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**SONIC TEAM
SPECIAL**

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

Exclusive first review
and online survival guide

FINAL FANTASY X

Screens &
characters inside

PLUS SONIC ADVENTURE 2

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with Sonic



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First hands-on preview

March 2001
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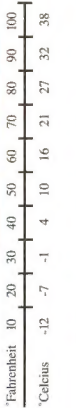


Weather

Today's temperatures and forecasts across the nation.

c cloudy
 sf snow flurries
 sh showers
 r rain
 pc partly cloudy
 t thunderstorms
 hw high winds

Fahrenheit

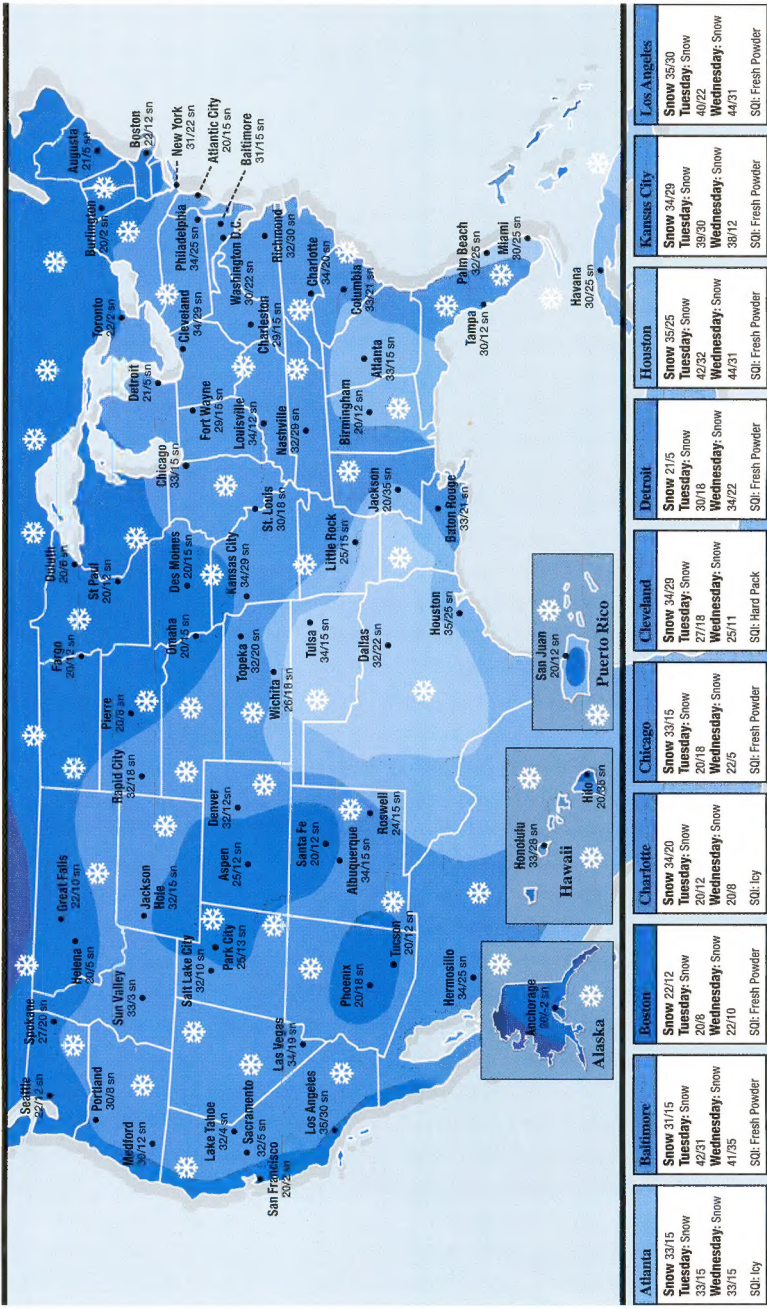


What are we going to do with all this snow?

A better question is, what aren't you going to do? Grab your snowboard and fly down the slopes. Get ozone-high air out of the half-pipe. Weak the laws of gravity. The possibilities are wide open. As is every available lift in North America.

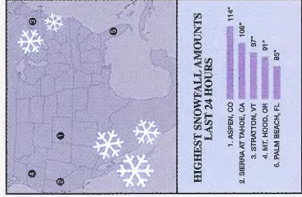
Ask the Weatherman

Send your questions to: Weather Editor: Doug Mukai. E-mail: doug@weathertrib.com. Or write to: Ask the Weatherman/ TRIBUNE, 1200 White Ave., Kirkton, VA 22229



New York	New York	Philadelphia	Phoenix	Portland	Salt Lake City	San Francisco	St. Louis	Tampa	Washington D.C.
Snow 32/29 Tuesday: Snow 28/17 Wednesday: Snow 24/18 SOI: Hard Pack	Snow 31/22 Tuesday: Snow 35/25 Wednesday: Snow 34/20 SOI: Fresh Powder	Snow 34/25 Tuesday: Snow 30/25 Wednesday: Snow 33/25 SOI: Hard Pack	Snow 20/18 Tuesday: Snow 32/15 Wednesday: Snow 32/14 SOI: Fresh Powder	Snow 30/8 Tuesday: Snow 25/12 Wednesday: Snow 26/12 SOI: Ice	Snow 32/10 Tuesday: Snow 27/18 Wednesday: Snow 24/14 SOI: Fresh Powder	Snow 20/2 Tuesday: Snow 18/4 Wednesday: Snow 12/2 SOI: Hard Pack	Snow 30/18 Tuesday: Snow 28/16 Wednesday: Snow 24/12 SOI: Fresh Powder	Snow 30/12 Tuesday: Snow 20/2 Wednesday: Snow 24/6 SOI: Hard Pack	Snow 30/22 Tuesday: Snow 33/15 Wednesday: Snow 28/2 SOI: Fresh Powder

Weekend sports weather



Blizzards in the Pacific Northwest could hamper snowboarders Kevin Jones and Tara Dakides as they defend their titles at the Mt. Hood Pro Invitational... For the third straight week, football stadium attendance will be significantly lower due to heavy snow... Record crowds should continue at mountain resorts nationwide.



Dakides

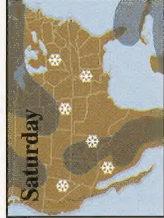


Jones

TODAY'S SNOW QUALITY INDEX (SQI)

Powder: A perfect time to use a sick day.

Hard Pack: A prime opportunity to work on your half-pipe prowess. A great day working.



Today through Sunday outlook: Mostly awesome amounts of up-to-your-ears fresh powder. East, west, north, south and everywhere in between. No end in sight. Is your board waxed?



The forecast calls for whatever your sick little mind can imagine. From falling snow to insanely realistic motion captures, we put you on the mountain. Break off gravity-defying tricks and grabs in over 20 huge, obstacle-laden courses. Shred deep powder with 10 top pros, including Todd Richards, Kevin Jones, Barrett Christy and Tara Dakides. Six killer events, including a wicked Pro Challenge Mode. The weather gods have spoken. Get out and worship.



CoolBoarders[®] 2001

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By John Davison • john_davison@ziffdavis.com

Electronic Gaming Monthly

Number 14.03 March 2001 www.zdnet.com/egm

EDITORIAL

The Changing Face Of Sega



This issue has something of a Sega theme as I'm sure you'll have noticed by now. It's Sonic's 10th anniversary (Yes, 10! Can you believe it?) and we have all kinds of cool stuff on the two big projects from his creators. You can check out our extensive history of the series this month before oogling at the gorgeous images of Sonic Adventure 2. If you really want to sink your teeth into some hedgehog goodness, get out to a store now and buy Phantasy Star Online. Not only is this a superb example of Sega leading the way for console gaming, but it also comes with a damn fine playable demo of SA2. What are you waiting for?

changing the expectations and perceptions of gamers everywhere. Players of NFL 2K1 take at Madden on the PS2 and say, "Hmmm, it looks great, but I'd rather take a slight hit on graphics and play my buddies online." With Phantasy Star Online, Sega will no doubt help elevate the console RPG to a new level and bring the genre in line with its PC-based brethren. Sega is opening the doors for everyone. Hopefully they can enlighten the whole games industry...but this leads us to our other big Sega story.

The rumors about Sega's fate have been circulating for a long time. They finally reached a peak at the end of 2000 in a story in the New York

"As they've proved so many times before, the boys and girls at Sega really know what they're doing..."

Go out and get it! When you get back, finish the demo a couple of times...rejoice in the knowledge that the Dreamcast is a damn fine system and then pop that PSO disc in. You're going to need some time to enjoy this, so you might want to order some pizza, take your pants off, kick out the cat/roommate/girlfriend and settle in for one of those truly satisfying all-night sessions. Keep your copy of EGM in hand too, as we've put together a survival guide to make sure you don't make a fool of yourself when you first log on to play online.

As they've proved so many times before, the boys and girls at Sega really know what they're doing when it comes to this video game marlarkey. In forging ahead with their online plans, they are doing something that everyone has wanted to see for a long time—they're

Times claiming that Nintendo was to buy Sega for about \$2 billion. This, we understand, is not true. What we are hearing more and more, though, is that the Dreamcast will almost certainly be the last piece of hardware we see from Sega. Why? Despite an awesome range of games, the system is not selling as well as it needs to globally. Why? We have no idea. If you look at the DC catalog, it has proportionately more great games than just about any system ever. Sega takes the risks for everyone else. They continue to open the doors on new concepts only for everyone else to come storming along afterward and steal their thunder. Sega will continue as a force to be reckoned with, but I fear it may be in a very different form from what we see now. Only time will tell, but we wish them the very best.

John Davison

Contributing Writers

Ethan Einhorn

EGM's official "jack-of-all-trades" freelancer came in and (once again) played all of the games we didn't want to.



Occasionally he found one that he liked (WDL: Thunder Tanks, for instance), but once we found out that he was having a good time with that one, we quickly confiscated the game and replaced it with more dreck.

Shawn Smith

Shawn left us for Illinois State University a few months ago, but managed to play the "I'm a poor college boy" card so that we would give

him enough work to pay for his college textbooks and finger paints. Over his Christmas break, we let him rummage through his old toy box in the office, and he rewarded us with a new installment of Power Tools.



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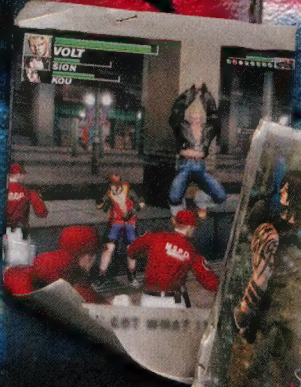
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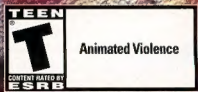
Siou, a man haunted by a tragic past. Within him lies strength and kindness, but also great sorrow. All this will change when he meets a girl named Dominique. These are the residents of DOG STREET.

The Bouncer



PlayStation 2

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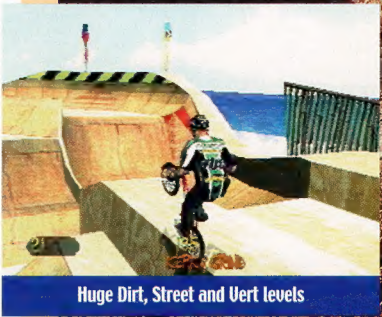
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3. Build huge jumps
4. Watch for signs of stray flowers
5. Kill stray flowers
6. Truck in more dirt
7. Build bigger jumps



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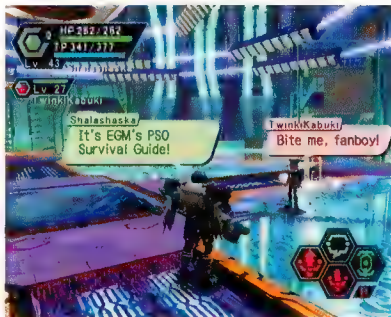


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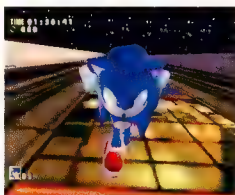
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Phantasy Star Online Survival Guide You won't last long in PSO without a little help from your friends—and we're here to jump-start your group's adventure. Wanna know how to build the perfect character? Help out your teammates? Screw over your teammates? **Turn to page 108 before you begin the quest.**



Sonic's 10th Anniversary Spectacular Sega's blue blur turns 10 in 2001, and we're on hand to celebrate with a look back at the world's most famous member of the erinaceous species (er, that's Latin for "hedgehog") **Page 88**



Everything Old is New Again Tomb Raider, Tekken, Twisted Metal—these and other famous PS one franchises are finding new life on PS2. Find out how they're being reinvented on **page 98**.



Daytona USA: Network Edition Sega's most-recognized racing franchise has sped onto the DC, complete with online support. See how this arcade and Saturn classic works on Sega's latest hardware. **Page 55.**



Gran Turismo 3 It's not called Gran Turismo 2K anymore, and it's finally right around the corner. We take a hands on spin with the jaw-dropping game that every PlayStation 2 owner has been waiting for. **Page 72.**

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We had a ton of info on the Xbox last issue, but find out what new details have recently surfaced. Also, a closer look at the Nintendo-Sega merger, Angelina Jolie as Lara Croft, and new Sega CD games. Yes, you read that right.

Gossip 40

Previews 54

We inaugurate our Xbox previews with a new peek at Malice. Also inside is Pokémon Stadium 2 and Mario Party 3 for N64; Ace Combat 4 and Gran Turismo 3 for PS2; and finally, Spider-Man, NBA Hoopz and Guilty Gear X for DC.

Review Crew 106

We rate Evil Dead, The Bouncer, Paper Mario and Mario Tennis GBC, along with a new wave of PS2 sports games: F1 Championship, NBA Live, NCAA GameBreaker, ESPN NBA 2Night and NCAA Final Four.

Tricks 120

The Final Word 125

Rumors about Nintendo buying Sega are back, and the crew waxes about "What if?". Although Nintendo and Sega vehemently deny the reports, take a look at what we think about this possible Dream Team.

SYSTEM KEY

	Dreamcast
	Nintendo 64
	PlayStation 2
	PlayStation
	Game Boy Color
	Arcade
	Xbox

PlayStation 2

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— EGM, NOVEMBER



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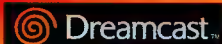
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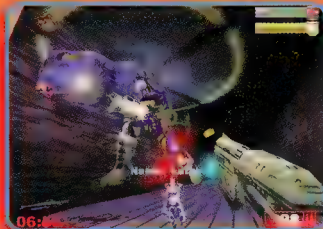
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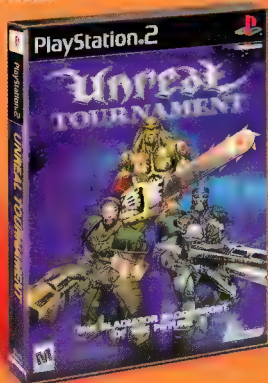
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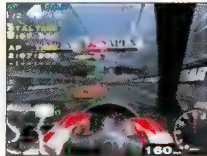
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- '80s sitcom-based letter art: 1
- Letters from Africa: 4
- % of writers who need a grammar-refresher course: 46
- Anti-Canadian letters: 17
- Obvious attempts to get in the Shorts section: 143
- System war-related letters: 267

Letters to the Editors

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Hsu and Chan In: The Third Dimension

Hello! I didn't know if you'd be interested or not, but my friend (Todd) and I thought it couldn't hurt to take a chance. We dressed up as Hsu and Chan for Halloween and thought someone at *EGM* might find it amusing (we already e-mailed the creator about it and he was greatly impressed). I made a Web site out of the pictures and stuff at <http://www.angelfire.com/anime2/kasagirl/howto.html> if you're interested. We even have a shameless plug picture of us reading *EGM* (and we got the brand-new issue that night, which I'm looking at in the picture). OK, that's all, just thought I'd let you know such a thing existed. I think it's

pretty cool, but we're hoping to do better next time. And there SHALL be a next time!

Zim
(Sara Brooks)

Go to the Web site Sara listed for more details and funny stories about Sara and Todd's evening as their favorite video game heroes. And here's what Hsu and Chan creator Norm Scott had to say to our costumed duo:

Wow—you guys went to a LOT of work, the costumes looked great! I am thoroughly stupefied and flattered, all at the same time.

Norm, the mighty stupefied and flattered cartoonist
<http://www.appe-law.com/evilmonkey>

"Wow—you guys went to a LOT of work, the costumes looked great! I am thoroughly stupefied and flattered, all at the same time."

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

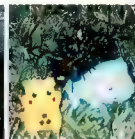
See page 128 for official rules.



Sara and Todd before...



Look! "action" figures too!



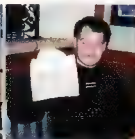
The aforementioned plug.



...and after, gasp! Uncanny!



The attention to detail is dizzying...



Ripped from the pages of *EGM*...



Thanks Sara and Todd—we put your photos in either really late, or really early, but either way we're sure we echo the sentiments of Hsu and Chan fans everywhere when we say the costumes and figures look great.

Cheers, Jeers And B.O.

Greetings! I have been a loyal subscriber to your magazine for several years now. I have also been a loyal subscriber to *T.V. Guide*. Why do I bring this up, you ask? Well, I was thinking about things I like and dislike about your mag today, when it dawned on me what a great idea it would be to have a section in your letters area devoted to "Reader Cheers & Jeers." This would allow us gamers to give equal voice to the good and the bad, while allowing you to consistently hone your fantastic publication into an even greater one. If I were you, though, I would add one iron-clad rule: All responses must be written in a civilized manner (none of that "Sega suks, Sony rulz!" neanderthal crap). To wit, here are my first Cheer and my first Jeer, respectively:

Cheers: To the Review Crew, for always remaining honest without insulting the gamers. I used to say I never trusted critics, but now that isn't 100 percent true. I trust you guys implicitly to warn me about the crap and steer me toward the good stuff. I was disappointed that Spider-Man didn't get a silver award, but I thank you for having the integrity to not let your love for Spidey get in the way of honesty.

Jeers: To not seeing certain games get reviewed at all. Several times in the past year, I have noted that a game I was anticipating did not get reviewed, even weeks after its release. This seems to happen most with GBC games (like *Yoda Stories* and *Deja Vu 1 & 2*). I know you have limited space, but I still wish you could find a way to let me know how good or bad a game is before I buy/rent it. Maybe online? Let me know if you think this section is a good idea. I personally think it would bring you and the gaming public closer together (but not in a bad way...no B.O. or anything). Thanks.

Rob Sinyard
Hampton, GA

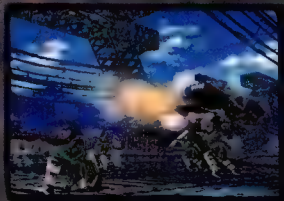
How refreshing. It's nice to receive such a finely crafted letter. And the use of such words as "hone" is always appreciated. Not to mention that you say nothing we can fire off

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PlayStation 2



Animated Blood
Animated Violence





LETTERS

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

Question of the Moment

What is your first impression of the Xbox?

an extremely sarcastic retort to. **Darn.** Of course we have no intention of heeding your suggestion for a Cheers and Jeers-esque section, but at least you got yours off your chest. Keep readin', and keep your powder dry, partner.

Gamer Wants More Soft-Core Coverage

I noticed lately that your content is from the perspective of and targeted toward the "hardcore gamer." The gamers who have the time and patience to muddle through, say, the weapon system of Vagrant Story or even the random battles of the early Final Fantasy games.

I don't want to come across as being critical, the *EGM* editors are exceptionally experienced in their field, but I'd really like to see some articles written from a different perspective, from that of the "casual gamer." The gamer who is interested in fast twitch games and doesn't care about exploring the depths of role-playing games and the rewards of building up strong characters; those who prefer action games.

You often comment on how video gaming is becoming more mainstream, but your magazine is still rather hardcore gamer-oriented. The problem in this is that an in-depth game will receive a very high score despite the fact that many gamers wouldn't buy it.

I'm not asking you to reform your entire magazine, but please give more recognition to the casual gamer.

Name withheld by request

Hold on there, chief. It's like the Air Force motto says: Aim High. We wouldn't be here if we were casual about games. It's in our DNA code 'n' stuff. Don't believe us? Just try to grab a freshly opened F1 sim away from Dean. Guarantee you'll pull back a bloody stump. If we lowered our standards, you'd be waist-deep in a world of Superman 64s (shudder), and I don't think any of us want to live in that world, do we? Seriously though, if we think a game is more suited toward casual

gamers, we try to mention it in the review text. So don't forget to always read the reviews, and don't just rely on the scores.

Fun With Playboy In Palm of Your Hand

Recently, I've heard (or dreamt) that Sony is going to be making a handheld video game console to compete with Nintendo's Game Boy Advance. Sony representatives have hinted that the new handheld will look somewhat like a fusion between a Dual Shock Controller and the Game Boy Color. They have also said that the Prototype name for the handheld is the Playboy (note: already copyrighted for an adult mag) and it would be released sometime in fall 2001!

I myself am really excited about the announcement of the Playboy and I think it would be a revolutionary system.

Edmund Lai
Vancouver B.C.

Q-Man is on the case, but he's being tight-lipped so far. In the meantime, we suggest another use for your idle hands (they are the devil's workshop, you know). Try the PS one with an available plug-in screen (from Pelican or Interact). It's out now, and there's more fun to be had with that than a stack of nudey books three feet high. Almost.

Harbo(u)ring Rage For Our Northern Brother

To everyone at *EGM* (except for the Canadian):

Recently I was at a friend's house (not in Canada) and he hooked up his NES for some retro gaming. He began to play a game I never heard of called Rescue. I thought it was some sort of stealth game because you were dodging searchlights and stuff. But then a sniper part came up, with a scope just like in Silent Scope. I guess that game isn't so original after all. I just thought I should tell you that, but

"You often comment on how video gaming is becoming more mainstream, but your magazine is still rather hardcore gamer-oriented."

It's amazing that Microsoft managed to plagiarize the PS2, Dreamcast and Gamecube system/controller designs in one swift blow.

Novasol33@aol.com

After reading your review I got really excited about the Xbox. With the hardware it has and the software being developed for it, I know it will steal many hardcore Sony fans.

cigma77@hotmail.com

The "system wars" standings after the Xbox launch:

- 1)Xbox
- 2)Gamecube
- 3)Dreamcast
- 4)PS2

kevink100@sega.net

Finally, a controller that's not grey/white!
kixposse@hotmail.com

Xbox is the hottest thing coming out this year! I can't get my hands on a PS2 (it's sold out almost everywhere), but once the Xbox comes out, it's gonna blow away that little PS2 box!

Tsyphon902@yahoo.com

I just finished looking at pics of the Xbox. Man, what a joke! The controllers are a blatant rip-off of the Dreamcast's controller. It also has the pressure-sensitive buttons of guess what other console?!? THE PLAYSTATION 2!!! Oh, that's not all! It also has the C-joystick of the Gamecube! I can't believe Microsoft can't get a design of its own!

brnxbombers1 2@yahoo.com



Next Month's Question of the Moment:

**What upcoming game are
you most excited about?**

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

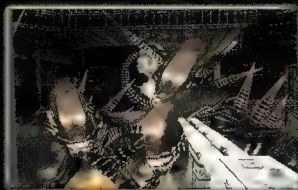
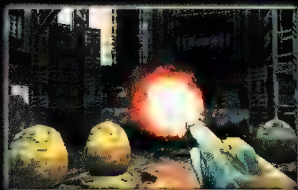
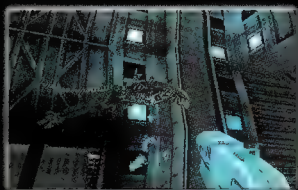
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Please note: We reserve the right to edit any correspondence for space purposes. If you don't want your name, city/state or e-mail address printed, tell us so (but please include your phone number and mailing address for Letter of the Month consideration). Also note: although we can only respond to a few letters each month, we read and appreciate (most) all of them. So keep 'em coming, eventually you might see your handy work turn up here!

you all probably knew that already (except for Stewart).

Oh, if you can't tell, I am still mad about Stewart's Chrono Cross review. beagles_gay@hotmail.com

Wow, who knew our little friend from behind the "Maple Curtain" would touch so many so deeply with his prose. His Chrono review was all the way back in issue 134, and our mailboxes are still seething with mail about it. In fact, it ranks among the top 10 subjects every month. For his part, Sewart (note the proper spelling) remains unapologetic, and stands brazenly in the face of all who query him.

Area Youth Demands "Madd Propz" For Luigi

Why has Luigi always been overshadowed by Mario? He's taller and can jump higher (according to Super Mario 2's physics). Why does he always get crapped on? He never got much credit in saving Peach. In Super Mario World, when you beat Bowser, it mentions Mario, Yoshi and the eggs. Not even a mention of Luigi. The eggs get mentioned instead of Luigi? I don't think that's right. And then the one game Luigi stars in, and what's it called?! Mario is missing! It doesn't even have Luigi's name in it. And then in Mario RPG, I forgot if Luigi was in it, and if he was, it was pretty late in the game. Oh, then in Super Mario 64, no Luigi to be seen. Even Yoshi got a special appearance. In Smash Bros., he's a secret character. They put a yellow electric rat in front of a legend! Don't get me wrong, I was all for Pokémon until it became the cash crop of every company, but they put Pikachu before Luigi, who's been around for about 16 years. If you noticed in Mario Tennis, the glum way he says, "Here we go..." and the expression on player 2 Luigi in Smash Bros. I think Luigi deserves to outdo Mario for once. He's been crapped on for over 15 years.

Adolfo Reyes
Northlake, IL

In life, a man has to pick his

SHORTS

From those with very little on their minds.

Three questions.
1. Is there really a barre? 2. How do you put e-mail in it? 3. Is this bad enough to get in? pandamny5@hotmail.com

1. Yes
2. Very carefully
3. Yes

battles in order to truly accomplish a few precious things that are near and dear to his heart, rather than fighting for everything and winning nothing. Obviously you are aware of this notion, Adolfo, and we are all the better for your passion. Who else would take up the mantle of a maintenance engineer's sibling, small in stature, who has, in your own words, been "crapped on"? We hope that your touting of Luigi's role down through the ages will inspire others to laud his virtues. Or something.

Grandork=Ganondorf

We all know that many actors end up in video games, like Mark Hamill and Malcolm McDowell. Well, I found another one. The first clue was a painting of Ganondorf in the instruction booklet of Zelda: Ocarina of Time. His hairstyle, his shoulders, the way he smiled...everything looked so familiar to me. This was two years ago, but now I've seen that GameCube video and suddenly everything is clear! I analyzed one screenshot with a special software (www.mossad.com/download/tools/fakefinder/) and I was able to restore




the original pixels. I can't wait to see a new screenshot of the fountain fairy...

Nic Cramer
nicolauscramer@aol.com

Nice work, man! This ranks up there with the unmasking of Batman, Kiss and Wonderdog. Of course this takes some of the mystery out of the game, but anything goes in the world of hard-hitting investigative journalism. Expect a call from the Nobel people.

LETTER MAN

WINNER Raniel Nebrida
Houston, TX



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Close, but no controller

Bad luck to these guys... better luck next time. Feel free to e-mail us artwork as well.



B. Cary Pasadena, MD



**Matt Steele
Georgetown, TX**

(It may not be "Timely", but there was indeed an AIL game, for the Sega Master System. Plus, come on, it's ALF!)

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

WITH ENEMIES LIKE THIS...



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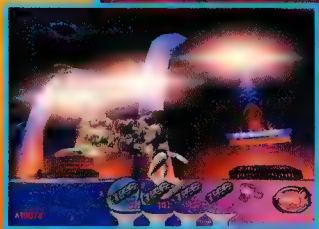
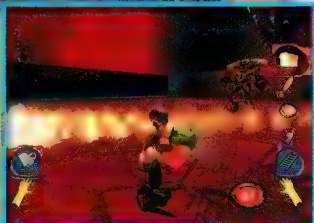
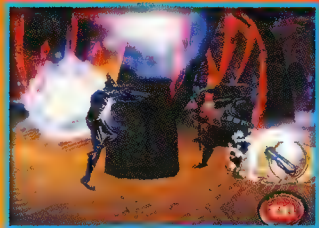
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Target Location: _____
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7 8 9 9 8 7



...WHO NEEDS



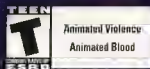
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By Chris Johnston chris_johnston@ziffdavis.com
 & Jonathan Dudlak jonathan_dudlak@ziffdavis.com

Press Start

The Hottest Gaming News on the Planet

If They Mated...

Is Nintendo Going to Buy Sega?

You've probably heard this one before. "Dude, Nintendo's going to buy Sega and they're, like, gonna stomp the competition. My uncle's brother's mom's sister's husband's friend works at Nintendo in Japan and he totally says it's true. Yeah, and they're, like, doing a system called DreamCube now which can rotate all these polygons. It's super boss." OK, so we've exaggerated a little. But if you've been listening to the news lately, you may have heard a startling report come over the wire: Nintendo's going to buy Sega! But wait, before you begin jumping around for joy (or begin cutting off limbs, depending on your console affiliation) let us calm you down—it hasn't happened...yet. That didn't stop people from believing it, causing Sega's stock to rise, Nintendo's to fall, and a whole bunch of people to become horribly confused.

How It All Began

On Dec. 27, 2000, *The New York Times* printed a story called "Nintendo Is Reported in Talks to Buy Sega." The paper sourced "executives close to the negotiations" but did not name names, saying that discussions had reportedly been going on for months, and put the deal somewhere around the \$2 billion mark. The same article quoted representatives from both companies scoffing at the report, including Sega spokesman Munehiro Umemura who called it "absolutely outrageous."

After the report was mirrored by *Reuters*, it was picked up by many other news outlets, including local news affiliates all over the country who reported it almost as if it had happened. Shares of Sega on the Tokyo Stock Exchange rose by 100 yen before being frozen by the exchange at 1,054 yen (\$9.25), even as Nintendo stock fell 5.4 percent to 17,390 yen (\$152). This is common activity in a buyout—the buying company's stock dips a little, while the one being bought goes up.

Nintendo and Sega both continued to deny



the report. A Nintendo spokesman told *Reuters*, "We are not in such talks." Nintendo President Hiroshi Yamauchi got in on the action the day the report became public by stating, "There is absolutely no chance that Nintendo will buy Sega."

The report was echoed in another *New York Times* article on Dec. 29, "Sega Looks at World Beyond Hardware Merger." This time the story added that Sega has also been in talks with Electronic Arts and Microsoft.

Sega sprang into action, issuing a statement from Sega's Corporate Executive Vice President, Shunichi Nakamura. "We would like to express our concern over the fallacy that appeared on 12/27/00 regarding Nintendo's buyout of Sega," he said. "Not only did this erroneous allegation cause the trade of Sega's corporate stock to be temporarily suspended while substantially influencing Sega and Nintendo's stock prices, it caused unnecessary confusion among stockholders, affiliated companies, business partners and end-users of both companies. It also severely damaged Sega's corporate and brand image during a very

precarious time in the video game industry...

"...Such repeated and arbitrary publication of groundless statements is pure harassment and unacceptable obstruction of our business, which we cannot overlook. We believe that *The New York Times* as a news organization is heavily responsible for this misinformation."

The letter goes on to call for an apology or retraction. But interestingly enough, a *New York Times* source told *EGM* that no one at the paper received such a letter, and that they only learned of it after it was posted in various places on the Net.

The Pros/Cons of A Deal

A few years ago, this report would've been openly mocked. That was when Sega and Nintendo were both successful, and when bigger fish like Sony and Microsoft weren't circling the boat ready to strike. But now the stakes are much higher, and Nintendo is about to launch GameCube, a new hardware platform, against machines from Sony and Microsoft (and to a lesser extent, Sega). Third-party publishers aren't making as many system-exclusive titles



"Dude, SSX totally rocks."

SADDAM SAYS, "I WANT MY PS2"

You probably heard as we did that the reason you couldn't get a PS2 this past Christmas was because Saddam Hussein smuggled 4,000 of them into Iraq, supposedly to use them for military purposes. This unsubstantiated report came from a "news" Web site with highly dubious sources. One quote attributed to a "military intelligence officer" that made us laugh read, "Most Americans don't realize that each PlayStation unit contains a CPU—every bit as powerful as the processor found in most desktop and laptop computers."

these days, which used to have the power to make or break a system. (The original Madden on the Genesis, for example, is widely acknowledged as one big reason for that console's success). Nintendo already has some strong second-party development (including Rare), but taking Sega under their wing could give them an edge. Microsoft has spent the last year either buying developers outright (Bungie) or teaming up with them (Oddworld Inhabitants) to make certain the Xbox has a large supply of exclusive games.

"I think Sega will always be the subject of takeover speculation because of their software

built a community of online gamers since its August 2000 launch.

On the down side, if Sega is sold lock, stock and barrel, whoever inherits its business also inherits the problems. And they're big problems. Sega expects to post its fourth consecutive net loss for the business year ending in March—not exactly the most attractive thing for a potential buyer. Dreamcast is still kicking (at least in the U.S.) and that market would have to be slowly phased out if a buyer came forward. That's a difficult proposition for any company. It took 3DO a few years to get to the point where it re-entered the business as a software developer

"There is absolutely no chance we will buy Sega."

—Nintendo Co. Ltd. President, Hiroshi Yamauchi

resources," Roger Lancot, Research Director for PC Data, told us. "The two companies' demographics are complementary—Nintendo skews more toward a younger audience with Pokémon and Game Boy, whereas Sega tends to skew to the upper demographics. The rationale is there and I'm sure Nintendo would love to have that kind of software team against Microsoft." Certainly we've seen Nintendo begin attempts to appeal to an older audience with Perfect Dark and Conker's Bad Fur Day.

Nintendo also plans to offer online gaming with GameCube, but it hasn't yet announced a partnership with a company to build/maintain this network (although an announcement is expected around E3 in May). Sega has an established network—SegaNet—which has

after its hardware business dried up.

One possibility is that whoever acquires Sega won't take its hardware business and will instead round up all the development houses Sega made separate during its restructuring last fall. Nintendo could take the home-based teams and leave the arcade teams for another company more interested in that market.

Will It Happen?

Well, we know that a deal was in the hatching. Nintendo, Electronic Arts and Microsoft have all been in talks with Sega in various stages, going over the books. In the end, it hasn't happened yet, and all this publicity may have scared both parties away from a deal. Damn. Perhaps video game history will be made another day. 🎮

TIBBITS

Blaze Boots DC Imports

Looking for an easier way to boot up imports on your Dreamcast? Blaze Accessories may have the cure for you. They recently released their under \$50 DC-X Dreamcast boot disc to stores. Just pop it in, and when it loads, switch it with your favorite import game and voilà! Menu options let you tweak the settings so any game from any region will play on your DC.



A1 Releases Value Titles

Agetec's A1 label is gearing up to jump feet first into the cheapo PlayStation games arena. It's very similar to Japan's popular Simple 1500 series—games often have very simple titles like "Bowling" and "Snowboarding" (the two games already released as of press time) and are priced at an attractive \$9.99.

Rockin' to Streets of Rage

If you follow game music, you'll want to check this out. Mars Colony Music is releasing a soundtrack CD to Sega's Genesis beat-'em-up Streets of Rage 2. Relive the old days with these classic 16-bit beats. Available in stores beginning in January or on marscolonymusic.com.

More Nuon Titles Ahead

At the Winter CES in Las Vegas, Nev., VM Labs announced six new titles coming later this year for its Nuon gaming platform from Hasbro Interactive and Taito. Hasbro will bring Monopoly, The Game of Life and Breakout to the system, with Taito supplying RC de Go!, Bust-A-Move 4 and Space Invaders 2001. All six titles will carry a \$29.95 MSRP when they land at retail. In other Nuon news, the company also announced that the Brendan Fraser/Liz Hurley comedy *Bedazzled* will be the first DVD movie to have Nuon-specific content. That includes digest-sized commentaries, production still-to-final comparisons, and an interactive chapter index.

If It Really Happened...

We got to thinking about what we'd do if Nintendo really did buy Sega (besides watch hell freeze over). So we came up with a bizzaro Press Start opening spread and the front page of *The Star Times*, a fictional video game newspaper. Check 'em out...





PRESS
START



THE ROCK ROCKS CES

At the Winter CES unveiling of Xbox, Bill Gates brought out a friend to help him show off the new system. Yes, that's right, none other than The Rock. Can you smell...oh, you know the rest.

