anticipation as you progress to Champion Edition and then on to the big daddy, Street Fighter II Turbo. Each game is pretty much arcade-perfect and you'll notice detail you never knew was there. Of course the biggest gripe I have is that most people will have to play with the standard Sony pad which is not the best controller for two-button fighting games (although it's not nearly as bad as the N64 one). Break down and get a joystick like you did for the SNES versions and you'll be a much happier camper. Capcom went and added a nice amount of extras like art and misc. information that can be accessed right away along with a few more that can only be unlocked by beating each title in the collection. This is a great incentive to play through each game repeatedly and get back in touch with your old-school roots. It's funny but this second collection which features much older games than the first SF collection stands the test of time better. I can't recommend this collection enough although most people who didn't live through this era may not enjoy it as much. Grab a friend and hit familiar turf.

Sushi

I've stated before that I think the two Street Fighter collections could've been arranged a little better. Regardless, this is one excellent compilation. Hyper Fighting is one of the best SFs ever (if not THE best), and the original, which is still fantastic in its own right, is included. These are games that everyone should have in their software libraries. They are as much a piece of video game history as Pac-Man or Pong.

Dan

There are lots of other must-buy games out now, but you'd be making a mistake if you ignored this compilation. After all, the original SFII is such a legendary game—both for its gameplay and its place in history—that it almost seems a crime not to own it. Just tearing the old tapes and rediscovering the Boss-beating patterns makes the experience worthwhile. Plus, Hyper Fighting is the most solid installment in the series.

Crispin

Street Fighter Collection 2 is definitely worth your while if you're a fan of the series. The three games aren't different enough to make the collection stand out (why play SFII or SFIII: CE when you can play SFII Turbo?), but then again, we are talking about the most popular, respected fighting series of all-time. The little extras (art, fighting tips, character bios, etc.) are all great, cool, adding to an already historic package.

John R

Number Of Players: 1-2

Best Feature: Classic Street Fighter Action

Worst Feature: Using The PS Controller—Buy A Stick!!

www.capcom.com

TEST DRIVE OFF-ROAD 2



Publisher: Accolade
Featured in: EGM #13

Number Of Players: 1-2

Best Feature: Lots Of Big Trucks

Well...it's a significant improvement over last time. Making effective use of the Test Drive engine, things both look and feel a lot better now. This isn't to say that everything is particularly peachy though. **TD: Off-Road 2 is a reasonable racing game, but it enjoys some unique little, erm, quirks.** This isn't a "simulation" by any stretch of the imagination. While it's full to overflowing with trucks you'll recognize from Ford, Jeep and others, I'm not aware of any 4x4 that can leap 100 feet into the air before crashing nose first into the ground. Maybe a Hummer? Dunno, never driven one. Anyway, this is all about sliding around in the muck and jostling for position at hair-raising speeds of up to 140-50 mph. Reading the long, linear courses takes a certain amount of skill—you have to keep an eye on the "road" textures to stay on a raceable line, but once you get the hang of it, you can win races with relative ease. I did suffer some unusual problems though...like running out of time, even though I was in first place (which you don't see often) and being persistently blocked by some weird-ass, vindictive opponent AI. Aside from this, not being able to reconfigure the controls enough was a real pain. I like analog steering, but don't like the throttle to be on the second stick, and you can't set things to be otherwise.

John D

Like Test Drive 5, it's way too easy to fall behind from one little mistake in Test Drive Off-Road 2. The game is a definite improvement over the original TDOR, but it still doesn't have what it takes to leave a lasting impression. The analog control is way too sensitive even after adjusting it, and the violation of the Dual Shock actually makes my hands feel numb. Thankfully you can turn it off. Don't buy this one—rent it.

Shawn

This edition of TDOR is improved thanks in part to a much quicker, recycled Test Drive 4 game engine. It's a good thing too—to race these super long tracks at a slower pace could possibly induce a coma. They're OK, but shorter with more variation would've been better. **TDOR 2 offers to be a real sim, and won't provide the kind of excitement Rally Cross 2 will.** It's solid, if not a little boring, but worth a look.

Dean

Test Drive Off-Road 2 is 10 times better than the original which sold an ungodly amount due to its low price and Hummer jeep on the cover. Capitalizing on the happy fluke, **Accolade went and made a pretty good driving game.** The cars look and control nicely. The tracks are varied and are fun to drive through. IMO the game plays too slow unless you play in the first-person view. A solid, although not outstanding racer.

Sushi

VISUALS 6 SOUND 7 INGENUITY 5 REPLAY 6

TWISTED METAL 3



Publisher: 989 Studios
Featured in: EGM #13

Number Of Players: 1-4

Best Feature: Smooth Visuals

Although I won't answer the burning question of which is better—this game or Rogue Trip (turn to page 218 for that answer)—I will say that TM3 falls well short of the standards set by the previous Twisted Metal games. **Level design is particularly disappointing.** Some of TM3's arenas are just plain boring—such as the mega-dull Washington, D.C. stage, which is basically a big rectangle—while the larger levels pack predictable secrets or downright cheap mega weapons. Instead of the 1-wonder-if-I-can-blow-that-structure-up style of puzzles in TM2, this sequel relies more on scattered destructible switches that grant access to the mega weapons, disable enemy regeneration, etc. They're fun to figure out the first time through, but become more of a chore when you replay with other characters. I'm not too keen on the control, either, which is supposedly built off a more accurate physics engine. The cars wobble too much, making aiming extra tough, and they practically flip over every time you hit a speed bump. Visually, TM3 is a step up, with a more rounded, natural look to the levels. The four-player split screen works well if you turn off CPU opponents; otherwise, it's a choppy unplayable mess. TM2 is just lacking overall. With only two hidden tracks and two extra cars, it needs more secrets.

Crispin

While I'm happy to see the Twisted Metal series finally get an upgrade in graphics, I'm not too happy with the new physics engine. The cars don't handle anywhere near as nice as they did before. **I especially hate the way the cars flip around so much—it's an opening for mucho cheapness (just use the freeze burst on the helpless victim).** The lackluster arenas don't help this score. Decent, but extremely disappointing.

Dan

Sure, the graphics are a bit better this time and the music sure is cool (Rob Zombie is OK in my book), but underneath the gloss TM3 is slow, sluggish and tedious. The level design is uninspired at best, while the new "realistic physics" engine seems utterly redundant. Even the multiplayer mode fails to impress. Where once the series was an Innovator, imitated by many; now it's just another cookie-cutter combat game. A shame.

John D

Twisted Metal 3 isn't a bad game but it's not very good either—certainly not as good as Rogue Trip or Vigilante 8 (although both of those games had their own unique problems). First, the control in TM3 is too real for my liking. **989 is using this "true physics" thing that ends up causing the game to lose some of its fast, arcade feel.** Also, the levels could've been much more interesting and larger as well. I wouldn't buy TM3.

Shawn

VISUALS 8 SOUND 7 INGENUITY 5 REPLAY 6

MAGIC KNIGHT RAYEARTH



Publisher: Working Designs
Developer: Sega Enterprises Ltd., CLAMP
Featured in: EGM #106

Number Of Players: 1

Best Feature: Beautiful 3D Graphics

It's been a long wait, but finally, Magic Knight Rayearth—the last Saturn game—is here. So was it worth the wait? Well, yes—but I'm not entirely satisfied. Let me explain. First of all, the Japanese version of Rayearth was unique for having tons of voice throughout the game at nearly every key story bit. Unfortunately, 95 percent of it is gone, replaced by an option to have the characters "speak" their diary entries at the sub-screen. This is a waste. Yeah, it's cute at times, but only after playing through both the Japanese and then the U.S. versions of Rayearth did I realize how badly I missed the voices. Much of the drama, especially later at crucial parts of the game, is gone because of the omission of the voices. Speaking of voices—the quality of the voice acting in Rayearth is not up to par with WD's usual high standards. They range from weak (the main girl, Precia) to just plain terrible (Zagat, Clef, Alicione). Anyway, now the good stuff. **Rayearth has one of the best stories of any action/RPG I've played, and the beautiful graphics create an enchanting atmosphere that just begs to be experienced.** The anime cutscenes are nice too, and the gameplay (most important) is excellent, though the game is definitely short. Minor greps aside (and yes, they are minor), I really enjoyed Rayearth. Be sure to check it out.

