



ZIFF DAVIS

N64 • GameCube • PS one • PS2 • Xbox • Dreamcast • PC

**CONKER'S
BAD FUR DAY**
FULL-PAGE
REVIEW

ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY

EXCLUSIVE

CRASH LANDS ON PS2

**MEET THE NEW
BANDICOOT**
(ACTUAL IN-GAME MODEL)

METAL GEAR SOLID 2:

**HUGE REPORT ON
THIS YEAR'S MOST
IMPORTANT GAME**

METROID FOR THE GAMECUBE:

**"IT WAS LIKE THE EMPEROR
VISITING THE DEATH STAR."
MIYAMOTO CHANGES THE
FATE OF METROID**

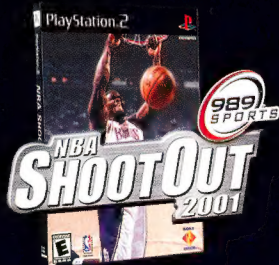
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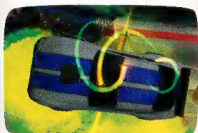
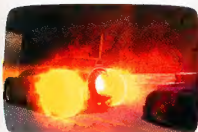
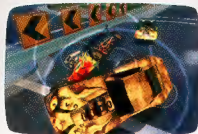
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EDITORIAL

The sacred Crash formula tested

Crash has a new keeper. Sony hasn't been holding his leash for a while, and while Crash Bash was an interesting (if somewhat insignificant) diversion and an indication of what other developers can do with him, it wasn't as important a project as the next "proper" Crash game; a successor to *Washed*. His journey to PS2 seems an obvious one to make, but now that Naughty Dog isn't involved in any way at all, you have to wonder how successful it will be. It's certain that a "true" Sonic game would never be developed by anyone other than Yuji Naka, and that only Miyamoto would ever steer the true fate of Mario...so does

ground, it seems clear to me that he's going to be a feeble competitor for Sonic and Mario when they start to flex their muscles later in the year.

Aside from our cover story this month we have some very interesting news from Nintendo, most notably the shake-up happening around Retro Studios and the fate of *Metroid*. It seems that this popular franchise is causing a lot of trouble in the Mario camp and has been the subject of great debate among gamers for the past month. Log onto any Nintendo chat forum, and word of *Samus*' first-person exploits are being discussed (in a particularly heated manner) by all.

Firm Nintendo news is extremely hard to pin

"It's certain that a 'true' Sonic game would never be developed by anyone other than Yuji Naka, and that only Miyamoto would ever steer the fate of Mario...so does this mean Crash isn't in the same league?"

this mean Crash isn't in the same league? We spent some time with the new developer and tried to get a feel for what they plan to change, and how they will keep him on top of his game. The message seems to be clear...there's a formula for successful Crash games that shouldn't be messed with. And that's either a good thing, or a bad thing depending on your point of view. Will he remain an icon? That remains to be seen...he's still a tremendously recognizable figure, but unless the games advance and break new

down at the moment. We fully expect to get some solid news on things for you in time for next issue—but here are my predictions. This isn't based on any secret knowledge that only I'm privy to, it's just an educated guess based on rumor and gossip. Expect *GameCube* in October, for \$199 and with six games at launch. Expect *Zelda* in summer 2002...and Luigi to be the hot launch game. Talk about sticking my neck out, eh?

John Davison

Contributing Writers

Marc Saltzman

Marc, who wrote our how-to-get-a-job-in-the-game-biz feature a few issues ago, is a freelance journalist for *Playboy*, *USA Today*, *Yahoo!*, *Internet Life* and more than 40 other mags. This month, he scored the Net to profile two of the fiercest opponents you'll face online.



David Kushner

David braved the new frontier of online-console gaming to deliver our in-depth report. He hails from New York City and is a frequent contributor to *Rolling Stone*, *The New York Times* and *Spin*. Oh, and his NFL 2k1 name is CptLntn.



John Ricciardi

After a year of the money, wild parties and fast cars of "dot.com" life, John is now broke and homeless. OK, it's not that bad. He's actually living in Japan now, where his lady resides, and he's back doing what he loves—writing for *EGM*.

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Animated Violence





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Crash Landing Universal Interactive Studios is reddyng Crash Bandicoot's upcoming PS2 installment without the help of Naughty Dog. Mark Cerny of Sony. So will the game be any good? We look at both sides of the issue in our cover story. **Page 82.**



See You Online Thanks to the Dreamcast and SegaNet, online gaming has finally taken hold on the consoles. We examine this revolution, find out if it's really here to stay, and tell you how you can get involved in the growing online community. Log on to **page 92** for the full scoop.



Metal Gear Solid 2: First Hands-On What game showcases just how much the PS2 can do? Metal Gear Solid 2, of course, and there's no other game we've been this excited about in a long time. We've gotten some hands-on time with Solid Snake and pals, and we're here to show you what it's all about. **page 50.**



Z.O.E. Don't let the Metal Gear blowout keep you from noticing our Z.O.E. coverage on **page 58.** This sweet-looking mech shooter is almost as breathtaking as Konami's tactical espionage action.



AOU Arcade Show The Pacific Ocean, despite its best efforts, couldn't keep us from getting the dirt on Japan's AOU arcade expo. Foreign correspondent Yutaka Ohbuchi and Captain John Ricciardi report on the latest games on their way to arcades, including Virtua Fighter 4! **page 22.**

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You've got Nintendo questions, we've got answers. Read what N-Boss George Harrison has to say about the GameCube, N64 and Game Boy Advance, plus the inside scoop on the new Metroid. Also: the first Sonic GBA Shot!

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The PlayStation's most famous mullet returns in four pages of Metal Gear Solid 2 coverage followed by Z.O.E. and Red Faction for PS2.

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So we finally got our hands on Metal Gear Solid 2—what do we think of it? Check out the lively banter on the game everyone's waiting for.

SYSTEM KEY

	Dreamcast
	Nintendo 64
	PlayStation 2
	PlayStation
	Game Boy Color
	Game Boy Advance
	Xbox
	Arcade



Kool DJ Red Alert
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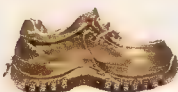
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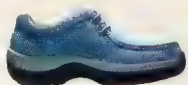
Navy



Black



Gold *not available



Sky Blue

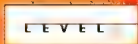
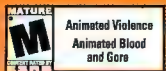
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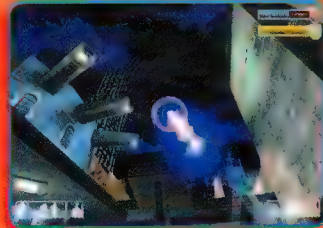
Unreal™ Tournament's fast and furious, online multiplayer experience comes to life on Sega Dreamcast™. Lead your team of virtual teammates against the deadliest gladiators in the galaxy. Mind-blowing realistic 3D graphics. High-octane gameplay. Totally Unreal combat action. Just be sure not to lose your head.



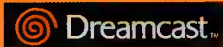
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- Phantasy Star Online letters: 46
- Letters about frozen Game Boys: 1
- Unsolicited game ideas: 635
- Unsolicited game ideas passed on to developers: 0
- Foreign countries heard from: 17
- Letters from Civil War re-enactors: 4

Letters to the Editors

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Students Fear For The Safety Of Their EGMs

Quite a few years ago now, around issue 70, I signed up for an *EGM* subscription. I was skeptical at first, but grew attached to you guys quickly. Now *EGM* is a part of me and my friends' everyday lives. I told

assembly room and didn't tell us anything. We figured it out quickly because they had the State Police with dogs sniffing someone's locker that was making a beeping sound. They didn't let us take anything with us to the assembly room so, naturally, we freaked out. If there was a bomb, OUR EGMs WERE GOING TO EXPLODE! We even thought about trying to sneak out

"...naturally, we freaked out. If there was a bomb, OUR SOWS WERE GOING TO EXPLODE! We even thought about trying to sneak out and get them back."

them all about you guys and they all subscribed too. We carry them around school with us all day waiting for the moment to open up to the article we didn't finish reading and the cover story we went to read again.

Recently, we had a bomb threat at our school. They took us into a large

and get them back. Obviously, it wasn't a bomb or else it would have been all over the news. It was a giant relief to us. Thanks for making such a great magazine.

Vincent Gmerek
VinceMacisBack@aol.com

First of all, we are very glad to hear all turned out OK. Second, no matter how much you love our magazine, we do not recommend, endorse or sponsor running into a potentially hazardous scenario to retrieve your precious issue.

We print lots of them, and you can usually order back issues if one were, to say, get toasted. However, we are flattered that in your hour of need, we were high on your list of priorities. Keep reading, and be careful out there. Oh yeah, what was the beeping sound?

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 120 for official rules.



Tough Little GBC Weathers The Storm

About three months ago, at my grandma's, my brother bent over to pick up a snowball, and in the front pocket of his coat was a Game Boy Color which fell out. It fell into the cold hard snow unseen. My brother found out it was missing after he got home; he just figured it was in grandma's house somewhere. During the following three months bad weather followed. First it warmed up a bit, then the snow all melted. Then it got cold and all the compact snow turned really hard. This cycle occurred a couple of times. One night I walked out of grandma's

house. It was a warmer day, probably in the mid 30s. There was rain pouring down, washing away the rest of the snow. I looked down at the ground and saw the Game Boy; all the time we were looking inside, it was outside. I picked it up, expecting everything in it to be dead, including the Pokémon Gold game inside of it, and turned it on. Everything worked. I played my brother's saved game from three months ago.

Jacob Knoblauch
wimbledongg@excite.com

Very "cool" little story, Jake. Those boys over at Nintendo know how to put 'em together, eh? One question: Did you tell your bro you found it?

"I picked it up, expecting everything in it to be dead, including the Pokémon Gold game inside of it, and turned it on. Everything worked."

Appetite for Expansion

I am not sure if you have figured this out, but as a fan of Guns N' Roses, I realized that the bosses' names in Mega Man X5 are variations of GN'R members' names:

GN'R's Rose: He makes his own gravy.



Photo Reuters

Grizzly Slash-Slash [lead guitarist]
Duff McWhalen-Duff McKagen [bassist]
Squid Adler-Steven Adler [ex-drummer]
Izzy Glow-Izzy Stradlin [rhythm guitarist]
Mattrex-Matt Sorum [drummer]
Axel the Red-Axl Rose [vocalist]
Dark Dizzy-Dizzy Reed [keyboardist]

Do not tell me this is just a coincidence or a figment of my imagination.

Hariram T. Rajah
leathernazi@yahoo.com

Ah, Hariram, alas we are torn. On the one hand, we must commend you for cracking this elaborate code. But on the other tobacco-stained hand, we have to severely reprimand you for freely admitting to still being a Guns N' Roses fan. One must question the judgement of such an admission. It is 2001 after all. Oh well, at least we finally had a reason to run this pic of Axl.

P.S. What's up with your lame-o e-mail nick?

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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!



the previous letter. What will we dream up next year? Hmm...

"Madd Propz" For David

Hello All,
Here is David's recent school picture. 14 years old and looking it!!! He has a size 10 shoe and is taller than I am. OK, so that's not so tall to you, but it's strange looking up to him! HA!

Love Always,
Christine, Charles and David



We're not sure why we were updated on David's height, shoe size or how accurately he is representing his age, but we were updated. So we pass the savings on to you, the consumer. Actually we were probably in David's family computer e-mail address book, unbeknownst to his parents. When they copied the whole list to mass mail to family and friends, we tagged along. Sorry, David, we couldn't resist, but congrats on the shoe size.

Apparently We're Crazy, Laughing And Whacked Out

Hey, have you guys seen the new Taco Bell commercial where they are eating the grilled steak tacos and they call each other names and end up with

SHORTS

This month we're featuring some legit questions instead of the usual silliness...

What the frig happened to Devil Dice 2?!!?

davehenge@hotmail.com

It was released in Japan, but since the first game didn't sell Jack in the U.S., it won't come out here.

Is there ever going to be a Final Fantasy Tactics 2?

Fanboy, toejamzoi@hotmail.com

No word yet on FFT2, but check out Hoshigami on page 74 to hold you over until we hear something.

"Fluffy"? That's kinda what I imagine the EGM environment to be like. Lots of humorous name calling, and some crazy Oriental guys laughing, all whacked out. Take it as a compliment if you wish.

dart533@cs.com

Some of us have seen the commercial, and some of us have not. As of this printing, it was not up on AdCrit.com yet for us to peruse. Although there is this series of undercover robot commercials that are pee-your-pants funny.

However, the environment here is nothing like the commercial you describe. It is, in fact, very humorless, sterile even (fart jokes being the exception). The whole "wacky staff" image is a ruse forced upon us by unscrupulous management types who think it makes us more "relatable" to the "kids," or at least males age 18 to 35 with a median disposable income of \$30,000 in any given fiscal year. We much prefer curling up with a good book and a hot cup of cocoa to bandying about a round of tawdry insults as you suggest. Good day, sir.

Man In Clutches Of "Phantasy" Devil

I am addicted. I can't stop. Phantasy Star Online has me in its clutches. I have been up 'til midnight every night playing this game that some hail as a godsend. I call it the devil. When I am not playing it, I am thinking about it. When I am not thinking about it, I feel a sense of longing. I love this game but at the same time hate it. It is truly amazing. I haven't been hooked on a game like this since Super Mario Bros. for the SNES. The thrill of charging into battle with my buddies excites me anew every time I do it. If you haven't played this game yet, DON'T!!!! STAY AWAY FROM ITS LURING GRASP!!!! SAVE YOURSELF!!

IAmABoyGenius@aol

You speak the truth. Many of the staffers have been struck down by this vile temptress called PSO. You know a game is addictive when the edit staff plans after-hours online rendezvous during deadline. It's a sickness, an itch that can't be scratched.

WINNER

Matt Steele
Georgetown, TX

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



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

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

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

LETTER ART

Brian Seufert
Tampa, FL



Close, but no controller

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

Roland Sabalza
Seattle, WA





DAVE MIRRA

Eleven-time X Games & Gravity Games gold medalist
Dave Mirra, shattering the world record for high
air on the DC Super Ramp in San Diego, California.

**EIGHTEEN-FOOT RAMP.
NINETEEN-FOOT AIR.
ONE WORLD RECORD.**



FEATURED MODEL:
THE TRUTH

MAJOR FEATURES:

- ① WRAPAROUND PAL AB2001 HEEL SUPPORT
- ② SHOCK ABSORBING HEEL AIRBAG
- ③ ACTION LEATHER OR HEAVY DUTY HUBBUCK UPPER
- ④ PROTECTIVE LACE LOOPS AND HIDDEN NYLON LACE LOOPS
- ⑤ HIGH ABRASION STICKY CLEAR RUBBER
- ⑥ TRIPLE-TONE BOTTOM
- ⑦ INTERNAL ELASTIC TONGUE STRAPS FOR STABILITY

LOOK FOR DC SHOES AND DAIR IN THE CIRCUMMALL VIDEO CLIPS



DC SHOES ARE AVAILABLE AT YOUR LOCAL SKATEBOARD SHOP. TO FIND A LOCATION NEAR YOU, SEE THE LATEST NEWS, TEAM INFORMATION AND SHOES, VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT WWW.DCSHOECOUSA.COM

DAVE HYNDMAN PHOTO

MOST WANTED

#1 MOST WANTED PLAYSTATION GAME - OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE'S TOP 10 CHARTS (MARCH 2001)



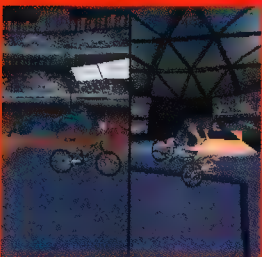
Rule like the king of BMX.
— Mat Hoffman



Put all kinds of trick combos
in 8 levels.



Revolutionary BMX course editor.



Rule like the king of BMX. — Mat Hoffman

The most wanted man in BMX stands up next seven of the most famous riders on the planet to bring you the most wanted PlayStation® game available. Enter Mat Hoffman's world of realistic vert ramps, street courses, dirt tracks and the infamous Hoffman Bikes' Park. You can use the custom course editor to create terrain that is as manic as Mat would want it. You can even move up the ranks in the career mode with hundreds of trick combos and signature pro moves. Finally, you can rip like the most wanted man in BMX. What more could you want?



FEATURING BMX'S TOP PROS:

ESCAMILLA / HOFFMAN / KOWALSKI
MCCOY / NASTAZIO / ROBINSON
TABRON / THORNE

SOUNDTRACK FEATURING:

PENNYWISE
AGENT ORANGE
BAD BRAINS
OUTKAST
JURASSIC 5
& MORE

MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX

FEATURING THE TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER™ GAME ENGINE

...AT PERFORMING HIS NEWEST
TRICK... "THE DEAD END"

IN STORES MAY 2001

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NEVER SET



ACTIVISION



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

Press Start

The Hottest Gaming News on the Planet

VF4 Ushers In Sega's New Era

Sega Gives a Glimpse of its Arcade/PS2 Fighter, and Other News from Japan's AOU Expo

At precisely 11:30 a.m. on Feb. 23, hundreds of anxious industry insiders gathered around the event stage in Sega's booth at Japan's AOU arcade show. Cameramen stood on stools to get a good view, eager press hounds pushed and squeezed their way forward to get closer to the stage, and a foursome of scantly clad J-Pop wannabes at the adjacent booth undoubtedly wondered why nobody was paying any attention to their crude croonings. Why all the fuss? Three words (well, two and a number): Virtua Fighter 4.

Three weeks after Sega dropped the bomb that they'd be going multi-platform and that a PlayStation 2 version of VF4 was in the works, the arcade game was unveiled for the first time at the annual AOU Amusement Expo in Japan. The expo featured entries from all the top coin-op manufacturers in Japan, and served as a showcase for tons of innovative and downright weird new ideas. Despite the absence of highly anticipated titles like Soul Calibur 2 and Tekken 4, the AOU still managed to capture the attention of arcade gamers looking for the next big thing. Just about all of them found it in Sega's Virtua Fighter 4.

While only about two minutes of game footage were shown for VF4, it was enough to leave showgoers itching for more. As you can see in these screens, the characters and especially the backgrounds have been enhanced significantly since VF3, and from what we saw, movement is as fast and smooth as ever. One battle featured a flock of birds flying around in the background, while another took place amidst a big snowstorm—all



without a hint of slowdown. Despite the improvements, the "wow" factor isn't quite what it was when VF3 was first introduced, but nonetheless we came away impressed. Suzuki and Co. revealed plenty of early details about the game.

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4

First off, there will be two new characters in VF4, one male and one female. The female character has yet to be unveiled, but the male

character, currently nameless, was shown to be a bald, Chinese monk who practices a variation of Shaolin fighting known as Rakan Ken. Returning characters confirmed so far include Akira, Aou, Jacky, Jeffrey, Kage, Lau, Lion, Pai, Sarah, Shun Di and Wolf. In addition to the classic outfits from past VF games, each character will sport new alternate costumes.

In terms of gameplay, Virtua Fighter 4 returns to the three-button layout of VF2, ditching the Escape button that was



At the AOU show, Sega showed off their new dog-walking game, *Inu no Osanpo* ("Walk the Dog"), with several hot models dressed in skimpy poodle outfits. These custom-made outfits came fully equipped with wagging tails and a whole lotta skin. Bow wow wow, baby!



introduced in VF3. This time around, however, the game features an eight-way directional stick, which, according to Suzuki, means game control will no longer be limited to a 2D plane (think *Soul Calibur*).

Most interesting of all, VF4 will support network features (Suzuki referred to this as "Virtua Fighter Net"). Using your cell phone, you can plug in and share data over a mobile network. For example, let's say a famous VF master is on a big winning streak at another arcade. You can find him with your cell phone and then head on over to challenge him yourself. In addition, the game will support a yet-to-be-specified storage medium (Suzuki simply called it a "card") which will allow you to save your game data and stats to use on different VF4 machines.

No release date has been announced for the arcade or PS2 versions of VF4. An Xbox version is rumored to be in development, but Sega will neither confirm nor deny these rumors.

ALSO AT SEGA

Sega unveiled several new games at AOU, the most interesting of which was Wow Entertainment's treadmill-based fitness game, *Inu no Osanpo* ("Walk the Dog"). With leash controller in hand and treadmill at feet, the object is to keep pace with your dog and guide him through the neighborhood as he avoids obstacles, chases the local cat and "does his thing" by the curb. Similar to DDR, *Walk the Dog* has a fitness counter that keeps track of calories burned.

Wow also showed *Dynamic Golf*, a trackball-



based 3D golf game; *Super Major League*, a Naomi CD title that uses the WSB 2K1 engine; and *Wild Riders*, an action-packed motorbike getaway game with cell-shaded graphics.

Amusement Vision showed off *Virtua Striker 3*, the latest in their long-running soccer series, and *Monkey Ball*, an odd new action title. In it, players use an analog banana controller (really) to guide a monkey encased in a ball through courses littered with bananas and Marble Madness-style slides and pits.

Also at Sega's booth was *Club Kart: European Session*, a go-kart racing game with

Cont. on page 26



Putting fruit to good use, a young gamer takes Amusement Vision's *Monkey Ball* for a spin. We found it most a-peeling.

SHOW NO-SHOWS

Soul Calibur 2? Tekken 4? Street Fighter Zero 3 Upper? These and other titles were fabled to surface at AOU, but alas, the cupboard was bare. Here's a rundown of what's still coming to arcades (allegedly) but didn't materialize at the expo. Don't give up hope, they may not have shown at AOU, but the soul still burns...

CAPCOM

Resident Evil: Fire Zone
Street Fighter Zero 3 Upper
Mobile Suit Gundam

Not a huge deal game-wise, but it was surprising not to see one of the biggest arcade-game creators totally non-represented at the show, with the exception of their joint venture with Banpresto (see next page).

SEGA

House of the Dead 3
F355 Challenge
Sega/Square Action-RPG

Sega's Tetsu Kayama promised the unveiling of Sega and Square's joint RPG adventure at AOU, but it never happened. F355 was also on the docket but got axed for the show, apparently.

NAMCO

Soul Calibur 2
Tekken 4

Soul Call 2 is on everyone's mind, and with two years passed since the original, who can blame 'em? Neither of these high-profile brawlers were shown at the expo, sadly.





PRESS
START

a full-size kart seat as part of the cabinet. The game features a Card System that allows players to save their game progress as well as custom driver and car information.

NAMCO

With **Soul Calibur 2** nowhere to be seen, Namco's focus was on **Vampire Night**, their PS2-based System 246 arcade light-gun shooter developed by Sega's Wow Entertainment (Wow developed Sega's House of the Dead games). Vampire Night is basically House of the Dead 2 on steroids, with much improved graphics, more plot diversion and vampires instead of zombies.

Namco also showed off four other titles: **Mr. Driller G** ("Great"), an enhanced version of Mr. Driller 2 with six different characters, new items and two new modes; **Photo Battle**, a "camera battle game" with 24 different picture-snapping mini-games (our favorite involved getting "panty shots" while a bunch of girls in skirts stood on top of a wind vent); **Master of Taiko**, a DrumMania clone with Japanese taiko drums; and **GaHaHa**, a collection of mini-games that are played with two analog sticks.

KONAMI

As usual, Konami's booth was littered with Bemani games. To list every one would take about three pages, but highlights included **Dance Dance Revolution 5th Mix**, **Guitar Freaks 5th Mix**, **DrumMania 4th Mix** and **Keyboard Mania 3rd Mix**, the latter three of which can now be linked together for multi-session play. The big K also unveiled **Mambo a GoGo**, a conga game with themes (and some songs) ripped from Samba de Amigo.

The two titles Konami hyped the most were



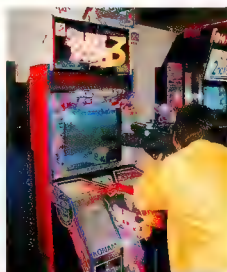
Football Masters, with its misleading title and all.



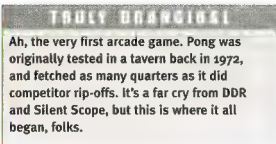
Hopefully **Mocap Boxing** works better than the Sega Activator.



Winning those stuffed arcade prizes was never so elaborate.



Silent Scope 3, one of Konami's few non-musical titles.



TRULY ORIGINAL
Ah, the very first arcade game. Pong was originally tested in a tavern back in 1972, and fetched as many quarters as it did competitor rip-offs. It's a far cry from DDR and Silent Scope, but this is where it all began, folks.

Mocap Boxing and **Monster Gate**. Mocap Boxing uses motion capture sensors to track your movement—when you move, the screen moves with you—making for a realistic boxing experience. Monster Gate is a Torneko-like dungeon-crawling RPG with a unique card system. By purchasing an Entry Card for 300 yen, you can create your own character and then attempt to conquer any of the game's many dungeons. Doing so will make you the dungeon champion—until someone else comes along and tops you, that is—and earns you medals for use in other Konami machines.

Elsewhere in Konami-land, we saw **Silent Scope 3**, with an improved rifle, enhanced graphics and more action stages; **Private Shot**, another camera-shooting game, this one starring Japanese "super idols" and J-Pop stars; **Muscle Ranking: Football Masters**, a stand-up soccer game based on a popular Japanese TV game show, where you kick a real ball on a string into the screen; and new updates of **GunMania (GunMania: Zone Plus)** and **Thrill Drive (Thrill Drive 2)**.

THE REST

Other AOU highlights included Banpresto

and Capcom's **Mobile Suit Gundam: Federation vs. Zion**, a Virtual-On-like two-on-two mech fighting game that takes place in the Gundam universe. Aruze, the pachinko giant that gobbled up SNK, showed **Sengoku Denshou 2001** and **Nightmare in the Dark**, two games that, while fun, could've easily been released to years ago. To add insult to injury, the only new franchise title on display was **Samurai Shodown 5**—a slot machine with SamSho characters, proving once again that absolutely nothing's sacred. ☠

-John Ricciardi and Yutaka Ohbuchi



A more tangible, possibly satisfying version of the arcade boxing game.



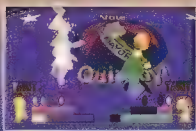
Real life too boring to photograph? Fear not, **Private Shot** has you covered.

Unleash Homer's "NUCLEAR BODY PLANT!"

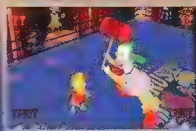
IN
STORES
NOW



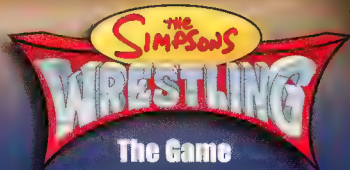
Dominates the King Simpson-Shike
Fight as over a dozen of your favorite characters, including Homer, Krusty, Bart and Apu!



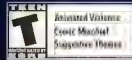
Me-Hello-Marrard, He-Hello-Marrard Action
Unleash exclusive character moves and "syrnack talk" voiceovers done by actors from the show.



Smack 'Em Down All Over Time
Battle in 10 locations all over 8-D Springfield - from the Power Plant to the Kwik-E-Mart!



**The Game
the Whole Family
Will Fight Over.**



ACTIVISION

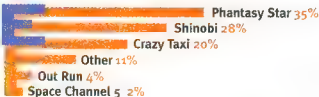


PRESS
START

GAME BOY ADVANCE

Source: Gamespot poll 3-01-2001

Which of the following Sega series do you most want to see come to the Game Boy Advance?



Don't Count Nintendo Out



If there's one thing we learned from the last two generations of machines, it's that Nintendo is full of surprises. Even with hardware limitations and the cartridge format, they've been a formidable force in the industry.

Nintendo's George Harrison. *We won't know their exact plans for the rest of 2001 until E3, but EGM spoke with George Harrison, Nintendo's Vice President of Marketing and Corporate Communications, to get a glimpse of what we can expect.*

EGM: Sega said at the end of January when they made their big announcement that hardware isn't where the money is, and that it's becoming increasingly difficult to make a hardware platform successful. You're introducing two hardware platforms this year. That's got to be a huge undertaking, isn't it?

George Harrison: Yeah it is. I don't know if we've ever introduced two hardware platforms in a year before. The first one out of the blocks, Game Boy Advance (GBA); we're building on strength. Normally we'd be launching a new hardware system when the old one's declining in sales and popularity, like the consoles normally are. In the case of GBA, we're launching with a huge strength. Game Boy Color was very successful in 2000. Between 1999 and 2000 we sold almost 15 million hardware units of Game Boy. For us, that's critical and it's the first step in what we call a one-two punch. It's critical for us because Game Boy represents more than 50% of our business right now and we've got to protect it. We're not taking anything for granted even though we've got a 99% market share. We also believe that GBA can be a Trojan Horse to get people excited and

knowledgeable about GameCUBE (GC). Everybody who buys a GBA is a potential future customer for GC. We'll be giving them information and talking about how those systems have the capability to link, share gameplay and data exchange.

EGM: Sega's move to software-only makes them one of the first old-school companies to leave hardware. Is there a point where Nintendo would make the same decision?

GH: I don't think it's likely. The only reason that we're in the hardware business is that we believe we can do a better job of delivering machines that are gamer- and developer-friendly. Short of marketplace rejection, there's no reason that we would not be in the hardware business.

EGM: Now that the June date has been decided for GBA has anything changed in regards to GC?

GH: No, the plan for GC is still summer in Japan and then fall in the U.S. We're still going to go as early as we can in the fall.

EGM: Nintendo has never launched a hardware platform head-to-head against another system (in this case, Microsoft with the Xbox). What are you anticipating the market to be like when that happens?

GH: There's no doubt there's going to be a battle of titans in the fall. Everyone sort of presumed that Sony would have a great headstart with PlayStation 2, but they haven't really capitalized on that lead at this point. The real deciding factor is going to be unique software—what software can you only get on what hardware system. In the case of GC, we believe we've got the strongest lineup of exclusive software. Not only from our own internal development, but from all the time and investments we've made in second-party developers like Rare and others. As we look at



"The only reason we're in the hardware business is that we believe we can do a better job of delivering machines that are gamer- and developer-friendly."

Microsoft, they have great technical specs and a lot of financial wherewithal, but they don't have a lot of great exclusive product.

EGM: Speaking of Sony and their troubles with PS2, is there anything that you learned from their mistakes, that you don't plan to repeat?

GH: First thing is to make sure you've got adequate hardware—a challenge in the startup of the production of a new chipset. The other part of that is to make sure that your marketing plans are in sync with what's possible. We expect to have a big pre-sell campaign for GC and get consumers very excited, but we don't want to disappoint them. We don't want more people signing up and reserving product than we can deliver in the



"...Game Boy Advance can be a Trojan Horse to get people excited and knowledgeable about GameCUBE."

Last month we reviewed InterAct's new Mobile Monitor for the PS one. Right after going to print we discovered they had re-launched the product with a new, rectangular screen. This new screen is great, with an excellent sound system and lots of on-screen picture tuning options. On our review scale, we'd give this new screen an 8.0 (instead of a 6.5). Be careful, though. The box still has a picture of the old, crappy Mobile Monitor, not the cool new one, so open it up and check before you buy.



first 30 days or so of the launch.

EGM: What's the future of N64 after GC comes out? Will it fall flat?

GH: It certainly won't be immediate. I think it'll sort of seek its own course, we'll just try to manage it closely and see. We were able to sell several million units of Super NES after the launch of N64. We did that by lowering the hardware price to \$49. We don't know if that's desirable or possible in this case with N64.

EGM: N64 games have been coming out on a one-title-per-month basis. Is that going to continue?

GH: We hope so. We haven't really finalized the lineup from May forward. I think it'll be April before we announce anything for the summer, and until E3 before we announce the second half. But, like everyone else, we have development resources to allocate between GBA, GC and N64. So we're going to have to get real creative to keep the flow of new titles coming for N64.

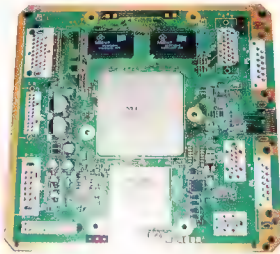
EGM: Are there any specific N64 titles you can mention that are past the release of Mario Party 3 in May?

GH: No.

EGM: Is there any chance the GC's specs will get beefed up now that Xbox seems to be more powerful?

GH: At this point, I would say the answer is no. Partly because from when you finalize the design of your chip, it takes a substantial amount of time to manufacture it. We're kind of curious that Microsoft says they're still tinkering with the design of their chip. At some point, you've got to take it out and try to produce it, and that takes time. Which leads to the rumors of are they or aren't they going to make it. In terms of technology by itself, we

The final GameCube motherboard.



believe that you're starting to reach a point of diminishing returns. Graphic quality is getting to be so perfect in this generation of machines that the edge is not necessarily going to be gained by having a small technological advantage. The edge is going to be gained by having a great game of some kind. Pokémon Silver, Pokémon Gold, Pokémon Yellow—these are 8-Bit games with fairly crude graphics. Just great graphics are not going to necessarily win the day.

EGM: We've heard a rumor that Nintendo is trying to keep GC priced really affordably—with \$149 as a possible price. What's your feeling on that?

GH: I can't comment on that price point in particular. But certainly, it's our goal to make it a dedicated game machine. Not only to keep the retail price as attractive as possible, but also because we don't believe the multi-functional aspects of these machines actually helps. One of the problems Sony has had is it tried to create a machine which had more than one function. As a result, you see developers struggling to make good games for the system. We think the same thing is a potential risk for Xbox.

EGM: Are there any examples of developers who sat out during the N64 days that are coming back for GC?

GH: I think you can look at most of the third parties. Clearly the N64 financial model with cartridges was not attractive. It was hard for them to feel like that was a really attractive economic model that they could make money on. As a result of that, we had tepid support. Did we have EA games? Absolutely. Was it a priority for them? No, not at all. But we believe that we have an attractive machine now that'll be developer-friendly. And the playing field

has been economically leveled with the digital disc (\$39-49 MSRP for GC games at launch), so have the cost of goods, the retail pricing, the inventory issues.

EGM: Are games like Dinosaur Planet and Eternal Darkness still coming for N64? Or have those changed at all?

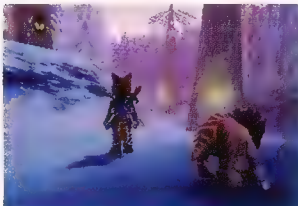
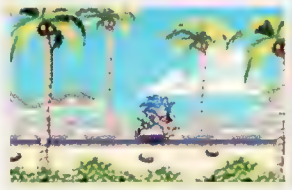
GH: They're still in development. I guess we won't really know until E3 where they're going to show up. They're exciting games, but they're games that were also very large. That causes a challenge with Nintendo 64 in terms of a reasonably priced cartridge. So I think we'll just have to wait until E3 to see.

EGM: Have you heard of projects that have started on N64 and been changed to GC?

GH: I think some of them have. I couldn't tell you any specific ones—or at least, I'm not allowed to tell you the specific ones. But it takes quite a while to develop a great game. As many amazing titles as have come for N64, they've always been a challenge to try to compress it down to get it onto a cartridge and have it reasonably priced. So, we know that the developers are looking forward to the freedom to do what they need to by having that capacity of the digital disc. 🐉

Game Boy Advance Moved Up, Launch Titles Announced

Just before we went to press, Nintendo announced that GBA will launch in the U.S. on **June 11** for an MSRP of **\$99.95**. Two Nintendo titles will accompany the launch—**F-Zero: Maximum Velocity** and **Mario Advance**. Games will be priced between **\$29.99-39.99**. Launch titles from third parties include Army Men Advance (3DO), Piffal (Majesco), Dodge Ball Advance (Atlus), ChuChu Rocket (Sega), Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 (Activision) and Rayman (Ubi Soft). Sonic Team also released the first screenshot of their first game for GBA, Sonic the Hedgehog Advance (below).