Microsoft Unveils Xbox to the World at Winter CES

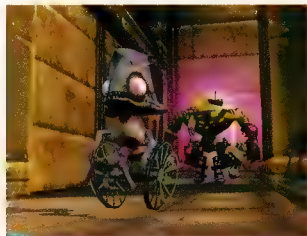
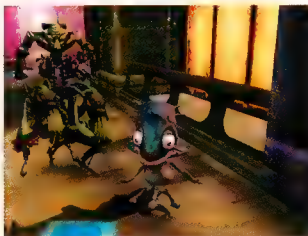


The future of video games is here! Well, almost...we still have to wait until the fall for Xbox to be on store shelves, but the company finally unveiled the system to the public at the recent Winter Consumer Electronic Show 2001 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Aside from taking up 15 minutes of Bill Gates' hour-long keynote address (with a little help from none other than The Rock), the Xbox's only other appearance on the show floor was in the form of a small wall with three video screens in Microsoft's booth. They didn't even have a unit behind glass—a shockingly small presence for the system's first public showing. When asked why, members from Team Xbox smiled, and said while this was the first public unveiling, E3 is where all the true action will be—including the announcement of the price and release date along with “a ton of games.” Prior to that, the system will make stops at the upcoming Tokyo Game Show and Game Developer's Conference.

Even though it wasn't on the show floor, we did get to see the final system and two games, *Malice* and *Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee*, both being played on development kits behind closed doors. Munch looked incredible, but *Malice* was truly breathtaking—featuring graphics and shadow effects that had an almost *Toy Story* look to them, and the game was running on hardware that was nowhere near final. (See page 82 for more.)

Several new titles were also announced simultaneously with the unveiling at CES. THQ will bring *WWF Raw Is War* to Xbox in the fall, developed by Anchor (who previously worked on the Dreamcast version of *Ultimate Fighting Championship*). You'll be able to grab clothing, announcers will provide on-the-fly commentary, and the audience will run for their lives when someone gets thrown into the stands. Opponents can be confronted on their



way to the ring and backstage combat areas will randomly change from venue to venue. All we can say is, sounds cool.

Activision also made it official—Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2x is slated as a launch game for Xbox, and is the first of six games the company has in development for the system. We hear it will have more levels, more populated environments, online play, tournament hosting and more.

In mid-December, Electronic Arts announced that it would be supporting Xbox with versions of its strong library of titles. The company plans to have up to 10 games ready for the launch of the system next fall. Madden Xbox? Count on it. 🚗



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TOMB RAIDER MOVIE

She's Croffy

Below are the first official pictures of Angelina Jolie as Lara Croft in the Tomb Raider movie, coming to theaters June 5.

We asked Jolie if playing video game babe Lara Croft was a huge departure from her other roles. "It's funny," she tells us. "I thought it was really, really far from what I'm used to, but it's not. Her essence is similar to all the other characters I've played—somebody who's kind of alone and focused on justice or setting things right. And it's kind of a little insane."

So what kind of things has she had to go through to get the part right? "They've had me on a really disgusting diet, actually," she says. "It's lots of proteins and sardines. I eat lots of meat, and I eat lots of fish—just the high, high protein. And all these vitamins and stuff like that. In between, in the middle of the day, I work out and train and run a bit. There's a lot of pressure to be this woman, and to get even her accent right. She's raised a certain way, she's had a certain breeding, and she is Lady Croft." We can't wait to see the results this summer!



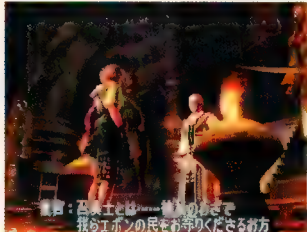
Final Fantasy for the 21st Century



Here are the first in-game screens from Square's Final Fantasy X, set to hit PS2 by this summer in Japan (and later in the U.S.).

For the first time in the series, characters will have voices, complete with facial motion (thus the need for DVD-ROM). Real-time 3D environments are used instead of prerendered backgrounds.

Shown are the main hero, Tidus (above) and the heroine, Yuna (right), both 17.



They kick ass.



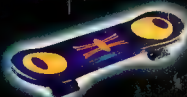
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PlayStation®2



Animated Violence



PRESS
START



FINAL FANTASY PACK-IN

On launch day, Bandai offered a special bundle of the Wonderswan Color hardware that came packaged with Final Fantasy for 9999 yen (\$93). As you can imagine, this box was a big seller. The front of the box is all white except for a Final Fantasy logo on the right side in the middle, and when you flip it open, you see the system and the game (pictured at left).

EGM Takes Bandai's Wonderswan Color for a Test Drive



On Dec. 9, 2000, Bandai released the Wonderswan Color—a color version of their black-and-white handheld game system in Japan. This sleek piece of hardware is about the size of a deck of cards, weighs almost nothing, and can run for 20 hours on a single AA battery (according to Bandai). Its 16-bit central processor is more powerful than the Game Boy Color's 8-bit CPU, and it's got strong third-party support—Capcom, Konami and Namco are all on board. The system sold 300,000 units in two days, which can mostly be attributed to the availability of Final Fantasy 1 as a launch title (and packed in with special-edition systems).

How does the machine fare compared to the Game Boy Advance? From a technical stand-

point, it's significantly less powerful (see the spec chart on this page).

When we took the system for a hands-on test, its performance was far from perfect. The screen tends to suffer from the same blur the Game Boy used to. This is because it uses a passive rather than an active matrix color screen like Game Boy Color or Neo-Geo Pocket Color. But the 'swan is definitely capable of offering SNES-level graphic performance as far as color and resolution go—just check out the Final Fantasy pic below. It's comfortable to hold, features a flexible button layout, and is very durably designed.

So Japanese gamers are all set...what about us? Will we ever see a domestic rollout? It looks as if the answer is...probably. Unfortunately, nothing has been set in stone yet, and no release dates have been announced. At one time, a release was pinned to Mattel's Interactive division, who later told EGM they had no such plans. With the impending release of Game Boy Advance both in Japan (in March) and the U.S. (in July), it almost wouldn't be worth it for the machine to come out here. Especially since it lacks the support and name recognition the Game Boy Advance already has.

	Game Boy Color	Wonderswan Color	Game Boy Advance
Size:	7.5cm x 13.3cm x 2.7cm	12.8cm x 7.43cm x 2.5cm	13.5cm x 8.0cm x 2.5cm
Weight:	138g	96g	140g
Playtime:	10 hours	20 hours	20 hours
Resolution:	160x140, 2.3" screen	224x144, 2.8" screen	240x160, 2.9" screen
Total Colors:	32,000 (\$6 on-screen)	4,069 (241 on-screen)	65, 535 (\$11 on-screen)
RAM:	32k	512k	256k
Total Sprites:	40	128	4,096
Sound:	Four channel stereo	Four channel stereo	32 channel stereo
Price:	6800 yen (\$65)	6800 yen (\$65)	9800 yen (\$95)

The Games

Final Fantasy

Two words: killer app. More than just a port of the original NES cart, its graphics have been given a facelift and the music remixed to take advantage of the machine's four-channel stereo sound. FFII and III are slated to ship 2nd quarter 2001.



Final Fantasy

Sorobangu

While not as captivating as Gunpey Ex, this is another solid puzzle game...kind of a

high-tech connect-the-dots. Not very impressive from a technical standpoint, but fun to play nonetheless.

Gunpey EX

A color version of the WS's flagship puzzle game. Link line segments to create long, colorful strands stretching the length of the screen. A cross between Columns and Pipe Dream, and not a bad little puzzler.



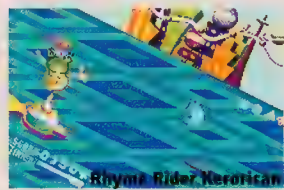
Gunpey EX

Digimon Zero Two

What would a new Bandai system be without a Digimon game launching by its side? The usual monster battlin' is found inside. If the system ever does come to the U.S., expect this to come with it.

Rhyme Rider Kerorican

Psychedelic neon images, bizarre cartoon characters, music-based gameplay, and a heroine who's a young woman in a frog costume who is asked to do battle with blue armadillos and purple duck heads. Trust us, it's even weirder than it sounds.

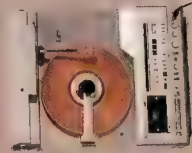


Rhyme Rider Kerorican

Dokodemo Hamster 3: Odekake Saffron

Capitalizing on the Japanese love of virtual pets, this "game" puts an anime-styled hamster in a player's care. The bright, bouncy graphics are eye-catching, and the variety of maintenance duties are interesting—for about a half hour or so.

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PRESS
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THE VIEW FROM JAPAN

Game Companies "Cell" Out

A few months ago, I talked about how hard it is to develop online games in Japan because of the high phone charges, lack of experience, and the expensive cost to maintain servers. But online gaming via cell phone is already spreading like a virus in Japan.

Here, research suggests that phone charges (including those used for Internet connections) has doubled in five years among the under-30 crowd. So inexpensive gaming via cell phones is an attractive option for many. Some folks in the entertainment industry cite cell phones as the reason people don't buy video games and CDs as much as they used to. Whether that's true or not, game companies have responded to the demand and have started to make games for cell phones.

As of last December there were over 60 million cell phone subscribers in Japan. Among them, 20 million used Internet connection services with their phones. You might think it'd be difficult to browse the Web on a cell phone, but using a modified version of HTML designed specifically for cell phones lets you view them fairly well.

Many respected game companies like Capcom, Hudson, Konami and Namco already provide games for cell phone users. They're simple compared to games on consoles—mostly table games, text adventures or quiz games. For developers, they're inexpensive to make and quite profitable. According to Hudson's president, over 100,000 players have played their games, each paying a monthly charge of a couple dollars. Some companies make phones with screens that can display up to 6,000 colors and have FM sound chips. Soon there will be Java-compatible cell phones, that will allow users to download data. Naturally this allows developers to make more elaborate games. Sega's already signed a deal with Motorola to use their image-processing technology. Sega games will soon be able to run on Motorola's cell phones.



Yutaka Ohbuchi

The next-generation of cell phones will be available later this year in Japan. Not only will they be Java-compatible, they'll provide a much broader (up to 2Mbps) connection, which makes cell phones a more valuable platform as a PDA or multimedia console. But some people think that no matter how strong cell phones become technologically, it's still just a cell phone. You can't really play games comfortably. Time will tell if these games have what it takes to compete with console handhelds long-term.

—Yutaka Ohbuchi



Dokodemo Fighter from Capcom and a chess game from Hudson.

Nintendo has every confidence that Game Boy Advance will be successful. The company plans to produce

24 million

units of Game Boy Advance hardware within its first year of release.

It's Been A Long Time, Sega CD

More than five years after we last reviewed a game for the Sega CD, out pop two more. Good Deal Games (www.gooddealgames.com) has given Sega CD owners a reason to take the system out of storage. Well, sorta...

Bug Blasters: The Exterminators and Star Strike, both originally developed by Stargate Films for Sony Imagesoft, are currently being sold on GDG's Web site. Both are full-motion video games that utilize the Tomcat Alley game engine. So far, so good, right? Well, not really. EGM's Review Crew took both games for a test drive. The results were far from sterling.

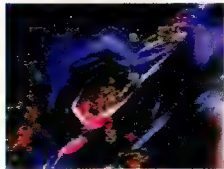
Bug Blasters

First there's Bug Blasters. It's the story of a Los Angeles overrun with huge, intelligent insects. The result of a horrible accident at a local chemical plant, they've taken over city hall and are cocooning every human possible. You play Hugh D. Player, a rookie member of the Bug Blaster team (these people resemble the Ghostbusters right down to their theme music). Thankfully this game doesn't take itself too seriously. You're constantly bombarded with slapstick humor and fart jokes. Still, at its core BB: TE is a shooter that's so poorly made you'll likely give up after the second level.



Star Strike

Unfortunately Star Strike isn't quite as good. The story of a rookie pilot joining a war between Earth and an alien race intent on conquering the human race and eating their brains, Star Strike is just god-awful. It's almost impossible to be accurate when shooting down enemies, and the game is simply overflowing with the horrible acting that was a video-game trademark in 1995.



Outside of pure collector's value, neither of these games is worth the \$34.95 price tag. However, if this stuff excites you like it excites certain Canadian staff members, take heart. Good Deal Games has already announced the impending release of Wing Nuts for the Sega CD. They've also confided to EGM that they're actively pursuing the rights to other completed, unreleased games for the Sega CD and other systems. Thank God for the Internet.

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PlayStation 2

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Animated Violence



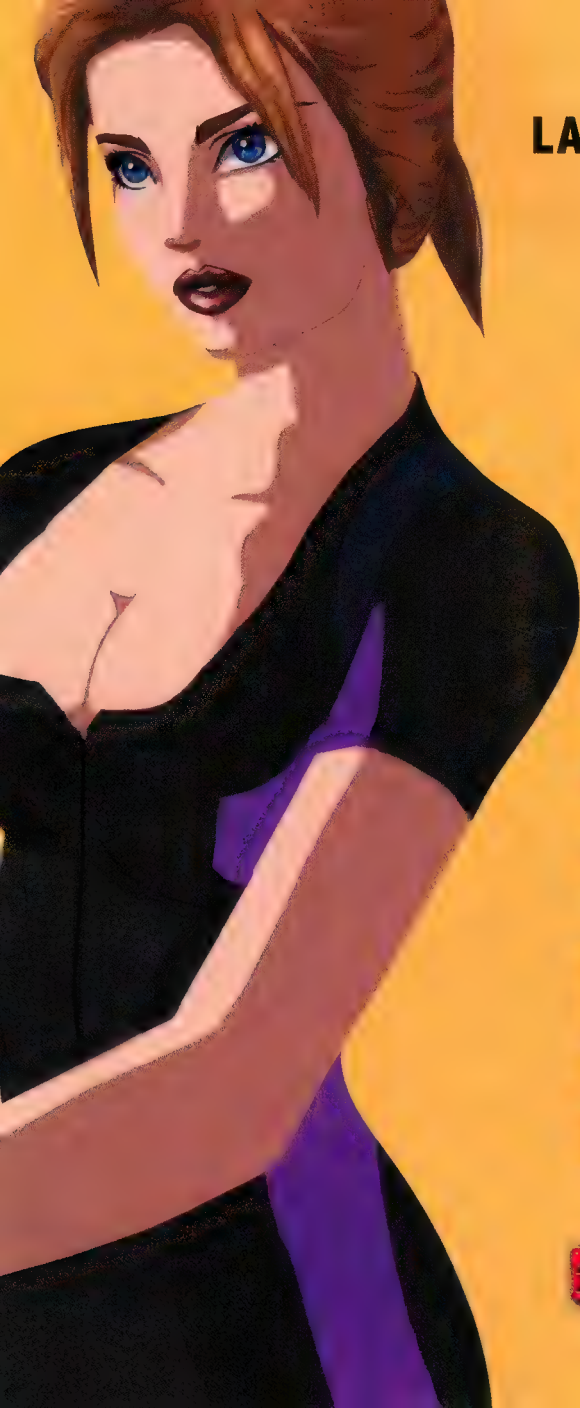


MATURE
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Animated Blood and Gore
Suggestive Themes



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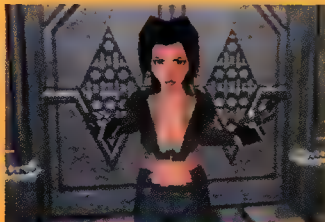
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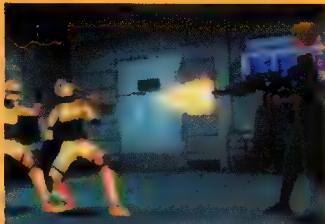
THESE TWO LADIES PUT THE ASS IN ASSASSIN.

"...great plot points, plenty of action, incredible graphics and both of the female characters taking off their clothes for no good reason... it's everything we were hoping it would be."

- DailyRadar.com



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JOVOVICH GETS EVIL

Mila Jovovich (*The Fifth Element*) and Michelle Rodriguez (*Girlfight*) have signed on to the \$40 million film version of *Resident Evil*. Directed by Paul Anderson, it won't follow the plot of the game—it features a supercomputer gone mad that begins turning scientists into zombies. Bleh.

Quartermann - Game Gossip & Speculation



Gran Turismo 3

Import Pick of the Month: Sony CEI's Gran Turismo 3 A-Spec gets the nod this month. Kazunori Yamauchi & Co.'s work on this game is absolutely astonishing.

PlayStation

- 1/25 Metal Slug X, SNK (Action)
- 2/22 Volfoss, Namco (Action)

PlayStation 2

- 1/25 Onimusha, Capcom (Adventure)
- 2/15 Gran Turismo 3 A-Spec, Sony CEI (Driving)
- Feb. Kessen II, Koei (Strategy)
- Feb. Shadow of Memories, Konami (Adventure)
- 3/1 Z.O.E., Konami (Action)
- 3/15 Shutoku Battle Zero, Genki (Driving)
- 3/22 Biohazard Code: Veronica Complete, Capcom (Adventure)
- Mar. Bloody Roar 3, Hudson (Fighting)
- Mar. Klonoa 2, Namco (Action)
- Mar. Monster Farm, Tecmo (Virtual Pet)

Dreamcast

- 2/2 El Dorado Gate Volume 3, Capcom (RPG)
- 2/15 Aero Dancing I, CRI (Flight)
- 2/15 Hundred Swords, Sega (Strategy)
- 2/22 Battle Beaster, Studio Wonder (Effect Action)
- 2/22 Macross M3, Shoelisha (Action)

Nintendo 64

- Feb. Animal Forest, Nintendo (Adventure)
- Feb. Echo Delta, Nintendo (Strategy)

Game Boy

- 2/23 Dance Dance Revolution GB3, Konami (Music)
- Feb. Legend of Zelda: Mysterious Tree of Fruit, Nintendo (RPG)

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

Hi-dee-ho, Quarterfriends. It is ye old Rumormaster, who has returned to yonder magazine pages to deliver ye hottest rumors in all the land...and so on and so forth. I have returned from a quest with the wizards of the lost kingdom, where I forged these many rumors that I shall now read to thee...

...Square has finally heard our pleas for U.S. releases of some of its most endearing classics, **PS one versions of Chrono Trigger and Final Fantasy IV** are certain to make the cut, with **Tobal 2** still in the air. Also interesting are the possibilities that Square will rerelease other titles with **special-edition treatment** and include extra goodies like soundtrack CDs. Sounds good to me! It's about time Chrono Trigger got its due in the U.S. now that RPGs are popular...

...Remember Sega's **Virtua Fighter X7**? It's almost ready and will be shown to the public for the first time at the **AOU Show** in Japan in February. Hopefully it'll look better than those lame-o demos Sega was giving on NAOMI 2 at the last arcade show...The sequel to **Space Channel 5 cancelled?** Or does Peter Moore know not that which he speaks? Hmm...Did I mention how much motorized skateboards rule for inter-office transportation?

...**Electronic Arts** has recently added **GameCube versions of SSX and Madden** to its 2001 lineup. So it looks like the only system not receiving EA lovin' is the Dreamcast now that they're on the Xbox bandwagon...speaking of that, EA's working on an **Xbox version of The Sims** as a test to see if the game can work on consoles. If it's successful, expect to see it on any and all systems that can handle it (except, well, Dreamcast...damn!):
...A new Medal of Honor game, called **Medal of Honor Frontline**, is headed to **PS2**. It'll be shown off at E3, and apparently will cross over with that popular WWII movie from a few years ago, **Saving Private Ryan**...

...**Acclaim** is still on shaky ground (they've been there before though), but is still pushing ahead with a few games that could save them from extinction. That includes **Turok 4**, coming to **PS2 (and GameCube)** as soon as the company can cross the P's and dot the i's on the finishing touches...They've also got a **super-secret platform game for Xbox** in development as well as a possible **Turok spin-off RPG based on Adon** (that's been in the

planning stages for a while now according to The Q's spies)...

...**Sony** really wants people to go broadband when the **hard drive/ethernet unit** comes out. So the company's thinking about putting together a deal where, if you sign up for Sony's service, you **get the hard drive/ethernet unit for free**. How's that? Believe you me, The Q just jumped into the broadband revolution, and lemme tell ya...**there's no going back**. And, heh...The Q needs that fast connection to keep downloading those, er...gameplay videos from his **network of spies!**

...**Namco's** gearing up for some heavy action this year. The big news, of course (wait for it...wait for it...) is that **Soul Calibur 2** will be . announced 'round E3 time and possibly shown. A platform hasn't been decided on yet, but The Q thinks it's a **no-go on Dreamcast** (d'oh). **Tekken 6** will also be shown at E3, with a **PlayStation 2** release almost guaranteed sometime in the fall...

...And if you aren't excited about the **Final Fantasy movie** by now, you will be. The Q's heard that the **DVD version** of the movie will include two discs. One will be the movie on a standard, dual-sided, dual-layered disc, all tricked out with the **special-edition content**, including **commentaries and making ofs** and all that good stuff. The **second disc** will include PlayStation 2-specific content, including a **"you be the director"** option which will feature several scenes rendered in real time on the **PS2**. You can then select your own camera angles for the scene and watch them play out. Now that's what I call a **killer app!** That'll have to fight for DVD time in The Q's player with the Power Rangers Movie/Turbo double feature set. Yeah baby!

...Finally, **Warren Spector** (OK, so many console gamers aren't going to know that name—his credits include games like **System Shock and Deus Ex** on the PC) has just recently signed a deal with **Eidos** to do an exclusive **Xbox game** for them. Sounds cool, but when can we kick the tires and **look under the hood?**

...**OK, that's all for this month Quarter-buds. Wow, I thought this month I wouldn't have much fer ya, but...golly, hot dernit! Back next month with a bevy of gaming goodness the likes of which have never been seen...OK, I'll stop now...** -The Q



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PRESS
START

The Top 20 Best-Selling Games of November, 2000

1 - Pokémon Gold



The little beasties in Gold and Silver had a rumble to see which of **Nintendo's** latest cash cows got to hold top spot this month. It wasn't pretty. You should see Pikachu. Tyranitar worked him over sumthin' fierce.

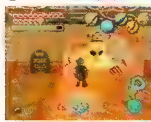
2 - Pokémon Silver



Silver took the long fall from first to second in November. We figure it's because most stores only had copies of Pokémon Gold left.

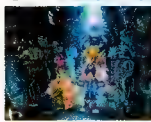
Nintendo executives must laugh all the way to the bank when they release these games.

3 - Zelda: Majora's Mask



Nintendo completes a one-two-three sweep this month with the continuing strong sales of Link's latest time-twisting adventures. Expect to see this sort of unreal domination until the PS2 builds up steam. The mind wobbles.

4 - Final Fantasy IX



It's fitting that the sole PlayStation showing in the top five is **Square EA's** latest epic. Our Review Crew says this is the best Final Fantasy to hit Sony's system. Besides, Vivi's just too damn cute to pass up.

5 - WWF No Mercy



The latest WWF spectacular from **THQ** debuts in the top five! Who else wants to see The Rock and Triple-H in a tag-team match against Bastoise and Squirtle? Knowing our luck, the little buggers'd probably win.

6	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 Activision		3
7	The World Is Not Enough Electronic Arts		---
8	NBA 2K1 Sega		NEW
9	Driver 2 Infogrames		NEW
10	Super Mario Bros. DX Nintendo		19

	ALL SYSTEMS	2
8.5	Mark	9.0
8.5	Chrispin	

	PROFESSOR SPIN	1
8.5	Mark	9.0
8.5	Chrispin	

	PROFESSOR SPIN	4
10	Mark	10
10	Ryan	

	NEW	
10	Greg	9.5
9.5	Ryan	

	NEW	
8.5	Mike	8.5
7.5	Kraig	

11	Shenmue Sega		NEW
12	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater Activision		5
13	Madden NFL 2001 Electronic Arts		6
14	WWF SmackDown! 2 THQ		NEW
15	Spyro: Year of the Dragon Sony CEA		---
16	Madden NFL 2001 Electronic Arts		7
17	Hey You, Pikachu! Nintendo		NEW
18	Gran Turismo 2 Sony CEA		8
19	Driver GT Interactive		13
20	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater Activision		---

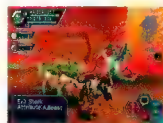
Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Service. Call Kristi Barnett-von Korff at (516) 625-2481 for questions regarding this list. Top 5 game descriptions written by the EGM staff.

JAPAN TOP 10			
1	Pokémon Crystal Nintendo		
2	Mario Party 3 Nintendo		
3	Yu-Gio Duel Monsters 4 Koei		
4	Mobile Suit Gundam Bandai		
5	The Bouncer Square		
6	Pokémon Stadium Gold/Silver/Crystal Nintendo		
7	Let's Make a Pro Soccer Team! Sega		
8	Phantasy Star Online Sega		
9	Pachi-Slot Aruze Kingdom 4 Aruze		
10	Dragon Quest III Enix		

Weekly Famitsu, week ending 12/24/2000



Pokémon Crystal sits atop the Japanese chart. It's already sold over a million copies in Japan. Guess the Pokémon craze isn't quite over there!



Sega's Phantasy Star Online debuts on the chart in Japan at number eight. Not too bad, but it was outdone by two PS2 games, Bandai's Gundam and Square's fighter, The Bouncer.

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PlayStation 2 



Dreamcast

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PRESS
START

Compiled By Jonathan Dudlak jonathan_dudlak@ziffdavis.com

Coming Soon - March 2001

February

Game Boy Color	
Action Man - THQ	Action
Aliens: Thanatos Encounter - THQ	Action
Dragon's Lair - Capcom	Misc.
ESPN National Hockey Night - Konami	Sports
Hercules - Titus	Action
Indiana Jones - THQ	Action
Metal Walker - Capcom	RPG
NBA Hoopz - Midway	Sports
Sea-Doo HydroCross 2001 - Vatical Ent.	Action
Troublls - Capcom	Action
PlayStation	
Blaster Master: Blasting Again - Crave Ent.	Action
Burstrick Wake Boarding - Crave Ent.	Sports
Disney's Aladdin - Sony CEA	Action
F1 Grand Prix 2000 - Eidos	Racing
Fear Effect 2: Retro Helix - Eidos	Adventure
Mega Man X5 - Capcom	Action
MTV Sports: TJ Lavin's Ultimate BMX - THQ	Sports
Sea-Doo HydroCross 2001 - Vatical Ent.	Action
Tom Clancy's Rogue Spear - Redstorm	Action
PlayStation 2	
Army Men Air Attack 2 - 3DO	Action
Army Men Sarge's Heroes 2 - 3DO	Action
ATV Offroad Fury - Sony CEA	Action
Carrier - Jaleco	Action
Dark Cloud - Sony CEA	RPG
Dinosaur - Ubi Soft	Action
Ephemeral Fantasia - Konami	RPG
ESPN NBA 2Night - Konami	Sports
High Heat Baseball 2002 - 3DO	Sports
Ico - Sony CEA	Adventure
Illbleed - Jaleco	Adventure
Knockout Kings 2001 - EA Sports	Sports
Navy Seals - Jaleco	Action
NBA Hoopz - Midway	Sports
NBA Shootout 2001 - 989 Sports	Sports
NHL Face-Off 2001 - 989 Sports	Sports
Seven Blades - Konami	Adventure
Warriors of Might and Magic - 3DO	Adventure
Zone of the Enders - Konami	Adventure
Nintendo 64	
Eternal Darkness - Nintendo	Action
Paper Mario - Nintendo	Action/RPG
Sea-Doo HydroCross 2001 - Vatical Ent.	Action
Dreamcast	
Conflict Zone - Ubi Soft	Action
Ducati World Racing Challenge - Acclaim	Racing
Fi Championship - Ubi Soft	Racing
Legend of the Blademasters - Ripcord	Adventure
Mars Matrix - Capcom	Action
M.O.U.T. 2025 - Ripcord	Racing
NBA Hoopz - Midway	Sports
Phantasy Star Online - Sega	RPG
Shrapnel: Urban Warfare 2025 - Ripcord	Action
Surf Rocket Racer - Crave Entertainment	Racing
Worms World Party - Titus	Misc.

March

Game Boy Color	
Army Men Arcade Blast - 3DO	Action
Legend of the River King 2 - Natsume	Action
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX - Activision	Sports
Portal Runner - 3DO	Action
Puzzled - Natsume	Puzzle
Return of the Ninja - Natsume	Action
Rocket Power - THQ	Adventure
Scooby-Doo! - THQ	Puzzle
Simpsons Treehouse of Horror - THQ	Action
Sponge Bob - THQ	Adventure
VR Sports: Powerboat Racing - Vatical Ent.	Racing
Xena - Titus	Action
PlayStation	
Alone in the Dark 4 - Infogrames	Adventure
Bombing Islands, The - Kemco	Action
Digimon World 2 - Bandai	RPG
Inspector Gadget - Ubi Soft	Action
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX - Activision	Sports
Rayman 2: Back to School - Ubi Soft	Action
Simpsons Wrestling - Fox Interactive	Sports
Triple Play 2002 - Electronic Arts	Sports
PlayStation 2	
Age of Empires II - Konami	Strategy
Army Men: Green Rogue - 3DO	Action
Bouncer, The - Square EA	Action
Clive Barker's Undying - Electronic Arts	Adventure
Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse - Metro 3D	Action
Dark Giants - Interplay	Adventure
Gran Turismo 3 - Sony CEA	Racing
Heroes of Might and Magic II - 3DO	Adventure
Jungle Book Rhythm 'N' Groove - Ubi Soft	Misc.
Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver 2 - Eidos	Adventure
MDK2 Armageddon - Interplay	Action
Off Road Thunder - Midway	Racing
Onimusha: Warlords - Capcom	Adventure
Quake III: Revolution - Electronic Arts	Action
Portal Runner - 3DO	Adventure
Red Faction - THQ	Action
Rock and Roll Racing - Interplay	Racing
Shadow of Destiny - Konami	RPG
Star Wars: Starfighter - LucasArts	Action/Sim
Tiger Woods PGA Tour - Electronic Arts	Sports
Tokyo Extreme Racer 2 - Crave Ent.	Racing
Triple Play 2002 - Electronic Arts	Sports
WDL War Jetz - 3DO	Action
World Is Not Enough, The - Electronic Arts	Action
Nintendo 64	
Aldyn Chronicles: The First Mage - THQ	RPG
Conker's Bad Fur Day - Nintendo	Action
Pokémon Stadium 2 - Nintendo	Misc.
Dreamcast	
18 Wheeler: American Pro Truckee - Sega	Racing
Alone in the Dark 4 - Infogrames	Adventure
Armada II - Metro 3D	Action
Bangai-O! - Crave Entertainment	Action
Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse - Metro 3D	Action
Daytona USA Network Racing - Sega	Racing

Evil Twin - Ubi Soft	Adventure
Fl Hogan Brothers - Sega	Action
Half-Life - Sierra	Action
Heroes of Might and Magic III - Ubi Soft	Adventure
Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver 2 - Eidos	Adventure
Mummy, The - Konami	Action
Outrigger - Sega	Action
Playmobil Hype - Ubi Soft	Adventure
Project Justice - Capcom	Fighting
Record of Lodoss War - Crave Entertainment	RPG
Soldier of Fortune - Crave Entertainment	Action
Stunt GP - Infogrames	Action
Stupid Invaders - Ubi Soft	Adventure
System Shock 2 - Vatical Entertainment	Action
Unreal Tournament - Infogrames	Action
VIP - Ubi Soft	Action

April

Game Boy Color	
Frisbee Golf - Vatical Entertainment	Sports
Land Before Time, The - Natsume	Action
Monster Force - Konami	Action
PlayStation	
Roswell Conspiracies - Redstorm	Adventure
VIP - Ubi Soft	Action
PlayStation 2	
Cool Boarders 2001 - Sony CEA	Sports
Forces of One - Interplay	Action
Roadster Trophy - Titus	Racing
Run Like Hell - Interplay	Racing
Supercar Street Challenge - Activision	Racing
Ultimate Sky Surfer - Crave Entertainment	Racing
Nintendo 64	
Dinosaur Planet - Nintendo	RPG
VR Powerboat - Vatical Entertainment	Action
Dreamcast	
Exhibition of Speed - Titus	Racing

May

Game Boy Color	
Batman Racing - Ubi Soft	Racing
Playmobil Hype - Ubi Soft	Action
VIP - Ubi Soft	Action
PlayStation	
Batman Gotham Racer - Ubi Soft	Racing
PlayStation 2	
Barbarian - Interplay	Action
Commandos 2 - Eidos	Action
Gauntlet: Dark Legacy - Midway	Action
Herdy Gerdy - Eidos	Adventure
Project Eden - Eidos	Action/Strategy
Star Wars: Super Bombad Racing - LucasArts	Racing
Dreamcast	
Commandos 2 - Eidos	Action
Dragon Riders - Ubi Soft	Adventure
Gorka Morka - Ripcord	Action
Ooga Booga - Sega	Strategy

The Legends of Fierce Warriors come alive!

DYNASTY WARRIORS 2

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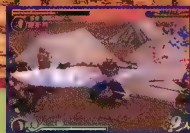
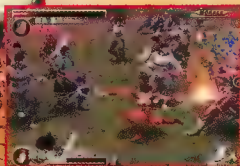
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Hsu and Chan

GAME DESIGNERS

"Schoolin'"

IN

PREPARE TO BE TAUGHT A VALUABLE LESSON!

HELLO, VIDEO GAMERS! I'M CHAN TANAKA, FILLING IN FOR MY BROTHER HSU ON THE TRADITIONAL WELCOMEING DUTIES!

WELCOME!

AS MOST OF YOU KNOW, HSU AND I ARE AWARD-WINNING GAME DESIGNERS! WHAT YOU MAY NOT KNOW, HOWEVER, IS THAT EVERY OTHER WEDNESDAY EVENING WE SHARE OUR TALENTS WITH THE WORLD AT LARGE BY HOLDING A GAME-DESIGN WORKSHOP THAT IS OPEN TO ANY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC WHO EXPRESSES THE DESIRE, ENTHUSIASM AND DETERMINATION TO LEARN OUR CRAFT IN THE SEASIS OF EARNING UP TWENTY-FIVE DUCKS FOR ADMISSION.

LET'S WATCH THE MAGIC!

I'M SORRY STENEN, YOUR "JUNGLE" SETTING SIMPLY DOES NOT MEET OUR ESTABLISHED QUOTA OF ENLIGHTENED PLAN AND DELIGHT THROUGH YOURSELF TO THE RIVER

OH GEEZ

THE REAL REALITY OF RUNNING A SCHOOL OF GAME DESIGN IS THAT, HAVING BEEN LITTLE IN THE WAY OF COMPETITION, THERE'S NO REAL BASIS OF COMPARISON FOR DETERMINING WHO ONE SHOULD BE RUN!

WE CAN BLOW FOUR HOURS ANALYZING "WANTREX" IF WE WANT TO!

LOOK! DICE! WEIRD, HUNT! TAKE NOTES!

WELL, CONFIDENTIALLY, I FEAR BROTHER HSU MAY BE TAKING HIS DUTIES AS HEADMASTER A BIT TOO SERIOUSLY. PERHAPS I WOULD TRY MUCKA, BUT IT SEEMS THAT HAVING NOT SET HIM UP IN A POSITION OF AUTHORITY WITHOUT ADEQUATE TRAINING MAY NOT HAVE BEEN THE HEALTHIEST THING FOR HIS PSYCHE.

EEK!

CHEATING GAM IN CLASS! THIRTY, LARPS!

WHELP! SWAPING THE MINDS OF TODAY'S YOUNGSTERS IS TOUGH WORK!

KELL! SHAMON! I'M GOING ON BREAK!

GLUE APPLICATOR

SMASH!

HSU... WE NEED TO HAVE A LITTLE CHAT. I'M A BIT WORRIED BY YOUR BEHAVIOR OF LATE.

WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, CHAN?

WELL, LITTLE THINGS, BROTHER. LIKE, FOR INSTANCE, THESE NEW LESSON PLANS... "ONE-DIRECT CONSTRUCTION OF LIFE-SIZED BRONZE STATUE OF SELF." "TWO-OVERSEE EXECUTION OF ALL NONCONFORMISTS."

ALSO, I HELP COULDN'T HELP BUT NOTICE YOUR RECENT VIOLENCE WITH BEING ADDRESSED AS "GOO-TIME" FOR HSU...

I SAID YOU COULD BE "ARCHDRAPE BROTHER!"

