

ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY

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FIRST
DRIVER 2
& **DINO CRISIS 2**
SHOTS ANYWHERE

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- MEGA MAN 64
- FEAR EFFECT RETRO HELIX
- TOMB RAIDER GAME BOY
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THE ONLY ALLIES ARE ENEMIES...

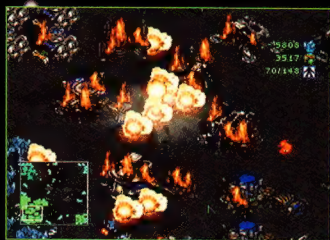


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EDITORIAL

The old west in a new world...

Results are in from a recent study and the news is shocking: 32-13 to 15-year-olds were sent out to buy M-rated video games, and every single one was able to purchase his or her game without being carded or questioned about their age. That's not good—not good for you, me, us, them, everybody.

While we don't expect to see MASMGRGTM (Mothers Against Selling M-Rated Games To Minors) chapter popping up anytime soon, this issue is something our industry must reckon with as the purview of gaming expands.

"We must honor this honor system we have established, or the Man will impose one upon us."

We didn't need a rating system so much when characters were a few quarter-inch pixels thrown together, but as the screen resolutions get finer and the detail gets clearer, a clear delineation becomes mandatory: We're no longer playing a bar of light in Pong or three-fourths of a circle in Pac-Man; instead, we're a terrified policeman killing limped-limbed zombies or bubble-busted though-clad babes who can kick the crap out of a dinosaur.

Even our magazine is not free from the scrutiny. We must constantly shift the editorial and covers between what's hot, what sells, and what's appropriate. Balancing the three is not always easy. On many occasions, I've had to explain to an angry mother that video games are not just kids' stuff anymore. I contend that eventually the average age of a gamer will be the average age of someone who

By Joe Funk • joe_funk@ziffdavis.com



watches movies. I fully expect that by the time I turn 70, gaming will be evolved enough that I will still be playing games appropriate for my age and interests and fading hand-eye coordination. Heck, we can see the demographics expanding right in front of us—can you say, "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?"

The crazy things is, the fix here doesn't have to be the showdown at the OK Corral for video games that many people are making it out to be. I asked a dozen different video stores how and why they have a separate adults-only section. Their answer: to restrict access to minors for mature titles. Just as every game is not designed for every gamer, every movie was not made for every movie watcher. And so that's why video stores have had the trademark western-style swinging doors to separate the adult software from everything else. After decades of use it still works, and if introducing it into stores that sell video games is our worst-case scenario, then we should be obliged to tip our 10-gallon hat and saunter on through.

While Mr. Retailer will no doubt complain that such a system will hurt sales, any incremental gain of selling such titles to minors is not worth the harm we are doing to ourselves in the long run. We must honor this honor system we have established, or the Man will impose one upon us.

And though the final word will never be spoken on this issue, check page 156 to see where Mark, Chris, Greg and some skateboard wannabe from the *Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine* continue this discussion in the section named...oh never mind...

Joe Funk

Contributing Writers

James Mielke

Starting with this issue, James "Milkmank" Mielke is no longer just a contributor. He's now a fully developed, man-sized official EGM editor. And since he's such a fine-looking individual, we wanted to run his picture one last time for all of the ladies out there. Aw yeah.

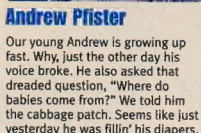
Michael Price

We misspelled Mike's preferred means of martial arts last month (we called it Kung To-uo "kunk fu" instead of "kung fu"), so he jabbed more editors' noses into their brains. See—it's typos that lead to real-life violence, not video games.



Andrew Pfister

Our young Andrew is growing up fast. Why, just the other day his voice broke. He also asked that dreaded question, "Where do babies come from?" We told him the cabbage patch. Seems like just yesterday he was fillin' his diapers.



ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY Number 13.7 July 2000 www.videogames.com

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Subscription Service Web Site:

<http://service.egmgame.com>

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ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY (ISSN #0268-9810) is published monthly by Ziff Davis Media Inc., P.O. Box 1338, Oak Brook, IL 60432-1338. Periodicals Class Postage Paid at Lombard, IL and additional mailing offices. Single issue rates: \$6.99. The one year (12 issues) subscription rate is \$74.97 in the U.S. and \$84.97 outside the U.S. Checks must be payable to U.S. currency only to Electronic Gaming Monthly magazine. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Electronic Gaming Monthly, P.O. Box 1338, Oak Brook, IL 60432-1338. For subscription service questions, call (415) 353-8300 (U.S. only) and (202) 646-7440 (outside the U.S.) or visit us at our subscription Web site at <http://service.egmgame.com>. We periodically make lists of our customers available to makers of goods and services that may interest you. If you do not wish to be included in any of our mailing lists, please inform your subscription label when writing to us. It contains valuable information about your subscription that will stay with us. Please allow 4-6 weeks before receiving your first issue as well as for any subscription changes to take place on any advertising subscription. The editors and the publisher are not responsible for unsolicited materials. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved herein, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written consent of Ziff Davis Media Inc. To receive any material in this publication, attach a permission request form to www.egmgame.com/copyright/, or have a form faxed or mailed to us by calling (415) 353-1665. © 2000 Ziff Davis Media Inc. All rights reserved. Electronic Gaming Monthly and EGM are trademarks of Ziff Davis Media Inc. TM and ® for all other products and the characters contained therein are owned by the respective trademark and copyright owners. All materials listed in this magazine are subject to manufacturers' change and the publisher assumes responsibility for that. The Canadian GST Registration number is 143069180 #.

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"Virtual-On: Oratorio Tangram is one of the most visually impressive Dreamcast titles yet."

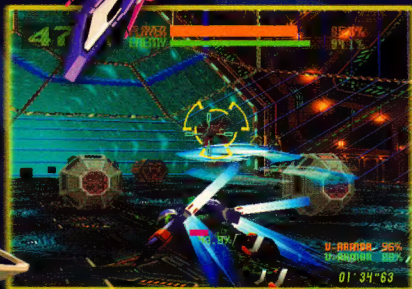
— Next Generation



TEMJIN

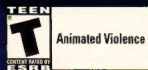


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Sega Dreamcast

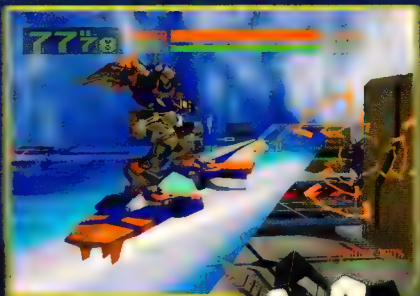


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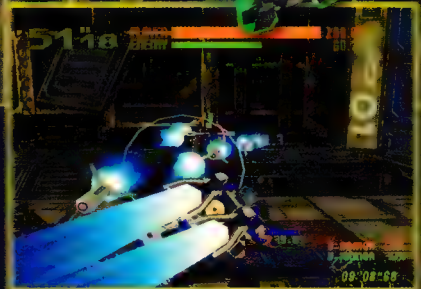
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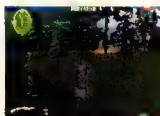
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Final Fantasy IX: Back to Square One You've no doubt read lots of info and speculation on Final Fantasy IX on the Web and in other magazines. We have, too—and noticed nearly everybody's getting the facts wrong. We went to Square's offices, played the game, and interviewed its creator to bring you the only complete and accurate info you'll find anywhere on this PlayStation finale that brings the series back to its roots. **pg 126**



Spec Ops See if this \$10 PS game is worth the dough. **page 144**



Wild Arms 2 Find out how Sony's RPG epic rates with the Crew. **page 146**



Ecco the Dolphin This game is downright beautiful. **page 65**



E3 Excitement Check out our show floor coverage of this gargantuan video game trade show. **page 30**

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Jammed full of E3 info. We also talk with Final Fantasy creator Hironobu Sakaguchi about FFX and the series' return to the fantasy elements of its earlier games.

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There's all kinds of crap on the news about violent games, the ESRB ratings system, and politicians who think they know what they're talking about. We voice our thoughts and concerns.

SYSTEM KEY

	Dreamcast
	Nintendo 64
	PlayStation 2
	PlayStation
	Game Boy Color
	Neo-Geo Pocket Color
	Arcade



**WHEN YOU'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A FIRESTORM,
WITH THE FREE WORLD COUNTING ON YOU TO SINGLE-HANDEDLY FOIL A TERRORIST NUCLEAR NIGHTMARE,
KICKBALL STARTS TO SEEM A LITTLE SILLY.**



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GET CLOSER TO GOD THE HARD WAY

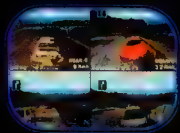
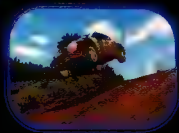


Sega Dreamcast

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TEST DRIVE VRALLY





ive by the Sword;

(Also pillage, plunder, hack, slash)

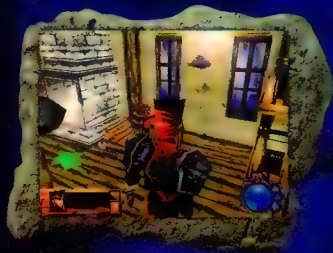


The Rock Monster,
Yalta Desert

*"From stone to sand, by
the force of my blade."*

LEGEND OF THE

BLADE MASTERS



Die by the Sword.

and conquer by the sword.)

Trial of the Worms,
Wizard's Cave

"Green is for the precious
life that I take from thee."

Dare with Queen Arachnid,
Queen Forest

"Yield her exoskeleton
till as tough as her will"

Oranka Overgrowth, Koku

"Fire in their bodies lead
my strike to steel."

- Quest-Based Action RPG For All Gamers
- Beautiful Anime-Style Landscapes and Graphics
- Immersive 3D Environment and Free-Roaming Camera
- Breakthrough Interface for Inventory and Magic Spells

Sega Dreamcast





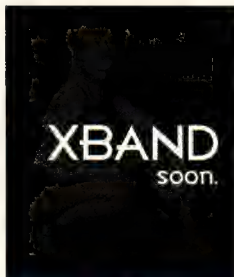
Letters to the Editors

LETTER OF THE MONTH

The Opposite Of X(BAND)

Several years ago, there was an excellent product out that introduced me to the world of online gaming. (I didn't have a very good computer at the time). Those of us who took part in this little world of multiplayer gaming all remember how much fun it was, and how sad we were to see it go. That's right, I'm talking about XBAND.

It was made for the Super Nintendo and Sega Genesis. I spent hundreds of hours a month on that network. Hey, 10 bucks a month for unlimited access? How can you beat that? I made friends, I made enemies, we had alliances, we had clubs, we had clans,



was great, and it sucked that Catapult shut it down. But wait...XBAND's Web site, www.xband.com, closed down with the network. Eventually, it was set up to redirect you to

"The few of us who played XBAND made up a small community. We all knew each other, it was like our own little world..."

we traded tricks, we had fun. Now I know all of you are saying, "Duh, get on the Internet [and] you can do all of that with a LOT more people. But that's the problem. The few of us who played XBAND made up a small community. We all knew each other, it was like our own little world away from school and homework and stuff. Plus, we could play all the games that weren't on the computer (I was one of the best Killer Instinct players in New Jersey). Online, you don't get to play most of the classic platform games, and there are so many people it's hard not to get lost in the crowd. XBAND

mplayer.com (if memory serves me right). I think the creators of mplayer were the same creators of XBAND or they merged with another company, I don't know the exact details. All I know is one thing. Go to www.xband.com now and see what you get...no explanation of when, or how, or what system, just a large sign that says, "XBAND soon..." and some chick with the trademark XBAND X on her shoulder. Which brings me to my question...is it coming back? Well, we can dream can't we?

Kevin Domenic
kdomenic@ix.netcom.com

Sorry to let you down, but we checked and it seems that the site up at xband.com is a placeholder right now. The domain is owned by an ex-Catapult employee, as MPath lapsed on keeping up the site. MPath acquired Catapult a few

years ago and dabbled with PC gaming, but shifted into Internet voice communication and are now called HearMe. XBAND making a return to online console gaming isn't in the cards. But perhaps an XBAND tribute Web site would be...

LETTER FACTS

- Responses that begin with DUH!: 2
- Readers who said something has been "itching" them: 1
- Letters about hair color: 1
- Readers who want us to fight other magazines: 1
- Readers named "Fro": 1

Big Brother (Bill) Is Gaming

Having seen the ups and downs of the video game industry for these many years, I might have a layman's understanding of how resilient it can be, but after reading about Microsoft's intro of the X-Box, I can't but wonder if this might be a death knoll for this industry. As I understand, Microsoft's mantra has always been "if you can't beat them buy them!" and this is exactly what it will do. Once having introduced its machine to the masses, it would probably go about investing and buying out developers and publishers so as to standardize on its platform and Windows CE OS. If rumors are to be believed, even now they are in talks with some Japanese developers, the main [rumor] being Square and Namco [will] buy them out. I have never held loyalty to one console maker, having enjoyed games from every platform, but if Microsoft gets its way, all of us will be forced to play games it produces on machines it makes. I hope this day will never come but having seen (smelt!-) a multibillion-dollar market, Microsoft is about to go on a feeding frenzy.

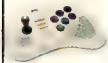
P.S. I have been an EGM reader since the days of Steve Harris and have enjoyed your magazine thoroughly. It just keeps getting better and better. Thank you.

Ravichander
rav66@pacific.net.sg

Microsoft could be compared to Sony before it launched the PS in 1996. Sony bought a stake in Psynosis (where would the PS be without Wipeout?) and encouraged as many companies as possible to make games for them. That's no different than what Gates & Co. are doing now. There have been rumors that Microsoft is throwing around some mad dollars to buy a software developer such as Square or Namco—but the likelihood that those companies would succumb to it is pretty low.

Congratulations. You win an InterAct controller. You will be receiving a Barracuda (PS), an Alloy Arcade Stick (DC) or a SharkPad Pro 64⁺ (N64).

See page 159 for official rules.



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LETTERS

Send us your thoughts, your wishes, your innermost weirdness...or your pictures, crazy screenshots or photos of bizarre game-related moments.

Déjà vu All Over Again

I've noticed some déjà vu happening in video games. Think of the Dreamcast as the Saturn. Sure it has many good games and great graphics now, but compare it to the other consoles and they look like crap. PlayStation2 resembles, you guessed it, the PlayStation. A weak launch lineup, a huge price, and the media backing it. And just like the PlayStation, the games over the horizon look great. Now to the Dolphin: Just like the N64, it promises to be twice as good as the competition. But with the only games named so far to be Harry Potter and Pokémon, it looks like it will lose many a gamer because of its kiddie games. And the X-Box resembles the ill-fated Philips CD-I. Great technical readout, and made by a giant electronic company, but no support by gamers. And who do I think will win the console war? If the PlayStation2 was cheaper I would pick it, but with a \$400 price tag and \$80 a game, it will break the bank. I'm cashing in my funds toward a Dreamcast, and I hope that Sega doesn't screw up this time.

Imthegotman@aol.com

Whoa, slow down there. Don't presume the outcome until everyone's shown their cards. In

some ways, it does seem like 1996 all over again, but the industry has changed. Nintendo's done with cartridges, Microsoft is bigger and more powerful than Philips was (and very little is even known about X-Box or Dolphin), Sega is serious about winning, and Sony is back at square one trying to get people to buy new hardware. Give it a year or two...

MTVMG+MP3?

I love my MTV Music Generator...and I love the songs I make with it. Any ideas how I can take 'em from my memory card and convert them into MP3s so I can upload to the Net or listen to them? Thanks.

lock@gamespotmail.com

There's no way to do it directly from the memory card, as the file on the memory card simply tells MTV Music Generator what sound files to use from the disc. The only way we can think of to get the audio from your PlayStation onto your PC or Mac for MP3 conversion is to record it. Get a splitter cable from Radio Shack, run it from your PS into the audio of your computer, and you should be good to go. Of course, you'll need the proper software. Just make sure the samples you're using are royalty-free.

"...with a \$400 price tag and \$80 a game, it (PS2) will break the bank. I'm cashing in my funds toward a Dreamcast, and I hope that Sega doesn't screw up this time."

Question of the Moment

Will you sign up for SegaNet and get a free Dreamcast?

I already own a Dreamcast!!! AAAHHHH!!! I knew I should have waited!!!!!!

soeyes@bellsouth.net

It's FREE!! Heck yeah!

jordavis149@aol.com

No, because if I'm going to do online gaming, I want broad bandwidth. I don't think the technology that Sega is using for this is adequate. I'd rather wait for the PS2.

jboersclier@farmland.com

DUHI! Sony, Nintendo and Microsoft are wrong about this strategy not working (from comments made in the Sega Strikes Back article, same issue). A free Dreamcast? Do you have to ask? Oh yay!

pdcarey@worldspynet

No. I have cable modem and a Dreamcast...I'm not for life!

rjohn223@home.com

I would first read the fine print and find out how long I would have to stay on the contract, which there probably will be one. The price of the SegaNet would probably balance out to how much the Dreamcast would cost due to how long I would sign up for SegaNet. But who cares?! It's a free Dreamcast!!!!

warlow3@aol.com

Duh! Two words. Free. Dreamcast.

acorna@acorna.hippy.com

I will, because Sega has cared about their customers all along. And I'll buy DC games with my \$200 rebate. I heard you can preregister at sega.default.net Sega cares; Sony wouldn't do that, they are selfish.

caseyavrett@worldnet.att.net

Only if they make it so you can trade Seaman with all your friends.

bigglesworth326@yahoo.com

HA HA HA HA HA, like I would pay \$527 for two years of sega.com while I could buy a Dreamcast for \$200!
HA HA HA HA HA!!!

mtsales@mindspring.com

Next Month's Question of the Moment:

Are you glad Final Fantasy IX is returning to the series' fantasy roots or do you like the futuristic stuff?

Send your short but sweet responses to: EGM@ziffdavis.com with the subject heading: fantasy

"...Any ideas how I can take (MTV Generator songs) from my memory card and convert them into MP3s...?"

DESERT ISLAND GAMES

Five Games You Couldn't Do Without

If you were stuck on a desert island and could only have five games with you, which would they be? E-mail us your lists at EGM@ziffdavis.com.

Mark the subject line **Desert Island Games**.

GT2
Medal of Honor
Soul Calibur
Civilization II
GoldenEye 007
loudkid27@webtv.net

Final Fantasy VIII
Final Fantasy VII
Final Fantasy Anthologies
StarCraft 64
Mario Party 2
ambic@frontiernet.net

Chrono Trigger
Grandia
Slayers Wonderful!
Pocket Monsters Silver
Final Fantasy IV
rounds@ez.sunflower.org

Out Run
Virtual On
Space Harrier
Zelda: Ocarina of Time
Marvel vs. Street Fighter
netlink1@concentric.net

Tekken 3
Dead or Alive 2
Final Fantasy VIII
Sonic Adventure
RE Code: Veronica
sailormoon013@aol.com

Star Ocean 2
Street Fighter Alpha 3
Final Fantasy VII
Medal of Honor
Crazy Taxi
jbreur10222@yahoo.com



For icy cool breath that lasts





LETTERS

You can write EGM at:

EGM Letters
P.O. Box 3338
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3338
e-mail: EGM@ziffdavis.com

Please note: We reserve the right to edit any correspondence for space purposes. If you don't want your name, city/state or e-mail address printed, tell us so (but please include your phone number and mailing address for Letter of the Month consideration).

Expand Now Or Die?

I was reading that Sega isn't likely to release a device designed to improve the Dreamcast because of the failure of the Sega CD and 32x. But don't they realize that's the only way to really compete with the PS2, the X-Box, and Nintendo's pretend Dolphin that no one knows anything about? Also, the Genesis was never meant to be expanded, but look at the N64 and how Nintendo improved it dramatically just by adding 4 Megs of RAM. Think of what Sega could do if they added, say, 32-64 more Megs, a graphics accelerator, and maybe a small hard drive, like the X-Box.

Chris Clark

FunkyBlue64@excite.com

If you're talking about DVD—Sega's already got the proprietary GD-ROM format which holds more data than a regular CD. The benefit you'd get by increasing FMV quality with DVD over alienating half your audience (as not everyone would buy an upgrade) is marginal. They need to do all they can with what they've got. An expansion at this time would be admitting a DC weakness. Besides, the games are what matter, not the graphics. Bring it on!

Blond-Bad Brown-Good

It's been a long time since this has been itching me. I just bought Code: Veronica and met with the Ashford twins. Now I have noticed something. Every main bad guy in the Resident Evil series has blond hair! You don't believe me? Blond: Albert Wesker, William Birkin, Annette Birkin, Alfred Ashford, Alexia Ashford. There you go. Also, every good guy/girl is red-haired or brown-haired. Red: Claire Redfield, Barry Burton, Leon S. Kennedy, Ben the Journalist. Brown: Chris Redfield, Carlos Oliveira, Rebecca Chambers, Enrico (Alpha team leader),

SHORTS

The very bottom of the Ziff letters barrel.

I have one question, what in the hell is UBER?

ogppa-a.c@worldnet.att.net

What do we look like, a German-to-English dictionary?

Shouldn't this page be updated? Umpalupa71@aol.co No.

I'm blue da ba dee da ba dye, da ba dee da ba dye, da ba dee da ba dye, I have a blue house with a blue window...

Cody Fowers C_fowers@yahoo.com
Hmm, well, we've dispatched the authorities to said blue house.

Brad the helicopter pilot, Mikhail, Sherry Birkin, that guy in the prison in RE: Code Veronica, Steve Bunside, and that's not all. Every mutant DOES NOT have hair. Bald: Tyrant, Tyrant 2, Mr. X (that guy in RE2), Nemesis, Alexia (2nd form). And every other sub-bosses. The following people do not follow my "hair rule": Nicholai, Chief Brian Irons, Ada Wong.

As you can see, it's all a matter of hair color. When we will hear about the next RE on PS2 and when we will see the first screens, we will just have to look at the hair color of a new character to see if he's a bad guy or not.

Jean-Francois Morin
Quebec, Canada

To quote Crispin, "What you say is very interesting, in fact, you're very interesting."

Readers Demand Fisticuffs

Hey EGM crew! I have a question about the *Packet Games* magazine. I was looking at the new edition and I noticed that there were at least 10 pages that came out of your Pokémon edition (#124). I was wondering if you are making part of this mag, or are they just making some very bad plagiarism? If they are big fakes, I recommend you go over there and beat the crap out of them!

Jay

!coolb@juno.com

Thanks for the heads-up on those thieves, we're gonna challenge them to a dance-off, like in the Beat It video...just kidding. *Packet Games* is produced by various members of our Ziff Davis gaming mags gang.

LETTER ART

WINNER

Rod Beltman
Hayward, CA

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.



The ASCII Control Pad

Put your creative skills to the test by decking out a #10 envelope (the long business type) with your own unique touch. Send your letter art to:

EGM Letter Art
PO Box 3338
Oak Brook, IL
60522-3338



(All entries become the property of Ziff Davis Media Inc. and will not be returned!)

Close, but no controller

Bad luck to these guys...better luck next time. Feel free to e-mail us artwork as well. More of our messages are e-mails these days—so don't miss out!



Matt Steele
Georgetown, TX



Scott Porter Anaheim, CA



Roland Sabalza Seattle, WA



Golden Tee -GOLF-

The #1 Arcade Hit Has Found A New Home... Yours!

The blockbuster arcade hit, Peter Jacobsen's Golden Tee Golf™, is coming home to the PlayStation® game console! Realistic gameplay, immersive environments and all new enhancements will keep you coming back for more again and again!



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Available at all fine game retail stores, or order online at www.wizardworks.com

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A NUCLEAR BOMB IS ABOUT TO DETONATE,
IT'S CONTROLLED BY SADISTIC THERMO-TERRORISTS,
AN AMBASSADOR'S LIFE HANGS IN THE BALANCE,
NO REINFORCEMENTS ARE COMING...



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The Hottest Gaming News on the Planet

Final Fantasy Legend

An Interview with Hironobu Sakaguchi



EGM: Were you concerned that going back to the superdeformed characters and fantasy setting might alienate some of the fans of FFXII and FFXIII, since those games gave so many players their first taste of Final Fantasy?

HS: If I have worries, it really restricts my creativity, and therefore the product is going to be very much limited and not very interesting. So I would like to remain being very free from those kinds of restrictions. Regardless of other elements and concerns, for FFXI, we just wanted to pursue what we feel we wanted to do. In the long run, you need to have the freedom of mind to make a game successful. FF enables us to create any kinds of

characters and any kinds of stories. It gives us the freedom to do what we want.

EGM: Which do you prefer personally—the fantasy or sci-fi setting?

HS: I like both. As long as the story themes are consistent in the Final Fantasies, I think either will work.

EGM: How did you come to work at Square, and why did you name your series Final Fantasy?

HS: When I was a student 17 years ago, I started working part time for Square. I was planning to work for only two months and then quit, but I'm still here. At the time, the team that was working on Square's first project had broken up because the director left, so I became the director myself, and we created Death Trap, a PC game, the first product of Square. We created several other things, and then we moved on to the Nintendo Famicom. We created three different products—a shooting game, a 3D action game and a racing game (Rad Racer in the U.S.)—for the Famicom. But we were very dissatisfied with these products. When we moved on to the next one, I was planning to make something

Put simply, Hironobu Sakaguchi is Final Fantasy. He invented the series, he's directed every installment since the NES original; and now he's charting new territory with his Final Fantasy flick, due summer 2001. On top of that, Sakaguchi is reading FFX for the PlayStation2—which, via Square's Play Online program, will interface with an online strategy guide and let players participate in auctions for rare items—and he's laying the groundwork for the massively multiplayer FFXI. We sat down with Sakaguchi, who's also the chairman and CEO of Hawaii-based Square USA, to talk about all things Final Fantasy.

EGM: Why have you taken the Final Fantasy series back to its fantasy roots with the ninth chapter?

Hironobu Sakaguchi: This is the last of the Final Fantasies with a single digit in its title, and therefore we wanted to go back to the original idea. FFXII and FFXIII are kind of cyber universes, cyber worlds, so we wanted to create some kind of medieval universe and use the technologies applied in FFXII and FFXIII. And you see the crystal on the logo as well. We wanted to restore the original concept and ideas of FF.





better than the first three products, and it was to be my final work—and that's why I called it Final Fantasy.

EGM: How many people were working on the first Final Fantasy?

HS: When we started out, we only had four. Maybe at the end of FFI, 20 people or so became involved.

EGM: So were you happy with Final Fantasy when you finished it?

HS: Yes, I was very, very pleased. At that time, the head of the sales department said we wanted to sell so-and-so many units of this game. I said, 'We have to produce twice as much as your goal, because I guarantee it will be a success.' It sold very, very well.

EGM: What can you tell us about the movie?

HS: It's going to be released summer of next year.

EGM: And...

HS: And it will be well done. You'll have to see it.

EGM: Don't worry—we will. We hear the movie will share some of the main themes of FFXI. Could you elaborate?

HS: It's not really common themes. But there are the nuances, hints and flavors of Final Fantasy. It looks like sci-fi, but if you look at the story, you can tell it's Final Fantasy.

EGM: How did you split your time between the game and the movie?

HS: I go back and forth, half and half, between Hawaii and Japan—two weeks and two weeks, for each. In Japan I concentrate on games and Play Online. In Hawaii I only concentrate on the movie.

EGM: What are some of your favorite games

"In the long run, you need to have the freedom of mind to make a game successful. FF enables us to create any kinds of characters and any kinds of stories. It gives us the freedom to do what we want."



or types of games?

HS: Half-Life, Everquest, and I like strategy games like StarCraft. I don't play them online. I lose. It's very stressful.

EGM: How will FFXI compare to online games like Everquest?

HS: It will have a persistent world like Everquest and Ultima Online, but we include more visuals and events/quests, so we're making a different type of online game.

EGM: We heard rumors that FFXI's release date was being moved around so



it wouldn't come out the same time as Dragon Quest VII.

HS: I don't even know when Dragon Quest will be released (laughs). Nobody knows. Therefore, we can't even challenge it.

EGM: Now that FFXI is tying up the series, what direction will the new Final Fantasy games take the franchise?

HS: FFX, as you saw, is very realistic, but the universe will be very different, much more of a medieval age than in FFXII and FFXIII. It's very easy for us to make it very real, because of the PlayStation2 hardware. ♣





PRESS
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DEVELOPER PROFILE

Acquire

Location: Akihabara, Tokyo
Web site: www.acquire.co.jp
of people: 20



Current project(s): Tenchu 2
Most difficult "ninja" or "stealth" characteristic to put into a game like **Tenchu:** Tweaking the level design and enemy placement to optimize the stealth factor in the game is easily the most difficult part. Try it for yourself in the Mission Editor.

Movies or characters that have inspired aspects of Tenchu: Most of our inspiration has come from older Japanese samurai-era movies. They're actually a lot like westerns in the U.S.

Most exciting aspect of new video game hardware: For 3D games like Tenchu the new hardware is very exciting. Specifically, it will give 3D developers the power to deepen and widen the field of vision, refine character graphics, and generally increase the amount of action on screen.

In our opinion, the differences between developing a game for a Japanese audience and a U.S. audience is: Artwork. The Japanese audience is very receptive to stylized, and even cute images in games, whereas the U.S. audience generally expects the images to be as realistic as possible.

During breaks from late-night programming sessions, we: Hit the Family Mart (Japanese convenience store chain) across the street for instant buckwheat noodles and hot dogs.

Our favorite game to play in the office (not by us) is: Quake 3 Arena

Music that inspires us around the office: Saburo Kitashima (a famous Japanese "Enka" singer).

Story behind our name: It puts us at the beginning of the phone book in English or Japanese.

Favorite catchphrase or slogan (can be Japanese): "Every programmer has their own distinct ninja style."

Violent Video Games Under the Gun Again

As more and more instances of teen violence crop up around the country, so do the outcries for enforcing the ratings system for mature-rated video games. Already, Blockbuster Video doesn't allow gamers under 17 to rent games rated with the "M" (Mature) classification by the Entertainment Software Ratings board. It is not illegal to sell M-rated games to those under 17.

Illinois Attorney General Jim Ryan released the results of a statewide "sting" that found that in 32 of 32 instances, customers aged 13-15 were able to purchase M-rated video games at 29 major retailers throughout the state (interestingly, Blockbuster, the only retailer that enforces the ratings system nationwide

issued by the Illinois Attorney General's office, Ryan's staff is looking into how to prevent minors from using or obtaining violent games at arcades or over the Internet. Voluntary enforcement of the ratings system would not necessarily make it illegal to rent or buy M-rated titles. So far, such a law has not been introduced.

On the one-year anniversary of the tragedy at Columbine High School in Littleton, Col., a report was published in the April issue of the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* linking video games and violence.

"We found that students who reported playing more violent video games in junior and high school engaged in more aggressive

"It defies common sense that we would want these shockingly violent and interactive 'murder simulators' to flow freely into the hands and ultimately the minds of our young people."

was not one of the stores targeted in the operation). The list of 19 games purchased under the sting included games in the Resident Evil series, Metal Gear Solid, Bio Freaks and Parasite Eve.

Ryan then sent a letter to retailers urging them to enforce the ratings system. Ryan said of the operation, "It defies common sense that we would want these shockingly violent and interactive 'murder simulators' to flow freely into the hands and ultimately the minds of our young people." According to a press release

behavior," said Anderson, a psychologist. "We also found that amount of time spent playing video games in the past was associated with lower academic grades."

These are the latest in what will no doubt be a continuing saga of studies linking violent video games and images in the media to real-life violence. After the Columbine tragedy last year, President Clinton assigned a task force to investigate the matter further. That committee will issue its findings later this fall.

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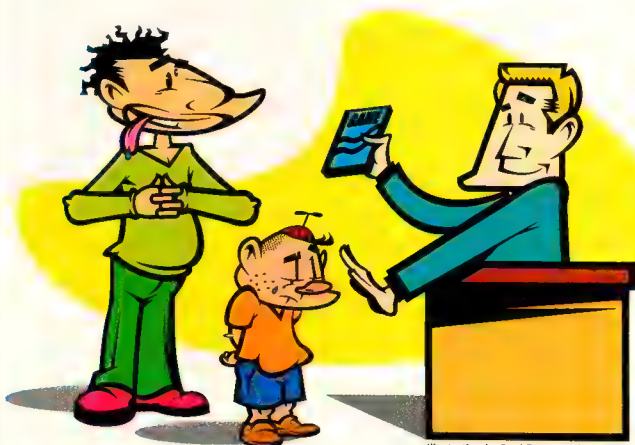


Illustration by Raul Ferren at Jivestudios



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“Comedy Central owns South Park, we don’t. Comedy Central can go do whatever the f* they want with these characters...and they’ve made all this s*** and these video games that we f***ing hate...”**

— Matt Stone and Trey Parker, in an interview that appeared in the June 2000 issue of *Playboy Magazine*.

The Minibosses Give the Classics an Edge

The Minibosses are a New England-area band that play not only their own brand of guitar-driven rock, but also perform versions of classic 8-Bit Nintendo-era tunes from games like *Metroid*, *Contra*, *Wizards & Warriors* and *Castlevania*. If you haven’t heard them yet, their Web site, www.minibosses.com has downloadable MP3 music clips and

information about the band. Recently their music has been heard blasting through the EGM offices (usually late at night when no one’s around), so we figured we’d ask them a few questions and get to know the guys—Ben, Burke and Wood—behind the music. Here’s what we found out:

EGM: How old are you guys?

Minibosses: We are all 23 years old.

EGM: How did you guys get started playing game music?

MB: Burke made us.

EGM: Where do you guys usually play? Around Massachusetts?

MB: We have only played seven shows so far and they have all been in Massachusetts, but we are relocating to Phoenix, Ariz., this summer and plan to tour along the way. [Look for info on their Web site.]

EGM: How long does it take to put together your interpretations of these classic game songs?

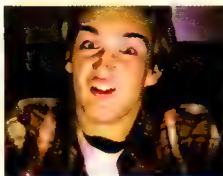
MB: Some of them come together really quickly, others can take a few weeks. *Wizards & Warriors* took almost no time to put together, but *Contra* took us almost a month.

EGM: Have you gotten any response from



Themes from *Metroid* and *Contra* are just two of the classic tunes the band has covered.





COMMERCIAL-1220

'Member this one? "You still don't have a Sega CD? What are you waiting for? Nintendo to make one?" If you were holding your breath for Nintendo to make a CD, well, it's too horrible to think about. Ah, the days when it wasn't about "it's thinking," but rather about buzz words like "blast processing" and "Mode 7."

the companies whose music you're playing?

MB: No, they won't talk to us. They are afraid we are game company spies or something. They don't let us leave messages either. Also, "they" is Konami.

EGM: What are some of your favorite games?

Ben: Phantasy Star will always be the first game that did me in, being the lone kid with an SMS on the block. Some of my all time faves are Symphony of the Night for PSX (never got the credit it deserved), Tecmo Bowl for the NES, Wayne Gretzky hockey for N64 (4-player mode only), and lately Mario Golf for the Game Boy. Of course I drool over all the given's—like the Castlevanias, Metroids, Zeldas, etc...minus FF7&8.

Burke: My favorite games recently have been Castlevania Symphony of the Night, Mega Man 2, Final Fantasy VII and Super Metroid. Those are really the only games that I have been playing in the past few months. I tried to get into Final Fantasy VIII but it was too easy and the story was not as good as VII's. I don't know—I am a big fan of series like the Mega



Minibosses takin' a break from laying down tracks to pose for the camera. From left—Wood, Ben and Burke.

Mans, the Castlevanias, the Final Fantasies, the Metroids...

Wood: I was blessed with a beautiful Commodore 64—Beach Head and Leisure Suit Larry always bring a tear to my eye. At one point I owned the Sega Master system, and I can remember playing Outrun and Shinobi until my dad turned off the television with broom. Possibly the greatest thing about the old Sega Master System was The Snail game;

I thought that was pretty damn cool, hiding a game inside the console. I never had the benefit of the old Nintendo—my friends who had the NES were very reluctant to give up the controls—but Ben and Burke have shown me what I've missed. I just wish I had that damn Robby the Robot now...

