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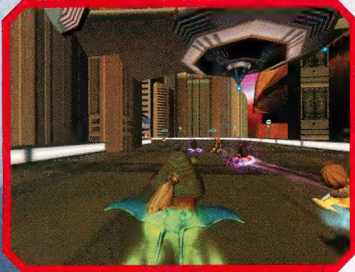
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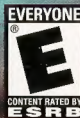
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By John Davison • john_davison@ziffdavis.com



EDITORIAL

Breaking Down the Boundaries

This may seem like a somewhat grandiose and slightly pompous thing to say, but in years to come we'll probably all look back on Tony Hawk's Pro Skater and its siblings as some of the most important video games of all time. No, I'm not in the pay of anyone at Activision or Neversoft, and yes, I know many of you will no doubt be yelling at the magazine right now with the kind of venom normally reserved for those of you who think we're "biased" against Sega/Nintendo/Sony/SNK/Game.com/3DO/whatever, but c'mon. Think about it. The Tony Hawk series has probably helped bring gaming into the much ballyhooed

"mainstream." There are 10 million systems in gamers' hands around the world now, and somehow this feat has been achieved in just one short year. It took three years for the original PlayStation to reach that kind of success. But for the system to continue to grow it needs these game-busting, culture-defying games and it needs them soon. Microsoft and Nintendo are breathing down Sony's neck right now and we're seeing the stage set for a major system war this fall. Like you couldn't guess that already, right? The battle is going to be nastier than anything we've seen before though. And there's one group of people that really lucks out when that hap-

"The Tony Hawk series has probably helped bring gaming into the mainstream more than just about anything. It's crossed social boundaries, brought people together, and introduced compatible cultures to one another."

and elusive "mainstream" more than just about anyone. It's crossed social boundaries, brought people together, and introduced compatible cultures to one another. Not many games can claim to have done that. Maybe Pokémon. Maybe Tetris. At a push, maybe Gran Turismo. But there really aren't many that we'll look back on and say, "That's when things really changed."

The third game in the series comes at a really important time. The PS2 really needs a game like this to perpetuate its own onslaught of the

pens: us, the gamers. Meanwhile, in mag-related news, you'll notice we have a fresh new face in the Review Crew. Jeanne Kim—a huge fan of RPGs, anime and PC games—joins the staff this month. Yes, she's a genuine girl gamer. And long-time readers will notice the return of a familiar face, too: Cho Chu rejoins the Crew after a year in the wild world of dotcoms. Speaking of familiar faces, be sure to check back next month...

EGM will have a new boss. **John Davison**

Contributing Writers

David Hodgson

After stints at *Computer & Video Games*, *Maximum*, the *Official U.K. Nintendo Magazine*, *GameFan*, *Gamers' Republic*, *inXite*, and *Gamers.com*, David has taken a break from his duties at Prima to track down some old-school gaming luminaries for us (see page 94).



Evan Shamoon

A New York transplant, Evan worked for the *Official Dreamcast Magazine* and has been writing about video games for a few years in San Francisco. He is currently trying to figure out how the hell to get 2 million points in THPS2.



John Ricciardi

John Ricciardi is what they call a "freelance journalist," which basically means he does nearly as much work as he did when he had a real nine-to-five job, only now he does it in his underwear, and for about 1/10 the pay.

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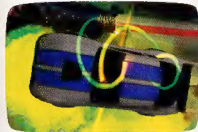
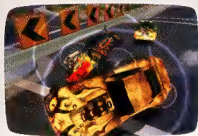
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PlayStation 2