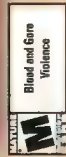
Rare's *Dinosaur Planet* (above) and Silicon Knights' *Eternal Darkness*, once Nintendo 64 titles, could be moving to GameCube.

山 登 母 中 作 吼 三

山 登 母 中 作 吼 三

On the field of battle, the warrior should wield his weapons as unthinking revengeful ghosts seeking those lives that oppose him.

When descending upon your enemy, run as the rabbit, not as the fox. For the fox runs for his dinner, while the rabbit runs for his life.



PlayStation®2



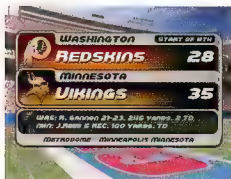
CAPCOM
capcom.com

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PLAYSTATION 2



PRESS
START



TAP TACTIC
This is probably the first and only time you'll see a screenshot from NFL Football 2002, which was a GameCube launch game in development by Retro Studios. Unless the game gets taken out of its permanent holding pattern, this is the last you'll see of it.

Saving Samus

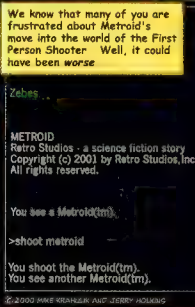
The Murky History of Retro Studios' GameCube *Metroid*

Samus Aran might have been able to survive hordes of aliens and oversized brains, but her most dangerous challenge may be getting to the GameCube in one piece. Reports from sources inside and outside of Retro Studios shine a troubling light on the project that raised eyebrows last summer when Nintendo decided to have their Japanese-born franchise continued by the unproven American start-up developer.

Conceived as a Nintendo second-party, like Rare, Retro immediately began work on its first titles in 1999. One of them was described to us as an "adventure game starring three female leads," according to a reliable source. This early project, which would eventually become *Metroid*, faced an uphill battle from the beginning, with setbacks caused by a subpar game engine created for Retro's four games. This engine "had to be rewritten from scratch as the game progressed and development was further hampered by inadequate development kits." To speed up development so that the game would be ready for the GameCube's launch, Nintendo asked that it be redesigned as a first-person game since third-person games are typically harder to fine-tune. Retro's designers fought the change, but lost.

Enter *Metroid*

Months after the game was up and running as a first-person game, Shigeru Miyamoto visited the Austin, TX-based Retro during April 2000. "It was like the Emperor visiting the Death Star," said our source, who then added, "He didn't seem to like any of the games very much, especially the racing title, which was probably our best-looking." Miyamoto spent most of his time with the action-adventure game, and "the impression was that he wasn't too thrilled. Nintendo would come down about three times a year and rip on most of the games, except football, which was under the radar." Then, weeks before *SpaceWorld* in August, Nintendo



decided to crown Retro Studios with the *Metroid* license and the action-adventure game was transformed. "They wanted to make a splash," commented a former Retro employee. "We had some *Metroid* fans in the office who were both thrilled and scared. Retro realized it was a great license, but we were also worried about the backlash from making it a first-person adventure game. We didn't want to be known as the studio that ruined *Metroid*," said our source.

SpaceWorld was right around the corner, and Retro scrambled. "It was crazy because Nintendo wanted a bunch of movies showing *Metroid* off," said a source close to the project. "Retro scrambled to come up with *Samus* running down a hallway—it was created very quickly. Just a movie, no gameplay." With all of these distractions, technical hurdles and redesigns, the first-person *Metroid* fell behind. "I doubt it will be out by the system launch," says our source, "even if GameCube is pushed way back." Apparently, Retro agreed and they took action.

Sacrificial Lambs

In January, two of Retro's games were put on "permanent hold", thus freeing up resources for *Metroid*: *Thunder Rally*, a Carmageddon-style racing game that "looked cool," according to our source, "but lacked substance, though it could have been a great online game if Nintendo knew what they wanted to do with it." The other was tentatively named *NFL Football 2002*, and was an action-oriented game that "Nintendo never seemed serious about." With franchises such as *Madden* and *NFL Quarterback Club* slated to

appear on the GC and the possibility of *NFL 2k2* appearing because of Sega's emergence as a third party, the market for *Football 2002* had diminished. "It definitely had promise," said someone close to the project. "The game was coming together and was finally on track." Many of the staff from football and *Thunder Rally* were reassigned to *Metroid* and Retro's other project, an RPG with "typical Dungeons & Dragons stuff that wasn't looking very good," said our source. "The CEO (Jeff Spandenberg), is a big RPG fan, so that's one reason why that survived. The car game was in better shape and made more sense market-wise."

But it's not all bad news. There's still plenty time for the projects to improve, and when asked about the situation, Nintendo reaffirmed their commitment behind the studio, and one of Retro's ex-employees had glowing comments about the reassigned people. "Some of the artists and programmers moved over were really good and should be able to help both projects quite a bit," said our source. "And they know that they're being watched and that *Metroid* has a huge following." Nintendo is well aware of it too. In an interview with *EGM*, Nintendo Marketing Vice President George Harrison mentioned that "(*Metroid*) will have to go through Nintendo's stringent 'Mario Club' testers before it hits the market" and added, "it will not be released until it's as good as it needs to be." Retro Studios refused comment.

With the project's newfound reinforcements, and a little luck, there's still hope that *Metroid* can meet fans' lofty expectations, despite the bumpy road Retro has traveled thus far. "I think maybe [Retro] is an untested studio, but not untested individuals," said Harrison. "The track record of some of the people in the studio is very attractive to us." And now *Samus* will put that very record to the test. —*Kraig Kujawa*

"...we were also worried about the backlash from making *Metroid* a first-person adventure game. We didn't want to be known as the studio that ruined *Metroid*."

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PRESS
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DEVELOPER PROFILE

Melbourne House

Developer Profile: Melbourne House
Year founded: 1980
Location: Melbourne, Australia
Web site: www.melbournehouse.com
of people: 100

INFOGRAMES
Melbourne House



Previous games: The Hobbit (C64), Way of the Exploding Fist (C64), Usagi Yojimbo (C64), Star Wars (NES), Hunt For Red October (GB), Shadowrun (SNES), True Lies (SNES), KKND (PC), Dethkarz (PC), GP500 (PC), Looney Tunes: Space Race (DC), Test Drive Le Mans (DC).

Current project(s): Le Mans 24 Hours (PS2), and a few other things...

During late-night programming sessions we: Often head down to 7-11 for slurpees.

Our favorite game to play in the office (not by us) is: Counterstrike, Quake II, Virtua Fighter 2.

Favorite snack food(s): Either pizza or Nandos chicken burgers.

Music that inspires us around the office: Everyone likes different stuff, so we have Herbie Hancock and Moby battling it out with Rancid and Bolt Thrower.

Story behind our name: Hmm, we're in Melbourne, and we're a software development group...seriously though, we were originally called Beam Software and our publishing arm was Melbourne House. We were Beam Software for almost 20 years until we became part of the Infogrames group, at which point we were renamed Melbourne House.

Want to cover any other racing genres? How many Formula 1 or rally games do we really need? The beauty of sportscar racing is that there are huge differences in the characteristics of cars that compete in races. You have your massively powerful prototypes racing against Vipers and 911s. With our current technology we could do a great GT-style game in terms of car collection and tuning of the game.



CINEMWARE ON CONSOLE

- NES: Defender of the Crown, The Three Stooges, Rocket Ranger
- SUPER NES: Wings 2: Aces High (this was done by Acme Interactive, founded by Cinemaware veterans.)
- NEC TurboGrafx 16: Lords of the Rising Sun, TV Sports Football, TV Sports Hockey, It Came from the Desert.
- Philips CDI: Lords of the Rising Sun, Defender of the Crown
- Genesis: It Came from the Desert (this was a REALLY bad port [they made a shooter!] developed by EA—horrible!)

Cinema-who?

Cinemaware rises from the ashes



Feel that modern games lack the passion of yesteryear? Then you may have something in common with Lars Batista and Sean Vesce. These two accomplished designers (MechWarrior 2, Interstate '76) decided to take matters into their own hands and bring retro-gaming to the next level--by raising an entire company from the dead.

"At one point I was getting so frustrated with the direction that the industry was taking that I realized there weren't any companies I wanted to give my blood and sweat to," Batista told us. So instead, he and Sean left their jobs to resurrect one. "We always believed that Cinemaware, as our favorite games developer, had died too soon (1991). The new platforms coming into the market (PS2, Xbox) gave us a good opportunity to show off what these games were all about."

So in late 1999, after the rights and licenses to its 11 titles were obtained, Cinemaware was reborn in Burlingame, Calif., with Batista as

CEO. With only 10 employees on its payroll, this developer is as grassroots as it gets. The staff is small, but they've got additional help from two members of the original Cinemaware team, hired as consultants "in order to make sure we are following the right footsteps," according to Batista.

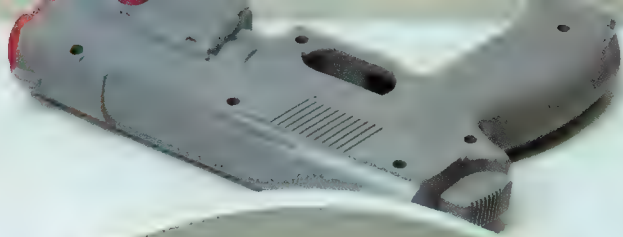
Their flagship title, Defender of the Crown, is fitting as it was the game that put the original company on the map. By bringing it to Xbox and PS2, they hope to avoid the fatal mistake that a decade ago doomed their predecessor, which put its product on niche platforms such as the Amiga and the TurboGrafx-16. Now they will "be able to realize many of the things that were only dreamt about back then," Batista surmised. A remake of The Three Stooges, a comedy-driven action game, is also well under way for the GBC and GBA, as is Wings, a World War II action-flight title for the GBA. Both of them have been upgraded over their Amiga predecessors, and it's a novelty to see a game once heralded as state-of-the-art now running seamlessly on a handheld.

Since announcing their first game in November of last year, Cinemaware's Web site has logged over 4.5 million hits, and 11,000 users have signed up to play free Java mock-ups of their classics and access their archives. This groundswell of support hasn't gone unnoticed. "We are definitely aware of the expectations," says Batista. "We know this is a big challenge, because in essence we are competing with people's fond memories of these games, and that is a tall order."

—Kraig Kujawa



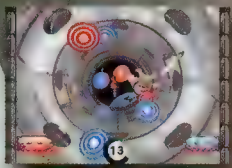
Cinemaware's first title in a decade will be Defender of the Crown for Xbox and PS2.



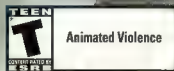
AIM IS EVERYTHING.

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MGS2: UNKNOWN OPERATIVES

McFarlane Toys couldn't show us all of their planned figures for Metal Gear Solid 2, but they did show silhouettes of two figures, known only as "operatives." Their identities will be revealed closer to the game's release.

Now You're Playing With Plastic

If you're a hardcore gamer, chances are you also like to play with dolls—or "action figures," sorry. At the International Toy Fair 2001, we caught a look at some of the polygon heroes and villains you'll soon be seeing soon:

Bandai

Bandai's lineup of Final Fantasy figures will continue this year, not only with the FFX figures that are already in stores but with FFX figures too. They had prototype figures for Tidus (with his water sword) and Yuna, which will be available simultaneously with the game's release. The company's also doing a full line of figures and vehicles for Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within, which hits theaters July 13.

Palisades Marketing

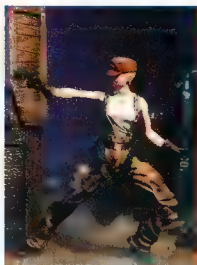
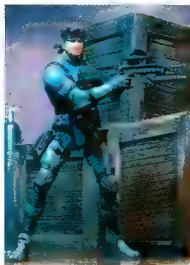
Already available are Palisades' House of the Dead (series two on the way) and Mortal Kombat figures (and they're looking nice). Out soon will be Space Channel 5 figures of Ulala, Pudding, Space Dancin' Ulala and Evila. They've also got 12-inch action figures, vinyl and resin statues of Resident Evil series characters like Claire Redfield, Leon S. Kennedy, Nemesis and the various zombies from the games. Twelve-inch figures, mini-resin busts and resin statues of characters from Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within are also scheduled to hit the market around the time of the film's release. Final Fantasy IX



Bandai's Final Fantasy Movie figures.



The many faces of Lara Croft, based on the summer blockbuster movie, from Playmates.



Solid Snake, Revolver Ocelot and Olga MGS2 figures are coming from McFarlane Toys.

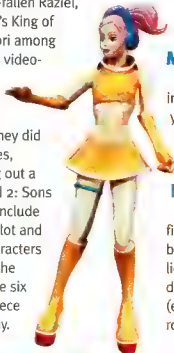
characters will be available in Vinyl statue form later this year as well. For more info, visit www.palisadestoy.com.

Blue Box Toys

Characters from Sony's Dark Cloud, Devil King and I, Eidos' Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver (including figures of a pre-fallen Raziel, Raziel and Kain), and SNK's King of Fighters 2001 (Mai, Kyo, Iori among them) make up Blue Box's video-game toy lineup.

McFarlane Toys

After the excellent job they did with the first game's figures, McFarlane Toys is bringing out a series for Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty. The six figures include Solid Snake, Revolver Ocelot and Olga. Three additional characters will be revealed closer to the game's release. Each of the six figures will come with a piece of a smaller Metal Gear Ray.




ReSaurus

A third series of Street Fighter II figures will head to stores in the second half of this year, including Guile, Dan, Ibuki, M. Bison and Dhalsim. The fourth series will follow, with the new versions of Ryu & Ken based on Third Strike. Tenth Anniversary Sonic the Hedgehog and Sonic Adventure 2 figures will be released around the same time.

Manley Toy Quest

Manley has a Ready 2 Rumble Round 2 interactive boxing ring ready to go for later this year. It's similar to Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robots, but you use a boxing glove to wirelessly control your fighter's actions.

Playmates

In addition to all their great new Simpsons figures (and wow are there a lot of those to go broke on), Playmates nabbed the action figure license for *Tomb Raider The Movie*. At least four different styles of Lara Croft will be available (each with an arsenal of weapons), along with robot and Mayan statue enemies. 



How are you gentlemen! All your base are belong to us! You are on the way to destruction! You have no chance to survive make your time! Ha ha ha ha!
<http://www.overclocked.org/zerowing.mov>



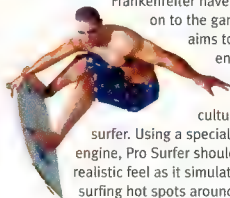
First Online RPG for Xbox

Chicago-based Epix Interactive is developing a massively multiplayer online RPG for the Xbox entitled Fate. "Since it's a fairly new genre to console gamers, we're definitely keeping their needs and expectations in mind," says lead designer Jeremiah Slaczk. Epix added that Fate will feature several mini-games in addition to its primary adventure, and is currently slated for a late 2002 release.



Activision to Release Pro Surfing Title

Eight surfing pros have been enlisted to appear in Activision's Q4 PS2 release, Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer. Lisa Andersen, Tom Carroll, Tom Curren, Nathan Fletcher, Bruce Irons, Rob Machado, Kalani Robb and Donovan Frankenreiter have all signed on to the game, which aims to encapsulate the look, styles and culture of each surfer. Using a specialized wave engine, Pro Surfer should maintain a realistic feel as it simulates several surfing hot spots around the globe.



Flex Backs MTV Music Generator 2.0

Codemasters has signed renowned DJ Funkmaster Flex to endorse their first PS2 installment of Music Generator. "It's exciting to be part of something where everyone can make hot, studio-quality tracks," Flex says. Flex is probably best known for his work as a DJ on MTV, but has worn many different hats in the hip-hop community to date, including producing records and running his own label. MTV Music Generator 2.0 comes to stores in April.

Survivor on PS2

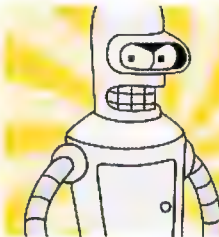
Reports that a Survivor game for the PS2 and possibly other next-generation consoles have surfaced this month. Though we can only guess who'll be stepping up to release the game at this point, those of you familiar with the board game (that's all of you, right?) should expect it to play something like that. The only question that remains is, for the love of God, why?



Pack up your stuff, Infogrames is inviting you to become a Survivor on PS2.

Acclaim Does Sega for UK

Acclaim has not yet confirmed their porting Crazy Taxi and 18 Wheeler to PS2 for the U.S., but a spokesperson did confirm the two titles for the European market. We imagine an announcement for the U.S. release is just around the corner.

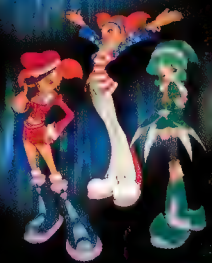


Sega Toys to Make Robotic Humanoid

Perhaps taking a cue from the popularity of the Robotic Dog, Sega Toys Ltd. will begin making humanoid versions in Japan come this May. Three models, the M-Bot, C-Bot and W-Bot, will range in price from 1900-4000 yen, and stand less than a foot tall. Similar to Sega's recent robotic wonder dog "Poo-chi," these bots will have a limited range of motion, from simple limb movements to walking and dancing. They'll be able to show facial expressions and display messages on an LCD, as well. Sega Toys hopes to move a total of 1.5 million units by the holidays, and if the Furby taught us anything, it's more than likely.



Music Anime Dance



03 | 2001



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PlayStation 2



PRESS
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"I am a lawyer who represents the parents of the three girls shot and killed in Paducah Kentucky by a video gamer trained to kill efficiently by the hyperviolent games he played."

—Attorney Jack Thompson, from Brill's Content

WELKRY AND ULTRAVIOLENCE
Apparently the military is missing out on some great, inexpensive training for its troops. It's a sad day when an individual can make a painfully far-fetched statement like this, conjure a case around it, and watch it get accepted by a public who prefers an arbitrary scapegoat to the reality that they've done a poor job of raising their own children. Take heart, gamers, and ponder this instead: http://www.theonion.com/onion3707/video_game_violence.html

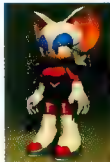
Quartermann - Game Gossip & Speculation

Welcome to my nightmare, gossip-hounds! As yours truly puts fingers to keyboard, we're but days away from the Game Boy Advance launch in Japan. Can you smell that? It's smoke, cuz this baby's red hot!

...*Soul Calibur 2* wasn't at the recent AOU Show in Tokyo, but rest assured friends, it is on its way. We may start seeing the first information on it this fall, followed by a Japanese release in the arcades 'round wintertime, and finally, a PS2 version. It's been too long since The Q has gotten his Soul Cali on...Speaking of arcade troubles, *Midway's* just shut down their arcade business, moving existing teams to next-generation console games. It goes without saying then that *Mortal Kombat 5* will never hit arcades. Fatality! *Twisted Metal Black for PS one* is more of a "kiddie" title with superdeformed racers...cool!

...We've already seen *Shadow*, the new "dark Sonic" from Sonic Adventure 2. But here's a spy picture I was able to smuggle out of

Gotham of a female bat that will show up in the game, aptly named **Rouge** (at right)...

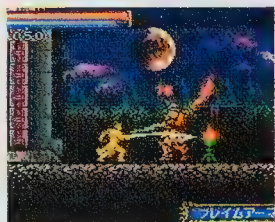


...Sony's got a new *Warhawk* game for PS2 coming...Come on beybee!...Also coming very soon from Sony is a futuristic bike racing title called **Kinetica...Pokémon Online?** That'd be a surefire way to sneak GameCube into the homes of unsuspecting GBA owners, don't you think? Thought so. Speaking of *GameCube*, word is **Rare's** at work on about a half dozen projects for GC right now. Add to the roster two new additions—**Conker's Other Bad Day** and **Grabbed by the Ghoules...**Ghoules another "adult" game? In England, ghoules is another word for the "berries" as in "twig and berries." As in...oh my.

Hmm, this was a short month. Remember to send all your love, hate and rumors to quartermann@ziffdavis.com —see ya!

IMPORT CALENDAR

Dracula: Circle of the Moon



Import Pick of the Month: Konami's latest Castlevania series game, **Akumajou Dracula: Circle of the Moon** for Game Boy Advance.

PlayStation

- 3/29 Beatmania: The Sound of Tokyo, Konami (Music)
- 3/29 Ganbare Goemon, Konami (Action)
- 4/26 Techno Bi Bi, Konami (Puzzle)
- 4/26 Time Crisis Project Titan, Namco (Shooting)

PlayStation 2

- 3/22 Bio Hazard Code Veronica Complete, Capcom (Action)
- 3/29 Super Gaidelic Hour, Enix (Misc.)
- 3/29 Kessen II, Koei (Strategy)
- 3/29 Gallop Racer V, Tecmo (Racing)
- April Gran Turismo 3 A-spec, Sony CEI (Racing)
- April Gitaro Man One, Koei (Misc.)

Dreamcast

- 3/22 Bio Hazard Code Veronica Complete, Capcom (Action)
- 3/22 Sakura Taisen 3, Sega (RPG)
- 3/29 Sega Gaga, Sega (Simulation)
- 4/12 Sports Jam, Sega (Sports)
- 4/19 Neon Genesis Evangelion Typing Challenge, Gainax (Typing)

Game Boy Advance

- 3/21 Akumajou Dracula: Circle of the Moon, Konami (Action)
- 3/21 F-Zero For Game Boy Advance, Nintendo (Racing)
- 3/21 Konami Wai Wai Racing, Konami (Racing)
- 3/21 Kuru Kuru Kururin, Nintendo (Puzzle)
- 3/21 Mario Advance, Nintendo (Action)
- 3/21 Napoleon, Nintendo (Strategy)
- 3/21 Rockman EXE, Capcom (Action)

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

THE VIEW FROM JAPAN



To coincide with our AOU coverage, I thought I'd spend a little time in this month's column talking about the current Japanese arcade market.

According to the numbers compiled by Japan's arcade industry trade organization, sales have shrunk two straight years in a row, and that trend is expected to continue this year. Even without seeing these numbers, you can tell the industry is suffering because you'll see an arcade close down every now and then.

Aside from a long, dragged-out economic slump, some people say the industry is hurting because of a lack of hit titles. Others say it's because game consoles are more powerful than arcade machines. Once-popular Print Club (remember that fad?) and crane games/UFO caches are past their prime. Music/rhythm games like Konami's Dance Dance Revolution are still relatively popular, but only with hardcore fans. How many people will still enjoy those games after there have been five or six sequels in

just a few year's time?

Whatever the reasons are, one thing is for sure: People don't play video games at arcades as much as they used to. In order to drum up gamer enthusiasm and hopefully prop up the ailing industry, several companies made big announcements in February aimed at generating excitement.

First of all, two arcade giants, Sega and Namco, announced that they'll work together on the distribution of new arcade games—Vampire Night being the first (which uses Namco's System 246 PS2 arcade board). Speaking of PS2, Sony CEI announced that they would join forces with Sega and Namco to develop new broadband arcade architecture for amusement centers nationwide. Sega's also developing a cell phone link-up for Virtua Fighter 4. What purpose that'll serve remains a mystery.

Many people in this industry hope that Sega will be able to deliver the goods. Even though Sega has stepped down from the home-console hardware market, the company will take a major role in the arcade market. After all, that's been Sega's biggest strength for many years. —Yutaka Ohbuchi



The Quickest Way To A Giant's Heart...



PlayStation 2



PRESS
START

Coming Soon — May 2001

April

Game Boy Color

Batman Racing—Ubi Soft	Racing
Frisbee Golf—Vatical Entertainment	Sports
Hercules—Titus	Action
High Heat Baseball 2002—3DO	Sports
Jimmy White's Cue Ball—Vatical Ent.	Sports
Land Before Time, The—Natsume	Action
Monster Force—Konami	Action
Return of the Ninja—Natsume	Action
SeaDoo Hydrocross 2001—Vatical Ent.	Racing
Snoopy Tennis—Infogrames	Sports
Trouballs—Capcom	Puzzle
Ultimate Surfing—Natsume	Sports
VR Powerboat Racing—Vatical Ent.	Racing

PlayStation

Blast Lacrosse—Acclaim	Sports
Blaster Master—Sunsoft	Adventure
Deep Sea Fishing—Acclaim	Sports
Digimon World 2—Bandai	RPG
WDL War Jetz—3DO	Action
Kasparov Chess—Interplay	Misc.

Nintendo 64

Dr. Mario 64—Nintendo	Puzzle
SeaDoo Hydrocross 2001—Vatical Ent.	Racing
VR Powerboat Racing—Vatical Ent.	Action

Dreamcast

18 Wheeler—Sega	Racing
Exhibition of Speed—Titus	Racing
Half—Life—Sierra	Action
Mars Matrix—Capcom	Action
Stupid Invaders—Ubi Soft	Adventure
Woody Woodpecker Racing—Konami	Racing

May

Game Boy Color

Kirby Tilt n' Tumble—Nintendo	Misc.
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX—Activision	Sports

Max Steel—Mattel	Action
Portal Runner—3DO	Action
Razor Freestyle Scooter—Crave Ent.	Sports
Xena—Titus	Action

PlayStation

Batman: Gotham City Racer—Ubi Soft	Racing
Inspector Gadget—Infogrames	Action
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX—Activision	Sports
NASCAR Racers—Hasbro	Racing
Ronaldo V Soccer—Infogrames	Sports
Roswell Conspiracies—Red Storm	Adventure
SeaDoo Hydrocross 2001—Vatical Ent.	Racing
Sheep Dog & Wolf—Infogrames	Action

PlayStation 2

Champs F1 Racing—Bam!	Racing
Commandos 2—Eidos	Action
Dark Cloud—Sony CEA	RPG
Gauntlet: Dark Legacy—Midway	Action
Giants: Citizen Kabuto—Interplay	Adventure
Gundam: Journey to Jaburo—Bandai	Action
HerdY Gerdy—Eidos	Adventure
Jungle Book R&G—Ubi Soft	Misc.
Paris Dakar Rally—Acclaim	Racing
Portal Runner—3DO	Adventure
Project Eden—Eidos	Action/Strategy
Red Faction—THQ	Action
Soul Reaver 2—Eidos	Adventure
Ultimate Sky Surfer—Crave Ent.	Action
WDL War Jetz—3DO	Action

Nintendo 64

Mario Party 3—Nintendo	Misc.
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Dreamcast

Armada II: Exodus—Metro3D	Strategy
Commandos 2—Eidos	Action
Conflict Zone—Ubi Soft	Action
Crazy Taxi 2—Sega	Action
Dark Angel—Metro3D	Action
Dragon Riders—Ubi Soft	Adventure
Floigan Bros.—Sega	Adventure
Gorka Morka—Ripcord	Action
Legend of the Blade Masters—Ripcord	Action
Ooga Booga—Sega	Strategy
Shrapnel: Urban Warfare—Ripcord	Action
Soldier of Fortune—Crave Ent.	Action
Sonic Adventure 2—Sega	Adventure

Soul Reaver 2—Eidos	Adventure
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June

PlayStation

Alone in the Dark 4—Infogrames	Adventure
Arc the Lad Collection—Working Designs	RPG
Playmobil Hype—Ubi Soft	Action
Rayman 2: Back to School—Ubi Soft	Action
Time Crisis: Project Titan—Namco	Shooting
VIP—Ubi Soft	Action

PlayStation 2

18 Wheeler—Acclaim	Action
Barbarian—Interplay	Action
Bloody Roar 3—Interplay	Fighting
Cart Fury—Midway	Racing
Clive Barker's Undying—EA	Adventure
Dinosaur—Ubi Soft	Action
Ephemeral Fantasia—Konami	RPG
F1 Racing Championship—Ubi Soft	Racing
Gran Turismo 3: A-spec—Sony CEA	Racing
Ico—Sony CEA	Adventure
Le Mans 24 Hour Racing—Infogrames	Racing
Lotus Challenge—Interplay	Racing
Motor Mayhem—Infogrames	Racing
NASCAR Heat—Hasbro	Racing
Seven Blades—Konami	Adventure
Test Drive Off Road—Infogrames	Racing
Top Gun—Titus	Action
The World is Not Enough—EA	Action

Dreamcast

Alone in the Dark 4—Infogrames	Adventure
Evil Twin—Ubi Soft	Adventure
Heroes of Might & Magic III—Ubi Soft	RPG
OutTrigger—Sega	Action
World Series Baseball 2K2—Sega	Sports

July

PlayStation

Digimon Card Battle—Bandai	RPG
----------------------------	-----

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PRESS
START

The Top 20 Best-Selling Games of January, 2001

1 - Pokémon Silver



There hasn't been one month since Gold & Silver hit stores that they haven't occupied the top two sales slots. Some cynics may say Poké-fever is dying, but you'd have a hard time convincing **Nintendo** of that.

BEST SELLER	
	2
8.5 Mark	9.0 Chris
8.5 Crispin	

2 - Pokémon Gold



When you're at the top, the only place to go is down. Not surprisingly, **Nintendo's** other Pokémon game has only swapped positions with its counterpart. It gets tough to write about these games month in and month out.

BEST SELLER	
	1
8.5 Mark	9.0 Chris
8.5 Crispin	

3 - NBA Live 2001



Wow! The highest debut of a PS2 title since its release comes from **Electronic Arts**. NBA also marks the first PS2 game to ever crack the top five. Could this mean the PS2 market is finally starting to live up to its potential?

NEW	
8 Kraig	7 Dean
5 Dan	

4 - Madden NFL 2001



The only PS2 mainstay on the charts finally claws its way into the top 5. **Electronic Arts** must be pretty happy, even despite their bellyaching about shipping more Madden's than there were systems during the botched launch.

NEW	
	18
9 Kraig	9 Dean
9 Joe	

5 - WWF SmackDown! 2



The game isn't finished quite yet, as **THQ's** PS one brawler stubbornly holds onto fifth place in January. We can smell it. SmackDown! 2 has grabbed wrestling fans tighter than a crippler crossface.

NEW	
	3
8.5 Greg	9 Todd
9 Milkman	

6 Driver 2
Infogrames

BEST SELLER	
	5

7 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2
Activision

BEST SELLER	
	4

8 Donkey Kong Country 64
Nintendo

BEST SELLER	

9 Final Fantasy IX
Square Electronic Arts

BEST SELLER	
	6

10 Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask
Nintendo

BEST SELLER	
	8

11 Mario Tennis
Nintendo

NEW	
	NEW

12 Gran Turismo 2
Sony CEA

BEST SELLER	

13 Madden NFL 2001
Electronic Arts

BEST SELLER	
	12

14 Super Smash Brothers
Nintendo

BEST SELLER	

15 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater
Activision

BEST SELLER	
	13

16 The World Is Not Enough
Electronic Arts

BEST SELLER	
	11

17 NBA 2K1
Sega

BEST SELLER	

18 Tekken 3
Namco

BEST SELLER	

19 SSX
Electronic Arts

NEW	

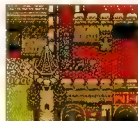
20 Driver
GT Interactive

BEST SELLER	

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

BEST SELLER	
1 Onimusha Warriors Capcom	
2 Pokémon Crystal Nintendo	
3 Yugio Duel Monsters 4 Konami	
4 Donkey Kong 2001 Nintendo	
5 Kikou-Heidan J-PHOENIX Takara	
6 Dragon Quest III Enix	
7 Hajime no Ippo ESP	
8 Hundred Swords Sega	
9 Pokémon Stadium Gold/Silver/Crystal Nintendo	
10 Aero Dancing i CR	

Weekly Famitsu, week ending 2/18/2001



It's no surprise to see Dragon Quest III near the top of the list considering the GBC and PS2 currently own the Japanese sales charts.



Even with the announcement of Dreamcast's demise, Sega's Hundred Swords is still selling well in Japan. Check out our preview on page 45.

The Koei logo, featuring the word "koei" in a stylized, lowercase font with a red dot above the 'i'.

www.koelgames.com

The background of the advertisement is a collage of images from the game Wing Commander. The central focus is a male character with short, spiky blonde hair, wearing a dark tactical vest over a purple shirt and a utility belt. He is holding a futuristic, glowing orange and silver weapon. The background is filled with fiery explosions, other characters in various poses, and industrial-looking structures. At the top, there are several small inset images showing different scenes from the game. At the bottom, there are more inset images showing action sequences. The overall color palette is dominated by oranges, reds, and yellows, suggesting a high-stakes, action-packed environment.

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your Space Center.

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WING COMMANDER

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PlayStation.2

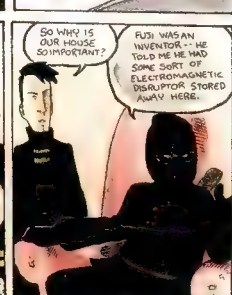
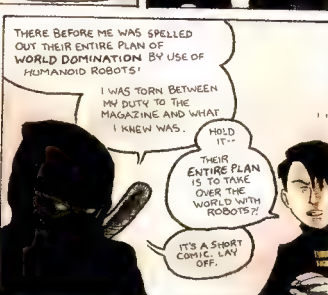
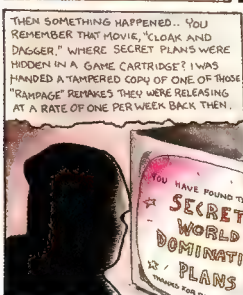
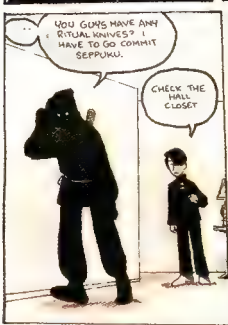
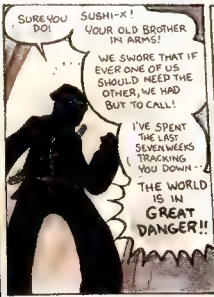


RECAP: IN OUR LAST EXCITING EPISODE, HSU AND CHAN WERE TOSSING WATER BALLOONS AT PEDESTRIANS WHEN A TERMINATORESQUE ROBOT SHOWED UP AND TRIED TO KILL THEM, WHICH THEY NARROWLY AVOIDED BY FIRING A CHIPMUNK FROM A POTATO CANNON, AT WHICH POINT NONE OTHER THAN THE LONG-MISSING SUSHI-X SHOWED UP, AND... AND... THIS ISN'T MAKING ANY SENSE, IS IT? JUST GO ORDER A BACK ISSUE.

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THE SUSHI SAGA!

PART TWO: "BACKSTORY!"



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Previews

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

We know you're all waiting patiently for the winner of our RPG Maker Contest to be announced. Well, bear with us for another month and we promise we'll pick a winner by the time the next issue of *EGM* hits stands. There are just so many good—and long—games to sift through it's taking us longer than we thought.

To make the long wait a little less painful, however, we've included four of the more noteworthy contest entries in the previews pages this month. They are by no means the only finalists, so we're not guaranteeing any of them will win. Remember, we'll give the full Review Crew treatment to the RPG that eventually wins the grand prize: a PlayStation 2 system and a collection of AgeTec games.

The other sad news this month is that, once again, there weren't any Nintendo 64 games to cover. Obviously the system is on its last legs, which is hard to believe when you consider all the fervor around Conker and Pokémon Stadium 2.

On a brighter note, though, we have a few more Game Boy Advance games



Check out four of the best RPG Maker Contest entries we've seen thus far. The homegrown goodness starts on page 73.

for you to check out this month. Along with newer shots of F-Zero Advance, we've managed to track down some of the first screens of Heart of Darkness and Rayman, both remakes of past platforming titles. The more we see of this system, the more we can't wait for its launch.