EGM: When you play these songs live do some people give you weird looks?

MB: Almost everyone gives us weird looks regardless of whether or not they recognize the songs. We also wear Cobra uniforms. And cowboy hats.

EGM: Who are your musical influences?

Ben: Everything. Especially Burke and Freddy Mercury.

Burke: Oh man. I used to be a big pop idiot, and then I realized pop music is mostly crap. Recently, I would say that my biggest musical influences are Failure, Kyuss, Queens of the Stone Age, and some crazy underground stuff.

Wood: I'd have to say Burke, as well as Failure and Queens of the Stone Age.

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SEGA BITS

We'll have the full details on Sega's E3 announcements next issue in our post-E3 wrap-up. But the big news is that from June to August, Sega will offer gamers a \$50 rebate offer, effectively lowering the price to \$149 (it'll still be \$199 in stores but you'll get a \$50 rebate). Sega also had an online gaming demonstration at their pre-E3 party, where rapper Ice T and Sega's Greg Thomas in Los Angeles squared off against two opponents in San Francisco in NBA2K.

Sony Makes Changes to PS2 for U.S. Launch

PlayStation2 lands stateside on Oct. 26 for a retail price of \$299 (same price as the original PS when it was launched in the U.S. in 1996). It will come with a Dual Shock 2, AV-Multi Out and AC Adaptor, but not the 8 MB memory card like in Japan. Instead, the DVD software will be stored within the system, eliminating the need to have the memory card inserted when playing a DVD.

Also changed is the back of the machine. SCEA President and COO Kaz Hirai held up a mock-up of the U.S. version which will have an extra internal expansion bay on the back of the machine specifically for a proprietary 3.5" hard drive that will be released at a later time.

The Dual Shock 2, 8MB memory card and the PS2 multitap will retail for \$34 each, with first party SCEA software released at a \$49 MSRP. Sony evangelized on its plans to bring about a broadband revolution, using the PS2 as the hub, but didn't go into specifics on

applications of this (game or otherwise) other than to say you could download demos, music, surf the 'Net, etc.

SCEA didn't show any of its own North American PS2 titles, instead focusing on games already available in Japan or those by Electronic Arts (oddly shying away from showing any of its own sports titles during this pre-E3 press conference). EA showcased Madden 2001, FIFA Soccer 2001 and Big SSX (Snowboard Super Cross). All in all, 270 titles are in development for PS2. Fifty plus games will be shown at E3. The company promises a large library of launch software covering all genres, including RPGs (Dark Cloud was shown briefly).

Sony reiterated its commitment to PlayStation1 by saying that in the future we can expect "cosmetic changes" to be made to the system to widen its appeal with younger audiences (although exact details on this are

still unknown).

An exciting presentation by Sony, but lacked much attention on North American-developed titles, instead vaguely alluding to future technologies over what will be delivered during and until the end of 2000. We'll have more on Sony's E3 showing next issue.



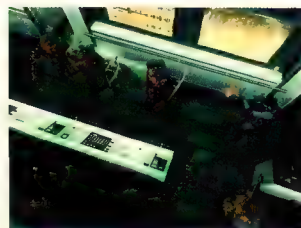
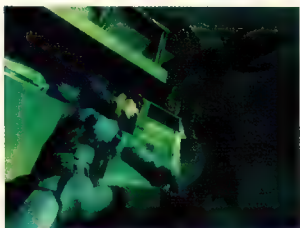
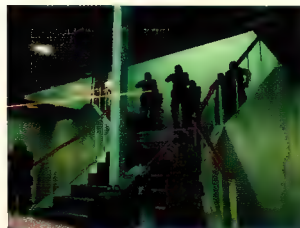
Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty Premiered at E3

Konami invited a select group of gaming journalists to join Metal Gear director Hideo Kojima for the premiere of Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty at a theater in Universal Studios' backlot in Universal City, CA.

To say this game looks amazing is an understatement—everything you see here is rendered in real-time using the game's engine. Shadows and light sourcing move naturally and

the game runs at a smooth 60 frames per second. Solid Snake's mullet has never looked so good. Rain falls and splatters on Solid Snake's uniform with amazing detail. It's still more than a year off, with a mid-2003 release date expected, but already the game looks more polished than the PS2 games being readied for the U.S. launch this fall. Still images of the game don't fully do it justice.

Revolver Ocelot makes his return as a new threat. Metal Gear Ray, presents itself. The game takes place in New York, and the scenes we saw take place on a boat. One memorable scene has you shooting at guards behind a shelf filled with wine bottles. As the enemies fire back, they break the wine bottles—each of which individually shatter and release their contents. Look for more on MGS2 next issue!



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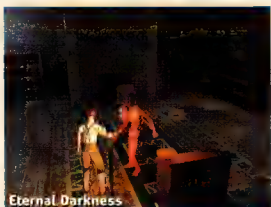


by Marc Eckō



PRESS
START

NINTENDO'S N64 LINEUP



Eternal Darkness



Paper Mario



Pokémon Puzzle League



Mickey Speedway USA

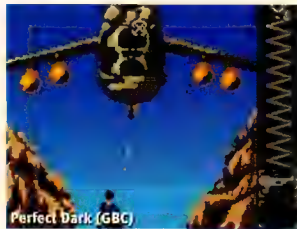


Conker's Bad Fur Day

Nintendo Gives Gamers What They Want

The message was clear: quality games for the system gamers already own. Nintendo chose not to release any new Dolphin or Game Boy Advance information—instead putting its faith behind the N64 and Game Boy Color. In a sense, gamers win out. Not all gamers are going to be able to cough up the \$299 for a PlayStation this year and Nintendo plans to use that to its advantage by delivering some stellar games to consumers later this year.

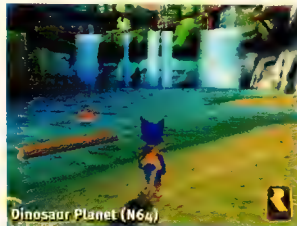
Nintendo 64 owners have a lot to get excited about. First and foremost are the four titles from Rare: Perfect Dark (already in stores by the time you read this), Banjo-Toolie, Conker's Bad Fur Day, Dinosaur Planet and Mickey's Speedway USA. Let's start out by saying that you're going to get excited over Dinosaur



Perfect Dark (GBC)

Planet. Rare has certainly pushed the envelope with it. You play as Sabre and Krystal, who are trying to save Dinosaur Planet from evil. You team up with dinosaur friends who'll help you along your way. Combat is similar in style to Zelda 64, and the game supports Dolby Surround Sound and features hours of speech (with no subtitles, so you can watch the story unfold like a movie without having to read text). Dinosaur Planet is scheduled for a Holiday release.

Banjo-Toolie will be released on August 28, and starts you off with all the abilities from the first game, plus sets you on your way to learning a whole host of new ones. Some levels let you use either Banjo or Kazoie (so you don't have to always have both together)



Dinosaur Planet (N64)

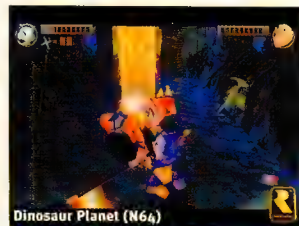
and has 125 new characters, multi-player minigames and more.

Conker's Bad Fur Day is real and is sure to offend (but in a delectably humorous way). It's currently scheduled for a Dec. 4 release. Mickey's Speedway USA is your basic Mario Kart/Diddy Kong Racing-style kart game with Disney characters and full speech (looks great). Silicon Knights has been signed by Nintendo to be a second-party developer and is hard at work on Eternal Darkness which will be released October 30. Super Mario RPG 2 has been retitled Paper Mario for the U.S. market and will be released on December 26 (missing that Christmas release by...one day). Mario Tennis is due Sept. 25. Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask looks like a winner, and is being called "the best Zelda game ever" by the series' creator, Shigeru Miyamoto. Zelda will hit Nov. 20. And finally, Kirby 64: The Crystal Shards nods in on June 26.

Of course, Pokémon will play a huge role in Nintendo's 2000 line-up. Pokémon Gold and Silver will make their debut Oct. 16, and Nintendo expects to sell 10 million cartridges in the first six months (and they very well could do that). On N64, we've got Her you Pikachu, a voice recognition game where you "talk" to Pikachu on Nov. 6; and Pokémon Puzzle League (formerly Pokémon Attack) on Sept. 24. The Game Boy Color version of Puzzle League will be released Nov. 20. Rounding out the Pokélineup is Pokémon Pikachu 2 GS, the U.S. version of Pocket Pikachu Color (which interacts with the GBC Gold/Silver versions through the infrared communications port) on Oct. 16 as well for a \$30 MSRP.

Game Boy Color support will remain strong, too (aside from Pokémon), with Perfect Dark coming Sept. 11, Donkey Kong Country on Aug. 28, Crystals on June 26, Warlocked on July 24, Little Mermaid 2: Pinball Frenzy on Dec. 4, and Pocket Soccer later this year. A release date for the first new Zelda GBC game was not announced yet.

All in all, an impressive lineup from Nintendo even without the appearance of Dolphin or Game Boy Advance.



Dinosaur Planet (N64)

CONKER: BULLS*** DO NOT?

So do you believe that Conker's Bad Fur Day actually exists?

I believed it from the start **3594**

No. This has got to be a joke **3164**

Yes, I'm a believer **1544** Source: Videogames.com poll, 5/4/2000

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HOW THAT'S A BIG TETRIS!
A group of students at the Brown University Tech House in Providence, Rhode Island, turned the school's science library into a 12-story version of Tetris code-named "La Bastille." Keith Dreibelbis, a student, came up with the idea after noticing that the building looked like Tetris blocks connected together (we've all had moments like that, right?). The game, constructed using over 10,000 Christmas lights, ran from April 15 to April 21, 2000 on the school's campus and was visible from miles around.

IMPORT CALENDAR

Jet Grind Radio

Import Pick of the Month: Jet Grind Radio, Sega's excellent cel-shaded rollerbladin'-and-messin'-things-up game.

PlayStation

- 6/3 Dance Dance Revolution 3rd Mix, Konami (Music)
- 6/29 Elder Gate, Konami (RPG)
- June Dragon Quest VII, Enix (RPG)
- June Fire Pro Wrestling G, Spike (Sports)
- June Persona 2 Eternal Punishment, Atlus (RPG)
- 7/19 Final Fantasy IX, Square (RPG)

Dreamcast

- 5/25 Rent A Hero No. 1, Sega (Action)
- 5/25 Sakura Taisen, Sega (Strategy RPG)
- 6/15 Animastar, Aki (Action)
- 6/22 Adv. World War, Sega (Strategy)
- 6/29 Jet Grind Radio, Sega (Action)
- 6/29 Street Fighter III 3rd Strike, Capcom (Fighting)

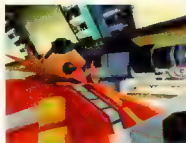
PlayStations

- 5/25 Hresvelgr, Gust (Action)

*Schedule subject to change without notice. Consult your local import game store for the latest release information.

Finally, Sonic Adventure 2

We promised you the first shots of **Sonic Adventure 2**—which Sega showed in a special screening room at E3—and here they are.

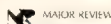
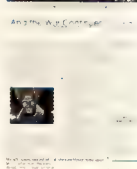


'ZINE-O-PHILE

Video Universe

Issue reviewed: #11, August 1999, \$1 per issue, Edited by George Wilson, 6714 Lower Macungie Road, Apt. B9, Trexlertown, PA 18087.

This issue marks the return of VU after a long hiatus. It was one of the better-known 'zines in the early '90s and this 28-page issue is a strong re-entry into fandom. Highlights in this issue include a rant by Video Zone editor Chris Kohler on the evils of used video game retailer Funcoland, game reviews from the NES to PlayStation, columns on retro games and George's opinions on the Dreamcast. It's all rounded out by a short, last-page piece pleading for arcades to stop sucking (we couldn't agree more). All in all, VU has a ton of variety, is well-edited by Wilson and his staff and feels/reads just like a good 'zine could.



Major Review

Issue reviewed: #1, Spring 2000, \$1 per issue, Edited by Erik Bondurant, 4025 Becket Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80906.

First issues of 'zines are always trial and error. But Major Review is a fairly strong first effort from fan-ed Bondurant. The focus of this 'zine is reviews, and there's loads of 'em in this 13-page package. The layout is all text and very clean, but could use a bit better organization—halfway through you have to look at an index to figure out who wrote which review. The reviews themselves have a few awkward sentences and typos (not to mention the odd use of the '@' for their review scale), but Erik admits in his "Letter from the Editor" that it's a bit rough around the edges. One of the most promising new 'zines we've seen in a while.

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PRESS
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Another comparison shot of Ridge Racer Type 4. Most noticeable difference: the headlights on the car.



DEVELOPER PROFILE

Warthog

Star Trek Invasion Team



Location: Cheadle, Cheshire, England

Web site: www.warthog.co.uk

of people: 12—(company total: 60)

Current project(s): Star Trek: Invasion, Starlancer and Tom & Jerry.

The most difficult aspects of melding the Star Trek universe into a video game:

One major issue of doing a Star Trek game is continuity, story depth and character involvement. We spent quite some time getting these three areas right. A trekkie is not going to let you base a game at the wrong Stardate with the wrong technology, characters and story references.

Favorite Star Trek movie, and why: I think it has to be *Wrath of Khan*. It had quite a lot of action in it and the "bug in the ear" scene sticks with me even now.

The secret to making a PS1 game look good is: Knowing the hardware, its flaws and its strengths, texture detail/coloring, lighting, understanding the CPU and GPU are also very important along with reducing the amount of texture warp.

Most exciting aspect of the next-generation consoles: Most exciting...I'd say resolution, 60fps gaming, depth of view, detail and potential power, not to mention incredible sound and special effects. Every new console comes bearing less boundaries, they just keep getting pushed back a little.

During late-night programming sessions, we: Talking gossip and game ideas, eating Indian curries, Chinese or pizza and work real hard, hi Boss!

Our favorite game to play in the office (not by us) is: Team Fortress, Quake III and occasional Dead or Alive/Soul Calibur tournaments.

Story behind our name: I think it was Paul Hughes (head technical bloke) who just pulled the name out of the air, then it stuck.

Play PlayStation Games On Your Dreamcast

In a move that is sure to garner more legal pressure from Sony, bleem! has announced that it will take the next step in game emulation: The company will deliver a version of its popular PlayStation emulator for the Dreamcast. That's right—gamers will soon be able to play PS games on the DC. Not only will bleem! for the Dreamcast play them, it will significantly improve the graphics, rendering them in higher resolution and using such effects as anti-aliasing and bi-linear filtering, producing a smooth, clean look.

The Dreamcast version of bleem! will come

The first bleem! packs should hit stores in early-to-mid summer, with more to follow in the months after. It will be possible to play imports and beta copies of games on it.

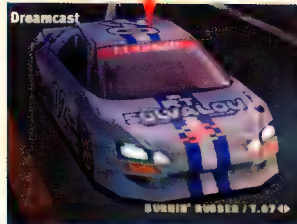
As for controlling the games, bleem! will release a specially branded PlayStation-esque controller as well as a pod adapter that will allow gamers to use existing PlayStation controllers on the Dreamcast. If only a standard Dreamcast controller is connected to the system, bleem! will recognize it and will allow the user to press button combinations to perform certain functions

"There's really no excuse not to own a Dreamcast now...you can walk out of a store with a new DC, plus bleem!, and four best-selling PS games for less than the cost of a new PS."

in what bleem! is calling bleem! packs—sets of bleem! that allow you to play 100 specific PlayStation games on the Dreamcast. Each pack will be priced at a \$19.95 MSRP and will feature a mix of games from all sorts of genres. The reason for splitting the library of PlayStation games into separate packs of 100 is so bleem! can focus on making sure each game in a set is fully compatible. One problem that plagued the PC version was that often in order to tweak the code to get one game to work, other games might suddenly lose audio or graphical effects, or not work at all.

(to make up for the lack of buttons on the DC pad). PlayStation game saves will be stored on the Dreamcast VMU.

David Herpolsheimer, president of bleem!, expects his product will help push many fence sitters to the DC. "There's really no excuse to not own a Dreamcast now. With top-selling PlayStation games selling for around \$20 and Sega's new free Dreamcast program, you can walk out of the store with a new Dreamcast, plus bleem!, and four best-selling PlayStation games for less than the cost of a new PlayStation."

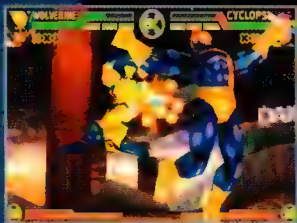


As these comparisons of Ridge Racer Type 4 show, Dreamcast bleem! cleans up the graphics considerably. The textures are especially smoothed out on both of these examples.



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Screen shots taken from PlayStation®2 game console versions.
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 For PlayStation developed by Paradox. Licensed by Sony Computer Entertainment. America for use with the PlayStation®2 game console. PlayStation 2 online play requires Internet connection and Network Adaptor for Extra Play Color developed by Gameloft. Licensed by Activision. Nintendo Game Boy and Game Boy Color trademarks are the property of Nintendo. © 2004 Activision, Inc. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Interactive Digital Software Association. All rights reserved. All other trademarks and registered trademarks are the property of their respective owners.



Q-Mann



BRINGS UP
 Directed by Ron Howard,
The Grinch is coming to town
 November 2000. If you've got a
 Web browser, you can visit the
 movie's official Web site at
www.grinchd.com.

Quartermann - Game Gossip & Speculation

We've got a full plate this month, and little space to tell you, so let's just jump right into the fray, shall we? Good, I knew you'd agree:

...There's been some strange rumblings within Capcom concerning the future of Resident Evil. The Q put his nose to the grindstone to come away with these tidbits. The company is already at work bringing Resident Evil Code: Veronica to the PS2. It could be released as early as next March. Bio Hazard Zero, in development now for the N64, is heading to the Dolphin soon. Whether or not the N64 version has been cancelled is somewhat in question. They're also developing a network version of Resident Evil. When you're bitten by a zombie you turn into a zombie, making the game a lot harder for the survivors (that could get real interesting)...

...Remember when there were supposed to be three Zelda games coming up this year for Game Boy? Well, 3...2...1...voila! Now there are two. They're still coming out by the end of this year, but the third part is now gone. Too bad, as marketing a "triad" of games would've been easier...

...bleem! on Dreamcast? How about bleem! on X-Box? The Q has heard that bleem! has even spoken with Gates & Co. regarding the possibility of bringing its emulator to the X-Box. If the Dreamcast version of bleem! is successful (and Sony doesn't go hog wild in court again), it's almost a given that it'll happen. Looks like Sony's promise of backward compatibility for the PS2 isn't such a big deal anymore...

...The amazing-looking NAOMI-based sequel to Guilty Gear, Guilty Gear X, is headed for the PlayStation2. Several companies are working behind the scenes, bidding on the console rights to Guilty Gear X (looks great but did the first one sell that well?), and many have expressed interest in a possible PS2 version. Whether or not it'll still hit the Dreamcast (as it was originally assumed would happen), is currently unknown...

...First it's canned, now it's back? Yep. Although a lot of things have happened behind the scenes at Konami throughout the development of Castlevania Resurrection on Dreamcast (first it's canceled, then it's back), the game is back on track. But don't expect it out this year. It's been delayed until 2001...

...Nintendo news—Mother 3 and Mini Racers (what the hell happened to that game? It was done at last year's Space World!) have apparently both been canceled. Mother 3 is still in development, but don't expect it to be released anytime soon. And now, Metroid...producer Yoshio Sakamoto commented that they're in the early stages of thinking about a Metroid game. But he's concerned how they'll make a sequel after the ending of Super Metroid kind of closed things up for the story. How to make a game called Metroid if there are no more Metroids? Hmm... it's too early to even say which system it would be on...please let it be Dolphin! Nintendo knows that Metroid is popular in the U.S.—but regrettably not so popular in Japan—so let's hope they give Sakamoto-san a lil' push and get this project to happen. That's it for me. Time to go hit some of those E3 parties...
- The Q

JAPAN TOP 10		
1	Yu-Gi-Oh Monster Capsule GB Konami	
2	Gradius III & IV Konami	
3	Iekken Tag Tournament Namco	
4	Dead or Alive 2 Tecmo	
5	Kirby's Dreamland 64 Nintendo	
6	Ridge Racer V Namco	
7	Power Pro Pocket 2 Konami	
8	Pocket Monsters Gold/Silver Nintendo	
9	Marvel Vs. Capcom 2 Capcom	
10	Warrio Land 3 Nintendo	
Weekly Famitsu, week ending 4/16/2000		

Tidbits



You're A Mean One, Mr. Grinch

The Whos of Whoville are in for trouble this Christmas...and you'll be the cause. Moviegoers will have to wait 'til November to get a glimpse of Jim Carrey (under a lot of makeup) as the Grinch in the film version of Dr. Seuss's *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. Konami and Universal Interactive Studios recently inked a deal to bring The Grinch to the PlayStation this fall. Konami doing a licensed game you say? Will The Grinch be anything like Solid Snake's adventures? Probably...not, but it still looks pretty cool.

Remote Possibilities

Ever since Sony first announced that PlayStation2 would be able to play movies, questions have flooded in as to whether or not Sony would make a wireless remote for the system. Controlling the DVD player with a Dual Shock isn't too bad, but think about the possibilities of tripping over the cord when getting up to get popcorn in a darkened room. Sony did say they'd do one, but InterAct has beaten them to the punch, at least for now. InterAct has announced that it will release a wireless DVD remote for the PlayStation2. The Master DVD Remote will offer 16 DVD function buttons and will operate at up to 23 feet on two AAA batteries. Interact plans to release the remote in September for \$19.99.





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The Top 20 Best-Selling Games of March, 2000

1 - Pokémon Stadium



No surprise here—**Nintendo's** Pokémon Stadium has risen to the top of the video game heap, temporarily knocking the Game Boy versions down. But they'll surely make a comeback soon enough...will it ever stop?

	NEW
8.0	6.0
Chris	Crispin
8.0	6.0
Che	Shoe

2 - WWF SmackDown!



THQ brings the WWF to the PlayStation in this, the company's first WWF game for PlayStation (after gaining the license last year). Features all the moves, grapples and matches you could ever want...until the next game.

	NEW
9.0	8.5
Shoe	Dean
9.0	8.5
Crispin	Shawn

3 - Pokémon Yellow



OK, seriously...you guys out there in gaming land...you have to stop buying everything Pokémon. **Nintendo's** raking in too much dough off this stuff. Of course, I'm kidding, I love Pokémon. But it's time for something new.

	1
8.0	6.0
Chris	Crispin
8.0	6.0
Che	Shoe

4 - Syphon Filter 2



Gabe Logan is a one-man army in **989 Studios'** sequel to last year's PS hit. If you didn't get your fill the first time around, this throws plenty more missions at you. Thing is, it doesn't seem quite as cohesive as the first game.

	NEW
5.5	6.0
Che	Crispin
5.5	6.0
John	Chris

5 - Pokémon Blue



When I said I was kidding you there, I lied. There's too much Pokémon out there! The real reason we're sick of it is seeing it grab all top-five slots every month. But we're happy for **Nintendo** (hint: Metroid...please...soon).

	6
9.0	8.0
John R	Crispin
8.0	9.0
John D	Sushi

6 - Pokémon Red

Nintendo

	5
--	----------

7 - Mario Party 2

Nintendo

	2
--	----------

8 - Gran Turismo 2

SCEA

	4
--	----------

9 - Tony Hawk's Pro Skater

Activision

	9
--	----------

10 - Resident Evil Code: Veronica

Capcom

	NEW
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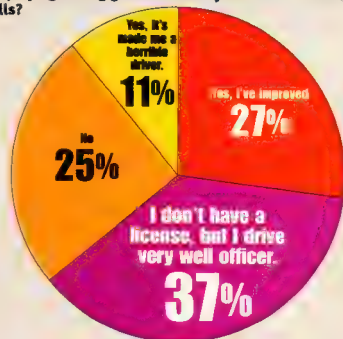
11	Pokémon Pinball Nintendo		12
12	Dead or Alive 2 Tecmo		NEW
13	WWF Wrestlemania 2000 THQ		8
14	Crazy Taxi Sega		3
15	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater Activision		NEW
16	Spyro the Dragon SCEA		13
17	Triple Play 2001 Electronic Arts		NEW
18	Syphon Filter SCEA		---
19	Super Mario Bros. Deluxe Nintendo		16
20	Dukes of Hazzard Soutpeak Interactive		10

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Service. Call Mary Ann Porreca at (316) 625-2345 for questions regarding this list. Top 5 game descriptions written by the EGM staff.

VIDEOGAMES.COM POLL

Driving You Crazy

Has playing driving games affected your real-life driving skills?

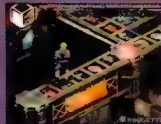


Source: Videogames.com main poll results for 5/3/2000



Turns out, you can advance past the black belt.

HEY YOU IN THE BACK. 16 years of course don't see them as new, you missed it. Here's the chance to get you the right to control the fighter's destiny. Don't miss it. The most skilled fighters in the world for the fighter's destiny. The Fighter's Destiny 2.0.



**FIGHTER'S
DESTINY 2**

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PRESS START

Coming Soon - July 2000

June

Game Boy Color	
2000 Times - Infogrames	Misc.
Dragon Dance - Crave Entertainment	Action
ALICE in Wonderland - Nintendo	Adventure
Austin Powers 2 - Take 2 Interactive	Action
Croc - THQ	Action
Crystals - Nintendo	RPG
Dark Angel Anna's Quest - Metro 3D	Adventure
Dragon Dance - Crave Entertainment	Action
Frisbee Golf - Vital Entertainment	Sports
KISS: Psycho Circus - Take 2 Interactive	Action
Lemmings Revolution - Take 2 Interactive	Puzzle
Looney Tunes Collector: Alert! - Infogrames	Misc.
Lord Raunoff's Decal - Vital Entertainment	RPG
Magical Drop - Electro Source	Puzzle
Men in Black 2 - Crave Entertainment	Action
Micro Machines V3 - THQ	Racing
MTV Sports: Skateboarding - THQ	Sports
NASCAR 2000 - THQ	Racing
NBA Live 2000 - THQ	Sports
Pocket Racers - Interplay	Racing
Pro Pool - Activision	Action
Puzzle Collection - Electro Source	Puzzle
Xe-Nel - Acclaim	Action
Road to El Dorado, The - Ubi Soft	Action
Ronaldo V-Soccer - GT Software	Sports
Space Marauder - Konami	Action
Test Drive Cycles - Infogrames	Racing
Test Drive Le Mans - Infogrames	Racing
Titus the Fox - Interplay	Action
TOCA Tour Racing - Southpeak Interactive	Racing
Tom & Jerry - Mattel	Action
Tomb Raider - THQ	Action
Unleash the Madness - Ubi Soft	Action
Wacky Races - Infogrames	Racing
WDW: Magical Racing Tour - Eidos	Action
X-Men: Mutant Academy - Activision	Action
PlayStation	
Alien Resurrection - Fox Interactive	Action
Baldur's Gate - Interplay	RPG
Blaster Master II - Sunsoft	Action
Conan Wars 3: Red Sun - Midway	Action
Countdown Vampires - Bandai	Action
Coverd Ops: Nuclear Dawn - Activision	Action
Hogs of War - Infogrames	Action
In Fisherman Bass Hunter - Take 2 Interactive	Sports
Iron Soldier 3 - Vital Entertainment	Action
Koudelka - Infogrames	Action
Legend of Dragoon, The - SCEA	RPG
Legend of Mana - Square EA	RPG
Major League Soccer - Konami	Sports
Martian Gothic - Take 2 Interactive	Action
Micro Maniacs - Codemasters	Racing
Mortal Kombat Special Forces - Midway	Fighting
NGen Racing - Infogrames	Racing
Paperboy - Midway	Action
Reel Fishing II - Natsume	Sports
Rolling Cage 2 - Psysnops	RPG
RPG Maker - Agetek	RPG
Saboteur - Eidos	Action
Strider 2 - Capcom	Action
Test Drive Cycles - Infogrames	Racing
Who Wants to be a Millionaire? - SCEA	Misc.
Worms Pinball - Infogrames	Misc.
Nintendo 64	
Blues Brothers 2000 - Titus	Misc.
Caesar's Palace - Crave Entertainment	Misc.
Carmageddon - Titus	Action
Fighter's Destiny II - Southpeak	Fighting
Hercules - Titus	Action
Indy Racing League 2K - GT Interactive	Racing
Kirby 64: The Crystal Shards - Nintendo	Action
Looney Tunes: Duck Dodgers - Infogrames	Action
PGA European Tour - Infogrames	Sports
StarCraft 64 - Nintendo	Strategy
Stunt Racer - Midway	Racing
X-Box	
Aliens - Ubi Soft	Action
Dracoon: Cult of the Wyrn - Crave Entertainment	Action
Fort Fighters - Acclaim	Action
Gauntlet Legends - Midway	Action
Hidden and Dangerous - Take 2 Interactive	Action
Legend of the Blademasters - Ripcord Games	Action
Midway Arcade Flashback - Midway	Misc.

Ring, The - Infogrames	Action
Rush 2049 - Midway	Action
Silver - Infogrames	RPG
South Park Rally - Acclaim	Action
Space Channel 5 - Sega	Misc.
Space Invaders - Activision	Shooter
Spec Ops: Omega Squad - Ripcord Games	Action
Street Fighter 3: Double Impact - Capcom	Fighting
Super Magnetic Neo - Crave Entertainment	Action
Toy Story 2 - Activision	Action
Virtual On: Oratorio Tangram - Activision	Action
Wacky Races - Infogrames	Racing
WDW: Magical Racing Tour - Eidos	Racing

July

Game Boy Color	
Barbie Fashion Pack - Mattel	Misc.
Cannon Fodder - Activision	Action
Carmine - Vital	Action
Perfect Dark - Rare	Action
Pokémon Attack - Nintendo	Puzzle
Power Rangers Lightspeed Rescue - THQ	Action
Warlock - Nintendo	Strategy
Xena - Titus	Action
PlayStation	
Danger Girl - THQ	Action
Darkstone - Take 2 Interactive	Adventure
Duke Nukem: Planet of the Babes - GT Interactive	Action
Earthworm Jim - Interplay	Action
Harvest Moon - Natsume	Racing
Jeremy McGrath 2000 - Acclaim	RPG
Lunar 2: Eternal Blue - Working Designs	Sports
Peter Jacobson Gold Tee Golf - Infogrames	Sports
Campage Through Time - Midway	Action
Speedball 2000 - Empira	Action/RPG
Threats of Fire - Square EA	Action/RPG
Wacky Races - Infogrames	Racing
X-Men: Mutant Academy - Activision	Action
Nintendo 64	
Adlym Chronicles: The First Mage - THQ	RPG
Air Boardin' USA - ASCII	Sports
Banjo-Tooie - Nintendo	Action
Super Bowling - Timm	Sports
X-Box	
Demolition Racer - Infogrames	Racing
Ecco the Dolphin - Sega	Adventure
Evolution 2 - Ubi Soft	RPG
Jeremy McGrath Supercross 2000 - Acclaim	Racing
Marvel vs. Capcom 2 - Capcom	Fighting
Metropolis Street Racer - Sega	Racing
Monster Breeder - Romstar	Action
Seaman - Sega	Sports
Virtual Tennis - Sega	Sports
World Series Baseball 2K5 - Sega	Sports

August

Game Boy Color	
Rawling - Vital Entertainment	Sports
Carmageddon 2 - Interplay	Action
Donkey Kong Country 2 - Nintendo	Action
Dragon Tales - Mattel	Action
Jack Nicklaus Golf - Vital Entertainment	Sports
Jimmy White's Cue Ball - Vital Entertainment	Sports
Seadoo Hydrocross 2000 - Acclaim	Sports
Spider-Man - Activision	Action
Sydney 2000 - Eidos	Sports
T-Rex - Eidos	Sports
Turk 2: Shadow Oblivion - Acclaim	Action
PlayStation	
Aladdin in Nasira's Revenge - SCEA	Action
Animorphs - GT Interactive	Action
Carmageddon 2 - Interplay	Action
Clono Cross 2 - Square EA	RPG
ECW: Anarchy Rules - Acclaim	Racing
Jeff Gordon X5 Racing - American Softworks	Racing
Kengo: Master of Bushido - Lightweight	Racing
LEGO Racer Legends - LEGO Media	Racing
NCAA GameBreaker 2000 - 989 Sports	Sports
Re-Volt 2 - Acclaim	Sports
Rock Raiders - LEGO Media	Action
Shao Lin - THQ	Action
Spider-Man - Activision	Action
Star Trek: Invasion - Activision	Action

Sydney 2000 - Eidos	Sports
Tenchu 2: Birth of the Assassins - Activision	Action
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 - Activision	Sports
Vanishing Point - Acclaim	Action
WTC World Racing Championship - Activision	Racing
Nintendo 64	
40 Winks - GT Interactive	Action
Madden NFL 2000 - EA Sports	Sports
Mia Hamm 64 Soccer - Southpeak	Sports
NFL QBic 2000 - Acclaim	Sports
Ogre Battle 64: PoLc - Alias	RPG
Polaris Sno-Cross 2000 - Vital Entertainment	Racing
Seadoo Hydrocross 2000 - Vital	Racing
Turk 2: Shadow Oblivion - Acclaim	Action
X-Men: Mutant Academy - Activision	Action
X-Box	
Armada II - Metro 3D	Action
Cannon Spike - Capcom	Action
Da - Sega	Action
Deep Fighter - Ubi Soft	Fighting
ECW: Anarchy Rulz - Acclaim	Sports
ESPN Baseball Tonight - Konami	Sports
Power Stone 2 - Capcom	Fighting
Quake 3 Arena - Sega	Action
Quarterback Club 2000 - Acclaim	Sports
Renegade Racers - Interplay	Racing
Sega GT - Sega	Racing
Sydney 2000 - Eidos	Sports
Test Drive Off Road 3 - Infogrames	Sports
Vanishing Point - Acclaim	Action

September

Game Boy Color	
Animorphs - Ubi Soft	Action
Blaster Master Enemy Below - Sunsoft	Action
Cast Con. Zone 2: Mining a Gold - Mattel	Action
Doug: Quailman to the Rescue - Mattel	Action
F1 Championship 99 - Ubi Soft	Racing
Hercules - Titus	Action
Incredible Gadget - Ubi Soft	Action
The Lion King: Simba's Adventure - Activision	Adventure
Mission Bravo - Mattel	Action
Pokémon Gold & Silver - Nintendo	Puzzle
Ratler - Mattel	Racing
Rambler - Mattel	Action
Tom & Jerry - Mattel	Action
VR Powerboat - Vital Entertainment	Racing
PlayStation	
Action Man - Hasbro	Action
Breakout - Hasbro	Action
Buzz Lightyear of Star Command - Activision	Action
Dinosaur - Ubi Soft	Action
Dragon Valor - Namco/Hometek	RPG
F1 Championship 99 - Ubi Soft	Racing
Family Feud 2 - Hasbro	Misc.
Frogger II - Hasbro	Shooter
Galaga - Hasbro	Action
Inspector Gadget - Ubi Soft	Action
Jeopardy! 2 - Hasbro	Misc.
Mega Man Legends 2 - Capcom	Sports
Mike Tyson Boxing - Codemasters	Sports
NASCAR Racers - Hasbro	Racing
Nickelodeon's Cat Dog - Hasbro	Action
Panzer General Assault - Mindspace	Action
Polaris Sno-Cross - Kemco	Racing
Rayman 2 - Ubi Soft	Action
TONKA Space Station - Hasbro	Action
Wheel of Fortune 2 - Hasbro	Misc.
Nintendo 64	
F1 Championship - Ubi Soft	Racing
Int'l. Track & Field 2000 - Konami	Sports
Tom & Jerry - Mattel	Sports
VR Powerboat - Vital	Racing
X-Box	
Dark Wings 2: Air Strike - Crave Entertainment	Action
Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse - Metro 3D	Action
Dragon Rider - Ubi Soft	Action
F1 Championship 99 - Ubi Soft	Racing
Heroes 3 Might & Magic - Ubi Soft	Action
NFL 2K5 - Sega	Sports
Peacemakers - Ubi Soft	Sports
Starlancer - Crave Entertainment	Action
Stupid Invaders - Ubi Soft	Action
Viva Soccer - Interplay	Sports

Compiled by Chris Johnson chris_johnson@zd.com & Jennifer Whitesides

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Two Adventures



He transforms into monsters.
Play as both characters



She uses powerful magic spells
It's a whole new game



SQUARESOFT

www.squaresoft.com

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Animated Blood
Animated Violence

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FUNNY ACCENT,
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MEDIEVIL

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Kick computers to make it work.