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Game Directory

Features

Departments

- 105 4X4 Evolution
- 104 **Aidyn Chronicles**
- 104 Aladdin in Nasira's Revenge
- 106 All-Star Baseball 2002
- 106 Army Men: Air Attack 2
- 106 Army Men: Green Rogue
- 107 Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2
- 69 Blood Omen 2
- 74 Bounty Hunter
- 78 Commander Keen
- 72 Dance Dance Revolution 4th Mix
- 72 Dave Mirra: Maximum Remix
- 64 Devil May Cry
- 56 Dragonriders: Chronicles of Pern
- 103 Ducati World Racing Championship
- 107 ESPN MLS ExtraTime
- 107 ESPN National Hockey Night
- 62 Extermination
- 75 Gotham
- 55 Heavy Metal: Geomatrix
- 108 High Heat Major League Baseball 2K2
- 63 Ico
- 103 Illbleed
- 111 Kirby Tilt 'n' Tumble
- 76 Legend of Zelda: Oracle Series, The
- 67 Lost, The
- 108 MDK2 Armageddon
- 79 Mega Man Battle Network
- 78 Mega Man Xtreme 2
- 111 Mickey's Speedway USA
- 68 Monster Rancher 3
- 68 NASCAR Heat
- 73 One Peace Mansion
- 56 Outrigger
- 105 Point Blank 3
- 103 Pokémon Stadium 2
- 108 Quake III Revolution
- 111 Razor Freestyle Scooter
- 66 Resident Evil Code: Veronica X
- 105 RPG Maker: Remote Control
- 109 Rumble Racing
- 68 Rune: Viking Warlord
- 73 Sheep Raider
- 104 Simpsons Wrestling, The
- 70 Smuggler's Run 2
- 54 Sonic Adventure 2
- 79 Spider-Man
- 72 Spider-Man 2: Enter Electro
- 78 Spider-Man 2: Sinister Six
- 109 Star Wars: Super Bombad Racing
- 70 State of Emergency
- 103 Stupid Invaders
- 79 Super Street Fighter II Advance
- 105 Time Crisis: Project Titan
- 109 Triple Play Baseball
- 73 X-Men: Mutant Academy 2
- 79 X-Men: Reign of Apocalypse
- 78 X-Men 2: Wolverine's Rage
- 110 Zone of the Enders



Appearing Out of Big Air Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 brings new moves, bigger air and—egad!—online play to the PS2 this fall. But that's not all. The Birdman is leading the charge of action-sports athletes exploding out of Activision's new sub-brand; Oz. Haul tail to **page 80** for the first info on Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder, Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer and Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2.



Could Homer Kick Flanders' Ass? See how your favorite animated jesters fare when pitted against one another in the ring. Will it be an overnight success or a flop? See our take on Activision's answer to the WWF. **page 104.**



Final Fantasy X and X-Box Make Headlines at Tokyo Game Show The biggest news from the Spring Tokyo Game Show? Final Fantasy X, baby! We played it—see what we saw and read what we thought. Also, Xbox plans to fly across the Pacific, steal a glimpse at Silent Hill 2, and more. **page 24.**



Where are they now? Remember Pitfall, Centipede, Street Fighter II and Tetris? Of course you do. But what happened to the pioneering designers behind these classics? We track them down, relive the good ol' days, and find out what they've been up to since. **page 94.**



Zelda Game Boy Color Games Galore! There's not one, but two new Zelda games about to hit our soon-to-be outdated handheld system—what better way for it to go out with a bang. Find out all about them in our comprehensive two-page preview of Link's new adventures. **page 76.**

Editorial 6

Letters 14

News 24

Find out what's brewing in Japan for the PS2 and Xbox at our Tokyo Game Show report, and get our first impressions of Microsoft's first flurry of American Xbox games shown at Gamestock.

Gossip 46

Previews 52

Activision's new lineup is turning this section into a comic-book convention. We take a look at an obscene number of Spider-Man and X-Men titles on PS, Game Boy Advance and Color. If men in tight suits with super powers aren't your thing, then take a gander at the new Zelda GBC games.

Review Crew 102

Opening Day has passed, and we tell you which of the next-generation baseball games pass muster. Also: Pokémon Stadium 2 on N64, Quake III Revolution on PS2, and a battalion of Army Men games storms PS2 shores.

Tricks 112

The Final Word 118

Microsoft raised the stakes when Sega announced 11 of their games would hit Xbox. None of the named titles were "A-List," but it caused some excitement among the Review Crew nevertheless.