John R

The sprite-based graphics in this action/RPG are among the most amazing I've seen on the Saturn. Everything from the characters to the terrain is amazingly crisp, colorful, detailed and just plain beautiful. Otherwise, MKR is an "Itra-cutesy, anime-heavy game, and at times the story and characters are too sickeningly sweet for my tastes, while the entire quest is a bit short and easy. Still, it's a fun little game that packs hilarious dialogue.

Crispin

So Mag Knight Rayearth is the last U.S. Saturn game? Oh well, at least the system is ending on a fairly good note. **MKR has some of the best 2D graphics in an RPG I've seen so far,** and the story is quite interesting—although most of the dialogue in the game is slightly cheesy. Still, the game is a lot of fun to play. The main problems are how short and easy the game is. I don't mean it's a breeze, but it's not very difficult either.

Shawn

I'm certain you gonna miss the little Saturn, particularly because of all the great Capcom fighter conversions. But at least Magic Knight Rayearth is a great way for the "2D system that could" to go out. **It's got some of the most beautiful 2D graphics I've ever seen,** and the game itself is pretty darn good too, if not a bit on the easy side. It only took me about two days to beat, but I really enjoyed the time spent. Weak voices, though.

Sushi

VISUALS 9 SOUND 7 INGENUITY 6 REPLAY 3

Worst Feature: Quirky AI

www.accolade.com

Worst Feature: Lame Arenas

www.989studios.com

Worst Feature: Lame Voice Acting

www.workingdesigns.com

Review Crew Archive

6 months of opinions for the minions

From EGM 107 - 113

Nintendo 64

Game

Publisher

Best Feature

Worst Feature

Scores

- All-Star Baseball '99
- Bio F.R.E.A.K.S.
- Body Harvest
- Bomberman Hero
- Buck Bumble
- Bushy Warzone 2: A.E.
- Clay Fighter Sculptor's Cut
- Crus'n World
- Deadly Arts
- F-1 World Grand Prix
- Flying Dragon
- Forsaken 64
- Gev.64: Enter the Gecko
- GT64: Championship Edition
- Iggy's Recruit Balls
- In the Name of the King
- Kyrin Edge
- Kuba B. in NBA Courtside
- Madden NFL '99
- Mike Piazza's Strike Zone
- Mission: Impossible
- MLB Fight Back
- Moral Kombat 4
- NASCAR 99
- NBA Live '99
- NFL Blitz
- Off-Road Challenge
- Quest 64
- Rush 2: Extreme Racing USA
- S.C.A.R.S.
- Space Station Silicon Valley
- The Simpsons
- Twisted Edge Snowboarding
- Virtual Chess 64
- Waialae C.C. True Golf Classics
- WCW/nWo Revenge
- Whip-Out 64
- WWF War Zone
- Activision Classics
- Addidas Power Soccer '98
- Armored Core: Project Phantasma
- Backstreet Billiards
- Batman & Robin
- Bio F.R.E.A.K.S.
- Bomberman World
- Bushido Blade 2
- C&C Red Alert Retaliation
- C. The Contra Adventure
- Cardinal S/V
- Colony Wars: Vengeance
- Cool Boarders 3
- Crime Killer
- Dead Ball Zone
- Devil Dice
- Duke Nukem: Time to Kill
- Elemental Gearbit
- Forsaken
- Fox Sports Golf '99
- Fox Interactive
- Future Cop: L.A.P.D.
- G. Darius

- Incredible Graphics
- Joyful Presentation
- Huge Assortment of Vehicles
- Star Fox-esque Flying Levels
- Cool Explosions
- Arcade-Perfect
- The Humor
- Fast Gameplay
- You Don't Have to Play It
- Detailed Graphics
- Multiple Gameplay Modes
- Stunning Graphics
- Lots of Levels
- Realistic Handling
- Cool Level Design
- Multiple Control
- Dodging
- Excellent Graphics, Great AI
- You Don't Have to Buy It
- Interesting Missions
- Multiple Play Modes
- Two-on-Two Combat
- Competitive Gameplay
- Nice Graphics
- Great Arcade Translation
- Multiple Gameplay Modes
- Mindless Racing
- Graphics (Sometimes)
- Improved Control
- Sweet Graphics
- Originality, Variety
- Easy to Master Tricks
- Tutorial Options
- Plenty of Options
- Graphics and Animation
- Multiple Gameplay Modes
- Incredible Sound
- Create-a-Wrestler
- 30 Games for \$30
- Loads of Teams
- Customization of ACs
- Multiple Play Modes
- Familiar
- Two-Player Mode
- Character Animation
- Squirtly Blood
- Lots of Cool Options
- Realistic Swordplay
- New Limits
- Side-Scrolling Levels
- The Graphics
- Multiple Missions
- Nice Graphics
- Building Custom Teams
- Tactically Unique Gameplay
- Level Designs
- Fantastic Atmosphere
- Incredible Graphics
- Brisk Gameplay
- Realistic Play
- Ability to Capture Enemies

- Minor Physics Problems; No Instant Replay
- Some Limit of Hero Character Designs
- Awful Elements
- Weak RPG Elements
- No Multiplayer Mode!
- Star Fox-esque Difficult Sometimes
- Loads a Little Dated
- Clunky Control
- Poor Animation
- Weak Opponent AI
- We Did
- Inconsistent Frame-Rate
- Sparse Background Graphics
- Not Enough Save Points
- Annoying Camera
- Lack of Tracks
- Uninspired Character Designs
- Frustrating
- Unrealism on the Excitement Meter
- Unrealistic Play in the Paint
- Frame-Rate is a Bit Lacking
- Just About Everything
- The Cool Things are Executed Poorly
- Cheap
- Poor Graphics Realism
- Engine Noise
- Way Too Easy
- Strange Missed Passes
- Frustrating
- Mindless Racing
- Dull, Simplistic Gameplay
- Still a Little too Foggy
- Camera Work
- Too Easily
- Ho-Hum Course
- Battle-Chess Animations
- Only one Course
- All the Characters Control the Same
- No Variety
- No Polygon Pop-Up
- Poor Collision Detection
- Create-a-Couple are Any Good Now
- Game Mechanics
- Outdated Graphics
- Too Difficult
- Starting Over at Level 1 Each Time
- Annoyingly Good CPU AI
- Everything Else
- Sluggish Control
- The 80/14 Isometric Perspective
- Not Enough Improvements
- Long Some Cool Features from the First BB
- Everything Else
- Unbalanced Characters and AI
- Limited
- Almost 100 Good
- Excuse Me
- Lack of Structure
- Lack of Difficulty
- Apparent Lack of Enemy AI
- Bit of a Learning Curve
- Trying to Make Time to Play More
- Limited Gameplay
- Control
- A Bit Short
- Insanely Hard Enemies
- Ugly, Unintuitive Menus
- Bland
- Boring Gameplay
- Some Slowdown

PlayStation

Reader Reviews

PlayStation

Game Boy

Nintendo 64

Saturn

Here's your chance to vent your views on recently released games. If you have something you think needs to be said about either one of our reviews, or a game you've recently bought—e-mail us your thoughts at review_crew@zd.com or write to us at the following address: EGM Reader Reviews, P.O. Box 3338, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3338

F-Zero X

What we said:

"This game's got everything an F-Zero fan could ask for...It's nice to see a game with so much depth....There's just something totally cool about zipping around its wild tracks with 29 other racers jockeying for position all around you....F-Zero X is thankfully one hell of a challenge....Graphically, I could've been more impressed."