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If only the answers to solving the mysteries of Wild Arms 2 were this easy to find. Instead, you'll face a monumental challenge to discover the secrets that lie within this stunning, yet mysterious 3-D world. A place where fate lies in the balance. Where one courageous, determined hero must sacrifice his heart for peace. Can he use the power of all living life forms and save Filgaia from the evil forces of Odessa?

Buy drinks to learn gossip.



Save before using duplicators.

Look inside barrels





Use Search System to find money

Condition screen camera's status.

Player-controlled camera angles

Choose from 3 characters to start quest

Battle detailed enemies

Solve brain-racking, action-oriented puzzles

WILD ARMS 2
What legends are made of.

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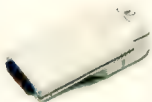
ESPN'S 2000 SUMMER X GAMES*.

GINA AND NIKKI, NOT INCLUDED.



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GINA SAVAGE

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE

LUCKY.



NIKKI SHARPE





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WARNING: Previews marked with international symbols may or may not be released in the U.S. They are designed to run on Japanese or European PAL systems. Import at your own risk.

Another hectic EGM deadline has come and gone. As the final pages are written and the last few screenshots taken, we're mere days from the game industry's annual showcase: the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3).

Speaking of which, this year's show promises to be the most interesting one to date. Sega's going full-speed ahead with killer software in almost every genre and some of the first games to take advantage of the new SegaNet network. This month we take a closer look at Sega's MSR and Ecco the Dolphin, both of which are looking absolutely spectacular.

In the Sony camp, the American third-party PS2 game info is finally starting to leak out. We've previewed a bunch of their upcoming games in the following pages, including a large chunk of EA's premier sports titles on the system and a closer look at Rockstar's games.

Nintendo is the real question mark. With Perfect Dark and Excitebike 64 already on the market, we're wondering what surprises Nintendo has in store for E3 attendees outside of the Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask and a plethora



The long wait is finally over. Ecco the Dolphin is almost ready to make a return appearance on a home console in fine style. Check out the preview on page 65.

of Pokémon cartridges including the upcoming Gold and Silver. Maybe we'll see an ill-tempered squirrel roaming the floor...

It's certainly an exciting time, and we've gone all out to bring you as many E3 game previews as possible before heading to the show.

Needless to say, next month we'll have a total blowout on all the big announcements and games of E3 2000. Along with loads of drunken party anecdotes and incessant whining about the fact that we couldn't score with any scrumptious booth babes. 🍷

TOP 5 Preview Picks

1. **Metropolis Street Racer** Dreamcast, Summer
2. **Dino Crisis 2** PlayStation, October
3. **Ecco the Dolphin** Dreamcast, July
4. **Madden NFL 2001** PlayStation2, Release Date TBA
5. **Tomb Raider** Game Boy Color, Spring

What do you think of WipeOut Fusion for the PS2?

source: videogames.com online poll

Looks like the same old game **3321**

I want to see it in motion **2617**

The game looks great! **1964**

Looks cool, I want to hear the music **312**

When you have A magnetic head, you're going to attract trouble.



"Every facet of the game, from its zany appearance to its goofy character designs and nutty score, is tailored to perfection. Rating: A-"

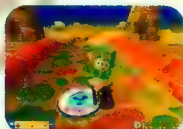
Dave Halverson • Gamers' Republic

"Its rather unique look and feel, combined with solid gameplay and a zany cast of characters... ensure *Neo* a place among the Dreamcast's elite."

Greg Orlando • DailyRadar.com

"Everything moves so well, and the worlds are so full of color that *Neo* will make quite an impression on anyone who sees it."

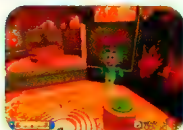
Brandon Justice • Dreamcast.IGN.com



Pinki and her goons have taken over Pao Pao Park and it's up to Neo to set things right!



Use Neo's magnetic powers to capture metallic enemies, catapult off platforms and rocket through the air!



Jump, run and swing your way across fantastic wonderful worlds.

SUPERmagnetic NEO™

THE attraction BEGINS JULY 2000



Sega Dreamcast

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I will not mate outside my species. I will not mate outside my species.
I will not mate outside my species. I will not mate outside my species.
my species. I will not mate outside my species.



Tough as it is, you must resist. Otherwise, you could end up with something like Seaman on your hands. Oh sure, treat him nicely and he's your buddy. Slack off, though, and he becomes just another verbally abusive mutant. Remember that the next time you feel the urge to fiddle with Mother Nature.

misseaman.com



SEAMAN ON LOVE:
"Don't make me vomit!"



SEAMAN ON THE 'F' WORD:
"I'm too polite to use that word, so I'll just say,
"Bite me, you baboon-faced ass-scratcher."



SEAMAN ON HIS ASTROLOGICAL SIGN:
"I need a middle finger to show you."

Sega Dreamcast

SEGA DREAMCAST

IT'S THINKING

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PREVIEW

35,000

HOT NUMBER

The number of photographs that Bizarre Creations took to model the environments in MSR.

Metropolis Street Racer

- Platform:** Sega
- Developer:** Bizarre Creations
- Players:** 1-2
- Genre:** Racing
- Play Time:** 75%
- Release:** Summer
- Price Tag:** None
- Web Address:** www.sega.com
- The Deal:** The best-looking Dreamcast racing game yet.
- What's New:** Frame-rate needs a little improvement.
- And You Will:** MSR's dedication to detail includes several Starbucks Coffee locations.



San Francisco offers all sorts of hills and obstacles, so driving can be pure hell—just like in real life!



The physics are based on a complex 3D four-wheel system that incorporates stats from the 60 cars' manufacturers.

KODAI MOMENTS

Say Cheese!

More of MSR's almost picture-perfect visuals.

When it came time to craft Metropolis Street Racer's zig-zagging city-street courses, the folks at Bizarre Creations used everything short of the Hubble Telescope to capture the game's true-to-life look. "We took information from street plans, government survey maps, land-usage data, topological maps and aerial photographs to get the layout and heights correct," Sarah Dixon, Bizarre's business director, told us. Then the developers photographed portions of Tokyo, San Francisco and London to get textures for buildings, which are individually hand-modeled. Houses, restaurants—heck, even signs—were photographed and stuck in the game. "The Dreamcast has a massive 8 megabytes of VRAM and

an amazing compression system," Dixon said, "meaning you can have high-color, high-res textures taken straight from the photographs."

MSR features more than 60 cars, and all have been modeled off of detailed schematics, diagrams, and, of course, photos (the team visited car factories and showrooms to get the goods). "MSR wasn't actually designed to be a car 'collect-'em-up," Dixon said, "and cars were chosen carefully to fit in with the game. We wanted to have a range of desirable and popular sports cars that could be, or nearly be, within financial reach in real life, rather than supercars that most people would never be able to afford." Bizarre is keeping mum for the moment on how you'll acquire new cars in the game. The current control scheme has the right trigger as gas, the left trigger as brake, and the A button as handbrake for strategic sharp turns.

Bizarre has yet to decide on exactly how it will set up tracks in MSR's featured three cities. The developers are toying with a random track generator, which would map out different paths through the cities. But if that doesn't work well, they may opt to go with several preselected paths. In either case, Bizarre hopes to offer at least 200 different course combinations.

MSR is currently slated for a European release in July. According to Sega, the game should see a release here a few weeks after. 🍄





POSTAGE DUE

Kevin Brin wrote *The Postman*. Yes, *that The Postman*. Luckily his involvement with Ecco doesn't mean it'll be the over-priced, three+-hour exercise in mediocrity that Kevin Costner's movie was.



PREVIEW

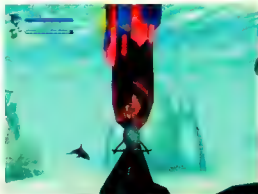
Ecco the Dolphin

- Platform** Sega
- Developer** Appaloosa Interactive
- Released** 1
- Genre** Adventure
- % Done** 60%
- Time** July
- Price** None
- Website** www.sega.com
- Company** www.appaloosacorp.com

Graphic Quality Gorgeous graphics and tight control.

The Best There's not much to be disappointed with thus far.

And the Bitch The fact that Greg won't stop playing the Ecco Sega CD soundtracks now.



Ecco admires some Atlantean architecture in one of the few levels where he's not being hunted or running low on air.



Now you don't need to pay for a ticket to SeaWorld when you want to watch a dolphin do the "water walk."

NATURAL HAZARD

Echo!

Ecco's echolocation ability has been around since the very first game was released. It used to be that holding the sonar button would bounce his song back and give you a glimpse at the surrounding area.

In the new Ecco, the echolocation map is much more useful. No longer does it have a separate screen. It's now an overlay that scrolls for a limited amount of time as Ecco swims. Kind of like the map from Doom, very useful.



Ecco on Sega CD



Ecco on Dreamcast

It's been almost six years since the last time we got to play a real Ecco adventure (Ecco: The Tides of Time came out on the Sega CD in 1994). Finally, after an excruciating wait that included a complete no-show on the Saturn, that aquatic hero of the Atlanteans, nay, the entire universe, is coming back in his third game.

In Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future, both dolphins and humans are endangered when an evil force strikes Earth and rips a hole in the space time continuum. One warrior, a dolphin with five star-like markings on his head, enters the hole.

Ecco literally fights for the future as he gets transported back in time, charged with recovering the stolen dolphin-power and ultimately saving

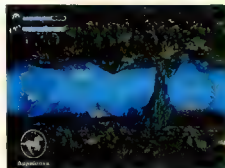
every creature on the planet from the dastardly evil force.

The graphics in Ecco are absolutely gorgeous, as is the animation of every living thing in the incredibly detailed underwater levels. Appaloosa is keeping the control scheme simple—it's basically the same setup as the first two Ecco titles, just adapted to the third dimension. As always, Ecco can use his sonar or charge enemies. But this time he can also learn special songs and abilities in order to deal with certain challenges (taking the series even further from reality than the last game did).

Even the soundtrack is reminiscent of the first two titles. Well, reminiscent of the Sega CD versions at least. Along with the haunting music comes a much more complete collection of sound effects for the bottlenecked dolphins in the game. In fact, all the creatures sound eerily realistic.

In order to keep the classic feel of the series, Appaloosa has paid homage to the two previous Ecco games in a few levels. Some of them are exclusively side-scrolling fare, basically making them look like polygonal copies of the originals. The later levels also include the "hanging water" that was so impressive in Ecco: The Tides of Time.

Appaloosa and Sega are definitely on the right track to make one of the best-looking and playing games on the Dreamcast thus far. We can't wait to get our feet wet with the final version. 🐬



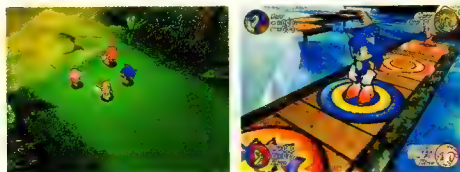


PREVIEW GALLERY

Sonic Shuffle

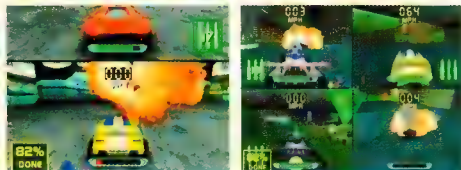
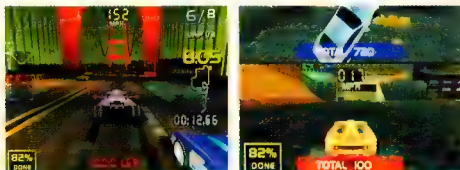
We gave you an exclusive first look at this Mario Party-style game last issue, when it was going by the tentative title "Sonic Square." Sega has since settled on the name Sonic Shuffle, and the game is still due for release this **fall**. As we reported last month, SS takes all your favorite Sonic characters and unleashes them on Chutes and Ladders-style game boards, where they'll encounter 50 mini-games. You can either play solo or with three other players. Better still, you can play against opponents online, as well. The game's producer told us online play will suffer no noticeable lag.

We'd also like to clear up some confusion over the game's developers. We've read speculation online that SS is being made in the U.S. That just ain't true. It's a **Sega of Japan** title, and some of the same Hudson folks who created Mario Party are working on this game. We've also learned that SS might not be Sega's biggest title at E3; video of Sonic Adventure 2 may be shown behind closed doors at the convention.



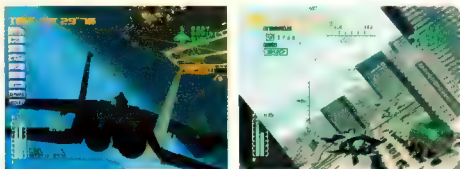
Rush 2049

We just got our hands on an updated version of **Midway's** Rush 2049—one complete with multiplayer modes. In Battle Mode (the most entertaining of the three) the vast environments facilitate great high-speed seek-and-destroy action. Weapon power-ups include machine guns, bombs, mines, cannons and several others. The frame-rate stays consistently high as well. Rush 2049 is due out this **June**.



Aero Wings 2: Air Strike

Aero Wings 2 from **Crave** and **CRI** is looking rather sharp graphically. Like the original, you take control of over 25 U.S. and Japanese military jets, each with its own weapons and flight attributes. The game has 30-missions to work through (completing them opens up new planes and stages). Then you can get into the Tactical Missions where only the top guns dare fly. The game also has a Versus Mode. Look for it in **September**.



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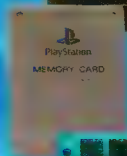


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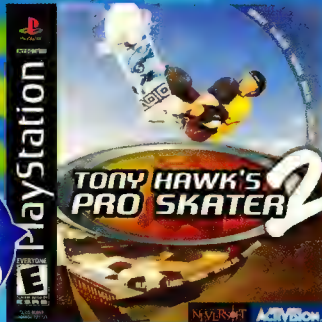
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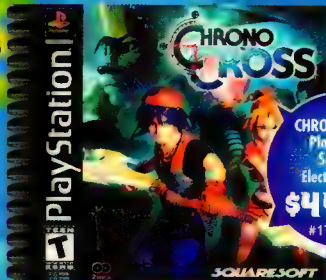


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18 WHEELS OF FUN

We look for any excuse to put a monkey in the magazine.

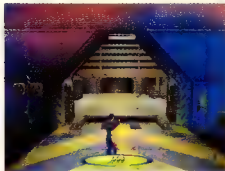
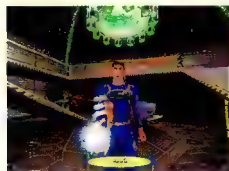
Remember *B.J. and the Bear*? It was a TV series about a man and his chimp. They travelled around the country in their 18-wheeler looking to rescue sexy young women in need. Like a "modern-day Robin Hood."



PREVIEW
GALLERY

Max Steel

Based on the WB television show of the same name, Max Steel places you in control of the hippest superspy in the business. As Max, you take on the international hi-tech terrorist faction DREAD and the evil Dawn Shadow. Developed by **Treyarch**, look for appearances from many of the show's popular characters in the game's eight missions. **Mattel Interactive** will release the game in **Q4** of this year.



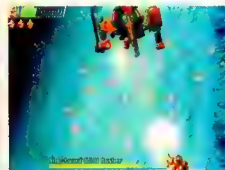
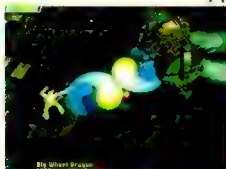
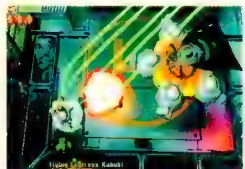
18 Wheeler

18 Wheeler is the latest in **Sega's** "professional" series (which also includes Crazy Taxi and Emergency Call Ambulance). Players will choose their cargo and set out on a cross-country trek to deliver the goods. The more cars they hit on the way, the less the cargo is worth. Depending on which cargo they choose the routes get harder to complete.



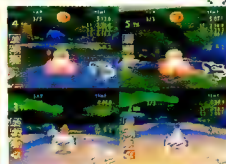
Cannon Spike

This character-based 3D isometric shooter from **Capcom** is pretty straightforward—run, shoot, avoid stuff, shoot, have a good time, etc. Of course, since Capcom's name is on the front, it's chock-full of recognizable characters. It stars Mega Man, Arthur from Ghosts 'n Goblins, Cammy and Charlie from Street Fighter, and many more. Look for it in arcades soon, with an **August** Dreamcast release to follow.



WDW Quest: Magical Racing Tour

This character-based kart racing game from **Eidos** and **Crystal Dynamics** features Chip, Dale, Jiminy Cricket and other Disney pals racing on 13 tracks inspired by parks at Walt Disney World (like Space Mountain, Epcot, Dinosaur and more). It also features different types of vehicles depending on the course, various offensive and defensive power-ups, and a four-player multiplayer mode. Look for it in **June**.



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DREAMCAST



Blood
If you like lots of blood and gory monsters, this is the game for you.



ESPN Baseball Tonight
The next generation of video baseball is here as this broadcast-style baseball game includes post-game interviews and the revolutionary "Smart Cam."



Half-Life
Half-Life combines all the visceral action of legendary action games like Doom with great storytelling in the tradition of Stephen King.



World Series Baseball 2K1
Featuring all the ballparks re-created in full 3D along with updated Major League Baseball Rosters for the 2000 season.



Sega GT
The best-looking racing game to hit the Dreamcast so far. The trackside detail and atmospheric effects are all top-notch.



Jeremy McGrath Supercross 2000
Motocross icons don't get any bigger than Jeremy McGrath. So if you're into getting your back muddy, pick up this game for sure.



Asteroids II
An RPG set in an Asteroids-like setting a thousand years in the future.



Spec Ops: Omega Squad
You'll have to watch your back in this one. Lots of covert action for fans of the long-running Spec Ops series.



Metroplex Street Racer
Two miles of various cities reconstructed and weather conditions—like rain, wind and fog will factor into your race. A great street racer.



Bust A Move 4
Bust A Move 4 brings the zany puzzle adventure world to the Dreamcast.



Ecco: the Dolphin
Perhaps one of the most visually stunning games ever. It's hard to tell if you're watching animal videos or playing a Dreamcast game.



PLAYSTATION



X-Men: Mutant Academy
This installment from the popular comic franchise features 13 characters including favorites like Wolverine, Gambit, Iceman and others.



Darkwatch
Set in a typical medieval world (drag-on included) you will be the one called upon to slay the mighty beast.



The Messiah
It was foretold that the Messiah would return after 2,000 years. Apparently, he caught an earlier flight.



Spidey Must
With the help of Black Cat as a guide, Spidey must work through various missions of danger-filled adventure.



ECW Anarchy Rulz
The follow-up to the successful ECW Hardcore Revolution. New matches include Street Fight, Table Match and Inferno Match!



Tenchu 2: Birth of the Assassins
Set four years prior to the original Tenchu, this unique game allows you to see the action from the perspective of three different characters.



Evil Dead: Hail to the King
In this adventure set eight years after *Army of Darkness*, you must continue the search for the Book of the Dead.



The Legend of Dragoon
This game from Sony is a combination of scrolling fighting action and platform jumping that has a distinctly old-school flavor to it.



Superman
Fans of Superman young and old will want to get their hands on this game. Kryptonite not included.



Time Crisis: Project Titan with Guncon
The Time Crisis games continue! Get out your Guncon and take aim.



Mike Tyson Boxing
There's actually three boxing games in this package; all of which include the former WBA and WBC Heavyweight champion, "Iron" Mike Tyson.



NINTENDO 64



Sega GT: HydroCross 2001
Get all the water sports action you want with this unique-style racing game. With handling and style inspired by SeaDoo, you can't go wrong.



Ogre Battle 64: Person of Lordly Caliber
The Holy Lodis Empire is planning the domination of the entire continent of Zeteginia. It's up to you and your band of supporters to stop it!



Spidey Must
Activision's hoping to fully realize Spidey's potential in dynamic 3D. You gotta love swingin' from ledge to ledge...that never gets old.



Turok 3: Shadow of Doherty
Now with a total of 24 weapons (with upgrades) and an improved multiplayer mode, this is the best Turok yet



Conker's Bad Fur Day
Conker awakens to find himself in a scene out of *Saving Private Ryan*... Our happy squirrel friend is thrust into a violent, M-rated very adult world.



GAMEBOY COLOR



Kirby-Man
You didn't think Spidey would forget about the Game Boy Color, did you? There's plenty of adventure and web-slinging action in this cart.



Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery
Austin Powers hits the Game Boy Color! It's smashing—in a swingin' 60's kinda way. Yeah, Baby, Yeah!



X-Men: Mutant Academy
This game features a state-of-the-art fighting engine and stunning animations, plus real-time character morphing and battle damage.



Resident Evil
One of the most intense Game Boy Color system titles ever. A direct conversion of the original PlayStation blockbuster.



Teku
The star of the television series makes it to the Game Boy. A must have for fans of the series.

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The Coolest Recent Releases



Tony Hawk's Pro Skater
 Filled with many extras not found on other systems, Tony Hawk for Dreamcast will feature improved graphics, and a four-player mode.



Space Channel 5
 The Morolians are trying to take over the Earth and Ulala (a reporter for Space Channel 5) is trying to cover the event.



Toy Story 2
 Buzz, Woody, Jesse, the whole gang from the hit movie are here in this great game from Activision.



Lunar 2: Eternal Blue
 The success and level of interest in the first Lunar assures that we get the sequel. RPG fans should set some time aside for this.



Vanishing Point
 An ambitious racing game with strong emphasis on physics and excruciating attention to detail.



Baldur's Gate
 Based in the Forgotten Realms universe, the Strategy/RPG has enough depth to keep even the most avid RPGers engrossed.



StarCraft 64
 The PC hit will make it to the N64! Marines, Zealots and Zerglings will battle it out on a split-screen two-player action.



Perfect Dark
 Even better than GoldenEye, this 3D shooter offers more options than any before. An instant classic.



Tomb Raider
 Lara performs all her famous moves in this hand-held version of the game, where she must search for the all-powerful Dream Stone.



NASCAR 2000
 This NASCAR-licensed game is sure to be a hit among racing fans who like to take the race with them.

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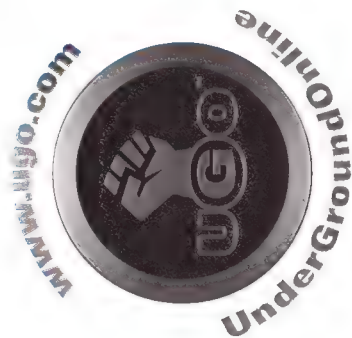
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ULALA SMILE

In addition to playing Ulala in *Space Channel 5*, living anime girl/singer/songwriter/martial artist and head of Team Smile, Apollo Smile, has released her own CD and has hosted anime marathons on the Sci-Fi Channel. She also invariably appears at anime conventions around the country. She's like every anime geek's (and News Editor's) dream: a cute girl who's totally into Japanese animation.



**PREVIEW
GALLERY**

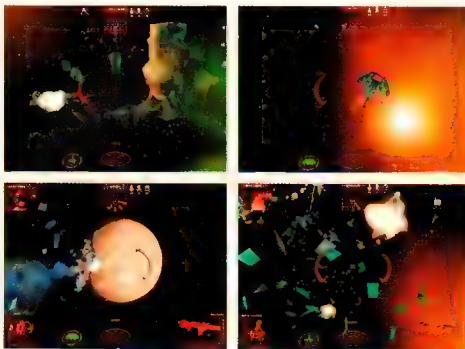
OutTrigger

Sega tries its hand at the saturated (at least in the U.S.) first-person shooter genre. Originally released in Japan as a NAOMI arcade game, *OutTrigger* feels more like *Virtual On* with its smaller, enclosed levels and brightly colored environments and weapons icons. In the arcade, *OutTrigger* had a joystick and trackball controller for the game—but it's unknown if they'll release that with the DC version.



Starlancer

Starlancer is being touted as one of the first games to take advantage of SegaNet this **September**. **Crave's** port of the PC game will allow SegaNet members to battle head to head or play through the entire game in co-operative mode. *Starlancer* will feature over 80 different ships and a dynamic story line which changes on the player's accomplishments and decisions in each mission.



Space Channel 5

We've finally had a chance to play the English version of **Sega's** *Space Channel 5*. The story is just as weird as you'd probably expect. And no, Sega didn't screw up the English dub like you were afraid they would (*cough* *Maken X*). Self-proclaimed "Anime-girl" Apollo Smile is now the voice of Ulala, and she does the job quite admirably. *Space Channel 5* will be out in stores this **June**. Look for the review next month.



Sno-Cross Championship Racing

Last month we showed you *Sno-Cross Championship* for the PlayStation. This DC version packs all the same features: eight tracks, Yamaha sleds, track editor, and more, all in a prettier package. Players may upgrade their sleds from 500 up to 700cc, and hop things up with after-market hotrod parts. Game modes include Race, Head-to-head and Hill Climb. **Crave** will release *Sno-Cross Championship* sometime this **Fall**.



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- Amazing effects including real-time skid tracks, water reflections and dynamic lighting.



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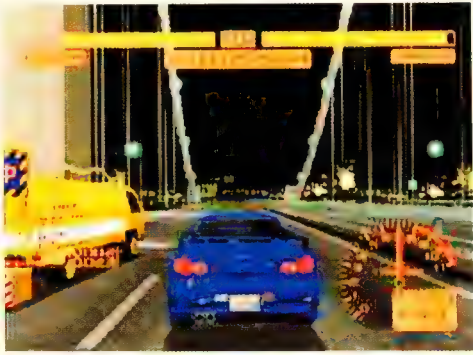
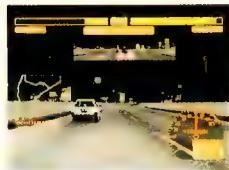
PREVIEW GALLERY



The folks at Sega should add one more player to the roster in Virtua Tennis—the lovely and talented Anna Kournikova.

Tokyo Xtreme Racer 2

Some called the first Tokyo Xtreme Racer a sleeper hit. Others called it boring. Whatever the case, this sequel from **Crave** and **Genki** is looking pretty nice, and its features are quite impressive. The game has over 65 cars, part upgrades, tons of opponents and over 100 miles of road (complete with interchanges and off-ramps that lead to new areas). You even create your own custom courses. It's coming in **November**.



South Park Rally

You all probably already know what this game is about: It's a cart-racer from **Acclaim** that features South Park humor, characters and environments. It's coming over from the PS and N64 later this year.



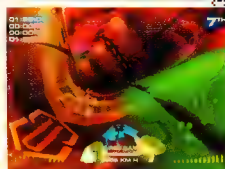
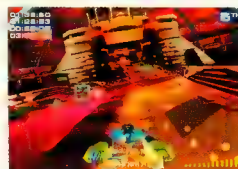
Virtua Tennis

It seems like every time a new DC sports game comes out, someone proclaims it "the most realistic-looking sports title ever!" Well, we won't say that again, but rest assured **Sega's** VT is simply gorgeous. Formerly released in Japan as an arcade game, VT features eight international players, 10 stadiums, 60 fps animation and intuitive gameplay. The motion, nuance effects and multiplayer are amazing. Look for Virtua Tennis this **summer**.



MagForce Racing

Fans of futuristic racing games such as WipeOut might have a new title to keep an eye out for this year. Titled MagForce Racing, this new game from **Crave** pits you behind the wheel of high-speed magneto-kinetic powered vehicles. MagForce will offer up nine different 360-degree tracks in such lands as Moscow, Hawaii and even Mars. Look for plenty of jumps and loops as well as power-ups and weaponry. MagForce releases this **FALL**.



遠い約束
EVOLUTION 2
FAK OFF PROMISE



YURKA

[rpg survival tactic #1]

Shrouded in mystery and cloaked in secrecy, a new force has divided Mag and Linear, threatening the trust between them. With no clear motive, and always one step ahead of everyone, Yurka alone possesses the immeasurable power of destruction, and the subtle power to rend Mag and Linear apart.

Remember...
only the strong survive.

Evolution 2, sequel to the best-selling RPG on the Sega Dreamcast™.



ST/NG Esp

Sega
Dreamcast

Ubi Soft
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PREVIEW GALLERY

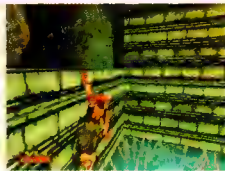
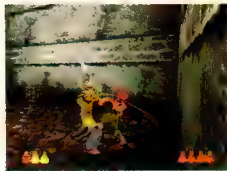
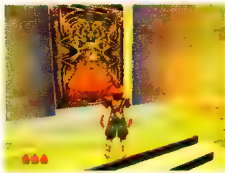
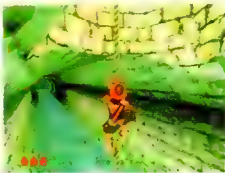


VIRTUAL HORROR

If you can't wait for *Illbleed* to experience "Virtual Horror," check out the *BoneGarden Estate* at www.bonegarden.com—it's a Web-based haunted house game, where you explore a giant mansion complete with secret passageways, items, real speech and spooky tunes. Scary!

Prince of Persia

The prince has returned, but this time he's in 3D. This latest installment in the *Prince of Persia* series is being developed by **Avalanche Software** and will be released by **Mattel Interactive**. The game allows players to traverse locales of ancient Persia, including labyrinth caverns and mystical ruins (14 levels in all). There will be frequent enemy battles and combat will have an emphasis on strategy. Look for this one in **November**.



Buffy the Vampire Slayer

This third-person action adventure from **Fox Interactive** and **The Collective** puts you in control of Buffy. The game combines action, exploration and puzzle-solving in detailed environments based on the show. It also features a number of Buffy's friends and foes. The creators and stars of the TV show are involved in the development process to help ensure the game has that Buffy feel. Look for it in the **fall**.



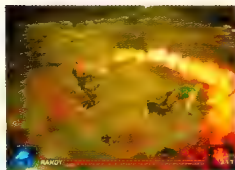
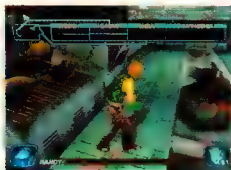
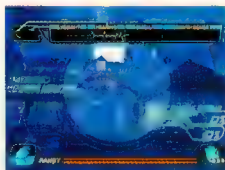
Illbleed

Who wants to be a millionaire? To answer that question, eccentric showman Michael Reynolds has built a half billion-dollar fun house and is offering a cool mil to anyone who can find their way out—alive.

Developer **Climax Graphics** swears they have fixed the camera glitches that plagued their last Dreamcast title, *Blue Stinger*, and are ready to prove it with this upcoming game, **due this fall in Japan**. *Illbleed* is described by its creators as a "Virtual Horror Land," which is to say Resident Evil-style puzzles and combat, but with a twist.

Illbleed keeps track of danger around you with its unique "four senses sensor"—registering danger via sight, sound, smell and your "sixth sense" (what? no tasting trouble?). As you get hurt or frightened, a stress meter on the bottom of the screen fills and your heart beats faster and faster until, well, it explodes. At some points in the game you can also go into a first-person "horror monitor" view to look for clues.

Sega themselves are reportedly planning on releasing *Illbleed* stateside. We should know more after E3, so stay tuned.



遠い約束 EVOLUTION 2 FAR OFF PROMISE



LINEAR

[rpg survival tactic #2]

Unexpectedly put between two people she trusts, Linear must decide to travel with her old friend, or to adventure with a new one. Lacking *faith* and stifled with indecision, Linear is forced to choose between Mag or Yurka. Stuck in the middle of two warring rivals, Linear must choose which friendship is worth saving.

Remember...
only the strong survive.

Evolution 2, sequel to the best-selling RPG on the Sega Dreamcast™.



神代世界エヴォリューション2



ST/NG Esp

Sega
Dreamcast

Ubi Soft
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遠い約束
EVOLUTION 2
FAK OFF PROMISE



MAG

[rpg survival tactic #3]

Mag is back to continue his quest to be the world's greatest adventurer. With Yurka's arrival, however, Mag must now choose between fulfilling his lifelong dream or to **save** his best friend, Linear. At the epicenter of the conflict stands Yurka often flaunting his amazing powers of destruction. With Linear's fate in his hands, Mag must rise up for the greatest challenge of his life.

Remember...
only the strong survive.

Evolution 2, sequel to the best-selling RPG on the Sega Dreamcast™.

神無世界エボリューション 2



ST/NG Esp

Sega Dreamcast

Ubi Soft ENTERTAINMENT

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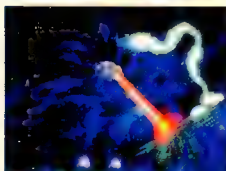
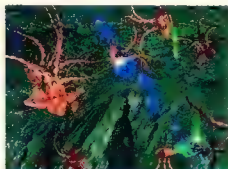


PREVIEW
GALLERY



Armada 2

The Alien Armada, whose unsuccessful attacks were fended off by the Allied Command in the first game are back, this time with a new weapon—the Armada Beacon. Armada 2 has online play for up to four players, six alien races (with their own technologies), new planets and environments, and more items than you can shake a stick at (1.2 million!). Armada 2 is headed to the DC and PS2 from **Metro3D** this fall.



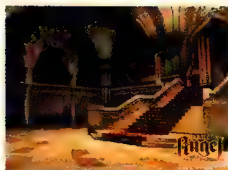
Dark Angel

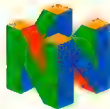
This **September** will bring the apocalypse to the Dreamcast.

Metro3D is promising that Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse will feature a fully realized virtual world where cities will experience financial boom or suffer plague as time progresses.

Sega's VMU is also set to figure prominently into this 3D action game. Players will be able to use it to develop their characters or trade items with friends.

Metro3D also guarantees incredible monster AI.





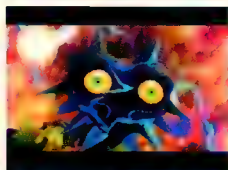
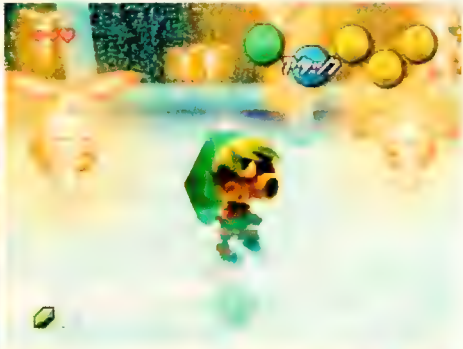
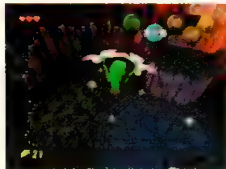
PREVIEW

Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask

Since the import version of the new Zelda game arrived just as we were finishing this issue, there wasn't enough time for a full-blown preview (look for that next month), but we figured you'd like a quick peek anyway.

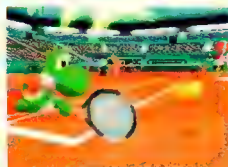
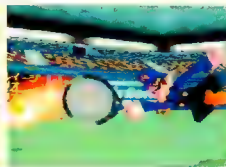
Majora's Mask begins with young Link's ocarina and horse Epona being stolen by a mysterious stranger wearing an ornate mask (see title), who then adds insult to injury by turning our hero into a Deku Nut creature. Link's quest is to find the stranger, retrieve his belongings, but most importantly return the magical mask to its rightful owner.