YOU MISS THE POINT, HSU. I'M AFRAID THAT YOU MAY BE GOING, WELL, A LITTLE BIT POWER MAD.

GUARDS! SEIZE HIM!!

HSU, YOU DON'T HAVE ANY GUARDS. LIKE SO MANY OTHERS, THE RIGORS OF TEACHING HAVE WARPED YOUR MIND. I CAN HELP YOU! COME WITH ME!

NO! I CAN COMMAND THE ELEMENTS! GO, MY MINION! ATTACK THIS MAN!

BEZ?

HSU! PLEASE, I HAVE "TRANQUILIZING DROPS" DON'T MAKE ME SHOOT YOU!

CAN'T YOU UNDERSTAND, CHAN?

DO YOU THINK YOU CAN CHANGE A PERSON'S LIFE BY TEACHING HIM? BUT IT'S A LIE! ALIE! NO, THE ONLY JOY IN TEACHING IS THE POWER - THE ABSOLUTE CONTROL!

WHEAT? TAKE THIS FROM ME!

WHEAT? TANAKA?

... HUH?

I JUST WANTED YOU TO KNOW, MR. TANAKA, YOU'RE THE BEST TEACHER I EVER HAD!

EEK!

HAVE A HOSTAGE BACK ON FE OR IN ARMY OF GIANT PANTS WAS HIM FOR BREAKFAST

THEY HAVE SOLD EYES! THEY'RE DEAD!

BAM! BAM!

UM...

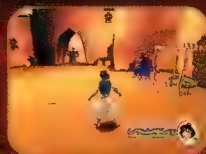
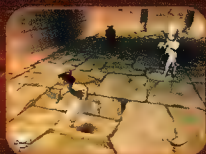
ANEM!

CLASS DISMISSED!

"STAY IN SCHOOL."

A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM HSU AND CHAN AND THIS FINE MAGAZINE. WE THINK

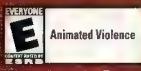
THE END.



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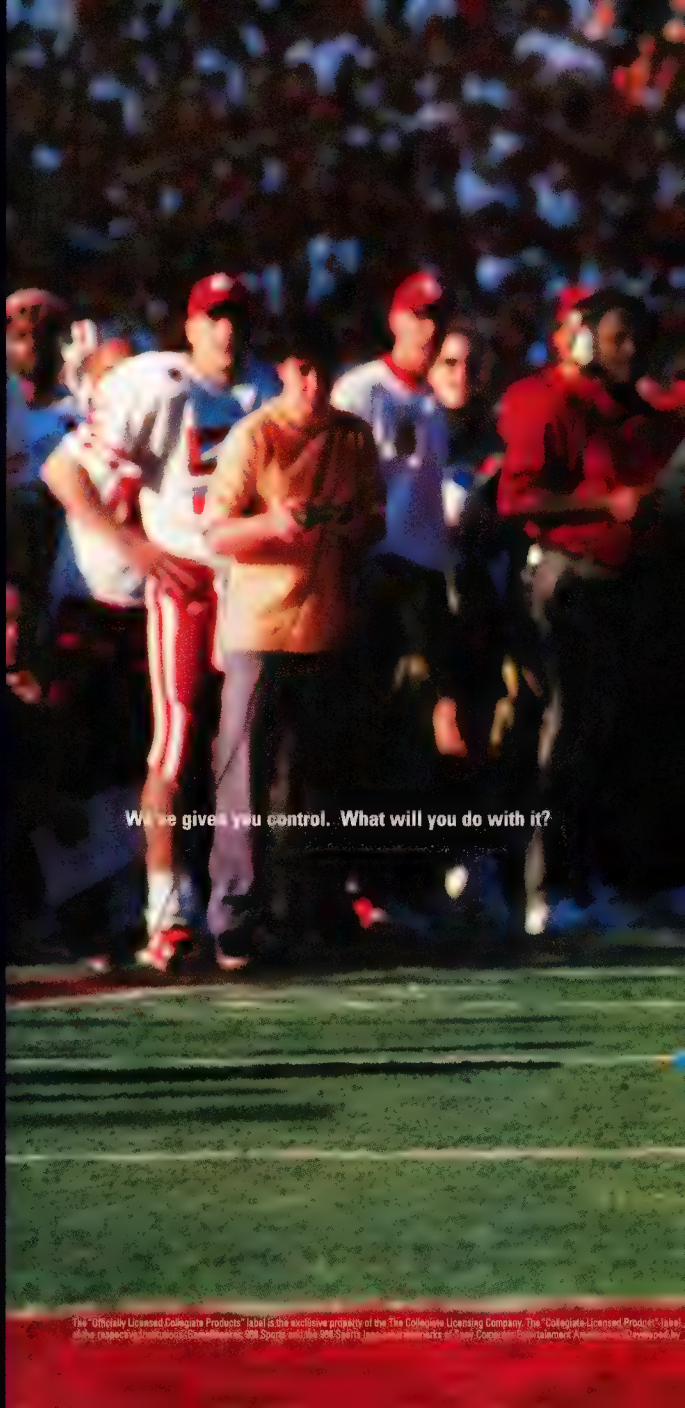


Keith Jackson Play-by-Play

PlayStation 2

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Tues. 5:15. Package being delivered.

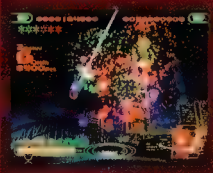


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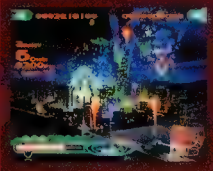


Anytime is a good time for fireworks.

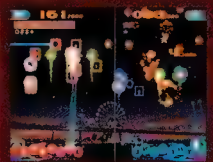
These days the word addiction gets a bad rap. Sure, there's a long list of bad influences out there. But an addiction to setting off massive fireworks displays? Only good can come from that.



At first glance, FantaVision is a colorful fireworks puzzle game. Not so fast, my friend. That's how they get you. It starts



by capturing and detonating flare after flare, which triggers chains of fireworks explosions as well as tons of points. Then you advance from one difficult city-scape to the next, more difficult one.



And on to even more difficult bonus rounds. But you can handle it, right?

FANTAVISION



Maybe we shouldn't mention FantaVision's two-player mode. Or the real-time lighting effects. Or the fact that once you feel like you've mastered massive combinations, another layer of this intense

action puzzle game pulls you in deeper. So be careful. Because before you know it, you'll be looking for any excuse to detonate fireworks.

PlayStation.2

www.scea.com



Previews

This Month in Previews

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Monster Force
NBA Hoopz

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Pokémon Crystal
Grandia Parallel Trippers



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.

Mark March 5 on your calendar—that's the day Nintendo gets nasty. More to the point, that's when Conker's Bad Fur Day hits stores. We don't have any new screens of the game to show you in this issue, but we just wanted to reassure you that, no, Rare hasn't canned development on the game and, yes, it's still gonna be geared to us grown-ups. Conker's box, in fact, will sport an extra large ESRB M-rating to drive the point home—so you underage players better meet at the teen center and plot how you'll sneak this thing past Wal-Mart security. (Hint: Don't bother applying a hobo beard with black crayon; most clerks are wise to that trick.)

As far as this month's previews go, it looks like the PlayStation 2 dike is finally about to bust, and there's no li'l Dutch boy in sight to plug it with his finger. (Please stop giggling—no one will sell you Conker's BFD with that immature attitude.) We have as many PS2 previews as we have for all the other systems combined. Why the flood? Well, it's not that we have more PS2 previews than usual (we have



Pee-pee, hard liquor, cleavage—no, we're not talking about the EGM New Year's party. This is the stuff of Conker's BFD, due March 5. Play responsibly, people.

exactly the same amount as last month). It's just that, as we've seen in recent months, development for the older systems is dwindling. At least we have a few N64 games to show you this month—and only one of them has the word "Pokémon" in its title.

And here's something to get really excited about: We kick off our very first Xbox previews section this month with Argonaut's superb-looking platformer Malice. Go take a gander, and then brag to your buddies that you were hip to our Xbox previews section before anybody, man. 🍄

TOP 5 Preview Picks

1. Malice
2. Klonoa 2
3. Daytona USA Network Racing
4. Gran Turismo 3
5. Dark Cloud

Xbox, Fall

PlayStation 2, May



Dreamcast, February

PlayStation 2, March

PlayStation 2, Spring

Fifty RPGs Enter...One RPG Leaves

We've had an overwhelming response to our RPG Maker contest—nearly 50 home-brewed RPGs! We considered hiring senior citizens from the local McDonald's to help us play all your stuff, but in the end we decided to split the games among the staff and take the next two months tearing into your masterpieces. Some of you have written strategy guides for your RPGs. Others have filled multiple memory cards with game data. Heck, one creator claims his game combines Final Fantasy with Chrono Cross. Talk about ambitious! Remember, we'll give the one-page-preview treatment to the RPG we deem most fun and clever. The grand prize also includes a PS2 with Armored Core 2, Evergrace and Eternal Ring, courtesy of Agetec.



"Legendary Legends," from reader Adam DeLaMarte, was the first RPG we got. Will it win? Find out in the May issue.



"FLY LIKE THE BONS OF ANGELS"

Did you know that Eric Martin (of Mr. Big fame) did the music for Daytona CCE on the Saturn? To this day it ranks as some of the absolute worst vocal stylings you'll ever hear in a video game.



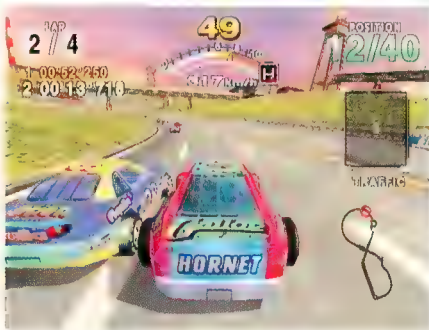
PREVIEW

Daytona USA Network Racing

- Platform:** Sega
- Developer:** Genki
- Players:** 1-4
- Genre:** Racing
- Rating:** 100%
- Release Date:** February
- Play Style:** Speed Devils Online
- Web Address:** www.sega.com
- What's New:** Finally, a Daytona game for Dreamcast owners!
- What's Hot:** Too bad it's not Daytona 2.
- And The Why:** Mielke dealing with the new control scheme.



The Rule of 9th is one sweet car. Not only is it a classic racing machine, but it's got the best handling and acceleration around.



Ah the Hornet. How we've missed thee. Anyone else getting a little teary-eyed?

NEW TRACKS

Go Away!

Mermaid Lake

FAIRWAY LAP: 0'43"888
BEST TIME: 4'43"187
CIRCUIT LENGTH: 3.466KM
A/R: 2/300 (50 MAX) SILENT

In addition to the three original courses from *Daytona USA* and the two newer ones from *Daytona CCE*, *Network Racing* features three all-new tracks to test your skills on.

Circuit Pixie is a simple, flat oval seemingly based on the Motegi Ring found in Japan.

Rin Rin Rink is a slightly more advanced road course with one or two very sharp, tricky turns and some major elevation changes.

Finally, **Mermaid Lake** is a stylized figure-eight course with a huge, banked turn on one end and a deadly-sharp hairpin on the other.

All told, the new tracks are arguably less interesting than the original's, but they still maintain that unique Daytona feel. We're certainly not complaining.

It's about friggin' time! Daytona fans haven't had much to smile about since *Daytona CCE* came out on the Saturn in 1996. Even then, the game was so mediocre it was almost an insult. Finally, after four long years, *Daytona USA* will make a triumphant return to the home market, complete with Net play. You bet we're excited!

And yes, we realize that seeing Genki as the developer has a lot of you holding your breath. Put their conversion of *Virtua Fighter 3* out of your minds, though—*Daytona Network Racing* doesn't disappoint. Sure, the control is a little different from the original arcade version, but it's still much better than *Daytona Championship Circuit Edition*.

New to the series is a championship mode that actually keeps tracks of points gained in each race, plus awards extra points for setting the fastest time and leading consecutive laps. Of course, choosing the right car for each track is the only way to find

success in any race.

And there's more vehicle variety in *Network Racing* than any *Daytona* before it. Not only does each car handle uniquely, each is based on different real-world models, ranging from a Ford Taurus to an Oldsmobile Cutlass Supreme to a classic formula-one car. It's a far cry from '94, when all cars were based on the Chevy Lumina.

As you can see from these screenshots, it's easy to appreciate all that wondrous auto variety with the clean, sharp look of *Daytona* on the Dreamcast. It's safe to say these visuals blow away those found on the original *Daytona*, although comparisons between this and arcade *Daytona 2* will surely lead to hot debates on the Internet.

For those of you wondering, the freaky music of the original game makes a slightly remixed return appearance on all the original tracks. Unfortunately, the tunes on the newer tracks ain't anything to write home about. At least there's no Eric Martin music on the disc this time.

Of course, let's not forget that this new *Daytona* is going to be compatible with *SegaNet* when it's released on these shores. Can you imagine? Maybe we'll finally get that linked arcade feeling that has eluded all home conversions thus far. Heck, if the network play is even as good as that found in *Speed Devils Online*, it'll be a treat. It's good to be a racing fan on *SegaNet* nowadays.



There's still a split-screen mode that runs at a beautiful framerate. Of course, you're limited to 10 cars on the track.

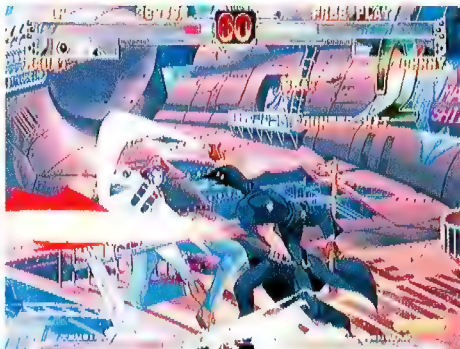




PREVIEW GALLERY

Guilty Gear X

The sequel to **Arc System Works'** cult-hit *Guilty Gear* has just landed on Japanese shelves after a brief stint in the arcades. This Dreamcast port (developed on Sega's NAOMI-board and published by **Sammy**) offers little in the way of extras, although it does add training and survival modes. The gameplay remains largely the same from the original, with the biggest difference being the hi-resolution, 640 x 480 (VGA-box ready) graphics, something Capcom has yet to get hip to. Kind of like *Samurai Shodown* meets *SF Alpha*, *GGX* offers fast-paced gameplay, air-blocks, air-recoveries, and the original *Guilty Gear* one-hit-kill mode as an unlockable feature. As of now there is no official U.S. release date. But *EGM* has heard from various publishers interested in getting the rights for these shores.



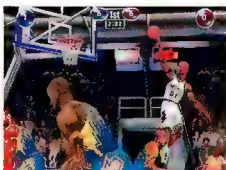
SPIDER-MAN 2 OTHER NEW PLATFORM

In a little over a year, the *Spider-Man* movie will be hitting the silver screen, and we trust you'll all be flocking to a theater near you on opening day. Here's a quick rundown of some of the major players for the film:

- Tobey Maguire as Peter Parker
- Kirsten Dunst as Mary Jane
- Willem Dafoe as The Green Goblin
- Randy Savage as Bone Saw McGraw
- Others: Bruce Campbell (J), Rosemary Harris and J.K. Simmons

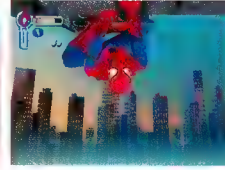
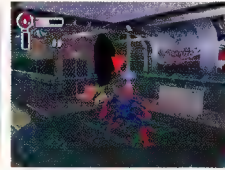
NBA Hoopz

Here's the scoop on *Hoopz*: **Midway** built this new three-on-three arcade game around its successful *NBA Showtime* game engine, so you'll find just about everything that was good in *Showtime* here—namely, fast-breaks galore, tomahawk jams, super-fast arcade gameplay, etc., etc. In addition, you'll see 500 new animations (including a couple from *Shaq*) and a cool three-point mode. Unfortunately, multiplayer is limited to two-on-two in this DC hoopsfest, due in **summer**.



Spider-Man

Given the success of its PS and N64 *Spidey* releases, it's no surprise that **Activision** is bringing the webhead to the DC. **Treyarch**—which ported both *THPS* and *THPS2* to DC—is putting the finishing touches on the game now, so you can get your hands on it when things thaw out in the **spring**. While there are no plans for adding levels or changing gameplay, *Spidey* will look a heck of a lot sharper than the earlier versions.



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Super Street Fighter II Turbo X

Street Fighter is finally online, in one of its greatest incarnations to boot! Too bad it's just in Japan. Since it's a precise port of the arcade/3DO classic, this version really isn't much to look at. But hey, you can play your friends in Kyoto! All the old favorites, and not so favorites, are here—from DeeJay to E. Honda. Ah, memories. Three words, **Capcom**: Bring it here.



Evil Dead: Hail to the King

As you'd expect, the Dreamcast version of THQ's survival horror knock-off is pretty much the same as the PlayStation game—except with slicker visuals. We never showed any DC shots before, so we figured why not do it here and now. Flip to our review section to see what we thought of the game. Suffice to say, we reckon only die-hard fans of the flick will want this lackluster title, which is **out now**.



Charge'N Blast

The title of this new **Sims** game says it all: After you (and a friend for two-player action) choose from three playable characters, you charge through various stages (including Las Vegas and an underwater level), stopping only to blast aliens Cabal-style. If stray fire happens to destroy a building or two in the background, don't fret—that's how you earn bonus points and uncover power-ups. It's out **now in Japan and Europe**.



Certified Entry of Death

Location of Death:	Lebensbaum, Germany
Name:	Your name here
Sex:	Male
Age:	Your age
Occupation:	Gamer
Cause of Death:	Murder
Coroner's Notes:	Victim found in the streets, lying in a pool of blood. He must now travel back in time across five different centuries to pursue his murderer and alter the course of events that led to his demise.

DA 210567

Certified to be a true copy of an entry of a Register of Deaths in the District above mentioned. Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, LEBENSBAUM, GERMANY, under the Seal of the said Office, the 6th day of June 2001



Shadow of Destiny



PlayStation 2

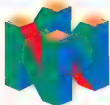


Animated Violence





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PREVIEW

Aidyn Chronicles: The First Mage

- Publisher:** THQ
- Developer:** H2O Entertainment
- Players:** 1
- Genre:** RPG
- % Done:** 80%
- Release:** Winter
- Web Address:** www.thq.com
- The Good:** The adventure is long and involved.
- The Bad:** Graphics are a bit on the muddy side.
- And The Ugly:** Hordes of *Clash of the Titans*-style scorpions.

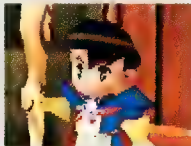


Aidyn doesn't feature a conventional overworld map; instead, players wander the game's expansive worlds in full 3D.

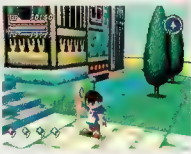


Cinemas feature very expressive character models and pop up frequently throughout the game.

THE OTHER RPG The Life of Brian



Shortly after the N64's launch, THQ and Imagineer released *Quest 64*, an odd action RPG featuring a hero clad in tights and a dainty red cape. Cute as a PowerPuff Girl, and about as intimidating, "Brian" is debatably the least liked—and most frequently mocked—character in RPG history. Must not be great for the guy's self-esteem. If he reconsidered his ridiculous Alfalfa-do and picked up a new wardrobe, a little more respect might be in order.



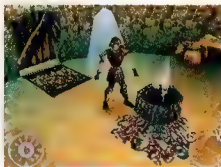
The Nintendo 64 has been on the market for nearly five years, and there still isn't a single traditional console RPG available on the platform. (No, we're not counting action-RPG Zelda titles, strategy-RPG *Ogre Battle 64* or the just plain God-awful *Quest 64*.) But now, H2O Entertainment is putting the finishing touches on the N64's first real RPG. *Aidyn Chronicles* centers on a young orphan who possesses a burning desire to uncover his forgotten past. The story is made up of standard sword-and-sorcery stuff; all of the clichés you've come to expect from a medieval epic are firmly in place here. But while the game's narrative is bound to tradition, its play mechanics experiment with genre conventions. For example, overworlds are



not explored from a top-down vantage point. Instead, you traverse all of the game's enormous landscapes up close, right behind leading-man Alaron's back (you can have up to four characters in your party). This design choice allows you to investigate castles and ravaged towns with the same ease as in the N64 *Zelda* games. It also makes environments feel more alive and interactive than the beautiful but static prerendered backdrops presented in most PlayStation fantasy games.

You'll find a second, subtler departure from standard RPG design in the game's battle mode. Combat still kicks off in a fairly traditional way—approach wandering enemies in the overworld and the screen immediately swirls to turn-based combat—but here you have direct control over the advancement and positioning of your team members. It's a battle system slightly similar to that of strategy titles like *Shining Force III*. This added maneuverability is welcome, as the stakes during skirmishes are very high: When a party member dies on the battlefield, he's gone for good (you'll need to reload from your last save point to get him back).

Sure, the visuals in *Aidyn Chronicles* are far from stellar, and the story is crammed with clichés, but this is the only game of its kind on the N64. And if you can live without FMV cutscenes and have already finished *Majora's Mask*, *Aidyn Chronicles* could be your next big RPG time waster.



PlayStation.2



PS2 UIC



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Note: the \$10.00 deposit is toward the purchase price of the game. All deposit certificates MUST be redeemed at Customer Service. Deposit certificate is not redeemable past the expiration date. If not redeemed by 4/14/01, the receipt may be refunded at Customer Service. No photocopies or facsimiles of receipt or certificate will be accepted. Release date subject to change.

CASHIER DEPOSIT PROCEDURES

Step 1: Scan the barcode on the deposit certificate. Step 2: Continue to scan any other items and tender transaction as normal. Step 3: Staple receipt to deposit certificate. Step 4: Point out the deposit amount on the customer's receipt. Explain procedures for redemption to the customer.

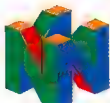
CASHIER REDEMPTION PROCEDURES

Step 1: All redemptions will be processed as an exchange at Customer Service. Step 2: Customer must have receipt and certificate for redemption. Step 3: Select P#2 for Return. Step 4: Enter transaction information from original receipt. DO NOT PROCESS WITHOUT RECEIPT. Step 5: Scan UPC on certificate or enter SKU. Select the return reason of "Paper." Step 6: Press P#2 for Sale. Step 7: Scan UPC on game or enter SKU. Do not change the price of game. Step 8: Continue scanning any remaining items and tender transaction as normal. Step 9: Each customer receives a game. Step 10: Place deposit certificate and original receipt in Media file.

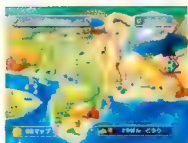
Note: If the customer wishes to keep the receipt, circle the item and price, write "Redeemed" and the date inside the circle, and initial. Redeemable only at the Best Buy retail store location where deposit was placed. Offer is not valid with other discounts, special, bonus or free offers, or promotions. Offer is for individuals, no dollars, please. Any applicable taxes are the responsibility of the person redeeming the coupon. No cash or other substitutions, except that Best Buy reserves the right to substitute this offer with one of equal or greater value in the event the offer is unavailable for any reason.



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PREVIEW GALLERY

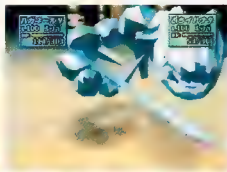
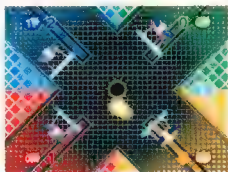


MAPPIES!

One of the handy features of Pokémon Stadium 2 is that it serves as a guide to the GB game. Here, you can see where all the Pidgeys are located in both Johto and Kanto. And like the first Stadium, you can use the Transfer Pak with Stadium 2 to play Gold and Silver on your N64.

Pokémon Stadium 2

Nintendo's Pokémon phenomenon has died down from "craze" to just plain "popular," but the games are still going strong—as our charts clearly show. Stadium 2 is scheduled to hit the U.S. on **March 26**. Newly added: a tutorial mode that gives you hints on how to be a better trainer, quizzes you on techniques and throws you into battles with weak Pokémon so you can try out what you learn. In addition to the regular cup battles, you'll find special bouts against each trainer from the game. On Gym Leader Island, for instance, you challenge the leaders of each gym in the game, one by one, and they're no pushovers. More mini-games starring new Gold/Silver Pokémon and old favorites round out just some of the more interesting features.



Mario Party 3

If you've played one Mario Party, you've played them all—sorta. **Nintendo** isn't taking any risks and radically changing its premiere party franchise, but developer **Hudson** has substantially refreshed this sequel up with over 70 mini-games. These new games include mini-gambling fare, button-mashing races and simple puzzles that anyone can pick up and play—even if substantially inebriated (hint, hint). You'll also find 10 different game boards, twice the amount of items and two new characters (Daisy and Waluigi) to top it all off. If you're a Mario Party veteran, rest assured that the gameplay is still intact but has been refined a bit. Some of the tweaks include the addition of a companion to help you in battles and a few new action squares. Gather your friends and...er, refreshments, this **May**.



Your friend wants you
to smoke that wacky weed.

You don't know what to say. Try this.

No. Absolutely not.

I have more respect ^{for my} body than that.

I have more respect ^{for my} parents than that.

I have more respect ^{for my} little brother who thinks

I am the best thing
to happen to the planet
earth
since professional
wrestling.

I don't get high
on the
streets.

I get high above
the rim.

Where I take guys
like you to school.

So, when I say **NO**,
I mean not now,
not tomorrow.

Not this weekend
at the party.

Not ever.

Or you could just say:
I'm not into that stuff.



self-respect

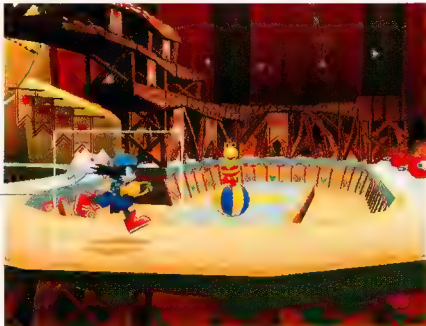
MY ANTI-DRUG.

Klonoa 2

Publisher:	Namco
Developer:	Namco
Players:	1
Genre:	Platformer
% Done:	90%
Release:	May
Web Address:	www.namco.com
The Good:	A shiny, new Klonoa game, at long last!
The Bad:	The first game sold like dirt.
And The Ugly:	Could the sophomore slump strike K2? Say it ain't so!

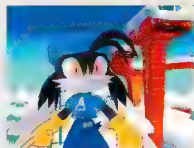


The above shot shows the old, flat, 2D sprite that was Klonoa v.1. To the right is the new, fully 3D, fully fresh Klonoa v.2. The transition to 3D has been a smooth one, though, as Klonoa controls just as responsively as he did in *Door to Phantomile*. Go, Namco, go!



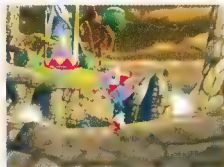
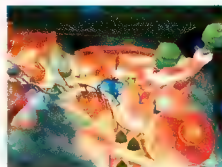
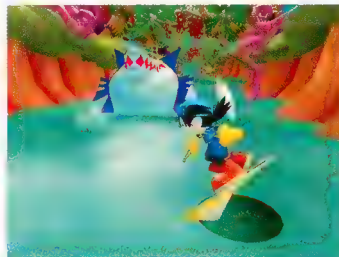
Toon-tastic!

Klonoa Filter or cel-shading? You decide!



Klonoa: *Door to Phantomile* was almost universally hailed as one of the PS one's best platformers, mentioned in the same breath as games like *Symphony of the Night*. Unfortunately, having an overly cute candy-coating and no name recognition gave the game a limited audience. Which is a shame, since that means most gamers missed the spot-on control, NIGHTS-like dream theme, the visual splendor, and most importantly, the menacing undertone that permeated the game. At last, cries for a sequel have been answered as a new, improved, truly 3D (graphically, at least) Klonoa is headed for the PS2 later this year.

Making use of a cel-shading-esque technique



Namco dubs the "Klonoa Filter," K2 looks like a cartoon come to life. Playing almost identically to the 2.5D action of the first game (Jump, grab guys with your power-ring, throw them to and fro, etc.), Klonoa 2 is easy to pick up and play. The biggest difference here is the incredible heights from which you can drop—something the original game could not do for technical reasons.

When cornered and questioned about the content of Klonoa 2's story line, and how it follows the bittersweet ending of the first game, Tsuyoshi Kobayashi, chief director of Klonoa 2 had this to say: "It is a secret. Basically, you can play it without knowing the story line of the first game. In developing the game, we took it into consideration that Klonoa should be older and we have given many other aspects to show this."

As these screens show, the game boasts plenty of technical wizardry (huge, *Perfect Storm*-sized waves crashing in the background, lit by lightning flashes, etc.) not possible on the PS one. Kobayashi says, "There are many things that couldn't be done in the first game—extensive backgrounds, special effects and various character motions. Any one of these could not be created in the first game. Using dynamic camera angles throughout the game will also keep players immersed in the game." Who knows? Maybe the great look of this game will breathe new life into the platforming genre. 🐉

Dark Cloud

Publisher: Sony
Developer: Level 5
Players: 1
Genre: RPG
% Done: 100% (Japan)
Release: Spring
Also Try: *Zelda: Majora's Mask*
Web Address: www.playstation.com
www.level5.co.jp

The Good: Creation-themed gameplay and nice graphics.
The Bad: Dungeons are simple and boring in design.

And The Ugly: The mug on the evil genie in *Dark Cloud's* intro.

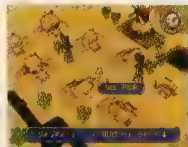


You will be able to take control of different characters.

City Planner



Your city will be sparse for the first few dungeon levels you clear.



But things really start getting crowded as you reach the cave depths.



The combat uses a *Zelda*-inspired lock-on camera—and foes who look straight out of a Nintendo game.

After you set down buildings you can run around the town, talk to people, and take a closer look at your creation.



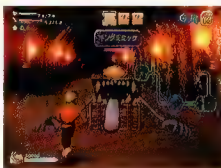
Those who long for a new *Actraiser* or *Soul Blade* have quite a wait on their hands. Not only has Enix completely given up on these properties, Quintet, the development company behind these (and many other) 16-bit hits, has faded into obscurity. Thankfully though, someone finally picked up where *Quintet* left off; the creation RPG is back.

Dark Cloud is less a traditional RPG than it is a "god game." Like many of the older titles it borrows ideas from, the goal here is to re-create what has been destroyed. You do this by entering dungeons and finding orbs that contain buildings, people and items that once littered the landscape and bringing them back to a bare field that once held a bustling

town. You can then place these houses, trees, roads, rivers and such in any way you please on the landscape. After you're done playing god, you can actually zoom down and run around your creation, talking to the folks you've saved. Talking is an important aspect of the gameplay; while building the houses, you'll need to fill them with items they used to contain, and the only way to find out exactly what the buildings held is by talking to their inhabitants. Once some buildings are complete they'll offer special abilities, such as selling items or giving you more storage space. Each level of a dungeon has a certain amount of orbs, and you've got to find all of them to fully re-create the town.

Of course, the *Quintet* games were not the only inspiration for *Dark Cloud*—it's obvious that this game's developers also enjoyed the latest *Zelda* titles. *Dark Cloud's* graphics, music, steady (and very impressive) passage of time, lock-on combat, and even the very enemies you face all have a very *Zelda*-like feel, lacking only the charm found in Nintendo's series.

Titled a "Georama RPG," the first PlayStation 2 role-playing game is certainly not your standard offering, and it's an impressive indication of what Sony's machine can do with real-time environments. But, the question remains, even with its interesting gameplay, is *Dark Cloud* good? That's an answer we'll have closer to its late-spring release. 🐉



Shadow of Destiny

While it's been forced to lurk in the shadows of Konami's MGS2 and Z.O.E. since last E3, Shadow of Destiny is emerging as one of the PS2's brighter prospects for 2001. Due in **March**, this dark adventure feels like a very cinematic Shemmue with a bit of Silent Hill ambience (it's being handled by the same director), flaunting characters and environments with unparalleled realism. The premise? You've got to journey through several periods in time to prevent your own death in the present, which is when the game begins. Interacting with people and places in the past will seriously alter your future and uncover a lot of the mystery around your untimely demise, so plan your actions accordingly when time-traveling.



ATV Offroad Fury

Notice any resemblance between this **Sony** title and Microsoft's Motocross Madness? You oughta. Offroad Fury is from the same developer, **Rainbow Studios**, and it packs the same semi-realistic physics and horizon-to-horizon freedom. A good run up a steep hill will launch you into low orbit, and jumps of 200 meters or so are not uncommon. In addition, the framerate and animation are silky-smooth—even when things get crowded. Throw in the numerous licensed quads (more than 20), 20 diverse tracks, thumping music and up to four-player split-screen play, and the result is the most in-depth ATV game we've played yet. Hopefully the developers will implement a first-person view before release. ATV should be in stores **now**.



Supercar Street Challenge

Don't look for everyday sports cars in this slightly arcadey racer, due this summer. **Activision's** new supercar racing simulator will allow players to build their dream concept cars from the ground up and race them through city streets, smashing through barriers and finding shortcuts. If you don't fancy yourself a designer, famous names like Fioravanti, Callaway and Modena have lent their talent to the game.



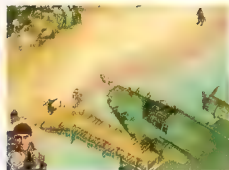
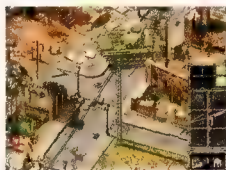
Sidewinder Max

We doubt the demand for flight sims is strong enough here for a U.S. Sidewinder Max release, but armchair jet jocks may want to import the game (it's out **now in Japan**). Combining air combat with flight training (you'll learn to take off, land, maneuver, etc.), **Asmik Ace's** Sidewinder Max feels like Sky Odyssey with missiles, but drags a bit with its military minutia.



Commandos 2

Well-received in the PC community, Commandos is about to get a sequel. This time, however, the game will also land on the PS2 and DC. Commandos 2 takes place during WWII and features a host of missions (some inspired by movies such as *Saving Private Ryan* and *The Bridge on the River Kwai*). Gameplay is a mix of action, strategy and stealth. **Pyro Studios** and **Eidos** plan to release Commandos 2 in **March**.





PREVIEW GALLERY



BLONDIE ON JUBBOP

Just as EA was finishing up the PS2 version of Tiger Woods, the wacky guy goes and gets a dye job. We called EA to find out if they would have a Rodman-fied Tiger in the game, or even a hair color option on their Create-A-Golfer feature, but they couldn't be reached to answer this burning question. No sign of it on the screenshots below.

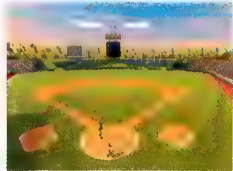
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001

EA's golf games never hit their stride on the PS, but maybe the PS2 is just what Tiger needs to get on track. This deep golf sim packs PGA courses (Sawgrass, Poppy Hills, Scottsdale, etc.) and six modes. The most unique item is a Tour Challenge that has you take a golfer through amateur play and improve his skills, and then take him Pro. Or just play as Tiger and crush the field when you tee off this **March**.



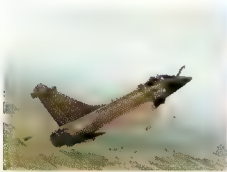
Triple Play Baseball 2001

EA is set to have you swing for the fences in time for spring training in **March**. Obviously, the graphics have been improved markedly, but you'll find subtle features (real-time scoreboards changing in-park, 150 real player faces, lighting effects according to time of day) that add a nice touch. A slew of new features are also being added, such as analog button support to gauge your throw's power and an all-new batting/pitching interface.



Ace Combat 4

The fog is gone, the sense of scale is unbelievable, and the planes look even better than ever in Ace Combat 4. Seen in motion, **Namco's** sequel is on par with flight sims used by real-life jet jockeys. Although we've yet to get a chance to kick the tires and light the fires, we expect the action to remain close to the series' arcade roots when it ships this **fall**. Hopefully another PS one franchise will be reborn.



SERVING SUGGESTIONS:
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MOMENTARY
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OUT**
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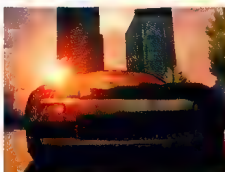
Gran Turismo 3

Fast and beautiful—these are the only two words needed to describe Gran Turismo 3. It's the game Sony is pumping up to be the flagship title for the PlayStation 2, and we recently had the chance to sit down and play the thing. We walked away from it with a sense of awe.