How we rated it:

9.0 9.0 9.0 9.0

What you said:

I love and hate F-Zero X. It's (sort of) more F-Zero but I dislike being maimed by the guitar-lord/comic-book aesthetics the brain-dead designers employ. It's quick, it's fun, it's painful.

Christian Nitt
kaoru@system.com

F-Zero X does justice to the original, and is proof that gameplay transcends graphics.

Andrew Pfister
acpfiste@students.wisc.edu

WipeOut 64

What we said:

"Some of the best music ever on the system....While the gameplay is nippy, the graphics engine doesn't seem to be able to keep up and there's some nasty pop-up on the more complex tracks....It's even faster (in some cases, a lot faster) than F-Zero X....Multiplayer is fun (though 4P is a bit cramped)"

How we rated it:

7.5 8.0 7.5 7.5

What you said:

WipeOut 64, while having ostensibly the same mechanics and design that fueled WOXL, lacks the punch and character that made that game interesting and fresh. The music, this time around, is a bunch of no-talent table scraps instead of great tracks from good artists, and the courses, while decent, do not seem inspired. It's a limited rehash of WOXL that seems to lack the developer's interest.

Christian Nitt
kaoru@system.com

Bushido Blade 2

What we said:

"Its tweaks—namely, simplified control and easier blocking—put a fresh spin on the fighting

engine....there's an awful lot missing—like any challenge.... The environments are way too limited (they were cooler in the original)....despite the obvious depth in the game's fight system, it just isn't all that much fun to play."

How we rated it:

7.5 8.0 6.0 6.0

What you said:

Square have really hit it with this sequel, as it's quite easy to lose a few hours of your life playing the Vs. Mode. This is a refreshing departure from the endless fighting games on the market today.

Greg Sewart
gsewart@hfx.andara.com

I liked the original Bushido Blade better. Square seems to have gotten a bit lazy with this one.

Mike Cetta
(Address Withheld)

Metal Gear Solid

What we said:

"Easily the most cinematic masterpiece of game design on any system ever....the gameplay is crammed with one heartstopping encounter after another....An absolute masterpiece....so full of innovation, so full of surprises, so full of fantastic design....It's so much more than a game—it's an experience."

How we rated it:

10 10 10 10

What you said:

12 to 15 hours for the average gamer is plenty of time for the type of game MGS is. If it gets longer, then it gets tedious. I find it the right length, with plenty of reason to go back, as well as plenty of things to do that you didn't the first time around. There are other issues I could complain about, but game length isn't one of them. A lot of games of this type are around this length. Why does everyone expect it to be an RPG length of 40 hours?

Marty Chinn
vdsourc@netcom.com

Metal Gear Solid is all about the experience. The melancholy music, gloomy settings and Hollywood-caliber scripting combine to form one of the most engrossing games I have ever played. It's a game for the intelligent, mature gamer. Despite its shortcomings (guards who can only see 20 feet ahead), MGS

manages to immerse players in this world of high-tech espionage, government conspiracy and nuclear warfare, all while challenging them to question the direction of their own lives. From the opening cinemas to the very last line of dialogue that makes you say "Oh wow," MGS is the benchmark of gameplay that all future titles should be judged by.

Andrew Pfister
acpfiste@students.wisc.edu

MGS definitely doesn't suck, but is it perfect? No.

Jeff Marchiafava
(Address Withheld)

Konami's monumental MGS has generated a tremendous amount of hype—more so than last year's so-called "must-own" Final Fantasy VII—and rightfully so. Right from the start, MGS exudes high production values. Never before has a video game

immersed the player as beautifully as this. That's not to say MGS isn't without its faults, however. As quickly as the mission begins, it soon ends; and the hold-your-hand approach—telling you exactly what needs to be done, and exactly where to do it—will likely assist those whose IQ can be displayed on one hand. Toward the end, the game whittles down to nothing more than an anti-war campaign, and it struggles to find meaning. Other than these flaws, MGS comes closer to perfection than anything we've seen on the PlayStation. Don't pass this one up.

Zach Iniguez
iniguez@sparc.isl.net

If you like running back and forth for keycards, REALLY like stupid AI, which seems to be common for most game players, and enjoy the frustration of not having a choice, then MGS is all for you. If you like being stealth-like and killing without being seen or heard, toss this game in a bucket of paint and go get Tenchu.

(Name Withheld)
sethdied@aol.com

After all the hype settles down, and the anticipation builds as you anxiously open the plastic and pop in the first disc of MGS, you're immediately dropped into the plot. The intro flows along and the cinematography takes hold of you. You know this is not just a game, but an experience. From

the beautiful slow-motion blurs to the superb voice acting, you're immersed into Hideo Kojima's vision. MGS has a few flaws, but the parts are greater than the whole. What you're left with is a game with personality. Even when you're done, you'll still find more things to do. The attention to detail is unbelievable in MGS.

Jason Rainwater
jnr549@hotmail.com

While MGS has gotten a perfect 10 from the editors at EGM, there is a heated debate in the online gaming community concerning the game's length and to some extent, its interactivity. Average play time for MGS virgins sits at a liberal estimate of 12 hours, which is appropriate if one considers MGS as more of an adventure game rather than an RPG. No other game combines action and cinematics with such tight execution and artistic flair. For all of KCE's ambition, hard work and genius, MGS rightfully deserves a score of 10.

Che Chou
chespace@concentric.net

Xenogears

What we said:

"Easily one of the most sprawling and contentious games yet on the PlayStation....It may be for the hardcore RPGer, but the story's so good you'll want to get through it....One of the greatest RPG stories of all time....an already great-playing game that not only looks beautiful, but sounds it as well....Being able to rotate the world is great, but I wasn't too keen on the muddy graphics."

How we rated it:

9.0 9.0 9.0 8.5

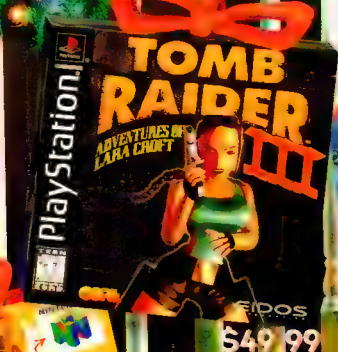
What you said:

This is a return to the Square Soft we grew to love on the SNES. Using a combination of polygonal locales and hand-drawn characters, Xenogears has achieved a look all its own, with none of the confusion that used to arise when navigating through FFVII. The best part of Xenogears, though, is the fact that it explores issues previously taboo in Square Soft titles, particularly what happens when two religious sects clash. I only hope the overwhelming hype surrounding MGS won't hurt Xenogears' chance of success.

Greg Sewart
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129⁹⁹

**Playstation Game Console
w/ Dual Shock Controller**
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S.C.E.A.



29⁹⁹

Dual Shock Controller
PLAYSTATION
S.C.E.A.



14⁹⁹
EA

Color Memory Cards
PLAYSTATION
S.C.E.A.



44⁹⁹

NBA ShootOut 99
PLAYSTATION
S.C.E.A.