If it doesn't sound like your typical Zelda plot, well that's because this isn't your typical Zelda game. The meat of the gameplay is solving tons of tiny sub-quests—the game even keeps track of them in an appointment book. Visually, however, Majora's Mask is a lot like Ocarina of Time, although it does require the RAM pak. Now if you'll excuse us, we need to get back to our N64...



Mario Tennis 64

That's right—Mario Golf developers **Camelot** are bringing their trademark arcade-style gameplay to the courts. The usual suspects all return, plus a new character: Wario! (pictured below). MT64 will also be compatible with the Transfer Pak, although Nintendo hasn't said exactly what for just yet. Could a Game Boy Mario Tennis be on the way? Mario Tennis 64 will be released **July 25 in Japan**.



Learn to say
**“Pull me out of this thing
 before it blows”**
 in 6 different languages.

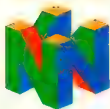
Rally Challenge 2000 takes you on a scorching tour of nine countries, each with its own eye-popping 3-D track. Hitting the dirt takes on new meaning on these mud-slinging, sand-spitting, snow-storming highways. Pick from any of nine WRC rally rods.

Customize it with all the power and torque your reflexes can handle. Then put the pedal to the metal in any of the four arcade-style modes, and give your opponents a crash course in road rage.



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PREVIEW
GALLERY



THE HIGH COST OF MADDEN

Many years ago, John Madden was a respected and talented coach and commentator, but he never really did contribute much to EA's football game, regardless of what they say. Branding is important to EA, so once the game became unbelievably popular, they (understandably) were unwilling to take the risk of causing confusion by changing the game's name. Now, many pigskin fans consider Madden old and stale, but he's still commanding a huge paycheck. Fat million-dollar+ royalties keep his bluster on your television screen—a big price to pay for boring commentary. We wonder what will happen when Madden retires—we're betting that even when he passes on into the big football field in the sky, his mug will still be plastered on EA's best-selling sports game. Branding is King.

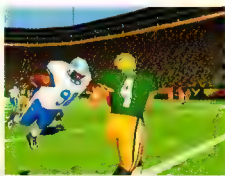
Indy Racing 2000

Infogrames' Indy Racing 2000 has a decidedly arcade feel, lots of speed, spinouts and aggressive driving. It's also the only game to feature the actual race at Indy. That's a big deal for IRL fans, believe us. Also for the purists are 20 real drivers (Goodyear, Boat, Cheever, etc.) and their respective teams. Other notables in this **June** release game: a draft meter, secret cars and tracks, two-player and Rumble-Pak support.



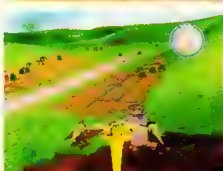
Madden NFL 2001

Having pushed the Nintendo 64 about as far as it can go, Madden NFL 2001 will concentrate on tweaking the franchise's already stellar computer intelligence in addition to including even more features. Now you will notice familiar coaches' faces on the sidelines, more team-building features, and the best addition—tradable "Madden Cards" that unlock special modes. Look for it in late **August**.



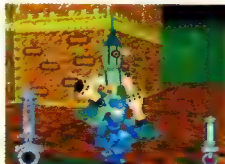
Star Wars Ep. I: Battle for Naboo

Following in the footsteps of games with long-ass titles, Star Wars Episode I: Battle for Naboo mines a few more scenes from the movies and brings them to the N64. Developed by **Factor 5** (the same guys responsible for Star Wars: Rogue Squadron), Battle for Naboo sets you against the Trade Federation forces and others through 16 levels of non-stop action. **LucasArts** hopes to ship the game this **fall**.



Mega Man 64

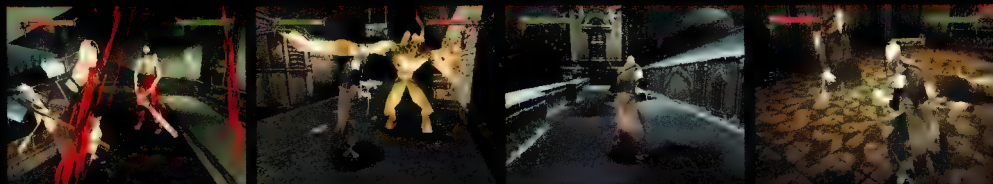
Coming this **September** from **Capcom** is Mega Man's first adventure on the N64. Join Mega Man and his friends as he battles Tron Bonne and her henchmen in an enhanced version of the original Mega Man Legends. MM64 promises to be graphically smoother and tighter gameplay-wise than the PS original. That's not all, kiddies—the Blue Bomber is now Rumble pak compatible and features Time Attack Events in multiple cities and different enemy placements than the original.





FE, FI, FO, FUM,

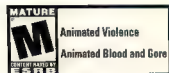
I smell the blood of an Englishman.
Be he alive or be he dead,
I'll grind his bones to make my bread.



This is a game of revenge. A dark early 1900s revenge where you'll battle against 20 different creatures using new fighting techniques, combination moves, and fatalities. A revenge that goes deep into 30 game sectors in 8 different worlds including subways, castles, sewers, cities (London|Paris), cemeteries, villages, and underwater.

A gory revenge. An extremely gory revenge.

Soundtrack by Rob Zombie.



Sega Dreamcast



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CANUCK SMUGGLING

Smuggler's Run will allow gamers to smuggle as-yet-unnamed goods across the American/Canadian border.

For realism's sake we think one of the commodities you smuggle should be Canadian EGM editor Greg Sewart. It's pretty much how we got him here to begin with.

Madden NFL 2001

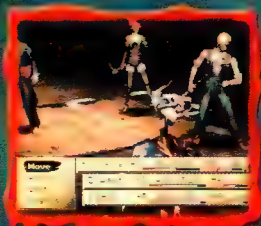
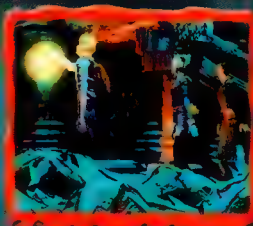
EA, which has historically had a tough time with first-generation games on new systems, is focused not only on breaking that tradition, but also topping the stunning graphics of the Dreamcast's NFL2K. The game will build upon the excellent intelligence found in Madden NFL 2000. So hopefully, even though the game is as pretty as a lovely blonde, it won't be nearly as dumb when it arrives this fall.



Smuggler's Run

Rockstar and Angel Studios aren't out to make another racing game. In Smuggler's Run players will smuggle various contraband across borders all over the world, including Columbia, Canada and Africa. The game will also include "wingmen" on each mission as well as loads of off-road vehicles. As for the maps, Angel assures us that if you can see it, you can drive to it, no matter how far away it is.





A gothic horror RPG set in the late 19th century.

An Epic tale of murder, mystery and mayhem.

And Koudeka, a troubled yet strong woman, determined to unravel it all.



KOUDELKA

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PREVIEW GALLERY



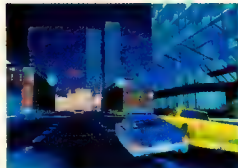
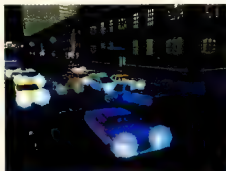
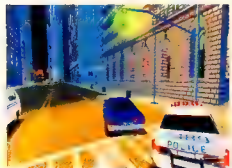
RISING SON

Dale Earnhardt Jr. is only the third rookie in Winston Cup history (along with Tony Stewart and Davey Allison) to win two races in his rookie season. It was only his 16th start, and there are still over 20 races left!

Oh, and we hear he's a video game nut too...

Midnight Club

One of the first U.S.-developed PS2 games comes from **Angel Studios**. *Midnight Club* is based on the not-entirely-legal nocturnal races held in cities throughout the world. Start as a cabby and work your way up to the big time, going from New York all the way to Tokyo in your quest for supremacy. The hours upon hours of research put into this title is very evident in the detailed city models.



FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer

EA Sports will release FIFA MLS as their first title for the PS2 later this **spring** in Japan. The game will then be released in the U.S. roughly around the same time as the PS2 launch. Beyond five play modes—Exhibition, World Cup, Championship, League and Training—the game is filled with options and features galore. A full MLS license as well as a ton of international teams are present in this promising title.



NASCAR 2001

For the first time in a NASCAR-licensed game, players will be able to compete in the historic Daytona 500. That alone should be enough to send fans into fits of ecstasy, but it gets better. *NASCAR 2001* is being rebuilt from the ground up for the PS2, so it won't just be a quick port of the old PlayStation game. **EA Sports** is quick to point out that the drivers now perform more like their real-world counterparts.



DON'T SET THE PACE.

DEMOLISH IT.

The speed, skill and tradition of the world's most time-honored auto racing series are yours to experience with **INDY RACING® 2000**. **INDY RACING® 2000** is the only official Indy Racing® game available, capturing all the excitement and high-speed action of racing

225 mph toward victory.

INDY RACING® 2000



Have as **20 of Indy Racing®'s** biggest superstars on official Indy Racing® track!



Compete any way you want: intense arcade action with detailed 3D model!



Go head to head in an **intense** split-screen mode!



Dominate beyond Indy Racing®'s open wheel road courses with hybrid F2000 cars and sprinters!

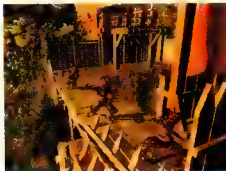


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Onimusha: Warlords

Finally some nice gameplay screens of **Capcom's** medieval Japanese adventure—we can't wait to try this one ourselves at E3.

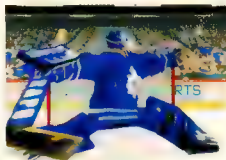


NHL 2001

EA Sports will bring all the hard-hitting action of the NHL to the PlayStation2 this fall with NHL 2001.

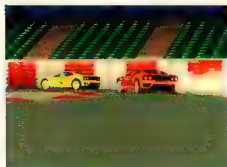
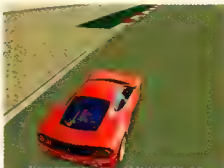
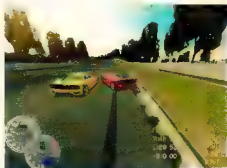
Players can expect all the mainstay options, like full season, playoff and tournament modes, along with all the players and licensed teams. NHL 2001 will also include the two new expansion teams: Columbus Blue Jackets and Minnesota Wild.

And just look at these screens! You can almost count how many teeth the players are missing.



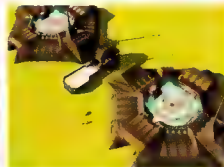
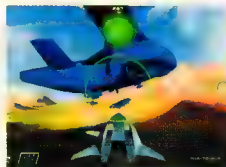
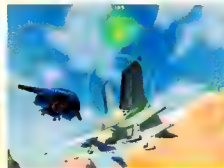
Ferrari 360 Challenge

Acclaim and Ferrari have teamed up to bring out what looks to be quite a cool racing game for the PS2. They're tight-lipped about the project, but we know the awesome 360 Challenge will be the featured automobile. Hopefully other Ferraris will be available as well...maybe even some vintage models? Also on tap from Acclaim is Ferrari Grand Prix, an F-1 offering featuring the Ferrari team. More info coming after E3.



Dropship

If you dug on Blast Radius for the PlayStation, then you should dig this new project by **Psynosis**. Pilot a huge (wait for it) dropship that dumps a big load of combat vehicles into action and then jets off to someplace a little safer. It'll be interesting to see how the gameplay presents itself, but the graphics look pretty nice so far. Dropship's release date is still unknown at this point.

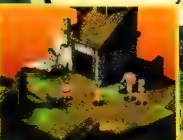


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**When Chains of Oppression Cut
When Bitterness Stains the Land
When Hope Fades from Memory**

**Those Forced Outside the Law
Must Rise to Become Heroes.**



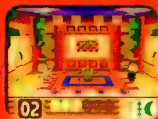
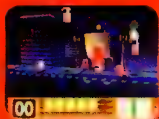
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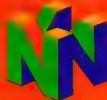


He may still look cute, but with new attack combinations, Kirby's more powerful than ever.

KIRBY
The Legend of the Crystal Shard



Only For



Video Games' Most Vengeful Villains

You wanted the toughest of the tough, the villains that put the R in rough. Well, look no further. Never before has such an intimidating group been assembled on one page. You're looking at a few of today's most vengeful video villains. Nothing and no one can stop the destruction they wield when their reckless rampage is unleashed on players' screens.

Take the Gladiator, for example, a true warrior, who fights for the sport of it. If a double-handed broad sword isn't

from the arsenal of tomorrow to fight here and today, it shows up to battle in entire army clad in armor, bearing broad swords, catapults, shots, maces and all metal doesn't stand a chance. Well, not until he grabs a few Tomahawk pretty much blood and sticking to the bottom of

Then there's Mike The that ditched military sch and grenades. To say he be an understatement, time married to the mu swamps and the wetlan face-to-face with this gu two options, salute and

another tattoo on his cretinous cranium.

*Note: Mike (The Militant) chose not ever to wear a helmet, but had to keep track of his conquers somewhere, thus he painstakingly tattoos little notches into his head for each one he makes.

"Ignorance" a.k.a. Iggy Iron, on the other hand, prefers to keep track of his kill and a lot of other menacing information inside his heart database, a computer three times as powerful as what the

Pentagon is currently using. A lot of negative things have been said about Iggy because of his cold way of killing. But let's face it, when you're a machine, you have no guilt, so anything goes. Anything. Did we say anything? Well, did we?

Finally, there's Talon Night. Yes, we've seen Ninjas in video games before. But not Ninjas like Talon. In fact, as ly no information





BALLS

For a mere \$79.99, you too can own the Official NBA Game Ball. Palm the pumpkin like Chris Webber and slam like Shaq if you wanna. Rated a 30 out of 30 in both durability (indoor) and feel, and boasting a rating of 9 for grip, if you're going to buy a ball, this is the one to get!

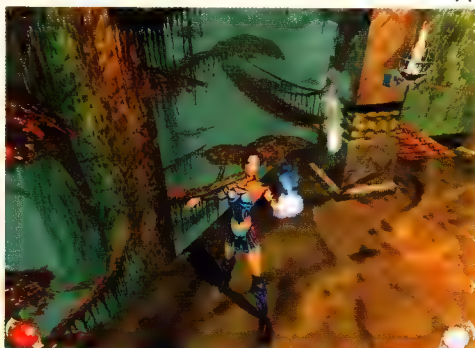
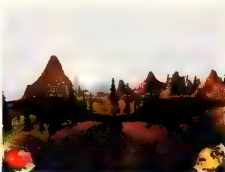
Formula One 2000

Psynosis released the first-ever F1 simulator on the PlayStation all those years ago to mass critical praise. Since then Eidos and EA have both entered the arena, but Psynosis is looking to repeat their accomplishment with the first (and hopefully the best) F1 simulator on the PlayStation2. If the earlier titles in this series are any indicator, Formula One 2000 is going to be the quintessential F1 sim for the PS2.



Drakan 2

That sexy, leather-clad gal Rynn is back. Riding bareback on her dragon Arokh, **Psynosis'** Tomb Raider-esque dragon-jockey is flying from the PC to the PS2 in her first console excursion. Expect lots of high-flyin' shenanigans as **Surreal Software** readies this PS2 title for release sometime this **FALL**.

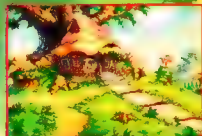


NBA Live 2001

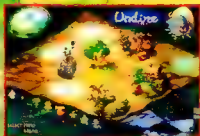
If these screenshots are anything to go by, NBA2K may have some trouble in store. If **Electronic Arts'** super-fineshed gameplay makes the transition from PlayStation to PS2 smoothly, then this may be the definitive b-ball game. However, we'll wait 'til we actually play the game to make that decision. Expect NBA Live 2001 to ship this **winter**.



LEGEND OF MANA™



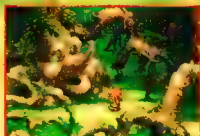
Unlock the secrets within this long-lost place and time



Recreate the world of Fa'Diel with powerful artifacts



Explore and battle in this immense, unique land



Experience a story of incredible depth and flexibility



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PREVIEW GALLERY

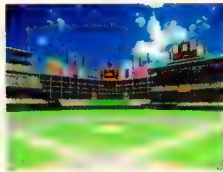
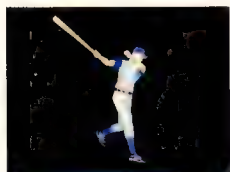
FROM WHAT YOU'VE SEEN, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE PS2'S GRAPHICS?

They look great	6962
They look OK, but future games should look better	5249
I'm not that impressed	3205
Who cares about graphics	565



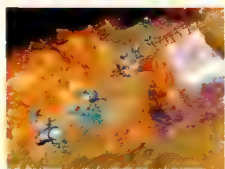
All Star Baseball 2002

Seeing as how they've tapped the graphics potential of the N64, taking their premier sports game to the PS2 seems like a natural progression for **Acclaim**. These early pics reveal great detail in the stadiums and fields. The player models look equally impressive. All the proper licenses, players and parks are featured. Improved stat tracking and a new batting interface are also planned for this **April 2001** game.



1/4

A bit more on **From Software's** upcoming action/RPG: After selecting a party of four characters from a larger group of seven or eight, you take on large groups of monsters in huge real-time battles. Your goal: Defeat the lord of darkness, who escaped his sealed prison, and claim the kingship of your country. 1/4 is due in the **4th quarter in Japan**; nothing yet on a U.S. release, but with all the other From Software games coming over, it seems like a pretty safe bet somebody will take notice.



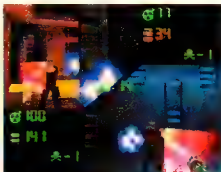
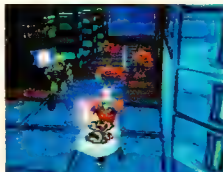
Primal Image

Perverts, social misfits and prison inmates rejoice! **Attlus'** virtual model photo shoot game is **out in Japan** and it's everything you could ever want. Pick between one of four young models (including a token male), choose your outfit, then pose 'em however you like or select from several preset motions. When you're done you can take pictures from swooping angles, adjusting the camera on the fly, then save your favorites. And this is just Volume 1—who knows what's coming next.



Duke Nukem: Planet of the Babes

Publisher:	Infogrames
Developer:	n-Space
Players:	1-4
Genre:	Action
% Done:	80%
Release:	July
Also On:	None
Web Address:	www.infogrames.com
The Good:	Duke is the man.
The Bad:	Overly sensitive controls.
And The Ugly:	Getting splattered with pig and ape parts.



Monkeys, apes and baboons, oh my! Duke is back with an anti-simian theme. Oh yeah, those pigs are back too, but they aren't Duke's biggest problem this time. Ah, at least there are scads of scantily clad ladies to keep our blond bay boy from getting too depressed about his situation.

DUKE'S PAST

Duke-ology

- Duke Nukem (PC) - original side-scrolling 2D adventure
- Duke Nukem 2 (PC) - 2D sequel
- Duke Nukem 3D (PC) - major attitude change
- Plutonium Pak (PC) - add-on levels
- Atomic Edition (PC) - Duke 3D and Pluto Pak bundle
- Kill-A-Ton (PC) - massive Duke collection
- Balls of Steel (PC) - pinball
- East Meets West (PC) - Duke/Shadow Warrior bundle
- Duke Nukem: Total Meltdown (PS) - first PS outing
- Duke Nukem: Time to Kill (PS) - first third-person perspective title
- Duke Nukem 64 (N64) - 4-player deathmatch
- Duke Nukem: Zero Hour (N64) - Tomb Raider-style Duke
- Duke Nukem 3D (Saturn) - PC port with Net Link
- Duke Nukem (Game Boy Color) - 2D side-scroller like PC original
- Duke Nukem 3D (Game.Com) - black & white pseudo 3D action

Recent scientific studies show that playing Duke Nukem can significantly increase testosterone levels, lean muscle mass, sex drive and your ability to snap off witty one-liners. Side effects include but are not limited to shortened blond hair, light-sensitive eyes (may need dark sunglasses), and hearing loss due to large caliber gunfire.

Every time he thinks he's done saving the world, they pull him right back in. You see, Mr. Nukem was enjoying a relaxing evening at the Bootlicious gentlemen's club when a bunch of hoglodites bust in through a time portal and start tearing up the joint. After taking care of the pigs, Duke enters the portal only to emerge into a world of Babes. The planet has been devastated by a creature

called Silverback (guess what animal he is) and all the men in this strange world have been done away with. The Babes have formed a resistance group to fight the gun-toting animals but time is running out. They need Duke and his big gun to clean up this mess.

Planet of the Babes is Duke's third PS outing, and like Time to Kill, is an over-the-shoulder 3D action game. There are now 23 new levels, plus six cool multiplayer maps. Missions include underground bunkers, underwater buildings, junkyards, and a space port level that's a great spoof on *Star Wars* (complete with carbonite-frozen babe). In two-player deathmatch mode, gamers can split the screen three-ways-to-Sunday (diagonal is cool) in either third- or first-person perspectives. Make sure you spend some time in the four training areas because the game packs a Duke-load of new moves, many of which seem inspired by a certain tomb-raiding babe. An auto-targeting system makes wasting enemies easier and all the old favorite weapons are back along with some new surprises. Duke's health is now handled by the EGO system that gives a health boost when an enemy is capped.

n-Space seems well on its way to producing another fun and edgy action game featuring 3D Realms' blond bay boy. Look for GT Interactive to unleash this PlayStation exclusive Duke-venture in July. 🎮



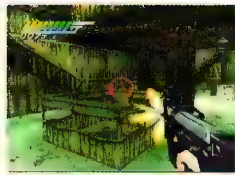
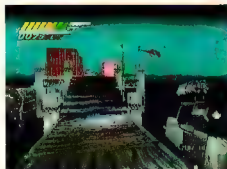


PREVIEW

The World Is Not Enough

Everyone and their mom has been screaming for a sequel to GoldenEye for years. While this probably had more to do with GoldenEye's stunning game design than it had to do with the James Bond license, it can't be denied that assuming the role of a sly agent provocateur doesn't have its own allure.

While Rare had nothing to do with this sequel, concentrating instead on getting Perfect Dark out the door, **Electronic Arts** wasted no time getting not only an N64 version of this Bond-based first-person shooter together, but a PlayStation (and PlayStation2 on the way) version as well. Imagine a touch of GoldenEye gameplay mixed with a dash of Syphon Filter, and you'll have a good idea what developer **Black Ops** has in mind. There will be a full arsenal provided and designed by the ever-ready Q, and video clips from the original motion picture to tie the various levels together. Hoping to arrive in a more timely fashion than Tomorrow Never Dies, *The World Is Not Enough* will arrive in the **fall**.



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a)

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b)



c)



d) "A great new game for the PlayStation® game console..."

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GRUDGE WARRIORS

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS FRIENDLY FIRE.



April 2000



23 mission battle arenas.

11 ruthless and unique gangs + the Final Boss to compete against in battle. Each level is loaded with secret areas, hidden power-ups and dozens of non-gang opponents like attack droids and robotic gun turrets.

Head-to-head 2 player split screen combat.

Dozens of power-ups including invulnerability, invisibility, double damage, guided missile jammers, nitro boosts...

An arsenal of destructive weaponry including shield-draining bombs, energy mega-bolts, corrosive gas bombs and mini-thermonuclear warheads.

DARKSTONE

DEFEAT THE ULTIMATE EVIL IN THE ULTIMATE QUEST

The world is living under the dark shadow of a nefarious dragon. Villagers are turning to stone. Armies of skeletons, swarms of wasps, and lumbering ogres lurk everywhere. Evil is spreading like a plague. And only you can stop it. Scattered across the kingdom are seven ancient magic crystals that together invoke the power of the Orb. Without it, you have no hope of defeating your fire-breathing nemesis. As a knight, monk, thief or sorcerer you will creep through dungeons and castles, explore wilderness and glades, and encounter traps, curses, and puzzles on your quest to unearth the crystals.



July 2000



32 levels of closed environments and huge open spaces -

dungeons, castles, caves, glades and villages.

More than 200 enemies and interactive characters.

More than 30 types of weapons and 32 different spells; many with multiple variations.

Secret characters unique to the PlayStation®

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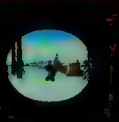
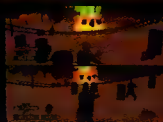
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SPEC OPS: Stealth Patrol

THE ENEMY IS EXPECTING YOU TOMORROW... YOU'RE ALREADY THERE!



April 2000



- Choose **stealth** or all-out frontal **assault** as you lead your team of Rangers into combat against **ultra-powerful** terrorist units.
- **Fight** against time and huge **enemy forces** in global **terrorist hotspots**.
- An **arsenal** to choose from including **night-vision goggles**, **sniper rifles**, machine guns, **tripwire** mines, grenades, shotguns, and more.
- **Two player** split-screen battle mode.
- Lead your team with **guns blazing** or silently under the **cover of darkness** across landscapes of thick jungle, barren desert, arctic tundra and dense forest.

MARTIAN GOTHIC

EXPLORE THE DARKSIDE OF THE PLANET.

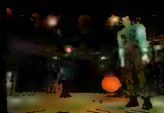
Year 2018. On Vita 1, a base constructed on the face of Mars, man searches for evidence of bacterial life beneath the frozen surface. During the excavation, a giant sarcophagus opens into a vast and ancient necropolis. Soon after, all communication with Mars ends.

Reason for breakdown of transmission: unknown.

Fate of Vita 1 base: unknown.



May 2000



- Through the complex, layered plot **follow** three investigators sent by Earth Control to **assess** the situation on Vita 1.
- Dozens of **treacherous** subterranean city caverns to **explore**.
- **Non-linear** puzzle structures **challenge** you at every turn.
- Strange and **violent creatures stalk** you constantly as you **seek answers** to the disappearance of Vita 1's staff and the **mystery** of the ancient Martian **necropolis**.

* Suggested Retail Price=\$9.99.

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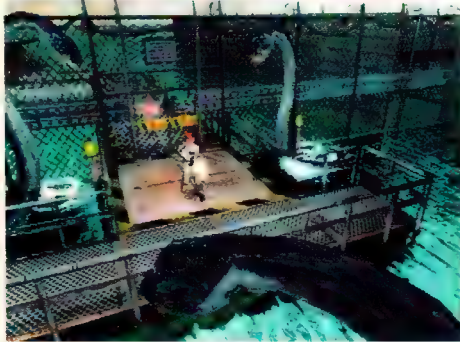
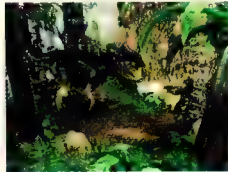
JUST A GIGOLO

The main character in *Harvest Moon* is a freakin' stud. 5 chicks at once? Male gamers want to be just like him and female gamers just want to get *with* him! You too can be a stud, or even (gasp!) a gigolo! If you fancy a career where women drool at your feet, head to <http://www.chippendales.com>

Dino Crisis 2

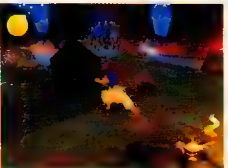
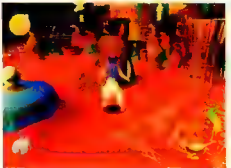
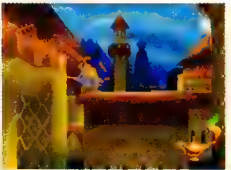
Capcom's other survival horror series returns this **October**, with a crapload of new features: the ability to equip two different weapons at once, two playable characters (Regina is back along with a new special agent named Dylan), underwater sections, and over 10 different types of dinos. Most of the game takes place outdoors this time around, and is supposedly more action and battle oriented—you even get points for each beastie you take down, which you can use to purchase weapons, ammo and healing items.

So how come all the big lizards are stompin' around again? Even though Dr. Kirk was successfully captured at the end of the first game, the government confiscated and continued his work, leading to (surprise!) another accident. When the research site, Edward City (close to Raccoon City?), disappears and is replaced by a patch of prehistoric jungle, Regina and co. are sent in to rescue the scientists and figure out what went wrong. Check back after E3 for hands-on impressions.



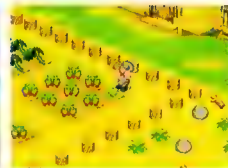
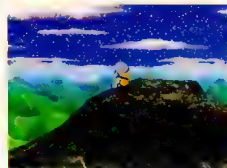
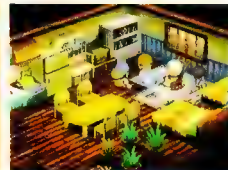
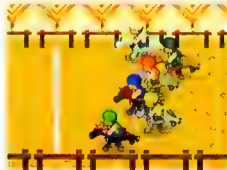
Aladdin in Nasira's Revenge

A new Aladdin game is on its way from **Sony** and **Argonaut**. This 3D action title features a variety of puzzle and gameplay types, a lot of the characters from the movie and brightly colored cartoon levels. And of course, it's pretty friendly—Sony even calls it "fun for the entire family." Is it us, or do these levels look a lot like the Persian levels from Crash Bandicoot WARPED? Anyway, Aladdin hits on **August 29**.



Harvest Moon: Back to Nature

It's time to batten down the hatches, plow the fields and sow your wild oats. After pit-stops on the Game Boy and N64, it's Harvest Moon time on the PlayStation. Prepare to cook, farm, fish, train your dog, raise chickens (woop!), attend festivals, befriend the Harvest Sprites and date the town's *five* women (You go, playa!). Get ready to fire up the cheese-maker when **Natsume** releases Harvest Moon: BTN this **July**.



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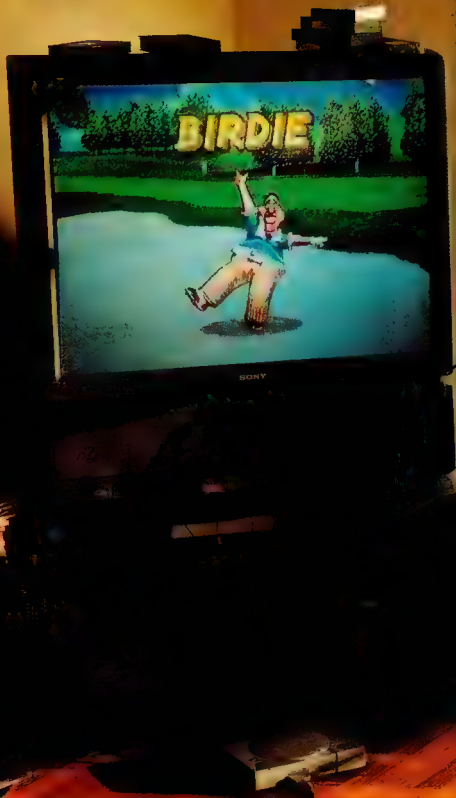
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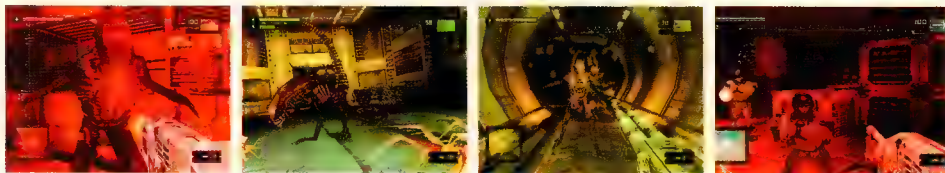


HOT SHOTS
GOLF **2**

GOLF FOR THE PEOPLE.

Alien Resurrection

Argonaut's been working on this one for three years now. We finally got a chance to play this game for the first time. Argonaut has opted for a slow, plodding pace with no music rather than the traditional fast-paced FPS formula. They feel this will create a much more tense atmosphere and re-create the feel of the movie. We think they've accomplished just that. This fall, in space, no one can hear you scream.



RPG Maker

Agatec's RPG Maker is finally headed stateside this June, and like Fighter Maker, the title promises to deliver an unprecedented chance at amateur game design. Developed by Success, RPG Maker gives gamers carte blanche over nearly every aspect of RPG design. Fans have long clamored for a chance to show the world their dream RPGs; finally, they will have the opportunity.



Driver 2

For a comprehensive look at GT Interactive's Driver 2, check out our groovy cover story from the March issue. In a nutshell, here's what's new in D2. Cities have some curved streets for more speed and variety. There are many more cars to drive—as Tanner you can commandeer any vehicle you please. More pedestrians and cars crowd the roadways. The environments are more detailed overall. Look for Driver 2 in winter.





PREVIEW
GALLERY

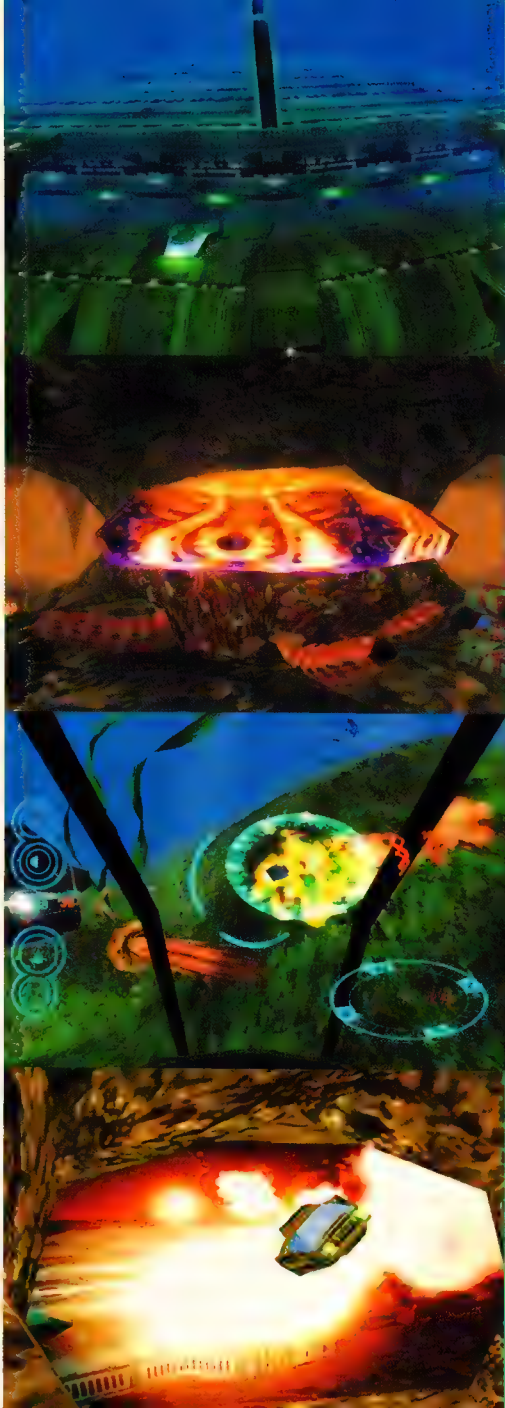
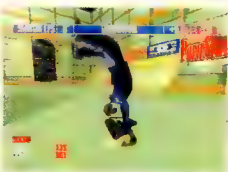
NCAA GameBreaker 2001

One of the best parts of GameBreaker has always been the play-by-play of Keith Jackson. He may have retired from true-life broadcasting (most of it at least), but he remains the voice of college football in GameBreaker 2001. Some of the highlights in this year's game include 115 Division 1A teams plus 61 classic teams from the past. There are also 16 bowl games and the prestigious Heisman trophy as well. Improvements have been made to the animation, specifically the special moves. Hopefully the juke step won't look as jerky as it did last year. For the daring, a multi-**tap** allows up to eight players. Look for **989 Sport's** NCAA GameBreaker 2001 this **August**.