Yes, it looks nice (jaw-droppingly nice). We've always known this about GT3, but we're happy to report the control is incredibly solid as well—which is good, because this game isn't easy, not by a long shot. Be prepared to devote some serious racing time this **spring** if you want to fully master GT3.

Along with trying out a couple city street tracks, we were also able to experience the Rally Racing section of GT3, complete with its super-realistic dirt-kicking effects. The physics were wonderful, and the sense of sliding was incredibly authentic.

Sony also brought by Logitech's black-and-blue GT3 wheel, and even though it's only confirmed for Japanese release, there's a very good chance it's coming here. The force-feedback wheel felt great (if a little too small), but the pedals were a bit light and cheap-feeling and needed traction.



Dance Summit 2001

Exix's latest in the Bust-A-Move (or Groove, in the U.S.) series is a team-based dancing game. Instead of opponents, you just have to keep your dance meter from falling too low. You watch each sequence first, then perform it, similar in style to PaRappa the Rapper. Music and character designs aren't as good as the previous Bust-A-Move's. Dance Summit's **out in Japan now**—a U.S. release is unlikely.





三日月夜叉王



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a warrior overcome those obstacles
which at first appear overwhelming.*

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SPRING 2001

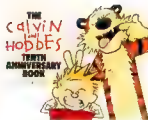


PlayStation 2



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PS2

PREVIEW
GALLERY

ROEMON AND HORNETS?

PS2 Goemon doesn't mark the first time a spiky-haired kid hero has teamed with a tiger pal. Remember Calvin and Hobbes? Bill Watterson's classic comic strip packed the perfect combo of imagination, wit and kid angst. Unfortunately, Watterson retired the duo in 1996. The only places you'll likely find Calvin now are on the rear windows of pick-up trucks, wee-weeing on Ford and/or Chevy logos.

Seven

Though its 2D graphics hardly utilize the real power of the PS2, the smooth animation, brilliant effects and storybook-style art of **Namco's** new RPG **Seven**, out **now in Japan**, add up to more than an old-school throwback. Combat is unique—you don't choose individual attacks but rather organize your army into rows, with the option to rotate forces (the front line attacks while the rear can heal) between rounds.



Goemon

Konami isn't releasing this PS2 installment of the oddball Goemon series here in the States, so here's what you're missing: It plays a lot like *Mystical Ninja* on N64, complete with kung-fu helpers Ebisumaru, Sasuke and ninja-chick Yae. It's kinda action-RPGish and loaded with Japanese text, so importers beware. You do get a cute tiger pal who claws the enemies you target and cleans up their spilled coinage.



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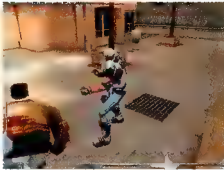


THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS

Not everyone can be like big Kabuto in Planet Moon's opus. But John Flansburgh and John Linnell might be giants anyway. Check out this stellar pop group at http://www.tmbg.com/index_flash.html

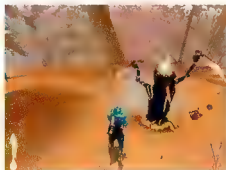
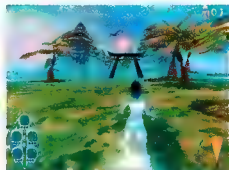
Hidden Invasion

Set in a sci-fi world, *Hidden Invasion* puts you in the role of a special-forces operative called to the scene of a terrorist crime. There, you'll fight all sorts of enemies—many of them alien—and generally kick a lot of butt. The game's developers, **Toka** and **Idea Factory**, say they would like to emulate the intensity of the *Die Hard* movies. Look for the game in late **spring**.



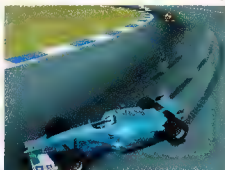
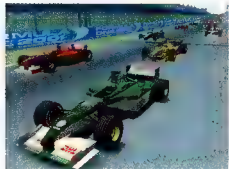
Giants: Citizen Kabuto

Interplay's ambitious third-person, neo-RTS, quasi-FPS, god-game is heading to the PS2. Little is known about the PS2 port of this game, but at the very least it will contain the same villager-eating action favored by *Kabuto*, as well as the presence of the other two races, the Meccaryns and the Sea Reapers. Simple controls ensure ease of play in the game's 40 worlds, but multiplayer is up in the air. No release date has been set.



Formula One 2001

In addition to the Ubi Soft and EA PS2 *Formula One* titles, **Sony** will soon offer its own F1 game. Developed by its Liverpool studio, *Formula One 2001* will feature a highly complex physics model that allows for spectacular crashes. Much focus has been placed on AI, as well—there are 30 parameters that influence drivers, resulting in aggression, rivalry, experience and determination. Look for it in **spring**.



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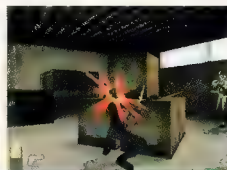
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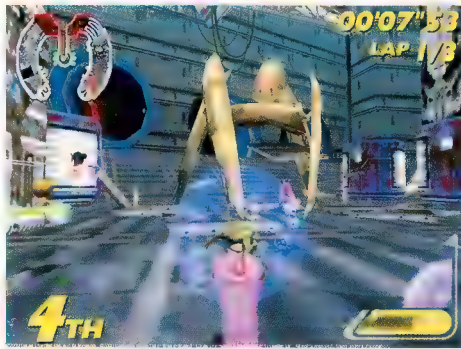
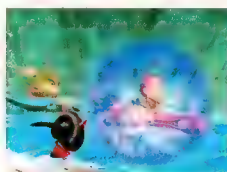
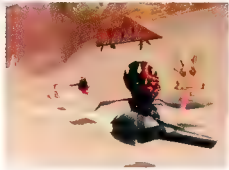
Winback

Koei originally released Winback (developed by their **Omega Force** team) for the N64 a year and a half ago. Now it's getting a second chance on the PS2 (with improved visuals), scheduled for release in **March**. Gameplay takes you through four stages of tactical espionage action as you try to regain control of the GULF weapons complex. And importers take note: The Japanese version has an English option.



Star Wars: Super Bombad Racing

LucasArts is putting the finishing touches on the PS2 edition of this kart-themed title, and we're seeing a few unexpected surprises. Sure, you race cartoony adaptations of Jar Jar, Darth Maul, Obi-Wan, Sebulba, Yoda, Princess Amidala, Boss Nass and Anakin, but rumor has it you'll find some old-school characters in the roster too (they must be unlocked). Another new twist is a co-op racing mode that lets you and a friend help each other during the race. For example, one person could distract enemies while the other scoots ahead for the victory. This mode complements a multiplayer game and another nice twist on the typical "Ghost Mode" that lets you race against yourself by having the game AI emulate how you drive. There's no lack of depth in the gameplay either. Twenty-five different weapons (although they are variations of five main ones) and nine huge tracks (complete with shortcuts) comprise the meat of this racer. The territories (Coruscant, Naboo, etc.) each have their own "champion," and it'll be up to you to unseat them from their perch. Super Bombad Racing should be in stores **now**.

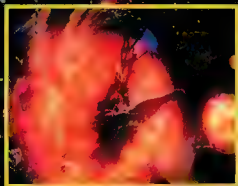
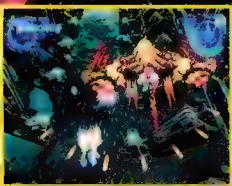


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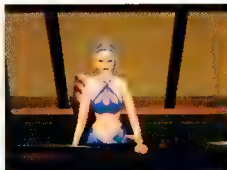
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PREVIEW
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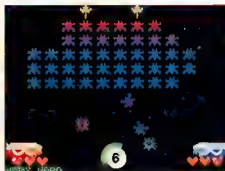
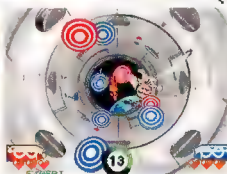
Time Crisis: Project Titan

Namco's Time Crisis series continues in **May** with Project Titan, the series' second appearance on PlayStation. Fans of the first two arcade games will be familiar with the ducking feature, plus Namco has added a "multi-hiding" ability that lets you change the angle of your perspective and shots. Plot-wise, it's Time Crisis. It's the perfect title to keep the ol' PS and oft-ignored Guncon from gathering dust, though.



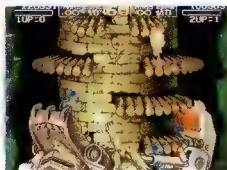
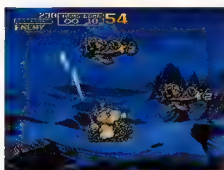
Point Blank 3

Remember the GunCon? It's that dusty gray gun-shaped thing in your closet. **Namco's** hoping you'll bust it out again this **May** for its latest shooting-gallery mini-game compilation, Point Blank 3. Up to eight players can compete (two at a time) in teams or ladder-tournament setup, in over 80 new contests that once again star doctors Don and Dan, plus other Namco celebrities (can you spot them all below?).



Metal Slug X

SNK is here to keep the 2D shooter genre alive and kicking with its newest installment in the classic action series, Metal Slug. **Agetec** will bring it to the U.S. this **spring**, hopefully sans the slowdown and load times of the Neo•Geo Slug games. Based directly on MS2, X has some new bosses and stages, but the real treat is that this series—which has a strong cult following—will finally get its due on a mainstream system.





WORLD'S SCARIEST WHITE TRASH

Fans of HBO's now-defunct *Mr. Show* know who Ronnie Dobbs is. He's the hot-headed, drunk, White Trash dude with the golden voice. Check him out in the upcoming film *Run, Ronnie, Run*.



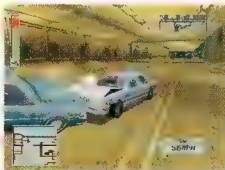
Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear

One big problem with the PS Rainbow Six (besides its lack of multiplayer) is that many of its strategy elements—the strength of the PC original—were taken out. **Red Storm** will make things right in **February**, when *Rogue Spear* hits with an in-depth 3D mission-planning phase. This all-new version comes with three PS-specific levels (for a total of 16), and, better still, you get multiplayer modes this time.



World's Scariest Police Chases

This **spring**, PS one owners will get their chance to drive a cop's beat and ram crooks' cars courtesy of **Fox**. And, yes, this game really is based on the guilty-pleasure-packed TV show. The game looks like it'll be the next *Driver* clone, which is really the best kinda game to emulate here. If the graphic engine stays solid and the framerate remains high, these police chases could deliver the ultimate therapy for our road rage.



Monster Force

What happens when you shrink Universal's famous monsters and plop them in a 3D platform game? You get this marketing-department brainstorm from **Konami** and **Universal Interactive**. The game—due in **March**—has you joining forces with mini-me versions of Frankenstein, Dracula and The Wolfman as they venture to find the ingredients to counteract an evil witch's spell, bashing enemies and solving puzzles along the way. That's right—the monsters are the good guys in this game.



NBA Hoopz

No doubt **Midway**'s NBA Hoopz will put the fortified Showtime engine to good use this **summer**. We hope the addition of a third player won't slow the pace (we'll let you know when we get hands-on play time with the thing). In the meantime, check out these stats: It packs more than 500 animations, four game modes (regular, three-on-three multiplayer, "21" and three-point shootout), plus Fire Mode and Create-a-team. The game even spotlights team mascots and a load of NBA stars.



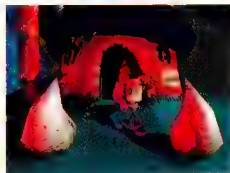
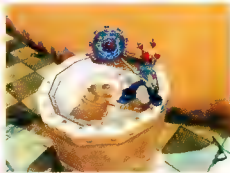
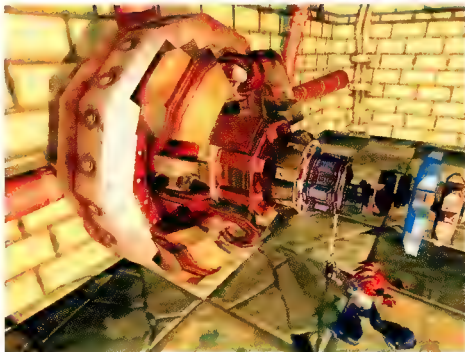
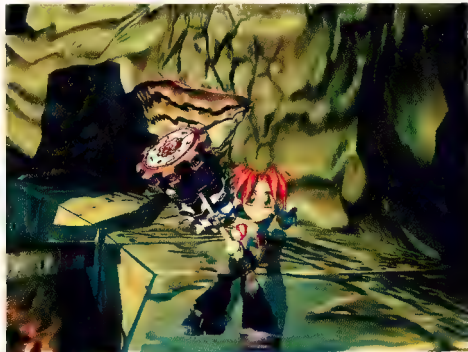
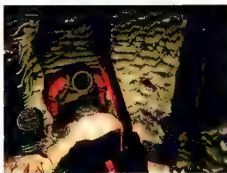


PREVIEW GALLERY

Malice: A Dark and Comic Fiery Tale

Claiming influence from *Monty Python*, *Red Riding Hood*, *Batman* and everything in between, *Malice* looks like one of the prettiest and most unique 3D platformers yet—and will likely hold that ground when it launches with the Xbox in late 2001 (Microsoft says these shots are from a dev system with one-fifth the power of the final console). The game's name comes from the fire demon that a young girl unleashes accidentally on the world and must battle through 25 magical levels to stop.

To get the insider's perspective, we talked to *Argonaut* prez Jez San, who, in addition to extolling the virtues of programming for Microsoft's new baby, gave us the lowdown on this sinister offering. "It displays some deep, dark and very warped fantasies, with novel gameplay and surreal characters and plotlines," San explains. Too much to ask for in a 3D platformer? Not with the yet-to-be-fully realized potential of the Xbox. Besides, how many other games can boast a Quantum Tuning Fork as part of your twisted arsenal?



New Legends

What console launch would be complete without a strong action/adventure title to usher it in? *Infinite Machine* is teaming up with *Infogrames* to release this enticing title, which blends ancient mysticism with post-modern technology in a futuristic Chinese setting, out on the X this fall. From what we've heard, *Legends* sounds like *The Bouncer* meets *Dynasty Warriors*—hey, maybe you won't need that PS2 after all...



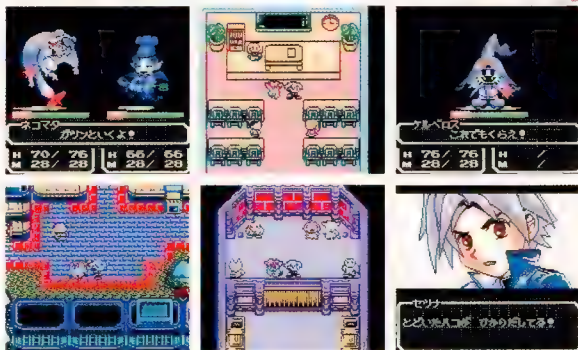


For icy cool breath that lasts



Devil Children

You might mistake this new **Atlus** RPG for Pokémon at first glance, but once you spot the pentagrams and handguns you know this is no Nintendo game. Yes, you do play a young adventurer who collects strange creatures to fight for him on his travels, and, yep, there are two versions of the game (Red and Black, in this case) that allow you to trade creatures via a link cable. But the Pokécentric theme isn't such a stretch in this case: Gathering monsters (actually "devils") has always been a part of the Shin Megami Tensei series (Revelations: Persona, Persona 2), Devil Children just focuses on it and gives everything a cuddly makeover for the Game Boy audience. Some original touches like multiple enemies and party members are nice too. Devil Children is out **now in Japan**. No word yet on a possible U.S. version.



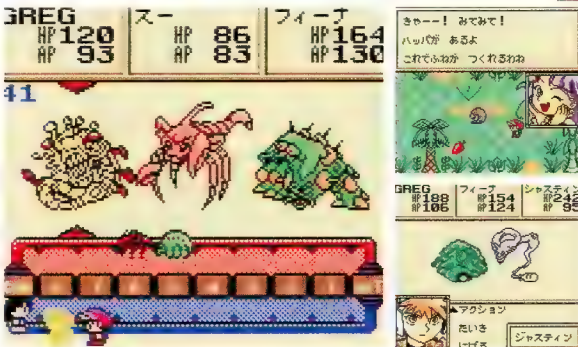
Pokémon Crystal

Pokémon Crystal is to Gold and Silver what Yellow was to Red and Blue: exactly the same game with a few minor aesthetic changes. The biggest addition is the option to play as a new girl character. Animations have also been added when enemies appear on the screen for battle—Pidgey flaps his wings, Sentret waves his arms up and down, etc. As you pass into new areas, the name of the area is displayed at the bottom of the screen, so you don't have to look at a map or read a sign (see the far left picture on the bottom row). Crystal is also compatible with **Nintendo's Mobile GB** adapter, which goes on sale Jan. 27 in Japan, for battling and trading via cell phone. No date's been announced for Crystal in the U.S., but an eventual release is guaranteed.



Grandia Parallel Trippers

Who'd have thought it would be possible to convert an epic RPG like the original Grandia to the Game Boy Color? Well, that's not exactly right. Besides sharing a similar battle system and all the same characters with Grandia, Parallel Trippers is, technically, an original game. Still, it's cool to see characters like Sue, Feena, Justin and Liete roaming around the handheld screen picking fights and using cones of light to recover their power. What's even better is that the classic battle system has been re-created almost completely; the interface has your party and enemies traveling along a time bar, so you can see who will attack when. It's exciting and depressing at the same time: While **Hudson** has already released this game in Japan, there are **no current plans for a U.S. release**.



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PlayStation 2



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Animated Violence



BUNGIE



PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

BY MARK MACDONALD

Yeah, we know you think you're hardcore, but when you jump on SegaNet to play Phantasy Star Online prepare to be humbled. If online PC RPGs like Everquest are any indication, you're going to be running into people in cyberspace who eat, drink and sleep this game—people who get kicked out of school, lose their jobs, wives, everything because they do nothing but play PSO morning, noon and night. How are you supposed to compete with these obsessive freaks? That's where we come in. Our guide gives you everything you need to know to infiltrate this secret society, to walk alongside Mr.-Know-It-All-57th-level Ranger without him screaming, "Stupid newbie!" and maybe even show him a trick or two. But enough talk, let's get started...



COMMUNICATION

Communication is essential for progress in Phantasy Star Online. Asking for help, trading items—you won't get far (or have much fun) if you aren't interacting with others. But how you say something in PSO is just as important as what you say. For one thing, you don't want to be fumbling around the keyboard when a group of Bohmas is beating you to a pulp, or wasting your time typing "follow me" over and over and over again. That's why you need a good set of chat shortcuts; here's a list of the essential phrases you should have set to buttons for quick and easy access. All of these are available

from the premade chat FIXED menu in the game or created using icons, so even players in other countries will understand you. We picked the eight most important phrases (and where you can find them in the game in parentheses) to fill the eight spots you can bind to the DC pad.

1. "Help me!" (FIXED: IN THE BATTLE): Trust us, you're gonna



Don't wait until you see the red screen of death to ask your buddies for help.



need this one. Use it for backup in combat, when you need healing, want other players to assist on a switch puzzle, etc.

2. **"One moment..."** (FIXED: IN THE AREA): You have to eat and go to the bathroom sometime, don't you? Let everyone know you're gonna be sitting out for a bit.
3. **"Thank you."/ "You're welcome."** (FIXED: ANSWERS): Common courtesy, especially after someone heals or resurrects your worthless behind.
4. **"Come over here."** (FIXED: IN THE AREA): At higher levels, many spells affect a small area around your character. Use this phrase to get everyone close to share their healing or stat-boosting effects.

5. **"This way. Follow me."** (FIXED: IN THE AREA): Someone has to take charge when there's more than one way to proceed. Use this to keep anyone from wandering off.
6. **"Shall we go back to the city?"** (FIXED: IN THE AREA): You'll be surprised how often you need to go back to town to sell items and pick up supplies, especially spell-casters who constantly need Magic Point-boosting Monofluid infusions.
7. **"RUN!"** (CUSTOM: SYMBOL CHAT): Surprisingly, there is no set phrase for "Retreat!" so instead, try making one like ours here from the symbol chat menu, with the accompanying

"Sadness" Sound Effect. Use this when things go wrong to call everyone out of combat to regroup.

8. **"Cool!"** (CUSTOM: SYMBOL CHAT): Great for all occasions, from someone gaining a level to your party finally trouncing that tough second boss. Sure you could choose the word "Cool!" or "Wicked!" from the FIXED: GREETINGS category, but making your own icon just has more style. The added "Pleasure" Sound Effect is a must.

No one should be without at least two signal icon that binds: one signaling retreat and another just to say, "Yes!" You can have lots of fun making your own, but here's ours to give you some ideas.





CHOOSING YOUR CHARACTER

The first important decision you have to make is choosing your character. Now before you go and just grab whoever you think looks cool, consider this: All the time you put into some character you end up deleting is precious hours you could have spent building up one you eventually keep. The three important questions you need to answer before picking a character are 1) Do you prefer guns or hand-to-hand weapons? 2) Do you want to be able to use magic? and 3) Will you be playing mostly online or single-player? If you aren't sure about any of these, try a few different characters for 10 minutes or so a piece—it'll be worth it in the long run. When you know your preferences, take a look at our breakdown:



CHARACTER ATTRIBUTE KEY

- AC** - Armor class (Level of defense)
- AD** - Attack Damage
- HP** - Health Points
- Hit** - Accuracy Rate
- ID** - Technique Damage (Spell power)
- IP** - Technique Points (Spell Points)

AD **HP**

AC



Hit

IP

ID



HUNEWEAR

More TP makes her a slightly more balanced fighter than HUmAR. Fans of Nel from Phantasy Star II will also go for the stylish looks.

HUMAR

The stock character for beginners with a little of everything—attack power, some magic, and nice Hit Points.

HUCAST

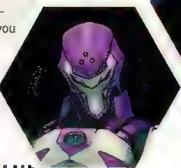
This thing is a combat machine—literally, since it's an android. If you don't care about magic, it's got the most Hit Points and attack power of any character.

AD **HP**

AC



Hit



AD **HP**

AC



Hit

IP **ID**

HUNTER

If you are looking for a good balance between fighting and magic this is the profession to start with. Close combat (their specialty) is a bit riskier and takes some getting used to, but the blade weapons Hunters equip are generally more powerful than guns.

AD **HP**

AC



Hit

RAMAR

If you're into guns but still want some magic ability (and you probably do) this is your man. Highly recommended and the best character for the single-player game.

IP

ID



RACAST

Like a big dumb jock, this hulking robot lives up to its intimidating looks with excellent offense and defense but no spell ability whatsoever.

AD **HP**

AC



Hit

IP

ID

RACASEAL

She may look like a maid, but this android is actually a lot like RACast. Slightly better defense makes up for a matching drop in attack power.

AD **HP**

AC



Hit



IP

ID

RANGER

Probably the easiest profession for beginning and single-player gamers. Rangers can use every gun in the game so you can stay safely away from monsters for those first few formative levels while you learn the ropes.

FORCE

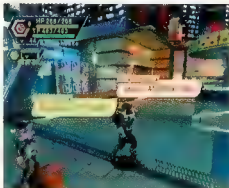
At higher levels, these magic users are arguably the most powerful profession. Their offensive and defensive spells affect a wide radius and become almost scarily potent. But if you're planning on playing single-player much, especially at the start of your game, you'll want to look elsewhere.



ETIQUETTE

How you treat your fellow party members means a lot in PSO. If you're selfish and rude no party will want you, and you won't build up a good group of comrades you can play with regularly. Here's some tips on how to act and what to look for in fellow adventurers:

DON'T BE GREEDY: Don't head straight for the treasure boxes, grabbing every item and Meseta in sight. Concentrate on killing the monsters first. Leave stuff for the other players, or offer them items that you don't need or can't use. Set a good example and helpfully your teammates will follow.



Those friendly 'bots hangin' out just off the shoulder are MAGs, and they come in all shapes and sizes depending on how you raise them.



RAISING YOUR MAG

So what is that little thing hovering over your shoulder? It's called a MAG, and it's basically a little robot sidekick. It may not seem like it now, but that little comma-shaped buddy is critical to your character's success in PSO. It can cast spells and perform special attacks, but the MAG's biggest perk is the boost it gives your stats. As your MAG gains levels it can improve your attack power, defense rating, spell abilities—just about everything. But in order for it to gain levels, you have to feed it. A lot. Every three and a half minutes you can feed your mag any item from a Monomate to a Sol Atomizer. But don't just give it whatever you happen to have on hand. Different items can affect different MAGs in various ways, depending on their type and level. Watch your MAGs' stats closely. Try to focus on one stat at a time, and feed it only the items that raise that stat.

DO UNTO OTHERS: Heal other players when you can. Cover their backs in combat. Resurrect them when they die. Use one of your Telepipes when they need to go back to the city. Build up some good karma and it'll pay off when it's your body that's lying dead on the floor.

DON'T SELL IT—STORE IT: Find a really nice item but your character can't use it? Or maybe you already have a slightly better item? Give it away or trade with someone instead of just selling it. If no one's around, deposit it at the Check Room for later. The goodwill you build with other players is worth more in the long run than the few Meseta the item store will give you.

DON'T MAKE THEM WAIT: If you're going to be away from the game for a while, don't just stand there idle—quit. Groups can only hold four people, and you taking up a slot is dead weight that handicaps the rest of the party.

TEAM STRATEGIES

As ex-Dallas Cowboys head coach Tom Landry always said, "Teamwork is the number one thing that will save your butt in PSO." Well, he would have if he wasn't dead. We like to think he'd approve of these plays too:

INTERFERENCE: While the rest of the group waits in the hall, have one person run around the room, luring the monsters away from the rest of the party. Once everything is a safe distance away, the other three players can enter at once and attack together.

DIVIDE AND CONQUER: Split into two groups, one that goes left in every room and one that goes right. Surround the monsters and attack from both sides and they'll move slower and die faster.

HEALER: Designate the party member with the strongest defense (or the most hit points) as your safety. He or she should stay toward the back and be the first to run when monsters get close but also have status healing and resurrection spells or items always at the ready. Especially helpful when fighting the bosses.

FOMARL

If you are convinced you want to rely mostly on magic but still want to mix it up hand-to-hand now and then, choose her.



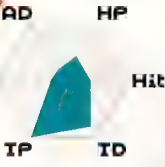
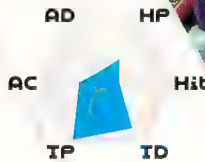
FONEWM

Don't be fooled by his goofy appearance: The most powerful magic user (along with Fonewear), with a party to back him up this guy kicks booty.



FONEWEAR

Forget about attacking with regular weapons, she has the worst Hit percentage in the game. But if you want nothing but magic, she's your best choice.



DATE-SPECIFIC EVENTS

This isn't really a tip, but it's something you should know: PSO has several date-specific events locked inside. Two examples: For the holidays, the principal's office was decked out with Christmas trees, and New Year's had a giant "21" twirling in the city, complete with the music from 2001: A Space Odyssey. Cool.



Keep on truckin' with a rubber band (above) and use natural barriers like this moat (right) to kill enemies without getting a scratch.

TIPS AND TRICKS

There's no out-and-out way to cheat in PSO, at least not that we've figured out. But there are a number of little sneaky ways to do things that might not be obvious.

BUILD UP EXPERIENCE WITHOUT BREAKING A SWEAT:

Low-level characters out of their league against tough opponents should try hitting every monster they can just once, then running away. Let the rest of the party finish off the baddies and you'll still share in the experience points.

LEARNING SPELLS: If your character can cast spells, never throw away any Priest/Mind unit you find. Put it in storage instead. Whenever you are close to being able to learn a new spell, equip every slot in your armor with these to temporarily boost your magic ability. Once you learn the spell you can put the units back in storage and equip whatever other units you normally use, and you can still cast your new spell.

IDLE AS LONG AS YOU DAMN

WELL PLEASE: PSO normally only lets you idle for up to an hour, then it automatically quits and saves. But if you don't mind tying up your phone line, set up a rubber band on your pad like ours here to make your character run in circles and you won't have to start all over at the first area when you want to play again.

MONSTER TRAPS: Enemies can sometimes be blocked by hills, walls and other obstacles that will still allow you a clear shot at them. Try to find and take advantage of these locations.



Distract your teammates as you go for the treasure—but don't expect to keep getting away with it.



CHEAT LIKE A BASTARD

Are we suggesting you try any of these low-down, dirty, downright nasty methods for getting what you want, or merely letting you know about them so you can watch out for other scumbags trying to use them on you? That's a good question. We'll get back to you on that one.

GETTING ITEMS (AND LOOKING LIKE A BASTARD):

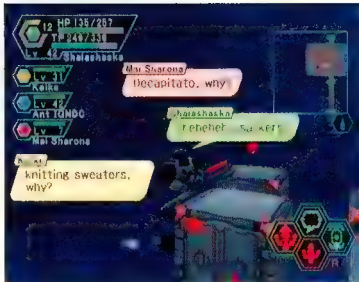
If you spot a bunch of treasure you want to grab, try asking the other players questions (like "Hey, what time is it?" or the FIXED: RECOMMENDED question "What is your hobby?") if you're playing with foreigners). While they are busy on the keyboard answering, you can run over and snatch the goodies. Of course, this only works so many times before it becomes painfully obvious what's going on.

GETTING ITEMS (WITHOUT

LOOKING LIKE A BASTARD): If you see some money or items lying around in the middle of combat, position yourself by them and start attacking. Since the default setup uses the same button for attacking as picking up items, it looks like you just grabbed the loot on accident in the course of helping your fellow players, and you won't look like the selfish prick you really are.

GETTING ITEMS (AND MAKING SOMEONE ELSE LOOK LIKE A

BASTARD): Stand next to the item you want and wait for another player to approach. Just as the second player gets close enough to take the treasure, you grab it first. Stay standing there, perfectly still for a few seconds after the other player walks away. Sure you know you got the item, and he knows you



got the item, but to the other two players it looks like he just ran up and grabbed it, the greedy punk. Then it's your word against his, and who's gonna believe some hit-and-run item-grabber over you?

THROW ENEMIES ON SOMEONE

ELSE: When you first enter a room full of monsters, make a quick lap around it. After you have all the monsters following you, lead them to some other poor schlep in your party. Once they lock on to your "buddy," take off for the other end of the room and pick them off at your leisure.

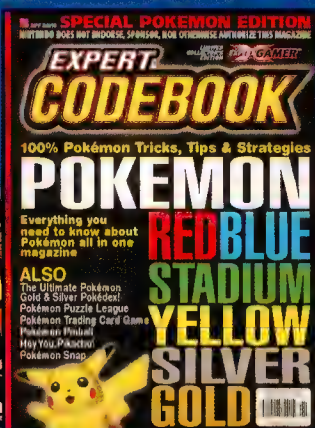
LANGUAGE FILTER? \$#@ THAT!

Now we aren't ones to encourage the use of four-letter words, but PSO's language filter is just too puritanical for our tastes (even Amish grandmothers say "fart" and "poop" for crying out loud). How do you get around it? Just add a space or period in the middle of the word (fa rt or fa.rt) and your message will get across with all the flavor and panache you intended. Also, dog-loyers take note: The word "bitch" is inexplicably not filtered out when it is the first word of a sentence.

Well that about does it for our PSO Survival Guide. Don't miss EGM's exclusive review of the game on pg. 108. Say hello if you run into Shalashaska, and remember: Take care of yourself, and each other.



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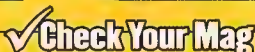
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SONIC THE HEDGEHOG TURNS

by Greg Sewart

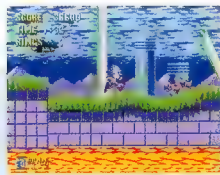


In 1990, Sega realized it needed something big on the Genesis. Project "Million Seller" was born.

That was Hayao Nakayama's (then head of Sega) master plan—to give three top designers 11 months to create Sega's first million-seller console game. The chosen ones were Yuji Naka (programmer), Hirokazu Yasuhara (level designer) and Haoto Oshima (character designer). The group grew a little and the development took 14 months, but the final product was a blue hedgehog named Sonic.

In 1991 he invaded our living rooms and proved that Sega was not going to take the launch of Nintendo's Super NES lightly. The following 10 years saw Sonic survive a bitter war with Nintendo, weather some dark days for Sega, and take on a new rival in the form of Sony's PlayStation. Now we showcase the blue blur's evolution, with a special focus on all the major games, and wrap everything up with a look at Sonic Adventure 2.

Sonic The Hedgehog 1991, Genesis



Taking a page out of Nintendo's gameplan, Sega decided to pack this killer-app in with each Genesis sold. The result? A whole new generation of Sega fans.

Sonic the Hedgehog brought blistering speed and attitude to the somewhat stale platform genre. This game was about action, not exploration, as each level had a 10-minute time limit and plenty of ramps and loops to take advantage of Sonic's blurring speed. The original game also pushed Sega's hardware to the limits by featuring fully rotating bonus stages. Sega claimed the Super NES couldn't do Sonic, since its system clock was slower than the Genesis. Sonic also hit the Master System and Game Gear. **Didja know?** If Sega of America had its way, the world may never have met Sonic. SoA wasn't too keen on Sonic's design. And Yuji Naka actually quit Sega once Sonic The Hedgehog was completed. He left because he didn't like Sega of Japan's seniority-based pay-scale.

Sonic The Hedgehog 2 1992, Genesis

Sonic's return appearance marked the first simultaneous worldwide release of a video game. Sonic 2's Day (Nov. 24) introduced the world to a two-tailed fox named Miles "Tails" Prower (get it?). It also introduced Metal Sonic, Dr. Robotnik's hedgehog doppelganger, and the Spin Dash. Now Sonic could crouch, build up speed and take off at full throttle.

Perhaps the most famous innovation of Sonic 2, though, was Blast Processing. It was a Sega of America marketing ploy that distributed the programming techniques that allowed Sonic to run faster than ever before.

The bonus levels were yet another technical milestone, featuring a 3D scaling half-pipe. Sonic 2 was also released on the Master System and Game Gear.

Didja know? Sonic 2 was developed by the Sega Technical Institute, a U.S.-based collection of American and Japanese programmers. Yuji Naka joined them to work on the sequel, but left the company again before the game was completed.



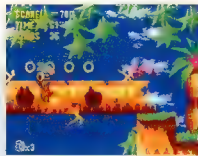
Sonic CD
1993, Sega CD

Considered a bit of a departure from the main series, the point in this sequel was to travel between future and past levels of each world and stop Robotnik's evil plans even before they started. Sonic's girlfriend, Amy, made her first appearance in this game.

Along with the Spin Dash, Sonic CD featured the Peel Out, where Sonic would basically do a standing Spin Dash. This move, along with the time-travel ability, was never used again in a Sonic game.

The bonus levels were the only real part of the game that showed off the power of the ill-fated Sega CD. These free-roaming, 3D battles with UFOs looked just as good, if not better, than anything seen on Nintendo's Super NES. Many people consider this the best 16-bit Sonic title ever made.

Didja know? The American tunes for Sonic CD, composed by Spencer Nilsen, were a radical departure from the absolutely superb Japanese tracks—so radical, in fact, that even today you'll find old-school Sonic fans whining about Spencer's handiwork.

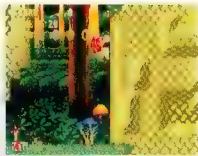


Sonic & Knuckles
1994, Genesis

Sonic & Knuckles seemed almost identical to Sonic 3. The levels were different, but the look was the same as the previous game's. However, Knuckles was now a playable character. Playing as the echidna opened up whole new sections of each level, since Knuckles could hover for short periods of time and climb walls with his spiked hands.