44⁹⁹

Twisted Metal III
PLAYSTATION
S.C.E.A.

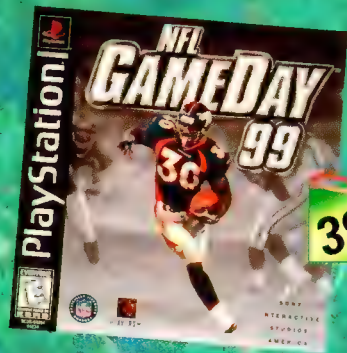


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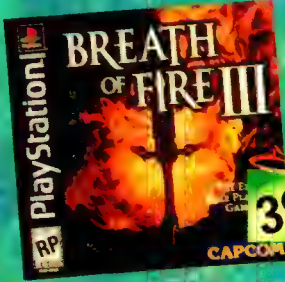
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Test Drive 5
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**Test Drive
Off-Road 2**
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Pocket Pikachu
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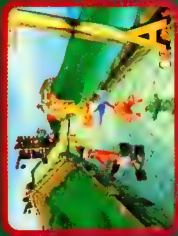
Pokemon Red
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Pokemon Blue
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Nintendo

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1. Orchard Express, level 3: This is the first level where you will play as Coco. The key to getting through this level on the first try is to know in your mind that you must avoid everything. The only things you can really jump over are the guys. There is one other thing that is good to do when running through the level: There are guys hiding under wooden shields, run on top of them and you will be hopped up to a higher level.



2. Malibu Waters, level 5: Speed, speed, speed. That is what you will need to get through this level quickly. The control for the jetski is a little tough to get used to, but if you master it, you will be able to pull some amazing moves. After a jump you can pull back to do a flip and push forward to dive into the water. Gather any Aku masks that you can so you can survive any high-speed collisions with floating bombs.



3. King Ridge, level 6: The first of many driving levels. The key to winning this level is to come in first place. If you avoid all the obstacles you should be able to win easily, but if you run into obstacles you will need to hit some of the boost strips to catch up a little. You can also get a head start at the beginning if you hit the Accelerate button right before the green light flashes. If you do this correctly Crash will do a wheelie and you should get a good speed boost.



4. Beachy Blander, level 8: It's similar to the very first level you played. One of the few additions though are these moon-sprockles. In order to beat them you must do a double jump and hit them in the head. That will knock them over and clear the way. The rest of the level is somewhat straightforward—watch out for those wizards though. Be sure to go into the bonus area for a bunch of free apples and a couple of free guys.



This is the third installment of the Crash series, but is it much different from the others? Not really. The gameplay has been altered slightly by the addition of a few new suits or vehicles, but they are only available on their own levels. The addition of new moves after beating each boss is very cool too. It is also very useful because now you are given the opportunity to return to the beginning and be able to get the faster or better score.

With all the new vehicles and the one new sidekick, the game itself hasn't changed much. Any hardcore fan of the previous Crashes will be able to blow through this one without much of a problem. The one real challenge is the time trials and getting the different relics. There are a total of three different levels of relic: sapphire, gold and platinum. Sapphire is the easiest and can sometimes be gotten without even trying too hard. Gold requires some speed, and platinum requires perfect timing. The sad thing is that getting all the higher levels of relics rewards you with nothing.

Special Techniques

Street Kinky Flip

You get this move after beating Tiny. Press circle at the top of a jump to use. This technique is useful for breaking boxes from a small distance away.

Double Jump

This move is received after you defeat Dingodile. Perform another jump at the height of the first jump to activate. Useful for making very high jumps or long distance jumps.

Death Tornado Spin

You get this move after beating N. Tropy. Multiple spin tops will activate this move. This can also be used to float in the air for a short time.

Fruit Bazooka

The ultimate in enemy elimination, this weapon is gained after beating N. Gin. Hold L2 to aim and press circle to fire. This can be used to kill just about any enemy from a good distance away.

1



Super Run

This special move is gained after beating Neo Cortex the first time. This move can greatly shorten the times that you will get when you have to run through the time trials.

See **Expert Gamer** Issue #55 for the complete walk-through!

EXPERT GAMER

Beat Those Bosses

3



Tiger:

Use the slide to avoid him when he tries to jump on your head. After several failed attempts to jump on your head, he will stab the ground with his trident. When he does this you can hit him with either the slide or your spin. When the lions come after you, you can either use the spin to destroy them or you can jump to avoid them. Using both can be a good combination, but try to get out of the way when more than one lion comes out of the same hole.



Dingodile:

When this guy starts the battle he will be surrounded by an impenetrable crystal shell. You will need to run around and avoid his flame shots. Watch the ground to avoid the fire blasts from the sky—always move to avoid the flamethrower shots he shoots straight at you. When he fires his flame shots straight at you, he will destroy his crystal shell as well. Let him make an opening for you then rush and hit him with a spin attack.



N. Tropy:

To beat this guy you must be patient. Wait until he slams his tuning fork into the ground and creates the bridges. Dodge the red fireballs by double jumping or sliding underneath them. After he finishes firing the fireballs, he will shoot some laser beams from the sides and top. A simple double jump will clear these beams. When both of those attacks are done, he will create enough platforms to reach him. Hop over to him and hit him with a spin attack.



N. Gin:

The easiest way to beat this guy is to hold down the Circle button and do a rapid fire on all of his weapons and both his arms. You need to duck low when he fires at you from the left arm, and climb high when he fires his right arm. His second form is not much different from the first. Always try to rock back and forth to take out any missiles that come your way. You must take out the small yellow crystals that he fires at you or you will receive huge damage from them.



Neo Cortex:

The greatest threat when fighting this boss will be the two masks that are fighting in the arena. On the first hit the masks will be firing a beam, while spinning mostly in the center. Just follow them around and you won't get hit. For the second hit you will need to constantly move to avoid them. On the third hit you must not be around them when they hit each other. As far as Cortex goes, dodge his laser blasts, jump over the mines he throws, and spin him into the center when his shield drops.

6. Bye Bye Blimps, level 17: Your first flying level. The key to shaking off the enemy fighters and making it through this level is a somewhat simple one: attacking you unless you are being them. So when an attack comes quick turn and go in a different direction to shake them off. It will take about 30 or good shots to knock out a blimp—there are only 3 blimps left.

7. Beat a Boppy, level 19: Use the side of the stage to be the toughest. In this level you will need to, and should, use the bazooka an enormous amount of time through each level. With that weapon you can practically clear a level and be the toughest to beat right through.

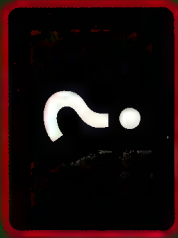
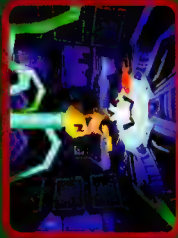


4

A Happy Ending?

There are two endings to Crash 3. You should definitely get the bad ending first. This ending leaves you at somewhat of a cliffhanger and poses you a new challenge. The second ending will be easier to get with the special move you get from Cortex, but will still pose a challenge. You must collect all of the gems and do that you will need all of the relics.

By the way, I am not gonna show you the good ending. You will find that out on your own. Lead Expert Gamer #55 to find out on play through yourself!



tricks of the Trade

Insanity Is near for Trickman Terry!