MTV Sports: Skateboarding

Holy crap! Another extreme skateboarding game. Seriously though, it does look pretty darned good. It's on its way from **THQ** and **Darkblack**. MTV Sports has 20 selectable big-name pro and fantasy skaters, about 60 linkable tricks and an impressive 25 levels (apparently, they're quite big). Of course, it has a "rippin'" soundtrack with bands like The Deftones, Pennywise and Cypress Hill on it. The game's scheduled to hit in **fall 2000**.



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DEEP FIGHTER

Or lasers, bombs or various other weapons at your disposal. As fun as it is to blow those beautiful fish up, they're the least of your worries. A raging war is spinning out of control as pirates and sea-creatures alike attempt to drive your civilization off the ocean floor. You've got to dog-fight your way through your adversaries, construct the mothership, and transport your people to less hostile waters.

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Ubi Soft



Sega
Dreamcast



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PREVIEW
GALLERY

NFL GameDay 2001

989 Sports has been mum about this edition's improvements, but we suspect they are concentrating on the PS2 version.



NCAA Final Four 2001

989 Sports has put Final Four 2001 through a complete overhaul. New graphics, AI, animation and so on. Over 300 teams and every Division 1 conference are present. Motion-capture of several former players show off maneuvers like the tomahawk jam, turn-around jumper and deep fade-aways. Modified player models feature several body types. Up to eight players can play using the multi-tap. NCAA Final Four 2001 is slated for a **November 2000** release.



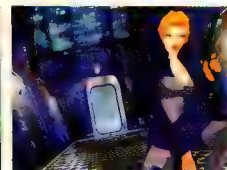
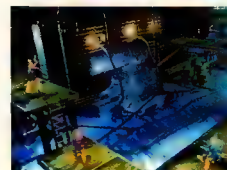
NBA ShootOut 2001

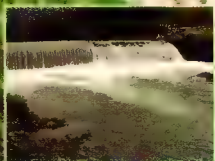
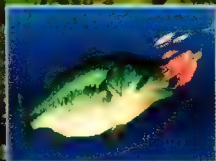
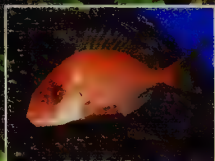
ShootOut 2001 will have more than a few interesting new features and options. Draft rookies and build them up to legendary status. In addition, new player models and "star-player" animation will (hopefully) lend the game a more authentic feel overall. Deeper gameplay using the trademarked Touch Shooting and Dribbling are on tap as well. 989 Sports will release NBA ShootOut 2001 in **November 2000**.



Fear Effect Retro Helix

This prequel to **Eidos'** latest PS milking cow is already under way. It follows the story of the three mercenaries from the first game and shows you how they met and fleshes out the original's backstory. Travel from New York City to Asian locales like Hong Kong, lost temples and a mountain island in the Pacific. Features two hours of CG sequences, improved inventory system, 60+ types of enemies and lots more anim -style action.





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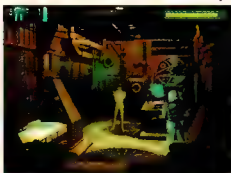
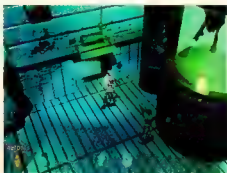
PREVIEW
GALLERY



IN WARM OR COLD BLOOD?
Researchers have recently found the fossilized four-chamber heart of a dinosaur called *Thescelosaurus*. This suggests the animal was, in fact, warm-blooded like a mammal. Until this discovery, most folks thought dinos were cold-blooded like their supposed reptilian brethren.

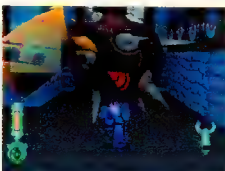
In Cold Blood

Take the best espionage and stealthy aspects of *Metal Gear Solid*, throw in the highly detailed static backgrounds of *Resident Evil*, and you'll get a rough idea of how this game from **Revolution Software** looks and feels. Of course, there's a lot more to it than that. In fact, the developer wants the game to be as engaging as some of the best films. *In Cold Blood* starts with the main character, British Agent John Cord, being tortured. To make matters worse, he has no idea how he got there, or why he's being tortured. As the story unfolds, you find out Cord was originally sent to Russia to gather information on the disappearance of a CIA agent, who was in turn sent in to investigate a secret technology. The story revolves around this technology, and how a Hitler-like dictator plans on using it in his quest to take over the free world. Like some movies, 90 percent of the story is told in flashbacks, and gets wrapped up in the last couple of levels. No publisher or release date has been decided upon yet. For more info on the game, and a chat with the game's developer, check out www.videogames.com.



Mega Man Legends 2

Capcom's wily haired mascot is headed to your PS once again this **September** in an all-new adventure that takes place shortly after the first. An improved graphics engine makes the visuals look tighter, and there's twice as many enemies in a world twice as big as the original. Talking with people in towns will help you more, too, as you'll find citizens will give you access to doors that contain important information.

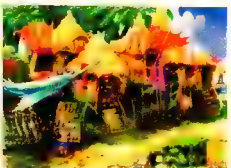


Chrono Cross

Square's Chrono Cross, like its predecessor *Chrono Trigger*, arrives at the end of its system's hardware cycle. Perhaps it will also duplicate *Chrono Trigger's* success.

Chrono Cross' hero Serge is thrust into a parallel world where he died 10 years ago under mysterious circumstances. He is helped by the spunky adventurer, Kid, and opposed by the enigmatic Yamaneko. While not a direct sequel, the story often references events and characters of the first game. The battle system, like *Grandia's*, combines features of real-time and turn-based engines. Characters have "stamina" bars depleted by weak, medium or strong attacks. Attacking builds up an element, or magic, bar. Casting magic knocks the character out of action temporarily. Balancing attacks, magic and defense is engaging.

Chrono Cross features a cast of over 40 playable characters; colorful, organic graphics; and a soundtrack by composer Yasunori Mitsuda. Look for it this **August**.





SPEC OPS

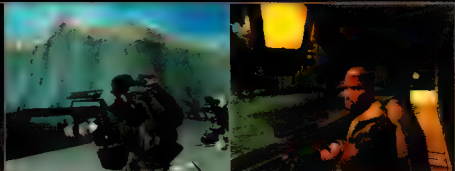
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Sega  Dreamcast



- Intense Military Combat Action
- Both First-Person and Third-Person Options
- Real-World Special Forces Missions
- Acclaimed Spec Ops Series Now On Dreamcast

SEGA DREAMCAST





With the PlayStation2 right around the corner, you can probably expect original PlayStation sports franchise games from EA and 989 Studios (Sony) to go on autopilot. We suspect that this year's crop, the 2001 series, will be the last to be developed by any of a company's "A-List" line of talent, if they all haven't been shuttled to PlayStation2 development already—just look at how many PS2 sports games are almost ready. Let's just hope the curtain call of PlayStation sports games don't just offer a few roster updates and superfluous additions for the folks who don't upgrade to PS2 immediately.

NHL FaceOff 2001

989 hasn't said much about their new hockey game, which is excusable since the new version is well over a half year away. The only thing we can tell you is that there will be improved graphics and new motion-captured animations. The season mode will be deepened, and don't be surprised if a few other minor trimmings are added. Regardless, you can look forward to play this one, which is due in **September**.



Army Men Air Combat

Army Men! You collected them as kids (maybe) and now **3DO** is hellbent on letting you collect as many Army Men games as you can possibly stomach! 3DO takes EA's Strike series head-on with a helicopter action-shooter that supports up to four players via a four-way split-screen. Blow up sand castles, save Sarge, and waste the Tan Army and their entire infantry. Fly four types of helicopters when AM-AC lands this **summer**.



Macross Plus

Based on the popular anime, Macross Plus will hopefully improve the terrible reputation the last few PS Macross 3D shooters have created. This time the game incorporates fighting-game style special moves, open field and dogfight battles, and over 30 minutes of animated video. It comes out **June in Japan**—no word on a U.S. release, but seeing how **Bandai** recently canned Macross VFX-2 for the U.S., it seems doubtful.



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PREVIEW

AMAZING MOVEMENTS

Believe it or not, the animation in *Tomb Raider* for the Game Boy Color is really amazing. And get this—her "pixels" even jiggle a little bit.



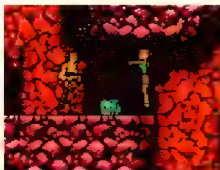
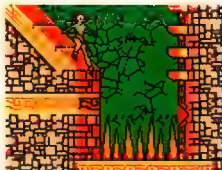
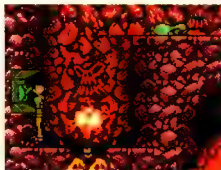
Tomb Raider

Publisher:	Undecided
Developer:	Core
Players:	1
Genre:	Adventure
% Done:	90%
Release:	Spring
Also On:	PS, DC, PC
Web Address:	www.eidos.com www.tombraider.com

The Good: Amazing 2D graphics, animation and old-school gameplay.

The Bad: Why aren't games in the PlayStation series this fun?

And The Why: Jiggling, pixelized boobs. It's just plain wrong.



Tomb Raider on the Game Boy Color plays a lot like *Prince of Persia*, so expect a lot of the same kind of jumping, hanging from ledges and trap floor stuff. Of course, it has that special *Tomb Raider* feel we all know...and perhaps love. The game takes place in a giant temple, so levels include plenty of caverns and other such underground-type places. You get the idea.

FUN FACTS

Lara's Hot GBC Specs



Wonder how Lara and her game measure up on the Game Boy Color? You've come to the right place.

Number of pixels tall: Lara is an amazing 48 pixels tall (characters in most Game Boy games are between 16 and 30 pixels tall)

Number of frames of character animation: 2,500 (these are used from the existing 32-Bit model)

Number of levels: 5 (they're absolutely huge, with sublevels and more)

Number of cutscenes: 50

Number of boobs: 2

Size of cart (megabits): 32

Everyone who has heard about *Tomb Raider* coming to the GBC has wondered how this decidedly 3D game will translate to the world of 2D. Well, to put it simply: beautifully. In fact, *Tomb Raider* is more fun on the Game Boy than more recent versions on the regular home consoles.

The story works like this: Back in the day, an evil god named Quaxet ruled the Incan, Aztec and Mayan people. So the tribes got together to seal him in what became known as the "Nightmare Stone." This stone has been left untouched for thousands of years in a temple deep in the jungles of Peru. Now, a slew of treasure hunters from around the world are looking for the Stone, hoping to release Quaxet from his evil orb, allowing him to

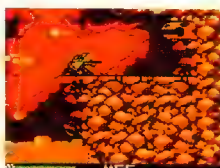
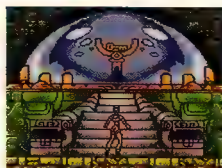
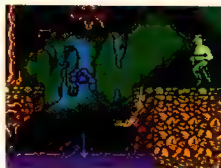
wreak havoc upon the Earth. That's where Lara comes in. She needs to find the Nightmare Stone before the bad guys do, and save the world.

The game plays a lot like *Prince of Persia*—the way it controls, the way it looks, the way Lara moves, etc. But of course, it has a definite TR feel. There's plenty of action, adventure and tricky puzzle-solving elements. Lara can do nearly all of the same moves she can in the PS version. She can back flip off of a ladder, slide down a decline, combat roll, swim and more. She can even do that fancy handstand thing to climb up from a ledge. As you'd expect, Lara can also use a variety of items and weaponry including pistols, rapid-fire bullets, dynamite, medi packs and more.

Enemies are what you'd expect in a TR game. When an enemy is nearby, Lara tracks them just like she does on the PS. Strangely, bosses are scarce.

Believe it or not, the game has a variety of cut-scenes that tell the interesting story. And while they're not animated, they look simply incredible and get the point across really well. There's a battery back-up as well, so no passwords are needed (only one save slot though).

All of this stuff incorporated into the game makes it a true *Tomb Raider* title, and does the series justice. It's not some no-name piece of dung with the *Tomb Raider* name slapped on the front. Let's hope other third-party developers take note.



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Gravity never felt so good.

There's nothing like the blackout inducing speeds and the bone jarring spinouts of professional racing. ToCA Touring Car Championship is an adrenaline-filled, nail biting driving game that brings it all to the fastest little machine of them all—the Game Boy® Color. Climb into the hottest driver's seat there is and watch out for the flying hoods, tires and glass as you race to victory in ToCA Touring Car Championship. It's full contact auto racing!

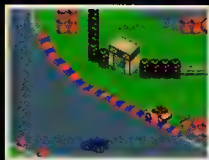
COMING FALL 2000



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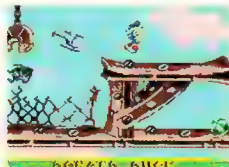
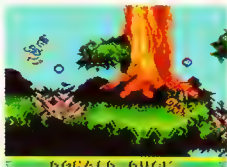
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PREVIEW GALLERY

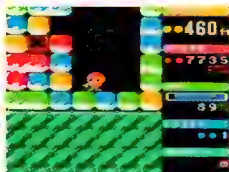
Donald Duck: Quack Attack

If there's one thing **Ubi Soft** knows how to do, it's put out stuff for the Game Boy. And this is fine, as long as the games are worthwhile. This Donald Duck action game is pretty standard Game Boy fare, but the graphics are looking well above-average. No doubt, it'll be fun to play through, as are most Disney platform games. There are five themed worlds with 24 levels overall. It's due sometime in **October**.



Mr. Driller

In addition to drilling his way onto the PlayStation and Dreamcast platforms, Mr. Driller has now found his way to the Game Boy. In the game, you take control of Mr. Driller and you must drill your way through pits of different colored blocks. The main objective is to avoid being crushed by falling blocks or running out of air (there are special air power-ups to be found). Also, players can rack up points by connecting similarly colored blocks. **Namco** should have this one ready by **summer**.



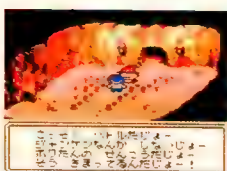
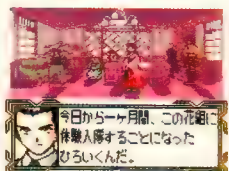
Sakura Taisen

With all the rumors of **Sega** titles coming to other systems, here is one we know for certain. The popular Saturn series of strategy RPG/dating games hits the Game Boy Color this **summer**. Added to the usual mix of robots, anime girls, and deep story is an interesting extra: Pocket Sakura. Like Pocket Pikachu Color works with Pokémon Gold and Silver, you can store up points walking with this pedometer and earn items you can transfer to your Game Boy via the infrared port.



Trade & Battle Card Hero

You can find plenty of similarities between this recent **Nintendo** release and the insanely popular Pokémon Card Game: Both feature a card battle/RPG gameplay mix, both have Game Boy and real-world incarnations, and both feature quirky monsters fighting it out. No word on any plans for a U.S. version, but given the success of Pokémon, a wider release could be in the cards. Card Hero is out now in **Japan**.



Wacky Races

**Zany Cars. Wacky Characters.
Dirty Tricks. Wild Racing Action.**

Take the driver's seat in the quirky cartoon world of Wacky Races! There is no other racing game like it!

- Get to the finish line first using diabolical schemes, pranks, and outrageous gadgets.
- Featuring 11 characters in unique vehicles from the original Hanna-Barbera cartoon, including Dick Dastardly, Muttley, Penelope Pitstop, the Slag Brothers, and more!
- Watch out for hidden shortcuts, jumps, tunnels, dirty tricks, power-ups, and wacky traps planted by Dick Dastardly & Muttley.
- 4-player mode adds to the mayhem.



CARTOON NETWORK



Dreamcast Screenshots



Do Dastardly Deeds



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It's the only way to win.



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cartoons to life



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www.wackyraces-thegame.com

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Star Wars Racer

The fast and furious action of the racing sequence from *Star Wars Episode I* is hitting the arcades courtesy of **Sega**.

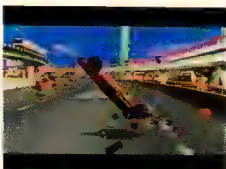
Star Wars Racer, like any racing title from Sega, promises to be impressive. It features four different tracks (including the Tatooine course) and 18 different podracers.

Star Wars Racer is the latest game for Sega's Hikaru board (the souped-up Naomi board used for Brave Fire Fighters). And with this cool cabinet, you too can look just like Jake Lloyd!



CART Fury

Midway will be unleashing the fury this **August**. CART Fury features 10 real CART drivers, a mixture of real and fantasy courses, and a full season mode. Different difficulty levels will make the game accessible to both the rookie and veteran arcade racers out there. Spectacular crashes are almost guaranteed as players scream around the courses with 27 other cars.



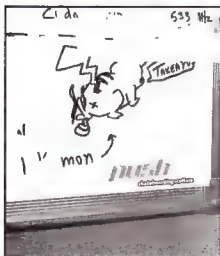
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NEW EVOLVED POKEMON DISCOVERED: TAKEAPU

While on assignment deep in the bowels of Nintendo's headquarters just days ago, Q-Mann sent us some interesting info. Apparently, a new Pokémon is on the way...an evolved form of Pikachu named Takeapu. This little guy's special attacks have yet to be determined but chances are they will be quite potent. We have heard something about a so-called "Scat Attack" Takeapu and a number of his Pocket Monster friends are said to be making an appearance in an upcoming version of the game called Pokémon Brown. This version is also said to have an "enhanced" sister version called Pokémon Yellowish-Green. 🐉



Before he was bludgeoned to death by a Team Nintendo rep, Q-Mann snapped a pic of Takeapu.

VID GAME EXHIBIT

April 4-May 30 an exhibition of handheld and home video game systems is being held in New York at a clothing store called GOTO. It's located at 85 Kenmare Street in New York. The small but interesting exhibit showcases a variety of systems from 1978 to present. Some are playable, while others are simply on display. The event is co-sponsored by Rockstar Games. More info is available on the GOTO Web site: www.shopatgoto.com. If you live in the NYC area, you should check it out. 🐉



While you're checking out the vintage systems, buy some gear.

HEY, WHERE'S EGM'S SAK?

eSak has taken a much-needed vacation, as his work for EGM and the Turkish Wrestling Federation was really taking its toll on the man of molten iron. He's spending time in Turkey, with his friend and trainer Mahir. Look for a column by him in the months to come.

SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM JOE FUNK:

These days, EGM is being run primarily by androids. We've made this decision both for our readers, and for the environment. We don't have to worry about oxygen use, clean trousers or human waste (since we don't feed them). All we really need is a little WD-40 now and again. Or maybe...

THE UNOFFICIAL EGM E3 PACKING CHECKLIST

E3's just around the corner, and with it comes a good deal of walking, talking, playing, partying, sweating and more. So we decided to show you what an average staffer's E3 suitcase is filled with.

- **Toothpaste** (for the ladies of course)
- **Comfy sneakers with extra padding**
- **Fancy clothes** (once again, for the ladies)
- **An extra bag** (for press kits and other goodies)
- **Protection** (uh, it is L.A. after all...lots of crazy people with guns)
- **Extra socks**
- **A stomach pump**
- **A sponge for the drool** (SO many good games!)
- **Sunglasses** (not so much for the sun, but for those early morning appointments after a long night of partying)
- **A 40 ounce** (of mouth wash...for the ladies)
- **Altoids** (any flavor, so you got the flavor...for the ladies)
- **Ointments and oils**

BELIEVE IT! MORE USES FOR BELOVED CANNED AIR

Canned air: Many of you use the stuff to clean the dust off of your electronics and video game systems. We use them as well. And they work like a charm. But there are a lot of things these little cans of compressed goodness can do. Just be careful...they can be dangerous if used improperly. Maybe we need more stuff to keep us busy. Anyway, here are some things we use this air for:

- **Shoe cleaner** (not Dan Hsu)
- **Sock exhaust system**
- **Balloon inflater**
- **Beverage cooler**
- **Slime inflater**
- **Hair dryer**



- **Styrofoam remover**
- **Frost inducer**
- **Noise maker**
- **Action figure freezer**
- **Bubble remover**
- **Foot cooler**
-

(write your own use here)

EGM's Random Quote of the Month

"I need me a woman for the summer."

-Jason Hinman, freelance art director in regards to the nice weather, and how he'd like a fine young lady to enjoy it with

WIN STUFF

It's Quite Simple: We're Giving Away A Bunch of Stuff for Free

As you may or may not know, we get a lot of cool items from game companies. And yes, we do appreciate them, but all too often after looking at them for a while they end up sitting in somebody's cubicle or getting stored in a cabinet. So we thought, "Let's pass some of these things on to our readers, instead of just having them lay around." After all, better you enjoy this stuff than us. Like last month, read the instructions below, send in a postcard and you might just be picked as the winner! This doesn't cost you anything—it's as simple as sending in a postcard with your name, address and phone number on it to the address below. We'll then pick one winner in a few weeks, and send out the goods.

EGM's Box o' Stuff Sweepstakes #132

c/o Electronic Gaming Monthly

P.O. Box 3338

Oak Brook, IL 60522-3338

Congrats to EGM #130 Winner

Eric Penterbaugh of Whitlir, CA

Take a look at what we're passing on to you this month:

- A Shenmue mug
- A Shenmue notebook
- A Sony Memory Stick magnet
- A mini MLB 2001 baseball bat
- An official EGM bottle of Liquid Paper
- An InterAct HandyPak for GBC
- A Sports Mouthguard
- A way-cool mouse pad
- A Happy Birthday balloon
- Wild Arms memory card stickers
- An InterAct PowerPak for GBC
- A wicked-awesome T-shirt
- An ancient Chinese coin
- Several Crimson action figures
- And more? Maybe



LEGAL STUFF

1. Official Sweepstakes Rules:

1. No Purchase Necessary. To enter, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to your name, address, and phone number to "EGM Box o' Stuff Sweepstakes," P.O. Box 3338, Oak Brook, Illinois 60522-3338. No purchase or payment of any money is necessary to enter. One entry per household per month. Entries must be handwritten and must be received by the 25th day of each month to qualify for that month's sweepstakes. Mechanically reproduced entries will be void. All entries become exclusive property of Ziff Davis Media Inc. and will not be acknowledged or returned. Ziff Davis Media Inc. assumes no responsibility for lost, misplaced, late, illegible, incomplete, postmarked or misaddressed entries. Ziff Davis Media Inc. reserves the right to cancel this sweepstakes at any time without appropriate notice.
2. Prizes: Grand Prize: Each month the Grand Prize winner will receive a package containing miscellaneous items from the EGM office with a total approximate retail value of at least \$500. Winners shall be announced by a random drawing held on the 15th of each month by EGM editors whose identities are hidden. Drawings to be held on or about the last day of each month. All prizes awarded will be verified by mail. Prizes are non-transferable. No substitution of prizes will be allowed, except at the option of Ziff Davis Media Inc. Should the listed prizes become unavailable:
3. Odds of Winning: The number of winners and the odds of winning will be determined by number of valid entries received.

4. Eligibility: Sweepstakes open to residents of United States and Canada. Void in Ireland (due to restrictions on EGM) for at least 30 days prior to the commencement of the current monthly sweepstakes. Non-compliance with the time parameters outlined herein or return of any prize/purchase notification or non-delivery will result in disqualification. Winners or their legal guardians shall open and receive an affidavit of eligibility/notice of liability/legal acceptance within 5 days of receipt on behalf of prize. By acceptance of prize, winner(s) agree to the size of their name and/or initials for purposes of advertising, media or promotion unless further compensation, unless published by law. Neither Ziff Davis Media Inc. nor its officers, directors, affiliates, subsidiaries, franchisees or related companies are responsible for any damages, losses or expenses that consumers might incur as a result of this Sweepstakes or receipt of prize.
5. Winners List: For a list of winners, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "EGM Box o' Stuff Sweepstakes Winners List," P.O. Box 3338, Oak Brook, Illinois 60522-3338. Please specify for which month that you are requesting the list. Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery of winners list.
6. Restrictions: Void where prohibited or restricted by law. All federal, state and local regulations apply.
7. Sponsor: This sweepstakes is sponsored solely by Ziff Davis Media Inc. ©2000 Ziff Davis Media Inc. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

WEB SITES

PHATTER THAN FAT

Thank you to all who continue to send us sites. We love checking them out more than we love chimps in diapers. As usual, here are all kinds of sites: Weird, gaming-related, zany, funny, cool, stupid and so on and so forth. Send Web site submissions to shawn_smith@ziffdavis.com

- www.adcritic.com
- www.scatpacker.com
- www.cracked.com
- www.hankthedwarf.com
- sodaplay.com/constructor/index.htm
- www.crazy-bitch.com (NOTE: THE RIGHT ONE!!!)
- www.theace.org/dont_touch_me.htm (NOTE: ANNOYING)
- www.inconnect.com/~river/
- www.dosgames.com
- www.gamewinners.com
- www.burpsandfarts.com
- 100inchtv.com (NOTE: WHAT THE HELL?!)
- www.mp3.com/molotovcocktail
- www.funny.com
- www.crystal-night.com/~willen/Mullet.HTM

* 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. Remember to surf safely!

HOT & NOT

EGM

The EGM Hot & Not list—a place where you can get an inside look at what the staff of EGM likes and dislikes. The list contains general and specific items, concepts, games, people and more. Note: Particular entries may or may not coincide with the opinions of particular staffers. Send yours to shawn_smith@ziffdavis.com

- Madden Football for the PS2
- "Real good meals"
- Afros
- Inflatable goo
- Pac-Man cars in Ridge V
- Real-life Toyota MR-2 Spyder
- Farts (they're always funny)
- Buying a new skateboard
- Sonic Shuffle (also known as Sonic Square)
- The Joanna Dark model
- Death of winter
- Good deals on used cars
- Turdcat.com
- Swat officers escorting criminals around, who are wearing nothing but underwear that's far too big for them
- The video for Fatboy Slim's Rockafeller Skank
- The title Grudge Warrior
- Goose crap
- Using a credit card to buy a new skateboard...that's really not keeping it real at all.
- Falling on your elbow trying to skate like Tony Hawk
- Beginning of allergy season
- Shipjumpers
- Speeding tickets
- Mielke's broken foot
- 3000 kilometers needed to earn the Pac-Man cars in Ridge Racer V
- Baked apple pies (they really should be fried)
- Still no sign of the Dolphin
- Pokémania
- Eggs
- Computers that crap-out for no apparent reason. Hello?
- The Iron Eagle series



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Back To SQUARE One

By Crispin Boyer

Once upon a time, Final Fantasy games played like fairy tales. You saved princesses, served kings, explored castles, spelunked dungeons, skewered dragons and eventually—after 40 or 50 hours of playtime—lived happily ever after. It was the way of the world in the NES original, through the two Famicom prequels, right up to FFIV (released here on the Super NES as FFI) and the Japan-only FFV.

But FFVI (FFIII on the Super NES) introduced a world on the brink of industrial revolution. Gunpowder and steampower threatened to replace swords and sorcery. The clash between old-world magic and new-world technology served as the game's theme, and in the PlayStation follow-up FFVII, technology had clearly won. That game's world—its look dubbed "steampunk" by players—was rife with modern-day weaponry, vehicles and factories. Last year's FFVIII launched the series into the future; characters could still wield magic, sure, but they also rode high-tech airships into deep space.

So when we put down our joypads after beating FFVIII, we had to wonder where Square would take the franchise in the new chapter. After all, the series had hit every conceivable technological epoch of civilization. What's next? Beings evolved into pure energy? Starships trolling the backwaters of the galaxy? *Star Wars*-style raygun battles?



Black Mages.
White Castles.
Dragoon warriors.
Magic crystals.
A guy named Cid...

None of the above. Square is kicking the series into reverse hyperdrive. In both setting and gameplay, FFX has more in common with Super NES FFI and FFIII than the most recent PlayStation installments. This return-to-roots approach may seem risky for Square (in fact, the company was at first reluctant to even tag this installment with the number IX). But FFX is the series' final PlayStation installment. Future titles on the PlayStation2 and PC will take the franchise in new—and mostly online—directions. Square wants this game to tie up any loose ends before the series starts breaking new ground. "Some people insisted that we should continue this cyber feel for FFX," series creator Hironobu Sakaguchi said, "but I felt like reverting back to the original, natural fantasy world, where people lived freely. After all, this is FF's last single-digit title."

Due out in Japan July 19 and here in "late 2000," according to Square, FFX will come on four CDs and pack all the extraordinary FMV, rendered visuals and fully orchestrated Nobuo Uematsu soundtrack fans expect from the PlayStation installments. "The amount of dialog is pretty much close to what was in Final Fantasy VIII," Ryosuke Taketomi, one of three localization specialists translating FFX at Square's L.A. offices, told us, "so, as a rough estimate, it lasts about as long as that game."



Everything old is new again in Final Fantasy IX, the series' PlayStation finale that returns the franchise to its sword-'n'-sorcery roots.



IN THE BEGINNING...

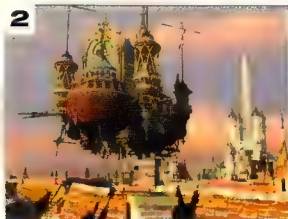
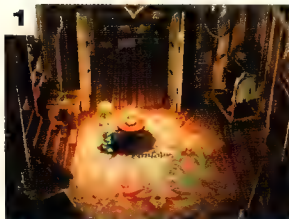
Spoiler seekers, peer here for a patchwork of screens from FFXIX's first hour. Gameplay starts aboard the thieves' airship, in the dark, until Zidane lights a lantern (1). Soon we learn of Regent Cid's orders to send the thieves to Alexandria, where they're to pose as performers and kidnap Princess Garnet. With much fanfare, the theater ship (2) glides to a stop before Alexandria Castle. (Note the crystal sword jutting from the castle's top.) Players are introduced to Vivi, who's been duped into buying a counterfeit ticket for the evening's big show. You guide the little mage across rooftops (3) so he can sneak in for free. Zidane and his fellow thieves infiltrate the theater ship and start the play (4). Soon, Zidane heads off to capture the Princess. Ironically, she joins the band willingly, and everyone escapes Queen Brahne's wrath on the thieves' ship. Her feathery Black Mages pursue (5) and force the thieves down into the Evil Forest. They make it out, barely, and return to Regent Cid in Lindblum (6).

Here's FFXIX's story in a spoiler-free nutshell: The game is set on Gaia, a world of four continents. Regent Cid, ruler of peaceful Lindblum, turns a worried eye toward neighboring kingdom Alexandria, where wicked Queen Brahne has begun attacking nearby towns for no apparent reason. Cid sends a gang of bandits—including main character Zidane—to Alexandria to kidnap the queen's daughter, Princess Garnet, who he hopes may be able to explain her mother's dangerous behavior. Suspecting that an evil being is controlling the Queen, Garnet joins the band willingly, looking for answers, bringing her towering bodyguard Steiner along for the ride. The party, which grows to include innocent bystander Vivi Ornitier, spends the early part of the game pursued by the queen's army of Black Mages.

As in every installment prior to FFXVII, you control a four-person party, occasionally guiding a lone character or a pair through sidequests. By the end of the adventure, you'll have at least eight characters of varying classes at your disposal, and you can mix them any way you like into your party of four (you assemble the group aboard your airship, just like in Super NES FFXII).

The return of characters with specific job types—Zidane's a thief, Vivi's a Black Mage, etc.—means that each party member slowly builds a roster of abilities unique to his or her character class. Skills in FFXIX come in two flavors: Action Abilities, things like spells or special sword techniques available only in combat, and Support Abilities that affect your status, build resistance to particular attacks, or make you more effective against certain monsters.

Characters earn new abilities by equipping items and weapons; the game packs 260 in all, and most have skills embedded in them. Vivi's Black Mage Staff, for example, contains the Action Abilities Fire and Osmose. While this item is equipped, Vivi can use the Fire and Osmose spells during battle and, at the same time, learn these abilities by earning Action Points (AP) from successful battles. "But if the staff is unequipped," Taketomi explained, "Vivi will no longer be able to use Fire and Osmose during combat, and he stops learning these abilities, as well. Once he gains enough AP to fully learn these abilities, he can remove the Black Mage Staff and still use Fire and Osmose. Then Vivi can go on





and equip a different staff to use and learn different abilities." Green bars on your character's Action Abilities screen show just how much AP you need to fully learn abilities. You switch on Support Abilities on a separate screen by allocating gems you earn each time your character levels up. If FFXIII's ability system sounds horribly complicated, fear not—it's actually much simpler in practice than FFXIII's junctioning system.

Combat uses the same Active Time Battle system we've all used to, although you can't unleash timed trigger attacks like you did with Squall's Gunblade in FFXIII. You can place characters in the front or back row of the four-person formation, depending on the range of their weapons. Magic is once again based on character-specific spells and Magic Points; forget about all that spell "drawing" stuff from the last game. As you'd expect, some characters can summon guardian monsters (although they won't be called Guardian Forces in this installment), and many of the familiar heavyweights return, including Ifrit, Leviathan and Shiva. As of this writing, Square says you can't cut short the lengthy summon animations or cast abbreviated summon spells—although, as in FFXIII, you can boost summon attacks with rapid-fire button presses. The big addition to combat this time is the Trance Bar, which replaces the Limit Break

CONTINUED ON PAGE 132.

FANTASY CAMPERS

Over the course of FFXIII, you'll stumble across eight characters you can mix and match in your four-person party. We've scattered the heroes' bios and original Amano artwork throughout this feature. Take a gander...

ZIDANE TRIBAL

WHAT'S HIS STORY? Just 'cause he's an orphan with a 3-foot tail doesn't mean this 16-year-old thief is any different from your typical chick-chasing teenager. "He's a player, or tries to be anyway," Square localization specialist Maki Yamane told us, "but he's not a jerk like Squall." FFXIII's main man, Zidane is the party's cheerleader, always rooting the others on—at least when he's not busy showing off.

WHAT'S HIS STRUGGLE? For the first half of the game, it seems Zidane's life goal is to get into Princess Garnet's royal pants. But as he matures, he begins to seek his birthplace—which he's never discovered during his journeys on the world of Gaia.

WHAT'S HIS SPECIALTY? His Steal command in battle will nab useful stuff for the party, but it's Zidane's flashy special moves that you may use most. Many moves, like the "What's That?!" special that tricks enemies into looking the other way while you attack their backs, are downright ridiculous.



PRINCESS GARNET TIL ALEXANDROS THE 17TH

WHAT'S HER STORY? The daughter of wicked Queen Brahne, Garnet willingly joins Zidane's band of would-be kidappers and flees the kingdom of Alexandria, her mother in white-hot pursuit. To remain incognito, she changes her name to Dagger after eyeing Zidane's preferred weapon. Garnet is noble but kind of a girly-girl, uncomfortable among the unwashed masses. "She really struggles when she gets out and tries to speak like a commoner would," Square localization specialist Brody Phillips said. "Zidane goes through an entire lecture with her, teaching her how to talk and all these little lessons." Note that Garnet is a brunette in the game and not blond as in Amano's concept sketch.

WHAT'S HER STRUGGLE? Suspecting her mother is under an evil spell, Garnet wants to expose who's really behind the queen's bizarre behavior.

WHAT'S HER SPECIALTY? As a summoner, Garnet can call down many of the same spectacular guardian monsters—such as Shiva and Ifrit—from past FF games. She can also wield healing White Magic.



VIVI ORANTIER

WHAT'S HIS STORY? Bright-eyed Vivi (pronounced Vee-Vee) is a 9-year-old, forever-frightened little klutz, but he's also a Black Mage—a character class feared and respected on Gaia (Steiner even calls him Master Vivi). The little guy stumbles into Zidane's party early in the game, when Vivi gets caught in the crossfire between Queen Brahne and the fleeing thieves.

WHAT'S HIS STRUGGLE? Vivi doesn't know who he is or where he came from. All he knows is that he's the only Black Mage on Gaia who's not a mindless servant to Queen Brahne and the mysterious Kuja. During his struggle to uncover his identity, Vivi will provide much of FFX's comedy relief and drama.

WHAT'S HIS SPECIALTY? Vivi wields Black Magic, of course, and that includes all manner of offensive spells. He also has a Charge command that'll recover Magic Points during battle. As long as you put him in the party with Steiner, Vivi can bestow magical abilities—such as fire or ice attacks—on the big knight's sword.