SYSTEM KEY

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



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- Number of letter artists using crayon as their medium of choice: 46
- Letters questioning our use of adult diapers: 1
- Letters written in defense of Gn'R: 74
- Letters defending Gn'R from people who don't read our magazine: 62

Letters to the Editors

LETTER OF THE MONTH

One Man's Plea To Stop Fade of Arcades

Where have all the arcades gone? The consoles have overrun society. The only info I get on them is when you fine fellows at *EGM* do a report on an expo. My city never did have the best and most up-to-date arcades, but they don't seem even further behind. They do not even have Dance Dance Revolution! First one of the greatest pinball manufacturers went out of business, and now Midway has announced that it will no longer manufacture arcade games! Are we in denial, people? Do we not even care that our only source of games will soon be consoles? I for one hope not!

Although the consoles seem to be matching, if not surpassing what is available in the arcades, we must not forget the type of joy only possible from playing a game in an arcade. Or the fact that you can play a game in the arcade without having to purchase the console the game is played on. The Internet seems to have filled the vacancy left by the consoles of being able to play

spotted Capcom vs. SNK, something I've been itching to play since sadly I do not have a Dreamcast. I have hardly played Street Fighter, or any Capcom fighting game seriously since Super Street Fighter II, so I was a little new to this. I popped in my tokens (tokens!), and started to play with Ken and Ryu. Then a guy walks up, an experienced-looking player and we tangle. I held my own. I played the silent type, the kind who looks and acts arrogant but is ready to pee his pants. Then it happens: I lose. I walk around the arcade awhile and come back to find some new people playing. I challenged them, kept the same guise and barely lost. Although I lost I had fun, and scared them a little before the end.

Compare that to the Internet. Oh boy, emoticons! Let's try to show our personality with those things! Without arcades, people, our lives will have less meaning! Consoles are nothing without arcades! It's destroying the basis of gaming! Save our arcades people! Run down to your nearest arcade and surrender all your quarters! Forget all this PS2, Xbox and GameCube hype.

It's time to get the arcade game business on a comeback track. People should be able to play arcade games in their homes, not just in arcades.

all your quarters!

strangers (one of the great bonuses to the arcades), but it still leaves out one very important part of playing in the arcades: the experience of playing against a complete stranger face to face, attitudes and all.

Recently I walked into an arcade and was searching for a game to play. I

Show the arcades you still support them, that you cannot live without them! Show the arcade owners and game manufacturers you still care! That you still want them around! Please, for the sake of humanity!

Chris Sittner
sittner@yahoo.com

Many of us here have fond memories of arcade scenarios very much like the one you describe. There was something cool about being blown away by the latest, greatest machine that had magically appeared since the last time you were in the arcade. The gap in technology between home systems and arcade machines really heightened the experience. But like

everything else, times change. That gap obviously closed long ago. Arcades can still be a good time, but the new machines have to be so dramatic to succeed, usually only the giant corporate complexes can cover the cost. Sadly the days of playing for hours at the corner pizza place or the dingy little joint in a stripmall seem to have gone the way of the Yugo, my friend.

Too Much Space Devoted To Our "Mighty Organ"

I just surveyed the two-foot length of bookshelf that holds my complete collection of *EGM* and wondered how much more space I can afford to devote to your mighty organ. It still amuses me to look at early issues and recall the excitement of Strider and



other platform marvels, but sooner or later those glossy pages will find themselves moulding in the garage and being shredded for mice nests. So why not offer subscription readers, such as myself, a purely electronic form of the magazine? Ship the text on a CD, or DVD. Save postage, conserve the world's diminishing trees, give the postman's back a break, and allow me to clear a few inches of space. It won't suit everyone, obviously, but I can't be the only guy whose girlfriend doesn't think 137 copies of *Electronic Gaming Monthly* in a row is classy.