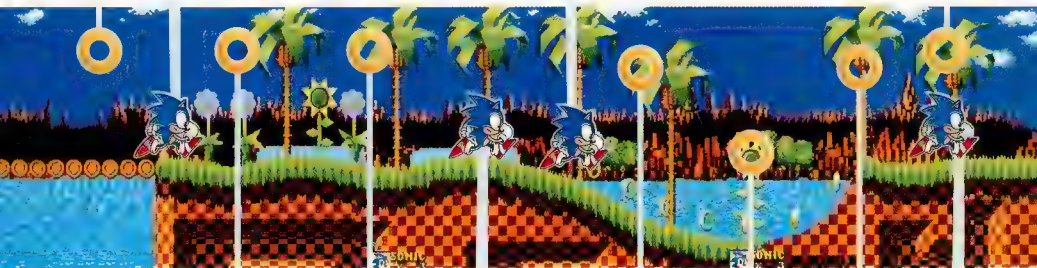
S&K was also the first and only Lock-On cartridge released for the Genesis. Plugging Sonic 2 or 3 into the slot on top of S&K made Knuckles a playable character in both games. The difference was most dramatic in Sonic 3, where it was obvious that the game had been planned with Sonic & Knuckles in mind.

Sadly, Sonic & Knuckles was the last of the "real" Sonic games to hit a home console for quite a while. By this time Sonic Team was a much more diverse development house than the original three-man group. Sega gamers would have to endure a stream of stopgap titles, such as Sonic Jam and Sonic 3D Blast, while Sonic Team branched off into other game genres on the Saturn.



SegaSonic
1993
Arcade

Sonic the Fighters
1996
Arcade



Sonic Chaos
1993
Game Gear

Sonic Spinball
1993
Genesis/
Game Gear

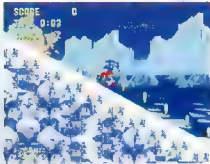
Sonic Triple Trouble
1994
Game Gear

Sonic Drift 2
1995
Game Gear

Sonic Labyrinth
1995
Game Gear

Sonic The Hedgehog 3
1994, Genesis

By 1994, Sonic was starting to grow a little stale. The first three games had looked almost identical, even with the different level designs. The series needed something to freshen it—to save it from becoming as flat as so many other character-based games in the mid-'90s. With that in mind, Sonic 3 received a complete graphical overhaul. Sonic and Tails were a little more stylized, and each level was overflowing with color and animation.

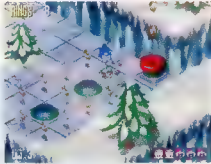


The gameplay was tweaked a little, too. Now Sonic could grab certain things and get various shields that made him impervious to fire or helped him breathe underwater. Plus each level flowed a little better and the game featured a battery back-up (a first for Sonic).

The most memorable part, though, was the unveiling of Knuckles The Echidna. Tricked by Robotnik into hating Sonic, he was the guardian of the Chaos Emeralds. Though he was an antagonist throughout Sonic 3, he later became more of a friendly rival.

Sonic 3D Blast
1996, Saturn

Suffering a beating at the hands of Sony and its PlayStation, Sega rightly assumed that its best chance at turning around the Saturn's flagging system sales would be to release a new Sonic title. 3D games were the hot new thing back then, but knowing the Saturn really couldn't handle a fully polygonal Sonic game, Sega opted for a pseudo-3D, isometric title that just didn't work. The limited viewing area and sloppy control kept Sonic from ever getting up to speed in this disappointing sequel. There was also a version of 3D Blast released on the all-but-dead Genesis platform.

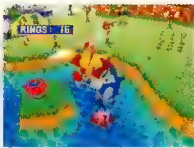


Didja know? Sonic 3D Blast marks the only time Sega farmed out a major Sonic title to a third-party developer. Traveller's Tales (who later developed Sonic R in 1997) did not handle the license well. This was a disturbing trend in the early days of the Saturn. Other huge franchises, like Virtua Racing and Shinobi, were also handed out like candy to anyone with enough money. Seen much of those two series lately?

Sonic Jam 1997, Saturn

Boy, did it suck to be a Sonic fan during the Saturn era. Not until the system was almost three years old did gamers get a Sonic game that was worth owning, and even then it was simply a compilation.

Sonic Jam featured Sonic 1, 2, 3 and Sonic & Knuckles, with Sonic CD conspicuously absent. Having all those classics on one disc was a pretty sweet deal, but Sega upped the ante a little by including “Sonic World,” a fully 3D area that Sonic could zip through and explore the many different gallery buildings littering the landscape. Sonic freaks dug it. From sketches of Sonic and friends to a Sonic timeline to a collection of Japanese game commercials, the Sonic memorabilia took hours to check out. What a way to apologize for never giving Saturn owners the Sonic game they really deserved.

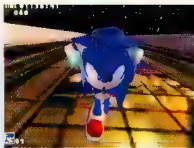


Sonic Adventure 1999, Dreamcast

Sega learned a lot of lessons from the Saturn's short and messy career—one of which was to launch the Dreamcast with a real Sonic game on the shelves. And man, Sonic Adventure was quite a game!

Even though gameplay was far more complicated than the single-button scheme of the first title, the unmistakable feel and attitude of Sonic was still present in spades. Sonic Adventure borrowed from Sonic & Knuckles in that there were multiple characters to play as, each with its own unique quests and play styles.

What's more, the Chaos Emeralds were finally made an integral part of the story. Robotnik was collecting them to resurrect a monster, aptly named Chaos. **Didja know?** Sonic Adventure is the most successful Dreamcast game to date worldwide.



Sonic Pocket Adventure 1999 Neo-Geo Pocket Color

Sonic Shuffle 2000 Dreamcast

Sonic R 1997 Saturn

Sonic Jam 1998 Game.com



Sonic Doomed

Almost as interesting as the Sonic games released over the past 10 years are the games that didn't make it, likely more than we can count. There are three examples that spring to mind immediately, though, when we think of Sonic's stillborn adventure.



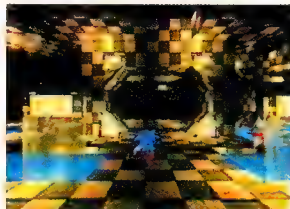
Sonic 4 was scrapped in favor of Knuckles Chaotix on the 32X.

First there's the rumored Sonic The Hedgehog 4 on the Genesis. The game had Sonic and Tails teaming up once again, but this time connected by a big elastic band (or something). The gameplay proved so slow and un-Sonic-like that the title was scrapped. The premise resurfaced in a game called Knuckles Chaotix on the Sega 32x, which didn't feature Sonic.

Then there's the planned Saturn version of the arcade-only Sonic The Fighters. Sega's arcade conversions were the stuff of legends back then, so Sonic The Fighters seemed a natural—especially with the lack of Sonic games on the system. Sadly, the game never made it to the home system, though two of the combatants did appear in Fighters Megamix.

Finally, and probably most famously, we

have Sonic Xtreme, developed by Sega Technical Institute (of Sonic 2 fame). Shown in playable form at the '96 E3, Sonic Xtreme had been in development for three years before Sega finally realized it would not be the hit the Saturn needed and pulled the plug (see our 10 Games You'll Never Play feature in *EGM* #137). The Sega Technical Institute was dismantled soon after and the Saturn died without a “real” Sonic title.



Sonic Xtreme spent three years in development only to be killed.

SONIC™ ADVENTURE 2

This brings us to Sonic's 10th year. We've only had a chance to play around with the first level of *Sonic Adventure 2* (you can too with the demo included with *Phantasy Star Online*), but even that's enough to see that it's well on the way to being a worthy successor to Sonic's first Dreamcast outing.

First and foremost, Sonic has received a redesign of sorts. Yeah, he's still a blue hedgehog who runs really fast, but he's lost a little weight and is much more animated than before. When he walks up to a ledge he stops and throws his arms out to maintain his balance. Also, when he falls he goes into a spread-eagle pose.

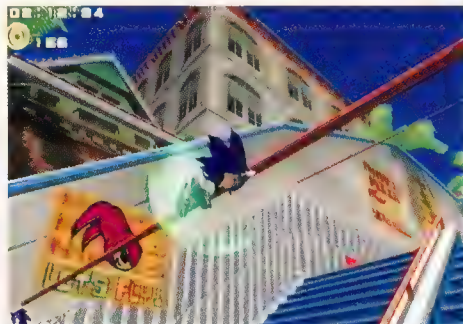
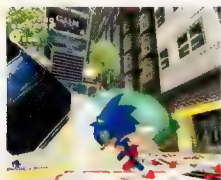
Sonic's got some new moves, too. Along with the return of the homing attack, Sonic can now grind down any rails you find in the game (a la *Jet*



Grind Radio). Also, destroying Badniks earns Sonic whistles that he can use to call various animals, collecting them (we assume) for more Chao breeding later in the game. Finally, Sonic can grab hold of horizontal bars and use them to swing and boost himself up to higher platforms.

The texture quality in *Sonic Adventure 2* is simply breathtaking. The walls and ground look so realistic it's almost scary. The particle work in the game is pretty impressive, too—especially the spark trail left behind Sonic when he's surfing down the streets of the opening level.

Checking out the preview video uncovers a few interesting points, too. It seems the main antagonist in *Sonic Adventure 2* is some sort of dark hedgehog (or similar character) and that Dr. Robotnik may actually be playable. The video shows him running around in an egg-machine blowing up a bunch of enemies. It should also be noted that Amy, Big, E-102 and Tails are nowhere to be seen in these gameplay clips. Knuckles, Sonic and Dr. Robotnik are the only recognizable characters.



A big thank you to Mark Cerny, a former member of Sega Technical Institute for helping us to the more interesting moments in Sonic's history

Sonic makes like a young girl in a Spielberg movie and saves the world with gymnastics! Seriously, the swing is one of Sonic's cooler moves in a while.

Twisted Metal: Black

It's got real-world weather and time-of-day transitions. It's got a much deeper combat system. It's got a dark theme that's been described as "mood altering." It's got ejector seats. But that doesn't mean everything about Twisted Metal: Black will be totally alien to fans of the series. This king of all car-combat games—due on PS2 in early summer—will pack familiar characters like Outlaw, Spectre, Sweet Tooth, Darkside and Calypso. And if you read last month's cover story, you know that developer Incognito is staffed with all the key Singletrac guys who worked on Twisted Metal 1 and 2, before the series fell apart at the hands of



989 Studios.

"In all honesty, we don't feel there has been a great car-combat game since TM2," says Dave Jaffe, Sony Santa Monica's director and lead designer of TM1, TM2 and TM: Black. "There have been good-looking ones, but nothing that has played that great." So what makes TM: Black so special? Plenty. The arenas—which expand as the battles wear on—are more interactive than ever. See that water tower over there? Blast its support struts and send it toppling onto enemies. The development team is implementing a new enemy-acquisition scheme that'll help you track enemies without having to rely completely on radar. And the



weapons system is ultra-deep. "There is a greater emphasis on skill this time out, instead of the simple 'fire-and-forget' type weapons of other car-combat games," Incognito president Scott Campbell tells us. "For new players, the game is still easy to pick up and play, but we've worked hard to make a car-combat game with the depth of Street Fighter II."

Best of all, Incognito is taking their time with TM: Black. The game's been in development for more than a year and a half already, and the team is well into the gameplay-tweaking stage. This will be one finely tuned product—and that fact alone means it will be a heck of



a lot better than the last two PS one installments in this lackluster series. "Twisted Metal: Black takes the best gameplay mechanics from TM1 (chasing and jousting) and TM2 (weapon combos, car dynamics, environment interactivity)," says Campbell, "then blends them in with the new gameplay mechanics that allow for a more balanced combat experience."



Wipeout Fusion

Every new console needs a jaw-dropping showcase title, but today's grown men were mere babes when the first Wipeout hit PS one, and they barely had 'pit hair when the more fully realized XL cruised to the system. Good news for anti-grav newbies, Wipeout Fusion is on course to hit PS2 sometime after June 2001, and the same Psygnosis team that worked on the previous games (before they were absorbed by Sony Europe) is building this one. Better news: This team is doing more than just jazzing up the visuals. "Each track will have a PS2 innovation—something we couldn't achieve on PS one," says Enda Carey, brand development manager for SCE. "The most obvious of these will be 360-degree loops, corkscrews, etc., and there will be shortcuts in every track, some of which won't become apparent until you study the replays."

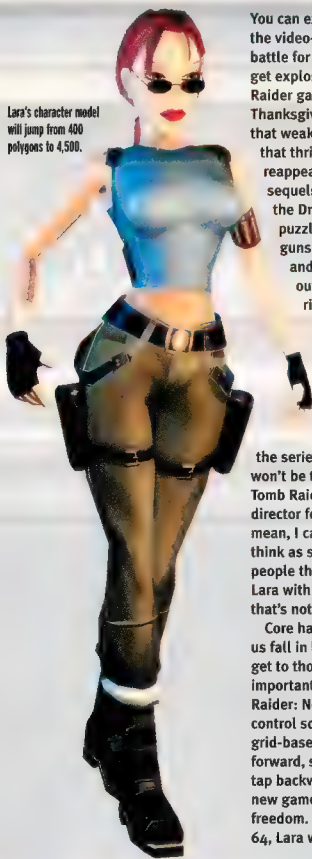
Eagle-eyed readers will also note that the



Tomb Raider: Next Generation



Lara's character model will jump from 400 polygons to 4,500.



You can expect three things to happen every year in the video-game biz: Madden and GameDay will battle for gridiron supremacy, an *EGM* editor will get explosively hungover at E3, and a new Tomb Raider game will hit a system near you around Thanksgiving. And we reckon if you're anyone but that weak-bellied *EGM* editor, the annual tradition that thrills you least is Lara Croft's annual reappearance. For four years now, Tomb Raider sequels on the PlayStation (and, more recently, the Dreamcast) have delivered new levels, new puzzles, a few new moves for its star gunslinger, and that's about it. Most gamers and game reviewers agree this franchise ran out of tricks two games ago. If any series is ripe for a rebirth, this is it.

Thank the gaming gods—developer Core Design seems to agree. Due in late 2001 for the PS2, Xbox and perhaps even GameCube (“We’re by no means ruling it out,” a Core spokesperson tells us. “It’s an awesome machine.”), Tomb Raider: Next Generation is set to take the series in a new direction. Heck, even the name won’t be the same. “It probably won’t be called Tomb Raider,” says Adrian Smith, development director for U.K.-based developer Core Design. “I mean, I call it ‘Tomb Raider: Next Generation,’ but I think as soon as we say Tomb Raider, people think temples; tombs; bears; bats; Lara with her guns, shorts and a T-shirt—that’s not what this game’s about.”

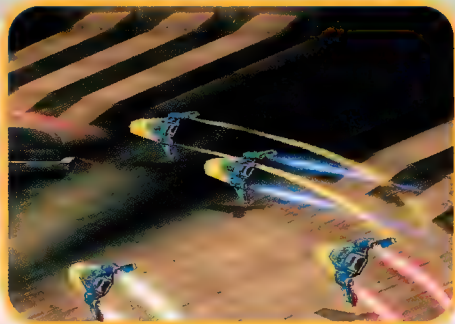
Core has lots of ideas on how to make us fall in love with Lara again, and we’ll get to those in a sec. But first, the really important series improvement—Tomb Raider: Next Generation will have a new control scheme. Instead of Lara’s current grid-based movement system (tap forward, she steps ahead one grid space; tap backward, she hops back a space), the new games will offer complete analog freedom. So, like Mario in Super Mario 64, Lara will be able to tip-toe, walk or

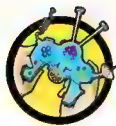
all-out run with complete analog precision. And control will feel fluid, not rigid and clunky like it does in the five PS one games.

Core also plans to take Lara into the realm of episodic entertainment. That doesn’t mean all future Tomb Raider games will be available only via download. The main chapters of the game will still be sold in stores every year or so. But sidestory adventures—chapters focusing on characters other than Lara—will be available for download as often as every three months. Loads of backstory find its way online, too. Core’s still sweating the details on how all this will work, since Sony and Microsoft haven’t crystallized their online plans yet. But a professional scriptwriter has already roughed out the next 20 or so chapters of Lara’s life in a “serles bible,” and Core promises that the new games, which will be darker in tone, will feel more like *X-Files* episodes, full of loose ends and unsolved mysteries. “You’re going to get to the end and go, ‘Hmmm, I’ve obviously finished that adventure, but I know there’s more,’” Smith says. “What happened to that character I met, and what was that whole thing I heard over there, and what about those five doors I couldn’t open?” You’re going to get to the end and realize you just solved a piece to the overall puzzle.”



tracks are considerably wider than those in the previous games. “This forces the player to make the choice between speed and combat as they will have to veer off to the side of the track to choose their relevant pick-up, making the game more strategic,” Carey says. “It will also prevent one of the problems of previous versions of the games—namely the scraping into the sides—and allow us to have up to 16 craft on screen at any one time.” The game will also support a two-player split-screen mode, but won’t feature any fire-wire or link-cable shenanigans this time around. The story line will also be a key factor in *Wipeout Fusion*, which, it should be noted, will have its look crafted not by Designer’s Republic, but by Good Technology, makers of the Audi, BBC and Uz Web sites. 🎮





Power Tools

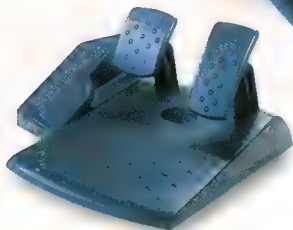
Peripheral Reviews

Blue Thunder Racing Wheel

Company	System	Price
InterAct	PS2	\$59.99

This is the best racing wheel to hit a home console, bar none. Whether you sit the wheel in your lap or clip it to a table, the steering is responsive and offers enough resistance that you feel like you're really driving a car. Plus this baby comes with a real gearshift! Rounding out the experience is the foot pedal. The pedals are unique so as to avoid confusion, and the added footrest on the left keeps it from sliding. If it weren't for the GT3 Logitech wheel looming, the Blue Thunder would be a no-brainer.

www.interact-acc.com



PS2 Controllers

Dual Force 2

Mad Catz • \$29.99

From the moment you pick up this pad, you know it's a winner. Maybe that's because it's not terribly different from the Dual Shock 2. Except that it's cheaper, and has a sweet macro feature. The cord is really short though.

Score: 8.0 out of 10



PX4000

Saitek • \$29.95

It's a tough call between this pad and the Mad Catz to the left. Both feel excellent, and both have their fair share of unique features. The PX4000 has an analog knob axis lock feature and an extra analog throttle underneath. The best feature? The 50-foot-long cord—who needs a remote?

Score: 8.5 out of 10



Storm Chaser

InterAct • \$29.99

When you see InterAct's Ps2 pad, you want to like the thing—it looks like some sort of Batman weapon. Problem is, the quality of the controller is just average. It's quite large and all, but it just doesn't feel very solid. It does have a nice programmable feature though. Nice design, but we like the others better.

Score: 6.0 out of 10



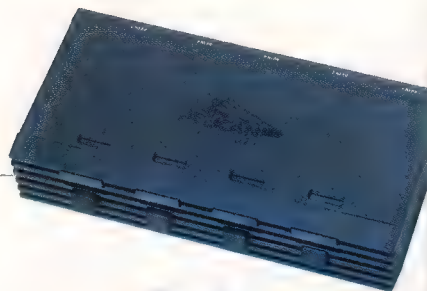
Freedom Shock 2

Pelican Accessories • \$49.99

The 900 MHz technology used in this controller allows for true wireless functionality (no more having to have the thing aimed directly at the system for it to work). Still, it's not 100-percent problem-free. It wiggled out more than once when held too far away. Plus, the price is too high, and the analog knobs feel really loose.

Score: 3.0 out of 10





A/V Selector

Company	System	Price
Pelican	Any	\$29.95

It's a PS2-styled composite and S-video A/V switch box with four connections—pretty straightforward. The little plastic nameplates identifying what system is connected to a particular port is what makes this selector different than others. No need for cumbersome stickers. All you need to do is snap the name in and you're set. It comes with tags for PlayStation 2, Gamecube, Xbox and more. Five ports would've been nice though.

www.pelicanacc.com

Multiplayer Adapter

Company	System	Price
InterAct	PS2	\$25.99

A five-person multi-tap for PS2? What the hell? It's a curious feature to say the least. While there are no games that support five players just yet, InterAct says they're working with various developers in hopes they'll include five- and 10-player modes in future titles. As a four-player adapter, it works just fine. A solid choice.

www.InterAct-acc.com

8MB Mem Card

Company	System	Price
Mad Catz	PS2	\$29.99

Two things make this Mad Catz 8MB PlayStation 2 memory card worth considering: it's officially licensed by Sony so you know the thing will work, and it's five bucks cheaper than the Sony-branded card. As always, we recommend the first-party version if you can find one and afford the extra dough. But this nicely designed third-party card will do the job. Plus it comes with a handy plastic case for those mobile Timesplitters blast-a-thons.

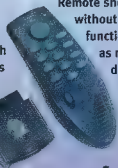
www.madcatz.com



PS2 DVD Remotes Master Remote

InterAct • \$19.99

You can control your PS2 and your TV with this stylish remote. Note: Early versions had two mislabeled buttons. In addition, the IR device doesn't have a pass-through port. **Score: 6.5 out of 10**



DVD Remote

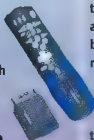
InterAct • \$14.99

This is just like the Master Remote shown to the left, without the TV control function. It feels just as natural, but still doesn't feature a much-needed pass-through port. Luckily, the price is five bucks cheaper. **Score: 5.5 out of 10**

Wireless Remote

Mad Catz • \$19.99

This rather bulky remote gives you power over your PS2, TV and VCR. Setup could've been more friendly, but it's worth the trouble. A pass-through connector would've been welcome however. **Score: 6.0 out of 10**



Wireless DVD Remote

Nyko • \$19.99

This egg-like remote features a pass-through connector, and a button to switch between a game pad and the remote on the fly. The rather tight fit of the pass-through port, and the tiny size of the Play and Stop buttons knock the score down. **Score: 6.5 out of 10**



DVD Remote

Saltek • \$19.99

This remote's sleek design will fit right in with the other remotes in your A/V arsenal. The pass-through connector works like a champ, but sometimes the buttons on the remote itself act quirky. Early versions had the swapped button problem like the InterAct remotes. **Score: 7.5 out of 10**





Freestyler Board

Company	System	Price
Thrustmaster	PS	\$69.99

Another situation where you're better off sticking with your trusty Dual Shock. Sure, the well-made Freestyler offers a more realistic 'boardin' experience but games are designed with the regular pad in mind—not this thing. After some control customization, the Board feels a tad more natural but all in all it's not worth the trouble for the average gamer—especially at the price. It's more for the hardcore boarders out there who double as gamers.

www.thrustmaster.com

DPS 5.1

Company	System	Price
Boston Acoustics	PS2	\$599.99

In a word, incredible. This high-end (and pricey) DTS-compatible 5.1 digital speaker/subwoofer set will have you loving whatever you hook up to it—preferably your PS2 since it has a digital connection and is DTS-compatible. The package will give you crystal-clear highs and powerful but appropriate lows in every movie and game you throw at it. It even comes with a full-featured remote that can be configured for your TV, VCR and cable box. One thing to note: The satellites use a proprietary speaker connector and wire, it may not be the perfect choice for your long-term home theater setup, but it's more than ample power for your apartment or dorm.

www.bostonacoustics.com



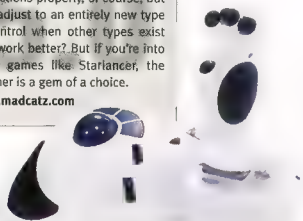
The DPS 5.1 can be purchased online from www.bostonacoustics.com

Panther DC

Company	System	Price
Mad Catz	DC	\$44.99

You'd think the Panther DC would be the ideal way to play first-person shooters like Quake III and Half-life with the trackball and abundance of buttons. Unfortunately, even with tons of tweaking and customization, it just doesn't feel as natural as the mouse and keyboard configuration, or even the DC pad. It functions properly, of course, but why adjust to an entirely new type of control when other types exist that work better? But if you're into flight games like Starlancer, the Panther is a gem of a choice.

www.madcatz.com



First Aid Kit

Company	System	Price
Nyko	GBC	\$29.99

If you're in the market for some Game Boy peripherals, this package from Nyko is a steal. Not only do you get the award-winning Worm Light (now with pass-through connector for link cables) and the stylish Hip Clip, you get tons of other goodies that'll turn your Game Boy into a mobile gaming assault unit—it's true. Seriously, there's a load of high-quality gear included in this kit.

www.nyko.com

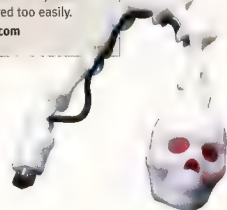


Bone Light

Company	System	Price
Mad Catz	GBC	\$9.99

Halloween has come and gone, but that's not stopping Mad Catz from bringing us this ghoulish Game Boy add-on. With the Worm Light, Cobra Light, Blob Light and every other kind of light available, this bone idea was bound to come along. Sure, it's silly, but it's fun. Problem is, it's difficult to adjust and it comes unplugged too easily.

www.madcatz.com

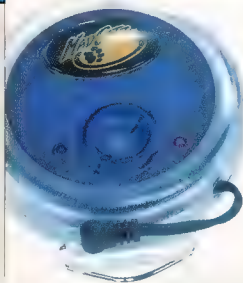


Battery Puck

Company	System	Price
Mad Catz	GBC	\$19.99

Clip this battery pack to your belt and you can become the world's biggest dork! Actually, you become the smartest kid on the block, since the nicely designed puck doesn't weigh down your GBC like other battery packs. Plus, it gives you three or four more hours of play time over standard alkalines. Keep in mind, the power cord isn't terribly long, but it should do the job. One thing: Mad Catz has some sort of Pokémon theme going on with this thing, but we don't get it. Stupid marketing.

www.madcatz.com



Monster Brain

Company	System	Price
Pelican	GBC	\$29.95

This cheat device specifically designed to work with Pokémon Gold and Silver will make you the king of all Pokémon trainers. Problem is, it's not how the game was meant to be played, so don't ruin the experience by using this thing from the get-go. But let's say you've made it through the game a couple of times and have an array of pumped-up Pokémon. In this case, it'd be fun to mess around with your experience, max HP, money and a ton of other options. The Monster Brain works without a hitch, including a nicely designed interface, but kinda pricey.

www.pelicanacc.com

Travel Pack

Company	System	Price
Mad Catz	GBC	\$29.99

While this pack isn't quite as impressive as Nyko's offering, it does include a couple of useful items. First, the winged battery pack gives the GBC a more balanced feel compared to other such devices. Next, a handy Game Boy padded tote allows you to store a slew of games and accessories, as well as your system. The amplified speakers and magnifier attachments are basically pointless. Do you really need GBC game music any louder than it already is? And do you really need to have an old-school clunky magnifier snapped onto the top of your handheld? We think not on both accounts.

www.madcatz.com





Review Crew

This Month...

Don't bother looking anywhere else. We have the exclusive first review of the U.S. version of Phantasy Star Online, and we're celebrating by giving this revolutionary online RPG the special two-page treatment. What? Don't believe us? Flip the page right now and see!

The Crew has stumbled onto some potential sleeper hits this month too. Ever hear of Bangai-O!

The Crew



Crispin Boyer

Cris reckons the only thing more frustrating than Prince of Persia is Chicago's f'ed up bus system. An hour-and-a-half wait in subzero temps for a bus? C'mon! **Favorite Genres:** Action, Adventure



Jonathan Dudlak

Mediating the heated rivalry between CJ and Sewart is a full-time job for young Dudlak. It's good practice for when he someday has kids of his own, though... **Favorite Genres:** Fighting, Rayman



Dean Hager

With the holidays a distant blur, Dean now begins several days of hibernation before the big thaw...or E3, whichever comes first. **Favorite Genre:** Sports, Racing



Chris Johnston

When Chris isn't beating Sewart firmly into the ground in Speed Devils Online, he's thinking about the many victories he's had on Aspen Summer. Oh baby! **Favorite Genres:** Adventure, Puzzle



Kraig Kujawa

Kay-Kay, as we call him, has been surging the callouses that all those swell sports games have laid upon him. His thumbs look like big leather sausages. **Favorite Genres:** Sports, Strategy



Dan Leahy

"Danny Vegas" met his match on a recent excursion, and was nearly thrown in the clink by a pit boss named "Benny the Bite." Will he be on *COPS?* **Favorite Genres:** Sports, Craps



Ryan Lockhart

Ryan's frothing at the mouth after seeing actual Xbox games in Vegas. He's also frothing because he left Sin City with an empty wallet. Damn blackjack. **Favorite Genres:** Whiteness, RPG



Mark MacDonald

Mark had few reviews this month, but he earned his pay enduring Mielke's endless bitching for countless hours playing Phantasy Star Online. Pity him. **Favorite Genres:** Action, Adventure



James Mielke

This holiday has been cruel to Mielke. Rib-snapping coughs, a hyper-drunk New Year's Eve and the PSO review. Oh when will the nightmare end? **Favorite Genres:** Reading, Tea



Greg Sewart

Fresh from his vacation behind the Maple Curtain, Greg has been taking all comers in Speed Devils Online. And kicking CJ's ass on a regular basis! **Favorite Genres:** Racing, Action, RPG

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.**

Additional Contributors

Ethan Einhorn

John Davison

Mike Price

Joe Rybicki

Shawn Smith

We gave Ethan a break this month and actually let him review some good games.

Our fearless Editor-in-Chief cannot be harmed by conventional weapons.

EGM's expert on all things violent takes down another wrestling game for us this month.

We tricked OPM Review Editor Joe into reviewing a game for us. Then we TP'ed his house.

Shawn spent his holiday break from college at EGM. We kept his room just how he left it.

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?

Game of the Month



Paper Mario

Pg.112

We only have one N64 review—and it gets game of the month. Go figure. Intelligent Systems and Nintendo really came through with this sequel to Mario RPG. With its roster of classic characters and mix of old-school game play, Paper Mario is a Nintendo fan's wet dream.

EDITORS' CURRENT FAVES

- 1 Phantasy Star Online
Sega
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Ubisoft
- 4 Pokémon Puzzle Challenge
Nintendo
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Konami
- 6 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2
Activision
- 7 Jet Grind Radio
Sega
- 8 Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask
Nintendo
- 9 Final Fantasy IX
Square EA
- 10 Daytona USA Network Racing
Sega



Publisher: Mattel Interactive
Developer: Avalanche Software
Featured In: EGM #136
Players: 1
Supports: None
Best Feature: Crisp textures
Worst Feature: Cruel level design
Web Site: www.mattelinteractive.com

The original Prince of Persia was tough, frustrating but a heck of a lot of fun. Now guess which of these attributes is missing from this PC port. Not only is Arabian Nights not fun—it goes out of its way to be spectacularly un-fun and fight you every step of the way. You get a lot of levels in this game, and each offers a new lesson in aggravation. Invisible, sudden-death traps—lethal stuff like falling blades, springing spikes and crushing columns—pop up in nearly every new room. You find most of these hazards the hard way: by dying, a lot, and that means you'll do a lot of reloading from the game's too-scattered save points. **In short, this thing's just plain cruel.** On top of that, control is awful, an order of magnitude worse than in Tomb Raider. Jumping feels unnatural. That's no good at all, considering all the high ledges and platforms you face in the later levels. And don't even get me started on the combat system. Blocking enemy sword attacks seems more like a matter of luck than skill. Save yourself the frustration and just run from enemies like a lit Persian princess. Arabian Nights looks just plain awful too. Your character runs like his shoestrings are tied together. Textures, although crisp, are way too repetitive. It makes for one big, bland, horribly frustrating adventure that—trust me—you really don't want to play. Stick with the Tomb Raider games. They're a much better 3D take on the Prince of Persia formula.

Crispin

Wow, there's nothing I enjoy more than dying and having to reload a saved game—something that happened, oh, every two minutes in Arabian Nights. Yes, this 3D Prince of Persia was always meant to be a console game, even when it was released for the PC last year, and here it finally is, on the Dreamcast to boot. And man, am I ever disappointed. **It's not that the control or gameplay is bad...it's just frustrating.** There are hard-to-see traps all over the place, ones you don't notice until you're dead, and the save system is archaic. Overall this game feels like nothing more than a slow-paced Tomb Raider, which is just about as appealing as it sounds.

Ryan

Taking the Prince to Tomb Raider territory didn't turn out so well on the PC, and while this Dreamcast version doesn't offer much more, there is merit to what's going on here. Placing a higher premium on puzzle-solving than out-and-out bad-guy hacking works in its favor, as the camera angles and controls aren't quite up to task for full-on combat. The graphics (especially the painful FMV), are merely OK, and the Prince himself looks like kind of a doofus, but the Arabian architecture is pretty nice. Unfortunately, **Arabian Nights is more of a rental than a purchase,** as it fails to recapture the things that made the original so good all those years ago.

Milkman

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY



Publisher: Conspiracy Entertainment
Developer: Neverland/ESP
Featured In: EGM #131
Players: 1
Supports: None
Best Feature: Addictive gameplay
Worst Feature: Simple graphics
Web Site: www.conspiracy-games.com

Let's skip that "imitation is the best form of flattery" line and just get to the point: The developers behind Lodsos War liked the Diablo series. A lot. And, believe it or not, they made a game that actually surpasses Blizzard's PC phenomenon in many ways. Keeping the general feel from Diablo, Lodsos War has the same kind of super-addictive, just-have-to-keep-playing-for-10-more-minutes gameplay, complete with the hundreds of items, dozens upon dozens of unique weapons and armor (all upgradeable with an almost too extensive power-up system), a solid story line and a fantastic sense of killing. There are parts where you'll be hacking through scores of goblins and such, and it just feels great. But where Lodsos War actually exceeds Diablo is in its control. Unlike the point-and-click interface found in the Blizzard series, Lodsos War gives you full analog freedom, and it's spot-on. It did take me a few hours to really get into the game, but once the gameplay and story line grabbed me, it was very, very hard to get away—a rare feeling in games these days. It does feel a bit "first generation," though. Even with the great animation, the creatures you face are simple-looking. The environments are nothing spectacular. There are no shadows. But all of this is easy to ignore once you get into the gameplay. **Lodsos War is addicting, fun and very satisfying—easily one of the best console action/RPGs in years.**

Ryan

Whether intentional or not, Lodsos War is **Diablo for the Dreamcast.** From its PC feel to its quests-within-a-quest infrastructure to its magic, weapons and armor systems, it feels a lot like Blizzard's genre-defining hit of the '90s. That's really OK, though, 'cause Lodsos War is fun and very easy to get into, even if you know nothing about the pen-and-paper RPG or Manga it takes its name from. It's a good-looking game, but I did see some slowdown problems when going after hordes of enemies, which is a considerable turn-off. Don't get too excited here—Lodsos War doesn't break any new ground. But at the very least it's a solid title.

Jonathan

Although it offers no multiplayer modes (which is disappointing, considering the DC's online capabilities), **Lodsos War is an impressive improvement over PC Diablo,** so I don't really mind that it's a shameless rip-off. The control is superb; many action-RPG interfaces are clunky, but this one is very easy to learn and use. The graphics are some of the best in the genre. Your 3D characters' appearances change as you outfit them, and spells look great when they tear through the bad guys. The only problem here is the slowdown during big battles (and there's many of them), but don't let that stop you from trying this excellent game.

Kraig

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY



Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega
Featured In: EGM #139
Players: 1-2
Supports: Keyboard
Best Feature: Hysterical gameplay
Worst Feature: Too weird for some folks
Web Site: www.sega.com

I would have paid money to have been in on the brainstorming session for this one. "Yes, let's take our number-one shooting game and add typing! Genius!" Despite the Incredulous origins, this may yet reach a surprisingly wide audience. When I first saw it at last spring's Tokyo Game Show (with two quick-fingered secretaries at the helm) and then in a Japanese arcade, I thought I'd seen everything. **Yet, somehow, it works.** Take The House of the Dead, mix the need for light-guns, plug in a keyboard and you've got Typing of the Dead. As zombies approach, words pop onscreen. You must type out the words that appear. The faster you type, the higher you score. The more accurately you type, the higher your score. Suck at typing? Fear not, the in-game tutorial mode will have today's Web-savvy gamers clicking their keyboards faster than ever. The game features the familiar arcade and original modes, among others. Original mode allows you to earn special items for one-time use (usually by hitting the F1, F2, F3 and F4 buttons), and is a bit more enjoyable than the straight arcade port. The real hilarity is when you see the cutscenes, which reveal the characters with Dreamcasts strapped to their backs and keyboards bound to their chests. It's an inspired piece of software that may not be for everyone, but quirky gamers'll no doubt find it an extremely enjoyable, humorous game.