CHOCOBO PARTY

WANT MINI-GAMES? FFXIII'S GOT 'EM.

FFVII brought mini-games to the series with *raw, furious vengeance* (heck, the Golden Saucer arcade alone could waste your time for weeks), but FFXIII got kinda stingy with its little diversions. All it offered was a single—albeit massively deep—card game.

FFIX takes both routes. You'll find mini-games, lots of them, but this time they're more integrated into the gameplay. Early in the adventure, you'll make Vivi skip rope by jabbing the Square Button. A scene soon after has you, as Zidane, timing button presses, PaRappa the Rapper-style, to choreograph a mock fight on stage. In another mini-game your party's stuck in a suspended cage, and you'll need to rock back and forth to bust 'em out. You'll go on a cooking monster hunt, guide a Moogles through a quick mini-game, rapid-tap the buttons to sneak past a guarding beast and lots, lots more. Instructions always pop on screen right before you attempt these little puzzles and dexterity tests, and you won't be able to progress through the adventure unless you complete most of them.

And, yes, you'll find a card game in FFXIII, too. As in FFXIII, you'll collect cards throughout the quest, and you can challenge almost any NPC in the game by sauntering up and pressing the Square Button. The card game itself seems a little simpler this time. Check the illustration for a quick guide to its workings.



ADELBERT STEINER

WHAT'S HIS STORY? Burly, square-jawed and blindly loyal to Queen Brahne, 33-year-old Steiner is captain of the Knights of Pluto, the lone troop of elite male guards in Alexandria's entirely female army. And while that may sound like the perfect setup for an after-midnight *Skinemax* flick, ever-stoic Steiner is only interested in one thing: protecting Princess Garnet from any and all threats. So, as you can imagine, Steiner ain't too keen on young Zidane and the lad's romantic advances on Garnet. The knight and thief make reluctant allies.

WHAT'S HIS STRUGGLE? A bit thick in the head, Steiner must come to the realization that Queen Brahne has flipped her lid. "It takes him a good portion of the game to get the concept that he's been betrayed," Phillips said. "Even when he's captured by the queen's forces, he thinks it's a mistake, a miscommunication. The queen cannot be doing this."

WHAT'S HIS SPECIALTY? Simply put, Steiner is a tank. He wears the heaviest armor and wields swords that make Squall's gunblade look like a letter opener. He'll learn special abilities like the "Crime Hazard," a spectacular attack that cuts 9,999 hit points from every enemy.



Players take turns laying down five cards on a square board (randomly placed blocks make some spaces off-limits). Each card sports an icon and stats that determine its strength, and a varying number of arrows line each card's edges; as a rule, more powerful cards have more arrows. You want to lay your card so one of its arrows points to an opponent's card. If the enemy card doesn't have an arrow pointing back, his card turns your color. If he does have an arrow, the two cards duke it out and stats determine the winner. The side with more cards its color at the end wins.

FREYA CRESCENT

WHAT'S HER STORY? An old friend of Zidane, rat-faced Freya is one of the legendary Dragoon warriors (or a Lancer, as they were called in FFV and FF Tactics). She hails from the besieged Kingdom of Bromecia, has already seen the world, and is both noble and streetmart.

WHAT'S HER STRUGGLE? Freya is searching for her lost lover, who disappeared while on a mission to become a better warrior. She does eventually find him in the game, but we're not about to spoil that encounter.

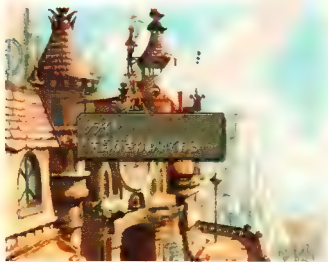
WHAT'S HER SPECIALTY? Like the Dragoons who've appeared in the old-school Final Fantasy games, Freya's special combat command is the Jump option. Choose it and she'll leap high off the screen for several turns, out of reach of enemy attacks, then pounce on enemies with her spear.

SALAMANDER CORAL

WHAT'S HIS STORY? With his scaly bluish skin, flaming metal-band coif and massive bulk (he's the biggest character on your team), Salamander fills FFI's wild-boy role just fine. Queen Brahne hires this behemoth to track down Zidane's gang and recover the princess.

WHAT'S HIS STRUGGLE? Salamander must overcome his dislike of Zidane, who played a trick on him years ago.

WHAT'S HIS SPECIALTY? Like the ninjas from earlier games, Salamander's extra combat command is Throw, which he uses to hurl any weapon—or even FF currency Gils—at monsters. He also wields a few fireball-style attacks and has special HP/MP recovery abilities for your party members.



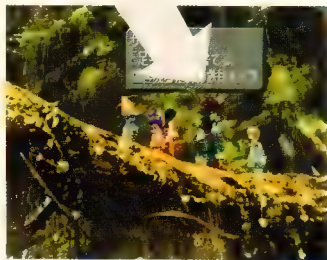
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 129.

meter. Take enough damage and your character will go into a trance, thus gaining an entire new set of abilities for a short time.

You'll find many more subtle additions to the classic gameplay. A hand icon appears over your character when conversations with NPCs conclude, signaling that you can move again. Exclamation-point and question-mark symbols flash near objects you can interact with. Mosey around new towns and you'll often encounter special "Active Time Events," brief scenes involving other characters in your party who are also searching the city. You can either tap the Select Button to watch these events or choose to ignore them.

Without question, FFI is the best-looking game in the series. The high-res prerendered backgrounds look sharper than ever. Each in-game, super-deformed character model oozes personality, thanks to its highly tweaked animation routines (characters even turn their noggins to track nearby NPCs). FFI packs roughly the same amount of FMV as FFVIII—about an hour's worth. Crafted by Square Visual Works in Hawaii, the video sets a new standard for the series. And, of course, you'll see plenty of the seamless transitions between FMV sequences and real-time gameplay made famous in the two PlayStation installments.

In every way, FFI takes the best of the old and mixes it with the best of the new. You get the rich characters of Super NES FFII and FFIII, a character-building system that rivals the depth of FFV, and the lush visuals of FFVII and FFIII. Even if you never played old-school Final Fantasy and have no interest in their low-tech settings, trust us—this game has everything you need to live happily ever after. ♣



The battle between Bahamut and Alexander is one of FFI's most spectacular sequences.

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OLD SCHOOL

A LESSON IN FINAL FANTASY'S LEGENDS

FFIX's return to the series' roots is fine and dandy for long-time fans, but gamers weaned on FFVII or FFVIII may wonder what all this nostalgic fuss is about. So here's a quick rundown of a few of the classic characters, items and themes that pop up in FFIIX:



CRYSTALS

In every Final Fantasy game up to and including FFV, crystals were integral to the gameplay, often symbolizing the four elements—Earth, Water, Wind and Fire. These magic rocks were all but forgotten in FFVI (FFIII for the Super NES), FFVII and FFVIII, but Square claims the FFIIX game will “restore” the crystal. Let's just say you eventually wind up in a region called Crystal World.



BLACK MAGES

With their pointy hats and glowing eyes, Black Mages have been common characters in Final Fantasy games ever since the day wee gamers popped the first FF into the NES. They appeared sporadically through the series' first five installments—either as a character or job type. In FFIIX, kid mage Vivi Ornitier finds out just where his black-robed kin come from.



DRAGONS

FFIII for the Famicom introduced the legendary Dragoon warriors, who also appear in FFIV, FFV and FFVI. Now they're back in the form of FFIIX's rat-like Freya Crescent. You'll recognize these guys (and gals) by their mile-high leaping abilities in combat.



MOOGLES

Kitty-like critters who take second billing to Chocobo as the series' mascot, Moogles first appeared in FFV for the Super Famicom. The little guys were no more than window-dressing in FFVII and FFVIII, but in FFIIX they're back in full force. You'll even stumble upon a Moogle village, and Eiko brings a moogle sidekick into your party. They also act as save points during your adventure.



CHOCOBOS

Since they first appeared in FFII for the Famicom, Chocobos have become the undisputed mascots of the series. They've shown up in every game since and play the standard transportation role in FFIIX.



CID

Cid has a lot in common with good ol' Chocobo. He first appeared in FFII, and characters bearing his name have shown up in every following FF title. Cid always takes the form of a mechanically inclined dude who specializes in airship construction. In FFIIX, Cid—who's been transformed to a stout bug-like creature by his spiteful wife—plays the ruler of Lindblum.



AIRSHIPS

The common means of air travel in every FF world, airships started as simple prop-driven machines. By FFVIII, they were hulking high-tech craft capable of space travel. In FFIIX, airships once again take their simple, propeller-powered form.



EIKO CAROL

WHAT'S HER STORY? The last of a summoner tribe, Eiko is a lonely little girl stranded in a village of Moogles. She also falls in love with Zidane, thus building a tricky love triangle between her, the thief and Princess Garnet.

WHAT'S HER STRUGGLE? Afraid of being alone, Eiko never wants to be away from people again.

WHAT'S HER SPECIALTY? She can summon recovery-type guardians, as well as wield White Magic.

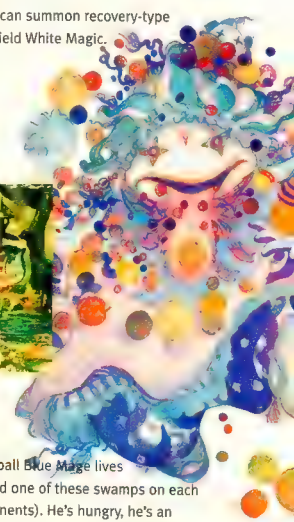


QUINA QUEN

WHAT'S ITS STORY? This oddball Blue Mage lives in Qu's Marsh (you'll find one of these swamps on each of the game's four continents). He's hungry, he's an avid cook and, well, he's not really a he at all. Square's not really sure of Quina's gender.

WHAT'S ITS STRUGGLE? Quina longs to be a master chef.

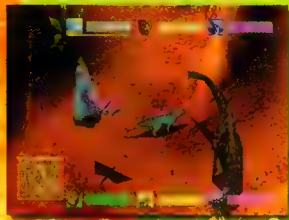
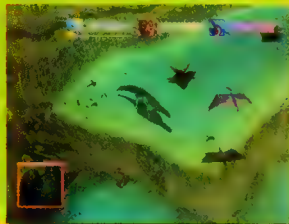
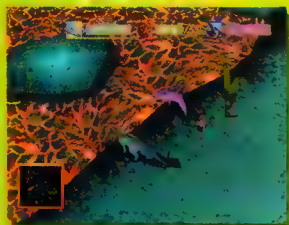
WHAT'S ITS SPECIALTY? The androgynous Quina can wield Blue Magic—mostly status-changing spells like Plague, Bad Breath and Level 4 Death. But you'll mainly want this creature for its Eat battle command. Wielding his weapon of choice—a massive fork—Quina will gobble enemies and steal their abilities.



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MARO A MARO WITH AMANO

Photography by Chris Johnston

Hardcore Final Fantasy fans recognize the name Yoshitaka Amano. He designed characters and scenes for all the Final Fantasy games and a few of Square's other Japanese titles, as well as Atlus' *Kartia* and Capcom's upcoming serialized Dreamcast RPG *El-Dorado*. He also created characters for the Japanese TV show *Gatchaman (Battle for the Planets in the U.S.)* and *Vampire Hunter D*. His recent work with Neil Gaiman on *Sandman: The Dream Hunters* has been nominated for several awards, and he's currently developing his *Hero* project (which we interviewed him about in *EGM* #126) into a movie and game. We dropped in on Amano at his SoHo-district studio in New York City.

EGM: Are you happy that Final Fantasy IX has returned to its classic medieval themes and settings, and did you have any involvement in that decision?

YOSHITAKA AMANO: I think it's great that Final Fantasy is, so to speak, returning to its roots. But it's important not to forget that there are many new elements which have been developed between Final Fantasy I and VIII which are a part of IX as well. I think it's a good, new balance. Concerning the overall direction of the game series, I didn't really

say that it should return to its roots or anything—it's just happening. But I'm very happy it's happening.

EGM: How many characters have you created for FFXIX?

YA: I designed over 10 new characters for the game, but I think they will appear differently than what my sketches are. When we started with the first Final Fantasy games, they were dot renditions. When you take my sketches and when you render them in dots, the outcome is rather different than what I had sketched out on paper. But they're still my designs, and the similarities and differences are very interesting. I think now there's so much more technology in terms of image rendition. One might think that the image will be very close to what I have designed. But perhaps once what I have sketched is on the game platform, it will be a completely different creature from what I've designed. I think that difference is really interesting and I'm looking forward to it.

EGM: Are you involved in the process of bringing your sketches into 3D?

YA: I am involved. I think the best way to answer the question is to say when you play the game, you will see there are quite a few direct incorporations of my designs. And I

think what you will see is right in the middle of the digitized game world and my illustrations—like the halfway point. It's best to see it first.

EGM: Have you done any of the environment designs too, or just character sketches?

YA: Basically what I've done is the character sketches as always. And then instead of what you call environmental sketches, I've done image boards. That's what I've always done for Final Fantasy, and that's not to design each environment in the game, but to design a world view. I imagine the world of Final Fantasy and I create sketches and so forth, and then looking at that, the other game designers work on translating that into each space and environment in the game. With the new technology for IX, I think the design of the game will be very close to what I imagined—or maybe not.

EGM: How do you go about creating or designing characters? Does Square give you a set of parameters—like this character has to be a wizard or have a sword?

YA: Like designing characters for films, there are certain settings—age group, their role, etc. Requests are sent to me and I try to meet them. But it's not that specific. I'm given freedom as well.

EGM: What's the process like when you begin work on a new Final Fantasy game?

YA: It's often in sync in the sense that I'm designing and sketching as the designers work to construct the game. Square is a very big organization, but they have one person, usually, in charge of dealing with myself. I am a very small operation and it's quite close to one to one. I deal directly with the person who comes to pick up my sketches, and we talk and there's feedback and so forth. It's quite a simple process, not any different from my other clients.

EGM: How did you first get involved with Square and doing video game artwork?

YA: It was a very long time ago that I started working. They called me and they said, "Do you want to design game characters?" and we met. Back then video games weren't such an ordinary thing. I felt it was a very new idea. I really didn't approach it as work, and I really didn't care how much money they were giving me—money wasn't the issue. It was really just to try something for fun because I was doing a lot of illustration work and I thought being able to work with computers on the side would be refreshing. That's how it started, and then the times caught up with our work, so to speak. It was a very small niche thing we were doing, and yet Final Fantasy grew, and so did gaming in general in Japan. It was a very interesting time if you think about the history of games in Japan.



EGM: Are you involved at all with Final Fantasy X and XI?

YA: No, not yet.

EGM: Where did the inspiration come from for two of the classic Final Fantasy characters—the Chocobo and the Moogles?

YA: To be honest, I don't really remember because I've sketched so many characters and they're only a couple out of the many that I've done. So it's an issue of volume—if you create a lot of volume, one or two will work.

EGM: How closely do you work with Hironobu Sakaguchi on creating characters?

YA: First of all, I think Sakaguchi understands Final Fantasy best out of all people. I really



think what is important in our collaboration is that we understand the common theme and we have a common understanding of what Final Fantasy represents. My role is to visualize Final Fantasy. Second, I think Sakaguchi is the game creator who represents Japan. He has discovered and nurtured so much talent. It's not just Japan if you think about it—I think he's really a leader in terms of gaming and, moreover, technology and the applications of technology around the world. I think he's somebody who's really fun to work with because we're always looking for new and daring and fun things to do. And at the same time, he's really someone who should be watched. Because he is a real visionary. 🎮





Review Crew

This Month...

According to many philosophies, everything in the universe follows great cycles, peaking in extremes but ultimately achieving balance. The last couple months of reviews have followed this yin/yang principle—last issue we had a ton of great games: RE Code: Veronica, Perfect Dark, Game Boy Metal Gear Solid, Vagrant Story, the list goes on and on. This month the pendulum swings the other way, with poop like Expendable, Spec Ops and Army Men: World War. Hopefully next month's games (Legend of Mana, Legend of Dragoon and Space Channel 5 among them) will mark a return to quality, restoring order to the universe and sanity to the Crew's editors. 🍌

Our Philosophy

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

EGM rates games based on how they compare with 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 0.0. 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?

Our Awards



Platinum Awards go to games that get three 10's, the best and rarest 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**.

The Players....

A couple more new additions to the crew this month: former videogames.comers Sam Kennedy and James Mielke. Don't judge them—love them.

John Davison

John Davison ain't our boss anymore. He's moved 20 feet to a new office and is now head of the *Official U.S. PS Mag*. We still tricked him into writing a few reviews.

Favorite Games
Action, Racing

Dean Hager

Dean keeps talking about how great Virtua Tennis looks. He says the Dreamcast has great potential. He also says potato chips are good.

Favorite Games
Sports, Racing

Sam Kennedy

Young Sam descended from the ranks of rodeo clown-dom to join us in an editorial bootcamp, chill cook-off, and paddle boat ride in the EGM offices this month.

Favorite Games
RPG, Action

Dan Looby

After seeing the Madden PS2 preview this month, Dan promptly spiked all of his office toys into the ground. Wait 'til he actually sees the game at E3.

Favorite Games
Sports, Action

James Mielke

Fresh from his last job at Videogames.com, Milkman is EGM's new West Coast Editor. In other words, he's our professional schmoozer.

Favorite Games
Action, RPG, Fighting

Greg Sewart

Greg's been all depressed since he got his E3 badge and his name was spelled "Dewart." At least the arrival of Tony Hawk on the DC lifted his spirits a little.

Favorite Games
Racing, RPG, Adventure

Crispin Boyer

Cris is going to E3 for one reason: To see the Metal Gear Solid sequel. Oh, and 18 Wheeler, and Bad Fur Day, and Sonic Adventure 2, and Dino Crisis 2, and...

Favorite Games
Action, Adventure

Joe Funk

It's tulip time in beantown and the ladies are wearing wooden shoes and short pants. Joe is planning a stunt in detox after all the big-timing and partying at E3.

Favorite Games
Sports, Driving

Chris Johnson

Rooting through his CD collection, Chris found the ultimate late-night musical interlude—Vanilla Ice Extremely Live. Deadlines will never be the same.

Favorite Games
Adventure, Puzzle, Music

Kraig Kujawa

Kraig is certain that this will easily be the best E3 ever. X-Box, PS2, and Dreamcast. What else could he possibly ask for? Some pie would be nice.

Favorite Games
Sports, Strategy

Mark MacDonald

Lucky for Mark he doesn't work at a Japanese game mag, where review editors commit ritual suicide to stone for a batch of horrible games like this month's.

Favorite Games
Action, Adventure, RPG

Andrew Pfister

This month the "Iron Pfist" discovered that girls don't, in fact, have cooties. Now he's all excited about heading off to E3 in order to hang with the booth babes.

Favorite Games
RPG, Action

Shawn Smith

Shawn has been needing money in a serious way lately with all of the new systems on the way. Plus, he wants a guitar. Can he afford all of this? Hell naw.

Favorite Games
Action, Adventure

Game of the Month



Tony Hawk's Pro Skater (DC) p. 140

Well, there wasn't much competition this month—only one other game received an EGM gold or silver award—but that shouldn't take away from the praise this Dreamcast version of the killer skate game deserves. All the awesome gameplay from the PlayStation original has been faithfully preserved and is now surrounded by the kind of beautiful candy coating only the Dreamcast is capable of. Sure, we wish the game had a few gameplay extras; about the only thing new here is the trick-points display on your VMU. But hey—Tony Hawk's in-game model has fully formed ears now. What more could you want? 🍌

EDITORS' CURRENT FAVES

- 1** Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask
Nintendo
- 2** Perfect Dark
Nintendo
- 3** Space Channel 5
Sega
- 4** Ecco the Dolphin
Sega
- 5** Metal Gear Solid
Konami
- 6** Vagrant Story
Square EA
- 7** Resident Evil Code: Veronica
Capcom
- 8** Evergrace
From Software
- 9** Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 1+2
Activision
- 10** Kirby 64
Nintendo



Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Sting
Featured In: EGM #125
Players: 1
Supports: Jump Pack, VMU
Best Feature: Nice combat engine
Worst Feature: The bosses are mean
Web Site: www.ubisoft.com



Evolution 2 is basically a pseudo sequel to the original Evolution, as it only features some marginal upgrades for its new quest. The characters are the same, the story is just as forgettable, it retains the simplistic feel of the original, and the game won't keep you busy for as long as most epic RPGs. But with that said, Evolution 2 is overall a fine RPG experience that should please RPG-starved DC owners while they wait for Grandia II and Eternal Arcadia. The game still places a strong emphasis on dungeon exploration, but this time around there are predefined dungeons in addition to the random ones. The focus on combat may not appeal to everyone, but I was certainly hooked; The battles themselves are fun, and the characters are really cool (I really enjoy how they are developed). And since the game sports nice graphics (simple, but bright and sharp) and a good soundtrack, there's no reason not to stay interested. One new feature that Sting has added for the sequel is an over the shoulder camera angle, which closely mirrors Zelda 64's. Even though it's not as practical to use as the overhead one, it's a nice addition. If there's any big downfall in the game, it's the same problem that plagued the original: Bosses are way too difficult, and often require you spend lots time building up levels in order to defeat them. Still, Evolution 2 is a solid, if not spectacular, RPG for the Dreamcast.

Sam

I didn't like the first Evolution, and this is really no different. Sure, it's got slightly better graphics, but it feels like this is more a continuation of the first game (or what should've been included in the first game anyway, since it was so short) than an entirely new adventure. The game itself is almost exactly the same, and there's really nothing new here to offer RPG players. With games like Grandia II, Eternal Arcadia and Phantasy Star Online to really get RPG fans excited, Evolution 2 is nothing more than a distraction. Of course for now there isn't much to choose from on the DC, and if random dungeons are your thing, then go crazy. Otherwise, skip it.

Chris

This random dungeon thing is getting way out of hand. First Evolution, then Time Stalkers, now Evolution 2. Well, maybe I'm putting a little too much emphasis on the problem, but it is getting old. The random dungeon engine means there's very little variety in each level. That said, Evolution 2 is actually not a bad game, especially when you consider the alternatives thus far on the Dreamcast. The graphics are colorful and solid, the music is well done and the battle system is reminiscent of Grandia's (exactly like the first Evolution). Evolution 2 doesn't do anything particularly wrong, it's just not exceptional in any way.

Greg

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY



Publisher: Sega
Developer: Video System
Featured In: EGM #127
Players: 1
Supports: Jump Pack
Best Feature: Completely customized setups
Worst Feature: Slows down with lots of cars
Web Site: www.sega.com



A good Formula 1 game for the Dreamcast has been a long time coming. F1 WGP comes fully stocked with all the play options needed in a game of this type. Championship, single race, versus and time trial options are just the tip of the iceberg. Drivers can customize the downforce of both wings, brake balance and sensitivity, steering, the list goes on and on. Of course, no F1 game would be complete without the fully licensed cars, teams and drivers (though you Villeneuve fans will be disappointed yet again), as well as the complete collection of F1 tracks. It's too bad the game is so liberal with warning flags and penalties, though. I've lost more than a few races due to being black flagged for things that didn't seem like my fault. World Grand Prix makes full use of the analog stick and buttons on the DC controller, which is a good thing, except for the fact that the game can't give you the option of steering with the digital pad. The result is a control scheme that can be mastered with a little perseverance, but will likely turn off casual racers almost immediately. The learning curve on this one is just way too steep for anyone but hardcore F1 fans. The graphics are above-average but suffer from noticeable slowdown whenever there's a lot of trackside detail or more than a few cars on the screen. Despite its few little flaws, F1 WGP is a competent racing simulator that fans of the genre should appreciate.

Greg

Maybe the first top-shelf open wheel racing game to come out for DC, F1 establishes an impressive standard for future titles in this genre. Modeled after the actual 1998 F1 season with accurate weather and all, F1 delivers the fastest, sharpest graphics I've seen yet from a console racing game. The feel is authentic and staying in the race-line on the many winding courses is mandatory for top to finishes. Racing on the Monaco track is a particular visual treat, and on the two-player version the vertically split screen is something I'd like to see more of in racing games. It's a game that will make slackjawed bystanders want to play, but may turn them off with its difficulty.

Joe

F1 World Grand Prix is a solid game but could use a few more tweaks. It looks great, that's not a problem. It's also fast and smooth—that's not an issue either. The control and the track-visit (or lack of a better term) are the areas that could use work. When using the chase-view(s), car control is more challenging. It seems like they slide in peculiar ways uncharacteristic of an F1 car. The in-car view alleviates this, but then it's tough to see the bends of the road. Overall it's not a huge deal. If you take your time, learn how to brake properly, and really treat this game as a sim it's not bad. If you approach it like an arcade game you'll be frustrated fast.

Dean

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY



Publisher: Midway
Developer: Kalisto Entertainment
Featured In: EGM #127
Players: 1-2
Supports: Jump Pack
Best Feature: Solid frame-rate
Worst Feature: Too difficult
Web Site: www.midway.com



Finding out that 4 Wheel Thunder wasn't originally developed to be a part of Midway's Thunder series came as no shock after playing this game extensively. All of the similarities it has with Hydro Thunder feel tracked on, and Kalisto definitely didn't manage to strike the same balance that game has. Even though 4 Wheel Thunder has above average graphics and suffers from little to no slowdown, it doesn't help the fact that the plodding pace and uninspired track design lead to boring, uneventful racing. The difficulty, though not insurmountable, is a problem too. In order to win you pretty much have to hold down the boost button 100% of the time. However, the boost icons strewn throughout each track are so small that missing them is an all-too-common problem. Without them there's no hope of keeping up with the field, and thus no chance of winning the race. Likewise, as you unlock the secret tracks they get so twisty and claustrophobic that navigating them while holding the boost button is the most frustrating experience you're likely to have in a racing game. Ultimately 4 Wheel Thunder is never more than the sum of its parts. If Kalisto and Midway had decided to make this an off-road racer with no attachment to the Thunder series it may have been an exceptional game, but by tacking on the Thunder gameplay elements at the last minute the whole game became frustratingly average.

Greg

It's clear 4 Wheel Thunder has great stuff...just look at it, it's gorgeous! And that's not the only thing, the 4x4 vehicle physics are the best I've experienced. Those big-wheeled trucks react to the terrain just like you'd imagine they would. It's also nice that each vehicle be tick, buggy or car, has distinct handling characteristics. The tracks themselves are super long, (the outdoor courses at least) picturesque and enduro-like. OK, now the bad news—it's too hard to win a race. You have to run flawlessly while popping turbos pretty much the entire time to have a chance. Multiplayer is definitely more friendly. For a seriously tough challenge check out 4 WT.

Dean

In true arcade fashion, 4 Wheel Thunder is fast, fun and very accessible. You'll start it up, and be knee-deep in racing in just a couple of minutes. Problem is, because of its arcade gameplay, there's only an average amount of meat to the game. Thus, the fun factor fades in a fairly short amount of time. To keep things exciting, it seems an unnecessary amount of difficulty has been added. In fact, you'll be hard-pressed to come in better than fourth in most races (and that's using shortcuts and plenty of boosts). Still, the game is fun to mess with, and it's awfully pretty to look at. It's fast, too. Overall, it's a definite rental—maybe a purchase.

Chris

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY



Publisher: Midway
Developer: Midway
Featured in: EGM #28
Players: 1-4
Supports: Jump Pack
Best Feature: Smooth, even in four-player
Worst Feature: Damn this game is hard
Web Site: www.midway.com



When I first played Gauntlet Legends in the arcade, I didn't like it. The whole concept of your life meter ticking away with the seconds no matter what you do just seemed really cheap to me. Luckily that idea is completely out the window in the DC version. **Legends makes a much better home game than an arcade game.** Graphically, it's excellent—super vibrant colors, no slowdown (even with four players), huge levels and hard bosses. Don't think that it's hack and slash all the way through, either, because you've got to build your character up by collecting gold to buy strength and through fighting experience. If you don't build up your character correctly, you could find yourself stuck on a boss character and have to redo previous levels in order to rack up health and experience. Unlike most arcade games these days, Legends has a huge amount of levels, each with its own challenges and enemies—some of which are the most annoying I'll bastards I've ever seen. They've packed every conceivable environment into this game as they could. The only problem I have is that it's not always clear when you've missed anything in the levels. Midway has captured the old-school gameplay of Gauntlet in 3D perfectly, and made the necessary changes and improvements to the game to make it a fantastic home game. If hack-'n'-slash dungeon action with a dash of action RPG gameplay is your thing, this is your game. **Chris**

Go figure: I really didn't enjoy this game very much in arcades because of its slow, methodical pace, but it is exactly that characteristic that makes it a much better home video game. **Gauntlet Legend's slow-paced action is a nice change-up** to what I'm used to—it's something you can really relax and play. The best thing about this game (college kids pay attention now) is that it's four-player capability lends itself perfectly to a few friends lounging around while downing a few beers—I could even think of a few decent drinking games (while one guy drinks, the other three protect him) Those bad habits aside, it's worth your time to check this one out. **Kraig**

Although it's an excellent port of the arcade game, it's hard for me to get excited about Legends. Yes, multi-player is fun for a bit—with so many different power-ups and items there are lots of opportunities for teamwork or screwing over your friends, and building up your character's abilities RPG-style is cool. But ultimately there just isn't enough technique or skill involved, so the game boils down to a pretty straightforward hack-and-slash action game. That'd be fine if it was fast-paced and exciting, but **all the backtracking and getting lost trying to find switches grinds the game to a halt way too often.** Rent it with friends if you liked it in the arcade. **Mark**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY



Publisher: Rockstar
Developer: DMA Design
Featured in: EGM #127
Players: 1
Supports: Jump Pack
Best Feature: Graphics
Worst Feature: Analog control feels weird
Web Site: www.rockstargames.com



Compared to the PlayStation GTa2, the only thing different—or I should say enhanced—about this version of the game is the graphics. In fact, they look so smooth, they're more akin to those found in the PC version of Rockstar's top-down criminal simulator. Does this make the game better? To a degree, yes. The best part of GTa2 on the PlayStation is its old-school yet complex gameplay, chock-full of missions, dozens of gangstas to deal with and a crap load of stuff to destroy. Ah, but the graphics on the PlayStation were...how do you say...poo-poo. No, they didn't hurt the game much—they just made it look terribly dated. Now that everything in the DC version is dynamically lit, anti-aliased and who knows what else, there isn't anything to complain about. Well, there's one thing: The control. Why not let us use the digital pad instead of the analog. The digital pad just feels so much more natural with this old-school type of play. Other than that, everything is fine. **It's just as addictive, just as challenging,** just as funny...and strangely serious at the same time. The nice thing is (and it's the same way in the PlayStation version) you can pick what crime organization you become allies with. So if you play through one time siding with the Zaibatsu, the next time you play you can side with a different gang, and have a different experience. It's this sort of depth that makes this game stand out from the rest. **Shawn**

There's really no reason to play this version of the game if you've already played the PS version. Gameplay-wise, it's identical. The only real difference—besides it being smoother—are the slightly overdone ambient lighting effects (although it gives the game a grittier feel). Unfortunately, you can't configure the left/right control to use the digital pad—an option I'd liked to have had considering that the analog control is very touchy. On-screen text often gets lost against the lighting effects, making it a bit hard to read when you're on the run. Just seems like there could have been more attention to detail in bringing the game to the DC. **Chris**

I'm all for mature-themed games, but I also want them to be fun to play. I found GTA 2 to be a little too methodical for my tastes—there's just too much running and driving around the city for the sake of doing so, and it's not too enjoyable. Wreaking havoc on the city streets is only amusing the first 20 or so times, after all. The control scheme is a little convoluted no matter which preset you turn on, and they could have really taken more advantage of the Dreamcast's power—**there isn't much here that couldn't be done on a PlayStation.** If you're a sucker for bad words and senseless violence, give it a shot, but just don't expect a deep game beyond that. **Kraig**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY



Publisher: Crave
Developer: Treyarch
Featured in: EGM #26
Players: 1-2
Supports: Jump Pack
Best Feature: Graphics
Worst Feature: Nothing really
Web Site: www.cravegames.com



Holy crap! And here I thought the PlayStation version of Tony Hawk's Pro Skater looked good. The Dreamcast version is simply amazing. The textures are flawless and the draw distance is about as real as it gets. Polygons that were jagged and textures that were blurry or pixelized in the PlayStation THPS are crystal-clear. The videos that run on the walls of certain levels are now TV-quality. Heck, even the frame-rate is a bit speedier overall. So is anything else different? Well, no...not really. There's a couple of extra bells and whistles (your score is displayed on the VMU, there are extra ball animations and a couple of other things) but all in all, it's the same game. And since I love the PlayStation version of THPS, you can see why I've scored this one how I have. **People will probably buy the DC for this game—it's that impressive and fun.** Understandably though, you may be wondering if the natural feel has been ported over from the PS version along with the innovative play modes, level design and graphics. Thankfully, it has. The game is just as intuitive as its PS brother. Well, there is one thing—but it's not the game's fault. I find the control difficult because of the Dreamcast pad (probably because I'm so used to using the Dual Shock, but I still think the DC pad isn't as friendly). I'm pretty much used to it now, so if you're starting fresh on the Dreamcast with THPS, it shouldn't be a problem. I'll be in line for this one. **Shawn**

Developer Treyarch had two goals in mind when they set out to port THPS: to retain every gameplay nuance and to boost the visuals to Dreamcast standards. They've succeeded on both counts. **Trick for trick, this game plays exactly like the PS version.** The characters get the same amount of air when they fastplop off a vert ramp. You'll find all your favorite grindable obstacles. And, yes, all visuals—from the detailed clothes to skaters' shadows to the extended draw distance—is 900 degrees ahead of the PS game's graphics. Still, THPS really isn't worth getting if you already own the original. I just prefer playing it with the comfier PS pad. **Chrispin**

I'm sure the other reviewers have mentioned that this game is essentially a clone of the PS version. I won't dwell on that. Instead, I'd like to use this space to praise it repeatedly in a grossly over-stated way until you, the reader, are ready to throw-up. This game is so good it inspired art directors, Cyril and Jim, to buy new skateboards. Of course now they annoy us with their noisy ollie attempts, but that's beside the point. It's smoother, better-looking and controls as well, if not better than its PS counterpart. **It's intuitive enough that beginners can jump right in but challenging enough to keep them hooked for days.** Awesome; a must-buy. **Dean**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY



As long as you dive into Deep Fighter with the preconceived notion that what you have to look forward to is essentially an **underwater version of Wing Commander**, you'll find a pretty satisfying adventure in store for you. There are lots of often-cheesy blue-screen video sequences and a myriad of tediously boring missions, but if you don't let that sort of stuff bother you too much, underneath is an incredibly cool underwater game that'll have you hooked. The graphics in Deep Fighter are surprisingly good—the frame-rate can get a tad bogged down at times, but thankfully, not enough to detract from the overall experience. The controls did irritate me, though. It's difficult to get the hang of all of your sub's functions, and even after hours of play, certain things didn't feel natural. Deep Fighter has a good diversity of missions, ranging from rescuing fish to manning gun turrets. But what I really enjoyed most was that in some parts, I truly felt I was playing out the movie *The Abyss*. This alone makes Deep Fighter worth the price of admission for me.

Sam

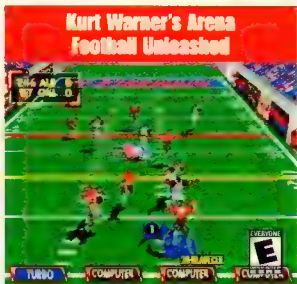
VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	4	4	2



Reel Fishing II gets a little too real for me. Sitting in one spot, staring at pretty FMV scenery, and not seeing any fish for what seems like days on end may be an accurate portrayal of the sport, but it doesn't do much for gaming fun. Another annoying aspect of the game are the awkward transitions from above water to the underwater perspective. Why not include a split screen or dedicate a corner of the screen to an underwater view? And I hate being confined to one spot, casting and recasting until I get some results. Put me in a boat where I have control. If the fish aren't biting, move on, right? Not here, unless you end the day and pick another location altogether. Some of the ideas in the game are nice, like the fishing notebook which contains useful information and stats about the locales you'll be fishing. **But you won't be using the information very much, because I doubt you'll give this game more than 30 minutes before you fall asleep.** Fishing can be a boring experience if it's not done right. I guess the same can be said for a video game about fishing.