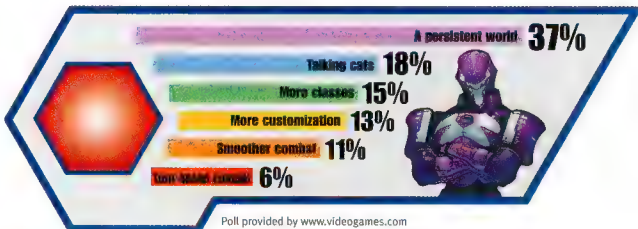
Of course, let's not forget the Metal Gear Solid 2 demo Konami recently released. Turn to page 50 to check out our four-page blowout on the beginning of Snake's next big adventure—and maybe his last.

See you next month.

TOP 5 Preview Picks

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Metal Gear Solid 2 | PlayStation 2, Fall |
| 2. Crazy Taxi 2 | Dreamcast, Spring |
| 3. Rayman | Game Boy Advance, June |
| 4. Grand Theft Auto 3 | PlayStation 2, September |
| 5. Zone of the Enders | PlayStation 2, March |

What would you like to see in Phantasy Star Online 2?

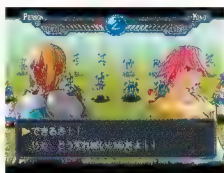




PREVIEW

Hundred Swords

- Platform:** Sega
- Developer:** Smilebit
- Players:** 1-4
- Genre:** Real Time Strategy
- Available:** Now (Japan)
- Series:** Starcraft
- Available on:** Dragon Force
- Web Address:** www.smilebit.com
- The Good:** Fast and furious gameplay, nice but simple graphics.
- The Bad:** Camera angle is a bit annoying, close fog line.
- And The Why?:** The fact we might never see this game here...

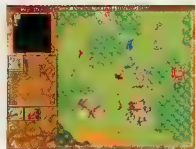


Hundred Swords also features an adventure/RPG mode complete with story line and numerous cinemas.

Some of the battles in Hundred Swords could only be described as pure chaos. There are times hundreds of soldiers will clash, and it looks damn keen.

Hundredth Clone?

While playing *Hundred Swords* it's hard to shake the feeling of déjà vu, and for a good reason. There's no doubt Smilebit are fans of American RTS games: Even with the squad-based combat and the unique 3D viewpoint, HS gives quite a few gameplay and visual nods toward its biggest influence, the *Warcraft* series. It has a similar theme (the whole medieval combat thingy), troop types, and the same kind of lighthearted yet chaotic gameplay. *Hundred Swords* isn't a simple clone though—you can't drag select units, there's only a single resource to be mined, and the characters don't say funny things when you click on them. Too bad.



Hundred Swords has a lot in common with games like *Warcraft* and *Command & Conquer*—PC-style online-capable Real Time Strategy titles—but dummed down a bit for consoles. Wait, no, scratch that, dummed down for arcades. Smilebit's latest creation after *Jet Grind Radio* has the distinct notoriety of being the first major networked simulation war game for arcades, and now it's hit the Dreamcast. Well, in Japan.

Surprised you've never heard of *Hundred Swords*? Don't be. While it might be an original idea, arcades and RTS games don't really mix, not to mention the fact its online play was overshadowed by another networkable arcade game a bit more suited for its surroundings: Sega's action-packed *Alien Front Online*. Not coincidentally *Alien Front* is well on its way to American arcades and Dreamcasts; *Hundred Swords* is not.

Sega isn't interested in bringing over *Hundred Swords* in any form, at least not yet. While we might see this strategy game one day on a different platform, the only way to play it in the near future is by calling your local importer.

And this wouldn't be a bad move, even if your understanding of the Japanese language isn't exactly fluent. As long as you've played real-time strategy games before, picking up and enjoying *Hundred Swords* won't be any great feat.

Much like RTS games of old, you control an army

of soldiers with the goal of taking down the opposing force. There's a total of four armies, each with four main character types (magic users, archers, foot soldiers and animal riders), which form attack groups led by a single general. You manage resources and can pump out additional soldiers from bases using materials you mine from quarries—the entire experience is very reminiscent of past RTS games, except the whole game moves much quicker. Instead of controlling individual soldiers you control the generals, so most fights are these epic battles.

There's no doubt *Hundred Swords* is fun, but we're left wondering when (and if) it will ever come out here. Sure, Sega dropped the ball, but perhaps a third-party publisher will pick it up. We hope. 🎮





DRIVER A

- Greets colleagues with a firm self-confident handshake.
- Dated cheerleaders in high school.
- Has lipstick on underwear.
- Smokes after sex.

MSR

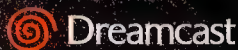
METROPOLIS STREET RACER

Welcome to Metropolis Street Racer where going fast isn't enough, you've gotta go fast and look good. MSR is the only racing game where you're judged on KUDOs (points based on style) as well as speed. MSR also features amazing recreations of real cities: London, Tokyo, and San Francisco, are shown in incredible detail, right down to the street signs and radio stations. So check out Metropolis Street Racer and see if you've got what it takes to maintain an image at 180 mph.



DRIVER B

- Offers a limp and clumsy handshake that screams of self doubt.
- Wasn't allowed to date in high school.
- Has superheroes on underwear.
- Apologizes after sex.



sega.com/msr

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PREVIEW
GALLERY



YOU TALKIN' TO MIP?

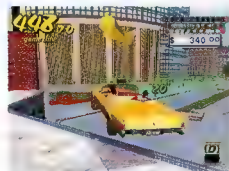
Robert De Niro worked 12 hours a day for a month as a taxi driver to prepare for his role in the film *Taxi Driver* (1976). No wonder he was so convincingly psychotic in the movie.

Crazy Taxi 2

And you were worried there'd be nothing left to play on the Dreamcast this year! Feast your eyes on *Crazy Taxi 2*. According to **Sega**, there won't be an arcade version of this sequel, so this **spring** the only place to make crazy money will be on the DC.

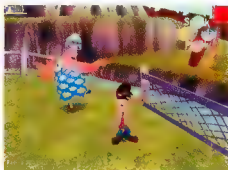
Although the game looks similar, CT2 features four new drivers: Slash, Iceman, Cinnamon and Hot-D. Now you can carry more than one customer at a time, each with alternate destinations, and you can "hop" your car. Basically that means each car has an active hydraulic suspension system (like those ones you see in *Coolio* videos and stuff).

Best of all, *Crazy Taxi 2* is based in New York City, so watch for landmarks and other recognizable sites from the Big Apple. Also expect music from *Methods of Mayhem* and *The Offspring* (again).



Floigan Brothers

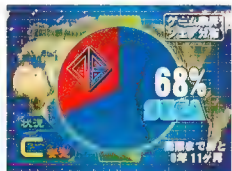
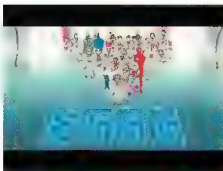
Although these screens may carry a common theme, they're really **Visual Concepts'** way of revealing that their upcoming Sega platform/puzzle game will be SegaNet-compatible when it ships this **spring**. Once a month, Floigan Brother lovers can get their funky butts online and download a new secret bonus. Secrets include new costumes (see pics), hidden levels and a year's worth of goodies.





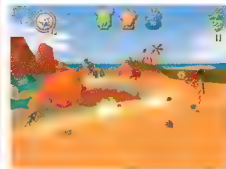
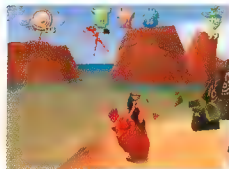
Segagaga

The year is 2025, and **Sega** is in financial trouble. What? Sega? No way! But yes, in this implausible and bizarre fantasy scenario from **Hitmaker**, Sega is actually losing money. Desperate for a solution, the company does what any company would do—turn the entire operation over to a plucky 15-year-old boy (that's you). Chosen by Sega's super computer, the Tera Drive, your job is to crush the competition, the evil Son—er, Dogma—Corporation, and increase Sega's market share to 100 percent within three years. How? By defeating rival developers and staff in RPG-style battles and convincing them to join you, of course. Featuring a wicked sense of humor and cameos from fan favorites like Opa-Opa and Nei from Phantasy Star II, Segagaga goes on sale **March 29** in Japan, exclusively from Sega's online store.



Ooga Booga

Try to win the favor of the Volcano Goddess, Ooga Booga, in this four-player Polynesian-Poy Poy-esque online action game from **Visual Concepts** and **Sega**, due this **spring**. Featuring tons of modes to get your mojo flowing, choose from one of four tribes, using tornados, wild boars, shrunken heads and a host of spells to pummel your opponents in this fast-paced battle game.



Metal Gear Solid 2

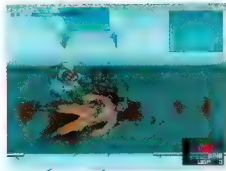
Publisher:	Konami of America
Developer:	Konami CEJ West
Players:	1
Genre:	Action/Adventure
% Done:	25%
Release:	Fall 2001
Web Address:	

<http://www.konami.co.jp/kcej/products/mgs2/english/01.html>

The Good: MGS2 plays as great as it looks. Simply phenomenal.

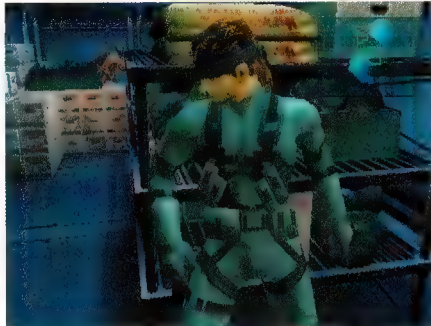
The Bad: The demo only lasts about 45 minutes.

And The Ugly: Olga's distinctively French approach to armpit grooming.



PS2's extra horsepower allows MGS2 to have all sorts of graphical flourishes. Like blood. Lots of it. Don't worry, the gore is optional.

The level of detail in MGS2 is absolutely mindblowing. Most everything in this storage room is interactive.



EASTERN FRONT

Try This At Home



The MGS2 trial version is chock-full of strange easter eggs and a healthy sense of humor. If you move the right analog stick from the intro menu, you can look around for a panoramic view of the George Washington Bridge. Move both analog sticks in CODEC view to move the 3D portraits of Snake and Otacon. And if you hit the circle button during the intro cutscene, you can switch between Japanese and English fonts. It'll be interesting to see if Kojima will keep some of these "features" in the final version. For some adult humor, try knocking on the centerfolds in the locker room. Bada bing!

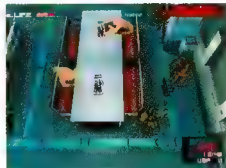
Since its official unveiling at E3 2000, an occasion which we dubbed one of the 10 most important news stories of 2000, we've been hustling for every available nugget of Metal Gear Solid 2 out there. When our copy of the U.S. trial version finally arrived this month, all of us here at EGM lived, breathed and ate MGS2. We just couldn't get enough of this rain-soaked demo. And you probably won't be able to either, come March 27, when the demo is packaged with the domestic release of that *other* game from KCEJ West, Zone of the Enders.

The MGS2 trial version itself is fairly short (45 minutes first time through), but it's packed with so much stuff that you'll probably play it over and over

again just to discover how far you can push the limits of the game's flexible engine. And when you've done blowing the crap out of the interactive environments with your guns, you'll play the demo for its clever time-attack ranking mode (but we'll talk more about that later).

MGS2 is a sequel in every sense of the word, which means you'll want to have played Metal Gear Solid before tackling its successor. The story line picks up two years after the events on Shadow Moses Island. Thanks to Revolver Ocelot (aka Shalashaska to his Russian buddies), the technical specs for Metal Gear Rex have leaked onto the black market, giving any rogue nation with the right connections and enough dough to build their own all-terrain bipedal weapon of mass destruction. MGS2 begins with Solid Snake and Otacon (Dr. Hal Emmerich), both men now operating under U.N. orders, investigating the Discovery, a USMC tanker on the Hudson River. Otacon suspects a new amphibious Metal Gear codenamed "Ray" is within the holds of the massive ship.

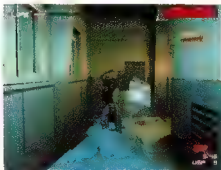
Sure, it's been a long time since you've had any tactical-espionage action, and Kojima realizes that some of you out there may need to take a refresher course on the sprawling MGS mythos. To help you get caught up, you'll find a cleverly disguised synopsis in the form of a fictional review of a book by Nastasha Romanenko. Never mind the fact that





GET YOUR NAME IN MGS2

Konami of Japan is currently accepting entries on their Web site for gamers interested in seeing their names and vital statistics on the dog tags of enemy soldiers. While it's still unclear what function these dog tags will serve in MGS2, KCEJ has announced that the selected names will be on all language versions of MGS2 sold worldwide. To be a part of gaming history, check out this URL: http://www.konami.co.jp/kcej/products/mgs2/mgs2name/index_e.html

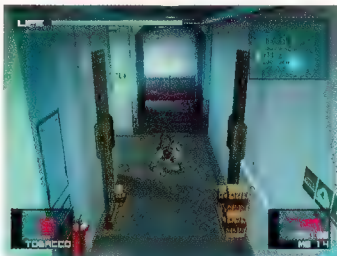


Not only can you punch, kick and strafe in first-person, but you can also aim and shoot specific body parts (top left). Snake can hide unconscious guards in lockers to cover his tracks (top middle). Olga's not only got armpit hairs, she's also pregnant (top right). Just like in MGS, the booby traps are back (bottom left). It's possible this guard may never wake up (bottom right).

it's cool Nastasha is still around from the last MGS to further reinforce the thickening conspiracy, the "book review" itself is a prime example of excellent localization and helps maintain our suspension of disbelief. Now let's just hope this is reflective of the quality of the English version as well.

Visually, MGS2 is the definitive yardstick by which all next-generation games will be compared to for some time to come. You might have seen screenshots and movies, but nothing will prepare you for the moment MGS2 is running on your PS2, under your control. Like MGS, the sequel begins with an elaborate introduction sequence. This time, it starts off amidst heavy rain on the George Washington Bridge in New York. Kojima once again walks the tightrope between art and entertainment with his masterful direction and thrilling cinematography work. In one graceful move, Snake activates his stealth camouflage, bungsies over the side of the bridge and plummets, arms spread Christ-figure-like, down to the deck of the Discovery. If Kojima were to make a two-hour movie using nothing but the in-game engine itself, we'd be there opening day. The truth is, most Hollywood movies don't look this good.

Out on the deck of the Discovery, rain comes down



in torrents. Since gameplay still takes place essentially from a top-down perspective, your view is filtered through spears of rain, endless particles that actually change to the whim of the wind. And just like it would in real life, these raindrops encompass everything; droplets of water actually explode and bounce off of people, while sheets of it will run off the sides of buildings like urban waterfalls. Other incredible touches of realism include a first-person mode where streaks of water actually blur your vision—a distortion effect similar to raindrops hitting the lens of a camera.

Even visual detail as inconsequential as shadows exude the love and attention to realism Kojima and his team have put into this project. Real-time shadows in MGS2 mean that when you walk down a hallway, Snake's umbrage will grow and elongate depending on the light source's location. This added complexity presents the player with new challenges. Snake can pick up the presence of enemies just by getting a glimpse of the shade they cast, and inversely, he's subjected to those same rules.

Absolutely no shortcuts were taken in the level design or the complexity of the environments. If you study just the George Washington Bridge structure alone, you see that the team really did their homework: Every beam, girder and support cable is seemingly accounted for. No detail was too big or too small either. Lights, bottles, cameras, glass, magazines...heck, pretty much anything you see



Desperate times call for desperate measures. Snake can now take enemy hostages while trying to escape.

IMPROVED ?!

Artificially Intelligent?



Unlike those robotic morons in MGS, the guards in the sequel are smarter and more lifelike. In the harder modes of the game, guards have a realistic line-of-sight, will shoot from behind cover, dive out of the way of your shots, throw grenades, slam the doors off of lockers, and use team tactics to try to flank your ass. We've even seen them stick their guns out from around a corner and fire blindly to try to pin you down. When Snake hides after setting off an alarm, pairs of soldiers will conduct realistic "clearing" routines. Snake's radar will turn into a camera that shows where the guards are sweeping for intruders. Of course, they match every intelligent thing they do with plenty of imbecilic behavior as well. Shoot a guy in the back with a dart and he'll scratch his head quizzically instead of running for cover. Other times, they can appear seemingly blind, deaf and dumb.



www.sce.com



Reach For The Sky



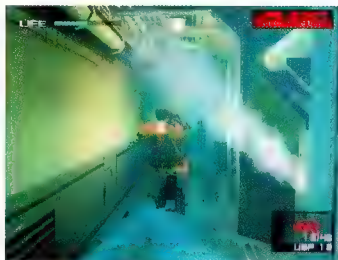
If you get the chance, sneak up on a guard, pull out your gun, and watch him throw his arms up in the air. Go into first-person mode, point the barrel at his head, and listen to his plea for mercy. The demo tutorial actually makes it a point to let you know that if you point the gun at his crotch, he'll drop valuable items (ammo, rations, bandages) for you to collect. From this point on, you're pretty much free to do with the guard as you please. Feeling especially sadistic one afternoon, we whipped out our USP semi-automatic and shot the poor bastard in both his arms and legs. Unable to run or fight back, our incapacitated guard actually tried to crawl his way to safety! Just be sure you're prepared to deal with his retaliation if you accidentally drop your guard.



strewn about the rooms can be shot, manipulated and destroyed. Helicopters fighting to hover in position have working windshield wipers, while Snake's trademark bandanna flutters with every move he makes. Throughout the demo, you'll constantly be second-guessing yourself: Is it FMV, or isn't it?

Even while MGS2 looks amazing in every possible way, Kojima still had to be choosy about creating such photo-realism. While the character models themselves look pretty good, you could easily tell that the majority of the polygons were spent rendering their faces (and in the case of guards, their gear). Even with all the peripheral detail around you, Solid Snake's face (and his powerful mullet) look fantastically baroque. Aside from telling facial features such as his prominent cheekbones, solid jaw line, and a steady five o'clock shadow, Snake can now display a spectrum of hardened emotions, from surprise and disgust, to anger and...well, just being plain pissed off. Frankly, we haven't seen in-game faces this good since Namco's Soul Calibur on the Dreamcast.

But MGS2 isn't just about pretty faces. Even with all the impressive cutscenes and over-the-top visuals, MGS2 is still an action game first and foremost. We were initially surprised at how strikingly similar MGS2 felt to its predecessor, but after spending some time with it, it's obvious that



this next-generation engine has given the gameplay a whole new layer of depth.

MGS2 helps draw the player into its reality by emphasizing use of the first-person perspective. You'll find that almost all of the shooting and gunplay in this game takes place in the first-person mode. While the traditional third-person perspective is still useful (thanks to a new enemy "lock-on" button), jumping into the first-person mode lets you take out enemies with one efficient headshot. Also new to the game is the ability to jump out from around a corner, squeeze off a few rounds, and then quickly duck back behind cover.

In terms of stealth, Snake can now peek around corners for a better look at what's ahead, as well as climb over low-lying objects. An alternate way to dodge some heat (if your surroundings permit) is to jump over railings and banisters to hang off the side. By using this hanging technique, Snake can surprise his enemies by literally dropping in to visit. A "grip" meter lets you know when his fingers have had enough. As well, any good covert warrior knows to clean up after himself, and that's why Snake can now drag dead or unconscious guards to stash them in more prudent unseen areas. To be absolutely certain, he can even dump the bodies overboard on the deck of the Discovery.

Regardless of whether you're a master ninja or not, there will be times when you're caught with your

BREEZE THROUGH THE MGS2 TRIAL VERSION

Start off by heading left, behind the row of winches so the guard upstairs doesn't notice you. Cut right and head up the stairs. If you time things right, the sentry to your left will be facing the other direction. Jump over the box and the railing, and tap triangle repeatedly to open the door quickly.

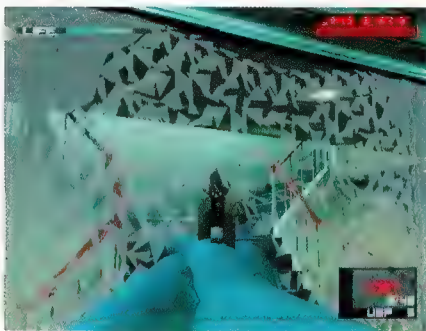


As the game is loading, hold down right on your controller so Snake begins to run as soon as it's finished. Run down the hall, bypass the locker room, and chase the guard patrolling the next hallway. You should be able to catch him before he turns around. Flip him on his back and move on.





Think you're really good at the MGS2 demo? Then head over to KCEJ's Internet ranking page and see where you place among some of the best players in the world. When the demo first hit the streets of Japan, the top 100 entries in the Very Hard category were predominantly Japanese. Just weeks after its release, players from all over the globe were seen charting the top 10. Check it out! http://www.konami.co.jp/kcej/products/mgs2/mgs2_t_LR/index_e.html



pants down. You have a small window of time to make sure a guard doesn't alert his friends after he lights off his exclamation point. Since the only way enemies can sound an alarm is by calling it in, you can actually go into first-person mode and shoot the radio strapped to the guard's side. If that's a bit too much finesse, then simply beat his face in. Regardless of your style, just make sure you do *something* before he calls in the cavalry. If you have to run like hell, try doing a couple tuck and rolls in mid-motion. And if you dive into some guards while you roll, they'll topple like bowling pins. It's a pretty handy trick if you've got somewhere to go in a hurry and you can't be bothered with subtlety.

Another highlight of MGS2 we have to talk about is the brilliant analog control implementation. Pretty much everything is analog and there's little question about how well it works. While fine-tuned movement from the stick was a no-brainer, we didn't expect the D-pad to have the same sense of delicacy and control. Other nice touches include pressure-sensitive strafing on shoulder buttons, as well as a pressure-sensitive fire button. The complaint with the previous MGS was that since you had to hold down the square button to aim your gun, there was no way to stand down without firing a shot (unless you put



You'll spend hours shooting up anything you can point a gun at. Here, a rack of magazines falls victim to our curiosity.

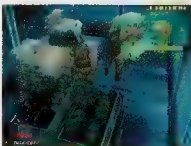
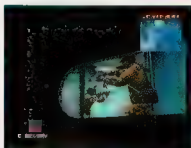
This large piece of glass, made famous by the gunplay in the MGS2 trailer, shatters once again.

your gun away). With the analog fire, you can now slowly ease up on the button, just like you would slowly uncock the hammer of a pistol, and Snake will quietly hold his fire.

The best thing about the MGS2 trial version, however, is how self-contained and infinitely replayable it really is. After you beat the demo, you're supplied with a "completion code" which you can enter in at Konami of Japan's Web site (see page topper). The code keeps track of stuff like how long it took you, how many guards you killed, how many shots you fired, and how much damage you took. Of course, the lower your numbers, the higher your ranking. And just like MGS, you're given an animal-based title depending on your score. We think we've gotten it down to a science, but it's always easier said than done. For some tips on mastering the demo, check out our little guide below.

So you've now had a taste of the real thing. There are still plenty of unanswered questions, like how good the voice acting will be (the demo has Japanese voices with English subtitles), or whether the game will be shipped bilingual. Expect the final version to have many more twists and surprises. We'll hold our collective breaths for another eight months, and pray to the gaming gods that this game ships on time. 🐾

A Box With A View

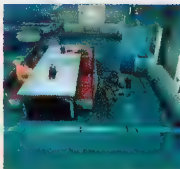


The ever-popular cardboard box is back in stock. This time it comes in two flavors: wet and dry. There's not too much difference between the two versions, except that a wet box indoors might attract some unwanted attention. Those of you box fetishists out there will be happy to know that not only can you engage in voyeurism through an oblong slot, but this next-generation box is so detailed you can even see the corrugation of the cardboard inside. Ah, to live the life of a box man! Kobo Abe would be proud.

When you come to the lounge with the two guards, watch the cutscene until the guard facing you turns toward the glass. Then make a mad dash for the stairs. Once upstairs, head toward the brightly lit hallway, wait until the guard turns his back, and then flip him from behind. Easy.



Run into the cafeteria as soon as the guard takes off on his route. Skip the camera cutscene and run straight for the door opposite the camera. Next up is ol' armpits. Olga is extremely easy, if you can bait her to throw grenades. Stand (don't duck) in the alcove where the bullets are and aim for her head.





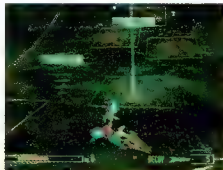
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Animated Violence

Zone of the Enders

Publisher:	Konami
Developer:	Konami CEJ
Players:	1-2
Genre:	Action
% Done:	100% (Japan)
Release:	March
Also Try:	Omega Boost
Web Address:	www.konami.com
The Good:	A perfect example of what we think PS2 games should look like.
The Bad:	Some fairly shallow gameplay.
And The Ugly:	That most people won't even look at Z.O.E and go straight for the MGS2 demo.



Moving from one level to another is done through an overhead flight screen reminiscent of the one in *Valkyrie Profile*.

Giant mechs battling in the midst of even bigger buildings? Awesome lighting and particle effects? Sign us up!



It's the little things that make *Zone of the Enders* so impressive. If you take the time to look around in between the frequent dogfights, you'll notice an attention to detail that's almost scary. Every level has a different theme. Some of them are suburban townships, some are big cities, and some are factories. And they all come to life in stunning detail. You see tiny vehicles parked along the street, one-level homes and towering apartment buildings scattered about, and even street lights lining every road. And the best part—you can destroy every bit of it, resulting in a satisfying explosion and hundreds of bits of shrapnel.

Not that you'd want to. A lot of missions in Z.O.E take into account all the innocent civilians in said

buildings, and their survival rate directly affects you. Still, it's pretty cool to see all that burning rubble framing a heated firefight.

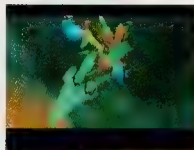
In fact, this whole game is gorgeous. The mech-battles look more like interactive cinemas. They're anything but, though, as *Zone of the Enders* has a very intelligent 3D control scheme. You never really get lost or very disoriented. What's better, you can auto-target a different enemy with the push of a button, something most 3D games haven't been getting right as of late.

And the enemies aren't stupid, either. Since the most effective way to fight most of them is hand to hand (so to speak), most of them are excellent sword fighters. They'll parry a lot of your attacks. Liberal use of your special weapons and shields is the only real way to survive.

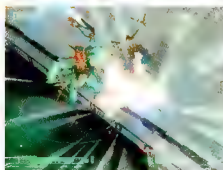
And after that, there's the gargantuan bosses to deal with. There are no words to describe how impressive these mechs look, or how well they animate; suffice it to say that *Zone of the Enders* is what we all expected PlayStation 2 games to look like when we stood in line that cold October night last year.

But is Z.O.E worth buying? *Metal Gear Solid 2* demo notwithstanding, our early answer would have to be yes. Of course, you'll need to check our Review Crew section next month to get the final verdict on the gameplay and U.S. dub. We can't wait! 🍀

Robo-Crotch



While everything else in *Zone of the Enders* seems pretty upper-crust, one has to wonder if the developers were just having a little fun when they designed the cockpit. The Jahuty's command center is located right in the robot's crotch. This rather phallic-looking pod protrudes almost embarrassingly from the torso of your mech. And when you leave a level to find a new place to fight? The cockpit angles itself in a very suggestive way. But we're all adults here, right? Yeah, sure. You wouldn't believe the uncontrollable giggling coming from the staff the first time we noticed this design choice.





BERRY PANIC™

**WHAT A
FRONTSIDE
LIPSLIDE
TASTES LIKE**





PREVIEW

Sound Logic

Seeing as how the PS2 has an entire PS one chipset encased within its own formidable guts, the ever-resourceful DMA crew have put to use the PS one's sound-chip to handle the musical chores in the game. This frees up the full power of the PS2's sound-board for other things like environment-reactive sound-effects and other audio delights.

Grand Theft Auto 3

Publisher:	Rockstar Games
Developer:	DMA Design
Players:	1
Genre:	Action
% Done:	50%
Release:	September 2001
Also On:	Xbox
Web Address:	www.rockstargames.com
The Good:	All the same maniacal GTA mayhem, in true 3D!
The Bad:	It boxes Driver 2 around the ears something good.
And The Ugly:	Ice-cream trucks and a satchel full of C4.



Liberty City may not be a real-life place, but—modeled after New York City—this gritty urban environment will seem familiar.

This ain't C.H.I.P.s! The ruthless Liberty City Police Department is on constant patrol for naughty boys like yourself.



First Dibs

Pancaked



Just in case there are two or three people out there who don't find it a thrill to be able to play Grand Theft Auto 3 the way it was meant to be played, DMA has taken the liberty of including the "classic" GTA perspective (read: overhead) so that nit-picky old-school gamers can relive the halcyon days of their felonious youth in top-down, pancake glory. The above shot is from GTA2, while the bottom shot is a plate full of pancakes. See the correlation? Of course you do!



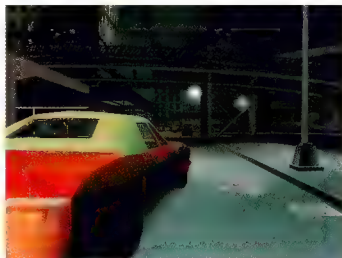
Back in 1997 when Edinburgh-based developer DMA first unleashed the game Grand Theft Auto on the unsuspecting masses, this graphically modest, controversially potent slice of software offended sensibilities and kick-started the careers of eager, young virtua-felons. The concept was (and is) carjacking (as in "to jack," not "be jacked"), doing jobs for the mob (or anyone else willing to meet your asking price), all the while causing as much high-speed carnage and mayhem as possible. Although the carnage and mayhem was more optional than mandatory, it went hand-in-hand with the cussing (young boys apparently giggle every time someone drops a four-letter word) and criminal activity that made up the bulk of the gameplay.

Although GTA 1 & 2 were effective at conveying a criminal atmosphere, the game's visuals were bordering on underwhelming due to the limitations of the hardware. The game looked like an overhead exercise in urban slot-car racing. Fast-forward to 2001 and Driver 2 has committed its own grand theft by seizing the original GTA concept and thrusting it into 3D (albeit with mixed results). So how does DMA and Rockstar respond? With a fully realized 3D

Grand Theft Auto filled with more ambition and ideas than most publishers' entire libraries.

The premise (and your main motivation) revolves around a botched bank heist, where you got nabbed by the police, but your girlfriend and Miguel (why, why, why is it always Miguel!?) got away with the money. But the game's attention to detail extends way beyond your simple thirst for revenge. For starters, you have an ally named Eight-Ball, a demolitions expert specializing in explosives. While he accompanies you on your first mission, he later serves as a shopkeeper who refreshes your munitions. The game's structure follows the same pattern as the first two installments, with the main character taking on a wide variety of jobs (50 mandatory and 50 optional), all the while edging closer to his own personal goals. Put simply, you jack any of the 40-plus cars in the game, take phone calls, pages, etc., drive insanely to your mission's completion (pick crime bosses up, hijack another car, deliver goods, et al), and get your reward.

Over the course of those 50-100 missions you will see a lavish attention to detail on par with Shenmue. There are sniper missions where you make your way to strategically placed locations and pick off your targets. When the body-count begins to mount, ambulances and EMTs will appear and begin to tend to the wounded/dead. Of course you can snipe the medics, and a well-placed head-shot will

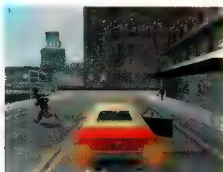


The complex architecture and moody settings of the industrial area give the game an organic, threatening feel.



TO JACK OR NOT TO JACK, THAT IS THE QUESTION

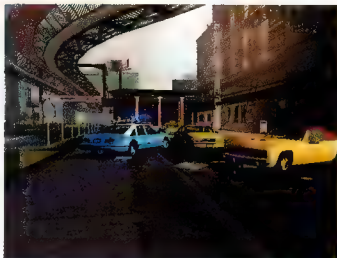
The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) defines carjacking as the attempted or completed robbery of a motor vehicle by a stranger that includes the use or threat of use of force. According to a DOJ report released in March 1999, between 1992 and 1996 there were an average of 49,000 carjackings each year, up from earlier estimates of about 35,000 each year during the period 1987 to 1992. Time to tuck that taser in your glove compartment!



As in the first two games, commit enough heavy-duty crimes on the street and the "peegs" come out in force. One way to dodge the long arm of the law is to dip into a spray shop and get yourself a new 'do. You got Smokey on your six? Jump into a spray-shop orange and come out yell! Zoof! Away you go!

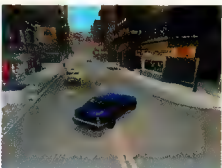
result in a gruesome (yet cartoonish) blood-fountain. Cause enough mayhem and pedestrians (peds) will run to pay phones, which in turn brings the police. Of course, if they don't make it to the phones, well, no police.

Grand Theft Auto 3 is a diverse visual assault. The dev team took more than 9,000 photos and hours of video of New York City as reference material. Weather effects (read: rain) make driving surfaces slick and add a mirror-like sheen to the streets, complete with reflections. When it rains, peds will whip out umbrellas. The concept of cause and effect is readily apparent in the environments. Shoot a window and glass shatters; any one in the way of an explosion or fire will be set ablaze. Meanwhile, buildings have a gritty, downtrodden look to them that seems appropriate for the seedy criminal nesting grounds the game seeks to project. The time of day moves in "real time" with 30 minutes simulating 24 hours in the game. Clouds affect the sun, making for a hazy environment as well as diffusing moonlight. DMA is aiming for a rock-solid 30-fps, which is actually very good considering how much stuff is going on on-screen.



Controlling the main character, as well as the multitude of different vehicles he jacks, is right-on. There are a couple collision issues, but the game is also very early. Despite the switch to 3D, the GTA "feel" is still there. Streets are crowded with other cars, and pedestrians run out of the way when you approach. There are three main areas in the game; industrial, commercial and urban. You can travel between the zones via car, boat or by hijacking a police helicopter. The water has its own Wave Race-style physics, and the boat is affected accordingly. Your character can use all manner of weapons (molotov cocktails, flame-throwers, grenades, pistols, baseball bats, assault rifles, missile launchers and more), while proximity dictates what sort of moves your man will perform.

Thankfully, the true beauty of the game is how it all comes together—no mean feat for a game previously limited to a "2D" format. Mission objectives will go a long way toward determining how well the game flows, but there aren't many installed just yet. Still, this could be the elusive killer-app that Rockstar's been hoping for. 🍌



SEXY M.F.

The X-factor

If you think this looks good, keep in mind that GTA3 is also coming to Xbox.








**Q: How many different kinds of reference material do you use to create the environments?
A: As many as possible. Digital images, magazines, books and fond childhood memories.**

—Ryan Geithman

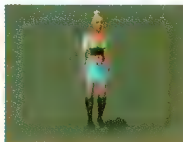
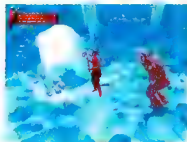
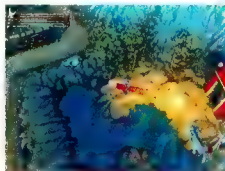
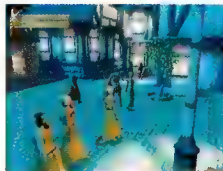
Snowblind Studios founder and Project Lead, on the visuals captured in Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance



PREVIEW

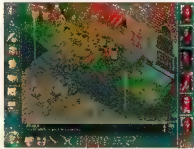
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance

Publisher:	Interplay
Developer:	Snowblind Studios
Players:	1-2
Genre:	RPG
% Done:	60%
Release:	Fall 2001
Web Address:	www.interplay.com
Also try:	Dark Cloud
The Good:	It looks sweeter than your sister.
The Bad:	It's like Gauntlet on juice, with stat-tracking.
And The Ugly:	A giant Yeti barbecue featuring Yeti-ke-babs.