Well the New Year is nearly upon us and the anticipation for new games and systems (such as Dreamcast and Nuon) has got Terry in a frenzied state of mind! Will these new systems have tricks? How will the new controllers work with the tricks? These questions and more are plaguing the Trickman's mind. You can let Terry know that change is a good thing, and just so he doesn't worry, keep sending in your best codes, tricks and secrets to:

Tricks of the Trade, P.O. Box 3338, Oakbrook, IL 60522-3338

or send e-mail to: tricks@zd.com



TRICK OF THE MONTH

Duke Nukem: Time to Kill



Appearance and Cheat Codes

Big Heads, Little Heads:

To change Duke's and the enemies' appearances, pause the game and enter one of these codes:

Big Head Duke - R1, R1, R1, R1, R1, R1, R1, R1, R1, R1, Up.

Tiny Head Duke - R1, R1, R1, R1, R1, R1, R1, R1, Down.

Big Head Enemies - R1, R1, R1, R1, R1, R1, R1, R1, Left.

Note: If you have Big Head Duke and want it to be Tiny Head, then just enter the Big Head Code again and Duke's head will shrink back to normal and you can put in the Tiny Head code. Otherwise it will not work. Do the same for Tiny to Big.

Cheat Codes

Pause the game and enter these codes at a slow but even pace. If you enter them too fast they might not work.

Infinite Ammo - L, R, L, R, Select, L, R, L, R, Select.

All Weapons - L1, L2, Up, L1, L2, Down, R1, Right, R2, Left.

All Inventory - R1 x 5, L2 x 5

All Keys - Up, Right, Up, Left, Down, Up, Right, Left, Right, Down.

Invisible - L1, R1, L1, R1, L1, R1, L1, R1, L1, R1.

Double Damage - L2, R2, L2, R2, L2, R2, L2, R2.

Temporary Invulnerability - R1, L2, L1, L2, R1, L1, R1, L1, L2.

Super Weapons - Right, Right, Left, Right, Right, Left, Right, Right, Left, Select.

Level Select

While playing, pause the game and press Down nine times and then press Up and it should say Level Select. Now quit the game and on the Main Menu you will see a new option that says "Time To Kill." Select it and press Right or Left to choose the level you want to go to. Press X to start playing.

Author Driver Jr.
Hayward, CA

Win Games and Accessories for your Tricks!

If your trick is selected as the Trick of the Month, you will win a free GameShark provided by the kind people at InterAct. If you are given credit for submitting a hot trick in this

section, you will win a free game. NOTE: If you send your trick by e-mail you must include your real name, address, city, state and zip code. See page 255 for details.



C: The Contra Adventure



Many Cheat Codes

Input the combinations on the Main Menu Screen.

Level Select -

Left, Up, Right, Square, Square, Triangle, Triangle, Down.

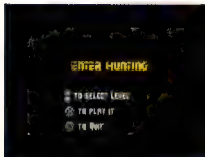
Unlimited Lives -

Up, Right, Square, Triangle, Right, Left, Square, Triangle.

button four times. Press the Start button three times. Press the Square button two times. Press the Circle button once. Press the Circle+Square button simultaneously again.

To Unlock secret Characters, highlight "Set Teams" on the Mayhem Selection Screen and perform the code.

To Unlock Secret Battlefields, highlight "Accept Teams" on the Mayhem Selection Screen and perform the code.



Unlimited SuperBombs - Square, Square, Right, Down, Down, Left, Square, Triangle.

Super Machine Gun - Right, Right, Square, Triangle, Right, Left, Down, Down.

Movie Player - Triangle, Triangle, Down, Square, Up, Up, Left, Triangle.

The Unholy War



Secret Characters, Battlefields and Maps

There are only three cheats in the Unholy War; all of which use the same code, though in different places.

The code is as follows: Press the Circle+Square button simultaneously. Press the Select

To Unlock All 1-player Strategy Maps, highlight "Set War" on the Strategy Selection Screen and perform the code.

Test Drive 5

Bonus Cars and Cop Chase Mode

From the Main Menu, choose Quick Race or under the Full Race option, choose the Drag Race and get a good time that will get you a high score. Once you finish the race, exit



the game and choose "Quit." On the High Score Screen, enter your name as NOLIFE. This will get you three bonus cars: Chris' Beast, Pitbull Special and Behold the Mighty Maul! To enable the Cop Chase, get a good time and on the High Score Screen, enter the name, VRSIX. Now go back to the Main Menu and choose Full Race. On the Select Race Type Screen, choose the Cop Chase option. Now you can choose from four different types of police cars. In this mode, your object is to arrest as many lawbreakers as possible, while gaining points along the way. Use the R2 button to use your siren and disable your enemies by running into them.

Test Drive Off-Road 2

Hidden Vehicles

At the Transmission Selection Screen (both for Single Race and World Tour), hold Select and enter



the following button sequences:
L1, Up, L2, Down, Down, L2, L2, R2 = Drive as a school bus
R2, L2, L2, Down, Down, L2, L2, R1 = Drive as an ice cream truck

NHL 99

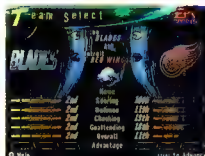
Cheat Codes

Cheat Codes

Enter these codes at the Password Screen.

BIGBIG - All the players are big
BRAINY - All players have big heads

EAEAO - Activates the EA Blades Team



Pool Hustler

Hidden Bowliard Mode

This trick will reveal the hidden "Bowliard" Mode. At the Title Screen, press Up, Up, Down, Triangle, Triangle, X, X, Left, Right, Square, Circle. Now go to the Main Menu Screen and you will see a new option in the middle called Bowliard, which combines the game of bowling and billiards.

Top 20 tricks

Check here each issue for tricks that work with last month's 20 best-selling titles.

1 WWF War Zone

Play as the Trainer and Big Head Mode

On the Main Menu Screen, press L1, R1 (It may take a few tries to get it to work). This will take you to the basement, where hidden characters and modes are accessed after they are unlocked. Here are two of them to get you started:

Wrestle as Training Mode wrestler:

Go to Training Mode and from the screen where you choose wrestlers, select "Custom" followed by "Trainer."

Big Head Mode:

Win the WWF title in Challenge Mode on the medium or hard difficulty level with British Bulldog.

2 WWF War Zone

New Features and Modes

Burp and Fart Mode:

Beat WWF Challenge with Mosh or Thrasher on any difficulty to get Burp and Fart Mode. Whenever you get hit or hit someone, you'll hear a burp or a fart!

Ladies Night Mode:

Beat WWF Challenge with Triple H or Shawn Michaels to get access to female bodies in the Create-a-Wrestler Mode.

Play as Sue:

Beat the Challenge with Owen or Bret Hart to access Sue (the ring girl).

Once you've opened one of the features or modes, press L, then the R button at the Main Menu Screen to move down to the basement. From here, you can access all of the cheats you've opened!

3 Banjo-Kazooie

Cheat Codes

First, start a new game or access a saved game. Go to Treasure Trove Cove without changing at Mumbo's hut in Mumbo's Mountain.

Get to the Sand Castle, then enter the word CHEAT on the floor tiles. You will hear a mooring sound for each letter of CHEAT you enter. Next, enter one of the following codes on the floor right after you enter the CHEAT letters. You will not

S.C.A.R.S.



Cups, Cars and Modes

On the Title Screen, press Start. On the Player Select Screen, choose your number of players. On the Game Select Screen, highlight and choose the Options. On the Options Screen, choose Settings. Now move down and highlight the "Password"



option and enter one of the codes as shown for various results:

- GLASSX** - Activates the Crystal Cup.
- ROCKYY** - Activates the Diamond Cup.
- ZDPEAK** - Activates the Zenith Cup.
- XPERTS** - Activates the Challenge Mode.
- DESERT** - Activates the Scorpion Car.
- RATTLE** - Activates the Cobra Car.
- RUNNER** - Activates the Cheetah Car.
- MYSTER** - Activates the Panther Car.
- ALLVID** - Activates the Codes.