Chris Baker
outlaw189@lycos.com

Well, your lady may not think it's "classy," but just think what would happen if that space were cleared, huh man. She'd start putting up doilies and figurines and the like. Next thing you know, your swinging bachelor pad looks like a craft bazaar. No, no my friend, you're much better off with the ol' *EGMs* atop that shelf. And to prevent a mass-mailing campaign, let's make this clear: Organ is another term for a newspaper, magazine, or any regularly occurring publication.

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.





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LETTERS

EGM@ziffdavis.com

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

Question of the Moment

N64 owners: What are your thoughts about your system lately?

(cough cough) getting...blurry...(cough wheeze) not much time left...(cough) goodbye cruel world...(cough)

ctolpin@redwoodhighschool.org

I used to play it a lot. I recently bought PlayStation 2 so the only one you play it is my little brother, and that's because I never let him play with my PlayStation 2.
abemat3@hotmail.com

Majora's Mask, No Mercy, Paper Mario, Conker...can't really complain.
pipolchap44@hotmail.com

I love it! Am I ever so happy I have it. Zelda Majora's Mask and Conker's Bad Fur Day will keep me entertained while I wait for the GBA and the GameCube.
Perez767@cs.com

I'm happy with my N64 right now. I just hope Nintendo continues to make games for it.

cslkgreg@magsinet.net

I blew off the dust, and replaced Perfect Dark with Conker's Bad Fur Day.
Craiger303@aol.com

Lately? The blasted thing has always sucked. It just collects the dust my Dreamcast blows off my PS2.
No1SprGuy@aol.com

I'll tell ya, it's one heck of a dust collector.
Gobluedevils2@aol.com

Two words: Sell it.
HeiMyoog@aol.com

As long as Zelda Majora's Mask exists N64 is still there!
icemyst4@ignmail.com

Next Month's Question of the Moment:
What Sega games do you want to see most on Xbox?
Send your short but sweet responses to: EGM@ziffdavis.com with the subject heading: **Sega on Xbox**

Learn To Say Booty In Nine Languages

A few weeks ago I found an English-Japanese-English translator online, so I started looking up translations to game titles. Some of 'em are really weird, like these:

Toki Tori = Time Bird
Hajime no Ippo: Victorious Boxers = Beginning of a Step: Victorious Boxers
Onimusha = Demon Warrior
Kuru Kuru Kururin = Winding Winding Winding Companion

Oh yeah, the URL for the translator is: <http://www.savergen.com/ondict/jap.html>

Klummus
Zero60126@aol.com

Thanks for the handy translation site, Klummus. We've seen a lot of these over the years, some good, some not so good. This one sounds solid, but we have to be sure. By plugging in our standard list of ordinary everyday words, we should get a clear picture of how accurate this site really is:

doughnut	do-natsu
turtleneck	kame erishai
unicycle	ichirinsha
mullet	bora
bowling	bo-ri ngu
pigeon-toed	uchiwani
shotgun marriage	shottoganmariiji
nougat	nuga
horn	horun
vomiting	outo
Canadian canoe	kanadiankanu
underpants	shitabaki
hotpants	hottopantsu
pirate's pants	paire-tsupsantsu
booty	bundorihin
Ascot	asukottotai

And now for the Japanese to English test:

kojima small island
...and we're done. Uh-huh, everything checks out. This site is spot-on according to our resident Japanese experts. Oh, since the site offers many languages to choose from, let's put it through its paces in Finnish too, just to be extra sure:

underpants alushousut
Yep, there you have it folks. 100% accuracy as far as we're concerned. Who are "we" you ask? Why Erektoronikku Ichiban Gekkanshi, of course!

Reader Wants To Continue Timely Servicing

I would just like to say how great your timing is on delivering my subscription to my front door. About every month or two I have to go on a three-hour ride with my school or something, and it never fails, but I always get my EGM the day before or the day of my trip, delivered right to my house! Now that's great service! Having an issue of EGM on a three-hour ride is great for anyone! I'm going on a trip May 28, so if you wouldn't mind, let's keep the streak alive, huh? I'd appreciate it!