The detail in these screens does not convey the striking crispness of the graphics when viewed in motion. The framerate is a ripping 60-fps, reflection-mapping shimmers off the mercury-like pools of water, character animation is fluid, and the light-sourcing is absolutely wonderful. Astounding in subtle ways, this game is a graphical tour de force. Amazing.

Sprites!



It wasn't so long ago that the original Baldur's Gate for the PC (and later the Mac) looked very sharp indeed. Yet even Baldur's Gate 2, a modest leap over the first (you could run it in high resolution), was but a baby-step compared to what Snowblind has done with Dark Alliance.

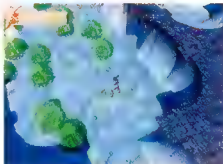
Keep in mind that while the game may look similar in style to Bioware's pioneering effort, all the characters in BG 1 & 2 were 2D sprites, while the sprite-like inhabitants of BG: Dark Alliance are actually high-poly-count 3D models, composed of up to 10,000 triangles apiece. Despite that, the game features cooperative two-player support and piles upon piles of enemies without the slightest hitch in framerate.

When Interplay finally decided to reveal Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance, their action-RPG for PlayStation 2, our hopes were, admittedly, not high. After all, the game bore not only the burden of maintaining the high-quality standards of the Baldur's Gate PC games, but also had to distinguish itself from the bottleneck of substandard action-RPGs already choking the system (Warriors of Might & Magic, Summoner, Orphen, Evergrace, etc.). Well, fears were extinguished the instant the Snowblind Studios (developers of Top Gear Overdrive, among others) logo shot across the television screen.

The moment you start playing BG: DA—a game squarely planted in the Forgotten Realms campaign,

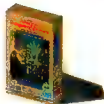
using the newest AD&D rulebook—you realize you're playing something special. You're a hero who has found him/herself in the way of the latest threat to Baldur's Gate and the Sword Coast, and while it initially feels like a glorified version of Gauntlet, you quickly discover the generous power-up and upgrade system. As with the previous Baldur's Gate games, every change of armor, weaponry and clothing is represented in full detail, and as you slay monsters, you gain experience points, periodically allowing you access to a power-up menu. Here you may spend those points on whatever spells or special attacks you find suitable for your character.

Aside from the new robust 3D graphics-engine, the most significant improvement to the first console-based BG game is the substitution of full analog control in lieu of the point-and-click antics of BG 1 & 2. Even though this is still just a first-generation PS2 game, everything feels right (a good thing, considering the occasional platform elements). Already firing on all pistons, Snowblind still has six months to hammer out the specifics of the level design and the enemy AI. The graphics engine is one of the most solid on the console, and the gameplay is en route to securing high marks come review time. Just wait until you see the reflection-mapped ice dragon spread its crystal wings from on high. Interplay is taking this series in the right direction on the consoles. 🐉



ALIEN NESS / ROCKSTEADY CREW, NYC





Although Stormfront primarily develops sports titles, the company has delivered its fair share of RPGs over the years, such as the original *Neverwinter Nights* for the PC in 1991.

Legend of Alon D'ar

Publisher:	The Learning Co.
Developer:	Stormfront Studios
Players:	1-2
Genre:	RPG
% Done:	60%
Release:	Fall
Main Try:	Evergrace
Web Address:	www.stormfront.com
The Good:	A very in-depth story accompanies the nice graphics.
The Bad:	The game's art style seems a little bland.
And The Ugly:	Most U.S.-developed console RPGs aren't that great...



Here we see one of your party members performing a Torch spell attack. He lifts an Orb of Flame and launches a bolt of fire at the enemy.



Stormfront aims to make the game's environments more detailed by adding trees, bushes, water and more.

PLAY A ROLL

The Story



Alon D'ar stars a young man named Jarik, whose village is attacked by the Daganí Warriors—or so people believe. Really, it was a bunch of changelings appearing as Daganí. So Jarik must prevent war between the Daganí and the humans. He is eventually joined by three other characters of other races from around the world. All four of the characters enter your party and can be used at the same time. "There are several themes in the story but the primary one is about redemption," says Tso. "Each one of the four party characters undergoes some type of transformation by the end of the game. There's also a love interest for Jarik and plenty of betrayals and twists."

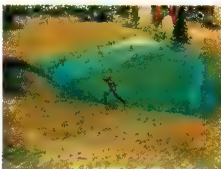
If there's one genre that the PS2 seems to be lacking in, it's RPGs. There haven't been many (except for several action RPGs), and the ones that have come out so far haven't exactly managed to impress. But that shouldn't come as a surprise—most game platforms don't get quality RPGs until a year or two into their lifespans. Stormfront Studios, known mainly for handling a multitude of sports games for EA, claims to have an RPG that might be finally worth some attention.

One of the most promising aspects of Alon D'ar is its seamless 3D world. "There is no transition or breakaway to a combat screen," says senior producer Jim Tso. "Barring ambushes, players will be able to see enemies in the environments and will

have the ability to move away or attack." This means no waiting or loading between battles. It also means you'll see giant environments that you can traverse without interruption. "The game world is composed of several zones," Tso continues, "and each one of the zones has wildly different climates, grassland, swamp, caves, arctic, city, etc. Each environment is populated by its own types of flora and fauna." The game uses several of the PS2 hardware effects such as dynamic lighting and particles, as well as procedural graphics and cloth simulation. "Instead of creating animation by hand, we can use the processing power of the PS2 to animate ambient creatures and plants in real time," says Tso.

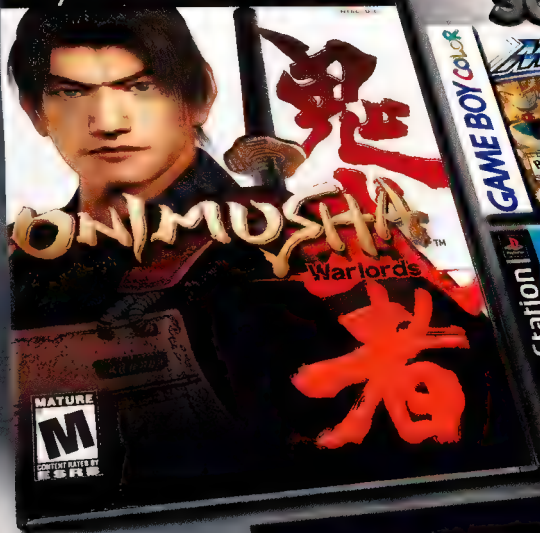
As for the combat system, Stormfront calls it "phased-combat." It's a mixture of real-time and turn-based," Tso explains. "During combat, you can select any character who is 'ready' and give him a command, which is instantly executed. All actions have a recovery time. The recovery duration depends on the action chosen and the object used. This provides the player with some interesting tactical choices." A second player can plug in a controller and also control members of your party. "We basically wanted people to be able to invite a friend over and play the game with them," says Tso.

In development since mid-1999, Alon D'ar is shaping up nicely. Look for more later this year. 🎮

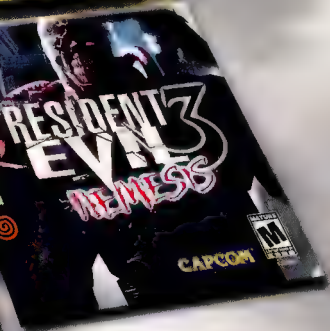


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PlayStation 2



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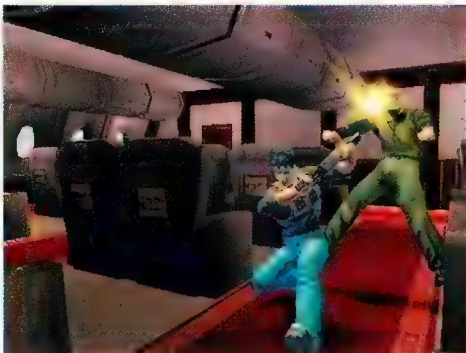
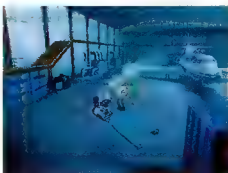
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On Feb. 18, on the final lap of the Daytona 500, Dale Earnhardt lost his life in what looked like a routine crash. Earnhardt was a seven-time NASCAR champion and a winner of 76 races since 1975. He was to stock-car racing what Michael Jordan and Wayne Gretzky are to their respective sports, and will be greatly missed.

Dead to Rights...

Here it is, the new PS2 game being developed by **Namco Hometek** (that's the American group). Not much is known at this point except that the team is aiming to recapture the feel of earlier John Woo films with this game. Expect a lot of gunplay, dramatic camera angles and spectacular, violent stunts. Right now there's no release date set for *Dead to Rights*, but we'll keep you posted.



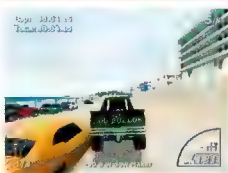
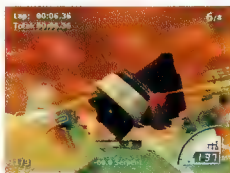
Rumble Racing

Now that we've had some quality time with **EA's** NASCAR Rumble follow-up (due this **summer**), we're more excited than ever. It plays exactly the same as before, but with some new cars, power-ups, tracks and the ability to do stunts.

Although stunts are limited to a collection of flips and rolls, completing a string of them during a jump rewards you with a speed boost when you land. It's the only way to win in the harder levels of the game.

The new cars and tracks are pretty inspired, especially some of the tracks specifically designed for jumping and stunts. Some of the older cars are back, sans their Winston Cup paint jobs, and most of the old tracks seem to be here.

Right now the game looks very clean, if not overly impressive. It has some nice particle effects and a very smooth framerate.



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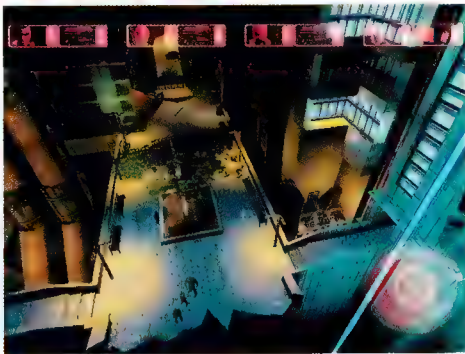
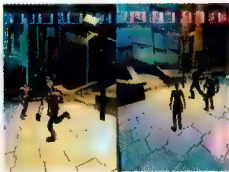
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Project Eden

Started as a PC-only game more than two years ago, Project Eden was quickly moved over to the PlayStation 2 after only a few months in development. But even though it's technically still a PC game at heart, **Core's** first major PS2 release for publisher **Eidos** is anything but a simple port—it doesn't look or feel like a computer game.

Classified as a third-person action/platform/shooting/puzzle/exploration title (talk about melding genres), Project Eden is, on its most basic level, a team-based adventure game. You can take control of any of your four squad members whenever you want, and use their special skills to navigate the huge, detailed areas and solve the mysteries behind this futuristic tale. It's kind of like X-Squad in a way. Strategy will be the only way to complete each mission.

The coolest news is this **summer** release supports four-player cooperative gameplay. So add cooperation to strategy. Hope you don't have too many grandstanding friends.



Test Drive

Outside of a couple decent Dreamcast games recently, the Test Drive series hasn't seen any real glory since its PC days with Accolade.

Infogrames recognizes that and decided to give **Pitbull Syndicate** (Test Drive 4, 5 & 6) a full year to rebuild the game from the ground up.

Their goal is to reinvent the franchise, to make Test Drive stand for quality again. From early demos, we have to say Pitbull is on the right track. They've decided to take the Beauty vs. The Beast path again (that is to say modern sports cars racing with classic muscle cars), including 20 licensed cars.

Races will take place in four real cities, two of which are New York and San Francisco. Pitbull says the opponent AI is more realistic than ever, and traffic and pedestrians will stand in the way of completing every race safely. The massive draw distance is quite impressive, too.

We'll have more on this **spring** release next month. For now, enjoy these screens of what could be Gran Turismo 3's biggest competition.



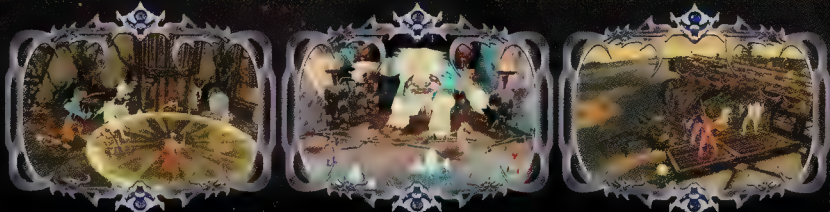
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The epic journey explodes with the all-new Gauntlet Dark Legacy, the only PlayStation 2 game with cooperative play for up to 4 people. With 8 playable characters, including 4 new alter egos, you'll slash together through 8 deadly game worlds with over 60 levels. Wield new weapons and join forces to use advanced combat moves against the bloodthirsty forces of evil. Prepare thy soul, brave one, for you are about to encounter Gauntlet Dark Legacy.



PlayStation 2



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PREVIEW GALLERY



Parts of Red Faction's plot may sound familiar: People developing horrible mutations, a group of disgruntled miners revolting, the giant mining vehicle—sounds a lot like *Total Recall*, the 1990 Schwarzenegger classic (well, classic in the minds of 13-year-old boys anyway). No word yet on a "remove the tracking device" mini-game.

Tokyo Xtreme Racer: Zero

Crave has another go at converting the masses into midnight street-racers with the upcoming **March** release of *Tokyo Xtreme Racer: Zero*, the PS2-enhanced version of *TXR2*. Fans of the series will enjoy the 125-plus cars on offer, beefed-up car models, slick reflection-mapping, finetuned control, improved rival AI, superior customization options, 60-fps framerate, and the two-player mode missing from the DC version.



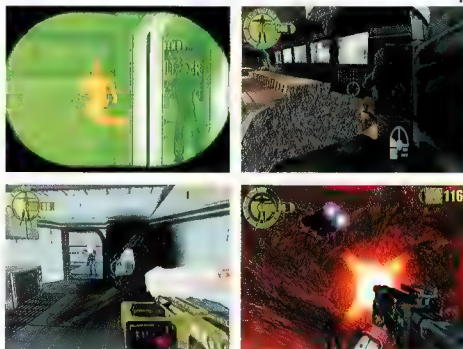
Tsugunai

Tsugunai is **Sony's** latest PS2 RPG, out **now in Japan**. The main character, Reis, is a wandering soul who has been removed from his body as punishment for stealing a precious gem. To redeem himself, Reis must travel the land, possessing the bodies of others and helping them solve their problems. Multiple mini-quests, interactive battles and music from Yasunori Mitsuda (*Chrono Cross*) round out this RPG.

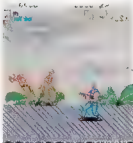


Red Faction

Of course the big story with **THQ's** upcoming first-person shooter is when you blow stuff up, it really blows up: Explosives punch holes in walls and carve out chunks of the ceiling, floor, pillars—anywhere that's made of rock. But the latest build of *Red Faction* includes a whole slew of other features that prove **Vollition** is serious about crafting more than a one-trick game here. For instance, you can pick up and move bodies, *Metal Gear*-style, to avoid alerting guards and tripping the alarm. Enemy soldiers scatter if a grenade drops nearby and panic hysterically when they realize you just strapped a bomb onto their backs. You can see—and shoot—through walls (top left) with the railgun. You get controllable vehicles, scripted events, two ways of firing weapons—we can't wait until **May**. The few questions that remain are the two-player split-screen multiplayer (which we haven't seen yet) and the framerate, which currently varies from (usually) like buddah to (sometimes) like crappah. *Vollition* promises they are hard at work on both issues.



To hell with those wussy allied officers in Codemaster's P.O.W. If you want some manly prisoner-breaking action, feast your eyes on SNK's classic P.O.W. (circa 1988), where two prisoners named "Snake" and "Bart" make a jail break the old-fashioned *Rambo* way: By moving left to right while punching, stabbing, shooting and charring armed guards by the thousands.

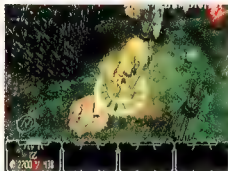
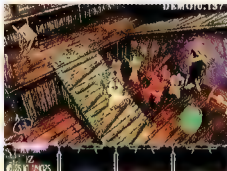
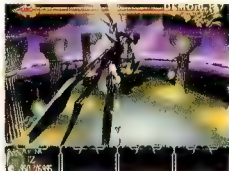
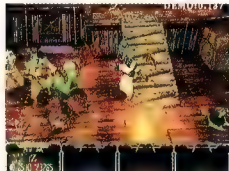


PS2

PREVIEW
GALLERY

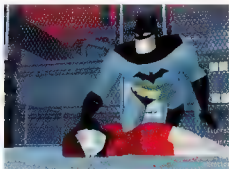
Gauntlet Dark Legacy

Trudging through dungeons to clobber elves with a warrior is fun, but lobbing bombs and bitch-slapping the masses on a flying aircraft carrier with a jester is delicious. **Midway** has lightened the frantic mood in this **May** release with cool levels (60!) and some new characters whose weaponry is tailored to their personalities. Weak or strong attacks, in addition to a combo and defend move, make combat a bit more tactical.



Batman (tentative)

We honestly know less about this game than we do about the location of the Batcave, but we wanted you to get the first look at these new screenshots of the Caped Crusader from **Ubi Soft**. As you can see, it is based on the cartoon series, and the graphics are promising for such an early stage of development. But we don't expect to see more on it soon, since there isn't even an official title for this **September** release.



Prisoner of War

Codemasters may have one of the PS2's most intriguing titles with their prisoner-simulator that's due out this **fall**. You control four allied officers who must escape the P.O.W. camps of Salonika, Stalag and Luft III, so that they can pool their talents in order to stage a massive breakout at Colditz Castle. Stealth is essential as you gather supplies needed to escape via well-timed explosives or even a hang glider.





PREVIEW
GALLERY



GUITAR MAN-GUN

Ted Nugent is more than just any "guitar man." When he isn't waiting away on one of his patented wicked flaming mountain-top jams, the Nuge enjoys bow hunting, fishing, marrying underage immigrants, and campaigning for George W. Bush and first-amendment rights. "I like to think of myself as Rosa Parks with a guitar and a middle finger," says Nugent. "You can't stop me. There's not a force in this country that can stop me. I love all people." For a free catalog featuring all kinds of Teddy goods, including arrow tips, beef jerky, clothing, posters and more, call 1-800-343-HUNT.

Guitar Man

We haven't been able to get the crazy visuals from *Koel's* PaRappa-inspired music game out of our heads since Tokyo Game Show last fall. The gameplay sounds simple enough: Using only one analog stick and button, tap and move along to the music (as shown by the winding red path on-screen). But how will the four-player battle and co-op modes work? We'll know when the import hits this **spring**.



Shadow Hearts

Koudelka developer **Sacnoth** returns with another gothic-horror title, this time an RPG due **later this year**. Battles have a few interesting quirks: One is a spinning wheel you stop with a well-timed button press for more effective attacks or magic. Your characters also have "sanity points," which decrease as battle goes on until they go nuts and you lose control of them altogether.



Maken Shao

Maken X wasn't a huge success on the Dreamcast, but **Atlus** has enough faith to give it another try on PS2. This is basically the same game—you slice through scores of bad guys and bosses with any of the multiple characters' wild blade weapons—with an added tutorial, surround-sound support, and most importantly a third-person view replacing the first-person perspective of the original. As for the voices...





IN AN EFFORT TO recognize as many entries as one page will allow, we present these superlative awards to:

- Legendary Legends*—Best Title
- Way of Peace*—Longest damn thing ever
- Atlantian Memories*—Most Elaborate Packaging
- War for Supremacy*—Oldest Entry (in the works for 10 years!)

RPG Maker Contest Update

Due to an overwhelmingly strong response to our RPG Maker contest, which kicked off last year and inspired countless readers to spend gobs of time assembling their masterpieces by the Dec. 31 deadline, we here at EGM decided to spend a little more time properly reviewing all these great games. Here's a sneak preview at some of the more inspired titles

we've seen so far. Don't see yours up here? Relax, we still have a bunch to play through, and even some of the games we already have deserve this spot just as much as these four. We just wanted to give everyone a look at some of the cool ideas that are coming in and just how expansive the imaginations of role-playing gamers out there can get. Squaresoft: Look on these works, ye mighty, and despair. This may just be the next wave of RPG-design competition!

Remote Control

Chronicling the misadventures of a young film student in a sleepy Oregon town, Remote Control piqued our interest for a number of reasons. From its custom art and music (created via sound effects) to its extensive film and game references, this RPG has truly mastered the off-beat approach. A video arcade at the very start of the game has you playing a ton of incredibly imaginative mini-games, including a DDR-style diversion and a very engaging dating sim. When a local pooch started singing "Who let the dogs out?", though, we unplugged our ears and agreed that **David Erwin** should be acknowledged for his subtle humor and "outside the box" gameplay ideas.



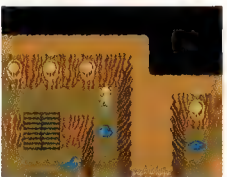
Crazy Horse

Holy custom art! We had to give **Dave Carter** props for his, um, "innovative" concept and use of custom art that sets Crazy Horse apart from the rest. More of a mini-game than an RPG, your objective is to raise enough money for your dying wife's operation by breeding your horse with others across the land. Due to its rather explicit nature, socially irresponsible themes and repetitive gameplay, there's no way it's gonna win (sorry, pal), but we agreed that it deserves a quarter-page in the limelight for the effort. Don't give up the art, man—just get yourself a design team to work on that story line and you'll be all set!



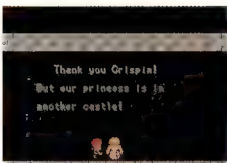
Wendell

OK, so the title's pretty lame, but **Joshua Barnes'** tale of a young magician growing into his powers has some pretty inspired features. Enemy encounters aren't random, but rather depend on whether you challenge (read: run into) an enemy on the screen, a la the Chrono Trigger. While this isn't the only game to use this system, it does a good job of allowing you to choose your battles and level-up as you see fit, rather than forcing you into repetitive, annoying combat, like so many other entries. Color-coded crystal balls scattered across the land fill up your power, save your game, offer combat challenges, or provide you with items—another clever feature. Not the most original entry we've seen but pretty darn solid and certainly fun to play.



Crispin's Quest

The current favorite of EGM Features Editor Crispin Boyer (for obvious reasons), Crispin's Quest stars Crispin, the elusive Sushi-X, ex-staffer Shawn Smith and a host of other EGMers, including our friends Hsu and Chan (of cartoon fame). Crispin's on a quest to win the respect of his peers and save the EGM offices from certain peril at the same time. It's not just the mag references that caught our eyes, however. Creator **Joel Regus** has obviously played a lot of games, and has creatively built his experience into this project. Dropped into several different game scenarios, including Resident Evil, and Zelda 64, Crispin has to rescue his friends while avoiding bad jokes and death at every turn. Let's hope he succeeds—we'd all like to have jobs for at least a few more years. And no, this game wasn't secretly submitted by Crispin.





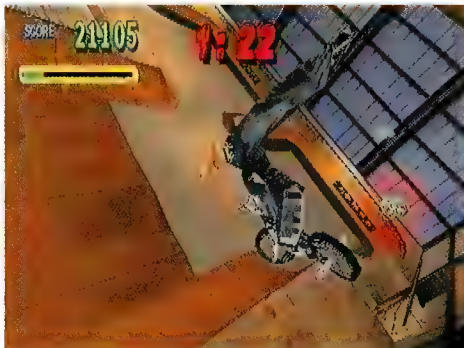
PREVIEW
GALLERY

50, 200, 40, 20

UNBREAKABLE
The number of concussions, stitches, broken bones and dislocated shoulders suffered by Mat Hoffman at his profession, respectively. Makes your job seem a lot nicer now, don't it?

Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX

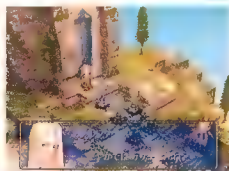
Apparently, positive response from a little game called Tony Hawk's Pro Skater led **Activision** to fund this BMX follow-up. MHPB is taking a lot of cues from its partner in grind at the hands of **RuneCraft**, but the two-wheeled successor has different tricks (duh), altered physics, and some handy features that will make it a fresh new experience. Example: Remember taking all those hard falls on the pavement when you run out of ramp in Tony Hawk? You can straighten out your ride and stick that horizontal landing in MH, which is a life-saver in and of itself. The popular level editor is in there, as are several of the sport's top riders. Count on a punk/hip-hop score from Orange County's finest (for whatever that's worth), and look for Mat 'round about **May**.



Hoshigami: Ruining Blue Earth

Strategy/RPG fans will have something to cheer about this **spring in Japan** when developer **MaxFive** unleashes Hoshigami, a game that'll undoubtedly be grabbing the attention of Final Fantasy tactics fans everywhere.

Gameplay is strongly reminiscent of FFT, but with several nifty innovations, including timing-based attacks (a la Paper Mario), the ability to move several times per turn, an intriguing "god" system, where characters gain abilities by choosing their faith from among six celestial spirits, and more. Throw in branching paths and over 40 different missions, and you've got what looks to be one of the most promising PS one titles of the year.



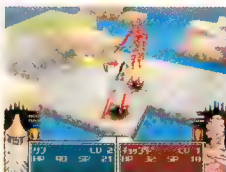
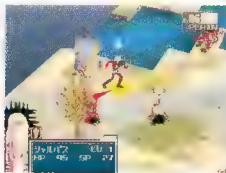
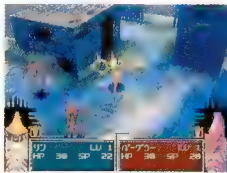
VIRTUAL AIRSIS

There's been a ton of Aladdin platform video games that date back to the Genesis, but if you want to try something entirely different, maybe the Aladdin ride at DisneyQuest is worth your while. It might be pricey to try the VR flight through the streets of Agrabah, but it's the closest you'll get to riding a Magic Carpet without getting rug burn. For more info and movies, try www.disneyquest.com.



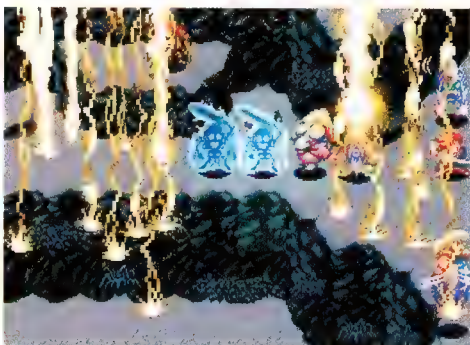
Volfoss

Namco's latest (and possibly last) role-playing game for the PS one is **now out in Japan**. Volfoss, a strategy/RPG along the lines of Final Fantasy Tactics or Vandal-Hearts, takes place in a strange world with an even stranger cast of characters. Battles are a bit on the simple side, but the big draw is the fact that there are over 200 missions, with branching paths, as well as a "Virtue/Evil" system that allows you to become either a braveheart or a badass on your path to destiny.



Arc the Lad Collection

We've played through the first disc in this collection, and we're here to tell you it's everything you'd expect: dated graphics, limited story line, short to a fault, and older than old-school gameplay. But underneath all that is a strong strategic battle system that still manages to stay fresh. As a stand-alone game, Arc the Lad isn't spectacular, but as a prelude to a three-game collection (courtesy of **Working Designs**), it may be a great introduction to a series that any RPG fan will want to play.



Aladdin in Nasira's Revenge

In this PS-exclusive platform game by **Disney Interactive** and **Eurocom**, you control Jasmine, Iago, Abu and Aladdin in their quest to stop Nasira, Jafar's evil twin sister. The gameplay is standard jump-and-attack (you wield a sword) fare, but with more emphasis on puzzle-solving than you might expect. This sequel arrives this **August**, but judging from the sharp visuals, it might be worth the wait.

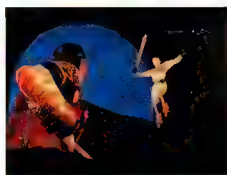




PREVIEW

New Legends

Publisher:	THQ
Developer:	Infinite Machine
Platform:	1
Genre:	Action
% Complete:	60%
Release Date:	Fall
Also In:	The Bouncer
Web Address:	www.thq.com
The Good:	Strong gameplay with tons of combos and weapons.
The Bad:	Huge environments make the game slow down at times.
And The Ugly:	Your character's face after a painful-looking cinematic.



New Legends packs plenty of cinemas using the in-game engine.

This giant hammer can plow through scores of foes on its own, and with the power bar filled, its special attack chews up the ground—and any enemies nearby.

OWN AND BUILT

Weapon Lord

New Legends is packed with nearly 20 different weapons, both close- and long-range types that can be combined. So, you can slash at the nearby enemy with the blade in your left hand, and shoot his faraway friend with that shotgun in your right. Nifty!



In early October THQ showcased a game created by ex-LucasArts designers—the very people responsible for the acclaimed Jedi Knight titles for the PC—and it looked amazing. But, strangely enough, they couldn't tell us what system it was for. Sure, they joked about "some box with an X," but what did that mean?

Silliness aside, THQ finally let us visit developer Infinite Machine and play the first major third-party Xbox title, New Legends. Running on a modified Unreal Engine, New Legends has you dashing around, hacking, shooting and just beating the crap out of swarms of foes as you explore huge Chinese-influenced locales.

In many ways, New Legends can be seen as a Final Fight game of sorts. There's little in the way of puzzles or role-playing elements; the focus is purely on combat. But what nifty combat it is.

Instead of most "beat-'em-ups" that surface with little or no depth (cough, Bouncer, cough), New Legends, in its 30-plus hours of gameplay, almost stifles the player with the amount of weapons and

combos he can use (see sidebar), and simply amazes with enormous (not to mention strikingly beautiful) areas.

We were running around a vast mountaintop road, jumping into snow-covered temples, taking control of huge sentry guns, and sprinting across sprawling wooden bridges—it's hard to convey in words the sense of scale that's presented here. New Legends easily has some of the largest and most intricately detailed levels seen in any game, ever.

But, at least with the version we played, there was an obvious price for such large environments. The Unreal Engine was never good at displaying outdoor areas, and in New Legends we saw some serious framerate issues. Infinite Machine is totally aware of this, though, and claim that they are concentrating on smoothing everything out, not to mention that they were still waiting for the final Xbox chipset.

We hope they do succeed in this, because with its strong gameplay and beauty, New Legends has all the makings of an instant classic. We shall see...

KICKING ASS WITH A POOL CUE

Motion Master

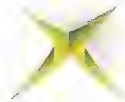
No, this isn't a fancy dance move. One of the key points infinite Machine has been working on for New Legends is the animation, and it shows. The main character moves like water, completely fluid, and the transition between combos is almost seamless. The picture below shows some frames from one of the many combos you'll be able to pull off using the staff.



Combat aside, New Legends also shines thanks to its incredible level design and texture work. Very cool.

THE REAL WIGGLES

The lucky, and no doubt proud, Australians have a children's music group called The Wiggles that releases CDs and tours the country. The fab four even have their own magazine! To find out more about them, visit their "wiggly Web site" at www.thewiggles.com.



PREVIEW
GALLERY

Halo

Take one look at Halo and you'll see why many are already labeling it one of the most graphically stunning games ever. If there's one title that can really show off Microsoft's new box this fall, it'll be Halo. Developed by **Bungie Software**, Halo features an almost Metal Gear Solid 2 level of detail. Your handgun realistically cocks when fired, bullet shells spray from your machine gun, and light realistically flashes off bodies and surroundings. Enter a jeep or tank and watch each wheel move independently over the terrain—and marvel at the smoke and gravel particle effects that trail behind. Halo is simply stunning.

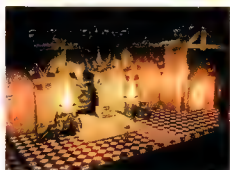
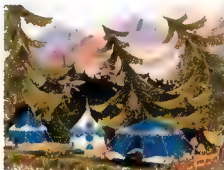
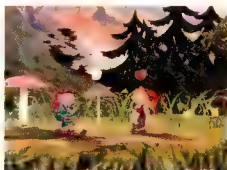
The game's single-player mode places you in the role of a cyborg warrior in the middle of guerrilla warfare on a distant planet. The enemy is an alien race intent on destroying humans. You'll eventually battle all over the planet, and command land, sea and even air vehicles. And Halo's multiplayer experience is being planned around broadband play. No word yet on split-screen.

Halo is planned for release on or shortly after the Xbox launch. To the right are shots of the PC version—on which the Xbox should improve.



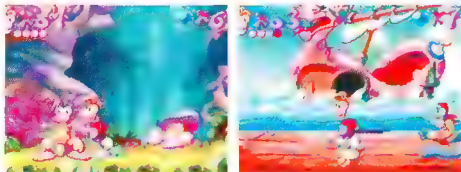
Wiggles

Godfather Odin has ordered his Wiggles to set forth on a long and arduous journey to take on the evil Fenris, who has been spreading trouble through the land. The Wiggles need to capture him—a job that will span several generations. Facing Dungeon Keeper-esque tasks, the player must guide his Wiggles through more than 100 quests, spanning four different worlds. Developed by **Innatics**, get ready for Wiggles this fall.



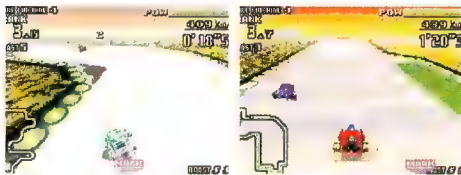
Rayman

Ubi Soft's mascot continues the fast-growing trend of classic games remade for the GBA, this time with veteran Game Boy developer **Digital Eclipse** at the helm. Come **launch**, Advance owners can guide Rayman through his original adventure (that's right, the one from the Atari Jaguar). Of course, it's been altered graphically to take advantage of the GBA's screen. Expect around 60 levels of platforming goodness.



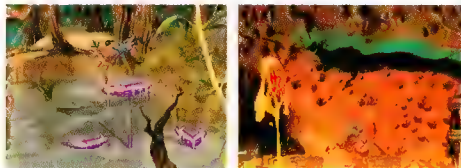
F-Zero Advance

Here are a few more shots for you to drool over as the U.S. Game Boy Advance launch this **June** looms ever closer. No doubt the reborn **Nintendo** racer will be one of the top sellers on launch day, especially looking at how the game is starting to shape up. Unfortunately we still don't know if this is one of the games that'll only require one cartridge for linked play, but here's hoping.



Heart of Darkness

While no U.S. publisher has been announced, **Infogrames** will be releasing this port on European shores. Heart of Darkness is the story of a boy who must rescue his dog Whisky from the forces of evil. Think Prince of Persia and Out of This World and you're in the ballpark. Heart of Darkness was pretty lukewarm as a PlayStation game, but it might just be the perfect fit for Nintendo's portable powerhouse.



Wild Riders

Wow! Entertainment is putting the finishing touches on this new arcade racing title, due out **March in Japan**. A cross between *Crazy Taxi* and *Jet Grind Radio* with a stylin' "American Comics" look, *Wild Riders* puts you in control of one of two bikers, Keith Raven or Trish Moon, on the run from the cops. The object is to flee through crowded city streets, forests and even inside buildings, avoiding traffic and any other obstacles that get in the way. By pulling up on the handlebar, you can perform a "wild jump" to get airborne, or push it in for a "wild slide" under trucks and barricades. If the cops catch up with you, it's game over.