Milkman

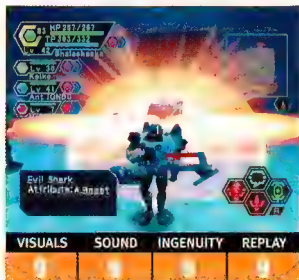
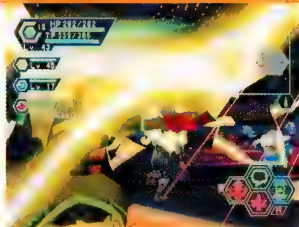
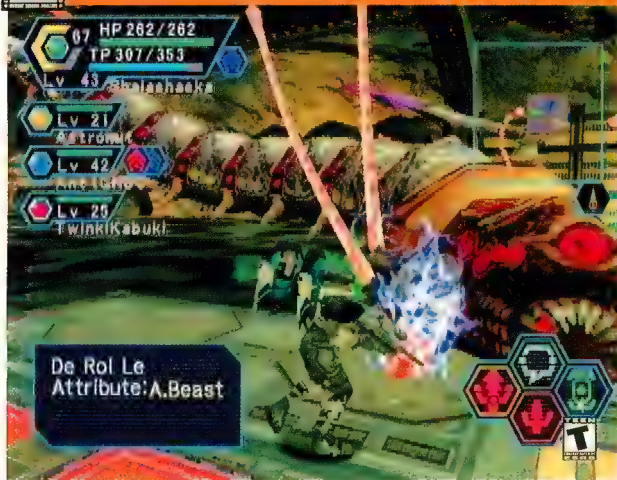
Without a doubt, The Typing of the Dead is the best typing-training/zombie-murder simulator I've played since fall 2001 (yes, even better than **Night of the Brain-eating Movie Beacons** for PC), but I gotta wonder how much appeal this game will have for folks who long ago played, beat and buried The House of the Dead. Aside from its typing drills, "education" value and sheer novelty, this sucker doesn't offer much new. And you really need to be careful where you place your keyboard or you'll be stuck in carpal-tunnel-syndrome city for a week (my fingertips are still tingling). Still, this game delivers unique thrills, and it's fairly cheap to boot.

Crispin

This is why I love Sega. Who else would have the rocks to bring a title like this to these shores knowing it likely won't make much money? Basically, this is a typing tutorial that plays out like House of the Dead 2. It's the same game, except for a few new challenges in each level (like beating 10 zombies in 30 seconds and such) and some weird power-ups that simplify the required words or change the form of your onscreen counterpart. Somehow, though, I don't see parents buying this as a typing tutor for their children with all the carnage and horrific themes involved. **Plus the font makes it hard to discern a period from a comma.**

Grog

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY



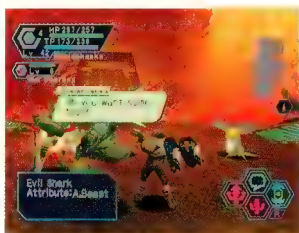
Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sonic Team
Featured In: EGM #140
Players: 1-4 (online)
Supports: VMU, Keyboard, SegaNet
Best Feature: Online player interaction
Worst Feature: Lock-on fighting system
Web Site: www.sega.com



First, so everyone knows, we played Phantasy Star Online on a server Sega established for the U.S. gaming press, and the load of players on this server (rarely even to people at once) was substantially lower than it will be once the game is released. Also note that we were unable to play with gamers from other countries, and we lost all of our items a few times due to a save-game bug. The following reviews are based on impressions from our Chicago- and San Francisco-based editors playing on that server via the standard DC 56k modem. Sega assures us performance will be identical once hordes of gamers hit the servers and that the bug will be worked out, but if there are problems we'll print an update on this review next issue. We also resurrected the old four-view system, since it seemed appropriate for the four-player online experience.



Now for the review: Opinions of this game varied a bit between the crew, so here we'll stick to the five things we could all agree on. One: Whether or not you enjoyed earlier Phantasy Star games has nothing to do with how you will like PSO. The game is tied into the series, but only in subtle ways—spell and item names, a few monsters and one very special boss—but anyone expecting Myau or Nei to pop up are gonna be sorely disappointed. Two: Playing PSO without a keyboard is like playing Samba de Amigo without the maracas—it's possible, but you won't be experiencing anything close to what the game truly offers. You need to be able to chat with the other players, and the on-screen keyboard just doesn't cut the mustard. Three: The graphics and music are amazing. Each of the four dungeons, with two or three sub-sections each, are totally different and stunningly beautiful. Monster designs, player animations, spell effects—all are topnotch. Four: As a single-player game, PSO doesn't fare so well. Story is almost nonexistent and there are very few recurring characters. Plus, without fellow party members to help you out (save the dim-witted AI partners who join you now and then) combat is a chore—run over here, attack a couple times, run over there, attack a few times more, run back, repeat over and over. But the main purpose of single-player is—or should be, anyway—merely to train your character for the online game. Which brings us to our fifth and final point of unanimous agreement: If you aren't careful, PSO can become an addiction so all-consuming it makes heroin look like peanut-butter cookies. The whole social-interaction-with-other-players aspect, where you not only fight

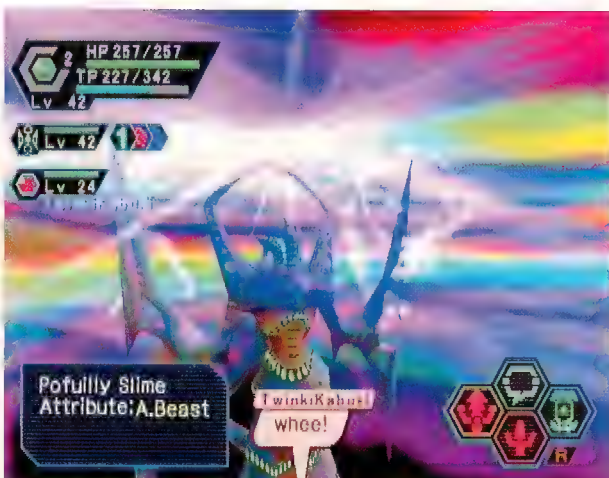


Make no mistake, PSO has some glaring problems: Combat is repetitive, especially in single-player, there's lots of slowdown when things get heavy online, the lock-on system needs work (it's too easy to lose a lock), and technical annoyances like not being able to continue your game on a different Dreamcast and only one character per VMU just suck. And yet for all its flaws, when the power blew out in my apartment I unplugged the fridge from the one working outlet to continue playing PSO. Yes, I am addicted. What keeps me coming back? It's not the aesthetics, despite graphics that are right up there with Jet Grind as the best ever on Sega's machine, and fantastic music that hasn't gotten old even after more than 80 hours of play. No, the true beauty of this game is building up your character and interacting with other players. Customizing menus, making binds and symbol chat icons, raising your MAG sidekick, all the different kinds of special armor and weapons—there's so much you can do to give your character his or her own personality. And the multiplayer dynamic, including stuff like formulating battle strategies, trading items, taking on the bosses (wait until you see them), or even just chatting, is unlike any other console game. PSO is definitely flawed, but it's a testament to how well the enjoyable parts work that it's still incredibly fun and impossible to put down.

Mark



alongside but really get to know and befriend other people, is like a great multiplayer game and Internet chat room in one. And when you make friends, it's quick and easy to find them online. Players can give each other cards (like a business card) with their name, e-mail address, whatever they want on it. You can use that card to instantly see if that person is online, where they are, and meet them or send them e-mail, all within the game. Adding to PSO's addictiveness are all the different ways to build your character and set them apart from everyone else. Besides the obvious stuff (choose your own hair, body size, color, etc.), you'll find custom chat icons you can make and all sorts of different ways of strengthening your character and your MAG sidekick. Now for the crew's individual takes:



Behold the Photon Blast. It's basically a special attack that your MAG sidekick can perform after you take enough damage. You get all sorts of different Photon Blasts, some offensive, some defensive. Which ones your MAG earns depends on how you raise it. It's just another cool way PSO lets you make your character different from anyone else's. The upper-left pic is a Tekker. He's the guy who identifies any unknown items you may pick up.



Phantasy Star Online is a beautiful, beautiful game, easily one of the best-looking I've ever seen. But, as a single-player game, it's also one of the most boring and monotonous I've ever experienced. Going into the same level 20 times on "fetch quests" and fighting the same boring enemies thousands of times isn't exactly my idea of fun. The monster AI is crap, there are tons of collision problems, and the lock-on is weak. Thankfully, though, the "online" part of PSO's name isn't just there for show—this title really is meant to be played on the Internet, and as a multiplayer game it succeeds wonderfully. Hell, I played the single-player game for 20 odd hours and couldn't stand to look at it for another second, yet **after only a few minutes of online play, it was almost impossible to put down.** The magic behind playing PSO on the Internet is the feeling of interactivity you experience with other players—the super-addictive nature of cooperation and teamwork, something games like Quake III and NFL 2K1 really can't portray. There's something about running into a room full of enemies with your buddies and helping each other take them down, something wonderful. Hopefully Sega will release an update disk with some new levels in the future. I can certainly see this getting old eventually, but for now I'm having a grand time, wars and all. Just stay away from the one-player game, and I'll see you online.

Ryan



I was really looking forward to this game, but the final product has left me with a love/hate feeling. PSO fancies itself a futuristic Diablo 2, and yet misses its marks more often than not. **Aside from the stunning visuals, and the cool but limited create-a-player function, PSO is really a pretty basic game.** Level-raising and item-finding becomes rather addictive once you get into the hard or very hard difficulty levels, but the game is marred by an evil camera, sluggish control (there is auto-target, but no auto-lock—did Zelda teach us nothing?), stupid yet relentless AI for the enemies, and super-repetitive gameplay. Most of the game is spent running back into area-dividers, which monsters cannot cross, and taking pot shots at them from afar. Deeper into the game, the difficulty spikes, but the dysfunctional gameplay remains the same. While the single-player experience is especially lame, the online game saves the day. Sure, multiplayer suffers all the same problems, but there's something to be said for joining up with three other people for an online ass-kicking session. Creating your alter-ego is a rush, but the game needs more dungeons to explore. Technically, PSO achieves many things, and there is great potential to this new series, but this virgin effort does not display the quality gameplay Sonic Team is usually known for. Still, this is SegaNet's killer-app by far.

Milkman



I'm torn. I think the online aspect of PSO is incredible. I love that up to four people have to work together to fight endless streams of enemies and incredibly tough bosses. I like that people have to share the items that are gained from exploration and battle, and even agree on which areas should be explored first. And of course, I'm overjoyed that Phantasy Star has finally made a return to retail after all these long years. The graphics are great, especially in some of the later levels, and the game has that techno-mystical feel that made the first four so awesome. Being able to create your character from scratch (sort of) is also really cool. I guess my **only real complaint is that the game gets too monotonous.** Almost the entire game consists of opening a door, clearing out the room of monsters and traps, collecting the booty, and moving on to the next room. The cool team play and pretty graphics make it a little easier to take, but at the end of the day that's all you're really doing unless you're in a chat room lobby or fighting one of the gigantic bosses. It all gets very tiresome after a while. This genre needs to be refined a lot before console RPG players, who are used to epic story lines and concentrated character development, will feel totally comfortable playing online. Phantasy Star Online is still revolutionary, and I still say anyone with a Dc and Internet connection should play it, but you may be a tad disappointed.

Greg



Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Clockwork Games Ltd.
Featured In: EGM #133
Players: 1-2
Supports: Jump Pack, SegaNet
Best Feature: Nice graphics
Work Feature: Floaty physics
Web Site: www.acclaim.com

Aaar! If I get run off the road by another VW bus I'm gonna explode! Why the hell are those sputtering tubs in the game anyway? Being sabotaged in the final lengths of a race by some lame-o, slow-moving jerk is BS! But that's what you have to tolerate in Vanishing Point—lots of frustration. First of all, you're competing for the best overall time, which is fine, but you're doing it with several other gear-heads among a lot of slow-moving traffic. So while it feels like a real race, the other cars are only there to make your life miserable. OK, not a problem, but in order to unlock the faster cars and options you must win each heat in the Tournament Mode. The problem is, you have to do it with some of the sloppiest handling vehicles known to man. Fortunately, **with practice, you can gain a pretty good command of the inherently floaty cars.** Once you've done that you can access the superior handling rigs. The question remains though, do you have the patience to see it through? And why are you expected to race with such precise, sim-like accuracy when the cars handle like arcade racers? It's a puzzling game but if you're willing to invest the time, there's some fun to be had. It's fast, the licensed vehicles look good and the Internet challenge is strangely addictive (even though it's only for posting best times—not real-time racing). Since the game is so niche you should probably rent it for a couple nights to see if you can handle it. **Dean**

This game has so much potential. Its loads of licensed cars, solid graphics and a good framerate all make the experience look enjoyable enough—at least until you pick up the controller. Then you realize that no matter what car you choose, you always feel like you're racing on ice. No matter how big your vehicle is, even a tiny VW Beetle can bump you off the road. And no matter how good you are, you're still gonna bust a lot of DC controllers. This game is frustrating. The basic ingredients for a quality racer are here, but much like MSR before it, **Vanishing Point** needed a lot more playtesting before hitting the market. Don't even bother. **Greg**

Vanishing Point is a very substantial attempt at injecting some life in the ever-crooked driving-game genre. Featuring a game engine that allows for virtually no pop-up (hence the name), VP is a graphically slick game that swims along at a snappy 60 frames per second, with nice car models and some decent track design. The game packs plenty of value, as it throws in Crazy Taxi-style mini-games and challenges, a rally mode and plenty of multiplayer options. Handling takes some getting used to (hint: Let go of the analog to let your car center), and the cars feel a little floaty at times, but generally, **this is quite a fine racing game.** **Milkman**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY



Developer: Red Storm
Featured In: EGM #133
Players: N/A
Supports: 1
Best Feature: Nice background graphics
Work Feature: Cheap, long, annoying missions
Web Site: www.redstorm.com

Red Storm did a great job of disguising this as a good game. At first glance, I was won by the amazing graphics—it looks like **Colony Wars** on steroids. The backgrounds are good enough to be in a space movie, and the weapons, explosions and lighting effects are excellent. Now if only the gameplay were just as rewarding. Gunship Elite falls into the trap that a lot of games in this genre do—the missions are too long and tedious. Most of them have a complete laundry list of objectives, each of which takes a while to accomplish. And if you fail one, it's time to do the whole thing over again. I can understand having a few missions like this to bust your balls, but my frustration started as early as level two. There is also very little strategy. Fighters endlessly pop out of nowhere, giving you little incentive to clear the field before going after the big targets. Dogfighting is also nonexistent, as it's hard to see enemy laser blasts and you usually pick at fighters from a distance, after which they zoom by you. If you want a space-action game, Starlancer would be a better choice. **Kraig**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY



Developer: Conspiracy Games
Featured In: EGM #133
Players: 1
Supports: None
Best Feature: Innovative shooter design
Work Feature: Graphics are really old-school
Web Site: www.conspiracygames.com

Treasure makes the niftiest shooters in town, and this is yet another example of their expertise. With Robotron-style controls and super spirtz-madness, **this funky shooter is aimed directly at the hardcore gamer** who likes a stiff challenge. Lucky to be on U.S. shores at all (thanks, Conspiracy!), Bangai-O! offers a nutbag story line, Ultraman-size robots, fast action (with a little slowdown) and swarms of enemies to blow away. The graphics are definitely 16-bit quality, but run in high-resolution and sport a level of 2D detail that will make you yearn for the days when games like this were commonplace. Not that Treasure ever does anything commonplace. The fruit-collecting antics of the game will have you reaching for the Visine, as you rediscover the meaning of "twich gaming." Sadly, the game is only a single-player experience, although you can switch between two different mechs—one with homing missiles and the other with rocket shots. Don't be put off by the extremely tiny characters, or you'll be missing a wicked little game. **Milkman**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY



Developer: Acclaim
Featured In: EGM #135
Players: 1-4
Supports: Jump Pack
Best Feature: Lots of modes and options
Work Feature: Still stinks of WWF Attitude
Web Site: www.acclaim.com

ECW Anarchy Rule, while boasting an "all-new control system," **still can't shake the musty smell of its WWF Attitude roots.** The problems aren't with its visuals or gameplay speed—everything moves fast and the graphics are sharp. I'm just not keen on the poor control timing and shoddy collision detection, which reduce the gameplay to button-mashing randomness. Combine that with the cheap AI and you're due for some controller-bashing frustration. The announcers can't keep up with the action, either. Anarchy Rulz does have its good points. I like the tie-up meter for pulling off more complex moves, stat tracking is cool, and Create-a-Freak is very detailed. You'll find plenty of wrestlers, modes and options early on with even more to unlock. But the high difficulty and frustration level shows how much other titles have evolved. Maybe the Acclaim guys will play WWF Royal Rumble and learn something about controls, while Yuke's Co. will play this game and take a cue from its play modes. Then maybe Dreamcast owners will get a good grapple game. **Mike**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY



Developer: Heavy Iron Studios
Featured In: EGM #138
Players: 1
Supports: Jump Pack
Best Feature: THQ
Work Feature: Bruce
Web Site: www.thq.com

Hype has surrounded this game for over a year now, and a legion of splatter-film buffs will be counting the days 'til its release. **Well guys, I hate to say it, but this package is a total letdown.** It shamelessly copies Resident Evil—right down to the item boxes and fixed axis control. Lifting every element from Capcom's survival horror games forces a comparison, and let me tell you, **Hail to the King** does not benefit by placing itself in that position. Ash is no Claire Redfield—he can't spin 180 degrees with the touch of a button, and his movements are very stiff. The game's enemies also lack finesse: Deadies are little more than regenerating distractions that slowly drain you of ammo and energy. Bosses look cool, but fighting against them is more irritating than fun. It's frustrating—when a game looks this good, and its quest is this large, you know a lot of time was spent on production—so why is the end product totally busted? Without question, **Evil Dead: HTK** stands as one of 2000's biggest disappointments. Not even Bruce Campbell's voice-overs can save it. **Ethan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY



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Yes, this release is branded with a lame kiddie license, but don't dismiss the game before giving it a try. Max Steel is far better than you'd expect it to be. **From a visual standpoint, it's absolutely breathtaking.** The environments sport an incredible level of detail—enemy quarters look messy and lived in, city streets are illuminated by half-broken neon lights, etc. Characters move with fluidity and grace, and the framerate is locked at a smooth 60fps. If the quality of the play mechanics were on par with the graphics, we'd have a minor classic on our hands. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Max controls too loosely, making it a hassle to jump, climb or pick things up. More problematic is the lack of strafing buttons. Since much of the action forces you to round sharp corners, this omission is profoundly irritating. Ultimately the title's pros outweigh its cons, but not to the degree that a purchase is justified. Rent the game during a long, laid-back weekend. It's easy to get into, and offers just enough fun to keep you busy for a three-day stretch.

Ethan

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
4	3	3	3



Hasbro

Pipe Dreams

N/A

1-2

Classic Q*bert gameplay
Worst Feature: Having to tilt your control pad

Jump Pack

www.hasbro.com

The popularity of the original Q*bert arcade machine stemmed from its simple, elegant game design. And, on the surface, a lot seems to have been added to the formula with this update—our hero now has to scale mountains, dodge booby traps and visit ancient temples. But fortunately, these varied settings and obstacles do not alter the nature of the game; they only act as window dressing. Q*bert hasn't learned any new tricks. He's still only capable of performing single diagonal hops, and his objectives never deviate from having to switch block colors. **This is an affectionate, respectful remake, and it'll be sure to delight old-school gamers—provided they can familiarize themselves with the infuriating control scheme.** The configuration menu indicates that players should hold their controllers at a 45-degree angle while playing, which is very uncomfortable. There is no way to adjust this, and if you do not tilt your pad, gameplay becomes very disorienting. @!#!#! Sadly, this flaw really tarnishes what is otherwise a well-designed game.

Ethan

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
4	3	3	3



Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Intelligent Systems
Featured In: EGM #337
Players: 1
Supports: Rumble Pak
Best Feature: Lots of variety
Worst Feature: Nothing worth noting
Web Site: www.nintendo.com



The N64's long RPG drought has come to an end in the best way possible. **Paper Mario is simply awesome.** The game's combination of stylized, flat-as-paper characters and 3D worlds is really the perfect way to deliver the high-tech look RPG fans have grown accustomed to while retaining the cool cartoony qualities Mario fans have grown to love. The whole package is pretty top-notch. The music is respectable, and the translation is very well-done. I didn't expect a Nintendo RPG to contain as many genuinely funny moments as Paper Mario does. The translation also does an excellent job of giving each character in the Mario universe a very real personality, especially poor, overlooked Luigi. Pudgy, mustachioed Italians aside, though, the real star of Paper Mario is the incredibly diverse gameplay. As he goes about his quest, Mario meets various partners, one of which he can have in battle at any time. They all have separate types of attack (from Goombroar's jump to Spike's spiny offense), and strategic use of them is the only way to finish the game. The variety doesn't stop there. Every chapter in Paper Mario is as unique as can be. What's more, the game isn't some six-hour affair that you'll finish in one sitting. You'll really need patience, dedication and a little luck to rescue Princess Peach this time. Speaking of which, you'll get some real Metal Gear moments with her majesty, too. Buy it.

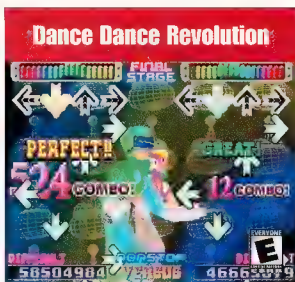
Greg

Ignore the name on the box—this is Mario RPG 2, and it lives up to the first game both in content and quality. The whole 2D "paper" spin is an inspired move, giving everything a unique and colorful look while avoiding the trademark N64 blue effect. Like Mario RPG, Paper Mario also does a fantastic job of using the plumber's world—hammers, stars, coins, Shyguys—everything is pure Mario. Timed button presses and new partners keep combat surprisingly fresh (a sore point in many modern RPGs) and all the powers Mario earns from badges give a real sense of building your character. Secrets, optional side quests, mini-games, it's got it all.

Mark

For you old-schoolers who didn't take kindly to Mario's 3D transformation, Nintendo has flattened his world right out for this platformer/RPG. A brilliant extension to the gameplay, characters and a story of Mario RPG, Paper Mario is a long overdue return of our favorite Nintendo heroes doing what they do best. The game boasts all of the franchise's defining traits, with tons of old and new interactive characters moving to an engaging score. Plus, you finally get to see what happens to the 'ol' princess while awaiting rescue (she's playable!). **If you have a soul, you'll enjoy this game.** If you don't, well, games are probably the least of your worries anyway. **Jonathan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	8	8	7



Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami CET
Featured In: N/A
Players: 1-2
Supports: Dance Mat
Best Feature: Great fun with a group of friends
Worst Feature: Limited song selection
Web Site: www.konami.com



I am a fan of music games, so I was ecstatic to see Konami finally come to their senses and release their most popular Japanese game in the U.S. It's not all that it could've been (the song selection is lacking; it's missing "Butterfly"—a travesty), but it's a good first entry to ensnare U.S. gamers. To enjoy this game, you *must* have a mat controller (preferably two) and a group of friends to play with. Soon enough you'll find yourself dancing around even if you are a tall, gangly white boy (like me). If you enjoyed Sega's Samba de Amigo, you're going to like this. It's a workout—you will break a sweat using the mat. Watch someone cut it up on Expert difficulty and you'll appreciate how amazing this game can be. I can honestly say **I've gotten more enjoyment out of the DDR games than any game series ever.** I've played it constantly since the first Japanese version came out. For those familiar with the series, I'd put it between the first game and 2nd Remix in terms of quality and song selection. The dance tunes mostly consist of Konami originals, and unfortunately there are no songs by Papaya, smile.dk or E Rotic in the bunch—which is why my score isn't higher. I'm hoping that people buy this thing and show Konami that the music-game genre can sell in the U.S. so they'll release more titles with better songs and more options. If you like dance music or wacky Japanese games—buy it. You won't regret it.

Chris

It's more like March Madness Revolution the way most people play this game, but no matter what you call it, it's one helluva lot of fun. Once you learn how to stay balanced and hit the steps, it's hard to pull yourself away—you'll be trying to finish the harder songs and master the simple ones until your legs are literally sore. But there are drawbacks too. The game and dance mat combo is \$60, and honestly you need another \$50 mat for DDR to live up to its party game potential; that's a fair chunk of change. Also, there's no really catchy or recognizable music (outside of one "Smoke on the Water" remix) and too many of the tracks sound alike. Cool but I want a remix! **Mark**

Let's get something out of the way right from the start: I'm addicted to DDR. Yeah, you'll look like a fool doing it and the dance pad might cost more than you're used to spending, but man it is worth it. DDR is a decent way to exercise and a hell of a lot of fun when you get a group of like-minded people together for a few hours. Especially when one of them is Chris Johnston, who's got more rhythm than any man I've met. The thing that keeps this first U.S. version of DDR from greatness is the very limited song selection and the fact that some of the best songs on the Japanese version were left out. Otherwise, I recommend it if you haven't imported 3rd Mix yet. **Greg**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	7	9	9



Evil Dead: Hail to the King

Publisher: THQ
Developer: Heavy Iron Studios
Featured In: EGM #339
Players: 1
Supports: Dual Shock
Best Feature: Voice of the Bruce Campbell
Worst Feature: Crap gameplay
Web Site: www.thq.com



It's really too bad that how can a game fashioned after Resident Evil and combined with the pure coolness of Evil Dead go wrong? Apparently quite easily. I've got to admit, as a huge (huge, huge) fan of the Evil Dead movies, I'm a little pissed off. THQ took what was looking like a sure thing and dropped the ball on dozens of gameplay aspects, both big and small. First of all, respawning enemies are just bad. Especially when they pop up right after you just finish one off. I can't count the number of times I killed a foe, went to pick up the item he dropped, just to have yet another deadie come crawling out of the ground. That adds frustration, not challenge. And the camera angles are another major problem. There's nowhere near enough of them, so too often you find yourself fighting and not even really able to see your character. The battles are just boring, with little skill needed, and the graphics really aren't that great. Oh, and the plot is terrible; not to give anything away, but why can't a grown man stop a tape player? Even with all the downsides though, this game still has one major thing going for it: The Evil Dead name. It's great to be able to walk around the cabin and other famous Evil Dead locations, and the voice of Bruce Campbell really adds a lot. But I was hoping for more, much more. Fans of the series might want to check it out, but those looking for a solid game should stay away. Far away.

Ryan

THQ had a good idea when they got the Evil Dead license. After all, Bruce Campbell is a fine actor, as proven by his work on Broken Hellix. That the game copies Resident Evil is not so much a problem as is the crappy combat system (your chainsaw runs out of gas every five seconds), and the spastic camera angles. Good grief. Every time you kill a monster another one spawns in its place, before you've had a chance to even move from that spot. It's almost like an endless cycle of battles. Each baddie also drops a medkit, 'cause you'll need 'em. It's a shame, really, as the source material is topnotch, but **this game offers very few surprises.**

Milkman

Being a hardcore fan of the Dead film trilogy, I really wanted to like this title. Unfortunately, sloppy controls, regenerating enemies and baffling level designs make for a very disappointing play experience. Too bad, given all that the game has going for it: The pre-rendered backgrounds look great; the quest—which touches on elements from all three movies—is lengthy; and the clever implementation of a taunt button allows you to crack wide while hacking up deadies. **The style is there, but if the game isn't any fun to play, who cares?** Most fans will play this up regardless of reviews, but just remember, guys—you're being warned.

Ethan

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

7 8 4 4



NCAA March Madness 2001

Publisher: EA Sports
Developer: EA Sports
Featured In: N/A
Players: 1-8
Supports: Multi-tap
Best Feature: Lots of teams
Worst Feature: No analog support
Web Site: www.easports.com



While last year's March Madness game was a decent first effort from Black Ops, this is a decided step backward. I think the sports term that applies here is sophomore slump. Shot blocking, a major problem in last year's game, has gone through the roof. **It's like playing against a team of Minute Bols.** But the offensive woes don't stop there. Bringing the ball up against the press is another exercise in futility, as the CPU is all too happy to swipe the ball for a five-on-none break. The mechanics are so sloppy that rebounding the ball even becomes a guessing game. Sometimes a CPU defender will magically vacuum the ball away from your guys. Not cool. Finally, as if to add insult to injury, EA decided not to bring back the voice of commentator Dick Vitale. I know this doesn't sound too important to all you sports "purists" out there, but believe me, he helped make last year's game. It was hilarious to get a run going and hear Dick Y harping on and on about how you (well, your team) are the greatest thing ever. Now you get canned phrases and remarks that are straight from sports cliché 101. On the bright side, or shall we say dimly lit side, you can now unlock special moves and high-flying dunks for your players. Franchise mode and recruiting are still intact, but no real improvements were made in this area. I don't know what else to say except that I hope you're enjoying year 20 of your franchise from March Madness 2000.

Dan

Any sports game that doesn't have analog control has a bad strike against it right off the bat. Once you go analog, you never go back—unless of course you're playing March Madness 2000. **Overall, the problems outweigh the positives here.** I had the hardest time with the difficulty levels. On the easier settings the steals are rampant. Crank it up to Senior level and they're still rampant. There's an option to turn them down manually but still, the steals are many. There are actually several adjustable elements—steals, AI, game pace, etc., but in the end I'd rather not be bothered trying to find the perfect combination. MM 2001 is a bit disappointing.

Dean

EA's commitment to their college games has always been suspect, and **this is the biggest rush job I've ever seen them do.** The first clue came when I couldn't control the game with the analog sticks—what's up with that? I can't remember the last game that didn't support analog control, but I have my suspicions why this one doesn't: It probably wouldn't have worked properly with the jittery player animations. It's not just the graphics that need a tweaking—the gameplay is just as raw. There are way too many blocks and steals, and even though there's a sliding bar that lets you adjust those, it's EA's job, not mine, to make this game play right.

Kraig

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

5 5 4 5



Persona 2: Eternal Punishment

Publisher: Atlus
Developer: Atlus
Featured In: EGM #339
Players: 1
Supports: Dual Shock
Best Feature: Deep story line
Worst Feature: Bad voices in battles
Web Site: www.atlusc.com



I love medieval-themed RPGs. I really do, but sometimes it's cool to take a break and get a taste of something a little different. Which, of course, is where Persona 2 comes in. This game is cool, pure and simple. **It's got solid graphics, great music, and one of the most compelling plots I've experienced in an RPG in a while.** The story line has a distinct movie feel to it—it's much deeper and more involving than even seasoned RPG fans might expect, and the characters are incredibly well-developed. The whole serial killer idea is excellent, and I love that certain events don't happen until you start up rumors. Persona 2 also has a sense of style that is second to none, accompanied by fantastic artwork (some of the animated cinemas are simply breathtaking), giving it a very mature feel. And the 3D graphics are wonderful—although a bit simple in design but there's loads of detail. Even though it really doesn't affect the game, I'm still upset Atlus chose to skip the "first" Persona 2 (see last month's preview for more details), and I hope this one does well enough to justify bringing the original game out. It should—this great RPG hampered only by some lame voices in battles and the fact it's not always clear what to do next. Will every RPG fan enjoy Persona 2? No, not a chance. It takes a while to get into and the modern setting will surely turn a few, but those who give it a chance will no doubt be impressed.

Ryan

RPGs traditionally thrust you into a time and place so different from reality, it's an altogether foreign experience. A game that can create this fantasy world using elements that are instead very familiar to the player is that much more enthralling. This is where Persona 2 shines; folding occult elements into an off-beat serial-killer plot starring an otherwise ordinary group of young adults. **P2 demands a lot of attention and strategy, but is extremely satisfying if you oblige.** The localization is a bit rough, and the complex gameplay is only for seasoned RPG folk, but even those who disliked the original should give Persona 2 a few hours to prove itself.

Jonathan

The Persona series has always had a different flavor from most RPGs. Focusing on modern-day school kids is one unique way to approach an RPG, and this is one of the most stylish yet. Despite being only one half of Persona 2 (the first part only came out in Japan), American gamers will be able to follow the story just fine. Sharp graphics, a dark story line, and a complex, yet utterly rewarding battle system make up the backbone of this game. **Persona 2 has loads of optional mini-games and a cast of memorable characters.** The translation has also been handled rather well. A step to the left of "conventional" RPGs, this is for more eclectic tastes.

Milkman

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

8 8 8 7

Gold and Glory: The Road to El Dorado



Publisher: Ubi Soft

Developer: LSP

Featured In: EGM #136

Players: 1

Best Feature: Great voice acting

Worst Feature: Choppy animation

Supports: Dual Shock

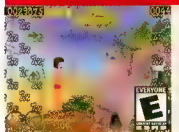
Web Site: www.ubisoft.com

If you're looking for a fast-paced, exciting game, please take note: There is no action in this adventure, based on the animated flick. Gold and Glory is all about exploration and puzzle solving. This game is cut from the same cloth as King's Quest, which makes it rare in the realm of console entertainment. Unfortunately, it's not as well-designed as that classic PC game—easy puzzles often border on insulting, character animation is choppy, and collision detection is poorly implemented. Surprisingly, the game still manages to provide a worthwhile play experience, regardless of these (rather substantial) flaws. Its relaxed pace allows for an impressive level of character development. Extensive, well-written dialogue and stellar voice acting combine to give every individual you bump into a distinct personality. And most importantly, the game's general tone and sense of humor suits the license. **El Dorado's developers understand the source material and are quite successful in embellishing the movie's world.** Give it a try if you liked the film.

Ethan

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	8	8	5

Jungle Book Rhythm 'n Groove



Publisher: Ubi Soft

Developer: Ubi Soft

Featured In: EGM #138

Players: 1-2

Best Feature: Features two Disney tunes

Worst Feature: Rest of the music/gameplay is lame

Supports: Dance Mat

Web Site: www.ubisoft.com

Maybe Rhythm 'n Groove would be a good time if you're under 10, a Jungle Book fanatic or like Lou Bega. Any music game is only going to be as good as its music. Unfortunately, Rhythm 'n Groove's tunes aren't sonically pleasing to us adults. The music's catchy, but not in a good way. Stages are really long—you want it to be over so you can get the **##%\$! tunes out of your head.** PowerUp isn't really do much for the game. For example, the Firewall power-up leaves you standing there for a few seconds with no steps to do. Having to perform extra steps to defeat bosses is a cool idea, but even that seems a little out of place—you have to glance away from the steps you're required to take to peer at the steps needed to beat the boss. Thankfully there are two songs from the real *Jungle Book* movie, but that can't save this 12-stage game. There is a bonus stage features Lou Bega's rendition of "I Wanna Be Like You," but it's not much different from the old version. If you're looking for a good dancing game that's a little more mature, get Dance Dance Revolution.