Dan

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	4	4	2



Publisher: Midway
Developer: Midway
Featured In: EGM #131
Players: 2-4
Supports: Dual Shock, Multitap
Best Feature: High scoring
Worst Feature: Limited playbook
Web Site: www.midway.com



Wow, another "X-treme" sports game. Excuse me if my excitement in these titles has waned a bit since NBA Jam back in the early '90s, but now I like my extreme games to be based on actual extreme sports, like skateboarding (Tony Hawk), motocross (Excitebike), etc. Arena football is only extreme in the sense that players are encouraged to run into cement walls. Other than that, it's football on a small field with less talented players. Whatever it is, Midway's betting that there are enough fans out there to warrant a video game version of the sport. The only problem is that Midway has already done one and it's called NFL Blitz. If you like Blitz, then chances are you'll like Arena Football. **The gameplay is carbon-copied from Blitz, which is a positive statement.** The only differences between the games occur due to specific Arena football rules, which include 20 yards for a first down, being able to return missed field goals, etc. The game also comes replete with usual Midwayisms such as after-the-play violence, secret codes galore, an over-the-top announcer and so on. There's also a play editor and a ton of different play modes. The game would be impressive if it hadn't already been done a million times. If you haven't tried Blitz yet, and don't care about NFL players, maybe this one's worth a rental. If you're a football junkie who's looking for something different, then Arena ball could be the answer.

Dan

As you know, making and selling games is a business. So why shouldn't a company recycle a good game engine? There's nothing wrong with that. But sadly Arena Football II is a step down in quality from NFL Blitz. There's polygon clipping all over the place. AI players will, at times, shake violently—and no, they're not supposed to do that. Plus there's some jerky animation. It's not a total loss by any means. **There are several new and unique moves and taunts that we haven't seen previously in Blitz.** And arena football fans just might get a kick out of it. The AI is decent, keeping games relatively close in that come-from-behind Blitz style. Arena fans give it a rent.

Dan

If you like Arena League football, and you loved NFL Blitz, then you'll want this niche game of a niche sport. Otherwise, it's an obviously gratuitous Kurt Warner license slapped onto a repackaged Blitz that plays pretty well. The fatal flaw of most subpar sports games is that the action is too slow or choppy. In this game, that's not a problem. In fact, the game may actually be too fast. Like Blitz, it's easy to pick up but difficult to master (against human players anyway). I beat the AI team the first time I played it, and I'm not a Blitz freak. **I wonder about the merit in licensing a league where the only recognizable star doesn't even play in it any more.**

Joe

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	5	5	5



Publisher: 3DO
Developer: 3DO
Featured In: EGM #131
Players: 1-2
Supports: Dual Shock
Best Feature: Sound effects
Worst Feature: Glitches, bugginess
Web Site: www.3do.com



Let me start by asking a simple question: Are the soldiers in this (or any) Army Men game supposed to be human-sized plastic toys in the real world, or are they regular toy-sized guys and vehicles in a mini-version of the regular world? While you're thinking about that one, let me get on with my review. First, if you've just purchased this game, and are about to take it out of the packaging, for the love of all things holy, STOP! Drop it in that little shopping bag and take it on back to the store with the quickness. Get yourself something else—hell, exchange it for Spec Ops and put the rest of your hard-earned dough toward the pre-purchase of a PlayStation2. If you've opened it already...well, I'm sorry for not getting this review to you sooner. Army Men: World War is one of the buggiest, unpolished games I've ever played. Polygons disappear, you get stuck on things, the AI is either dead-on accurate or as dumb as plastic, and the multiplayer is the antithesis of fun (it's often far too dark, pointless and lacks the innovation found in Army Men 3D's multiplayer mode). So does this thing have any redeeming qualities? Two things: the incredibly realistic sound effects, and the weapons (there's just something fun about mortars). I guess the missions aren't too bad either (infiltrating a prison camp, riding on a gun boat and what not). But then, I'm into this military/covt ops sort of stuff. All in all, it's best to steer clear of this one.

Shawn

Countless glitches. Can't strafe. Dark, ugly graphics. Flawed concept. Pathetic AI. Frustrating gameplay. Whenever I cut loose with a stream-of-consciousness rant about Army Men: World War (and I've screamed plenty of random stuff while playing this sequel—just ask my coworkers), I can't for the life of me come up with one positive thing to say. OK, many levels are mercifully short. And, um, the sound effects are very nice. But otherwise the uninspired, sloppy gameplay here just ain't fun. Even the two-player game—which was the best thing about the original—has been dummed-down. Ugh. Stick with Medal of Honor for your warfare fix.

Crispin

Another month, another Army Men game. If you haven't been a fan of the series up until this point, Army Men: World War will do nothing to change your mind. Just as in Army Men 3D, World War has a lot of great ideas, but just falls on its face in execution. It's simply no fun at all when you have to replay each level over and over just to learn where every enemy is. And it's especially frustrating when your bullets just don't hit the enemies—even if they're right in front of you. Add to that some annoying camera angles and you'll quickly see why World War just doesn't work. The scary thing is, this could be such a killer game if it was done right.

Sam

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
4	7	4	3



Publisher: Activision
Developer: Sugar & Rockets
Featured In: EGM #30
Supports: 1
Players: Dual Shock
Best Feature: Multiple endings
Worst Feature: Annoying camera
Web Site: www.activision.com



Covert Ops is probably best summed up as terrorist-action movie meets Resident Evil. So how does it fare in all the important adventure game categories: puzzles, combat and story? Unfortunately the puzzles are pretty lame—way too literal and usually too easy. The little tasks you have to perform to progress (find the key, put disk into computer, etc.) never get too complicated—you are usually only on one little errand at a time, without many items to keep track of. Combat doesn't take much skill either; you just face the general direction of the enemy and the game auto-aims for you. The biggest problem though, as usual, is the camera. Your view is constantly shifting and cutting to new angles, which is not only disorienting, but really gets in the way of the gameplay. Enemies and items are often obscured when the camera cuts, which leads to incredibly awkward situations like being shot by someone off screen you can't even see. **But even with all these gripes, I'd still recommend Nuclear Dawn to fans of this genre.** Maybe it's the Die-Hard-esque plot. Or maybe it's the graphics—it looks great, fully polygonal and yet still very detailed and varied (which is especially impressive since the whole thing takes place on a train). The few mini-games are simple fun, and the multiple endings and optional sections make up for the shortish length (5 hours or so). If you find the premise interesting, give CO: ND a try.

Mark

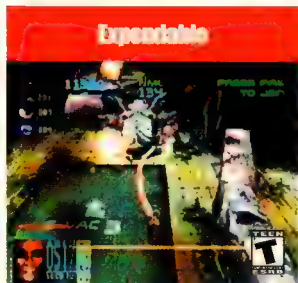
Overlooking the rather tedious battle system and annoying music for a moment, **Covert Ops is a fairly decent adventure game.** There are plenty of neat little features, like peeking through doors that are locked and a couple of mini-games. It also has nice-looking character models, a solid story and interesting level design (considering the game takes place on a train). The multiple endings are a nice touch as well, since games like this often have little replayability. But that darned clunky battle system. Since it's such an integral part of the game, it really takes away from the overall experience. And to make matters worse, the camera acts up sometimes.

Shawn

It probably looked a lot better on the drawing board, but this shameless hybrid ripoff of Metal Gear and Resident Evil turned out to be a mediocre mess. Nuclear Dawn borrows things from both games, but has very little suspense, a boring environment (whoopee, explore the endless halls of a train), and lame enemies. Visually, the game is pretty impressive—but you'll never get to see things the way you want to, thanks to the badly designed camera views. Not only do they make exploration frustrating in the claustrophobic train, but they often force you to shoot at enemies you can't see. **At least there is one neat feature—the bathrooms are save points.**

Kraig

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	5	4	5



Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Rage
Featured In: EGM #23
Supports: 1-2
Players: Dual Shock
Best Feature: Fluffy special effects
Worst Feature: Shoddy controls
Web Site: www.infogrames.com



Expendable uses a pretty low-brow game concept, but there's no denying that there's a certain charm about a mindless shooter—it's just too bad that this isn't a good one. Instead, it is a **cookie-cutter game that relies too heavily on its veil of gaudy special effects** which, no matter how flashy, can't cover up this game's ugly flaws. Within five minutes of trigger lime, I was already frustrated with my Dual Shock as I tried to grasp the game's crappy control scheme. After awhile you get used to it, but only after realizing that all you really need to control your soldier is to use the shoulder buttons to strafe (slide left and right while still aiming forward) around enemies back and forth while dodging their bullets. Hell—since you just slide back and forth the whole game, you barely even need the control pad or analog sticks. This is almost a blessing in disguise since when you do use them, you'll notice that they are very inaccurate and clumsy. The rest of the game isn't much better. The animation is shoddy—it looks like your soldier slides around the battlefield rather than running, and most of the humanoid enemies aren't much better. Expendable might have been worth your time if its two-player cooperative and Deathmatch modes were any fun. But, like the rest of the game, any amount of entertainment you could have gotten from those modes was also deemed expendable.

Kraig

Expendable reminds me a lot of Activision's Apollyps, but with one very important difference—the controls here suck. And I don't mean they're a bit sluggish; I'm talkin' thumb-blistering, scream-out-loud, drag-the-whole-rest-of-the-game-down-with-them-bad controls. They make it impossible to zone out and get into the twitchy reflex driven gameplay, and that's pretty much the whole point of a game like this. Who the hell decided Resident Evil style controls were appropriate in a 360° blast-everything-in-sight shooter? You end up circle strafing around like an idiot, only to get caught on walls. Frustrating as hell, and not much else.

Mark

What is this trifle? Expendable might have been a decent rental had Rage gotten the control right, but as the game is now it's hard to believe anyone even played this title. In digital mode the game controls like Resident Evil. You need to push up to move forward whichever way you happen to be facing. It just doesn't work well in a game that's all about fast-paced shooting action. Besides which, the digital control is so imprecise that it's hard to hit any targets consistently. On the flip side, the **analog control is totally broken.** You can't even move horizontally while it's on. The bottom line is that you shouldn't even waste your time trying Expendable.

Greg

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	4	3	2



Publisher: Interplay
Developer: Gremlin
Featured In: EGM #125
Players: 1-4
Supports: Dual Shock
Best Feature: It's a beat-'em-up on the PS
Worst Feature: Frustratingly cheap hits
Web Site: www.interplay.com



It's a real shame when a game released today attempts to improve on a tried-and-true classic but completely fails in the process. Gekido makes no secret that it tries to emulate classic beat-'em-ups such as Streets of Rage and Final Fight—it's filled with all sorts of old-school items (a turkey replenishes your power), and several characters, weapons, combat moves and stages pay homage to the older titles. But the sad fact is that I'd gladly choose to play those games over Gekido any day—and they came out nearly a decade ago. Don't get me wrong, Gekido definitely has some good things going for it—the graphics are nice, there's a cool combo learning system, a decent diversity of enemies, characters and modes to unlock (such as four-player team battle), and background music from people like Fatboy Slim—but it can get frustrating. Very frustrating. There's a lot of stuff on-screen at once, and a **good portion of the time it's hard to see just what the heck is going on.** Cheap hits are prevalent, as enemies will constantly pull your attention in on others. Also, everything you do is on a strict time limit, which is an unnecessary annoyance. Still, even with some of the frustrating aspects, the game is a decent beat-'em-up that can keep you busy for days (especially with two players). And although it might not be saying much, Gekido is probably the best game of its kind on the PlayStation.

Sam

This is perhaps the closest a 3D game has come to duplicating classic Final Fight/Streets of Rage gameplay as far as control, moves and combos go, but it **stumbles in crucial places.** First off, too many enemies surround you so that you're screwed before you can even throw the first punch. Second, during levels there'll sometimes be things like live electrical wires hanging down, or a helicopter firing gunshots at you—and you can't avoid them. But somehow enemies are completely immune (that'd never happen in Streets of Rage). Graphics are above-average and the licensed tunes fit the game nicely, but it's missing the right kind of balance.

Chris

I'm a big fan of Final Fight-style games, so I was really excited about giving Gekido a try. But, after about 20 minutes of gameplay that feeling quickly dissipated. The **stoppiness of this game is almost indescribable.** For example: This is a side-scrolling beat-'em-up that is almost devoid of punching sounds. You would think that at the very least the developers would make sure you know when you're connecting with a blow—after all, punching and kicking is the single most important thing in the game, isn't it? There's plenty of other similarly stupid flaws (graphical and otherwise), which is too bad because Gekido had the potential to be a good action game.

Kraig

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	5	3	5



Publisher: SCEA
Developer: Shaba Games
Featured In: EGM #131
Players: 1-6
Supports: Dual Shock
Best Feature: Tony Hawk's Pro Skater feel
Worst Feature: It's just not very original
Web Site: www.playstation.com



Aren't there laws against this sort of thing? I think it's called plagiarism. Grind Session is disturbingly similar to Nevsoft's masterpiece. Some time ago Sony stopped by to show us an early version of the game, and they insisted Grind Session was in development around the same time as the original Tony Hawk—apparently making it OK the two were so similar. Strange thing is, the first Tony Hawk came out about eight months ago and Grind Session is just coming out now. Makes you wonder just how “influenced” the developers were by THPS. In Grind Session, there's the Versus Mode where you and a friend compete for points. Whoever spells out C.H.U.M.P. first, loses. Sound familiar? You receive Respect Points (think Tony Hawk's skate tapes) in the one-player mode for completing tricks, knocking stuff over and getting high scores. The control is almost identical, too. Whatever the case, even though the game looks, controls and sounds like THPS, it's just not as fun to play. The frame-rate is choppy in spots, the graphics are less refined than in THPS, and there's a certain amount of realism that just doesn't quite work. And what's up with the custom skater option? On the good side, the levels are quite big, and have plenty of opportunities for tricks and combos. I also like the Practice, Endurance and various Team Play Modes. All in all, it's not a terrible game—it's just not what they call original.

Shawn

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater packs videotapes that open new levels. Grind Session's got “Respect Points” that open new levels. In THPS, the Triangle Button grinds, Square does kick tricks, Circle grabs and X ollies. The same buttons do the same things in Grind Session. THPS lets two skaters play H.O.R.S.E. Grind Session lets two skaters play C.H.U.M.P. Despite a few subtle differences and some extra play modes, Grind Session blatantly copies everything that makes THPS such a great game. It just doesn't do any of it as well. Control doesn't feel as natural. The visuals are blockier. The levels—although mostly larger—aren't as interesting. **Just sit tight until THPS2. Crispin**

While it may be brutal to say, this game is a Tony Hawk wannabe, and it shows in practically every corner of the game. Instead of collecting tapes, as you did in THPS, you attempt to break boom-boxes to “earn respect.” Gag me with a grind-plate please. In almost every way, Grind Session is simply inferior to the Hawk in control, graphics and replay value. **The only thing Grind Session has over THPS are licensed music tracks from hip-hop artists like KRS-One.** If Grind Session had taken a more sim-like approach as Thrasher did, it would avoid ungainly comparisons to Nevsoft's skateboarding tour de force. As it is, GS is a mere pretender to the throne.

Milkman

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

6 7 3 6



Publisher: Konami
Developer: Kaiko
Featured In: EGM #129
Players: 1
Supports: Dual Shock
Best Feature: Movie-like production values
Worst Feature: Cheap, crappy gameplay
Web Site: www.konami.com



This sequel takes place a full hundred years after the events of the distinctly crappy original, but you have to wonder why this franchise was allowed to continue. With little in common with the original aside from the bad guy, the new game takes place in early 20th-century London, complete with smoggy, drizzly weather and dirty locales. The basic premise is that you play the part of a complete loony who wakes up in a cell next to a large ax (I'm sure all loony-bins presided over by evil villains are well stocked with weapons), and you then have to wander the levels swinging said ax at ugly creatures. It's quite spectacularly linear despite the early impression of it being vaguely Silent Hill-y. Once you've played for an hour you realize it's nothing more than a very gory update of Splatterhouse. Monsters growl, you chop at them, you move on. Unfortunately this potentially satisfying, albeit disturbing, idea is utterly destroyed by a host of **irritating, cheap and nasty gameplay problems** that render the experience boring and frustrating. Bad guys seem to be able to hit you even when you're not anywhere near them, the scenery can only be interacted with if you're standing by the single pixel “hot spot,” and you can only sidestep in “combat mode” but not in “explore mode.” Visual production is pretty good though; there's buckets of red stuff (which can be switched off) and some truly disturbing *Evil Dead*-worthy chop-chop moments.

John

Under all the gore and the extreme ax-swinging violence, Nightmare Creatures II is really nothing more than a very linear Final Fight-style game with very little substance. While the production values behind the visuals are clearly quite high, there's little substance behind the gameplay. You run from room to room chopping at ugly-ass monsters who gush pints of blood all over the place—and that's about it. There's an occasional button to push or lever to pull and every now and then there's a power-up to pick up, but **fundamentally it's just a boring and frustrating game.** The first game wasn't anything special. This one's no better.

Chris

Nightmare Creatures II comes out of the gates strong but, in the end, falls short of real lasting appeal. On one hand it's aesthetically on the mark. The sound effects are well-done if not cheery in parts (especially the persistent groaning). The dark and dank environments convey the nightmare world very well and the gameplay mechanics, while simple, are tolerable. So what's wrong? I simply got bored with the game too fast. **I kept hoping for more,** be it more moves, more levers and switches, more breakable stuff, more interactivity with the environments and so on... NC2 isn't a bad game but additional variety and deeper gameplay would've helped a lot.

Dean

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

8 7 4 3



Publisher: Take Two
Developer: Runicraft
Featured In: None
Players: 1-2
Supports: Dual Shock
Best Feature: It costs \$10
Worst Feature: It's not worth \$10
Web Site: www.take2games.com



Priced at only \$10 retail, you might think there's no way to lose by picking up Spec Ops at a whim. Of course, that's before you actually turn on the game. Once you do, you'll truly understand the meaning of getting notin' for somethin'. At first look, Spec Ops doesn't seem altogether too bad—you get to choose your Rangers, each with his own specialty, and then outfit them with a complement of real-life weapons and equipment. But once you've past the entry screens, that air of realism is shattered. Let's start with your Rangers who crawl and roll like they're handicapped. I'm not sure where they learned these moves—they really don't look like they could possibly help them survive in the wild. And in this game, they really don't. In fact, nothing seems to work. You can stand behind a tree and you'll still be hit by sporadic enemy fire. So then you can try to lay flat behind one and it's still of no use. But that's not the only annoying thing—nothing in this game makes sense. It's really easy to kill enemies from a long distance with the machine gun, but then someone five feet away won't die until I empty a whole magazine into his body. **Spec Ops can't seem to decide whether it wants to be realistic or action-packed,** and even if the developers were able to decide one way or the other, the rest of the game is lame regardless. Save your 10 dollars and buy something more fun, like a bag of rocks.

Kraig

Hmm, what do you do when a game seems too hard? Do you: a) keep at it until you master it, b) consult a strategy guide or c) get really frustrated, smash something then lose all interest? I didn't smash anything, but I did lose interest fast. The premise is a good one—lead special forces on different covert missions, etc. **The problem is the missions become too ambitious and confusing.** I'm all for depth but only if it can be executed properly. There are too many loose ends...like getting shot by seemingly invisible enemies, having no idea where to go next, and dealing with intuitive gameplay. This game has potential but doesn't pull it off.

Dean

Spec Ops is so frustrating that I ended up calling a tester at Take2 to ask him what the hell was up with this **obnoxiously difficult** game. “Yeah, it is quite hard,” he tells me. “Have you tried avoiding the guys that shoot at you?” Yeah...I tried avoiding them, pal. But because of the stupid, cheap, crappy, pathetic “we didn't bother pushing it coz it's only \$10” AI in this game, it doesn't matter whether I'm lying down, behind a tree and on the other side of a hill from where the bad guys are—they can still drill a bullet into the back of my skull. Even for \$10 I still expect a game to be playable, and this really isn't. Do not be tempted by the cheap price.

John

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

4 3 2 2



Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Featured In: EGM #14
Players: 1-2
Supports: Dual-Shock controller
Best Feature: Improves on the first game
Worst Feature: Not by much
Web Site: www.capcom.com



When the first Street Fighter EX was released, everyone sighted a breath of relief that Capcom had finally taken the series out of the 2D realm. A couple years pass by and the inevitable sequel arrives. While the number of characters has increased to much greater proportions, the gameplay remains largely the same. Aside from the addition of the "excel" meter and a couple other minor alterations, this is the same Street Fighter you've come to know and love. Unfortunately, while the game plays much smoother than the slowdown-laden import-only SFEKs for PS2, it's still sluggish, with flat, static backgrounds that make the characters look like they're fighting at the school play, and "features" some of the most horrendous loading times seen on the PlayStation. On the plus side, old-school characters like Blanka and Dhalsim make a 3D comeback, so fans of Street Fighter 2 and all of its spurious sequels will have a field day. Anyone else used to the joys of games like Tekken 2 or Rival Schools will find the slow 2D gameplay of SFEK2 suffocating. Street Fighter EX 2 is certainly worth playing, but not necessarily worth buying. With more powerful hardware lurking, it'd be nice to see this series make some significant strides. This is just the same old same old. While hardcore Street Fighter fans may find this a worthy addition to their fighting library, **the majority of gamers will simply find this more of the same.** **Milkman**

I'm not really crazy about it, but besides the annoying load times there's not too much I can find fault with in EX2 Plus. Gameplay is a bit slower and more deliberate than the Alpha games, but that suits me fine since I always liked older fighting games over Marvel vs. Capcom style warp-speed titles. The graphics look pretty good—characters are a bit blocky but definitely look better than the last EX game and always animate smoothly. The expert mode is a nice way of introducing new players to the game while also giving experienced SF masters something to do when no one else's around for a versus battle. **Solid but nothing too new.** **Mark**

It's Street Fighter...in 3D...again. Which could be considered a good thing (if you love Street Fighter and don't ever want to see it change) or a bad thing (if you like Street Fighter, but want a change), depending on your preferences. The sequel's requisite changes are here: improved graphics (the models are much-less blocky), a few new characters and new combo system. Here comes the three-fold recommendation: if you loved the first one, EX2 should be worth your time and money. If you merely liked EX, then it would be best to pass or wait for EX3 on PS2. If you didn't like the first EX at all, then the sequel isn't going to change your mind. **Andrew**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	5	7



Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Featured In: EGM #130
Players: 1
Supports: Dual Shock
Best Feature: Fun gameplay like the original
Worst Feature: Unlimited continues
Web Site: www.capcom.com



What we have here is a combination of quality 2D and 3D graphics with old-school platformer/action gameplay. Controls are basic—dash, attack, jump, slide, etc.—but more than adequate for this type of game, and quite responsive. The levels are visually interesting, incorporating all kinds of crazy locations, and there are tons of excellent bosses, including many updated from the first game. So you're probably thinking "What's up with the 5.0 if everything's so peachy?" Well here's the problem—unlimited continues. And you don't restart a level when you die, you reappear right where you left off. This completely and totally destroys not only the challenge, but the whole point to a game like this. Part of the beauty of the original Strider on the Genesis (and what could have been great about the sequel), is how you were forced by a limited number of continues to really learn the game, and slowly improve by challenging stages over and over. The levels and bosses in Strider 2 are likewise designed so you can master them if you practice, but when you can throw life after life at them with no penalty, what's the point? You can just continue on and finish the game in a half hour. **The inclusion of Strider 1 is a nice perk, but the unlimited continues destroy this game for a wider audience;** only hardcore gamers and fans of the original should consider buying, everyone else can rent Strider 2 and finish it in a day. **Mark**

Back in the day, I rented the original Genesis Strider, and I have fond memories of playing it to the end. The inclusion of the original Strider on a separate disc is a great touch. Both games are really good—that's not the problem. The problem is that **unlimited continues turn Strider 2 into a cakewalk**, removing the challenge, turning it into a slashfest. There's no incentive to do better on each of the levels. Aside from occasional slowdown, Strider 2 is visually impressive. I'm a fan of the 2.5D style of gameplay. The last few levels, especially, look great and play great. Because it's so easily beaten, I'd be cautious about buying it, but it's a definite rental. **Chris**

Strider Hiryu is back in style, and it's about time too. This game feels like old-school Capcom, back before everything they released was either a fighting game or the latest spinoff of Resident Evil. Strider 2 is one of those "2.5D" games that blends gorgeous, hand-drawn sprites with fully polygonal backgrounds. The result is a classic Strider look complete with a lot of dramatic camera panning and angles that just wouldn't be possible in a 2D game. The gameplay is classic 2D fare as well. **It's too bad Capcom felt the need to allow players to continue endlessly.** Chances are you'll finish this game in one sitting and never play it again. **Breg**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	8	7	2



Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Eutechnyx
Featured In: EGM #129
Players: 1-2
Supports: Dual Shock
Best Feature: Lots of options
Worst Feature: Bad music and sound
Web Site: www.us.infogrames.com



A 24-hour racing event doesn't seem to be the best basis for a driving game. However, Infogrames simply used the 24 Hours of Le Mans as the building block for a full-featured sports car racing simulator. Sporting Arcade and Championship modes with two difficulty settings, the game also packs a complete, 24-hour race at Le Mans. Of course, for those of us who actually have lives to maintain, it's also possible to speed up the clock so that the race is over in 12 minutes, 24 minutes or two hours. Test Drive Le Mans includes three classes of sports cars: GT1, GT2 and Prototype. Just like the real racing series, you only need to win your class, not the entire race, to score a victory. An interesting feature is the danger of oil being spilled on the track. When a striped flag appears on the screen, you're in a slippery area and need to take caution. It's the first time I've seen this very realistic racing aspect done so well in a game. **Graphically, Test Drive Le Mans offers a good sense of speed and some nice car models, but also some very glitchy scenery.** In the sound department this game loses in just about every way. The music is bad and restarts every time the announcer says anything. Plus Eutechnyx, for some odd reason, decided to use some sort of static breakup noise for the engine backfire. I thought my speakers had blown up when I first heard it. Test Drive Le Mans is solid, but could have been better. **Greg**

Test Drive Le Mans has its flaws but I like it anyway. The intense speed and tight racing gameplay are what thrills me. The cars stick to the road like glue so cornering may not be realistic, but it is fun. You can almost go as fast in the turns as you can in the straights. I also like the way AI cars behave. They don't run perfect every time. They'll scrape a wall, spinout or just plain wreck...it's a nice change from the usual. Now for the flaws—the cars have little lateral movement; instead, the backgrounds seem to rotate around them. It's cheap but tolerable. Oh, and the back-fire noise is too loud. Check it out anyway. **Dean**

GT1 and GT2 racing is often overlooked in racing games. Too bad, 'cause it's actually a thrilling sport with all the best bits of sports car racing and stuff like CART or NASCAR all thrown into one event. Unfortunately TDM fails to really capture the "spirit" of the cars concerned here. Sure, they all look fairly accurate, and the teams are all spot-on, but they lack the feeling of kicking power. You never feel like you've got over 500hp pushing through the back wheels. The cars always feel like they're on rails, and there's little sideways movement as you take a corner at 150 mph. This isn't the most fun you'll have with a racer. File it under "adequate." **John**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	5	5	7



Publisher: SCEA
Developer: Contrail
Featured In: EGM #129
Players: 1
Supports: Dual Shock
Best Feature: Cool characters than before
Worst Feature: No in analog control
Web Site: www.playstation.com



When the first Wild Arms game showed up on American shores, Sony had just reversed its anti-RPG stance that had handcuffed these niche titles for so long. Prefacing Final Fantasy VII's arrival by a good margin, Wild Arms was the first graphically potent RPG to appear on the PlayStation. However, as anyone who plays RPGs knows, time does not stand still. Newer wonders like Final Fantasy VIII, Vagrant Story and even the Legend of Dragoon have upped the ante by some margin and Wild Arms 2 finds itself among tougher company than in the early days of the 32-bit era. Wild Arms 2 attempts to keep things rolling with fully 3D graphics, as opposed to the strictly 2D bitmaps found in the majority of the first game. Despite this, the visuals will impress no one, although they certainly manage to get the job done. Character design has taken a turn for the better, with the anime/Western flavored characters each having a unique, stylized type to them. Graphic enhancements aside, the game builds on the first by adding tons of weapons and items to use among the three main characters. Puzzle elements are spread liberally throughout the game, and you can now avoid battle at will, should you so choose. However, the genre hasn't sat still since the first game and the uninspired battle-engine shows its age. Still a good RPG, but state-of-the-art it's not.

Milkman

The original Wild Arms was the right game for the right time—but that time was three years ago, before Final Fantasy VII and the flood of gottahave games that have hit the PlayStation since. This sequel—which plays and looks much like the original—doesn't have what it takes to steal thunder from current RPG juggernauts Final Fantasy VIII, and Vagrant Story. Still, WA2 is a solid game that blends action- and traditional-RPG elements into an immense quest (and plenty of subquests, if you explore). Dialog rambles and the plot gets confusing, but the dungeons and character-building system are compelling enough to hold your interest.

Crispin

This reminds me of an old-school RPG, because of its deep fantasy roots. Its mix of 2D sprites and 3D environments works great, and while some may not enjoy the game's synthesized, repetitive and oddly tempoed music, I think it fits well. Being able to avoid enemy attacks is great for times when you don't want to be interrupted by battles. Searching for towns or areas is an interesting, if sometimes frustrating, feature. Drawbacks include having to adjust the camera a lot to see around obstacles and a font that's a bit hard to read. The translations a little loose in spots (not as tight or good as it could've been), but a solid RPG all around.

Chris

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	5	6	5

Carnageddon

Publisher: Titus
Developer: SGI
Featured In: EGM #123
Players: 1
Supports: None
Web Site: www.titusgames.com

Best Feature: Decent graphics
Worst Feature: Just about everything

Carnageddon is proof-positive that just because a game got critical acclaim on the PC a few years ago doesn't mean it'll make a good Game Boy Color game. The whole point is to race around some poorly designed tracks in your futuristic mech-machine, running over as many people as possible as you try to figure out where the next checkpoint is. This task isn't too difficult—that is, until trackside objects such as trees and buildings cover up the radar in the corner of the screen. After that it's a crashout, normally resulting in you hitting just about every barrier on the screen as you try to navigate the convoluted courses blindly. Even ignoring this incredibly irritating feature, Carnageddon just isn't much of a game. You can earn credits and buy new cars, but that's about the only other "feature." The graphics are actually not that bad for the Game Boy Color. Unfortunately the presentation, gameplay and premise are all uninspired and the entire game feels like it should have come out years ago. With all the racing games for GBC, Carnageddon isn't worth it.

Greg

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	4	2	2

Toonsylvania

Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: RFX Interactive
Featured In: None
Players: 1
Supports: Infra-red link
Web Site: www.ubisoft.com

Best Feature: Simple platform stuff for kids
Worst Feature: Any name could be on the box

I think Ubi Soft should have a stock generic platform action game they can pull out and use whenever a company wants a licensed game for their toy line, cartoon, movie or whatever. I think it'd save them time and money in the long run. In fact, they can just use Toonsylvania since it's so average—you could slap any old character in here, surround some enemies and have yourself another mindless action game on the Game Boy. Yeah, Toonsylvania is better suited for kids...little kids who are just learning how to play games. Older gamers will be driven nuts by this game's simple yet tedious gameplay, repetitive music, awkward control and brain-dead enemies. Sometimes the game's one-hit enemies respawn, sometimes they don't. Levels are small, too. Stuff like this was done back on the NES a long time ago. And while that isn't always a bad thing, in this case it is. One feature in particular stands out: The game uses the Infra-red link, so you can hook up with a pal who has certain Ubi Soft titles and get secret codes and cheats for this game.

Shawn

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	2	1	4

Xtreme Sports

Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Running Dog
Featured In: None
Players: 1
Supports: None
Web Site: www.infogames.com

Best Feature: Nice use of color
Worst Feature: No two-player support

"Extreme" sports games usually turn out either really, really awful, or as just mediocre games that you'll play once and then promptly forget. Even once in a while you'll see a Tony Hawk or a Sled Storm, but the vast majority fall into the bargain bin. Fortunately, Xtreme Sports manages to be more than your stereotypical extreme title and will probably remind some of T&C Surf Design on the NES. There are only five events (skateboarding, skysurfing, in-line skating, surfing and street luge), but there are three different levels for each. Adding to the variety, you can walk around "Xtreme Island," challenging anyone you come across Pokémon-style to a quick battle ("The grass is green, let's fight!"), and compete with different requirements for victory. The biggest problem I have is the lack of any complicated tricks. It would be nice to do more in the skateboarding level than just spin around, for example. It's disappointing, but fits in with the overall simplistic nature of the game. Xtreme Sports is a fun little game, even if there are better Game Boy diversions out there.

Andrew

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	6	5	6

Last Blade

Publisher: SNK
Developer: SNK
Featured In: EGM #130
Players: 1-2
Supports: Link Cable
Web Site: www.snkusa.com

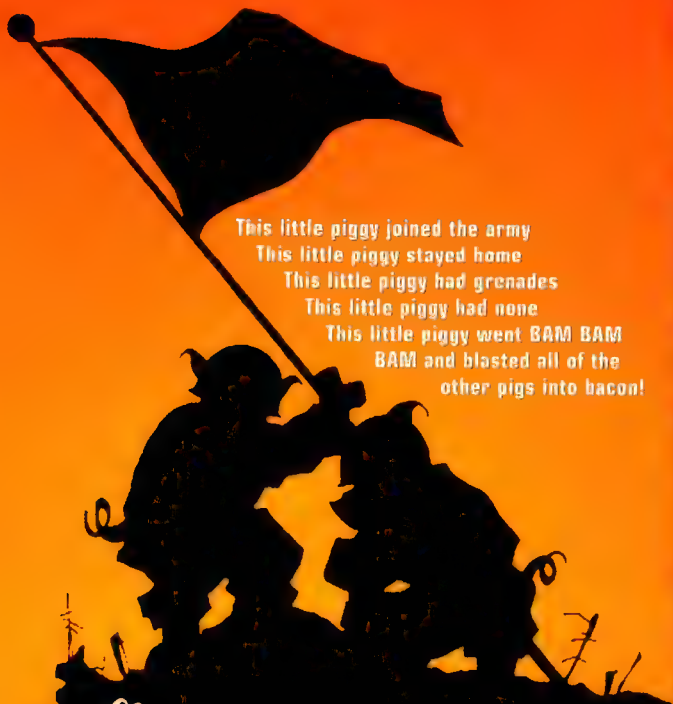
Best Feature: Excellent control
Worst Feature: Moves very slowly for a fighter

The Neo-Geo Pocket Color is quickly becoming the system of choice for 2D fighting fans. It always amazes me just how much depth SNK is able to give to these little handheld fighters, especially only having two buttons to work with. Last Blade uses a point system, meaning you gain points after accomplishing certain things that will unlock extra modes. The game has more in common with Samurai Shodown than the other NGPC fighters as far as the feel and battle system go, so if you long for the breakneck speed of SNK vs. Capcom you may not be satisfied. Each hit in TLB is more of an event, keeping the match at a slow pace with a flurry of activity every few seconds. Reversals are just as, if not more important than, blocking your opponent's attacks. There is some strategy (when you choose your fighter you get to decide whether you want them to concentrate on speed or power) and the graphics are crisp, with nice dramatic scenery, but the music feels too slow to belong in a fighting game. Overall, it's another solid NGPC fighter.