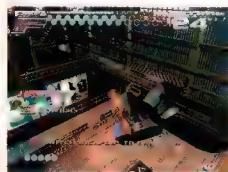


Air Trix

Remember *Top Skater*? No? OK fine. It was an old Sega arcade game where you traveled down various obstacle courses on a skateboard. The cool part was that the controller itself was a skateboard you could stand on, tipping it forward and back and side to side to perform tricks.

Air Trix is Sega's unofficial sequel to that game. Now the skateboard pivots up to 180° freely, and the competition takes place on a halfpipe. It might seem a little less exciting of a venue, but there's way more room for some kick-ass tricks.

However, the skateboard controller is also somewhat of a limitation, since there are only so many things you can do on a plank of wood screwed to a pivot. Still, you can do tricks, handplants and grinds if you learn the right timing and angle to hit the lip at. It's definitely worth trying.






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under the hood



By Crispin Boyer

“Don’t judge us before you’ve played the finished game,” says Daniel Suarez, Universal Interactive Studios’ producer of the new Crash Bandicoot title in the works for PlayStation 2. He’s demoing a 35-percent-complete version for us. Tentatively titled *Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex*, this sixth installment in the smasheroo franchise is set to hit the PS2 in November. And if Suarez seems a tad defensive, well, we asked for it. We’ve brought up the obvious question: Is he concerned that gamers will be wary of this game because it’s the first Crash title made with zilch creative input from Naughty Dog and Mark Cerny, the developer/producer team that crafted Crash’s

CRASH LANDING

The PS one's unofficial mascot is dropping onto PS2 in his first action-platform game since *Crash 3*. But without Naughty Dog at the helm, does this Bandicoot still got game?

first four outings?

It's a question we had to ask. *Crash's* recent history—described by Naughty Dog prez Jason Rubin as a “custody battle”—has been a bit confusing. We started scratching our heads two years ago when Naughty Dog told us *Crash Team Racing*—the fourth game in the series—would be their final *Crash* project; they wanted to make something new for PS2. Then last year Universal Interactive Studios, owner of the *Crash* franchise, said it was ending its publishing partnership with Sony Computer Entertainment of America. The party-themed *Crash Bash*, which was developed by Eurocom with help from Cerny and art files from Naughty Dog, would be the last *Crash* title

published by Sony. Most surprising of all, Universal announced Crash would be hopping to other platforms, specifically the Xbox and GameCube. The revelation sent Crash fans reeling. It seemed a screwy new direction for a character many gamers consider the PlayStation's unofficial mascot.

If Crash were a real-life bandicoot, we imagine he'd be suffering something of an identity crisis (well, when he wasn't eating lice from his fur, a pastime of real bandicoots). Now that Universal is producing and publishing Crash titles without the creative support of Cerny, Naughty Dog or even Sony (whose producers had contributed a couple of levels to past games), Rubin himself wonders if we're seeing the beginning of what he calls the bandicoot's "Fat Elvis period."

"Fat Elvis period?" Suarez asks. "I'm not convinced yet. Sonic survived from

Crash's funkier new vehicle is the Atlasphere, which is based on a real-life contraption (see inset below) that's no doubt familiar to *American Gladiators* fans. Atlasphere levels will involve tricky Marble Madness-style maneuvering around ledges, as this concept sequence shows.

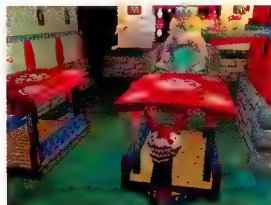


the Genesis to the Saturn to the Dreamcast. Mario went from the NES to the Super NES to the N64 to the GameCube. This is only Crash's first evolution." The evolution comes at a time when the stakes couldn't be higher for Universal. Crash titles are the best-selling character franchise on PS one, with more than 20 million games sold worldwide. In its first month out, Crash

Don't expect any reshaped level locales from the last Crash game. "Crash 3 had 10 unique environments, but we didn't want to use any of those," says Suarez. Instead, Crash will cross levels set in the arctic, Africa, the Wild West, on a volcanic island and even Kansas—complete with tornadoes.

Bash sold more than 250,000 copies. He's also the only character born in the USA to find blockbuster success in Japan and Europe. You'll even see someone in a Crash costume yukking it up at Universal's theme parks. A couple of bad games could bring the Crash Bandicoot gravy train to a grinding halt.

So you better believe Universal is being careful with this PS2 installment. Back in early 2000, they handed



Why Traveller's Tales?

For Crash Bash, Universal Interactive Studios chose U.K.-based Eurocom as the developer. For Wrath of Cortex, they chose Traveller's Tales, also based in England. But before you go thinking there's some Anglophile conspiracy going on, rest assured that the real reason Traveller's Tales is on the job ain't so sinister. "These guys, for a really long time, have been on the forefront of technology—they're just not as widely known as some other people," Crash producer Daniel Suarez says. "And when we approached them they actually had a really cool 3D rendered demo of what they thought they could push—a volcanic level with Crash running through it. So far they've come up to about 80 percent of what they said they could do."

Wrath of Cortex doesn't mark the first time Traveller's Tales has been handed the reigns of a big-name game character, either. Back in the late '90s, they did two Sonic games—Sonic 3D Blast and Sonic R—for Sega. Neither was a critical hit, but they were technically sound titles nonetheless. Now, because Wrath of Cortex borrows much of its gameplay from Naughty Dog's Crash titles, Traveller's Tales has a tried-and-true formula to build on. And Universal's betting that this combo of Traveller's Tales' technical expertise and the series' classic gameplay will make for a Crash game fans will find every bit as fun as the PS one installments. "Traveller's Tales is very determined to make this as good, if not better, than any sort of Crash game that has existed before," Suarez says.

Traveller's Tales Console Gameography

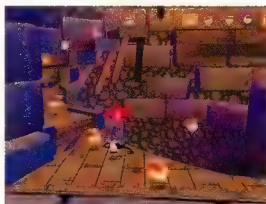
Leander (1990/Genesis)
Bram Stoker's Dracula (1992/Genesis, Super NES)
Puggsy (1993/Genesis, Super NES)
Mickey Mania (1994/Genesis, Super NES)
Toy Story (1995/Genesis, Super NES)
Sonic 3D Blast (1996/Genesis, Saturn)
Sonic R (1997/Saturn)
Rascal (1997/PlayStation)
A Bug's Life (1998/PlayStation, N64)
Toy Story 2 (1999/PlayStation, N64)
Muppet RaceMania (2000/PlayStation)
Toy Story Racer (2001/PlayStation)



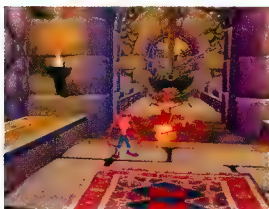
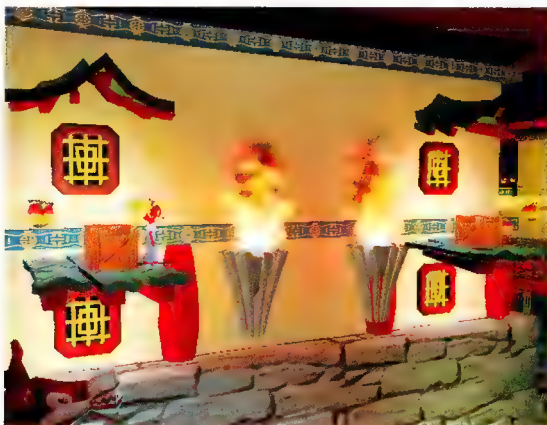
development duties to Traveller's Tales, the U.K.-based studio behind the excellent Toy Story 2, the so-so Bug's Life and the dismal Rascal, among about a dozen other titles of varying quality. Tucked away in their farmhouse offices in Knutsford, England, these guys follow the same austere approach to game design as fellow Brits Rareware: They work day and night. Their studio, nestled in the north-England countryside, is in the middle of nowhere. Social life? Who needs it. The Traveller's team would rather eat, drink and breathe games. And right now, the entire house is eating, drinking and breathing Crash.

Just don't expect them to reinvent the Bandicoot for his first post-PS one outing. Instead, they want to duplicate his success by, well, duplicating his games. "It would have been so easy for us to go in a whole new direction and then upset the millions of people who have bought and played Crash games," says Arthur Parsons, Traveller's Tales project leader on the new Crash title. "Instead, we have taken the good, fun elements of the previous Crash games and are building on these foundation stones." About 65 percent of the

gameplay in Wrath of Cortex is the same stuff you did in Crash 1, 2 and especially 3. In other words, you control Crash from behind, smashing crates, collecting Wumpa fruit, using the same basic set of moves (spinning, sliding and belly flopping onto baddies) and riding various vehicles. The camera occasionally switches to a side view for short bits of traditional, side-scrolling action, and sometimes it swings around in front of Crash, so that he's running toward the screen for a chase sequence. (Remember when that triceratops thundered after you in Crash 3: Warped?



That's what we're talking about here.) Even the collectible structure of the game is largely the same. Crash's goal is still to beat each level to collect a crystal, then go back and smash all the



crates to earn a gem. As in *Crash 3*, you can replay each level in a time-trial mode to win a relic. A percentile meter keeps track of how much stuff you've collected in your game. "We didn't want to mess with the formula," says Suarez, "which is pretty much great gameplay that's simple to understand and easy to pick up. That's what we want to retain. *Crash's* audience ranges from 6 years old to 50 years old, and we want to keep it that simple."

Keeping it simple is one thing; keeping it simple in a way that's fun is the tricky part. Naughty Dog's *Crash* games are among the best action titles on PS one, and Rubin and Cerny have admitted they drew much of their inspiration from Shigeru Miyamoto's

classic Mario side-scrollers. So *Wrath of Cortex* is nabbing its gameplay framework from past *Crash* games whose framework was built on Miyamoto's titles. In a roundabout way, *Crash* for PS2 is like a twice-removed cousin of Mario. And with a pedigree like that, *Crash's* next outing should—in theory anyway—make for a great game, right? Gamer expectations are certainly running high. "Mark Cerny and Naughty Dog did the best PlayStation games out there, so yeah, there's the pressure," Suarez says, "but *Traveller's Tales* has done an amazing job so far in terms of wanting to emulate and re-create what they'd done. We've looked at blueprints of levels that Mark Cerny did before, looking at how they did different things and really learning from that and taking it to the next level."

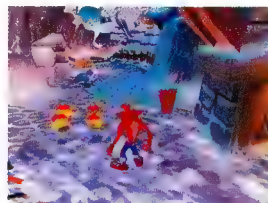
That brings us to the other 35 percent

Universal tells us it'll take you at least 60 hours to collect 100 percent of the crystals, gems and relics in *Wrath of Cortex*. In other words, this game will give you about as much stuff to do as *Crash 3: Warped*.

Does this gameplay look familiar? *Wrath of Cortex's* developers studied blueprints of the previous *Crash* games to help capture their old-school gameplay for this sequel. So are the original developers bitter? Mark Cerny is diplomatic on the subject. "I'm trying really hard not to be a Monday-morning quarterback on this one," he says. "I wish them the best of luck with the *Crash* franchise."

of the game that's unique to this installment. Of course, you get a new story with new characters. This time around, king *Crash* baddie Dr. Neo Cortex and his voodoo-mask boss, Uka Uka, are building a new secret super monster that'll finally crush *Crash* for good. To power up the creature, Uka Uka unleashes four ancient elemental masks—air, earth, water and fire—that will assault the land with natural disasters to release the energy-filled crystals so common to the series. Naturally, it's up to *Crash* to nab these crystals first and foil Cortex's plans. *Crash's* sister, Coco, plays a larger role, too. No longer confined to just riding a vehicle, she has her own moves and levels now.

Wrath of Cortex is divided into five hubs, each made up of five levels and a boss stage. The game will have new level types, too. Every hub, for instance, will contain an arena-type stage that has *Crash* cruising around in his new jeep or "Atlasphere" vehicle (basically a big hamster ball), trying to complete an objective while fending off Dingodile,



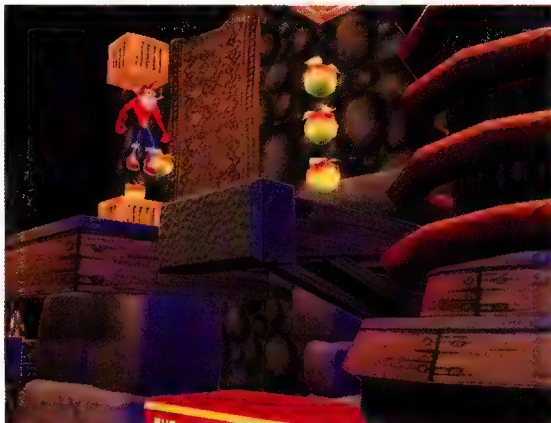


Tiny, N. Trophy and other boss enemies familiar to Crash fans. "It will be very Destruction Derby-esque gameplay," Suarez says. The game also introduces mini-bosses to the series, as well as much more elaborate boss levels. Now, instead of just jumping straight into battle when you pick a boss stage, you'll have to run through an obstacle-filled research center to reach each big battle.

One of the more striking additions to the classic Crash mix is the inclusion of a few wide-open areas, which sprawl off the tight linear path from time to time. Now we're not talking about a sudden shift into free-roaming Mario 64-style gameplay. When Crash encounters these open areas, you don't get control over the camera, and there's really not much to see anyway. The developers are

planning to fill these areas with puzzles that normally wouldn't fit within the confines of the series' usual tight paths. Still, seeing these open areas had us wondering why Universal didn't take things a step further with this installment and add in a few more 3D-adventure-game elements. "It was one of the things we originally thought of," Suarez says, "to change the formula and make it a free-roaming Banjo-Kazooie/Mario 64 type of game, and it was like, 'You know what? We want to be able to do it right.' And I think Crash fans are different. If you look at Spyro versus Crash, different people play both games. Crash is more widely accepted by a wider audience."

Crash will confront new enemies and a few new crate types this time around,



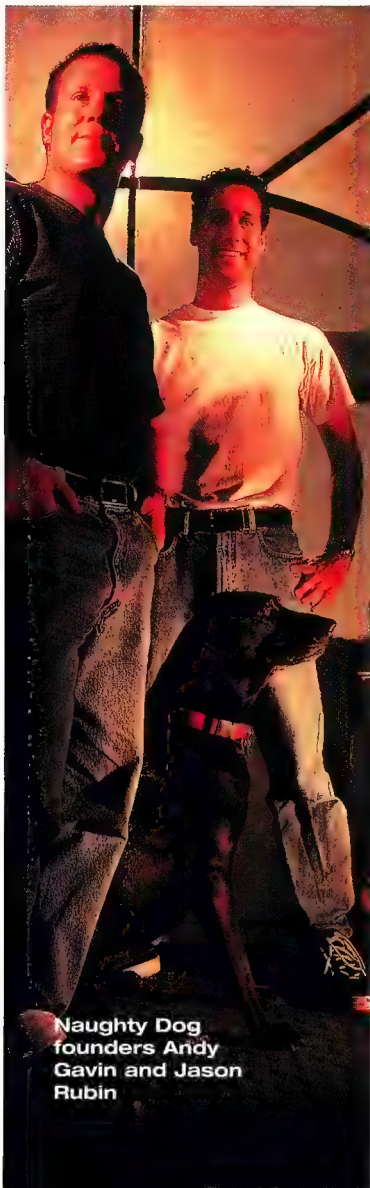
Which console's next?

Last year, Universal Interactive Studios announced it would bring Crash to other platforms after his PS2 debut. This year, they're backpedaling. "There has been speculation and misstatements that [Crash] is coming out for other platforms. It's not definite," Prity Patel, Universal Interactive's director of marketing, tells us.

"Nothing is definite right now. Nothing has been signed." In other words, Universal isn't quite ready to talk about possible Xbox or GameCube incarnations of Crash, although the studio has established a relationship with both console manufacturers. "The future of the industry is going multiplatform," Patel continues, "but only where it makes sense. Where it doesn't make sense, we're not going to do it. There's a misconception among people in the trade that we're selling Crash out to whoever wants it. That's not the case. We're interested in protecting the franchise."

Whatever console Crash lands on next, we don't figure that game will be a port of the PS2 title featured in this cover story. At least, that's the feeling we get from Traveller's Tales, who aren't developing Wrath of Cortex with portability in mind. "As a developer we are contracted to deliver the next generation of Crash Bandicoot games on PS2," project leader Arthur Parsons says. "As such, we want to do the best job possible, so we will be using every trick we possibly can to wow the gaming public. If when finished Crash is to go elsewhere—and note the "if"—then it is up to whoever does the port to work out how to do what we have done on another machine. There is no point at all in doing a game that does not take full advantage of the hardware that is available."

Word from the dog house...



Naughty Dog founders Andy Gavin and Jason Rubin

He's been called "The Father of Crash Bandicoot," although he freely admits that Crash was created by a handful of folks at Naughty Dog and a couple of Hollywood character designers. Nevertheless, Naughty Dog president Jason Rubin still feels pangs of parental concern after bidding Crash farewell. To wit, Rubin's remarks:

EGM: What do you think of the direction that Universal is taking *Crash*?

Jason Rubin: I don't really have an opinion on *Crash*'s new direction because I haven't played the new *Crash* title. I will say, however, that the movie Universal released on the Web of *Crash PlayStation 2* was totally unimpressive...both in comparison with what a *Crash* title should look like and in terms of technical ability. Mark [Cerny] and Sony were there during the creation of *Crash 1* through *3*, and Sony was there during the production of *CTR: Crash Team Racing*, so there were good, knowledgeable people advising Eurocom during the production of *Crash Bash*. Any new product is being done without Naughty Dog, without Mark Cerny and without Sony. That alone would lead me to be pessimistic. After seeing the movie, I would wager that being pessimistic is giving them the benefit of the doubt. But only time will tell.

EGM: How do you feel about Universal for going *Crash* to Traveller's Tales?

JR: I don't have strong feelings either way about Traveller's Tales. I would like to think that we set pretty high standards with the series, and Eurocom had the advantage of being able to use all of Naughty Dog's original artwork when they were making *Crash Bash*. On a new system, with expanded capabilities, old reference artwork becomes almost useless, so Traveller's Tales will be starting from scratch. I wish then luck!

EGM: What do you think of Traveller's Tales using your and Cerny's design blueprints for their *Crash* games and using them as a guide for this new installment?

JR: If it is true, then I think it is a mistake. We moved on from the platform games to *CTR* because we felt that the *Crash* style platform game—linear, in/out, left/right gameplay—had gotten stale. We didn't want to make more games using that design because we thought that people wanted something more. Certainly, on a machine as powerful as the PlayStation 2, a developer should offer something new. We also enjoyed being able to leave the *Crash* universe behind and begin something new, with new rules and new style. I have to say, I wouldn't want to be tasked with making a "Crash-style platform game" on the PlayStation 2, in 2001.

EGM: Do you feel that Universal is, for lack of a better term, whoring *Crash* out? Or are they being smart with him, picking the right games, developers, etc.?

JR: I honestly don't know how to answer this. They certainly don't dress like pimps. But then again...In all seriousness, I think we will have to look at this next title when it comes out before making that kind of statement.

EGM: If you were still doing *Crash* today on the PS2 hardware, what sort of new things would you have done with the series/character?

JR: You'll have to wait until you see our new title...soon.

specifically a Nitro crate that senses movement and detonates if Crash wanders too near. Fortunately, Crash will learn a new tip-toe move that'll let him sneak safely past. As in Crash 3: Warped, you'll earn super-sized versions of the basic moves once you beat a boss. Vehicles in Wrath of Cortex are plentiful. Aside from the jeep and Atlaspere, Crash and Coco will find a

Will you get the new PS2 Crash game even though it's not being developed by Naughty Dog?

I'm not sure 2665

I'll have to wait and see.

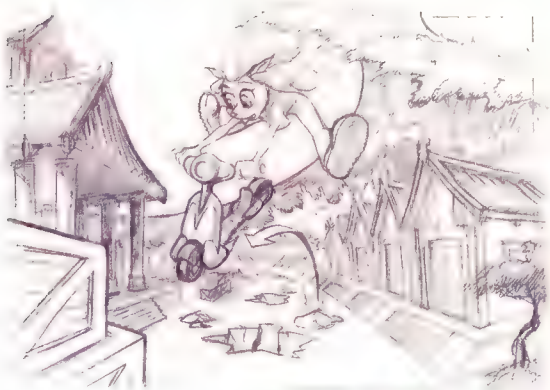
No 1554

Not if Naughty Dog isn't making the game.

Yes 513

I love Crash and can't wait to play his next game.

Source: GameSpot Video Game Poll, 02/23/01

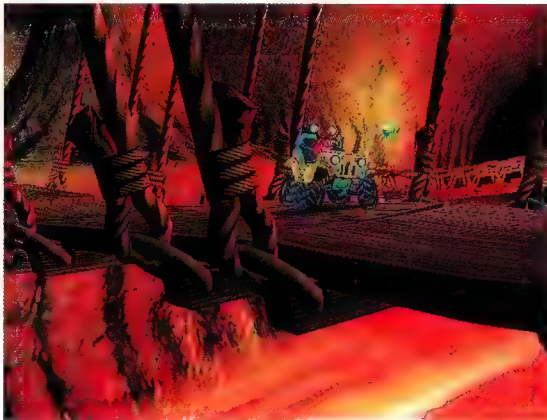


More than anything else, it's the toward-the-camera chase sequences that'll push the PS2, says Universal. You'll be pursued by a stampeding herd, as well as a massive tsunami wave and an avalanche. Traveller's Tales is kicking the particle and terrain-deformation effects into overdrive for these sequences.



hang glider, helpack, submarine—even an exosuit mech right outa *Aliens*.

Sure, this all still sounds familiar—it sounds sooo PS one. But the developers say they're tweaking the gameplay and updating it for PS2 where they can. "Overall, we feel that the gameplay in Crash works really well," Parsons tells us. "The only thing that doesn't is some of the puzzles that need completing to get all of the gems. Without a play guide, it would be impossible to find everything and fully complete any of the Crash games. We intend to make this game itself more logical, without breaking the mold." One way they're doing that is by including new Elemental Crates in the game. Now, after you beat





Wrath of Cortex may still be a tough sell for gamers reluctant to buy a Crash game without the Naughty Dog name—especially after the less-than-stellar Crash Bash. But this extra pressure is a good thing, if for no other reason than it's lighting a fire under the publisher and developer. “We have to make this a really good game,” Suarez says. “People are expecting it. And if we let them down, it’s going to ruin the franchise.”

And so the guys at Traveller’s Tales work day and night, eating, drinking and breathing Crash, stopping only when nosy game journalists ask that same obvious but essential question posed to Suarez at the top of this article. “We all know full well that whatever end product we end up with, certain elements of the press and public will dismiss this game because of the Naughty Dog and Traveller’s Tales transition,” Parsons tells us. “At the end of the day, if we as the developer and Universal as the producers are happy with the game, then we know that the unbiased press and public will love the game. The pressure of the media and hype will not really get to us.” 🐨

The New Crash

In Crash’s past PS one installments, his in-game character model was comprised of about 500 polygons. In Wrath of Cortex, he’ll be made of 1,800, and that boost in complexity makes for a boost in detail, too. Here’s a rundown of what makes the new in-game Crash, well, new and improved...

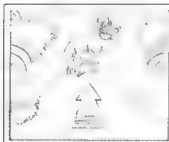
Crash’s facial structure is designed to animate at several points, including his eyes, eyebrows, cheeks, ears, nose and lips. Expect plenty of in-game facial expressions. Oh, you can see his uvula now, too.

Crash’s tuft of hair is more complex and realistic.

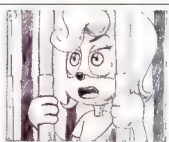


Stitching is now visible on his jeans and shoes.

His pants have a designer label.



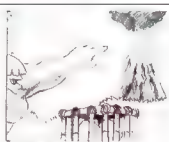
The sketch shows the character's face with various points of articulation and movement lines.



The sketch shows the character's face with various points of articulation and movement lines.



The sketch shows the character's face with various points of articulation and movement lines.



The sketch shows the character's face with various points of articulation and movement lines.

After years of aborted attempts, console-online gaming is finally here. EGM dives into the revolution to find out where it's going, who you're playing against, and how you can hook into the burgeoning online console community.

By David Kushner


SEE YOU ONLINE

You fragged Dickhead!!" The message scrolls across the top of the screen in blood-red letters. It's midway into an online deathmatch of Quake III Arena, the insanely popular first-person shoot-'em-up. At the moment, Dickhead—some anonymous gamer out there in the ether of Internet play—has indeed just been fragged after dumbly jogging into the path of a cold metal rocket.

But of course he's not really dead. He's just set back, temporarily vaporized into a puff of binary 1's and 0's that tells the graphics-rendering program to scrawl a bloody husk of dead cyborg on the bottom of the

arena floor. Such is the gladiatorial allure of online gaming: Even when you die, you always come back. Thing is, for the past decade or so, online gaming was the clandestine domain of hardcore computer gamers, not console players. Though there were some embarrassing attempts to bring living-room gamers into the online arena over the years (see page 99), none of them ever achieved success. This left fans of Nintendo, Sony and Sega to more or less gnash their teeth and mutter, "Maybe one day we'll get to lay the smack down too."

That day is now. In the evolution of video gaming, XaK will go down as the year that console gamers hooked online. Despite initial delays, Sega is currently the first (and only) one out of the gates, with a fully functional online gaming network that allows Dreamcast owners to duke it out over dial-up and, for a few games, broadband Internet connections. By the time all the rest of the next-



generation hardware—Xbox and GameCube, plus the PS2's broadband adapter—hits shelves, console gamers will find themselves with numerous channels into the online thunderdome.

And as of quite recently, it appears that what they find there will be very compelling indeed. Not only will gamers be able to experience much of what made PC online gaming such an underground/overground sensation (the visceral shooters, the mind-altering role-playing worlds), they'll be doing all the cool stuff that console fans associate with, well, console gaming—cooperative sports games, adrenalized head-to-head auto racing, and online RPGs with story lines and aesthetics more in tune with traditional console fare.

There are still a few hurdles in the way, however, some of them formidable. Will consumers embrace broadband connections fast enough for the plans of Sony and Microsoft—the two console manufacturers who've banked on the technology? Will that elusive and magical thing that made online PC games such a phenomenon—the community, the human factor—take hold with the console crowd? And will fledgling online service SegaNet survive Sega's recent shakeup? As console makers are finding out, there's a lot more to successful online play than a modem and a rocket launcher. Cultivating a world of Dickheads isn't just a science—it's an art.

Ports of Call

Gee, what do all these consoles have in common? Dreamcast may be the first system to launch with out-of-the-box online connectivity, but it won't be the last. Nintendo's violet GameCube will ship with optional dial-up and broadband adapters. The Xbox's rear sports a built-in ethernet port. Meanwhile, PS2 owners must wait for the hard-drive/ethernet adapter plug-in, which snugs into the system's backside hatch and is supposed to hit this year.



"You're new aren't you?"

The voice taunts me from the speakers of a stealth black TV high up in an office of Sega's San Francisco headquarters. I'm holding the controls of 18 Wheeler: American Pro Trucker, a racing game set to be released this spring with online multiplayer play. Like a lot of gamers, I've been in this position before, lamely fumbling through a new game, trying to master the feel, the finesse, while some bitchy AI insults my failed attempts. "You're in my way, green horn," barks a voice blazing by me in a black truck licked with fiery orange decals. "Don't pull that rig in front of me!"

The only thing better than getting harangued by some

punk-ass AI opponent, of course, is getting harangued by some punk-ass real-life player—which is precisely what's going to happen when games like Pro Trucker become available for online play over the course of the year. "What we want to do is deliver a fun experience," says Sega Product Manager Rob Alvarez, "and what makes it fun is to hear your friends scream." Sega has made a big investment in trying to make gamers scream. Because they're the first console giant heading into the online arena, I've come for a closer look at just how and what they're doing—especially now that the company is halting Dreamcast production and making online gaming, along

with developing games for other systems, a core focus of their business model. Although the Dreamcast's days are numbered, Sega is gearing up about half of its upcoming DC releases for online play.

And Sega.com—Sega's independent online-gaming company and ISP—doesn't plan to shut its doors once the Dreamcast fizzles out. Quite the contrary: Sega.com hopes to

bring its SegaNet service (which at last count had more than 200,000 subscribers) to other platforms, including consoles, set-top boxes and cell phones, while still supporting the Dreamcast as long as its owners demand it. "We have led the way over the past 18 months, but it's been kind of a lonely path," says Sega of America President Peter Moore. "I'm hoping that all of our



Sonic Team broke the online ice with the pre-SegaNet ChuChu Rocket. Now, their Phantasy Star Online defines a new genre.

Opponent Profile: The QgirlZ

There's a fresh breed of virtual killers on the loose, lurking in the darkest corners of cyberspace, waiting to pounce on their next unsuspecting victim in a heated round of Quake III Arena. But before you conjure up visuals of relentless psychopathic hitmen, keep in mind these savvy game players are not even men to begin with. The next generation of femme fatales is one of the fastest growing (and deadliest) demographics of the 3D-shooter phenomenon.

And arguably one of the most popular,

successful and feared female teams is the QgirlZ clan (www.qgirlz.com), a 3-year-old, 12-member organization with players spread coast to coast across North America, from Vancouver to New York. QgirlZ is currently sponsored by nVidia and has won many heated tournaments ranging from the Femme League to NYC's Female Frag Fest to the coveted Frag 4 event.

"We play Quake III because it gives us a chance to be competitive and experience the adrenaline rush of a tight game," says

Alison Suttles (a.k.a. "Trillian") of the QgirlZ. When asked why it's a more male-oriented sport and why this is changing in the new millennium, Trillian adds, "Well, as women become a stronger force in the world—and especially in the technical world—more young girls are finding successful, competitive role models. Hopefully, as this continues, more and more girls will feel comfortable playing computer games, learning programming, exploring their scientific and mathematical world."



network expertise in our games will find homes on other consoles. We're certainly offering that expertise to other platform holders." It should be noted, however, that at least one hardware manufacturer isn't biting. Nintendo tells us they're establishing partners in their online endeavors right now—but SegaNet won't be one of them. Still, now that Sega's going online, they say, there's no going back. "Within the next couple of years, every one of our console games will have some kind of online component, period," says Skip McIlvaine, director of games business development for Sega.com.

Sega's certainly not alone in this ambition. The three other major console manufacturers—and even mega-publisher Electronic Arts—are secretly putting together their online

strategies. Though they're eager to keep their plans and mouths zipped, this much is known on the hardware front: Microsoft will include a built-in ethernet port when Xbox is released, and games that support online play (including Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2X and Halo) should ship at or near the system's launch; Sony, which neglected to include a modem with PlayStation 2 units, will offer a broadband adapter separately; and Nintendo's GameCube will be accessorized with a 56K modem and broadband adapter. We expect the companies' online plans to become much clearer at the industry's big powwow, May's Electronic Entertainment Expo, or perhaps even sooner.

There's good reason they're keeping quiet. As PC games have proven over the last few years, online games have

become the "it" niche. Shooters like Quake III Arena and Unreal Tournament, as well as RPGs like Ultima Online and Everquest, have raked in huge bucks and hype. Everquest alone has attracted 300,000 members, some of whom spend up to \$3,500 offline bucks for characters and virtual tchotchkes on eBay. Even more people are getting off on casual online parlor games like backgammon and chess.

For console makers, the scene cultivated by the PC gaming world is ripe for the plucking. According to the numbers, plenty is at stake in

capturing the online arena. Forrester Research, a technology research group in Boston, expects 18 million people to play online games this year, with accompanying revenues surpassing \$1.6 billion. By next year, the company expects nearly one quarter of all games produced will be played online.

And though most of the money will come from game sales, there's a world of advertising to be capitalized, too. Jupiter Communications, another research firm, estimates that online games generated \$106 million

The QGgirlz aren't really particular about the gender of their online victims. "Men...women...we're just interested in winning," Trillian says. "Like with any team, however, you have rivals. That's what feels good—when you beat your rivals—and we've had both male and female rivals."

Trillian says her and the rest of the dirty dozen at Qgirlz play Quake III Arena on PCs rather than the Dreamcast version, but she admits she's curious to see how it'll play out online between the two platforms.

So, if you think you have what it takes to take down these maneaters, put your mouse where your mouth is and keep your eyes peeled for the name "QGgirlz" in the QIII Arena lobby. You never know when these girls might pick a fight with you Dreamcast gamers.

—Marc Saltzman

Alison "Trillian" Suttles—lethal at Quake



Photo by Mike Floyd

What to watch for...

It looks like we may never see an online version of Half-Life for the Dreamcast after all, and tantalizing titles like the massively multiplayer RPG Farnation and Phantasy Star Online 2 won't hit the DC until next year, but that doesn't mean your cupboard of networkable games will be bare for the rest of 2K1. You can already get your online jollies from new releases Daytona USA Network Racing, Worms World Party and Unreal Tournament (check our reviews), and here's a look at the more promising online games hitting this year...

• **18 Wheeler: American Pro Truckner** (April, DC)—Haul cargo across the U.S. of A. in a highway race against an online rival in this big-rig sim. And you wasted all that money learning to drive semis at Truckmaster.

• **Outtrigger** (April, DC)—Think of this kinetic first-person shooter as Quake III Arena for the arcade crowd. We're talking hyperspeed gameplay in smashlit arenas.



“What we’re saying is ‘you’ll connect, yes, you’re going to connect.’”

—Sega’s Charles Bellfield

worldwide last year alone from in-game advertisements and subscriptions. For advertisers, the sites are especially enticing because of their so-called “stickiness,” their ability to keep visitors glued to their pages for extended periods of time. Though most sites offer free gaming to visitors, subscription revenues are expected to grow from \$41 million at the end of 1999 to \$360 million in 2003.

Console game makers don't want to just glean from the success of online PC gaming—they want to kick PC ass. Inside the Sega conference room, the company's vice president of marketing and corporate communications, Charles Bellfield, is quick to point out how and why. “If you want to play online games, a PC sucks,” he says. “How many times do you have to reinstall [software like] Direct X? How much time

did you waste having to decide on what graphics card to buy? On the PC side, you're always having to deal with the technical issues. For us, online gaming on a console has to be the same plug-and-play, ease-of-use experience our gamers expect.”

This is why players don't hear that familiar dial-up screech when they connect a Dreamcast online; Sega built the DC modem without an internal speaker. “We wanted to avoid anything that remotely felt or sounded technical,” Bellfield says. “We wanted to remove words like lag and latency. What we're saying is ‘you'll connect, yes, you're going to connect.’”

Bellfield says that, now that Sega is abandoning hardware development and focusing on software, the company's currently entering into the third phase of its plan to take over

Photo by Amy Pereira

Bob Blandeburgo craved competition, so he kicked off his own league.

Opponent Profile: The Commish

Let's face it—we all know a big part of playing football video games is kicking back on the couch with your buds, cussing up a storm, and the occasional elbow jabs and tackles (yep, the movie *Swingers* had it down perfectly). But now that we've entered the era of online-console gaming, we're beginning to see new ways to bond with the boys while indulging in some Gridiron Goodness™ at the same time.

Case in point: New virtual leagues of diehard NFL 2K1 players have formed, created for football fanatics to compete over the Net against other likeminded couch-potato quarterbacks. A shining example is the BTNG NFL 2K1 League, which stands for Browns:

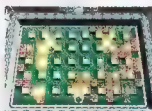
• **Alien Front Online** (May, DC)—Side with the good-guy earthlings or invading alien troublemakers in this arcade port crammed with firepower and heavy-metal hardware (you can drive either a tank or an alien mech).

• **Ooga Booga** (May, DC)—Up to four players can bounce around in dozens of online mini-games. This



jungle-themed goofball title comes from the DC masters at Visual Concepts.