Top 20 Tricks cont.

hear any confirmation sound until you finish each code:

BANJOEGGSFORPLENTYOFEGGS

(Infinite eggs)

LOTSOFEGSWITHMANYBANJOS

(Infinite lives)

NOWYUDCANFLYHIGHINTHESKY

(Infinite red feathers)

ANENERGYBARTOGETOYOUFAR

(Maximum honeycombs)

AGOLDENGLOWTOPROTECTBANJO

(Infinite gold feathers)

Note: You must learn the wonderwing in Clanker's Cavern before entering the gold feathers code. Also, the "CHEAT" code may not work in all circumstances of all saved games. Make sure you enter the word CHEAT every time before putting in any of these codes.

4 NCAA Football 99

Find Codes!

Can you find codes for this game? If you do, send them in! You can score a free game for the system of your choice!

5 GoldenEye 007

31 Extra Characters

On the Multiplayer Options Screen, go to the Characters Option and move to your last available character, which will be Mishkin or Moonraker Elite. Now hold the L+R buttons and press Left-C, left go and hold L-R button and press Up-C, left go and hold L-R buttons and press Left (control pad), hold L button and press Right (control pad), hold R button and press Down (control pad), hold L+R button and press Up-C, hold L+R button and press Right (control pad), hold L+R button and press Down-C, hold L button and press Down (control pad). Now you will see that you can select from a number of new characters (31 to be exact)

6 Gran Turismo

Find Codes!

Can you find codes for this game? If you do, send them in! You can score a free game for the system of your choice!

7 Waialae Country Club: True Golf Classics

Find Codes!

Can you find codes for this game? If you do, send them in! You can score a free game for the system of your choice!

The Fifth Element



Cheat Menu

On the Main Menu Screen, press L1, L2, R2, R1, Select. You will hear a sound. Then choose "New Game" and the Cheat Menu will be displayed. Now you can choose from plenty of options such as your beginning level, shields, all weapons, objects and more!



Future Cop: L.A.P.D.



General Password Cheats

DISYFISLFY -

All Crime War and Precinct Assault missions completed.

DITIFISFLF -

All Crime War and Precinct Assault missions locked completed.

DYPYFASRRH -

All Crime War and Precinct Assault missions completed.

All Easter Egg Weapons

SIFRGYBERR -

No Crime War or Precinct Assault missions completed. Invincibility allowed.

SYMRG0BRL -

No Crime War or Precinct Assault missions completed. All Easter Egg Weapons

DYSIFASRHY -

All Crime War and Precinct Assault missions completed. All Easter Egg Weapons

Assault missions locked completed. All Easter Egg Weapons

DYTFASUHL -

All Crime War and Precinct Assault missions locked

completed. All Easter Egg Weapons. Invincibility allowed.

(Please note that certain conditions, once set, are not cleared by passwords. These conditions are: All Crime War and Precinct Assault missions locked completed. All Easter Egg Weapons. Invincibility allowed.)

(Please note that certain conditions, once set, are not cleared by passwords. These conditions are: All Crime War and Precinct Assault missions locked completed. All Easter Egg Weapons. Invincibility allowed.)

In Game Cheat Codes

These passwords have to be entered while the Adjust SFX Volume entry is selected in the MAP Menu. Once the password has been typed, you have to OUIT (validate YES). If the password is valid, the game won't quit (except for the quit successfully). Most of these passwords will affect the player who actually typed it:

Reload Shield - Square, Select, Circle, X

Quit a crime war mission successfully - Square, Circle, Square, Circle, X, Select, X, Select

Blue player = Black - Square, Select, Circle, X, X, Circle, Select, Square

Reload weapon 0 - Square, Circle, Select, X, Select, X, Circle, Square

Reload weapon 1 - Circle, X, Select, Square, Circle, X, Select, Square

Reload weapon 2 - Square, Select, Square, Circle, Square, Select, X

Power up weapon 0 - Circle, Circle, Circle, X, X, X, Circle, Select

Power up weapon 1 - Square, Square, Square, Circle, X, Square, Circle, X

Power up weapon 2 - Square, Circle, Square, Select, X, Square, Circle

Add 200 points to the player (in precinct assault mission) - Circle, Square, Circle, X, Select, Square, X

Invincible (allows zone bypass) - Circle, Circle, Select, Select, Circle, X, Square

Walker can super jump (allows zone bypass) - Circle, Circle, Circle, Circle, Square, Square, X, Select, Square, X, Select, Circle

Set the maximum shield to the max (32767) and resield (might allow zone bypass) - X, X, Select, Circle, Circle, Select, Square, Square, Select

Top 20 tricks.com

8 Madden NFL 99

Cheat Codes

At the Main Menu Screen, move down, highlight and access the "Code Entry" option. On the Code Entry screen, press X on New Code and enter any of these codes for the results shown:

New Teams:

BESTNFC - All-Stars NFC
 APCBEST - All-Stars AFC
 BOOM - Madden 98 Team
 BELLBOTTOMS - All 70s team
 HEREANDNOW - All 90s team
 TURKEYLEG - Madden All-Time Greats
 THROWBACK - 15th anniversary team
 WELCOMEBACK - '99 Cleveland Browns
 INTREGAME - EA Sports Team

Secret Stadiums:

EA STADIUM - EA Sports
 DOGPOUND59 - Cleveland
 THEGOS - RFK Stadium Washington, DC
 OURHOUSE - Tiburon

9 NFL Xtreme

Player Alterations

From the Main Menu Screen, choose the Rosters option. In the Rosters Screen, choose "Create Free Agent." On the CreateFreeAgent Menu, enter the following first and last names for the results as shown:

MONKEY MICKY - All players have huge arms.
 TINY TOM - All players are tiny.
 BIGHEAD BOBBY - All players have big heads.

10 Mission: Impossible

Weapon Codes

Enter all of these codes during the Mission Select (level select) Screen:
 Right-C, Left-C, Right-C, Down-C, R - Gives you Uzi with 30 rounds.
 R, L, Left-C, Right-C, Down-C - Gives you a Mini Rocket Launcher with 30 rockets.
 Up-C, L, Right-C, Left-C, Up-C - Gives you 7.65 Silencer with 50 rounds.
 R, L, Down-C, Up-C, Up-C - Gives you 9mm HI POWER with 30 rounds.
 After you enter a code correctly then you will hear Ethan say, "There, that's better."

11 NFL GameDay 99

Easter Eggs

From the Main Menu Screen, highlight and access the Options. On the Options Menu, highlight and access the Easter Eggs option. Now choose to add an entry and put in any of the codes as shown:

EVEN TEAMS - Both teams are evenly matched
 HAMSTRING - Blow a hamstring after using speed burst
 WEAK - Bad coverage
 BLINDERS - No penalties
 BIG HITS - Harder tackles
 DAVIS - Better running
 ROCKET MAN - Longer dives
 FLEA CIRCUS - Tiny players
 GRUDGE MATCH - Different colored field and no Goal Posts
 STAMINA - No fatigue

Secret Super Power-Up

Press the Action button 10 times in lower-left corner of plaza.
 Press the Action button 10 times in lower-right corner of plaza.
 Ta-daaaaa super reloader powers you up!

Level Specific Passwords

Passwords in Normal difficulty setting, Single Player Crime War.