Greg

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	7	8	9

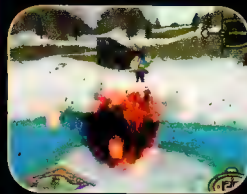
HOGS OF WAR™



This little piggy joined the army
This little piggy stayed home
This little piggy had grenades
This little piggy had none
This little piggy went BAM BAM
BAM and blasted all of the
other pigs into bacon!



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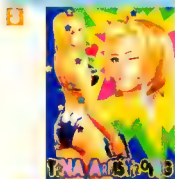


www.zdnet.com



Tricks of the Trade

By Trickman Terry
tricks@ziffdavis.com

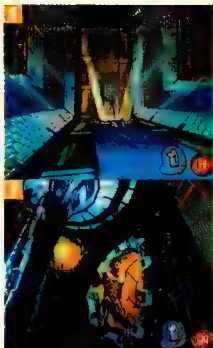


DREAMCAST

Dead or Alive 2

Cool Codes

- Change View of Victory Pose**
As your character does his/her victory pose, hold X and move the pad or analog stick to rotate the view. Press the B button to zoom in.
- Full Screen Pause**
During the game, press Start to pause. Then press the R-Trigger button and the words will be gone.
- Girl Art**
Place the Dead or Alive 2 disc into a PC-compatible CD-ROM drive. Access the disc and look for a folder called Bonus. In this folder are several images of the DOA2 girls in bikinis.



MDK2

New Camera Angle, Full Pause, Etc.

- New Camera Angle**
During the game, press Start to pause. Then hold L-Trigger+R-Trigger buttons and press B, A, B, A.
- Full Screen Pause**
During the game, press Start to pause. Then press X+Y simultaneously to get a clean game screen without the text.
- PC Pictures and Sounds**
Place the MDK2 disc into a PC-compatible CD-ROM drive. Access the disc and look for a folder called MDK2. Inside, you'll find picture and sound files that you can view and play on your computer.



NINTENDO 64

All-Star Baseball 2001

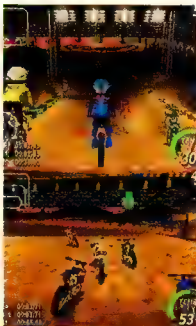
Cool, New Modes

- On the Main Menu Screen, highlight and access the Game Options. In the Game Options Screen, scroll until you highlight the Enter Cheats option. Access this option and on the Cheat Code Screen, enter one of these passwords for the following modes.
- Big Ball Mode**
Put in BCHBLKTPTY as your password.
 - Ball Trail Mode**
Put in WLDWLDWST as your password.

Cyber Tiger

Unlock Characters and Course

- From the Title Screen, choose Play. Now pick Stroke or Match Play and choose to edit a golfer. Go to the Edit Name option and enter a code.
- Unlock Kimmi**
Choose any character and change the name to Rapper.
- Unlock Starr**
Choose any character and change the name to Retro.
- Unlock Marvin (the Alien)**
Choose any character and change the name to UFO.
- Change the Looks of Liltiger**
Choose Liltiger and change the name to Prodigy.
- Unlock the Volcano Course**
Choose any character and change the name to Sthelens.



TRICK OF THE MONTH

Excitebike 64

(For Nintendo 64)
Cheat Menu and More Cheat Menu

- On the Main Menu Screen, press and hold the following buttons in this order: Hold L Button, then hold C-Right, then hold C-Down. While holding these buttons, press A. The "Enter A Cheat Code" Menu will appear. On this screen, you may input any of these passwords as shown.
- Big Head Mode**
Enter BLAHBLAH on the Cheat Code Screen.
- Invisible Rider**
Enter INVISIDER on the Cheat Code Screen.
- Stunt Bonus**
Enter SHOWOFF on the Cheat Code Screen.

Kirk N. Bramlett Jr.
Ballwin, MO

HEY, YOU, WANNA WIN FREE STUFF?

If your trick is selected as Trick of the Month, you will win a free GameShark provided by InterAct, and a Pro Shock, or a Hyper64, or a VIPER controller from Fire International. If you are given credit for submitting a hot trick in this section, you will win a free game. see page 159 for rules.

Note: if you send your trick by e-mail, you must include your real name and address.

Send your best tricks, codes, Web sites, anything that can help make games more fun or interesting to:

Tricks of the Trade
P.O. Box 3338
Oak Brook IL
60522-3338

or send e-mail to:

tricks@ziffdavis.com



TRICKS

TOP 10 TRICKS

The top 10 games of the last month given the full-on *Trickman* treatment:

1. Pokémon (Yellow) (GB)

Easy Level Gain

To easily gain experience, switch the Pokémon you want to train with the top Pokémon on your list. When you go into battle, this Pokémon will appear. Once you win the battle, the beginning Pokémon and the fighting Pokémon both gain experience points. This is especially useful if the Pokémon you want to build up has no initial attack in its first form.

2. Mario Party 2 (N64)

Find Codes

Send in codes for this game. If we print yours, you'll score a free game!

3. Crazy Taxi (DC)

Awesome Codes

From the Mode Selection Screen, choose the Arcade or the Original Mode. Now choose the amount of time you want, and at the "Now Loading" Screen, press and hold the following button combinations until the Driver Select Screen appears.

Expert

Press and hold L-Trigger+R-Trigger+Start. When the Driver Select Screen appears, you will see the word "Expert" in the lower-left corner of the screen.

Hidden Bike

To unlock the bike, go to the Character Select Screen and highlight the driver you want. Now press L-Trigger+R-Trigger three times simultaneously. Then press button A to pick your driver. You will hear bicycle chimes to confirm it was entered correctly.

4. Gran Turismo 2 (PS)

Find Codes

Send in codes for this game. If we print yours, you'll score a free game!

cont. on pg. 152



Pokémon Stadium

Pikachu Talks

- Note: You must have the yellow version of the Game Boy Pokémon game for this to work. Upload Pikachu from the game to Pokémon Stadium. Don't register Pikachu. Now start a battle and use Pikachu. When battling, Pikachu will say its name and have new animations for some of its moves.

WCW Mayhem

Spring Stampede PPV Code

- At Main Menu, access the Pay-Per-View Password option. Enter the code (Note: the code is case sensitive).
- WCW Spring Stampede**
@HkfyIbwfQQF.
You'll get the WCW Stampede ring, and these matchups: DDP vs. BPP, Booker T. vs. Kidman, Lash vs. Buff and Sting vs. Hart.

tricks@ziffdavis.com

We want your tricks! We want to include your best codes and tricks in every issue, to put along with all our great tricks we pack in every issue. You can even win prizes if we pick yours as Trick of the Month!

*FROM MARCH 1998 FOR CARNIVAL MILES



Tony Hawk's Pro Skater

Awesome Tricks

Slow Motion

Choose Career Mode from the Main Menu and begin your game. While playing,

- press Start to pause. Press and hold the L button. While holding it, press Down, Down, Up-C, Right-C, Left.

Turbo Skater

Choose Career Mode from the Main Menu and begin your game. While playing, press Start to pause. Press and hold the L button. While holding it, press Right, Up, Down, Down, Up, Down. The screen will shake if entered correctly.

Stats Raised to 10

Choose Career Mode from the Main Menu and begin your game. While playing, press Start to pause. Press and hold the L button. While holding it, press Down, Right, Up, Right, Up, Left, Left-C. The screen will shake if entered correctly.

2 All Tapes

Choose Career Mode from the Main Menu and begin



Tony Hawk cont.

your game. While playing, press Start to pause. Press and hold the L button. While holding it, press Right-C, Left, Up, Up-C, Up-C, Right, Down, Up. The screen will shake if entered correctly.

1 Faster Specials

Choose Career Mode from the Main Menu and begin your game. While playing, press Start to pause. Press and hold the L button. While holding it, press Up-C, Left, Down-C, Down-C, Up, Down, Right. The screen will shake if entered correctly.

GoldenEye 007

Unlock Missions Button Codes

Enter codes at Mission Select Screen with the L, R and C buttons, and D-pad. Hold the buttons for one or two seconds between steps.

Facility Unlocked

Hold L+R Buttons and press C-Up, hold R Button and press C-Left, hold L Button and press Left, hold R Button and press C-Down, hold L Button and press C-Right, hold R Button and press Right, hold L+R Buttons and press C-Up, hold L Button and press Right.

2 Runway Unlocked

Hold L+R Buttons and press Left, hold R Button and press Left, hold L Button and press C-Up, hold L Button and press Left, hold R Button and press C-Up, hold R Button



GoldenEye 007 cont.

and press C-Down, hold R Button and press C-Right, hold R Button and press Right, hold L Button and press Down, hold R Button and press C-Left.

Surface 1 Unlocked

Hold R Button and press C-Left, hold L+R Buttons and press C-Up, hold L Button and press Left, hold R Button and press Up, hold R Button and press Left, hold L Button and press Up, hold R Button and press C-Down, hold L Button and press Right, hold L Button and press C-Right, hold L+R Buttons and press Down.

1 Bunker 1 Unlocked

Hold L Button and press C-Down, hold R Button and press Right, hold L Button and press C-Right, hold R Button and press C-Left, hold L Button and press C-Down, hold L+R Buttons and press Left, hold L Button and press C-Right, hold L+R Buttons and press Up, hold R Button and press C-Right, hold L Button and press Up.

2 Silo Unlocked

Hold L Button and press Up, hold R Button and press C-Down, hold L Button and press Left, hold R Button and press Down, hold L Button and press C-Left, hold L+R Buttons and press C-Right, hold L Button and press C-Up, hold R Button and press Right, hold R Button and press C-Right.



GoldenEye 007 cont.

3 Frigate Unlocked

Hold R Button and press C-Up, hold L Button and press Down, hold R Button and press C-Right, hold L Button and press Left, hold L+R Buttons and press Up, hold L+R Buttons and press C-Down, hold R Button and press C-Down, hold R Button and press Up.

4 Surface 2 Unlocked

Hold L Button and press C-Down, hold L+R Buttons and press C-Right, hold R Button and press C-Right, hold R Button and press C-Up, hold R Button and press C-Left, hold L Button and press Right, hold L+R Button and press C-Up, hold L Button and press C-Right, hold L+R Buttons and press Down, hold L Button and press C-Right.

Bunker 2 Unlocked

Hold L Button and press Down, hold R Button and press Down, hold L+R Buttons and press C-Up, hold L Button and press Left, hold L+R Buttons and press Right, hold L Button and press C-Left, hold R Button and press Right, hold L Button and press Left, hold L Button and press Left, hold L Button and press C-Down.

We'll have codes for the rest of GoldenEye's missions in a future issue.



GameShark Code Center

Nintendo 64

All Star Baseball 2001

Big Ball Mode

800296320001

Ball Trail Mode

800296360001

Tom Thumb Mode

8002963a0001

Infinite Creation Points

8110534042ba

Infinite Pitch Type Points

81105a544200

1 Ball And You Walk

d106a2760000

8106a2760003

1 Out And You Are Out

d106a27a0000

8106a27a0002

1 Strike And You Are Out

d106a2780000

8106a2780002

Away Team Scores 50

80060d0b0032

Home Team Scores 50

800599830032

Infinite Balls

8106a2760000

Infinite Strikes

8106a2780000

Pokémon Stadium

Have All Pichachus/Magnemites

801183bc0000

801183bd0000

801183be0000

WWF Wrestlemania 2000

Infinite Creation Points

8011a81b0001

Easy Pins P1

801671fa0064

Easy Pins P2

801676880064

Easy Pins P3

80167b1c0064

Easy Pins P4

80167f000064

Easy Royal Rumble Win

8016722d00ff

801676c300ff

All Secret Characters

8109e45affff

Instant Win

8016722e00ff

801676c200ff

Ancient Wrestlers

8004a58a000f

Field Goal

800105480043

Backward Wrestlers

800105580043

Giant Wrestlers

8001064e003e

PlayStation

Alundra 2

Infinite Health

8006771003e7

8006771203e7

8006771403e7

8006771603e7

Infinite Gold

800677060010

Rising Sword

8006746c0024

Valar Shield

8006746e002c

Infinite Keys

8006744e0100

F1 2000

Quick 1st Place Ranking

e0034e2d0000

30034e2d1010

Low Lap Time

80034e200400

Galerians

Rion: Infinite HP

801af97200c8

801c2f9c00c8

Rion: No AP

801af96c0000

Rion: Infinite Nalcon

801af97800c8

Rion: Infinite Red

801af97c00c8

Rion: Infinite D-Felon

801af98000c8

Rion: Max Psychic Level

301c2fa600c8

Rion: Have D-Felon

801af9aeffff

Enable All Movies

801fd00a0fff

801fd00600ff

Hydro Thunder

Always Place 1st

8009d580001

Unlock All Tracks And Boats

800a223c0000

800a223e0000

800a22400000

800a22420000

800a22440000

800a22460000

800a22480000

Triple Play 2001

Enable All Rewards

80054d08ffff

80054d0affff

Enable All Legendary Players

80054d0cffff

80054d0effff



TRICKS

1-900-PRE VIEW
773 8439

The number to call for the latest cheats a gaming info

\$1.49 per minute. Must be 18 years or older. Under 18 must have parents' permission

WWW.VIDEOGAMES.COM

Hey kids! Hunkerin' for some video game news in between issues of *Electronic Gaming Monthly*? Well, get on down to videogames.com for all the latest info!

TOP 5 TRICKS FOR OLD-SCHOOL REMAKES



1 Asteroids (PS)

Classic Cheats

After pausing in the middle of the classic Asteroids game, enter these codes:
99 Lives: Up, X, Down, Triangle, Left, Square, Right, Circle.
Invincibility: Down, Down, Up, Up, Circle, Square, Triangle, Triangle.



2 Paperboy (N64)

Cool Cheats

Enter any one of the codes shown below for various results.
Unlimited Newspapers: NOBUNDLE
Paperboy Can't Get Hit: INVINC
High Jump: MOON
Newspapers Are Huge: SUNDAY



3 Pong (PS)

Open Zones and Levels

As soon as you see the "Zone 1" screen, press the START button to pause. Now press L1, R1, L1, R1, and press START again. You will now be able to choose any Zone in the game. This will also open up each stage and the second "level type" will be available!



4 Rampage: World Tour (N64)

Level Select

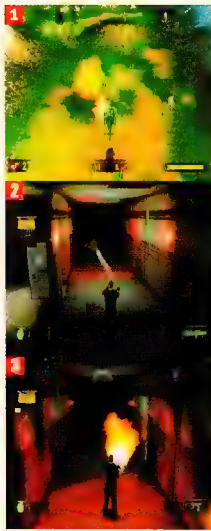
At the Character Selection Screen, hold L and all four C buttons simultaneously until you hear a noise. Press START. When the screen that shows the level you're about to play appears, press Left/Right to change the city or press Up/Down to change the country.



5 Space Invaders (PS)

Level Select and Classic Mode

At the Main Menu Screen, press Circle and a Level Select Menu will appear. Now you can choose your starting level. If you pick level 00, you will be taken to the final level; after defeating the "retro" space invader boss, you'll get "Classic."



PLAYSTATION

Army Men: Air Attack

Enable All Co-Pilots

1 Press Start on the Title Screen to go to the Main Menu. On the Main Menu, access the Password Screen. Now enter this code to get access to all the co-pilots: Up, Down, Up, Down, Up, Down, Up, Down. Press Start to accept the code. Begin a new game and move down to the Co-Pilot option to access them.

Die Hard Trilogy 2: Viva Las Vegas

Third-Person Codes

2 From the Main Menu, choose Movie or Arcade Mode. If you choose Arcade Mode, pick the spinning John McClane figure. In the middle of the third-person game, press START to pause. Now enter one of the codes. For best results, enter the Unlimited Ammo code after the Every Weapon code.
3 **Every Weapon**
Square, Square, Circle, Circle, L1, L1.

TOP 10 TRICKS

(CONTINUED)

5. Pokémon (Red) (GB)

Infinite Items

With this cheat, you can give yourself an unlimited supply of whatever item you have in your sixth inventory slot. Keep in mind that this trick only works in the Red and Blue versions of the game. First, head to Viridian City and talk to the old man who instructed you how to use Poké Balls. When he asks you, choose to watch his demonstration again. After that, immediately fly to Cinnabar Island. Choose one of your Pokémon who has the Surf Ability. Ride up and down the east coast of the island (hugging the shoreline) until you get into a battle. Eventually, you will encounter one of two glitchy Pokémon, either one with a name made up of scrambled boxes or the infamous Missingno. Whatever you do, do not catch any Pokémon that you encounter here. Repeat: Do not catch any of them. It will ruin your saved game. Run from every battle as soon as you get into one. After running from a battle with a glitch Pokémon, check your inventory. Whatever item was in the sixth slot should have a strange symbol where the quantity used to be. This usually means that you have well over 100 of that item. This trick can be done repeatedly, so you can essentially have infinite items. Now, you can have a ton of Master Balls or enough rare candy to power up all your Pokémon to level 100. Just don't power them up past that because you then run the risk of damaging your save game.

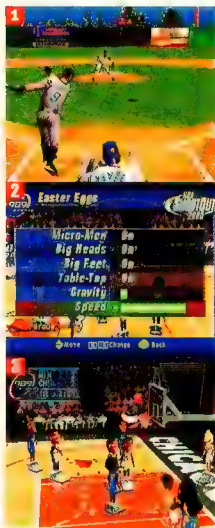
6. Pokémon (Blue) (GB)

Fight Safari Zone Pokémon

This will allow you to fight and catch the Safari Zone Pokémon outside the Safari Zone. To begin, you must have a Pokémon with the Surf Ability. Now go to the Safari Zone and enter the area where the Pokémon you are trying to catch is found. Stay in the section until the time runs out. Go to the Seafoam Islands by surfing south of Fuchsia City. Be sure you don't encounter any enemies on the way, or the trick won't work (this does not include the Pokémon in the water on the way there). On the edge

WWW.GAMEGUIDES.COM

The ultimate online resource for strategy. And be sure to pick up a copy of **EXPERT GAMER** every month for the latest tricks and strategies.



Die Hard Trilogy cont.

Unlimited Ammo and Grenade Weapons

L1, L1, R1, R1, Circle, Circle.

Invincibility

Triangle, Triangle, Circle, Circle, L1, L2.

Triple Play 2001

Triple Play Dream Team

- From the Main Menu Screen, choose Big League Challenge. When you get to the Player Select Screen, hold L2+R1+Up simultaneously. Keep holding these until you hear the announcer say, "Triple Play Baseball." Now you'll be able to play as this team in Big League Challenge mode.

NBA ShootOut 2000

Hidden Easter Egg Menu

- During a game, press Start to pause and then press the L2+R2+Square simultaneously. The Easter Eggs Menu will appear and you will be able to choose new options such as big heads, big feet, gravity, speed, etc.



Battleship

Stage Passwords

- On the Title Screen, press Start and then press Select to move down to the Password option. Press Start again to enter any of the codes shown here.
 - Stage 25: YSKGPC
 - Stage 26: BCSQBW
 - Stage 27: BDVJQJ
 - Stage 28: YFQPKP
 - Stage 29: BJRQZN
 - Stage 30: TRGGTD
 - Stage 31: JDNQJQ
 - Stage 32: TXBGTL
 - Stage 33: ZKFGXP
 - Stage 34: ZHPQCW
 - Stage 35: JCXJVL
 - Stage 36: TVDGTJ
 - Stage 37: TTLGKB
 - Stage 38: JZQWQP
 - Stage 39: JMRQCQ
 - Stage 40: PXGGTL
 - Stage 41: CHNQBW
 - Stage 42: CGYQJS
 - Stage 43: CDTQZQ
 - Stage 44: CBQBPP
 - Stage 45: CMXQCC
 - Stage 46: CKSQJP
 - Stage 47: CLVQZV
 - Stage 48 (Last Stage): PPFQYM
- Ending: PQMGTD



Rayman

99 Lives

- Press Start to pause. Then press Left, A, Right, B, Up, A, Left, B, Down, A, Right, B, Up, A, Left, B. The game will unpause, you'll see 99 lives.

Toy Story 2

Scene Passwords

- At Main Menu, access the Password option. On the Password Screen, enter the corresponding letters for the square formation password as shown: Scene 2 - PBPP, Scene 3 - BJWJ, Scene 4 - PJBW, Bonus 5, Scene 6 - WBPP, Bonus 7, Scene 8 - JBPJ, Scene 9 - JJWW, Scene 10 - PBWJ, Scene 11 - BPWW

NEO-GEO POCKET

The Match of the Millennium: SNK Vs. Capcom

Alternate Costume Colors

At the Character Select Screen, select character, then press and hold A. Your character's costume color will change.

Sonic the Hedgehog: Pocket Adventure

Faster Spin Dash

Press and hold Analog Down and press the A button repeatedly until you hear no more "power-up" noises. Release Analog Down to achieve an even faster Dash.

TOP 10 TRICKS (CONTINUED)

of the islands, there is a strip of the screen that is half land, and half water. Now, surf on this section and just keep going up and down on it. When you run into an enemy, it will be the Pokémon from the Safari Zone section you just left. This time though, you will be able to fight them and use the other Balls.

7. NHL (DC)

Black Box Team

Note: You must first have a controller plugged into the 4th port (D) on your Dreamcast and enter these tricks on the 4th controller. When the logo for Black Box appears, press and hold the L+R buttons. While holding these, press B, B, X. You will hear the announcer say, "Oh, Black Box baby." Now Black Box is available in the choice of teams.

Big Heads

Note: You must first have a controller plugged into the 4th port (D) on your Dreamcast and enter these tricks on the 4th controller. When the logo for Black Box appears, press and hold the L+R buttons. While holding these, press B, A, B, Y. You will hear the announcer say, "Oh, Black Box baby." All of the team will have big heads except for the goalie.

8. WWF Wrestlemania 2000 (NG4)

Find Codes

Send in codes for this game. If we print yours, you'll score a free game!

9. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater (PS)

Awesome Codes

Enter the following cheats while paused during play. If you entered these correctly, the screen will shake.

Big Head Mode

Hold L1 and press Left, Up, X, Down, Up, X.

Special Available Anytime

Hold L1 and press Square, Up, Left, Up, Circle, Triangle.

Get 10X Multiplier

Hold L1 and press Triangle, X, Triangle.

Get 15X Multiplier

Hold L1 and press X, Square, Square, Triangle, Up, Down.

10. Dukes of Hazzard (PS)

Find Codes

Send in codes for this game. If we print yours, you'll score a free game!



Get Some Cool stuff you could probably live without, but shouldn't



It's Not Your Dad's Zenith

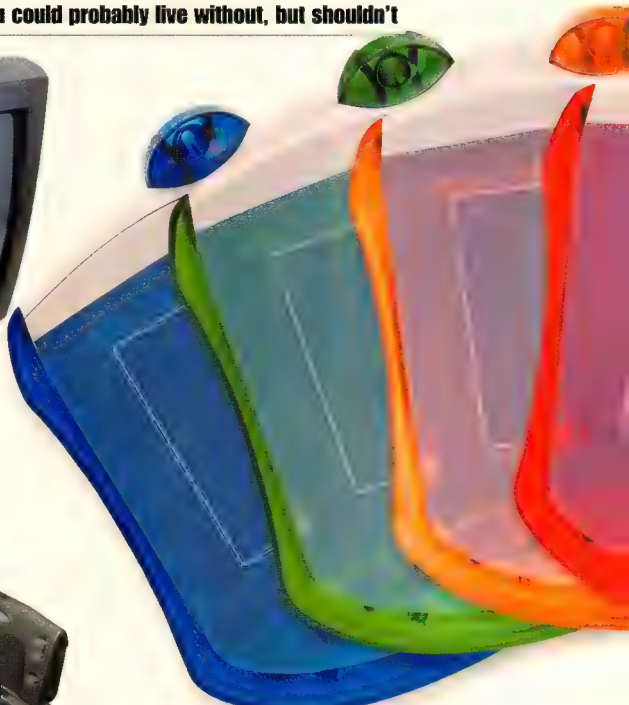
The 19-inch **Game TV** is Zenith's new set specifically designed with gamers in mind. It features 3D Front Surround speakers, 270 lines of resolution, brilliant color and a fancy remote. Its front A/V connectors make it easy to hook a system up to the TV in a snap. S-video would've been nice though.

Price: Around \$250
www.zenith.com

GBC, NGPC Get MP3!

We've covered MP3 players in this section before—all shapes, all sizes, all prices. This time we have something that truly stands out from the rest. It's the **SongBoy** (Songs on NeoGeo Pocket). It's a full-fledged MP3 player that simply plugs into your handheld like a cartridge. All you have to do is download some songs and plug in your headphones (and maybe buy an extra memory card to bring the player up to 64MB). It has all of the features you'd want from a digital music player: PC connectivity via USB, voice recording, extra memory card slots and more. It can even show special graphics and animations on screen depending on the song being played. We'll have more on this amazing device after E3.

Price: Around \$90
www.songboy.com



Blast Your Home-Brewed MP3 Tunes

Is MTV Music Generator just not powerful enough for you anymore? Well, if you have a PC then you may be ready to take it to the next level. The **BlasterKey MP3** from Creative shows you how to play the piano, compose all sorts of music and then easily record your own songs to MP3 format. The bundle comes with all of the software you'll need, five sound discs and the Soundblaster Live MP3 sound card. If you already have a SB Live sound card, the keyboard is available by itself.

Price: Around \$199 (for the bundle)
www.blasterkey.com

Be A Mario Artist On Your PC...or PS2?

If you've been hankering for an easier way to make art on your Mac or PC, consider the USB-compatible **Graphire Tablet** from Wacom. Each Graphire comes with the tablet, pen and wheel mouse—an awesome value. The thing has an amazing amount of sensitivity, and comes in a bunch of sweet transparent colors. Since the PS2 features USB ports, let's hope a company brings something like this to Sony's upcoming system. That'd rock.

Price: Around \$100
www.wacom.com



Body-movin' Beats and Video Game Music Treats

Want something instead of movies on DVD for a change? Palm Pictures has recently released **Sound & Motion Vol. 1** and **Hip Hop's Greatest Videos** on DVD. Sound & Motion is a collection of videos from a variety of electronic musicians, and Hip Hop's Greatest Videos features a variety of rap videos. The experience is both musical and visual. On the CD front, Mars Colony Music has recently released the soundtracks for **Resident Evil 3 Nemesis** and **Dino Crisis**. No doubt, these moody scores will be a nice addition to your library.

Price: Around \$20 (DVDs), Around \$15 (soundtracks)

www.palmpictures.com
www.marscolony.com

Bring On Noise

Sound is just as important as visuals when you're talking about gaming. Without it, we wouldn't get near the same experience—bullet whizzing by our head in *Medal of Honor*, the orchestra hits in *Resident Evil* and so on. Maybe it's time to upgrade your current sound system to take full advantage of the audio games have to offer. Here's several options available, depending on your budget.

Midland Speakers/Decoder

If you're like us, when it comes to technology and electronics, you want the best money can buy. Then consider the **Midland 5.1** system and the **ATH-2000** Dolby Digital Decoder box. Once you have your systems jacked into this gear, you'll never want to go back to TV-set-speaker-sound again. The sound from these five speakers and subwoofer is simply outstanding. And considering everything you get, the price isn't bad at all.

Price: Around \$200 (speakers, subwoofer, controls), Around \$100 (decoder)

www.midland.com



Diamond Audio

If you're on a budget, but still want incredible sound, look into these Diamond Audio Technology speaker sets. The **Pro Media 2012** is the standard two speaker set. Don't be fooled by its size though—the pair delivers an incredibly full sound. For a little extra cabbage, you can move up to the **Pro Media 3025**. The subwoofer in this trio really kicks the bass in games and music. Either way, you can't go wrong.

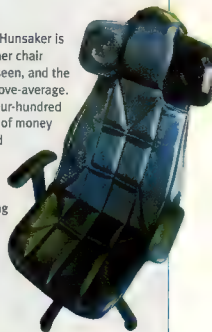
Price: Around \$35 (2012), \$70 (3025)
www.diamondaudio.com



Battle Chair

The **Battle Chair** from Hunsaker is cheaper than some other chair audio products we've seen, and the sound it puts out is above-average. Problem is, three- to four-hundred smackers is still a lot of money to shell out—you could buy a Dreamcast and some games for that much. But if you have a lot of extra cash laying around, and you fancy immersive one-player games, give the chair a shot.

Price: \$300-400
www.battlechair.com





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 Todd Zuniga • todd.zuniga@ziffdavis.com
 Greg Sewart • greg.sewart@ziffdavis.com
 Mark MacDonald • mark_macdonald@ziffdavis.com

FINAL WORD

The Great Ratings Debate



Chris Johnston

Illinois attorney general Jim Ryan is trying to get retailers in his state to enforce the ESRB Rating System, which at this point is a voluntary program. Since most of EGM's editors live in Illinois, you can imagine we had a lot to say when we made Ryan's plans the focus of this month's Final Word topic.



Todd Zuniga

Chris: Hmm...is it an election year? The ratings system is voluntary, period. You can see more real-life violence and gore on TV or on the news than in ANY video game. It is a guideline for parents. If parents are stupid enough NOT to watch what their



Greg Sewart

"...making it a law will just turn the whole thing into a bigger problem than it really has to be."

children are watching/playing/ doing, then that's their fault. It should not be the government's job to raise their kids because of their Ignorance. I think that it's important to look at how many games are actually "M" rated out of the total, and how many of those are in the top 20. I think there's only one M-rated game in the whole Top 20 games of '99. Most of the top games are Pokémon-something. Blockbuster Video enforces the ratings system and won't allow anyone under 18 to rent an M-rated game. That's a logical step because I think younger gamers are more likely to rent their games than buy them. But politicians need to remember that games are games...and kids are smart...they know what's real and what's "pretend" when it comes to gaming. If you're concerned about violence why not go after wrestling? That encourages kids to beat each other over the head with folding chairs, acting out their own wrestling fantasies. I'm thinking of starting a protest against the game Clue because it encourages kids to beat anyone named Colonel Mustard over the head with a candlestick in the kitchen. It's violence! Violence I tell you! Board games are VIOLENT!!!!



Mark MacDonald

Todd: You make stellar points, but I like the idea of some regulation. Kids have a way of getting their hands on a lot of things they shouldn't: cigs, gangsta rap, violent games. But I think if we can make it harder, just so the shadiest can do it, it's for the best. But now I do want to write a column on board game violence. That's really funny.

Greg: If they do start to enforce the M ratings it's gonna be a step back. Fewer

games like RE and Fear Effect will be made when companies are assured that an M-rated game will be harder for kids to buy. It'll mean fewer sales in the long run, even taking into account the fact that kids will most likely clamor to get their hands on something they're not supposed to have. This is all bullsh*t anyway, it's the parents' responsibility to know what their kids are buying. The fact that video games have ratings on them at all should be a hint that maybe not all of them are suitable for a young child. I do agree that stores like EB and Babbage's should take it upon

themselves to make sure a very young child doesn't buy an M-rated game without a parent's consent, but making it a law will just turn the whole thing into a bigger problem than it really has to be.

Chris: Exactly. If I worked at Babbage's and a 6- or 7-year-old kid came up with Resident Evil Code: Veronica and the \$60 to buy it and was without a parent, I'd be suspicious. But if I refused to sell it to them, I would also count on having a parent come in and bitch me out... just because society is that fricking idiotic. "WHY WON'T YOU SELL THIS GAME TO MY CHILD?!" It's just like in the movie industry, you fight to get a PG-13 rating on a film that you want to be a blockbuster. If I remember correctly, it's very hard to get an R-rated movie to do big business. I think *Saving Private Ryan* is the highest-grossing R-rated movie ever.

Mark: Do people who think enforcing game ratings is bullsh*t also disagree with enforcing movie ratings? Games are getting more and more like movies all the time, and now especially with the DVD format you could just have hardcore porn with little "interactive" card game segments between routings, call it a game, and sell it to whoever. I'm not saying I agree or disagree, it just seems to me either way you stand on this you have to take the same side as you do with film ratings. Another interesting point is how some games are rated. Just what is the criteria? There's some pretty messed-up stuff in MGS for the GBC, but it's rated E—probably just because it's a Game Boy game. How do they rate these things? Do they look at the cover art and decide?

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NEXT MONTH

August 2000

On sale July 4

Soul Reaver 2

EGM travels to San Francisco for an in-depth look at this latest installment in the Legacy of Kain series. Go behind the scenes into the development of **Soul Reaver 2**, **Crystal Dynamics'** and **Eidos'** hot sequel for the **Dreamcast** and the **PlayStationz**. We'll have the scoop on all the new enemies vampire hunters, spectral spirits,



demons and oh, yeah, humans too! Return to the spectral realm... if you dare.

ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY

• **Straight from E3—All the Latest Announcements and New Games—You'll Find Them Here!**

• **Full Preview of Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask for N64**

• **The new Metal Gear Solid game Reviewed for PS2**

• **Legend of Dragoon (PS) and Space Channel 5 (DC) Reviewed**

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine

July 2000

On sale June 12

Demo Disc

PlayStation

- **Tony Hawk's Pro Skater**
- **The Legend of Dragoon**
- **MLB 2001**
- **Star Trek: Invasion**
- **Mr. Driller**

Non-

Playables

- **Jedi Power Battles**
- **Tenchu 2**
- **Covert Ops: Nuclear Dawn**



Tony Hawk

The Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine is going to be something different from the July issue onward, so look for a bigger, better and brighter magazine. They'll still be bringing you an exclusive CD full of games every month, and all the PlayStation and PS2 info you could possibly want. It will all be wrapped in an even groovier package than ever before. What exactly will you see? Special PS2 U.S. launch

details including price, launch date and an actual games lineup. Plus, a closer look at **Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2**.

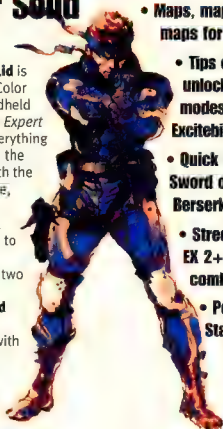
EXPERT GAMER

July 2000

On sale June 20

Metal Gear Solid

Solid Snake is back! That's right Kiddies, **Metal Gear Solid** is coming to a Game Boy Color near you soon. The handheld MGS is outstanding and *Expert Gamer* will show you everything you need to get through the tough spots. Staying with the tactical espionage theme, there's special bonus coverage on the original **Metal Gear Solid**. Want to catch some air? *XG* will deliver next month with two high-flyin' games in **Excitebike 64** and **Grind Session**. We'll also continue our coverage with an updated strategy for **Pokémon Stadium**.



• **Maps, maps & more maps for MGS**

• **Tips on unlocking all modes in Excitebike 64**

• **Quick Hit on Sword of the Berserk**

• **Street Fighter EX 2+ killer combos**
• **Pokémon Stadium**

*All editorial content is subject to change.

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Official Contest and Sweepstakes Rules

Trick of the Month

1. No Purchase Necessary: To enter, simply send a picture of yourself in any pose you wish. Your picture must be received by the contest office by the date of the contest. The contest will run from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on the date of the contest. The contest will be held on the date of the contest. The contest will be held on the date of the contest.

2. Prizes: The prizes will be as described in the contest rules. The prizes will be as described in the contest rules. The prizes will be as described in the contest rules.

3. Odds of Winning: The odds of winning will be as described in the contest rules. The odds of winning will be as described in the contest rules.

4. Eligibility: The contest is open to residents of the United States and Canada. The contest is open to residents of the United States and Canada.

5. Winner's List: The winner's list will be as described in the contest rules. The winner's list will be as described in the contest rules.

6. Sponsor: The contest is sponsored by Funco Land. The contest is sponsored by Funco Land.

7. Rules: The contest rules will be as described in the contest rules. The contest rules will be as described in the contest rules.

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*No Merollians are actually harmed in this game. Their little souls are returned to the planet Morolla where they are recycled and go on to live happy, productive lives.