Chris

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	4	4	3

The Bouncer



Publisher: Square EA

Developer: Dream Factory

Featured In: EGM #136

Players: 1-4

Supports: Multi-tap

Best Feature: Lots of cool attack moves

Worst Feature: It's darn short

Web Site: www.squareusa.com

PSE

When Square ran a non-playable, gameplay-free demo of *The Bouncer* at the last E3, everyone was disappointed, to say the least. And now that I've played the finished product, the disappointment sets in again. Why? Probably because all the hype surrounding this title since its conception made me think I'd spend more than an hour-and-a-half busting through it. I've beaten the game four times, have all my characters to top status with every special move unlocked, and feel like I've played the heck out of it, but **my game clock is in no danger of hitting 40 hours** anytime soon (bear in mind I skipped any redundant cinematics). The Final Fight-style action is a great, almost nostalgic element, but it takes at least two trips through to build up all your special attacks, so the real fun doesn't set in until then. The idea here is that you play the game using each of the three bouncers for key battles to access different paths of the game, see new cinematics, and build character abilities. You can use all of the characters, good and bad, in a two- to four-player versus match, which is very cool and arguably more fun than the solo game itself. When you look at actual gameplay time and the pretty repetitive nature of it, though, there's not a lot to rave about. Still, *The Bouncer* is probably the prettiest action game I've seen on the PS2, and the story will keep you engaged for as long as it lasts, so you'll want to set aside a little time to try it. **Jonathan**

If all you want for your PS2 is a showpiece title, you can't go wrong with *The Bouncer*. This game looks stunning, with vibrant colors and heavy use of the system's soft-focus effects. The characters—created by Tatsuya Nomura, the artist behind Final Fantasy VII and VIII—really pop to life with facial expressions and little details like flowing hair. Heck, the game even makes use of the Dual Shock 2's pressure-sensitive buttons (pressing harder unleashes more powerful attacks). Unfortunately, the gameplay itself is a bit dull. There's not much technique to the combat—once I earned a few special moves, I just kept using them over and over. **Crispin**

This was supposed to be such a great game: You were supposed to be able to destroy your environment and pick up anything in the area and use it as a weapon in these Battle Royal-style rumbles. Well, the rumbles are there...but **no weapons, no interactive environments, no nothing.** It's incredibly disappointing. That disappointment is tempered somewhat by the absolutely stunning graphics, both real-time and rendered, but that just isn't enough. And on top of all that, the game's insanely short, under two hours. Sure, there's a four-player Versus mode, but the fighting engine isn't nearly robust enough to make up the difference. Blah. **Joe Rybacki**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
9	7	5	6

F1 Championship Season 2001



Publisher: EA Sports

Developer: EA Sports

Featured In: EGM #139

Players: 1-4

Supports: Multi-tap

Best Feature: Excellent sound effects

Worst Feature: Totally broken AI

Web Site: www.easports.com

PSE

This is definitely a better offering than EA's NASCAR game on the PS2, but there's still a major problem: The AI in F1 is frightening. I know the first corner in any grand prix is a crashpot at best, but these guys just line up and come to a complete stop. If you have the damage turned off you can plow right through most of them. That really confuses the game, too, since it's trying to make sure that whichever driver won each race last season will win that race during the game. It makes for some amazing recoveries by guys like Schumacher during certain events. Finally, the lapped cars are way too aggressive. Even if you're a couple of laps ahead of a guy, he won't move out of the racing groove when you overtake him, and if you do try to outrake him, he'll run like he's racing you for position. In other words, it just ain't realistic. That translates into a lot of unnecessary spins for the leaders of the race. It's all very frustrating when you consider that the driving physics in this game are excellent. Taken as an arcade racer, F1 is not all that bad. Plus, it's got all the elements of an excellent simulator. F1 2001 also has the best sound effects of any Formula 1 game, ever. It's too bad the AI wasn't tweaked a lot more. **I hate racing in a high-speed parade.** Something else is that there are no penalties for jumping curbs. It's possible to skip whole sections of the racetrack without getting a stop and go! That's just unforgivable. **Greg**

Once again EA Sports has delivered a fairly good F1 racing game. **The cool thing is, you don't have to devote hours upon hours tweaking and adjusting your vehicle.** Just start 'er up and rip into it. It's more or less a "turn-key" game, which I'm sure is welcome news for casual fans. For the devoted motor-head however, it offers a few deeper options but nothing too intimidating. The gameplay mechanics are tight across the board with the exception of some suspect AI. You get a good sense of speed and the difficulty settings offer a decent challenge for all ability levels. Oh, and I've never heard the high pitch squeal of an F1 engine brought to life so realistically. **Dean**

It's a gorgeous game, and it has some very cool cosmetic features, but having played the hell out of every mode I can honestly say that the AI in F1 leaves a lot to be desired. Unless you're a blood relative of Schumacher, you're going to want to get started with one of the less difficult settings...and that's where the problems lie. On anything but the highest setting, **opponent drivers cruise around like they're stoned,** even going so far as to back up completely and stop on tight corners. When they're not driving like your mom, they're acting like a\$\$holes, and there doesn't seem to be any semblance of teamwork or anything. Very disappointing. **John**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	9	6	7

Kengo: Master of Bushido



Publisher: Crave
Developer: Lightweight
Featured In: EGM #137
Players: 1-2
Supports: N/A
Best Feature: Training mode
Worst Feature: Awkward control
Web Site: www.cravegames.com



Kengo is from developer Lightweight—the same guys behind the novel Bushido Blade and its sequel—but you wouldn't know it after playing this sword-based fighter for a few minutes. Several things that made Bushido Blade revolutionary are missing here. For starters, Kengo lacks one-hit deaths. Instead, the fighters have life bars (something Bushido Blade avoided) and opponents stay spry even if you unleash a lethal blow—although they will begin to gush blood and lose health slowly. Kengo's combat moves are much smaller and more straightforward than Bushido Blade's too. But that's really for the best, since the control here is extremely awkward. Here's why: The camera has a nasty habit of spinning around the arena without warning. Your perspective relative to your fighter is constantly changing, so you never quite know which way to press the D-pad to perform a move or run in a certain direction. It's really too bad, because the actual combat system is simple and elegant (one button for attack, one for parry, one for block and one for special moves, while the shoulder buttons set up different combat strings). Even better is the single-player game, which has you choosing a warrior and training dojo, then putting him through a series of tests and mini-games to build his skill. **It could be the Gran Turismo of fighting games.** Instead, you spend too much time fighting the control.

Crispin

I've never been a fan of samurai combat games like this or Bushido Blade. Kengo's not the type of game that you can pick up and immediately get the hang of. It takes hours to master the details, and that's not my thing. When all is said and done, the fighters don't look as good as those in games like Dynasty Warriors 2, Onimusha or Tekken Tag Tournament. **All the detail went into the arenas,** which look great. The training exercises are fun (the first few times) and give it a bit of a Monster Rancher feel. You can then use your customized character in versus or tournament play. Hardcore samurai fans may dig it, but to me it's an average game.

Chris

The obvious comparison here is to Bushido Blade for the PS one, but the single-player character training and fighting mechanics in Kengo make it a very different game. The game features the same swordplay and damage ideas of BB, but won't allow you to disable an arm or a leg, which should be a no-brainer for this type of sword fighter. While the battle arenas are small dojos instead of large, open spaces, there's still enough room to attack, defend or regroup strategically. Little touches like opponents' faces that track your precise position and parrying in battle give Kengo a smooth finish, but it **becomes tedious before too long** in any mode.

Jonathan

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY
6 7 7 5

NBA Live 2001



Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: EA Sports
Featured In: EGM #136
Players: 1-8
Supports: Multi-tap
Best Feature: One-on-one game
Worst Feature: Choppy graphics
Web Site: www.easports.com



So far, so good. **EA's first attempt at a basketball game on the PS2 is pretty impressive,** and it gives me reason to be excited about what else they do with the franchise. The graphics are gorgeous, if not much better than the Dreamcast's NBA 2k1. Highlights include loads of animations, real digitized faces on the players' mugs (complete with facial expressions and Iverson's cornrows), and loads of on- and off-the-court activities (the pre-game dances are realistically obnoxious). It just looks and feels more like the NBA than any other—until you see it in motion. Although there are lots of animations, they don't flow together like buttah. Instead, players stutter and move choppily around the court almost every time you execute a drive. It would be much better if the game gave you more direct control over your character, instead of having motion-captured moves play out at the touch of a button. As is always the case with this franchise, the features are absolutely topnotch. This one-on-one game (which includes Jordan and other all-time greats) is adding and, in some ways, plays better than the five-on-five simulation. I think I enjoyed it more. There's also the beefy season mode that includes all the fixin's. EA obviously has the mechanics down, but I just can't help but shake my head at their inability to come up with a smooth game that plays as well as it looks. Live 2001 is good, but it could have been great. **Kraig**

Welp, it's prettier, moves well and retains the classic NBA Live feel, but I'm still a little disappointed. **It's a bit too much like a deluxe version of its PS cousin than a spectacular new PS2 b-ball sim.** Why, you ask? Much of the graphic detail gets lost once you pull the camera out to a workable level. The tight camera angles don't reveal enough court to be functional, so you're left zooming 'er way out. I guess I'm spoiled by NBA 2k1's ability to place you close to the action while still revealing the majority of the court. Devoted Live fans should be pleased with the product anyway. Like I said, many of the same moves, techniques and Live flavor have been retained. **Dean**

As a PS2 owner, all you need to know is that NBA Live is by far the worst of the EA SPORTS games released for the console. At its core, Live is just not fun. **Players don't seem to carry any real weight—they fly around the court like marbles when the turbo button is held.** Also, what gives with the difficulty in making a shot? I'm usually no slouch, but I found shooting the ball in NBA Live 2001 to be very difficult. Maybe it's because my guys were always doing ridiculous, out-of-control leaning jump shots due to the lousy control, eh? That was part of it. The other part is that the game just doesn't feel tweaked. For next-gen hoops, see NBA 2k1. **Dan**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY
7 7 7 6 7 7

NCAA GameBreaker 2001



Publisher: 989 Sports
Developer: Red Zone Interactive
Featured In: N/A
Players: 1-8
Supports: Multi-tap
Best Feature: Sweet tackle animations
Worst Feature: AI bugs
Web Site: www.989sports.com



After GameDay's lackluster debut on the PS2 it's no surprise GameBreaker would follow suit. After all, they share the same game engine. How much better is the college version? Well, not much, other than a few minor tweaks. **The sad part is, with more development time, it could've been decent.** In its current condition, however, the game is riddled with holes. One of the most serious is the collision detection. It's not always obvious during normal gameplay, but replays reveal players (on occasion) passing right through each other. Trying to sack a seemingly invincible quarterback is damn infuriating. Again, it's the kind of snafu that could've been fixed with more tweaking time. Even more problematic are the AI bugs. I was able to pull off a plethora of money plays time and time again. The funniest is one I like to call the Benny Hill maneuver. On a kick return you can fool the defense into forming a giant train as they hopelessly chase you up and down the gridiron. I could literally run several laps with every player on the field in tow. That particular problem is partly due to an overly potent turbo boost and partly due to the herding problem. The AI moves too many players in unison instead of running each as an individual entity. In the end, the game is playable—and you may even want to rent it for a night or two—but if you're looking for a serious college football sim, wait to see how EA's NCAA Football turns out. **Dean**

989 Sports sure has developed a knack for creating PS2 title wrecks. Before I played this "football" game, I thought GameDay was the most disappointing PS2 game to date, but this one narrowly edges it out to win that dubious honor. **The list of stupid things that happen during a game is endless.** Player animations are buggy, the playcall screen is crappy, the graphics are subpar, and my personal favorite bug of all—wide receivers actually run away from the ball when you heave it to them deep downfield, causing oodles of stupid interceptions. I know that this is the only PS2 college football game, but you still shouldn't buy this dreck. **Kraig**

Well, 989 got one thing right with this game...the title. GameBreaker fits so perfectly, as **this is one broke-ass game.** Outdated and inaccurate rosters are a forgivable crime, but porting over the horrid GameDay engine is not. There's nothing like seeing defenders run through ball carriers, or better yet, away from them. I personally love the ball-is-five-yards-away/ball-is-in-his-hands catching animation. The one positive thing I can say is that it does have less glitches and bugs than GameDay. But that's kind of sad, because I don't get the belly laughs going like I do with GameDay. Avoid GameBreaker and all 989 sports titles until further notice. **Dan**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY
6 6 3 4



Publisher: 989 Sports
Developer: Killer Game
Featured In: EGM #139
Players: 1-8
Supports: Multi-tap
Best Feature: Auto Defend
Worst Feature: AI
Web Site: www.989sports.com



Wow...I'm beginning to think 989 is the devil. First GameDay and now this (and GameBreaker). The phrase that most repeatedly ran through my head while playing this game was "make the bad man stop." I mean, c'mon Sony...these games offer less gameplay and fun than anything ever seen before. **To sum it up briefly, I'll just say this game looks and plays like it was dragged "through a cow's ass."** I know, I know, much like people demanding more cow bell in Blue Oyster Cult's classic hit "Don't Fear the Reaper," you demand more of me. Specifically, you scream. How about ridiculous animation sequences that are wholly unrealistic? You're in the zone. Ignorance of basic basketball rules? Yep, just watch offensive players stand in the lane for 5-10 seconds at a time. Player movement is poor and other gameplay elements (blocking shots, rebounding) are almost missing entirely. The crowd and arenas are miserably bland, which helps sap the life out of any college atmosphere 989 was trying to capture. You may find it hard to believe that 989's PS2 games are worse than their PS1 counterparts, but it is painfully true. Trust me, even if you like Final Four 2001 on the PS one, you will feel betrayed by this title. It's not just the "same game, with better graphics." While usually being a cardinal sin of game development, that formula would have been a blessing in this case.

Dan

Like the old NBA Live games, this thing has the 'ol Swiss cheese defense problem. Playing the computer is more a dinking contest than a team endeavor. It's all about streaking down court (using the turbo), threading through the flat-footed defenders and laying down the big jam. You'd think the higher difficulty levels would prevent such a cheap maneuver—but they don't. Instead they just increase the amount of steals and blocked shots. It's not a constant occurrence but it still happens too much. **On a positive note, multiplayer is a much better experience.** Oh yeah, the camera work is very good as well. And let's not forget those hot cheerleaders either.

Dean

Like every other 989 Sports PS2 game, this falls well short of expectations. It's about as **vanilla** a PS2 **hoor game you'll ever see**, but at least it isn't as bad as GameDay or GameBreaker. The basics of the gameplay are solid: The players move smoothly and the control is pretty good. Sometimes the player animations are weak, and the rebounding is sloppy, but it's something I can live with. A lack of depth and excitement is what tanks the game. The crowd is so quiet and the sound effects are so mundane that it feels like you're playing in a morgue. But then again, you could blame the virtual crowd. It's hard to get excited about this game.

Kraig

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	4	3	4



Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Ubi Soft
Featured In: EGM #137
Players: 1
Supports: None
Best Feature: Gameplay is a nonstop blast
Worst Feature: Pretty tricky, for its audience
Web Site: www.ubisoft.com



When I heard a follow-up to the original Rayman was in the works years ago, I wasn't all that thrilled until I saw it in action on the DC—it was like night and day compared to Rayman's first title. As one of my all-time favorite games, Rayman 2 could have been ported straight to the PS2 and I'd be perfectly happy, but Ubi Soft has made a bunch of changes that make Revolution a **must-buy for any adventure gamer with a pulse...** oh, and a PS2. Not surprisingly, it's nearly graphically identical to the DC version, though it looks like the lighting and textures have been spruced up. The little glowing "lums" you collect in a Mario 64-esque fashion not only unlock bonus stages but can now be traded for power-ups, which changes the game dynamic quite a bit. The beauty of it is you're not punished if you don't grab every single one, but you rack up some cool rewards if you do. It's also a treat to go back through the levels and see how creative the designers got with hiding the little suckers. Despite its relatively simple gameplay and child-like characters who speak Raymanian (which is one oddly endearing step above baby talk), don't dismiss Revolution as a game for novices. I noticed myself dying and getting stuck a lot more than I remember from the DC days, so be prepared for a challenge. You'll probably be a little frustrated with the load times, but such is the burden for PS2 owners. Relax, Revolution is worth the wait.

Jonathan

Revolution expands on an already strong platform game, giving it a few extra things here and there. Does it necessarily make it a better game? No. **But if you have a PS2 and haven't played Rayman 2, do yourself a favor and check it out.** Graphics are comparable to the Dreamcast version, with a few polygon seams visible occasionally. The only slight drawback is the load times. PS2 games seem to really like those long loading screens. Now that Rayman 2's been out for every system in different forms, it's time to move on to Rayman 3. This is a great game, but any more updates and Rayman runs the risk of overstaying his welcome.

Chris

Revolution is to Rayman 2 what Special Edition was to Star Wars. It's the same profoundly addictive game that we saw on the N64 and DC, with the added bonus of new visual affects, creatures and environments. While it would have been nice to see a third chapter, this installment still stands as the only platform game to surpass Super Mario 64 in terms of play control and level design. **It's a masterpiece.** It's also unbelievably eye candy—this is one of the best-looking PS2 games on the market. If you've never picked up a Rayman game before, Revolution is an absolute must-have. If you already own an earlier edition, a rental will suffice.

Ethan

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
9	9	8	8



Publisher: 3DO
Developer: 3DO
Featured In: EGM #136
Players: 1-4
Supports: Multi-tap
Best Feature: Cool explosions
Worst Feature: Sparse play fields
Web Site: www.3do.com



The PS one version of this game was nothing short of appalling. Why would 3DO want to release a new edition? Examining this PS2 port tells the tale. By dramatically improving the game's graphics, boosting the speed, and allowing up to four players to compete simultaneously, a **once-awful product suddenly becomes the life of any video-game party.** Granted, it doesn't have the infinite replay value of TimeSplitters, but what does? In its corner, WDL is far more accessible to casual gamers than standard FPS shooters are. If you have a group of friends come by, and not all of 'em are big into gaming, this is a great title to boot up. Gameplay capitalizes on one of the most basic of human desires—to blow stuff up. Just about every building, vehicle or monument can be annihilated, and every time you mow something down, you're rewarded with a series of fantastic-looking explosions. The super weapons are really cool; most light up the screen with dazzling particle effects. The one-player game, sad, is a total bust. I played through it in about two hours and didn't have much fun doing it. That's a significant stumbling block, but it's not a deal killer. Some games are simply meant to be played with a group of people. All said, you may grow tired of WDL in a few months' time—the control is not very deep, and the arenas don't offer much in terms of variety. But it'll do 'til Twisted Metal: Black ships.

Ethan

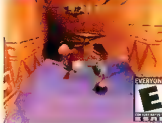
While the original PS version of Thunder Tanks was a beast at best, the new revision is a very different game and thus a lot more palatable. It's good—not great-looking. You can actually tell what's going on in battles. But if you'll do best to avoid the single-player mode like the proverbial plague and jump straight to multi-tank combat with some friends. Sure, the horrendous tough-guy commentary is about as entertaining and redeeming as your average tractor pull or backyard tough-man competition, but the action, weaponry and respectable graphics make WDLT **a guilty pleasure for at least a few days.** It should tide you over until TM: Black. **Jonathan**

Wow! Now this is a man's game. Big, ugly, two-ton tanks, huge cannons, walls of fire, exploding buildings, obscene carnage—WDL has it all. And then right when you think you've seen everything, there's the glorious nuke that makes you think, "That's what I got a PS2 for!" This gets to the root of all that I like in video games: simple gameplay and the ability to blow up lots of stuff in short order. WDL isn't original, and it doesn't pretend to be innovative. It takes variations of Capture The Flag and Deathmatch, puts them on tank treads and adds a lot of pizzazz. With all of the modes and characters, WDL is a sleeper title that should keep you awake for hours.

Kraig

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	6	6	8

Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers



Publisher: **PS2**
 Ubi Soft
 Developer:
 Ubi Soft
 Featured In:
 N/A
 Players:
 1

Best Feature: Sharp graphics and animation
Worst Feature: Not enough levels

Supports:
 None
Web Site:
www.ubisoft.com

Before I even booted this game up on PS2, I figured it would be the same Goin' Quackers that I'd played twice already. Luckily, this is a very different game from the one I played on PS, DC and N64, though they share the same story and end-level bosses. Level designs are completely new, with gears instead of stars to collect, special moves like invincibility to learn, and a boatload of new enemies. So even if you've played one of the others, it's worth checking out because this version's so different. **Ubi Soft significantly raised the difficulty so it's not as much of a cakewalk** as before, but it's still too short. Why no new environments? Special-move challenges and time trials help keep things interesting after you've beaten the regular game. The 3D animation for all the characters is great, *much* better than the Dreamcast version—especially some of the motions for Donald's special moves. The music's forgettable but the voices are great. It's one of the few platform games on the PS2, so if you need your fix, rent it for a few days' fun.

Chris

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	5	5	3

ESPN NBA 2Night



Publisher: **PS2**
 Konami
 Developer:
 Konami
 Featured In:
 EGM #127
 Players:
 1-8

Best Feature: Razor-sharp graphics
Worst Feature: Chunky passing

Supports:
 Multi-tap
Web Site:
www.konami.com

The ESPN license will mean nothing for Konami if they can't support it with quality games. NBA 2Night for the PS2 is a step up from NBA 2Night on the Dreamcast, but it still lacks enough gameplay muscle to merit your attention. **The passing game lacks any zest or sense of movement, as players kind of do a "medicine ball" pass to each other.** It's slow, erratic and a total barrier to running any offense. On defense, you'll be frustrated at your players' moronic stall attempts. It looks like they're trying to take the guy's arm off instead of just poking the ball away. Also, the CPU can't put some lockdown defense on you—thanks to the length of the shooting animations. Still, there is room for growth here. The visuals look really good and presentation is great. Options and customization aren't quite up to the gargantuan standards of EA games, but the basics are there. One final note: Do not buy this game with a one-player experience in mind. The AI is weak and boring. Actually, don't buy this game at all, as a quick rental will satisfy your curiosity.

Dan

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	5	4	4

RC Revenge Pro



Publisher: **PS2**
 Acclaim
 Developer:
 Acclaim Studios
 Featured In:
 EGM #137
 Players:
 1-2

Best Feature: Course and vehicle variety
Worst Feature: No four-player support

Supports:
 None
Web Site:
www.acclaim.com

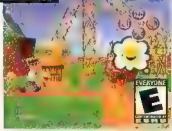
Kart games are everywhere these days, but this isn't a bad start for the genre on PS2. **The strength of this game begins with its glut of vehicles.** They include regular cars, trucks and even boats (30 in all), but also offer lots of goofy fare (a skull, a space-ship) unlockable as you progress through the game. Up to eight of the buggers can be on the screen at once, and it's pretty damn hectic when that happens. Just wait 'til everyone starts firing at you! The controls and pace of the action are usually good, but sometimes it feels a little too slow for a kart game—especially when some of the weapon effects bog everything down. On some tracks, the framerate sputters. On others, the track's moving parts (a monster squid, for example) animate badly. I could understand if this game were pushing the PS2 hardware, but these graphics aren't even scratching the surface of what Sony's machine can do. I suspect that the game was rushed, and that's why there's no four-player mode. At least the clock trader offers something fresh to the genre.

Kraig

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	5	5	8



Theme Park Roller Coaster



Publisher: **PS2**
 Electronic Arts
 Developer:
 Bullfrog
 Featured In:
 EGM #139
 Players:
 1

Best Feature: Building your own coaster, and riding it
Worst Feature: Monstrously long load times

Supports:
 None
Web Site:
www.eagames.com

This is one of those games that really grows on you. When I was writing the review for it, I wasn't expecting much—but when it came to moving onto the next game, I had to pry my fingers from the controller. It's hard to believe that it's so easy to get the hang of playing this game, considering how deep its gameplay is. Not only can you design and build your own roller coaster, you can also ride it and create entire theme parks. Unlike other "sim" games, there are goals to accomplish here that give playing it a purpose. You can't just build arbitrarily—unless you don't mind going out of business. Instead, you must carefully balance your expenditures and growth so that you can meet business goals and win "tickets," which let you open bonuses and advance further in the game. Don't worry, though—the game doesn't get buried in boring economics. You can see if people like your park by looking at their faces, and making kick-ass rides will earn you awards and fame. **It may not be as pretty as some PS2 games, but surprisingly, it's one of the most addicting.**

Kraig

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	5	9	7



Mario Tennis



Publisher: **Nintendo**
 Camelot
 Featured In:
 EGM #132
 Players:
 1-2
Supports:
 Link Cable, Transfer Pak
Best Feature:
 Addictive gameplay
Worst Feature:
 Working the tiny control pad
Web Site:
www.nintendo.com

Camelot set a precedent for turning great N64 games into outstanding GBC titles with its translation of Mario Golf onto the smaller screen. So it comes as little surprise to us that Camelot has handled Mario Tennis in much the same fashion. **Mario Tennis for the Game Boy is a blast, featuring the same addictive gameplay as its N64 counterpart.** To add some depth to the game, MT steals a page from Mario Golf with an RPG-type mode where you build a player from scratch. The only way to improve your new character is to compete in various mini-games and tournaments. This is where the real fun of the handheld version lies. Link play is not that exciting, and lengthy duels against the CPU get a little tiring. Working the GBC's minute D-pad gets to be a chore at times. I found myself wishing the matches were a bit shorter. But once you've built the proper ahem, stamina, you'll be tearing up the courts in no time. Perhaps the coolest feature of the game comes via the Transfer Pak, which lets you import your Mario Tennis GBC characters into full 3D glory on the N64. This is not only very cool—it's a very practical application to get more out of your N64 cart. Your players can bring a wider variety of styles and shots to the game, which lends a lot to the replay value of doubles. All in all, Mario Tennis is a very good game that is sure to keep handheld owners happy for months to come. Maybe even longer.

Dan

The repetitive nature of tennis wears thin on the GBC. The small digital pad and the constant back-and-forth pressure does a number on the ol' thumbs. Yeah, it's a pathetic complaint, but that's the only thing wrong with this game. **You won't find a better tennis game for the GBC.** The gameplay mechanics are rock-solid, the link-play is great, and the RPG elements are addicting. That about covers it, at least on one level. On another level I don't like it as much as Mario Golf. Even though the two share the same format and many similar characters, Tennis just doesn't translate as well on the small screen. But hey, that's splittin' hairs—it's still a fine game.

Dan

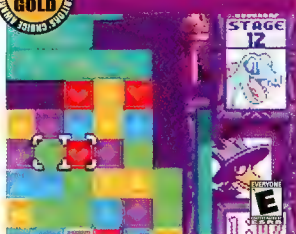
I can't see how tennis on a handheld system could get any better than this excellent adaptation of the N64 game. Even the best sports games lose a lot of their luster when you play by yourself, but Mario Tennis' exceptional depth makes it just as fun as playing it with another person. **The game is insanely addicting and easy to learn.** Its challenging mini-games (and fun tutorial) and RPG-like upgrading of characters give it a unique feel, much like the Dreamcast's Virtua Tennis. When you add in the link multiplayer and Transfer Pak capabilities, this is not only one of the best GBC sports games, but one of the best GBC titles, period. A must-buy.

Kraig

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	8	8



Pokémon Puzzle Challenge



Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Intelligent Systems
Featured In: EGM #136
Players: 1-2
Supports: Link cable
Best Feature: Very challenging
Worst Feature: No slowdown
Web Site: www.nintendo.com

Since Puzzle Challenge was developed by Intelligent Systems (and not Nintendo Software Technology), this looks and plays more like Tetris Attack than Puzzle League did. In case you haven't played either yet, **let me repeat: This is the best two-player puzzle game ever**, not to mention a very addictive one-player game. Even if you've never played a Pokémon game in your life, but are a sucker for an addictive puzzle game (like me!) you'll be able to appreciate this game. It's simple enough at the beginning, but the difficulty increases ten-fold by the time you move on to Hard difficulty and higher (Super Hard, anyone? Ultra Hard?). When you get to that level, you realize just how deep the gameplay is in this deceptively simple game. Graphics are vibrant, making it easy to distinguish the colors from each other even in dim light. Aside from Challenge, you get a handful of other modes of play to hone your skills. For instance, Puzzle Mode forces you to set up combos in a minimum of moves, and the Marathon mode starts out nice and slow and won't drop garbage blocks your way. On the extreme end, there's a Garbage Mode that tests your skills at dealing with various levels of garbage blocks. My only complaint with this game is that because it's missing the slowdown present in the Super NES and N64 versions, you have to be even faster at setting up combos. This is a must-have for any gamer's GBC library.

Chris

I enjoy some parts of PPC even more than its N64 counterpart—the annoying voices are mercifully gone, and earning Pokémon is a nice touch. **It's also perfectly suited to the Game Boy.** Tetris Attack/Pokémon Puzzle has always made the hours fly, by only now you can bring it wherever you want to kill time. But my favorite mode—multiplayer—is basically gone. Yeah you can play if you find a friend with the game and a link cable, but how often do you have both on the plane or bus when you really want to play? Also, the delay between when blocks disappear and when they fall is shorter, making combos harder. Still, an excellent handheld puzzler. **Mark**

This is the game that saved my sanity during the horrifying ordeal that was my recent vacation. Through one cancelled flight after another, I could count on Pikachu and pals to keep me going. I simply love the different play options in this game, especially the Puzzle Mode, where you have to clear a stack of blocks within so many moves. Competing certain goals adds a few new Pokémon to your stable and gives you that many more chances to complete the game in the quest mode. Everything on this cartridge is designed to build your skills at identifying how combo possibilities within the actual game. **No GBC owner should be without this.**

Greg

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	7	9	10

Hoyle Casino



Best Feature: Abundance of voice for a Game Boy title
Worst Feature: Roulette isn't random enough

Publisher: Sierra
Developer: Pulsar Interactive
Featured In: N/A
Players: 1-2
Supports: Link Cable
Web Site: www.sierra.com

From the get-go, you know Hoyle Casino is more than just another average casino game. First, it features a battery back-up save system, so no need for annoying 30-digit passwords. Just enter your name, pick your player type and you're ready to gamble. The game selection menu is pretty standard, as are the types of games you can play—you have your blackjack, roulette, poker, slots and a couple of others. Once you start playing any of these games, however, things get interesting. **Believe it or not, this little GB cart features a ton of voice.** Sure, you've heard voice in GB titles before, but this time around it really fits into the gameplay nicely, and makes for a more enjoyable experience. Your dealer tells you when you score a blackjack, when you've won a hand, and what number the roulette wheel lands on, among other things. Speaking of roulette, the developers need to work on the randomizer—the same numbers keep popping up again and again. Overall though, Hoyle is a well-made, highly addictive gambling game that would even make Kenny Rogers happy.

Shawn

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	8	5	10

Inspector Gadget



Best Feature: Some of the best graphics on GBC
Worst Feature: A few difficult control problems

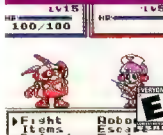
Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Light & Shadow
Featured In: EGM #133
Players: 1
Supports: None
Web Site: www.ubisoft.com

Inspector Gadget was one of my favorite cartoons when I was a youngster, so I was overjoyed that there's finally a decent game based on the show (and not the movie). Perhaps the best thing this has going for it are the graphics—they're damn good. Now for the bad news: switching between characters on the fly is sometimes a chore since you can't change characters while they're attacking or in mid-air (and other times too). Is this music from the show? I can't tell. It's sounds crappy and is not recognizable. Control is sometimes frustrating, especially in levels where you have to make pinpoint jumps (often blind). Earlier levels are filled with "???" icons that give you hints (although these are obvious earlier in the game). They disappear when you read them, so you better pay attention to the more important hints. It's too bad Penny and Brain are under-used, two-hit-and-they're-dead characters (Gadget can take more damage). And what's the point of the end-of-level puzzles? They're lame! It's got a few kinks, but overall it's a fun platformer.

Chris

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
10	5	6	6

Robocon: Sun Edition



Best Feature: The best Pokémon clone yet
Worst Feature: Not much here is new

Publisher: Atlus
Developer: Hudson
Featured In: EGM #136
Players: 1-2
Supports: Game Link
Web Site: www.atlus.com

If Nintendo had snagged the rights to this game and released it here as "Pokémon: Robot Edition," Pokéfans would have accepted it as an extension of their favorite franchise without any qualms. That speaks volumes for the quality of this title: The graphics, interface and play mechanics are just about on par with the newest Game Freak releases. Scouring the cart's overheard worlds in search of new Robocons is intensely addicting; you'll be glued to your Game Boy for hours on end, guaranteed. Just don't expect much innovation—beyond the superfluous additions of a built-in speaker (which will chirp at the start of real-time events when your Game Boy is turned off) and a custom infrared transmitter (used to unlock secrets with any TV remote), every element of the game has an unavoidable "been there, done that" feel. This wouldn't be a big deal if Robocon's mechanical monsters were as interesting and varied as the Pokémon critters, but they're not. Still, it's worthwhile for die-hard fans who have already finished Gold and Silver.

Ethan

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	5	8

Ultimate Fighting Championship



Best Feature: Smooth animation
Worst Feature: One-player only!

Publisher: Crave
Developer: Fluid Studios
Featured In: N/A
Players: 1
Supports: none
Web Site: www.cravegames.com

UFC—good on the Dreamcast, mediocre on the PlayStation, awful on the Game Boy. It's an exciting license, but this watered-down cart is not likely to satisfy fans of the sport. The sluggish fighters are limited to performing only the simplest of punches and kicks. Effectively using this small selection of moves requires little skill, since the game's crude AI ensures every opponent you face will be dumb as a box of rocks. To win any given bout, simply press up on the directional pad while hitting the B button about 50 times, then pin your opponent and force a submission. Matches take forever to end; playing through the game's Tournament mode is a profound test of patience. This might be forgivable if you could ignore the solo game and focus on some two-player action, but, inexplicably, there is no link cable support. Be prepared for an experience completely void of variety—every selectable character controls more or less identically. Barring the smooth animation, this game has nothing positive going for it. Stick with the DC ver and pretend this never shipped.

Ethan

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	3	2	1

ESRB Rating System: www.esrb.com



EARLY CHILDHOOD RATING: Deemed Suitable For Children 3 Or Older. Products Carrying This Label Have Absolutely No Material That Would Be Considered Inappropriate By Parents.



EVERYONE RATING: The E Replaced The Previous K-A Rating Last Year. Suitable For Kids Ages 6 And Up, E-Rated Games May Contain Minimal Violence Or Crude Language.



TEEN RATING: Contains Suggestive Themes, Mild Or Strong Language And Animated Violence. Some Parents May Want To Supervise Children Playing T-Rated Games.



MATURE RATING: These Games Contain More Adult Themes, Such As Blood And Gore, Stronger Language And Sexual Themes. Deemed Not Suitable For Those Under 17.



ADULTS ONLY RATING: The Extreme Of The Ratings, Suitable For Adults Only. Packs Sexual Themes And Extreme Violence. Console Manufacturers Have Yet To Allow An AO-Rated Game.



Tricks of the Trade

By Trickman Terry
trickn@ziffdavis.com

TRICK OF THE MONTH

Spider-Man

Tops of Awesome Tricks

On the main menu screen, access the Special menu. Highlight and enter the "Cheat" option. Now put in any of these cheats. (Shown in caps) on the Cheat screen as shown.

- Level Select
- LVLSKIPPER
- Invulnerable
- TURTLE
- Full Health
- HELP ME
- Webbing
- STICKYSTUP
- Comic Collector
- CLITHMALL
- All Slide Show
- SMESTORY
- Game Comic Credits
- COV VEIW
- All Sound Menu
- LISTEN
- Symbolite Spidey Costume
- SYMBSPID
- Quick Change Costume
- GTATNKFT
- Captain Universe
- Costume
- POWCOSMIC
- Spidey 2099 Costume
- SPTWOKNN
- Ben Reilly Costume
- DA CLONE
- Peter Parker Costume
- MISTERMJ
- Spidey Unlimited
- Costume
- LIMITED ED
- Scarlet Spider Costume
- SPID INRED
- Everything
- TRUBLEVR

PS2 PLAYSTATION 2

Gradius III and IV POWER-UPS AND HIDDEN MODES

These commands can be done multiple times in Gradius III. In Gradius IV, you must beat the first boss of the game to do the tricks and they can be done once per level beaten thereafter. If you don't use the power-up trick in a level, you can build it up to do it multiple times in the next level.

Double Weapon Power-Up
In Gradius III or IV, pause the game during play and enter Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, Square, Triangle. You will be fully powered up with the double weapon.

Laser Weapon Power-Up
In Gradius III or IV, pause the game during play and enter Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, X, Circle. You will be fully powered up with the laser weapon.

Hidden Modes in Gradius III
1. If you reach Stage 9, Extra Mode will appear, and then you can play Cube Attack.
2. If you get hit with a bullet from the boss of Stage 10, stages from the very first Gradius will appear. If you play these stages once, you can select them from Extra Mode.
3. Complete the entire game once and Extra Edit will appear within Extra Mode.
4. Complete the entire game in

Extra Edit to choose from more kinds of weapons.

Hidden Modes in Gradius IV
1. Complete the entire game once to get Boss Rush Mode to appear.
2. Complete the entire game without using a Continue and you will get the Stage Select.

Ready 2 Rumble Boxing: Round 2

1 UNLOCK ALL BOXERS

From the main menu, choose Arcade mode. Then select one or two players. On the Boxer Select Screen, press Left, Left, Right, R2, Left, Right, Right, R1, R1, R2. You will hear a bell when entered correctly. Now you can choose from a variety of new boxers, including Bill and Hillary Clinton!

Silent Scope

MANY CHEATS

On the Mode Select screen, enter these cheats as shown.

Professional Mode

Hold the R1 button and quickly press Start, Start, Start, Start.

Night Vision Mode

Hold the R1 button and quickly press Start, Start, Start, Start.

Professional Night Vision Mode

Hold the R1 button and quickly press Start, Start, Start, Start, Start.

No Crosshair

Right, Right, Right, Square. You will hear an explosion when



entered correctly.