Griffith Park Finished:

TAFRGYBLRR

Zuma Beach Finished:

CRGRGYBLRY

La Brea Tar Pits Finished:

FUMRGYBLR

Venice Beach Finished:

SICUGYBLLI

Hell's Gate Finished:

TAFUGYBLRR

Studio City Finished:

CRUGYBLLY

LAX Finished:

FUMUGYBLLL

Long Beach Finished:

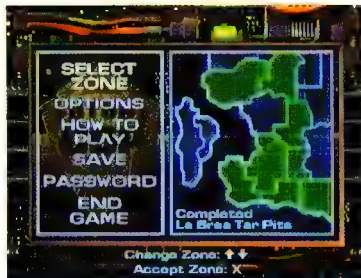
SIFYGYBISR

Precinct Assault - Single Player Passwords -

Normal Difficulty

Urban Jungle

Start at Level 5:



FUCUGYBIMI
 Start at Level 10:
 SUHUGYBIDR

Proving Grounds
 Start at Level 5:
 SICRGYBLLI
 Start at Level 10:
 TIFRNYBLSR



Hollywood Keys
 Start at Level 5:
 SICRGYDLLI
 Start at Level 10:
 TIFRNYPLSR

Venice Beach
 Start at Level 5:
 SICRGLBLI
 Start at Level 10:
 MIFRIGBLSR

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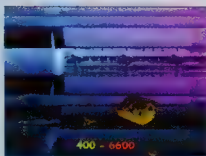
Entry Deadline: Jan. 15, 1999

Space Station Silicon Valley



Hidden Level

From the Saved Game Select Screen, press Down, Up, Z button, L button, Down, Left, Z button, Down. If you did it correctly, you will hear a "ping" sound. If not, keep trying until you hear it. Select your saved game and the Zone Select ring will appear. Press Left to back up one zone and you will see the hidden level! (Thanks go to Jennifer Koibe at Take-2 Interactive.)



GameShark Codes

PlayStation:

Alundra 1.1

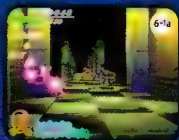
Infinite Health
801ac70c0032
801ac7100032
Infinite Glider
801dd824270f
Steel Flail
801dd8580001
Ice Wand
801dd8690001
Fire Wand
801dd8700001
Earth Book
801dd8e00001
Water Book
801dd8e80001
Infinite Magic
801dd8200004
801dd8220004
99 Keys
801dd9240063
Legend Sword
801dd8500001
Fire Book
801dd8f00001
Wind Book
801dd8f80001

Dragon Seeds

Infinite Gold
80084574ffh
Infinite HP
800eedf803e7
800846a03e7
Infinite Special Attacks
800ee5bc0009
Max Special Strength
800846b03e7
Max Attack Strength
800846d00063
Max Muscle Strength
800846b203e7
Max Speed
800846ae03e7

Duke Nukem: Time To Kill

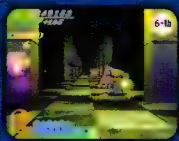
Infinite Throwing Knives
800d74600001
800d746203e7
Infinite Throwing Axes
800d74640001
800d746603e7



Chalice6-1a: This chalice is located on the left wall, right before you enter one of the final hallways on the sixth stage. You will want to use your Wind weapon and will want to aim at the center of the left wall. This pic shows the location of the chalice.



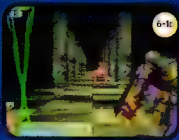
Chalice6-2a: This chalice is located on the rock in the lower right-hand corner of the screen in the area where you first come across the second of the three end bosses for the sixth stage. You will want to use your water weapon and aim for the lower right-hand corner of the rock. This pic shows the chalice being found.



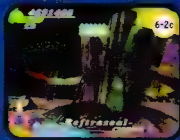
Chalice6-1b: shows the chalice coming towards you.



Chalice6-2b: shows the chalice coming toward you.



Chalice6-1c: shows the chalice in your inventory.



Chalice6-2c: shows the chalice in your inventory.

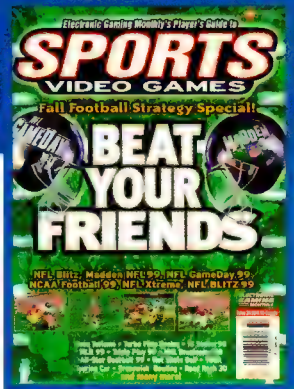
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The Ocarina of Figures

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Price: Around \$10
www.bdalnc.com



It's Music to My Ears

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Panasonic's new superslim **RQ-SX50V Stereo Radio Cassette Player** gives you an incredible 65 hours of playback on just one rechargeable battery and one regular AA. It features 15x high-speed access, an aluminum lid plus casing and a four-key remote that attaches to your headphones. For a tape player it's cool.

Price: Around \$150
www.panasonic.com



Talkin' Data

The 50K V.90 **MultiTech Systems** from Multi-Tech Systems allows you to simultaneously send data and voice over most phone lines, as long as the party on the other end also has a DSVD-compatible modem. **Price:** Around \$180
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"Arms Opening" in Praise of R.A.D.

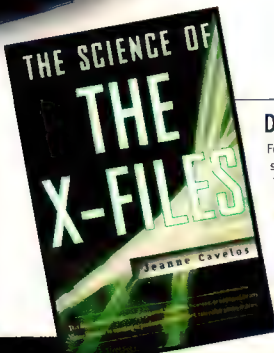
Wondering what this big robot is all about? Simply put, **R.A.D. (Remotely Activated Defense)** from Toymax is the coolest remote-controlled item we've ever seen. It stands a whopping 18-inches tall, has "all-terrain" treaded wheels, can open and close its arms, move its torso and travel in any direction, thanks to its tank-like controls. The best part is R.A.D. blasts soft foam missiles from its chest when the Fire button on the controller is depressed. **Price:** Around \$100
www.toymax.com

My Achy, Quakey Toys

New from Resaurus—makers of Crash Bandicoot and Duke Nukem assortments—comes their newest line, **Quake figures**. Each set comes with various accessories and has a gritty, Quaked-out look to them. **Price:** Around \$8
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Truman Show
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Princess Bride
Tekken



by John Ricciardi
john_ricciardi@zd.com



The Final Word

Get This Guy Some Zelda, Quick!

Rather than hit on any one topic in particular this month, I thought I'd instead ramble on about several things that have been on my mind lately—namely Zelda, Metal Gear Solid and a certain little piece of hardware called Dreamcast.

Zelda's Finally Arrived

As I write this, it's Sunday, Nov. 8, and Zelda 64 is but a few short weeks away. We're expecting our office copy in a day or two, and needless to say, I can't wait. All I can think about is Zelda. I've been a die-hard fan of the Series ever since the original was released in 1987, and since then every new Zelda release has been like a major holiday for me. Since the last Zelda game (Link's Awakening), I've spent the time building up my Zelda collection (I now own every version of every game in the series—Japanese and American, disk and/or cartridge), and waiting patiently for a new Zelda to arrive.

Finally, after five long years, my wait is over.

These last few weeks, I've been getting myself ready for Zelda 64 by listening to the double-CD Zelda soundtrack from Japan (it's out of print now, but if you're a Zelda fan you need to try to track down a copy—it's amazing), watching quicktimes of the Zelda 64 trailer that's now showing at movie theaters, and basically counting the days, minutes and seconds until Zelda arrives. I even bought those cheesy action figures! I'm like a junkie who needs his fix. (OK, so I'm really just pathetic.) Thankfully, by the time you're reading this, my five years of anguish will have finally come to an end.