• **Bomberman Online** (June, DC)—Sure, you've played dozens of iterations of this console classic, but have you ever played it online? You will this summer.



• **Sega's 2K2 sports games** (Fall, DC)—Before the crew at Visual Concepts starts bringing their sports series to other systems, we're due for new DC installments in the NFL, NBA and World Series Baseball franchises. Foam number-one hands not included.

• **Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2X** (Fall, Xbox)—The Xbox's ethernet port means you'll see an online-compatible game for the system at launch. THPS2x will let skaters compete against each other over the Net. Expect Halo to offer network play, as well.

the online-gaming universe. "It's all about building the roster now," he says. In other words, it's about the games: the stuff that spawns them, the stuff they spawn, and the challenges of making them come to life.

The receiver is going out for the long bomb. The QB drops back for the pass. The jets defense charges in for the kill. But the quarterback evades the big D and throws a hail Mary rocket right for a TD. Yep, the team has done it again—but not alone. These guys did it with the help of me, CptLint, playing NFL 2K1 on one end of the modem, and some sardonic gamer out in the ether named Shiny Skins.

As I uncontrollably pump my fist in the air, I realize this is a perfect example of what online console games should be: exciting, different, fun and—



NFL 2K1 cracked NPD's list of 20 best-sellers—a rare feat for a DC title that shows gamers crave online play in sports games.

don't laugh—athletic. Sure, I'm not going to work out much more than my thumbs, but I'm talking about athletic in the real homestyle, backyard-football sense. The competition. The leagues. The ritual of playing against the same or similar people throughout the week.

This is really what is, can and will differentiate online console gaming from PC gaming: the sports thing. Yes, PC games can be sports-like (multiplayer



Quake clans come to mind), but they are not sports sports: football, basketball, baseball, racing—they're all a big part of console gaming that has never really taken off on the PC. It's no surprise then that sports titles like NFL 2K1 and NBA 2K1 have been some of Sega's first and most successful entries into the online arena.

But here's the cool news.

According to the developers working under the hood, sports games are just the beginning. Brad McQuaid is vice president of Verant Interactive/Sony Online, the company behind the enormously successful PC online RPG Everquest. He says that there are no genres of online gaming that he "would totally rule out" for console gaming, not even massively multiplayer RPGs. "Sony Online/Verant is determined to be the leader in online gaming, regardless of platform," he asserts. If you read between the lines, that sure sounds like you might be seeing some kind of massively multiplayer Everquest-style action on the PlayStation 2 (trust us, it's

The Next Generation NFL 2K1 League, hosted by btng.com, the largest Browns fan site in cyberspace. Their URL is a long one but worth punching into your browser: www.BrownsTNG.com/browns/features/videogames/2000_league.asp.

Bob Blandeburgo, the 27-year-old "commissioner" from Bel Air, Md., established the BTNG league soon after NFL 2K1 was released. "I wanted to make sure the game performed well online," he says, "and when I discovered it did, I

decided to start the league—just for pure fun. Now that I'm out of college and my wife doesn't like many video games, I rarely have a human opponent to play against. For me, online gameplay was a huge factor. It adds so much to a game's replay value because of humans' unpredictable nature. And hey, talking trash with the keyboard can also be fun, especially if you know the person you're playing."

Blandeburgo believes the lack of online support for games such as EA Sports' Madden franchise makes them less

appealing on store shelves. "Madden is an excellent game in almost every aspect, but the lack of online play is what puts it a small notch behind NFL 2K1," Blandeburgo says. "I play games not just for fun, but to socialize as well."

The BTNG NFL 2K1 League is ramping up and recruiting new members for the 2001-2002 season. Would you like to be one of them? Drop by the official BTNG NFL 2K1 league to register for the following season—or check out our sidebar on the final pages of this feature for more info on jumping into Dreamcast sports leagues.

—Marc Saltzman



“Just because you can play DC versus PC doesn’t mean you should.”

—Epic’s Cliff Bleszinski

coming). Sega, for one, has confirmed that it is currently working on such a game, called *Farnation*, for the Dreamcast. And already gamers have seen classic shooters like *Unreal Tournament* and *Quake III Arena* make the leap to online-console play.

On one level, then, it seems like console gamers stand to get the best of both worlds online: all the wicked titles they expect to find on consoles—the sports games, the fighting games (eventually), the RPGs—plus all the games they never really dabbled in on a PC, stuff like first-person shooters and massively multiplayer games. All you have to decide now is how to connect, the fatter your pipe the better. And to promote faster connections, console makers are making broadband part of the action. Thing is, it’s not really that cut-and-dry. The realities of getting a broadband connection into the home these days are not always easy. For example, I have a DSL connection in my home office but not in my living room,

where I play my console games. If I want my DC broadband adapter to work, I’ve got to pay my phone company to hook up an extra DSL line. Even if I was willing to put up with the hassles and extra cost, the latest numbers show that only 31 percent of households will have a broadband connection by 2004. That means, odds are, I’ll be playing broadband *Quake III* against some sucker on a 56k dial-up modem. Not fun for the 56ker.

Right now, Sega is trying to level the playing field by making games like *NFL 2K1* automatically default to a modem speed of 33.6k; in other words, no matter how fast your modem may be, the game drops down to 33.6k level of action. No gameplay is lost, Sega’s Bellfield says, “because the game simply doesn’t require any more bandwidth.” Sega thinks that being conscientious about low-bandwidth plebeians will give it the edge, since the other console makers are focusing the bulk of their resources on

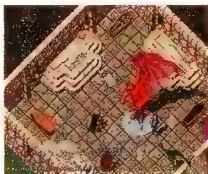
broadband play.

Problem is, Sega’s also banking quite a bit on its SegaNet online service, which currently charges gamers for Internet service, as well as relatively lag-free gameplay (similar pay-to-play services, sites like *Mplayer* and *Total Entertainment Network*, bombed on the PC front). Right now, though, Sega isn’t offering broadband subscription service. So that means if you buy a broadband adapter and want the SegaNet goodies, you have to pay for both the SegaNet ISP and a broadband provider. Yeesh. Even stickier, offering ISP service means Sega has essentially gotten into an entire different industry. ISPs have to provide service and employ bleary-eyed lackeys in matching yellow jackets who talk you through your setup snafus over the phone. How uncool is that?

Finding your way online is one thing. But there’s another issue that’s even more elusive: community and how to build it. One element that really made PC online gaming work, made it thrive, was the spontaneous boom of online-gaming culture. This ran/runs the gamut from obsessive fan sites, chat boards and news ‘zines to trash-talking home pages, clan rings and tournaments. All of these phenomenon grew organically by and for gamers.

Now here come the console makers with the *intention* to create community—or at least

give players the right games to build a community around. Of course, online communities are fairly easy to foster on the PC, thanks to its keyboard and mouse for chat and other important communication functions. But those are two peripherals that most console gamers don’t want tangled under the coffee table. Though it may sound minor, the keyboard/mouse problem is a major issue. “If you’re asking console gamers to go out and buy a keyboard and a mouse, you’re asking a lot,” says Ed Fries, vice president of game publishing for Microsoft’s Xbox. His cohort, Seamus Blackley, director of Xbox Advanced Technology Team, agrees, saying, “There’s a truism in games: Anything you don’t include never gets supported.” This might explain why Sega has done its best to package a keyboard and mouse when it can (gamers who sign up for 24 months of SegaNet get a keyboard for free). But I’m willing to bet that most console gamers don’t/won’t have keyboards. That means that game developers have to figure out a way to let gamers do all the necessary keyboard stuff via the game controller. Needless to say, that’s a tricky proposition; just how do you tell someone to, say, “bite your hard drive” if you can’t type it on to the screen? As Dennis “Thresh” Fong, the Michael Jordan of online gaming and winner of multiple *Quake* tournaments asks rhetorically,



Massively multiplayer RPGs *Everquest* (left) and *Ultima Online* are PC hits. Expect games like these to hit consoles next year.

Bad Connections

Aborted attempts to bring consoles online...

"How can you foster community when you can't even chat?"

A notable and ingenious answer comes in the form of Sega's newest online sensation Phantasy Star Online. This title packs its own so-called "Word-selection System," which lets players choose from around 2,000 words and phrases. Even better, after someone punches in a phrase such as "follow me," those words are instantly translated into the default language selected by the other players. And you can craft custom chat symbols representing everything from "Yikes—the boss monster!" to "Touch my loot and die!" How's that for a universal language? In fact, there's one bit of language that really is universal on the system: Type in a profanity and it comes up on screen as the familiar jumble of \$#@*.

Phantasy Star also points the way to remedying another potential of a keyboard- (let alone hard-drive) free environment: the lack of mods. Mods are user-created modifications that breathe extra life into games like Quake III Arena and Half-Life. They can range from customized character appearances/skins to entirely new game levels. Phantasy Star Online lets players elaborately customize their own player—everything from height to hair color. The permutations go on and on. Of course, future online console games will have to offer similar customization options if console gamers are to build any kind of online community they can call their own. The good news: The Xbox's hard drive (and the PS2's drive add-on) means you'll be able to

upload homemade characters, race tracks, skate parks—whatever game developers let you customize—to the Internet and share 'em with the world. In the meantime, you can always join the online community that's already building around Sega's online gems (see for yourself on the next page).

Once console gamers are empowered with language, simple mods and related tools, the next mission is whether we'll see one big happy world of online gaming, where PC players and console gamers can duke it out. While Quake III Arena for Dreamcast is supposed to dabble in that area, experts in the field aren't confident about the outcome. "Just because you can play DC versus PC doesn't mean you should," says Cliff Bleszinski, lead designer for Epic, makers of Unreal Tournament. "It would be the equivalent of throwing Christians to the lions. If you let the hardcore online loyalists play against the wide-eyed console gamers with the little controller, they'll get hammered."

Their fightin' words, you might say. But in the end, it really isn't about this kind of victory. Instead, the race and challenge to get console gamers online is more about broadening the experience. It's about taking players off the couch and hooking them up to innumerable players around the world so that, at any time, any moment, in the middle of the night, in the middle of the day, there is always a game, there is always a challenge, there is always a community, there is always—sniffle, sniffle—a friend. A friend, of course, who you can occasionally crush and humiliate, too.

• **Gameline (Atari VCS)**—Using a 1200 baud modem, the \$60 Gameline Master Module would pump Atari VCS games to your console over standard phone lines, with each download costing \$1. Games would stay in the module until you turned off your Atari. Originally part of a plan to include news and e-mail services, the whole Gameline shebang self-destructed soon after it launched. Control Video Corporation, the makers of Gameline, kept refining the technology and provided online services for Apple and Commodore, before finally evolving into America Online in 1989. Talk about humble roots.



• **X-Band (Super NES & Genesis)**—First available in the U.S., Japan and the U.K. for the Genesis and Super NES in 1994 (but defunct as of April '97), this console-networking device let you play certain titles against other gamers online—provided you and your opponent had the same game and console (i.e., Genesis owners could only play against other Genesis owners). Despite the inherent coolness of the technology, X-Band was tragically ahead of its time and only supported around 14 or so titles for either system, although it also featured e-mail, a call-waiting function and win/loss stat-tracking.

• **CatBox (Atari Jaguar)**—Developed by ICD for Atari, the CatBox was part A/V booster, part network add-on for the ill-fated Jaguar. The brushed-steel gizmo boasted jacks for either headphones and/or PC-style speakers and even let you hook to an RGB monitor. More importantly, CatBox enabled network play between two Jags (either in the same room or over the phone lines). Unfortunately, the only released game that took advantage of this feature was Doom.



• **NetLink (Sega Saturn)**—The Saturn's NetLink was a close-but-no-cigar sort of deal. It delivered what it promised, which was head-to-head gaming over the Internet (at 28.8kpbs). The NetLink connected to the Saturn's cartridge slot and then to standard phone lines. It even offered a primitive Web browser, supporting HTML 2.0 and most 3.0 extensions. You could get e-mail and fool around with Planet Web's groundbreaking set of features, a first for a game console. Of course, being able to battle opponents online in games like Virtual On, Daytona Championship Edition, Saturn Bomberman and Sega Rally (some of which you could only play in Japan) didn't hurt.



Don't forget to check www.sega.net on a regular basis. The site has begun its own series of ladders and tourneys.

managing and playing on a pro football team, so the trouble's well worth it.

It's really not as complicated as it seems, and if you'd like to see some slick examples of how a league is run, click this way:

<http://members.theglobe.com/luddyf/index.html>

Here's another example: www.ugfl.net

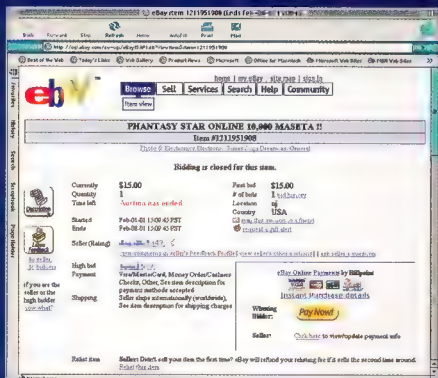
As you can see, a lot of league action finished with the conclusion of the NFL's Super Bowl, but new leagues are cropping up all the time. Go to <http://www.segasportsp.com/forums/default.asp> and follow the message boards to the game of your choice. Or, if you're in the message-board community and you'll have no shortage of opportunities to lead a league, rankings board or other gaming challenge. Hell, you might even consider starting one of your own. After all, "If you build it, they will come." Er, wrong sport.

• Clan-tastic

In the PC-gamer community, you'll find thousands of tightly knit teams—better known as "clans"—voted to specific

first-person shooters, especially Quake III Arena, Unreal Tournament and Team Fortress Classic. Clan members eat, drink and breathe this stuff. They practice all day and night (jobs, sleep and relationships are way down their list of priorities) and learn to work together with all the teamwork and lethal precision of them bad-ass SWAT hombies you see on TV. Then they challenge other clans to see which team's got the real killer instinct.

Generally, these are specific clan activity is pretty tight-knit, but there's a shadow of what's going on in the PC world: teams of Quake III Arena only allowing up to four players to duke it out online at once. (Face it: could you really call a two-person team a "clan"?) But peek around, and you'll find a few examples (check <http://www.thedigitalmafia.com> for one DC-only clan). The good news is that Unreal Tournament supports eight players online, so it's only a matter of time before DC first-person-shooter clans start spreading like body parts in an id Software game.



How much is 10k Meseta worth in U.S. bucks? According to this bid, not much. Yep, the selling of virtual items has hit consoles.

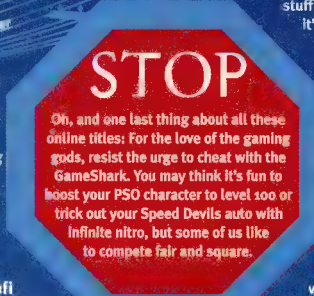
• Phantasy Star Phor Sale

Yuji Naka's Phantasy Star Online has turned out to be a well-deserved smash, but the game still hasn't been out long enough to spawn a galaxy-size online community. Give it time. Already, PSO players are warming to that online-RPG activity kicked off by Everquest—the auctioning of

virtual items for genuine American dollars. We've seen more than a few entrepreneurial gamers selling Meseta and hard-to-find items on eBay. But don't put too much faith into this get-rich-quick-scheme and tell your boss to kiss off—few winning bids have exceeded \$20.

What else you got?

You think all this community stuff's cool now, just wait—it's only going to get bigger and better, especially when the other console manufacturers put their online plans in gear. We want you to help keep us abreast of the goings-on in the console community. So please e-mail us at egm@ziffdavis.com with the header "Meet me online!" and let us know what you're doing to bring console gamers together. We'll let the world know what you're up to in a special section every few months. So, until our next update, see you online!



STOP

Oh, and one last thing about all these online titles: For the love of the gaming gods, resist the urge to cheat with the GameShark. You may think it's fun to boost your PSO character to level 100 or trick out your Speed Devils auto with infinite nitro, but some of us like to compete fair and square.



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?

Review Crew

This Month...

Listen closely—hear that sound? That spangling, weezing, sputtering noise? That's the sound of the N64 slowly dying. Once again, this month there's only one N64 game for review (although it's one that almost won Game of the Month). Even though Nintendo's system has had some truly amazing titles over the years, the supply of new titles has slowed to a trickle, and we

can't help but feel sorry for the poor schmucks who own the N64 as their only system. Check back next month though, Nintendo fans, for our opinions on Pokémon Stadium 2, Ailyn Chronicles (an RPG for the N64? Go figure.) and, well, that's probably about it. We suggest after Conker you play through Majora's Mask again, and start saving up for a Game Boy Advance.

The Crew



Crispin Boyer

Cris has been eyeing entries in our RPG Maker contest. His current fave: an RPG called Crispin's Quest. In related news, we've disqualified Crisp from the judging.
Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure



Jonathan Dudlak

This month, Jon learned that Valentine's Day isn't so much about giving but taking, when the kids at EGM didn't deliver any cards to his desk on their own.
Favorite Genres: Fighting, Action



Dean Hager

Much to Dean's dismay, management has started cracking down on office nudity. Looks like EGM's pants-less Fridays are a thing of the past.
Favorite Genre: Sports, Racing



Chris Johnston

After the local GameWorks wouldn't let him in without a photo I.D., Chris used his Review Crew picture to persuade them to let him in, just for DDR. Sweet!
Favorite Genres: Adventure, Puzzle



Kraig Kujawa

Between Unreal Tournament and Worms, Kraig barely had enough time to fit in his steady diet of reality TV, which is a different type of video game.
Favorite Genres: Sports, Strategy



Dan Leahy

Dan has proven a broken left hand is no handicap when it comes to playing video games. Other...personal activities, however, have become much more difficult.
Favorite Genres: Sports, Race



Ryan Lockhart

Ryan has been walking around the office yelling out obscenities, drinking beer and leaving strange-smelling "presents" for people. It's time to take Conker away.
Favorite Genres: Adventure, RPG



Mark MacDonald

Mark almost teared up as he unwrapped the Metal Gear Solid 2 demo this month. "It's times like this I thank God I flunked out of clown college," he says.
Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure



James Mielke

Milky's triumphant return to Edinburg this month: The Malmison, Sam the beautiful asian girl from Lush, IRM-BRU, Mad Cow Disease and the World's End!
Favorite Genres: Action, Fighting



Greg Sewart

Sewart learned to gamble 'n shoot in Sin City this month. Look for him to play James Bond in the upcoming film, *The Spy Who Gave Me 9.5*.
Favorite Genres: Racing, RPG, Action

Game of the Month



Daytona USA

Pg. 103

Once again Sega does DC owners proud with Daytona USA, the second racing Game of the Month in a row. It could be that we're just a little nostalgic about this title, but with Daytona's winning style and music plus an online option, who wouldn't love this game?

EDITORS' CURRENT FAVES

- 1 Metal Gear Solid 2 (Demo) Konami
- 2 Phantasy Star Online Sega
- 3 Daytona USA Sega
- 4 Conker's Bad Fur Day Rare
- 5 NBA 2K1 Sega
- 6 Worms World Party Titus
- 7 Paper Mario Nintendo
- 8 ATV Offroad Fury Sony CEA
- 9 Onimusha Warlords Capcom
- 10 Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask Nintendo

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

Ethan stunned us all this month when he turned down some freelance reviews for a trip to Disneyworld. Disneyworld? Over Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2 GBC? Has he gone mad?

Michael Stassus

PC fan and Editor in Chief of Special Magazines (that's special as in not published monthly, not special like the Special Olympics), Mike helped us out with his review of Iron Aces for the DC.

Touki Zanion

OPM's sports guy has been annoying us with his constant plugs for his website; we finally agreed to turn the url in exchange for two baseball reviews. Check out—oops! Out of space.



Publisher: Xicat Interactive
Developer: CRI
Featured In: EGM #140
Players: 1-2
Supports: Jump Pack
Best Feature: Destroyable backgrounds
Worst Feature: Way too short
Web Site: www.xicat.com



Publisher: Sega
Developer: Genki
Featured In: EGM #140
Players: 1-4
Supports: Jump Pack, VMU, SegaNet
Best Feature: Sweet graphics and sound
Worst Feature: This should have been Daytona 2
Web Site: www.sega.com



Publisher: Xicat Interactive
Developer: Global A Entertainment
Featured In: N/A
Players: 1-2
Supports: Jump Pack
Best Feature: Transparent cockpit
Worst Feature: Dum enemy AI
Web Site: www.xicat.com



It's been quite awhile since anyone has attempted this style of game (think Cabal or Nam 1975), with its behind-the-character view and crosshair-aiming action—the third-person first-person shooter, if you will. Unfortunately Charge 'N Blast doesn't make the return to the genre worth the trip; the kind of fast-paced intensity this type of game needs is killed by a bunch of time-killing gameplay quirks and other mediocre aspects. Between having to choose which of your three weapons you want to fire after every shot, waiting for unwanted target locks to go away (since all the weapons have limited lock-on capabilities), and waiting some more for your power meter to fill up between attacks, you start to get the feeling it should've been called Charge 'N Wait 'N Blast 'N Wait. To be fair, each delay only lasts a second or two, but they happen often enough to quickly become annoying. Graphics are pretty plain—far from horrible but with simplistic enemy designs and models that never raise an eyebrow. Likewise, levels are run-of-the-mill and way too short (not to mention there's only five of them), but there are a few nice touches—almost everything around you is destructible and with bonus points, plus you can uncover hidden power-ups and change minor story events depending on your actions. It may be enough to make Charge 'N Blast worth it once it becomes a \$10 bargain bin throw-away, but not before then. **Mark**

Frogmen, Godzilla-like beasts, flying piranha—I never thought I would live long enough to see the day that a game had all of these things in it, but now I can die a happy man. The gameplay isn't as creative as its gun-fodder, even though it has a cool old-school flavor reminiscent of Cabal. After the first few levels, dodging enemy fire gets difficult and to make things worse, there's a strict time limit to kill all of those wonderful enemies. Often, I was happy to see the game slow down so that I could keep up with the action for no other reason than I couldn't wait to see what weird monster this game had cooked up for me to shoot next. **Kraig**

Charge 'N Blast is a nifty throwback to the old-school shooter, cybered up for the 21st century. You're a jacked-up gusser-swatter who's got to put down the mutated swarm of bugs that have manifested from a radioactive meteor crash. Cool, huh? The graphics in CNB are surprisingly accomplished, and the framerate is usually quite smooth. Sadly, the control scheme is overly dicky, making what should have been a drama-free blaster a nagging chore instead. Therein lies the rub. Each of the three characters you can choose from has a unique set of weapons, but trying to use them effectively is a pain in the ass. **Rent it, then forget about it. Mikman**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

This is not your father's Daytona USA. The most noticeable change is in the graphics. Most of the original tracks look the same, but the cars are much smoother and more stylized now, not to mention there are a few different models as opposed to the all-Chevy lineup of the original Daytona. The other major difference is the control. While some old-school fans of the series may bitch and moan about the more touchy, analog control scheme in this DC version, I'm totally happy with it. Once you learn to finesse your car around each course, it's all gray. Plus it's possible to adjust the sensitivity of the gas, brake and steering controls. I guess what I'm saying is that this Daytona doesn't control like the original, but that doesn't make it a bad game. Offline you can run single races, a championship mode, a split-screen mode and time trials. You can change the rubber compound of your tires, the color scheme, transmission and so forth on each car. The track options are extensive too, from how many cars you race against to regular, reverse and mirror modes on all eight tracks. Unfortunately online play is limited to four cars on the track at a time, and isn't nearly as robust as say Speed Devils Online racing. Still, when you look at Online as a single-play mode in an otherwise fully featured racing game, it's hard to knock Daytona USA for skimping a little in that department. It's just too bad this isn't Daytona 2. **Greg**

It looks and sounds like Daytona, but it doesn't drive like Daytona. I have to admit, at first I was bummed about the tight handling. Power-sliding, yeah you can do it, but it doesn't work that well (damn). When the tires cut loose the speed goes way down, so essentially you're forced to drive more conservatively. You get used to it pretty quickly though, and to be honest it's a much better way to race. It's all about smooth brake and gas work (finding the best line is helpful as well). There's not much to bag on—the new tracks are a blast to race, the framerate is great (even while using a 40-cp field) and to top it off, it's online compatible. **A must-have for racing fans. Dean**

Three crucial elements—controls, clean visuals/viewpoints, and an invigorating feeling of speed—can make or break a racing game. Daytona pretty much nails all of these dead-on. The analog steering is very responsive, but not so forgiving that you can fake your way through a race. Crisp graphics couple nicely with a speedy framerate for gorgeous visuals no matter which of the four perspectives you prefer. **You'll never get that sluggish feeling, either—even recovering from an otherwise crippling crash is a fast, painless endeavor.** Those new to the Daytona games may find the car selection limited, but most will love the new installment. **Jonathan**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

This isn't the WWII flight sim it appears to be—it's more of an air combat simulation/arcade hybrid. I love a good story-driven campaign (like the Wing Commander series, for example), but the lame, fictional WWII plot here had me frantically hitting start to skip through it. The planes steer more like driving a 3D car than flying, but the control is smooth and responsive, which is good because dive bombing and attacks on enemy bases require precision flying and aiming. I liked the ground-attack missions best, but they play more like a simulation and are harder than they should be. On the other hand, the dog fighting missions have the fun, fast and furious action of an arcade title (although the brain-dead AI makes it kind of like shooting ducks in a barrel with a machine gun). Perhaps the coolest feature of the game is the semi-transparent cockpit; every future flight game should rip off this idea, which gives you the feeling of being seated in an aircraft with all the gauges and gizmos in front of you, but without blocking your view of the enemy. In the end, Iron Aces is a decent flight game but it lacks direction by trying to please everyone. Maybe the designers should have focused on the game's arcade or sim experience and tailored the sound, graphics and features to that specific audience. Instead, they try both at once, giving neither the attention it deserves and as a result, I felt like I got half the game that I should have. **Michael**

WWII air-combat simulators are a rare thing on the consoles (no, Capcom's 194x shooters don't count), so I was jazzed about Iron Aces' focus on unguided bombing and honest-to-goodness dogfights—forget that fire-and-forget-missile stuff. And this game does deliver a few thrills. Some of the more epic battles throw a lot of enemies at you, although enemies aren't smart enough to make for white-knuckled air battles. Bombing missions, on the other hand, are a royal pain in the rear. I tried dive bombing boats like it says in the manual, but that rarely worked. The two-player cooperative mode has potential—too bad it's often more confusing than fun. **Crispin**

World War II games are, by nature, a pretty boring bunch unless you're a history nut, and Iron Aces is no exception. Too often I'd be trailing an enemy plane and waiting for some sort of missile lock or something, anything to spice things up. **Iron Aces moves way too slow for my tastes.** It's nowhere near arcade enough to provide the kind of stimulation action fans need—hell, one of the first stages has no combat at all. The graphics, while nice in some areas, are overall quite bland, the enemies lack any kind of real AI (they rarely attack back) and I hated trying to bomb. It reminds me of Wing Arms for Saturn, just nowhere near as good. **Ryan**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

Sega Smash Pack Volume 1



Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega
Featured In: N/A
Players: 1-4
Supports: Light Gun
Best Feature: A collection of true classics
Worst Feature: The emulation sucks
Web Site: www.sega.com



This should be such a sweet disc. A dozen games, at least seven of them bonafide classics...all for \$20? Sign me up! Wait a second...what's with all this slowdown in Sonic The Hedgehog? Good lord, the "music" in Golden Axe is making my ears bleed! Shouldn't the DC be able to emulate these games in its sleep, blindfolded on one hand tied behind its back? These are *Genesis* games, for crying out loud! But not one of the 10 Genny games in Smash Pack is emulated well. All of them suffer from horrendous sound, especially Golden Axe and Phantasy Star II. Sonic and Vectorman both suffer slowdown that wasn't in the original cartridges, and Sonic is even filled with sprite glitches. The two games that are done well are Virtua Cop 2 and Sega Swirl. While having VC2 is a nice bonus (especially with gun support), it's too bad this isn't an arcade port. Instead it's a remake of the PC version. It's not bad, but definitely nothing special. And Sega Swirl...well, some people like it, some people don't. Personally, I think it's a yawn-fest. What a shame. This compilation is like a dream come true, especially with the inclusion of games like Phantasy Star II and Shining Force, but what it comes down to is Sega really didn't care about the quality of this product, and it shows. This has got to be some of the **laziest programming on any system.** Why spend \$20 extra on buying a Dreamcast just to be insulted?

Greg

Disappointment is not the word; seething anger is more like it. Sega did a great job choosing some of their finest 16-bit classics—PS II, Sonic, Shining Force and Revenge of Shinobi, just to name a few—then managed to completely screw everything up. Instead of extras, they added a butt-ugly and awkward interface, slowdown, glitches and other weirdness. But all this is merely bad; the music is what really ruins things—when I say it sounds like an Atari 2600 I am not exaggerating (like Golden Axe—yikes). The DC should handle these games perfectly in its sleep, unfortunately sloppy-ass programming and inexcusable laziness got in the way.

Mark

In theory, the Sega Smash Pack should be the king of all retro compilations—better even than the rather lovely Namco Museums. A dozen Sega classics on one GD-ROM? Sign me up, brother! Tragically, despite the legendary lineup, the translation suffers. Most significantly, the sound on nearly all the games (save Virtua Cop and Swirl) is even worse than the already sonically challenged original Genesis games. Some of the graphics seem weirdly emulated (read: soft, as if run thru some odd filter) and the disc I played was buggy as well, literally crashing at times. In short, **Sega should have taken more care with this botched effort.**

Milkman

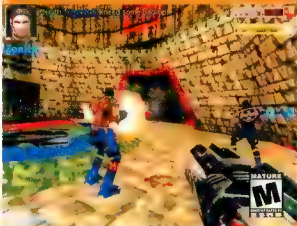
VISUALS **SOUND** **INGENUITY** **REPLAY**

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Unreal Tournament



Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Secret Level
Featured In: EGM #137
Players: 1-8
Supports: Keyboard, Mouse, Panther, SegaNet
Best Feature: Eight-player battles!
Worst Feature: Some lame level design



What we have here is basically three games, so let's take them one by one. First, single-player: not bad, but not UT's strong suit. Despite a pretty good AI (better than Quake III's), different modes including Capture the Flag and Domination (Assault is unfortunately MIA), tons of levels, and cool optional effects like low gravity, insta-gib and super speed, fighting against the computer in any of these no-story, all-deathmatch first-person-shooters just gets old. Moan-inducing simulated trash-talk ("You suck," "You be dead.") and blocky, dull levels definitely also limit how much fun you can have alone with UT. Second, split-screen multiplayer: Really depends on how you play; two-player matches work great, but four-player bogs the framerate down into unplayable chop. Finally, online multiplayer: Ah, now here is where UT gives Quake III a run for its money. Although it lacks the graphical flair and smoother play (via the standard modem) of id's masterpiece, **UT lets up to eight people in on the action instead of just four, which makes a huge difference in teamwork and general insanity.** Overall the game is still rough around the edges—you can't freely set your mouse buttons, can't bind bot orders to keys, and have to exit online games to switch teams—but if you're bothered by Quake III's player limit (two-on-two Capture the Flag? Bah!) or lame single-player game, plug the phone line into your DC and check out UT.

Mark

I'm not sure which I liked better: Watching Crispin get the crap fragged out of him, or taking the controls myself. Probably the former—it's much more fun watching someone take a rocket up the ass. If only at a better framerate. I was surprised to see the game jitter so frequently in one-player mode, and the action was utterly unplayable in split-screen with more than two people. All was forgiven once I got into the crazy online battles, however. After getting hammered for a bit, I came to the conclusion that a stock gamepad is impractical and a keyboard and mouse is essential to success. It's an expensive investment, but a worthwhile one.

Kraig

On PC, shooter rivals Unreal Tournament and Quake III Arena are so close in quality that it's hard to flat-out say which one's king. That ain't a problem on the Dreamcast. UT on DC suffers from muddy graphics, a so-so framerate, and online gameplay that gets frustratingly laggy. And if you play split-screen with more than two players, the game bogs down to a GoldenEye level of sluggishness. **Still, when the online play doesn't get too jumpy, it's a heck of a lot of fun, especially when you indulge in four-on-four capture-the-flag action. You get a good selection of novel maps, too, but this thing just lacks the presentation and smooth gameplay of QIII.**

Crispin

VISUALS **SOUND** **INGENUITY** **REPLAY**

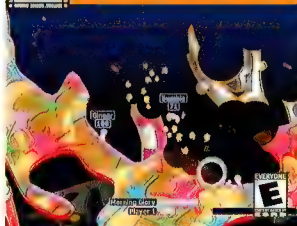
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Worms World Party



Publisher: Titus
Developer: Team 17
Featured In: EGM #138
Players: 1-4
Supports: Keyboard, Jump Pack, SegaNet
Best Feature: Online play
Worst Feature: No mouse support
Web Site: www.titus.com



There are some games that are timelessness, and the Worms franchise has a few of them. Despite World Party still having "outdated" 2D graphics devoid of fancy embellishments such as light-sourcing, real-time cinematics and particle effects, I got addicted to this game (as did other Review Crewers) and would still be playing it now if I didn't have 10 other games to review. The game's humor is its most endearing quality (we've used it to blow off steam on deadlines). There's nothing more satisfying than blowing up a gaggle of worms with an explosive Old Woman or anointing them with a deadly Holy Hand Grenade. I'm not sure how Team 17 thinks of so many ways to obliterate those little (and well-armed) guys, but this sequel has even more crazy weapons at your disposal, and yet still maintains a zen-like balance of strategy and mayhem. The addition of new weapons and a terrain editor isn't what makes this game finally feel complete, however. Worms' popularity on the PC was fueled by its online play, a feature that never made it to the console editions. But now, World Party has it all. **It's a wondrous multiplayer game that everyone can sit around and easily get a hang of.** If having a house party is too high-maintenance, then it's time for you to find out what PC gamers have known for a very long time: This is one of the most simple yet entertaining (lag-free) online games ever created.

Kraig

Don't let the screenshots fool you—this game may lack a lot like Worms Armageddon but...well, I guess it is a lot like Worms Armageddon, except with enough extra stuff to make it worth the money. You thought the last game packed cornball weapons? This thing's crammed with everything from a stone donkey you drop on enemies to a chick who unleashes a rain of deadly tambourines. Team 17 unleashed the old weapons, too, plus added support for multiple joypads so you don't have to pass around one controller in multiplayer. Best of all, **online play is lag-free and a total blast.** I just wish it offered more game-customization options.

Crispin

If ever there was a game that begs to be played online, it's Worms. The latest rendition of this multiplatform title on the DC has new items and weapons in addition to its network play, which runs quite well. The only snag we encountered was in quitting—half the time we had to reboot in order to exit a game. The nice thing about head-to-head play, though, is that you don't have to deal with the computer's pinpoint accuracy in one-player mode. It gets a tad frustrating when you're battling with rough trajectories and arbitrary weapon launch strengths and that little AI worm pegs you dead on every try. But you'll have a blast in multiplayer, so stick to that.

Jonathan

VISUALS **SOUND** **INGENUITY** **REPLAY**

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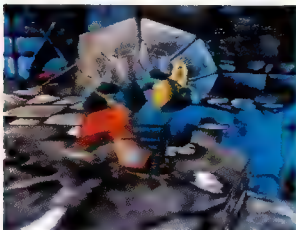
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9



A good example of Conker's naughty play: Here (below) you have to get drunk in a dance club and piss on people (hold Z trigger to really boost the stream) to piss them off, and move on to the next section.