2 Romantic Code
Left, Right, Right, Square, Triangle. You will hear "Wow!" when entered correctly.

Super Fast Professional Mode
Down, Triangle, Up, Square, Triangle, Down, Right, Down, Right, Square, Triangle.

Mirror Mode

Left, Left, Right, Square, Down, Down, Up, Triangle, Up, Right, Down, Up, Left, Down, Square.

3 No Scope
Right, Down, Right, Square, Right, Down, Right, Square.

Hidden Mode

(All enemies are invisible)
Right, Down, Right, Square, Up, Square, Square, Triangle, Down, Right, Down, Right, Square, Triangle.

Night Mode

Up, Right, Down, Left, Up, Square, Triangle. You will hear "Silent Scope" when entered correctly.

First-Person View

Up, Up, Up, Up, Down, Down, Down.

No Enemy Targeting Mode
Right, Right, Right, Right, Left, Down, Up, Right.

Life Exchange

Pause the game during play and enter these commands to exchange life for time, and vice versa.

Half of Life for 5 Seconds: Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, X, Circle.

5 Seconds for Half of Life: Circle, X, Right, Left, Right, Left, Down, Down, Up, Up.



DREAMCAST

Army Men: Sarge's Heroes

LEVEL CODES AND ALL CHARACTERS

From the main menu, go to the Input Code option and enter any of the passwords.

2. **Spy Blue Mission:** TRGHTR
3. **Bathroom:** TDBWL
4. **Riff Mission:** MSTRMN
5. **Forest:** TLLTRS
6. **Hoover Mission:** SCRDCD
7. **Thick Mission:** STPDMN
8. **Snow Mission:** BLZZDR
9. **Shrap Mission:** SFRPNK
10. **Fort Plastro:** GNRLLMN
11. **Scorch Mission:** HHTTTRT
12. **Showdown:** ZBTSRL
13. **Sandbox:** HTKTTN
14. **Riff Mission:** PTPSPN
15. **Living Room:** HXMSTR
16. **The Way Home:** VRCLN (unlocks the secret characters in a multiplayer game)

Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX

BIKES, CHARACTERS, ETC.

From the main menu, choose Proquest mode. Now enter these codes on the following screens for various results. You will hear a sound when they are entered correctly.

Slim Jim

On the Select Rider screen, press Down, Down, Left, Right, Up, Up, Y. You will hear a sound. Move Left until Slim Jim appears.

Unlock Bikes

On the Bike Select screen, press Up, Left, Up, Down, Up, Right, Left, Right, Y.

Styles Unlocked

On the Style screen, press Left, Up, Right, Down, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Y.

Looney Tunes Space Race

TRICKS OF CHEATS

From the main menu, access the Options. In the Options screen, access "Cheats." On the Cheats screen, enter any of these codes for the results as shown. The screen will flash and Foghorn

Leghorn will say, "There y'are. Have fun!"

Unlock Off-World City Limits 1
DURNIDGIT

Unlock Off-World City Limits 2
PALOOKA

Unlock Galactorama Park 1
YOIKS

Unlock Galactorama Park 2
DODGPARRY

Unlock the Pyramids of Mars 2
SCNEWBALL

Unlock Wild West Quadrant 1
HOGGRAVY

Unlock Planet ACME 2
MAROON

5 **Unlock The Nebula**
MRFUZZY

Unlock Marvin the Martian
REDWAGON

Unlock Porky Pig
YAVARMINT

Every Gallery Item Open
MICHIGANJ

Unlimited Turbo Boost
DUCKAMUCK

No Gags in Game
SUCCOTASH

All Tracks Mirrored
SAMRALPH

Every Challenge Open
MOIDALIZE

Every ACME Event Open
3LILBOPS

Open up everything in the game
CHEESFISH

Silent Scope

HOW TO BEATS

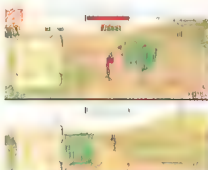
On the Mode Select screen, enter these cheats as shown.

Professional Mode

Hold the R-Trigger and quickly press Start, Start, Start, Start.

Night Vision Mode

Hold the R-Trigger and quickly press Start, Start, Start, Start.



Professional Night Vision Mode

Hold the R-Trigger and quickly press Start, Start, Start, Start, Start, Start.

No Crosshair

Right, Right, Right, X. You will hear an explosion when entered correctly.

Romantic Mode

Left, Right, Right, X, Y. You will hear "Wow!" when entered correctly.

Super Fast Speed

Down, Y, Up, X, Y, Down, Right, Down, Right, X, Y.

Mirror Mode

Left, Left, Right, X, Down, Down, Up, Y, Up, Right, Down, Up, Left, Down, X.

No Scope

Right, Down, Right, X, Right, Down, Right, X.

Hidden Mode

(All enemies are invisible)

Right, Down, Right, X, Up, X, X, Y, Down, Right, Down, Right, X, Y.

Night Mode

Up, Right, Down, Left, Up, X, Y. You will hear "Silent Scope" when entered correctly.

First-Person View

Up, Up, Up, Up, Down, Down, Down, Down.

No Enemy Targeting Mode

Right, Right, Right, Right, Left, Down, Up, Right.

Life Exchange

Pause the game during play and enter these commands to exchange life for time, and vice versa.

Half of Life for 5 Seconds: Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, A, B.

5 Seconds for Half of Life: B, A, Right, Left, Right, Left, Down, Down, Up, Up.



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!

*SEE PAGE 123 for contest rules

TOP 5 TRICKS

The top 5 games of the last month given the full-on Trickman treatment:

1. Pokémon Gold/Silver

Duplicate Pokémon and Items
WARNING: THIS TRICK AFFECTS YOUR SAVED GAMES. USE WITH CAUTION!

First, you must decide on the Pokémon and item you want to clone. At any time during the game, press Start and access the Pokémon option. Choose the Pokémon you want to clone and make it hold an item that you also want to clone (such as a Master Ball). Next, go into a town and find a Pokémon Center. Move in front of the PC and press Start. Move down the menu and access the Save option. After saving your game, press the A button to turn on the PC. Access Bill's PC and deposit the Pokémon you want to clone into one of the boxes. Then choose "Change Box" and move to an empty box. Press A and choose "Switch." When it asks if you want to save the game, choose "Yes." Now, this part is very important and requires precise timing. The game will tell you that there is already a save file, and it will ask you if it is OK to overwrite the file. Choose "Yes" and immediately turn off the Game Boy. Be sure to turn it off before any words other than "Saving" appear on the screen, or the trick will not work. Turn the Game Boy back on again. Check your party status and you should see the Pokémon you wanted to clone still in your party. Access Bill's PC and look at the box in which you deposited the Pokémon. The Pokémon and the item it was holding will be cloned inside the box, and still in your party! You can clone up to five Pokémon and items at one time by doing this trick.

2. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2

Cool Codes

From the main menu screen, access Career Mode and choose to continue a career or start a new one. On the Select Player screen, choose a character and begin your game. In the middle of play, press START to pause the game and then press and hold the L1 button. While holding this button, enter any of these codes to unlock the following features. The screen will shake when each of these tricks are entered correctly. Unlimited Special Meter; X,



TRICKS

TOP 5 TRICKS

(CONTINUED)

Triangle, Circle, Up, Left, Triangle, Square.
Fast Motion: Down, Square, Triangle, Right, Up, Circle, Down, Square, Triangle, Right, Up, Circle.
Full Statistics: X, Triangle, Circle, Square, Triangle, Up, Down.
No Blood: Right, Up, Square, Triangle.
Skinny Skater: X, X, X, X, Square, X, X, X, X, Square, X, X, X, X, Square, X, X, X, X, Left, X, X, X, X, Left, X, X, X, X, Left.

3. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater

Blowout Trick
 This trick will blow open the game and give you a new character. From the menu, access Career mode. Begin a new game and press START to pause. Press and hold the L1 button and enter Circle, Right, Up, Down, Circle, Right, Up, Square, Triangle. The screen shakes if entered correctly. Go to the Main Menu screen. Choose to continue the Career mode and Officer Dick, all tapes, levels, medals, stats and FMV movies will become available.

4. Tekken Tag Tournament

Begin With Tag Partner
 If you want to start your match with your second player, just hold the Tag button on the loading screen until the match begins.

New Armor King Costume
 To get Armor King's costume (without armor), beat Arcade mode with Armor King. Then at the Character Select screen, highlight Armor King and press Start.

Tekken Bowl
 Use Ogre to unlock True Ogre. This will give you Tekken Bowl. While bowling, you can see Dr. Boskonovitch jumping in the background. Aim to the left where he is, and if you get it just right, you will be able to K.O. him with the bowling ball!

Jukebox
 In Tekken Bowl, get a score of 200 or more and you will open up a new Jukebox option on the Pause screen. The jukebox will allow you to choose the

NINTENDO 64

WCW Backstage Assault

VARIOUS CODES
 On the main menu screen, enter any of these codes for the results as shown. You will hear a sound when they are entered correctly.

Unbreakable Weapons
 L-Shift, R-Shift, L-Shift, R-Shift, C-Left, C-Left.

Super High Stamina
 R-Shift, R-Shift, B, R-Shift, R-Shift, B.

New Wrestler Noises
 R-Shift, L-Shift, R-Shift, L-Shift, B, B.

Tiny Wrestlers
 R-Shift, R-Shift, L-Shift, L-Shift, C-Left, C-Left.

1 Women Wrestlers are Huge
 R-Shift, R-Shift, B, B, L-Shift, L-Shift.

Star Wars Episode 1: Battle For Naboo

MANY CODES
 From the Main Menu Screen, enter the Options. Access the Passcodes option and put in any of these codes.

Advanced Shields
 DROIDEKA
Showroom Art Gallery
 KOOLSTUF
Development Team Picture
 LOVEHUTT
Pink Ship
 RUAGIRL?

PLAYSTATION

Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2

INVINCIBILITY AND MORE
Invincibility
 In the middle of a game, press Start to pause. Then press Square, Circle, L, R1. You will hear a sound. Unpause the game and you will see the word, "Invincible!!" at the top of the screen.

All Weapons and Unlimited Ammo
 In the middle of a game, press Start to pause. Then press Square, Circle, R1, L1. You will hear a sound. Unpause the



game and you will see the word, "Power Up" at the top of the screen. Press Circle continuously to scroll through your available weapons.

Looney Tunes Racing

NEW CHARACTERS
 On the main menu screen, press the following buttons to get these characters.

Duck Dodgers
 L2, Square, Square, Triangle, Circle, Select.
Evil Scientist
 Square, Circle, L2, R2, Triangle, Select.
Foghorn Leghorn
 Right, Right, L2, Square, Square, Select.
Genie
 Square, L1, R1, Triangle, Circle, Select.
Gossamer
 Triangle, Circle, R2, R1, Square, Select.
Granny
 Circle, Triangle, Triangle, L1, R1, Select.

Rocky
 Triangle, L2, L1, Triangle, Square, Select.
Pepe Le Pew
 Left, Right, R1, Circle, Square, Select.
Sylvester
 Left, Left, L1, Triangle, Circle, Select.
Yosemite Sam
 Left, Right, R2, Square, Circle, Select.
Single Race Bonus Levels
 On the main menu screen, press

the following buttons to open these bonus levels in the Single Race.

Wackyland Bonus Level
 L1, Circle, Square, R2, Triangle, Select.
Planet Y Bonus Level
 Right, Left, Triangle, L2, L1, Select.

2 Player VS. Mode Speedways
 On the main menu screen, press the following buttons to open these Speedways in the 2 Player VS. Mode.

Planet X Speedway
 R1, Square, Circle, L2, Triangle, Select.
Garden Speedway
 R1, Right, Left, L1, Square, Select.
Forest Speedway
 Triangle, R2, Left, Triangle, L1, Select.
Duck Dodgers' Speedway
 Circle, Left, Square, Square, R2, Select.

Medal of Honor Underground

COOL PASSCODES
 From the main menu screen, choose the Options. Access the Passwords screen and put in these codes for the results shown. Once these passwords are in, choose Secret Codes from the Options screen to activate them. The codes will work in the levels you've already completed.
Invincibility
 PUISSANCE
Quadruple Firing Rate
 BALLESVITE
Bouncing Bullets
 RICOCHET

Podoski Mode (One hit kills for enemies and you)

LATIREUSE

Wacky Taxi (one minute to kill each enemy you come across)
AUTODINGUO

Moto Racer: World Tour

AWESOME CHEATS

Ultimate Code

On the main menu screen, press Square, Triangle, Circle, Circle, Up, Up, Left. The screen will flash and you will hear a sound. Now you will have access to all the bikes, courses and game modes.

Slower CPU Bikers

On the main menu screen, press



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, or a Twin Shock, or a Hyper64, or an Advanced Pad, or a DC carrying case from Blaze, if you are given credit for submitting a hot trick in this section, you will win a free game. See page 128 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

1-900-PRE VIEW

773 8439

The number to call for the latest cheats & gaming info

Down, Up, Up, Right, Triangle, Square, R2. The screen will flash and you will hear a sound.

Tomb Raider Chronicles

MULTIPLE TRICKS

All Weapons, Unlimited Ammo, Medipacks, Etc.

In the middle of a game, press Select to get to the inventory screen. Move over and highlight the Timex-TMX option.

Now press and hold L1+R1+L2+R2+Up. With all of these buttons held, press Triangle. Go back to the game, press Select to get back to the inventory screen and you will see that you have unlimited ammo, medipacks and more.

All Items

In the middle of a game, press Select to get to the inventory screen. Move over and highlight the Timex-TMX option.

Now press and hold L1+R1+L2+R2+Down. With all of these buttons held, press Triangle. Go back to the game, press Select to get back to the inventory screen and you will see that you have all the keys and items.

Special Features

In the middle of a game, press Select to get to the inventory screen. Move over and highlight the Timex-TMX option. Now press and hold L1+R1+L2+R2+Down+Circle. With all of these buttons held, press Triangle. Go back to the game, press Start and quit the game. Once you are back at the title screen, a new option called Special Features will be underneath the New Game option. Access the special features to find new options such as storyboards and concept art.

GAME BOY COLOR GAME BOY COLOR

Buffy the Vampire Slayer

LEVEL CODES

Graveyard: 3NKFZ8
Alley: 9MD1WV
Sewers: XTN4F7
Zoo: 5BVPL2
Mansion: 9D6FoS
Initiative: TSCNB4

Caverns: CS1TQZ
Hellmouth: BNPXZ9
Ending: GH9MRY

Chicken Run

AWESOME PASSCODES

From the Options screen, access the Password option. Put in any of the codes for these results.

Stage Skip

Oval, Triangle, Circle, Rectangle

Unlimited Time

Diamond, Oval, Cross, Crown

Unlimited Corn

Triangle, Triangle, Eagle, Circle.

No Alarms

Crown, Circle, Oval, Triangle

After you enter any of the above passwords, press A and you will hear a sound. You can enter any of the other passwords as well to combine the codes.

Level Passwords

2. Circle, Cross, Crown, Eagle
3. Diamond, Oval, Circle
4. Cross, Eagle, Circle, Circle
5. Crown, Diamond, Crown, Oval
6. Triangle, Diamond, Cross, Rectangle
7. Oval, Triangle, Cross, Circle
8. Diamond, Rectangle, Cross, Crown
9. Oval, Triangle, Eagle, Diamond
10. Circle, Eagle, Cross, Eagle
11. Rectangle, Cross, Rectangle, Diamond
12. Eagle, Diamond, Cross, Triangle
13. Rectangle, Cross, Eagle, Eagle
14. Triangle, Crown, Triangle, Triangle
15. Circle, Crown, Cross, Oval
16. Triangle, Rectangle, Eagle, Eagle
17. Circle, Rectangle, Triangle, Diamond
18. Crown, Triangle, Diamond, Rectangle
19. Cross, Rectangle, Rectangle, Crown
20. Rectangle, Diamond, Triangle, Eagle
21. Crown, Triangle, Cross, Rectangle
22. Oval, Cross, Crown, Cross
23. Crown, Rectangle, Cross, Oval
24. Oval, Diamond, Triangle, Diamond

Pokémon Puzzle Challenge

MULTIPLE CODES

Extra Options

On the Options screen, hold

TOP 5 TRICKS

(CONTINUED)

background music that plays as you bowl.

5. Spider-Man



Awesome Codes

On the main menu screen, access the Special menu. Highlight and enter the Cheats option. Now put in any of these cheats (Show in caps.) on the Enter Cheats screen as shown.

Level Select:

XCLSIOR

Invincible: RUSTCRST

Webbing: STRULD

Game Comic Covers: ALLSIXCC

Movie Viewer: WATCH EM

Character Viewer: CVIEW EM

Storyboard Viewer: CGOSSETT

What If Contest: GBHSRSPM

Ben Reilly Costume: BNREILLY

Symbiote Spider Costume: BLKSPDR

Spider 2099 Costume: TWNTYNDN

Captain Universe Costume: SCOSMIC

Spider Unlimited Costume: PARALLE

Scarlet Spider Costume: LETTERS

Amazing Spider Costume: AMZBGMAN

Peter Parker Costume: MJSSTUD

Quick Change Costume: ALMSTPKR

Unlock J. James Jewett: RULUR

Full Health: DCSTUR

Big Heads: DULUX

Debug Info: LLADNEK

Everything: EELNATS

No Naughty Words: Enter a "naughty" word for a cheat password and Spider-Man will appear next to the word and punch it; turning it into a "nice" word.

Select and press the A button. Seven new options will appear beneath the Gallery option. **Super-Hard Difficulty** Go to the 1 Player mode and choose Challenge. Highlight the Hard difficulty level and hold the Select button. While holding it, press A. S-Hard will appear beneath the Easy option. **Intense Difficulty** Go to the 1 Player mode and choose Challenge. While highlighting the S-Hard difficulty level, hold Select and press the A button. Intense will appear underneath the Normal option.



NEXT MONTH

April 2001

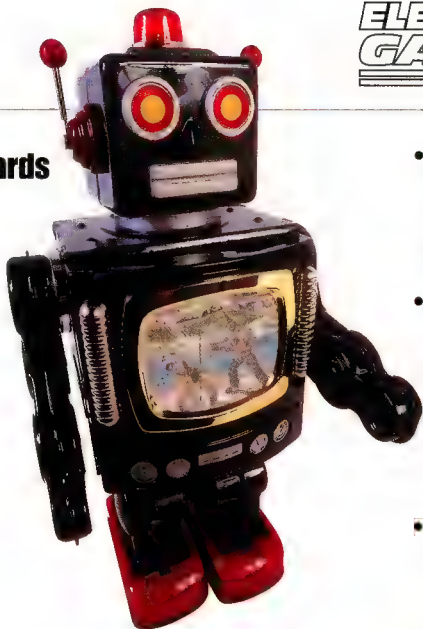
On sale March 6

2000 Gamers' Choice Awards

Yeah, we know we told you last month that we were going to run our 2000 Gamers' Choice Awards feature in this issue, but we've decided to hold off until the April issue so readers will have more time to cast their votes. You'll find your ballot in last month's issue or—better still—vote online at www.zdnet.com/egm. Last year *Soul Calibur* came away with a pile of our coveted robot awards, so what will be the big winner this year? Find out in 30 days.



Cover story: *Gran Turismo 3 A-Spec*—the real reason you bought a PlayStation 2.



ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY

- **Onimusha: Warlords, Knockout Kings 2001, ATV Offroad Fury reviewed on PlayStation 2**
- **Devil May Cry, Resident Evil Code: Veronica X, Crash Bandicoot, Half-Life, Quake 3: Revolution, All-Star Baseball 2001 previewed on PlayStation 2**
- **First screens and details on Final Fantasy X!**

*All editorial content is subject to change.

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation Magazine

March 2001

On sale Feb. 13

EXPERT GAMER

March 2001

On sale Feb. 20

Demo Disc

Playables

- Hot Shots Golf 2
- Disney's Tarzan
- Grind Session
- CTR Crash Team Racing

Non-Playables

- ATV Offroad Fury
- Fear Effect 2
- Soul Reaver 2

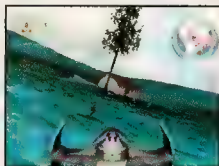
EA Sports

This month, *OPM* takes an inside look at the latest offering from EA Sports Big. It doesn't matter if you're a rabid armchair video game quarterback or just a wannabe—you're going to drool over the future of these extreme sports games. You may even get a glimpse of the sequel to a certain PS2 snowboarding game. Plus, how to play games and shed pounds at the same time. Just what is this mysterious video game diet? You'll have to read the magazine to find out. And if you're having a hard time finding all of those older PS games, don't worry—*OPM* will show you where to look.

Battle for Naboo

If you liked *Rogue Squadron*, then *Star Wars Episode I: Battle for Naboo* is right up your alley. Check *XG* for the skinny on how to attain all the top medals, mission-by-mission. For the fighter fans out there, they'll be covering two over-the-top brawlers. In one corner, Capcom's newest Dreamcast fighter, *Project Justice*...and in this corner, *Ready 2 Rumble Round 2*. Either way, you'll come out a winner with *XG*'s combos and tips. Finally, they'll go into overdrive to deliver a *Bond 007 Racing* strategy. Saweeet.

- **Battle for Naboo medals**
- **Project Justice moves, tactics**
- **R2R2 special moves**
- **Mega Man bonus coverage**
- **International and SegaNet sections**





FINAL WORD

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What if Nintendo Actually Bought Sega?



Crispin Boyer

Crispin: Well, it seems like everybody has debunked that *New York Times* article about Nintendo buying Sega, and I gotta say I'm a little disappointed the story's not true. I mean, think about it: An alliance between Nintendo and Sega—the two best game developers in the world—would be a hardcore gamer's dream come true. We'd get all the awesome Mario and Zelda stuff from Nintendo, sure, but the Sega teams would no doubt influence Nintendo products too. Nintendo would suddenly become known for the more experimental, boundary-pushing games Sega's famous for. Imagine Sonic and Mario starring



Chris Johnston

in game retail back then, telling customers why they were right to love the Genesis and wrong to like the SNES...ahem. Anyway, on the other hand I'd like to see Sega and Nintendo team up. It'd be like two Davids taking on two Goliaths with Sony and Microsoft. Plus, where Sega's been suffering financially it makes me worry my favorite software developer might disappear, and that would be a darned tragedy.

Jonathan: Heck, none of us would be disappointed to see an alliance between the two companies that pretty much defined the entire industry a short decade ago. I think it'd be pretty cool if Sega and Nintendo joined up, then went



Greg Sewart

"Imagine Sonic and Mario starring in the same game. Holy sh_t!"

in the same game. Holy sh_t! It'll never happen, I reckon, even if Nintendo did buy Sega, but it sure is fun to think about.



Jonathan Dudlak

Chris: I'm also disappointed it's not true. Nintendo and Sega are far and away my favorite game pubs—if they combined their efforts, it'd be like forming Voltron's blazing sword, splitting the competition down the middle. Back in the day, this rumor used to be around all the time—I think I heard it at least once a month when I was working in a game store. Back then it didn't make sense, and now it does. Nintendo's gonna have to start up an online business for Gamecube, where Sega has one that could easily be transitioned. Sega's got some of the best game developers in the world under one umbrella and Nintendo's going to need some serious first- and second-party support when the GC launches. In a perfect world, it would happen—two archrivals teaming up against new competition. Just imagine a Super Smash Bros. 2 with Nintendo and Sega characters (Sonic, Alex Kidd, Toejam & Earl, Seaman, Amigo). That'd be sweet.



John Davison

Greg: On the one hand I'm kinda happy since the Sega/Nintendo rivalry goes back so far. How many of us were on one side or another when the battle lines were drawn during the heyday of the Genesis and SNES? It was great to work

back and changed all of our historical records to show that they'd been partners all along, kind of like in 1984. They could erase their past differences, then merge Mario and Sonic into a spiky-blue-haired plumber with a 'tude and no one would be the wiser. Sure, we'd all have to lead bland, restricted lives under the yoke of the new gaming mega-corp, but I think it's a fair trade.

John: It looks like Nintendo is going to rely on its first party stuff with the 'cube more than it ever has before, so teaming up with Sega would be perfect for them. They still haven't really talked about an online service yet, so SegaNet would be perfect for that, too. Is everyone else as surprised as me at how quiet Nintendo has been lately though? Aside from emphatically denying anything and everything about Sega they've gone awful quiet about the 'cube. Is it really going to be 2002 before we see it now? I hear rumors we'll get some big Nintendo news in March, but I want to see stuff now! Sure Advance is going to be huge, but is it really going to be as big as they think? They're making, what, like a bajillion units in the first couple of years? It took 10 years to sell 100 million Game Boys...so unless they're going to give them away in boxes of Cheerios, I have to worry that maybe this Pokémon stuff has frazzled their brains.

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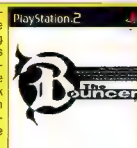
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PlayStation 2

Sony Simulation
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PlayStation 2

EA (Fighter)
Release: NOW
PSX2 **\$48.95**

'KESSON' is the real-time strategy game that will define strategic command as well as fulfill the complete potential of the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system. Players control tens of thousands of troops - including archers, infantry, riflemen, and the powerful Cavalry - and engage them in epic battles from the Warring States period of seventeenth century Japan.



PlayStation 2

EA (Strategy)
Release: NOW
PSX2 **\$49.95**

'TORNEKO: THE LAST HOPE' This RPG-style game features classic gameplay and a game design with monsters and items from the Dragon Warrior series, gamers will feel immediately at home. Randomly generated dungeons in 9 enchanted areas and 132 types of monsters!

Enix (Roleplaying)
Release: NOW
PSX **\$44.95**



PlayStation

'LUNAR 2: ETHERNAL BLUE COMPLETE' Join Hiro & Ruby as they try to unlock the secrets of the Blue Sphere & the strange young girl within it. Meet new characters, fight monsters, climb mountains & crawl through dungeons as you continue your quest to defeat the evil Zophar!

Working Designs (Roleplaying)
Release: NOW
PSX **\$59.95**



PlayStation

'FINAL FANTASY IX' Young bandits are enlisted in the fight against the ruthless queen of Alexandria. Featuring colorful characters, wizards & knights. The crystals from earlier titles are back too! One young band and his entourage must battle their way through many challenges to bring peace to their world.

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PlayStation

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Baldurs Gate	12/00	\$48.95						
Bombberman 2001	12/00	\$48.95						
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Metropolis	11/00	\$46.95
NFL Blitz 2001	11/00	\$44.95
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Tokyo Extreme Race 2	10/00	\$46.95
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DONKEY KONG COUNTRY 2 is an exciting action game starting Donkey Kong and Dixie Kong. Originally released for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System in 1994, this game has been reproduced for the Game Boy Color, along with extra bonuses not found in the original game. **Nintendo (Adventure) Release: NOW Gameboy \$28.95**

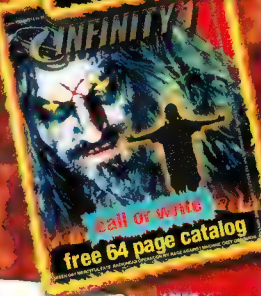
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FIFA Soccer 2001	11/00	\$28.95	Perfect Dark	09/00	\$28.95
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GoalStorm 2	11/00	\$29.95	Pocket GT Racing	11/00	\$28.95
Havard Moon 2	11/00	\$28.95	Pocket Soccer	02/00	\$28.95

TITLE	RELEASE	PRICE	TITLE	RELEASE	PRICE
Aldyn Chronicles	10/00	\$39.95	Indy Racing League 2K	06/00	\$39.95
All Star Baseball 2001	03/00	\$46.95	Jet Force Gemini	10/99	\$45.95
Base 2000	11/00	\$49.95	Kirby 64 Crystal Shards	07/00	\$49.95
Crisis: Exoticia	10/00	\$32.95	Legend Zelda Majora Mask	01/00	\$59.95
Dragon Sword	10/00	\$59.95	Madden NFL 2001	09/00	\$49.95
Demol Derby	02/00	\$22.95	Mario Golf 64	09/99	\$44.95
Excitebike	05/00	\$44.95	Mario Party 2	02/00	\$49.95
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Guardians Legends	09/99	\$49.95	NBA Live 2000	11/99	\$39.95
Havard Moon	12/99	\$59.95	NFL Blitz 2001	09/00	\$49.95
Hey You Pikachu	11/00	\$28.95	Ogn Battle 64	03/00	\$49.95
HEY YOU PIKACHU			Paper Mario Story	03/00	\$49.95
Combines the interaction of a virtual pet and the challenges of a point and click puzzle game. The game comes with a microphone that plugs into your N64 controller so you can talk to P.ichu, earn his trust and become good friends! Pikachu is listening! So get ready to say Hey You, Pikachu!			Perfect Dark	05/00	\$58.95
			Pokemon Puzzle League	09/00	\$49.95
			RayMan 2	10/99	\$52.95
			Resident Evil Zero	10/00	\$52.95
			Ricky Bacci 5	09/00	\$32.95
			Rush 2001	09/00	\$52.95
			SMS Smash Brothers	05/99	\$46.95
			Spider-Man	11/00	\$52.95
			Star Wars Race	05/99	\$26.95
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			WWF No Mercy	11/00	\$52.95
			World is Not Enough	11/00	\$49.95

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Baldur's Gate 2	09/00	\$42.95	Zeus Master of Olympus	11/00	\$39.95
C&D Red Alert 2	11/00	\$44.95	Chk Fight Sim Tokyo USA	10/00	\$99.95
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Delta Force LandWarrior	11/00	\$39.95	Euro Gold Edition	06/00	\$279.95
Deus Ex	04/00	\$33.95	Ever 2 GIGANT PAU	12/00	\$18.95
DeLo 2	02/00	\$42.95	Dmd Monster MX400	03/00	\$89.95
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CONTEST 1 - VIDEO GAMES
 Sony Playstation 2, Sega Dreamcast, PS1, and GameCube. Get all four or trade what you don't want for cash. Options include plenty of games, Xbox, Gameboy Advance, accessories and 36" monitor. Base prize package value \$1400.

CONTEST 2 - COMPUTER
 700 MHz, 128 mb RAM, 27 gig hard drive, 8X DVD-ROM, CD-RW drive, modem and 17" monitor. Options include software and accessories. Base prize package value \$2600.

CONTEST 3 - HOME THEATER
 60" big screen, 100 watt receiver with Dolby Pro Logic Surround Sound, DVD, 200 CD changer, dual tape, Hi-Fi VCR and tower speakers. Options include Satellite TV and camcorder. Base prize package value \$7475.

Make It Happen. All this and more could be yours. In these contests everyone starts out equal. There is no luck involved. You win the prizes by outscoring other players in games of skill. Begin your journey by solving the puzzle below. If you stick it out till the end and have the highest score, you go on a shopping spree and we foot the bill. This first puzzle is easy but it gives you an idea of how the contests work. You will receive full information when you enter. You have been given the opportunity to live your dream. Are you up to it?

Future Puzzles. For each contest you enter, you will receive by mail, four more puzzles at \$2 each and a tie-breaker at \$1. You have three weeks to solve each puzzle. We can not predict the number of entries for each phase. Typically 59% attain the highest score in

phase 1, 47% in phase 2, 39% in phase 3 and 34% in phase 4. The winner will have the highest score after the tie-breaker. Each contest has its own tie-breaker. In the unlikely event that players are still tied, they will split the value of the package they are playing for.

Directions. Follow the directions below to fill in the puzzle. Check the boxes on the entry form to specify the contests you are entering. Add up the entry fees, and send that amount with the entry form to the address below. Remember, you can't win if you don't enter. Only one entry per person. Prize totals are described below puzzle. All entries must be post marked by JULY 25, 2001. ALL ENTRY FEES MUST BE PAID IN U.S. FUNDS ONLY. WE WILL NOT ACCEPT CANADIAN CHECKS.

PRIZE PUZZLE

WORD LIST

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| TOWER - P | LEGAL - Y |
| EARTH - X | EMPTY - V |
| WORLD - U | WATER - T |
| SPACE - W | COAST - A |
| HAPPY - O | FIELD - B |
| SHARE - Z | BLADE - D |

	T				
H	A	P	P	Y	O
	L				
		S			
				L	

SECRET WORD ↓

SECRET WORD CLUE:
 What comes after yesterday but before tomorrow?

DIRECTIONS

Fill in the puzzle with the correct words going across. Transfer each word's corresponding letter to the line at the end. This should spell the secret word going down. HINT: Read the secret word clue.

ENTER ME IN THE FOLLOWING CONTESTS:
 (\$3) Video Game (\$3) Home Theater
 (\$3) Computer (\$5) Enter All Three

102

Name _____

Mailing Address _____ Apartment # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Area Code _____ Phone Number _____

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This puzzle is void where prohibited. Employees of Elation, Inc and its suppliers are ineligible. Judges decisions are final. Where judges are in error the sponsor's liability is limited to the amount of entry fees paid. Elation is not responsible for lost, delayed or stolen mail. Winners will be determined no later than December 01 2001. This contest is open to residents of the U.S. and Canada only. If you are under 18, you must have parents permission to play. © 2000 Elation, Inc.

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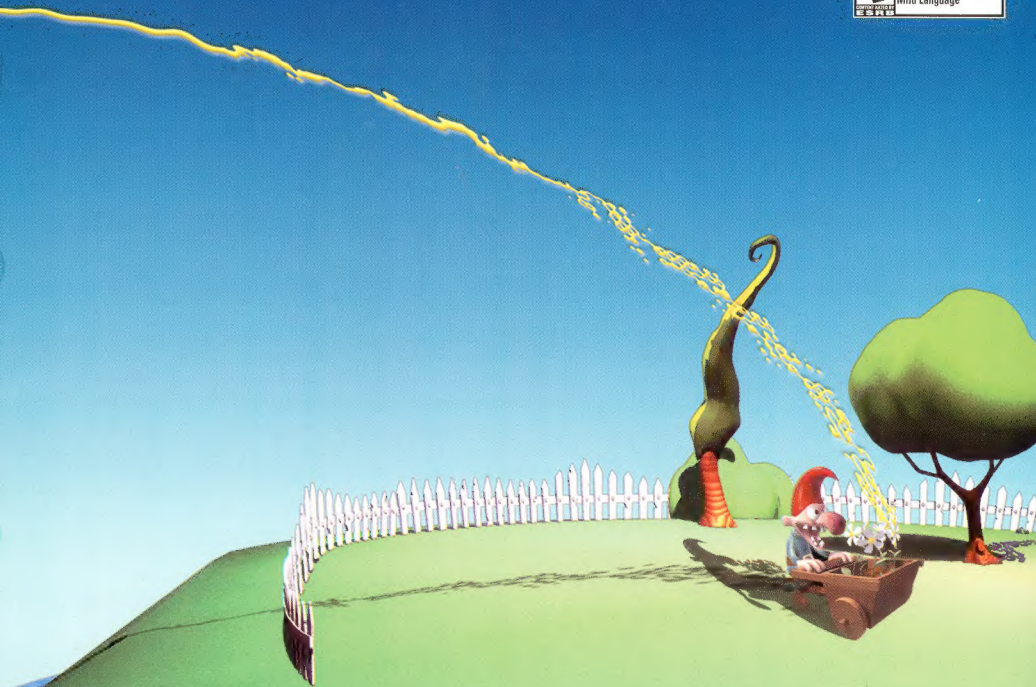
Value of prize packages as follows: Video Game package \$1400 base prize, bonus options \$2350, cash options \$1250. Computer package \$2600 base prize, bonus options \$2850, cash options \$1250. Home theater package \$7475 base prize, bonus options \$6975, cash options \$1250. For any questions e-mail us at elation@uswest.net, or call us at 952-826-0033.

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TEEN
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Spiraling through the Cosmos, five aliens have crashed on our fair planet Earth. Their intent? World domination? Enslave our women? Steal our bodily fluids? No, they'd just like to leave. For they are trapped between the clutches of the evil Dr. Sakarin and his deadly hitman. You must help them fashion solutions from strange and savage surroundings. Arm them with bathroom products, used undergarments, and cow dung to get them home. It's the greatest adventure you and five space idiots could possibly imagine.



STUPID INVADERS



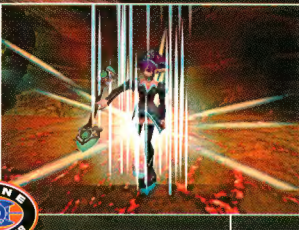
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ONLINE

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