Unfortunately, you may have noticed that we didn't review Zelda this issue as originally planned. Well, we're just as unhappy about it as you are. Because of Nintendo's strict policies on giving games to the press before release (in a nutshell—they don't), we were unable to get hold of the game in time for the entire Crew to play through it for review. Yeah, we could've rushed you out a half-assed review based on the go-pro version we played a few weeks ago (several EGfers played pretty far into it, only to find that it wasn't entirely finished and several items were going to be moved around before release), but that's not what we're about. We review finished games, and because of our strict policy on this, our review is running way late. We do realize that this is hardly convenient (if I were a reader, I certainly wouldn't be happy), and

we apologize for being so late. The good news is, as you can see, we're well aware that this is a problem, and we're already in the process of making sure it doesn't happen again. I did play about seven or eight hours into the preview version myself, and I can at least give you my early opinion: on I don't buy this game, you're nuts..)

MGS Too Short? Uhh...No

As you can probably imagine, we've been getting a LOT of feedback about our scores on Metal Gear Solid last month (if you missed it, MGS received four 10s). I can't speak for the other reviewers, but I can say that personally, I find the claims of MGS being "too short" to be totally absurd. 12-15 hours for a first-time through is not short. Four hours a second time is, but who cares? Was the original Zelda not the exact same way? Did anyone complain back then? I play games for the experience involved—the excitement, the drama, the release, etc. It usually depends on the case of MGS, every waking moment that I spent with that game, I was completely absorbed. I can't give a game a higher compliment. While I do expect to enjoy Zelda more, it's for different reasons than MGS. That's because (shock) they're different games. Just like you and several hundred thousand others out there, I went out and bought my own copy of MGS on Oct. 22, and I don't regret the purchase one bit. If I thought I would, there's no way I'd have given the game a 10.

Dreaming of Dreamcast

Finally, Dreamcast. I realize a lot of people are skeptical about Sega, considering their past track record in the U.S. Me? I've always admired them more than Sony for the simple fact that they're a video game company at heart, and they could theoretically survive to some extent with strictly first-party software (Sony would sink faster than the Titanic in the same situation). More importantly, I like the games they create.

Therefore, I'd like to see the Dreamcast succeed. But will it? We'll see how SoA does. In the past, they've made some pretty stupid mistakes (I'm being polite), but after hearing their plans for Dreamcast in the U.S. several times now, I honestly feel that they're back on the right track. They actually seem to understand the market they're going after, and they know what needs to be done to take it back. Will they? Time will tell. At the very least, they've already won back one former fan. Now it's time to convince the rest of the world. Good luck, Sega.



Can you believe it's been 11 years since we first experienced Zelda?



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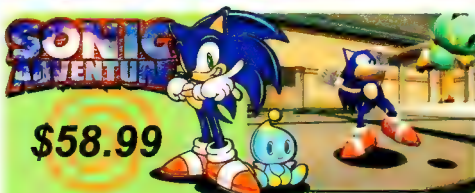
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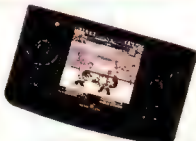


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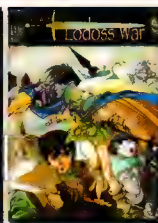


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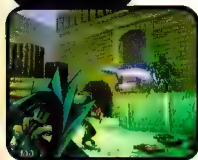
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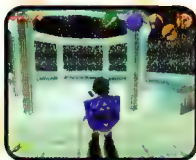


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Next Month



Open season on dinosaurs begins in February as *EGM's* Review Crew sets their sights on Acclaim's *Turok 2*.



Zombies on the brain! *EGM* gets face to face with writer/producer George Romero in the long-awaited interview about his upcoming production.

So many dinosaurs, so little time, the Review Crew takes a stab at the multi-player capable *Turok 2: Seeds of Evil*.

Our February issue lets readers stand

out and voice their opinions with our Readers' Choice awards. Tell us how you feel the 1998 titles stacked up to your expectations.

Is it a coincidence our new platinum award looks like a triforce? The question is: Will *Zelda* be sporting one or just weeping by the wayside next month?

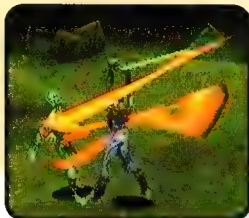
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February 1999

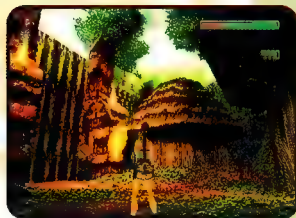
Should readers believe the hype? Will *Zelda* really stand up to the Review Crew standards?

On sale Jan. 12

Fey Vicist! *EGM* dives into Crystal Dynamics' *Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver* and tells players all the "gut-wrenching" details of what can be expected.



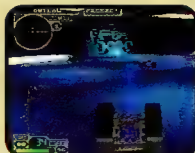
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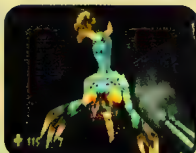
January 1999

On sale Dec. 22

If you thought the first two games were hard, you better be prepared for round three—meaning you better have *XG's* *Tomb 3* guide.



Experience the plus side of road rage with *Expert Gamer's* strategy guide on *Twisted Metal 3*.



Our *Turok 2* update recaps the first few levels then takes you to the end and victory.

What a great way to celebrate the new year than with a lovely lady on your arm, especially if the lady is Lara Croft. Our first issue of '99 will have a complete guide on *Tomb Raider 3*.

If tomb raiding isn't your style, take to the streets to blow up your opponents in the third installment

of the *Twisted Metal* series. Our guide will have the status on each car as well as some secrets.

Don't forget to check out the update on *Turok 2* as well as see what won our Best and Worst of 1998 awards. The categories include Best Ending, Toughest Boss, Hardest Level, etc.



We take another look at *Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver*, and it seems to get better every time we see it. Also, we'll tell you if 989 Studios brought the *Twisted Metal* games to the next level in car combat games with our review of *Twisted Metal 3*.

The January issue of *OPM* will give you plenty reason to want to usher in the new year. First of all we'll have the scoop on the sultry new sidekick who will accompany Gex on his latest adventure in our *Gex 3* preview blowout. You'll be quite surprised.

Further setting the table for 1999

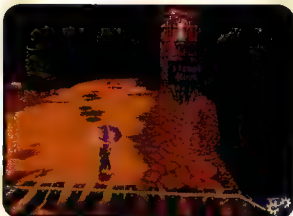
will be previews of *Marvel vs. Capcom*, *Street Fighter Alpha 3* and an update on *Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver*. It's gotten even better since you've last seen it. And finally, we'll give you hard-hitting reviews of games that include *Twisted Metal 3*, *NBA Live 99* and *Tomb Raider 3*.

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine

January 1999

On sale Dec. 15

We pull Gex away from his new lady friend long enough to put together our tell-all feature on *Gex 3: Deep Cover Gecko*.





I'M COMING



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"The high resolution graphics will blow you away!" -PSExtreme

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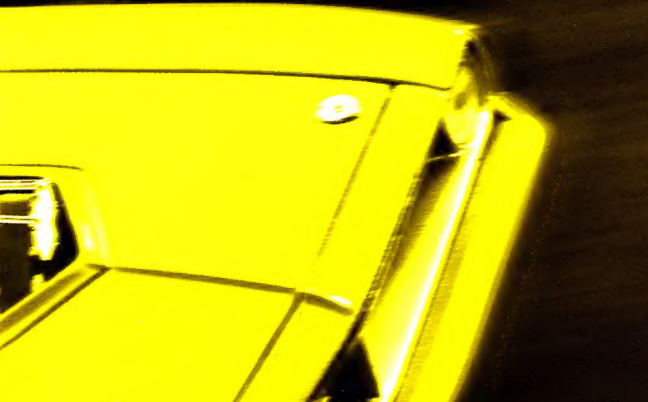
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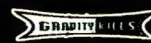
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