This game is not without its troubles. **The camera is, as Conker himself might say, #fucking annoying as hell.** You often lose the ability to adjust it for no apparent reason, usually just as the computer positions it in the least helpful angle possible. There's also quite a few sections where, if you mess up once, you are doomed to be unfairly hit over and over again until dead. Frustrating as *%\$^*. Graphics are impressive though, especially for a game that doesn't use the Expansion Pak—huge levels include nice effects like real shadows and reflections, but on some stages the N64's blurry textures are hard to ignore. And I still hate the unimaginative, Disney-reject Rare characters, but Conker turns that into a plus—it has those same sickeningly cute, infinitely marketable little buggers getting crushed, burned, blown up, shot and eaten alive. The variety of play is also staggering: The game switches between your standard run-and-jump platformer, shooting, racing and more (including a couple excellent four-player mini-games). Boss fights are likewise terribly clever, almost all of them involving some type of puzzle, and what other game pits you against a giant singing pile of crap or allows you to smash a boss' balls? Would Conker be worth it without the novelty and shock value of the naughty bits? Maybe not. But taken as a whole, Conker is an entertaining package, and definitely worth playing. **Mark**

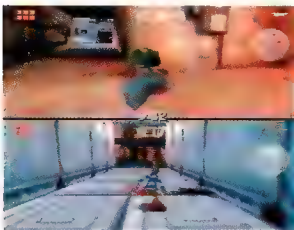
Publisher: Rare
Developer: Rare
Featured In: EGM #141
Players: 1-4
Supports: Rumble Pak
Best Feature: Great play variety
Worst Feature: #@%ing camera!
Web Site: www.conker.com



How many other games feature lavish musical boss fights, complete with "follow-the-bouncing-turd" sing-along subtitles?

fairly solid game underneath it all (some camera issues notwithstanding). It's thankfully not a big item hunt either, a la Banjo-Toolie; you collect money and that's about it. So what is gameplay like? Actually, it's rarely the same stage to stage—different modes of play constantly break things up, so just when you think you have the game pinned down, it changes. There's also an incredible amount of voice on the cart—by far the most of any N64 title yet—with some great accents and imitations, but also a slew of very similar and very forgettable characters. Conker parodies plenty of movies, too; from *A Clockwork Orange* to *The Terminator* to *Jaws*. The amazing part is not how dead-on accurate or funny these homages are (and they are usually both), but how well they fit into the overall game; like the Private Ryan beach level (and the best multiplayer game of the seven on the cart), or the *Bram Stoker's Dracula*-inspired 'shotgun-totin', 'zombie-blastin' level. Now on to the thoughts of the individual Crew members:

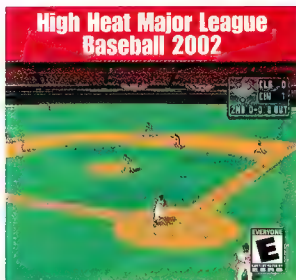
F or all the attention Conker is getting as a mature adult game, it may come as a surprise to many people just how immature it really is. Filled with pooping, peeing, and the type of fart-joke humor that wouldn't be out of place at any grade school recess, this isn't exactly an "adult" title in every sense of the word. But although over-the-top outrageousness is the reason most will try Conker, it alone isn't enough to keep things interesting. Yes, Conker is rude—getting drunk and pissing all over people—and yes, Conker is crude—forcing cows to drink prune juice, then blowing them into bloody chunks as they squirt diarrhea—and it's fun, but you can't fill up 15 hours with just silly jokes (not on an N64 cart, anyway). There has to be a game anchoring all the madness, and even though Conker might not be up to some of Rare's previous efforts, we all agree there's a



Despite the fact that it's been in development for two years (or more), Conker's Bad Fur Day lacks a final layer of refinement that would've made it really good. It's got a few weird control issues, choppy animation, and lots of areas where there's no indication you're doing the right thing. It's one of the **least polished Rare games I've played in a while**. Aside from that, it's great this game strays from the collecting-items-ad-nauseum formula Rare's been into lately. The amount of voice is amazing and the humor's plenty screwed up. I like it for the off-kilter humor and movie references; it's just a shame the gameplay isn't up to Rare's usual standards. **Chris**

Yes, it has camera problems. And yes, sometimes you're given little idea about what to do next. But even so, **Conker is still one of the greatest games on the N64**. No joke. In fact, I'm stunned exactly how good it is. Expecting little more than an "adult Banjo-Kazooie," I was constantly shocked while playing, and it wasn't just because of the vulgar humor (cows and prune juice sure make an interesting combination), or the terrific voice acting, or the often jaw-dropping visuals, or even the strong gameplay. It was all of these. Rare has pushed the N64 to its limits here, and as long as you have an open mind, you must play Conker. You must. **Ryan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	9	8	7



Publisher: 3DO
Developer: 3DO
Featured In: EGM #141
Players: 1-2
Supports: Dual Shock
Best Feature: It's simulation baseball
Worst Feature: The worst graphics out there
Web Site: www.3do.com



Of all the games I've reviewed, none has been such pleasant torture as this year's High Heat. Why such ambivalence? First, let it be known that I love baseball, and this is definitely baseball. Employing the occasional hit-and-run can be as important to playing winning baseball as taking a pitch in the late innings. On the other hand, the game looks sophomoric at best. The graphics are a spaghetti stain on the shirt of the PS one. **It boasts first-gen graphics, but at the same time, after a full season, you won't have half the league hitting over .400.** Players simply try to break up double plays by sliding headfirst, but the trajectory of hits are often different, unlike EA's Triple Play. The flags in the outfield are constantly blowing to left regardless of the wind's real direction, but every time I bring in my closer for two late-inning outs, I get nervous. That's my dilemma as a reviewer. For every good thing on the gameplay side of HH, there seems to be some annoying flaw on the graphics end that makes me hesitate to demand that people run out and buy the game. But the ultimate test is that I can't stop playing High Heat. I like going deep in the count, and I like gunning for 30 strikeouts each time Pedro Martinez (baseball's best pitcher in the last 35 years) goes to the hill. I like having only two home runs with my biggest power hitter after 18 games. It makes me feel like I'm really in the game and nothing is easy. Like real baseball. **Grade**

3DO was kind enough to send me a "High Heat Baseball Quiz" that tells me if I'm playing a "real baseball game." It asks: "After playing a dozen games, will you see types of hits you haven't seen before?" and "How many pitches will the computer take before putting the ball in play?" along with five other high-brow questions. I would like to return the favor with my own quiz: "Would you play the worst PS baseball game a dozen times?" "Did they motion-capture a bow-legged player for this game?" "Are choppy player animations artistic expression?" And finally, "Are a few realistic touches a good substitution for a fun, sharp-looking game?" **Grade**

HHB does a lot right, but I'm not convinced that it matters. It's got some serious clout as far as sim value and overall realism, but the presentation and look are clearly second-rate. Maybe it's just me, but I'd rather not have baseball players who look like they're out of a *Ren and Stimpy* cartoon. If it's ALL about gameplay, as 3DO claims, then go back and play Baseball Stars for NES. For me it's about game-play and other intangibles (look, options, multiplayer fun). HH lacks a lot of options (batting cursor, multiplier trades) and the gameplay, while producing realistic results, isn't compelling enough for me. If you're a purist, give it a shot. **Grade**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
2	4	3	5



Publisher: Agetec
Developer: Psykyo
Also Try: Raytrixis
Players: 1-2
Supports: Dual Shock
Best Feature: Six unique planes to choose from
Worst Feature: Brief missions
Web Site: www.agetec.com



A port from the arcade favorite, *Strikers 1945* actually made an appearance on the Saturn in Japan long before its PS debut this month. And despite its age (1995 saw it in arcades), *Strikers* is still a fun and challenging vertical shooter. It stays very true to the coin-op's appearance and performance, with all the hyper gameplay that's become standard for the genre. Two modes allow you to either control vertical scrolling to a small degree with the pad (which can buy you some extra time and space when dodging bullets) or keep it static for simpler control, though the obnoxious black bars can't ever be ditched for a full-screen view (not even by flipping your TV on its side). Having a choice of six fairly unique planes is nice, especially since each has different support and special attacks, but you don't get to switch between fighters mid-game, which would have been a very cool feature. There's no parallax in the backgrounds, either—land-based and airborne enemies all exist on a single functional plane. *Striker* seems comfortable with being a simple, action-rich shooter very much akin to *Gunbird* (by the same developer) and *Raiden*. While it doesn't bring anything new to the table for the shooter genre, it's a brief but good time for old-school pilots. And with four of the seven difficulty settings below normal, you'll be needing the unlimited continues at Easy or above. Good luck! **Jonathan**

If you've played *Gunbird 2* or any of the other *Strikers* games, you already know that *Strikers 1945* is like. It's old-school and almost frustratingly difficult. You've got to be a hardcore shooter pro to even think about challenging the grossly misnamed "normal" difficulty. So much enemy fire heads your way that without quick reflexes, you won't avoid it all, especially in these big, WWII-era planes. Some slowdown pops up when there's a lot on the screen and in two-player mode. You have unlimited continues, but it's kept challenging by restarting you at the beginning of a stage if you die after stage five. A fine game for old-school shooter fanatics. **Chris**

Psykyo has developed some of the most solid, if unspectacular, scrolling shooters the 32-bit era has ever seen. Like their previous effort, *Gunbird 2*, *Strikers* is a competent, if unoriginal, shooter. Amazingly, the action is super-fast, offering few hints of the slowdown typical to 2D shooters. Each of the six planes offered have a super-bomb in the form of "air support" but the innovations end there. The screen (vertically letterboxed, yuck) fills with insane amounts of gunfire, making for some hectic moments that the control, analog or not, cannot keep up with. It's cool for 30 minutes, but even then it's utterly predictable. Rental only. **Milkman**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	6	5	6



Publisher: Activision
Developer: Traveller's Tales
Also Try: Crash Team Racing
Players: 1-2
Supports: Dual Shock
Best Feature: Excellent PS one visuals
Worst Feature: Too easy
Web Site: www.activision.com



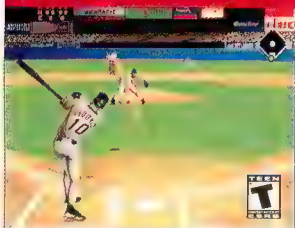
Toy Story Racer isn't necessarily a bad game, but there are too many other cart racers out there that are better. My big complaint is that the AI seems to make absolutely certain that races are as close as possible. It didn't matter if I was far ahead of the pack—they would catch up to me even if I was running flawless races. TSR also lacks the more useful power-ups of other cart racers, like anything to use as defense! Holding onto any weapon guards against one attack but there's nothing more long-term, which is bad news since there's a whole pack of enemies after you. Too many weapons shoot behind you, making it difficult to accurately target your enemies. I also noticed the frustrating trend of power-ups disappearing right in front of you before you can get to them (why the aren't just in specific places is beyond me). At least, like *Toy Story 2* before it, *Racer* looks good. It's got bright, colorful, clear graphics that run at a brisk 30 fps. But even with that, courses are really plain, devoid of moving obstacles, and with shortcuts that don't give you any advantage. You have to race the same tracks over and over, with no real sense of speed. Multiplayer is OK, with a fair amount of modes/tournaments, but not being able to play with more than one other player puts a cap on the fun. It's a simple cart racer and good for younger players or huge *Toy Story* fans, but otherwise, it's middle of the road. **Chris**

There's a glut of these me-too Kart racing games, and this one belongs near the bottom of the mediocre pack. The only distinguishing features are its real-world levels. Driving through the larger-than-life backyards and two-story houses is visually interesting, but the levels aren't well-designed. There's too many obstacles, small entry points, and tight turns that can kill your race. It wouldn't be so bad if the penalties were smaller, but often a simple gaffe will make you get stuck or veer way off course. Your weapons can help get you back into the hunt, but the combat is hindered by a boring arsenal that primarily back fires—much like this game. **Grade**

I enjoy the fact that even though *Toy Story Racers* can have easily just been another Mario Kart clone, *Traveller's Tales* actually tried to create something unique—the goal of the races isn't always just to finish first; you might have to knock everyone else out or something. Wait, I lied, there is one aspect of Mario Kart 64 that was copied, the cheating AI. More than once someone who should have been in fifth or sixth place suddenly crossed the line in second place in order to keep the score close. I really hate that stuff. There's also strange shortcuts on some of the tracks that actually hurt more than help. It's a good game, just not Crash Team Racing-good. **Ryan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	6	5	6

Triple Play 2001



Publisher: EA Sports
Developer: EA Sports
Featured in: EGM #141
Players: 1-2
Supports: Analog
Best Feature: Big League Challenge
Worst Feature: Choppy framerate
Web Site: www.easports.com



It's obvious that EA has moved onto the PS2 pastures when they are actually subtracting features to this game, as opposed to adding them. There's a couple new stadiums, and some Season Mode tweaks (whoopee!), but gone are the old-time great players—something unique to last year's game. All in all, it probably doesn't matter. Triple Play has always had the most obviously complete feature set of any baseball game (far surpassing its rivals) and I guess only the hardest of the hardcore fans will miss that little gem. Personally, I won't shed a tear so long as they keep the Big League Challenge, which amounts to a Home Run Derby on steroids. While nothing has been subtracted from Triple Play's gameplay, there's also been an improvement. It seemed like a no-brainer to fix the jittery framerate that made 2000 stutter, but lo-and-behold, it still mires this one. Not only does it give the action a rough feel, it also makes fielding (and occasionally batting on the hardest difficulty) more difficult than it should be. At least you can see the reason for this game engine's struggles: Triple Play's graphics are topnotch. EA just needs to find a better balance between smooth gameplay and eye-candy. I doubt they'll find it on the PS one—I don't think they're even trying—but **there isn't much of an alternative than to buy this (abait good) refresh** if you want a realistic and current PS one baseball game.

Kraig

I'll say one thing for Triple Play Baseball: It has some awesome camera angles—especially the battery of home-run cams. And the sound effects, as goofy and out of place as they are, are probably satisfying as well. Still I'm sad—but certainly not surprised—to report that this Triple Play is only about two degrees changed from the year before. You get new rosters, a couple new stadiums (Pittsburgh and Milwaukee), up-to-date commentary and that's about it. They removed the classic players as well—wait, probably a licensing thing. **It's obvious this PS one version is on cruise control**, so unless you don't already own TPB from seasons past, think twice.

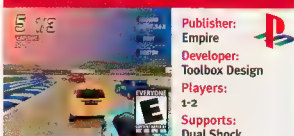
Dean

The problem with Triple Play 1999, er, um...wait. The problem with Triple Play 2000...doh! Wrong again. Well, actually, that is the problem with TP 2001. **It's virtually unchanged**, save for the addition of a batting-cursor for a more "arcade" hitting experience. EA threw in updated rosters and presto—TP 2001 is born. It's arcade, big, brash and overall kind of silly. The formula here is devoid of any real baseball strategy, and ultimately comes off as a glorified home-run derby (which the CPU seems to be pretty good at). TP, around since 1997, has failed to inspire the way Genesis, PC and even NES baseball games did. Find another pastime.

Dan

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	6	7

Ford Racing



Publisher: Empire
Developer: Toolbox Design
Players: 1-2
Supports: Dual Shock
Web Site: www.empireinteractive.com

It's pretty odd to see a \$10 game featuring licensed vehicles. What's even more strange is that this game really isn't all that bad. When you've got a dozen cars to race (from a Fiesta to a Focus to a Mustang) on eight different tracks, you're sure to get your money's worth. The cars even handle pretty well, though it's way too easy to over-brake heading into the tightest turns, and opponents will almost always overtake you when you do. Still, it gives the game a sense of competition that even some big-name racing titles over there still lack nowadays. Unfortunately, the game's big downfall is presentation. Graphically, Ford Racing won't win any praise. The car models are simplistic, and with the mickey-mouse tires on 'em, downright silly-looking. Lots of glitches and ugly textures make me think that Empire knew this game wouldn't sell for anything over \$10 in today's market. For the price, though, **you could do a lot worse than Ford Racing**. Of course, for 10 more bucks you could do a lot better, too. Remember, Gran Turismo 2 is a Greatest Hits title.

Greg

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
3	4	5	8

Vanishing Point



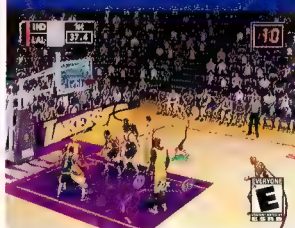
Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Clockwork Games
Featured in: EGM #133
Players: 1-2
Supports: Dual Shock
Web Site: www.acclaim.com

If you read our review of the DC version of VP you already know what to expect here—it plays exactly the same. In general, it's not so much a race against other cars as against the clock. You and your gear-head opponents blaze through various city and country environments darting through an annoying assortment of slow traffic. On paper it sounds like a good time—and to some extent it is—but floaty handling and a tough rewards system make it pretty darned frustrating. Like most games of this genre you're expected to unlock the fast cars by placing first in a series of heats. But doing so is annoyingly difficult with some of these cars and trucks. Even at low speeds, they tend to slide excessively. **The physics aren't necessarily bad, just overly sensitive.** You shouldn't be fish-tailing at 40 mph, no matter what the vehicle—geesh. Yet, even with the drawbacks, achieving the best time kept me captivated for a good long time. I only wish it handled more like Need for Speed High Stakes. Overall, if you're a patient driver rent VP for a night or two.

Dean

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	6	7	6

NBA ShootOut 2001



Publisher: 989 Sports
Developer: 989 Sports
Featured in: EGM #141
Players: 1-8
Supports: Multi-tap
Best Feature: Psychedelic free throws
Worst Feature: Hunchback-looking players
Web Site: www.989sports.com



(Curls into fetal position at the prospect of reviewing another 989 sports game) Ahh, now that I'm comfortable, I can say with all certainty that 989 is nothing if not consistent. I'm not trying to hold past sins against a company, but **ShootOut 2001 is right in line with GameDay and GameBreaker as another brand-wrecking, unworthy release.** As for BaceOff 2001 was pretty decent, but we're not talking hockey now, we're talking hoops, and this is one bad hoops game. Players scuffle about awkwardly and rarely exhibit the kind of hops and athleticism you'd expect from NBA players. Rebounding is a mostly below-the-rim affair as well, with players bunching together to see who the ball falls to. Not your most advanced AI routines going on here. Animations are poor and lack any flair, and even dunking, which should be one of the best parts of ANY basketball game (see NBA 2K1), leaves you feeling all empty inside. The only fun occurs at the free-throw line, when the free-throw meter turns into something similar to a Jim Morrison-esque nightmare, with entrails slithering downward into the basket. It's really quite bizarre and leads to some intriguing questions about recreational drug use. Maybe families can gather and play this one together, followed by meaningful discussion. I hate to seem harsh, but when something comes with a \$50 price tag, I expect it to measure up. SWAT! Rejection, baby.

Dan

It's so bad for the rest that NBA 2K1 has raised the bar too high for b-ball games. Now we expect all of 'em to sport ultra-smooth animation, good AI and incredible graphics. ShootOut does an admirable job, especially in light of its spotty past, but in the end fails to generate the same level of excitement. **Several little things trip it up.** The players appear to be looking down frequently; I guess they're actually looking at the ball but it looks weird. The animation—while great at some points—doesn't flow as well as it could. But most noticeably, the AI lets players idle too much—and when they are reacting it tends to look forced and unnatural.

Dean

Basketball is all about speed, and that's something that this game can't handle. Every time there's a loose ball, players rent in a hurry to get it, and if they do happen to be in the right place, they grab it in slow motion. These gaffes grated on my nerves over a full game, especially when they compounded with other annoyances such as a ball going into the basket and coming out (yet still giving you points), weird ball physics (ball bouncing on the rim forever) and illegal hip-off jumps. **With some tweaking ShootOut has the potential to be better than Live;** it feels too very unpolished, even though it's the best 989 Sports PS2 title so far.

Kraig

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	5	4	5



Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami
Featured In: EGM #141
Players: 1
Supports: None
Best Feature: Strategic gameplay
Worst Feature: Gets mind-numbing a few hours in
Web Site: www.konami.com

It's always sad when a game you truly enjoy for the first few hours begins to dwindle in your eyes the farther you play into it. Ring of Red is an amazingly deep and in many ways fun strategy game, but it's terribly hindered by a pace that slows battle by battle, until it moves at an almost madness-inducing crawl. It becomes so obnoxious to play a dozen or so hours in, you come close to forgetting the fun it originally offered. Seriously, I was in this battle that lasted three hours, which wouldn't be bad if the gameplay was more compelling, but seeing the same animations and using the same tactics over and over would drive even the most hardened of us insane. Much like Front Mission, Ring of Red is a mech-based strategy combat game, but with much more depth than the standard fare. For one, you're not just controlling mechs, there's also up to two ground-based squads that you can give commands to in conjunction to your giant machine. They have special abilities that can affect battle in various ways, and their animation is incredible. At least, again, for the first few hours. Which brings us to yet another problem with RoR, you can't skip the small cinemas. And you'll see them thousands of times. What sucks the most is this could have been a great game, the motif and story line are excellent, and I love the visuals. **The pace kills it for me though,** and none but hardcore (and patient) strategy freaks should apply.

Ryan

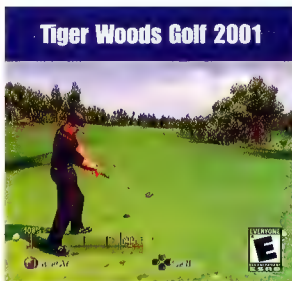
The first few hours I spent with Ring of Red were fanatic: Between the sharp graphics, gritty post-WWII Japan-as-Vietnam scenario, cool battles and unique strategy/RPG gameplay, I was hooked. But **the more I played, the more this game wore on me.** The missions soon become ridiculously long (and you can only save between missions), with draw-out attack animations you see hundreds of times but can't skip grinding the pace to a crawl. Underneath it all, strategy and mech fans with *serious* patience can find a deep, well-balanced game, just keep a magazine nearby to read while the endless animations play (may I humbly suggest EGM?).

Mark

Ring of Red is a lot like sniffing gas vapor. At first, it seems kind of cool, but after a while you're in agony from prolonged exposure. RoR has a unique look and some innovative gameplay, both of which really draw you in initially. But once you're forced to sit through **tons of long-winded dialogue and cut scenes** or spend a few hours on a single sluggish battle, you'll want out ASAP. The combat is dodgy at best—landing a hit on an enemy is purely a matter of chance most of the time, which makes things all the more frustrating. Strategy gamers into re-written-post-WWII-history will be the only ones patient enough to go the distance on RoR.

Jonathan

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	7	8	6



Publisher: EA Sports
Developer: EA Sports
Featured In: EGM #135
Players: 1-4
Supports: Multi-tap
Best Feature: Best graphics in a golf game...
Worst Feature: ...that should have been better
Web Site: www.easports.com

This series has always been rough around the edges, but I hoped that the PS2 might provide EA the punch they needed to smooth it out. Instead, the franchise has been given a fresh coat of paint that still has a coarse feeling to it, except for the 3D-rendered players. The designers seemed to be focused on rendering realistic golfers, and even though Cyber Tiger doesn't have blond hair, he looks eerily similar to his flesh-and-blood counterpart (as do the rest of the PGA pros). These detailed graphics work well with the television-style presentation, but not with the most important facets of the game. For example, when you try to finesse a shot, the lack of course detail makes it difficult to place the ball. Don't get me wrong: the courses look beautiful, but the only way to really see the layout of the land is to press a button that makes the course morph like it's been hit by an earthquake to exaggerate the ground contours. It amuses me that EA tries to make this game so obviously "accessible" that it automatically lines up your shot, gives you the right club, and even lets you control the ball in flight, but fails to have courses detailed enough to let you line up a putt without using a stupid morphing "feature." If you don't mind missing a few shots you should have made while dealing with this problem, **then you'll like this realistic golf game. But to tell you the truth, I had more fun with Swing Away Golf.**

Kraig

The good news: This is the best Tiger Woods game yet. The bad news: It still isn't as fun as Hot Shots 2. But for the PS2 (where Camelot hasn't spun its magic yet), **TW manages to keep pace with its only competition—Swing Away Golf.** Overall, the package is solid with the exception of the putting game. Until you're close enough to use a special morphing feature (which exposes the slopes of the greens), they appear nondescript and void of important detail. It's hard to play a hole when you're not sure how it's contoured. It's not a deal breaker, but they could've found a better way. Now, if only Camelot and EA Sports would team up on a golf sim...

Dean

EA's Tiger Woods golf game fits right in with Tiger's image: slick, overproduced, and ripe for the masses. It's also a bit dry, dummed down, and, well, boring. That's not to say some people won't like it. I can see Joe Average guy, so, showing off his PS2 to his golf pals. "Look at Tiger, man. Doesn't he look awesome?" The game plays well enough, and definitely is user-friendly (read: not too hard). The traditional power meter is there as well as caddy help when selecting clubs. Putting is a bit inconsistent, but maybe that's just me. Still, **I find myself asking for something more.** A hardcore golf sim would be cool, but I doubt EA will go to the trouble.

Dan

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	6	6	7



Publisher: Tecmo
Developer: Tecmo
Featured In: EGM #139
Players: 1-3
Supports: Multi-tap
Best Feature: Excellent music selection
Worst Feature: May be a little too weird for some
Web Site: www.tecmoinc.com

Unison is from the same genre as Dance Dance Revolution, Bust A Groove and Space Channel 5. And like those titles, it's not going to appeal to everyone. But if you liked any of those games or just dig wacky Japanese games like I do, Unison's worth looking into. Since you have to memorize the steps you're doing with the dual analog sticks it's a lot more difficult than your average music game, especially on the hard and very hard modes. Luckily, you have plenty of time to practice before you actually perform it. The best thing about Unison is the music. Tecmo went the extra mile and licensed songs that U.S. audiences would know (some by the original artists). Included are "O.P.P.," "Stop the Rock," "Barbie Girl" and "YMCA," among others. The whole game plays out like a Japanese anime TV series, which means very wacky and very cheeseball. The plot and characters are so well done and the **humor's so out of this world, it's hard not to laugh.** The English dub is pretty good, with some really funny lines ("Dumb...Ducker"), plus the afro physics on Doc Dance are so good you'll be mesmerized by its wave-like motion. Unison's not without drawbacks, though: The Hard and Very Hard difficulties give you the same story (and songs) from Normal, although with different controller motions. Perhaps a few mini-games would've broken it up a bit. At ad short, but it'll still be plenty of fun for music game fans.

Chris

Unison takes the Simon analogy even more literally **than its rhythm/dance relatives.** With a style and story that whispers Space Channel 5, Unison has you memorize those dance steps (which are all based around the two analog sticks) well in advance of your performance. The big difference here is that things get pretty tough, especially when you're trying to get a perfect or near-perfect score. You can mess up a lot and still advance in the game, but perfectionists will spend a lot of time in practice mode. Throw-back titles like "YMCA," "We Are Family," and that "Barbie Girl" song (how'd that get in there?) are sorta cute, but I got bored of it fast.

Jonathan

While I'm a big fan of the music-game genre, **Unison leaves a lot to be desired.** Sure, it's got one of the best soundtracks in any of these games (licensing "O.P.P." in particular was brilliant), and it's easily the prettiest title in the genre by far, but that's where the ovens end for me. Memorizing each song beat by beat and attempting to move the dual shock sticks in time with it is not my idea of fun. Unison would be a lot better if it at least let you freestyle during each song—this control scheme would be so perfect for it. In the end, though, this is really worth nothing more than an one-night rental. Pity—there's a lot of potential that's gone to waste here.

Greg

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	9	7	5

Warriors of Might and Magic



Publisher: 3DO
Developer: 3DO
Featured In: EGM #137
Players: 1
Supports: None
Best Feature: Nice CG
Worst Feature: Horrible design all around
Web Site: www.3do.com

PS2

Wow. I know it's become standard fare to bash 3DO games lately, but this is just silly. **Warriors of Might and Magic is the worst PS2 game I've played, by far.** First of all, it borders on ugly. While there's some keen lighting, the overall game looks like little more than a PS one or N64, title with slightly nicer textures and bad used special effects. The locations are horribly designed and lack any kind of inspiration, the framerate pops from super high to super low depending on your surroundings, and the camera goes nuts in small areas. And the main character—my god. I've never seen a worse running animation; at first glance I swore he was a woman. What shocks me the most is the super shallow feeling this game emanates—it's just boring. Let's say it this way: **Warriors** is a huge RPG, yet you feel almost no drive to keep playing. The crap story line is updated primarily through poorly written books and notes you find, the fighting is mind-numbing thanks to non-existent AI in the enemies (here's the key to winning most fights: block your foe's blow, then hit back, block again, hit, block ad nauseum), the levels are bland (giving you no incentive to explore), and the side quests make no sense and give little satisfaction over a bit of experience points. If you're an Action/RPG fan, this is a title you'll want to stay away from, but those curious about the genre might find it worth a rental. Then again, probably not.

Ryan

It may seem trendy to bag on 3DO games just 'cause they're from 3DO, but in all honesty, that really isn't the case. In yet another example of having missed the boat, **Warriors of Might & Magic** has almost nothing we like. **The graphics are sub-par for a PS one game—let alone the PS2**—the framerate veers wildly from about 60-fps to 15, and the control is wack (a bad thing considering the platform elements). The spell effects look ridiculous (look for the blue pasta wheels that surround one particular sword), and the inventory menus are unwieldy. Having a choice, I'd recommend leaving this alone. Wait for Baldur's Gate: DA instead.

Milkman

A horrendous framerate, hideous textures and poor animation combine to provide gamers with the ugliest title yet released on Sony's new console. **What this mess has to do with Might and Magic is totally beyond me:** the game is nothing more than a medieval one-player 'beat 'em-up. The play mechanics seem sound at first: Chaining your movements to pull off a flurry of hits can be pretty gratifying. But after a few hours of slashing away, you'll be bored to tears. Admittedly, 3DO has cooked up an impressive number of levels to hack through—but you'll likely have put down the controller long before reaching the final boss, so who cares? Pass on this.

Ethan

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
3	5	2	2

Adventures of Cookie & Cream



Best Feature: Innovative gameplay
Worst Feature: Control may stymie younger gamers

Publisher: PS2
Agetec
Developer: From Software
Featured In: EGM #139
Players: 1-2
Supports: None
Web Site: www.agetec.com

The most impressive thing about the **Adventures of Cookie & Cream** is not the wonderfully rendered Crash Bandicoot-y environment, nor is it the rather innovative gameplay that utilizes (in one-player mode) both analog sticks to control the two characters. It is also not the creative manner in which one to four people can control these two lapins using only two Dual Shock controllers. **The most striking aspect of C&C is that it was developed by From "We Make the Stowest Games in the World" Software.** Better known for Armored Core and King's Field (along with a host of other well-intentioned efforts), **Cookie & Cream** is a refreshing reprieve from the overly serious games for which they are known. A puzzle-oriented platformer, **Cookie & Cream** hip-hops through a variety of challenge-filled islands, packed to the brim with problem-solving scenarios that will force you to get the hasenpfeffer working in tandem. It may be a bit cute for the average bear, but anyone willing to give this a shot will be pleasantly surprised.

Milkman

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	8	8



Best Feature: Great mini-games
Worst Feature: Graphics looking a little dated

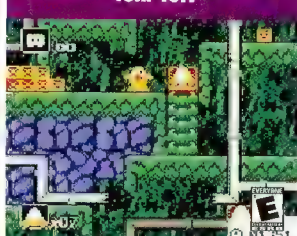
Publisher: PS2
Midway
Developer: Eurocom
Featured In: EGM #139
Players: 1-6
Supports: Multi-tap
Web Site: www.midway.com

This sequel to NBA Showtime may have lost the stupid NBC theme music, but it's gained two extra players on the court, making it a three-or-three free-for-all. I'd say **Hoopz** came out ahead in the swap. It definitely affects the gameplay—now there's more strategy since you have to bob and weave through more defenders and can use Pick-and-Rolls and post-up moves to get to the hoop. The irony is that even though there's more ways to score, most points still come by way of crazy dunks and improbable three-point bombs. Either way, it's still a blast in multiplayer. **My favorite part of Hoopz aren't the extra players, but rather the four new mini-games** (21, 3-pt. Shoot-out and more). They add welcome variation to this back-and-forth dunkfest, and should keep this game from gathering much dust on your shelf. I must admit that I'm disappointed that there's almost no improvement over the Dreamcast version; only the sound has been slightly upgraded. While that's all right for first-generation PS2 fare, I hope Midway tries harder next time.

Kraig

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	6	8

Toki Toki



Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Two Tribes
Featured In: EGM #141
Players: 1
Supports: None
Best Feature: Great puzzles
Worst Feature: Lame graphics
Web Site: www.capcom.com

Here is a character who's damn-near as endearing as Pikachu: He waddles with a hilarious sense of urgency, and displays an impressive range of emotions. The first time you see this plump little chick jiggle onto the scene, there will be no doubt in your mind that **Capcom** is looking to establish a new mascot character. And why not? **If there is any justice in the video-game world, Toki Toki will capture the public's imagination,** and we will see a nice, long string of slick sequels. The graphics are good: Animation is silky-smooth, and backgrounds are buffed out with parallax scrolling, even though stunningly simplistic. There are a ton of levels on hand (which is great for long trips), and each stage offers an increasingly perplexing challenge. The game is basically a puzzle (comparisons to Lemmings would be apt) with a handful of platform elements. This balance works well—it gets a strong sense of character identification, and the brain teasers are a lot of fun to play through. All of this adds up to a great package, but please note: While playing, you run the risk of becoming a Toki Toki addict. After an hour or two of egg-gathering, you'll be hard-pressed to stop playing. Even when the machine is turned off, your mind will be reeling with possible solutions to the board you are presently stuck on. And that may well be the greatest testament one can make to the quality of a game like this.

Ethan

Toki Toki reminds me of two other puzzle games—the **Humans** (aka Dinolympics) and **The Lost Vikings**. It's a good puzzle game to bring along on trips or waiting because you can play a stage and turn it off without too much time investment, because it thankfully auto-saves your progress (I hate Game Boy games where you have to write down a password). Figuring out where our ill' friend can get to, and in what order you should tackle stages, becomes harder and harder the further you progress. The text is a little hard to read on the GBC's screen, but other than that, the graphics are great. Plain and simple, a fun GBC action-puzzler.

Chris

Although based on the screenshot Toki Toki may look like a platformer—and a crappy platformer—there are few times any actual reflexes are required; this is actually a puzzle game, and a decent one at that. The game introduces a good amount of interesting powers (moving blocks, teleporting, setting traps for enemies), which you then must carefully use to rescue eggs in some **divinely designed levels**. I do wish the game looked and controlled better—the graphics are generic GBC cookie-cutter garbage and your character moves sluggishly, which is twice as annoying since you are working against the clock. But as a GBC time-killer, you could do plenty worse.

Mark

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
3	5	8	7



Tricks of the Trade

By Trickman Terry
tricks@ziffdavis.com

PLAYSTATION 2

ATV Offroad Fury

1 INCREASE AI DIFFICULTY
From the main menu, choose Pro-Career. Choose an empty slot and then put in ALLOUTAI for the name. After pressing "Done," you will be taken back to the main menu. Now when you race, your opponents will be more difficult to pass.

Knockout Kings 2001

HIDDEN BOXERS

From the main menu, choose Modes. On the next menu, choose Career and then pick "New." On the Name Boxer screen, put in any of these names to unlock these boxers.

BAILEY

This gives you Joe Mesi.

OWNOLAN

This gives you Owen Nolan.

JBOTTI

This gives you John Botti.

DEFIAGBN

This gives you David Defiagbon.

2 JRSEAU

This gives you Junior Seau.

AUSTIN

This gives you Ray Austin.

STEVFF

This gives you Steve Francis.

NELSON

This gives you Trevor Nelson.

MECCA

This gives you Ashy Knucks.

MRBARRY

This gives you Barry Sanders.

OSUNA

This gives you Bernardo Osuna.

DEMART

This gives you David DeMartini.

JGIAMBI

This gives you Jason Giambi.



are performed by pressing in the left analog stick for L3 and pressing in the right analog stick for R3)

2 Mini Me

L3, R3, Square, Circle.

Huge Heads

Start, Square, Circle, Start.

Star Wars: Starfighter

VARIOUS CHEATS

On the main menu, access the Options. From the Options, access Code Setup. Now enter the following passwords to unlock each cheat as shown.

Invincible Mode

Put in MINIME for the password. This will make you invincible.

Jar Jar Mode

Put in JARJAR for the password. This will reverse your ship's controls.

Director Mode

Put in DIRECTOR for the pass-

TRICK OF THE MONTH

Rayman 2: Revolution

Menu Cheat and Menu Cheat

First, you must get to at least one save point in the game, or load a saved game. Then press START to pause. From the main menu, access the Sound option. On the Sound menu, highlight the Mute option and hold the L3/R3 buttons simultaneously. With these held, quickly press L2, R2, L2, R2, L2, R2. The "Menu Cheat" will appear with various cheat options.

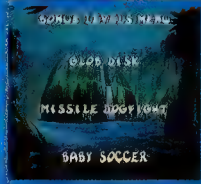
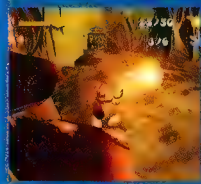
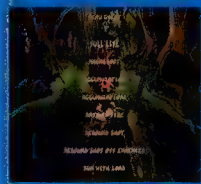
could normally have been done in the game.

Bonus Mini-Games

After loading up the game and choosing your language, go to the main menu and access the Options. From the Options menu, access the Language option, and then choose voices. On the Voices menu, highlight the Raymanian option and hold the L3/R3 buttons simultaneously. With these held, quickly press L2, R2, L2, R2, L2, R2. The "Bonus Levels Menu" will appear, where you can play mini-games such as Glob Disk, Missile Dogfight and Baby Soccer.

Games in Baby Soccer

You can do this trick after unlocking the bonus levels and accessing the Baby Soccer mini-game. While playing Baby Soccer, hold the L3+R3 buttons simultaneously. With these held, quickly press L2, R2, L2, R2, L2, R2. You will now see games above each one of the players.



HATCHER

This gives you Charles Hatcher.

ZITO

This gives you Chuck Zito.

BOSTICE

This gives you David Bostice.



word. This will give you alternate camera angles in the game.

4 Christmas FMV

Put in WOZ for the password. This brings you to a video of a Nym having trouble opening a door. When he finally bashes it in, he gets a strange Christmas greeting.

Oni

TINY CHARACTER AND HUGE HEADS

In the middle of the game, press the SELECT button. Move down and highlight the "Help" option. Now press L2, L1, L2, Square, Circle, Square. This is the first part of the codes shown below. After entering this part first, put in the rest of the codes as shown below for these results. (Note: The L3 and R3 commands



Sega Smash Pack: Volume 1

ALTERED BEAST

Cheat Menu

At the title screen, press and

hold the A button. With A held, press START. A cheat menu will appear where you can choose your starting round, difficulty level, power and number of lives. Press START to go back to the title screen. To begin at your selected level, press and hold X, and with X held, press START.

Continue on Current Level

After you lose all your lives, go back to the title screen and then hold X. With X held, press START. You will begin on the stage you were previously playing, with a full count of lives.

5 Choose Your Altered Beast

At the title screen, press and hold X+A+B+Down-Left. While holding all of these buttons, press START. You will get a menu where you can choose which beast you will become on each level.

COLUMNS

Easy Magic Jewel

Put the game on the Easy difficulty. At any point during play, fill up the entire left or the entire right two columns with jewels, leaving one space at the top of each of the columns. Once you do this, a magic jewel will appear. Maneuver the magic jewel to the top of one of the columns to get rid of the set of regular jewels it touches. Since it is at the very top of the screen, two pieces of the jewel will be left to eliminate another set of jewels. If you have an empty column in the game, you can drop the magic jewel to the bottom of the column for an easy 10,000 points.

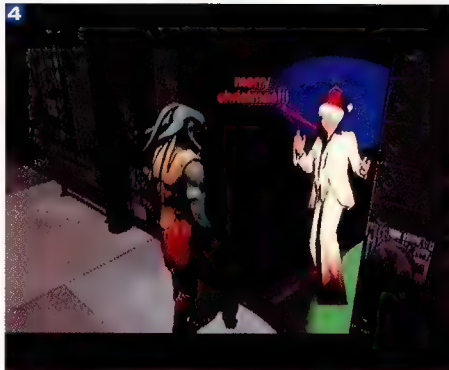
GOLDEN AXE

6 Level Select

From the main menu, choose Arcade. On the Select Player screen, press and hold diagonally Down-Left on the D-pad. You will see the characters spin. While still holding Down-Left, press A+START simultaneously. A number will appear in the upper-left corner of the screen. This is the number of your starting level. Press Up or Down on the D-pad to change this number, and then press START to begin there.

9 Credits

From the main menu, choose Arcade. On the Select Player screen, press and hold diagonally Down-Left on the D-pad. You will see the characters spin. While still holding Down-Left, press X+B simultaneously. Let



go to all the buttons and press START. When you die in the game, you will see that you have nine credits to continue.

PHANTASY STAR II

Slow Motion

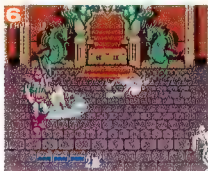
While in the middle of the game, press START to pause. Now press and hold A. While holding A, you can move around the town with the D-pad, but you will be moving in slow motion. Also, while paused, you can tap the B button while holding a direction on the D-pad to move frame by frame.

Keep the Music

Press START to pause the game before you go from one scene to the next. Press and hold the X button and move to the next screen with the D-pad. Now unpress the game. The music from the previous scene will be playing on your current one.

REVENGE OF SHINOBI

Infinite Shurikens



Access the Options screen and move down to the Shurikens option. Set the number of Shurikens to oo. After you do this, wait until you see the number turn into an infinity symbol. You now have infinite shurikens throughout the entire game.

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

Mess With the Demo

While the demo is playing, press and hold X+A+B. Sonic will run into walls, jump into enemies, etc.

Slow Motion, Frame Advance and Restart

On the title screen, press Up, B, Down, B, Left, B, Right. You will hear a sound to confirm that the code was entered correctly. In the middle of the game, press START to pause. Pressing X will reset the game and bring you back to the title screen. Holding A will enable slow motion play. You must hold A the entire time for slow motion to continue. Pressing B will advance one frame of animation. Keep pressing B while moving to continue advancing frames.

Debug

On the title screen, press Up, B, Down, B, Left, B, Right. You will hear a sound to confirm that the code was entered correctly. Now hold the X button and press START. Keep holding X until the first level appears. If you see a jumble of letters and numbers on the top left of the screen, you will know you did the code correctly. Press A to change Sonic into a ring. Once you do this, you can press X repeatedly to cycle through different objects in the game. Once you get to an object you want, press B to

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



TRICKS

TOP 5 TRICKS

(CONTINUED)

shake when each of these tricks is entered correctly. **Unlimited Secret Meter:** X, 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.

Obese Skater: X, X, X, X, Left, X, X, X, X, Left, X, X, X, X, Left.

3. WWF: No Mercy

Find Hidden Wrestlers
From the Superstar Select screen, you can find new wrestlers.

Jacqueline
Press C-Left or C-Right while highlighting Ivory.

Funaki
Press C-Left or C-Right while highlighting Taka Michinoku.

Goodfather
Press C-Left or C-Right while highlighting Goodfather.

4. 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.

5. Super Mario Bros. Deluxe

Sweet Tricks
Many of the old tricks for the original Super Mario Bros. game on Nintendo work on the new Game Boy Color version. For example, the warp zone found in World 1-2 is still intact.

Warp Zone: Go to World 1-2



place it on the screen. You can place a multitude of objects anywhere you want throughout the level. To change back to Sonic, press A again.

Level Select

On the title screen, press Up, Down, Left, Right. You will hear a sound. Then hold X and press START. A Stage Select screen will appear where you can choose any level, special stage and sound select.

STREETS OF RAGE 2 Stage Select, New Difficulties and 9 Lives

(Note: Make sure you have two controllers plugged in before you do this trick.) On the main menu screen (with 1 Player, 2 Player, Duel and Options), take controller 2 and move down to Options. With Options highlighted, press and hold the X+A buttons. With these held, press START. On the Options screen, you will see a new option called "Round." Here you can choose your starting stage. Also, two new difficulties (Very Easy and Mania) will be opened. You can also set your lives up to 9.

VECTORMAN

1. Cheat Menu

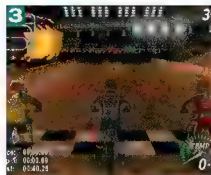
From the main menu, access the Options. On the Options screen, press X, A, X, Down, X, A, X, Refus Q. Orbot's Private Option screen will appear. Now you can increase your health, lives, starting level and start shot.

Life Refill

In the middle of the game, press START to pause. Now press X, A, X, B, X, Down, X, A, Right, X and unpause the game. All of your life points will be refilled.

Level Warp

On the SEGA logo screen (where Vectorman is standing on top of



the A), move Vectorman underneath the logo. Jump up and hit your head on the logo 12 times. Then shoot anywhere on the screen 24 times. After this, you will see the words, "Get Ready" and then the letters from the SEGA logo will start falling in a pattern back and forth throughout the screen. You must use Vectorman to catch these letters as they fall. A total of 120 letters will fall and you must catch at least 90 to warp to level 5. If you catch 110 or more, you will warp to level 10.

Destroy the Logo

On the SEGA logo screen, move Vectorman over to the right side, in between the A in SEGA and the right edge of the screen. Begin shooting up and you will notice that you're hitting something. It is actually a TV. Keep shooting it until it is destroyed, and it will leave a power-up. Collect the power-up and shoot the SEGA logo to destroy it.

Sprite Boundaries

To show Vectorman's sprite boundaries, press START to pause. Then press X, A, X, B, X, A, A and unpause the game.

Tomb Raider Chronicles

2. SPECIAL FEATURES

During the game, press START to



pause. Access the Inventory screen and then access the TimeX-TMX option. Press A to get to the Statistics screen. Now, press and hold the Y button for about five seconds, and then let go. After letting go of the button, the "Secrets Found" statistic should read 36/36. Exit the game and go back to the main menu screen. Access the Options and then enter the Special Features option. All of the storyboards and galleries will now be opened.

Second Story

On the main menu screen, have the New Game option highlighted. Then press and hold L-Trigger+R-Trigger+Down. Hold these buttons until the game loads. This will bring you to the Russian Base, which is the second story in the game.



Excitebike 64

COOL CODES

On the main menu screen, press and hold the following buttons in this order: Hold L-Shoulder, then hold C-Right, then hold C-Down. While holding all these buttons, press A and the "Enter a Cheat Code" menu will appear. On this screen, you may enter any of these passwords as shown.

3. Transparent Riders

XLURIDER
Crazy Color Tracks
ROTCOLS
Programmer Information
IMGOINGNOW



HEY, YOU, WANNA WIN FREE STUFF?

If your trick is selected as Trick of the Month, you will win a free GameShark provided by InterAct, and a 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 120 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

San Francisco Rush 2049

VARIOUS TRICKS

On the main menu screen, move down and highlight "Options." Then press the L-Shoulder+R-Shoulder+C-Up+C-Right+Z buttons simultaneously. Keep doing this until you see a new option called "Cheats" appear at the bottom of the menu. Access this new option to get a list of all the cheats you can unlock with these codes as shown. (Note: The timing is tricky, you must enter them VERY quickly and you may need to try them several times before they will appear.)

Car Collisions

Highlight Car Collisions. Hold L-Shift and press Z. Release the buttons and then hold R-Shift and press Z. Release the buttons and hold L-Shift and press Z. Release the buttons and hold R-Shift and press Z.

Tire Scaling

Highlight Tire Scaling. Press Z+C-Down+C-Left+R-Shift. Release the buttons and press Z+C-Right+C-Up+L-Shift. Release the button and press Z, Z, Z.

Frame Scale

Highlight Frame Scale. Press C-Left, C-Left, then hold L-Shift+R-Shift+C-Right.

Super Speed

Highlight Super Speed. Press Z. Hold L-Shift+R-Shift and press Z. Release the buttons. Press C-Down. Hold L-Shift+R-Shift and press C-Down. Release the buttons. Press C-Up, C-Up, C-Up.

Brakes

Highlight Brakes. Press C-Down, C-Down. Hold L-Shift+R-Shift and press C-Up. Release the buttons. Press C-Up, C-Up. Hold L-Shift+R-Shift and press C-Down.

4 Track Orientation

Highlight Track Orientation. Hold L-Shift+R-Shift and press C-Right, C-Left, C-Up, C-Down, Z.

Invisible Car

Highlight Invisible Car. Press C-Up, C-Down, C-Left, C-Right, L-Shift, R-Shift, Z.

Car Mines

Highlight Car Mines. Hold L-Shift+R-Shift and press Z. Release the buttons. Hold C-Left+C-Down and press Z. Release the buttons. Hold C-Left+C-Up and press Z. Release the buttons. Hold C-Up+C-Right and press Z.

Cone Mines

Highlight Cone Mines. Press Z+C-Down. Release the buttons. Press L-Shift+C-Left. Release the buttons. Press R-Shift+C-Up. Release the buttons. Press Z+C-Right.

Auto Abort

Highlight Auto Abort. Press C-Left, C-Up, C-Right, C-Down, Z, L, R, Z.

Resurrect in Place

Highlight Resurrect in Place. Press Z+C-Down. Z+C-Right. Z+C-Up. Z+C-Left. Z+ R-Shift. Z+L-Shift.

Suicide Mode

Highlight Suicide Mode. Hold R-



Shift and press C-Right, C-Up, C-Left, C-Down. Release R-Shift. Hold L-Shift and press C-Down, C-Left, C-Up, C-Right.

Fog Color

Highlight Fog Color. Hold C-Up+C-Right and press L-Shift. Release the buttons. Hold C-Down+C-Left and press R-Shift. Release the buttons. Press C-Right, C-Left, C-Right, C-Left.

Star Wars Episode 1: Battle for Naboo

5 OPEN ALL LEVELS

From the main menu screen, enter the Options. Access the Passcodes option and put in LEC&FIVE as your password. This will open up all the levels and the bonus Trade Federation Secrets level as well.



Colin McRae Rally 2.0

ALL CARS AND TRACKS

On the main menu, choose Arcade and then pick the mode you want to play. Choose a one- or two-player game and on the Driver Select screen, access the Create New Driver Profile option. After entering any three-letter tag entry you want, put in your name as one of these passwords as shown.

6 Unlock All Tracks

HELLOCLEVELAND

7 Unlock All Cars

ONECAREFULOWNER



TOP 5 TRICKS

(CONTINUED)

and find the second set of moving platforms (the ones moving upward). Get on these platforms and ride them until you reach the top. Then jump up and to the right. You will land on the top bricks of the level. Run right and keep going until you reach an opening. Fall down the opening and you'll see three pipes that will allow you to automatically warp to worlds 2, 3 or 4.

Max Out Lives: Go to World 3-1 and get to the end of the level where the staircase of blocks leads up to the end-level flagpole. Two turtles will come down the steps and you'll have to avoid or get rid of the first one. Now, you will have to get the second turtle shell between one of the blocks and Mario's body by jumping on it to make it bounce off the block and Mario multiple times. Once you do this correctly, your score will increase and eventually turn into 1-Ups. This way you can max out your lives.

The Lost Levels: Basically, you must get the number-one position on the "Ranking" screen (a minimum score of 300,000 points). Then on the title screen, select the Luigi icon for an entirely new game—Super Mario Bros. 2: The Lost Levels.

You vs. Boo: You must get a minimum score of 100,000 points. On the title screen, select "Boo" for the "You Vs. Boo" bonus levels.

Five Extra Lives: Note: This works only on a new game. Select the "Toy Box" option at the main menu screen, and then choose the "Fortune Teller" option. Keep choosing cards until you get the Extremely Lucky card. This will give you five lives. Return to the main menu and choose to play the original levels. Start a new game to begin with 10 lives instead of five.

Play as Luigi: Press the SELECT button at the Map screen before you begin a level. This will let you play as the green plumber instead of the red one.

1-900-PRE VIEW

773 8439

The number to call for the latest cheats & gaming info



TRICKS

NASCAR 2001 HIDDEN COURSES AND DRIVERS

From the main menu screen, choose Options. On the Options menu, choose Credits. On the Credits menu, choose Development. Now you must wait for the FMV to end. When the credits are scrolling, you can enter any one of these tricks.

Asher Boldt Driver

Press and hold L2. With L2 held, press Square, Circle, Triangle, X.

John Andretti's Other Car

Press and hold R1. With R1 held, press Square, Triangle, Square, Triangle.

KC Monoxide Driver

Press and hold L2. With L2 held, press Square, Circle, X, Down, Up, Right, Left.

1 Shorty Leung Driver

Press and hold R2. With R2 held, press Square, Circle, X, Up, Down, Left, Right.

Jacko Michaels Driver

Press and hold L1. With L1 held, press Square, Triangle, Square, Circle, Square, X.

Treasure Island Course

Press and hold L2. With L2 held, press Square, Circle, Square, Up, Up, Down, Up, Left, Right, X.

Proving Grounds Course

Press and hold R1. With R1 held, press Left, Circle, Up, Down, Right, Right, Right.

Spyro: Year of the Dragon

NUMEROUS CHEATS

In the middle of the game, press START to pause. Then enter any one of these codes for the results shown.

Spyro's Huge Head

Up, R1, Up, R1, Up, R1, Circle, Circle, Circle, Circle.

Flat Spyro

Left, Right, Left, Right, L1, R1, L1, R1, Square, Circle.

More Hit Points

Circle, R1, Circle, L1, Circle, R2, Circle, L2, Circle.

Easier Game

Circle, Square, Right, Left, Right, Square, Circle, X.

Harder Game

Circle, Square, Right, Left, Right, Square, Circle, Square.

Spyro is Green

Up, Left, Down, Right, Up, Square, R1, R2, L1, L2, Up, Right, Down, Left, Up, Triangle.

Spyro is Yellow

Up, Left, Down, Right, Up, Square, R1, R2, L1, L2, Up, Right, Down, Left, Up, Up.

Spyro is Blue

Up, Left, Down, Right, Up, Square, R1, R2, L1, L2, Up, Right, Down, Left, Up, X.

Spyro is Pink

Up, Left, Down, Right, Up, Square, R1, R2, L1, L2, Up, Right, Down, Left, Up, Square.

Spyro is Red

Up, Left, Down, Right, Up, Square, R1, R2, L1, L2, Up, Right, Down, Left, Up, Circle.

2 Spyro is Black

Up, Left, Down, Right, Up, Square, R1, R2, L1, L2, Up, Right, Down, Left, Up, Down.

Spyro is Original Purple Color

Up, Left, Down, Right, Up, Square, R1, R2, L1, L2, Up, Right, Down, Left, Up, Right.

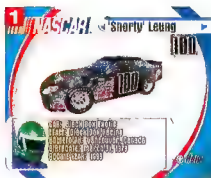
Tomb Raider Chronicles

SPECIAL FEATURES

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.

Second Story

On the main menu screen, have the New Game option highlighted. Then press and hold L1+Up. While holding these, press X. This will bring you to the Russian Base, which is the second story in the game.

3 Third Story

On the main menu screen, have the New Game option highlighted. Then press and hold L2+Up. While holding these, press X. This will bring you to Black Isle, which is the third story in the game.

Fourth Story

On the main menu screen, have the New Game option highlighted. Then press and hold R1+Up. While holding these, press X. This will bring you to the Tower

Block stage, which is the fourth story in the game.

GAME BOY COLOR

102 Dalmations: Puppies to the Rescue

SPECIAL FEATURES

On the main menu screen, access the Password option. Enter any of the codes below to get to new levels.

Garage

Bone, Bone, Paw, Toy Tank

4 Cafeteria

Dominio, Bone, Key, Paw

Cruella!

Toy, Bone, Bone, Bone

Xtreme Sports

DEBUG MENU AND MORE Debug Menu

On the main menu screen, press Left, Left, Left, Left, Press Up, Up, Up, Up, Right, Right, Right, Right, Right, Down, Down, Down, Down, Down, SELECT, SELECT, SELECT, SELECT. A debug menu will appear where you can choose from various events, a scrapbook and a sound test.

400 Medals

From the main menu, choose New Game. Choose Guppi or Pin and go to the Sign-In Booth. Put in your name as zxyzz (all lowercase). Exit the booth and then hold the A button and press SELECT. Now press START. You will have 400 medals.

Ending

From the main menu, choose New Game. Choose Guppi or Pin and go to the Sign-In Booth. Put in your name as staff (all lowercase). Exit the booth and go left to the snack shop. Enter the shop and you will be taken to the ending and credit screens, where you can play the level while you go through the credits.

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE ADDICT

Got your own PSO tidbit for us? Send us a letter or e-mail us at EGM@ziffdavis.com, subject: Phantasy Star Online. If we choose your letter you'll get your name in *EGM* and maybe even a little somethin' extra.

ALTERNATE COSTUME COLORS

Tired of the standard colors for your character? Want a new character and you choose from two fifty extra costume colors—here's how. From the main menu screen, choose New Game and at the Character Select screen, pick a character. Now, enter one of these names on the Character Name screen, depending on your new character's class. After putting in the name, hit the Enter key, and you will hear a sound to confirm correct code entry. Now move up to the Costume or Body Color option and you will see that there are now nine colors instead of seven! Finally, go back and change your name, 'cause it's not easy to type "KSKAUDONSU, look out!" for god's sake.

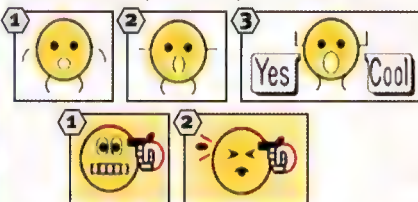


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Racast: MEIAUGHSYN
Racaseal: NUDNAFJOOH

Your source for anything and everything to do with PSO.

ANIMATED ICONS

By making three slightly different symbol chat icons, binding them to different keys, and hitting them all in a row, you can make your chat bubble appear to animate. Here's a simple one we made and another we ran across online; experiment with your own ideas.



KEYBOARD CHART

Keeping track of all those F key binds isn't easy, and a mistake in the heat of combat can cost you plenty (like screaming "Charge!" when you meant to say "Aigh! RUN!" for example); try attaching a piece of paper with all your chat phrases written above the buttons for easy access (see below).

AVOIDING LOCKUP

If all the other players stop moving, be ready to quit. It might just be lag, but it could also mean your game is about to freeze, which will cause you to lose all your items you don't have equipped. If nobody moves in 20 seconds or so, quickly quit your game. Better safe than sorry.

TAKE A PICTURE

So you finally bagged that nasty final boss on hard—wanna remember the moment with a photo? Try this: Pop a totally empty VMU into slot 2 of a controller plugged into the DC's D port. Now hold X, Y, and the START button all at once. The screen will go black and a counter will appear—when it reaches zero, the game will save a screen capture to that VMU. Go to <http://ps0.donut.dhs.org> to e-mail yourself your pic.

JAPANESE PRIMER

Now that you can play online with our friends across the Pacific, you might have run into a few puzzling phrases and had some trouble being understood yourself. Unfortunately we can teach you Japanese in one small paragraph, so instead here's a list of helpful expressions and translations to help you scrape by. Most Japanese understand some simple English (like "help" and "OK"), so if you need to say something not on the list keep it short and avoid abbreviations or slang.

Wahongo wakaranai. Daijoubu desu ka?
I don't understand Japanese. Is that OK?
Chotto matte.

Wait a sec.

笑

Hehehe

Yatta!

Woohoo!

Yoroshiku.

Nice to meet you.

Ohayoo gozaimasu.

Good morning.

Arigatoo gozaimasu.

Thank you very much.

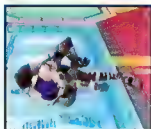
KJ ni shinaide.

No problem.

LOBBY

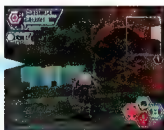
ANIMATIONS

Try holding the Alt key and pressing any of the "F" keys (F1-F12) to perform all sorts of animations. Note this only works in the lobbies online.



SECRET AREA

Most video-game veterans know if there's a waterfall, chances are there's a secret behind it. PSO is no exception to this age-old rule—check behind the falls in Ruins 1 to find a room that isn't on the map but is filled with treasure.



NEXT MONTH...

Akiko's frypan, the special katana weapon, playing with the broadband adapter, and more.

ROCK

PAPER SCISSORS

YEE-HAW!

ROCK/ PAPER/ SCISSORS FOR IT

ABSO-LUTELY DONT!

YOU *%* @!

GO FOR IT!

TRANKS

NO PROBLEMO

READY?

BACK TO CITY

Esc

F1

F2

F3

F4

F5

F6

F7

F8

F9

F10

F11

F12

STOP PLAYING



WWW.GLOBALWORMING.NET

Dreamcast™

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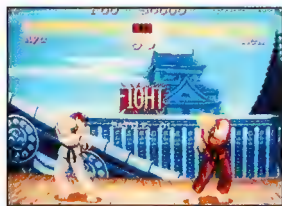
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On sale May 8

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3

Activision is about to set off an extreme-sports explosion, with THPS3 lighting the fuse. We deliver the exclusive scoop on Neversoft's next skate masterpiece, as well as the first screens of Tony Hawk on Xbox. We even reveal every high-octane title in Activision's adrenalized new sports line. But that ain't all: We also catch up with gaming's greatest pioneers, including Alexey Pajitnov and Pac-Man maker Moru Iwatani, and find out what they've been up to lately. This issue's packed!



What's the inventor of Street Fighter up to these days? Find out next month.

- **18 Wheeler: American Pro Trucker** reviewed for Dreamcast
- **Zone of the Enders** reviewed for PlayStation 2
- **Huge previews on two new Zelda games for the Game Boy Color**
- **Game Boy Advance hits Japan: full report**

*All editorial content is subject to change.

OFFICIAL U.S. **PlayStation** May 2001
MAGAZINE On sale April 10

Demo Disc

Video Previews

- **The Bouncer**
 - **NBA ShootOut**
 - **Red Faction**
 - **Winback**
 - **NHL FaceOff**
- #### Playables
- **Metal Gear Solid**
 - **Tekken 3**
 - **Ape Escape**
 - **Legend of Dragoon**
 - **Emperor's New Groove**
 - **Cool Boarders 2001**
 - **Syphon Filter II**
 - **Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver**

Medal of Honor

Medal of Honor hits PlayStation 2 in a short while, and *OPM* has an exclusive look at the next chapter in DreamWorks' WWII epic. Plus, all the latest info on Crazy Taxi, Crash Bandicoot, Virtua Fighter 4, Baldur's Gate and more.



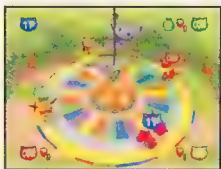
EXPERT GAMER

May 2001
On sale April 17

Stadium 2!

Pokémon Stadium 2 is here and we've got a full strategy on the hottest N64 cart of the year. Another potential N64 star is born as well. Who? He's big, he's bad, and he's...furry? Yep, he's Conker, Rare's irreverent new video-game star. This squirrel has a rather large chip on his shoulder, and he'll be counting on you to get him through Conker's Bad Fur Day. Moving on, *XG* brings you the latest on Phantasy Star Online. On the PS2 front, *XG* hits the dirt with some serious offroad action with ATV Offroad Fury. Finally, look for some keen insight into the handheld world of Mario Tennis.

- **Stadium 2 Guide**
- **Mario Tennis GBC**
- **Conker Blowout**
- **ATV Offroad Fury Action**
- **PSO Update**





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 Kraig Kujawa • kraig.kujawa@ziffdavis.com

FINAL WORD

Metal Gear Solid 2 lives up to the hype



Jonathan Dudlak



James Mielke



Mark MacDonald



Kraig Kujawa

Jon: Far and away the most chilling part of E3 2000 was the MGS2 demo, and at that point, it was only a video. I got the exact same charged feeling from watching and playing the demo this month—it's truly mind-boggling how much Konami's done to create a totally interactive environment and yet preserve the unique MGS gameplay that had me skipping classes in college (sorry Mom and Dad). Snake's range of abilities has been dramatically increased, which in itself extends the hell out of a game like this, but the attention to detail in this demo is what made my eyes go wide. The AI is nearly flawless—guards can track you from

"The game just looks and moves so much better than any current titles..."

room to room now, and react differently to their dead or unconscious brethren that Snake leaves behind (and there are a ton of ways to dispose of the bodies—that's YOUR responsibility in this game). Bottles break apart differently based on how you shoot them, Snake's well-being is affected by the weather conditions, and how soon enemies get affected by your tranquilizers depends on where they get hit. Don't even get me started on the brilliant use of water (in all its states), shadows and lighting. I'm overstimulated...I need a time-out again.

Milk: It's amazing how Konami can dominate E3 year after year, with little more than video of Kojima's newest Metal Gear. I know of a few developers who just watched the video last E3 and shook their heads in defeat. Nothing comes close to the ideas and execution contained in MGS2. Nothing. Having seen the video time and time again, I was pretty confident the demo would live up to the anticipation, but once I actually got my hands on the thing, oh my God. The demo can be beaten in as little as 15 minutes if you skip the cinemas, but you'd be missing out on the whole experience. Even for a short demo, you just want to play over and over and over again. After

I beat it on normal, I instantly went to Hard mode, which rocks. I beat Hard mode, then got my ass whupped on Very Hard. They don't play around on V-Hard. In any case, I can hardly wait to play the full version (who wouldn't?), but at the very least, I'll buy Z.O.E. just for the MGS demo and I'm not even kidding. Chances are you'll play the demo more than the game it comes with.

Mark: Yeah, with a game as huge as MGS2 and the number of jaded bastards around here, it really says something that no one was disappointed even by a teaser demo. In fact, I don't think I've heard one complaint about the game so far—a downright miracle at this office.

The game just looks and moves so much better than any current PS2 titles—it's like "This is running on the same system as Warriors of Might and Magic?" Both Z.O.E. and especially MGS2 look more than just one generation ahead of anything we are seeing now, except maybe Gran Turismo 3. I wish Konami'd take some time off and teach these other developers how to handle the PS2, because it's obvious KCET knows something everyone else doesn't. I can't wait 'til we get off deadline so I can take that mutha home, lock the door, lay it down, and explore every nook and cranny...of the demo. Playing the Metal Gear Solid 2 demo. That's what I'm talking about. Ahem.

Kraig: It's amazing how time and time again Konami can come up with a sneak peek of a game where people shake their heads in disbelief and then follow up with a game that fulfills every expectation. Granted, what we've seen is just a limited demo, but it's more than enough to let all of us EGMers rest easy knowing this is indeed the PS2 "killer app" that we've all been waiting for. And maybe, if we're lucky, it will make developers take a second and third look at their PlayStation 2 game before they decide to put it on the shelves. With all the mediocre PS2 stuff out there, Lord knows they need to.

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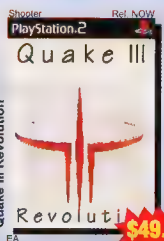
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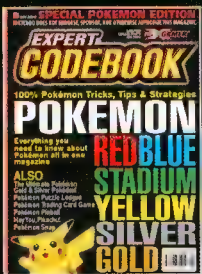
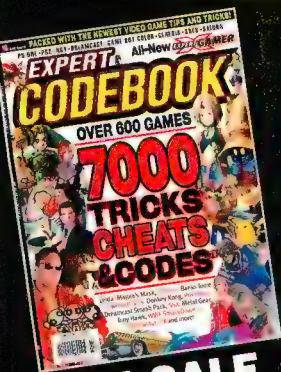
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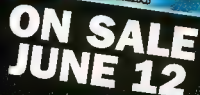
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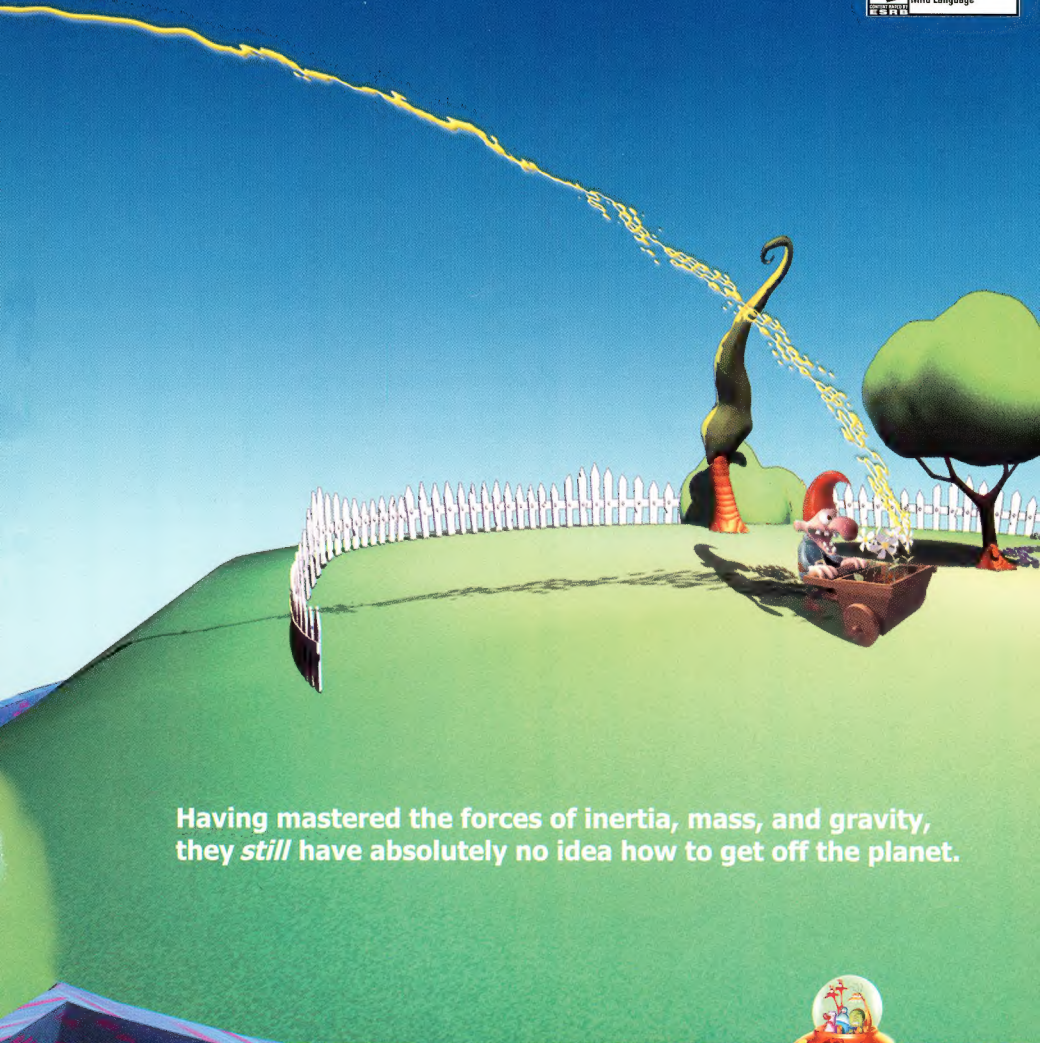


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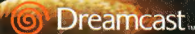


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