David Galindo
Odessa, TX

No sweat, David. The wireless Web microcam we embed in each issue of EGM allows us to monitor the daily routines of each lucky EGM reader. We already arranged for the May 28 trip, and the September "Fall Festival Hayride" is roughly four hours away from

you, so we took the liberty of penciling that delivery date in as well. Happy Trails! P.S. You might want to consider replacing the Transformers Underoos. They're a little passe. May we suggest Digimon?

Concussion Discussion

I don't know which is more preposterous: The fact that Mat Hoffman claims he has suffered 50

"...every month or two I have to go on a three-hour ride with my school or something, and it never fails, but I always get my EGM the day before or the day of my trip, delivered right to my house! Now that's great service!"



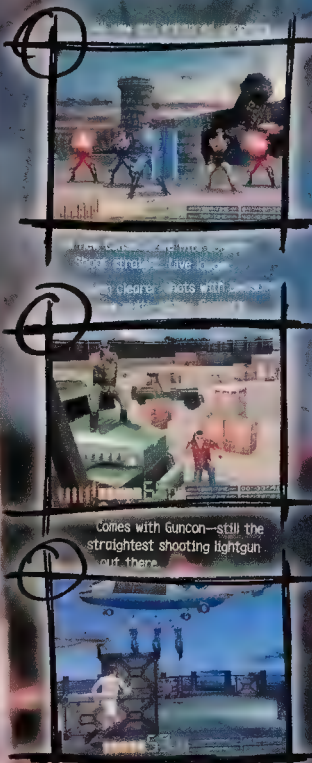
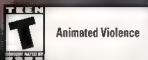
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Also note: although we can only respond to a few letters each month, we read and appreciate (most) all of them. So keep 'em coming, eventually you might see your handy work turn up here!



concussions, or that you would actually believe and print that.

Steve Young suffered four concussions in a three-year span, and doctors told him he would be risking grave danger if he were hurt again. Troy Aikman was forced to retire after accumulating 10 concussions over a 12-year career. Mick Foley has suffered eight, and his wife ran through all the memory-loss problems he has been having during a recent *Dateline* piece.

Hearing that Hoffman suffered concussions five times would not surprise me in the least based on what he does for a living, so I am hoping you guys just goofed and added a "o" by mistake. I have no respect for someone who would make such a ridiculous and downright laughable claim in the hopes of hyping himself.

Matt Giggey
Antioch, CA

What are you talking about Matt? Fifty concussions isn't that unusual. Look at Dean. He'll get up a full head of steam and level his dome at the vending machine with spectacular results five or six times daily. Sure he can't see so good anymore, and no one's denying that sometimes he thinks he's a vacuum, but his heart is in the right place. It's his passion, his gift. We don't question it, why should you? So what if he lies motionless for a few minutes—it's a small price to pay for glory. Not to mention the fact that we haven't paid for a Zagnut bar in over a year. Now don't bug us anymore or you'll be looking at the business end of a knuckle sandwich.

Man Challenges Our Claims Of Diaper Use

I have been reading your magazine frequently lately, and the subject of wearing absorbent devices when you are playing a game you can't let go of has been mentioned often. My question is this: Are you serious? Has anyone ever tried this wacky suggestion? I am really curious, so please respond to my letter.

pigphantom@hotmail.com

SHORTS

Some interesting nuggets worth mentioning.

Is it true that Square is bringing over some old Front Mission games for PS2?
Michael Witt
drcps@capital.net

Magie: EGM Ball sez: All signs point to no.

I have some PSO news, in case you haven't heard, hacked items such as God/HP God/Ability and Devil/Tech ARE BANNED! Woohoo! So smooth sailing for us light players!
daxpro5
qhotmail.com

The GameShark codes that sprang up for PSO were one of the more depressing things we've witnessed lately, but we have real doubts how well Sega will be able to enforce banning cheaters.

Tried it? Wacky suggestion? Are you kidding? We buy those suckers wholesale. We hired an "efficiency expert" a couple years back, and he showed us how this could shave off an average of 4.3 hours a week in lost gaming time. 4-3! Well I don't have to tell you that's all we needed to hear. With our relatively small staff and high workload, we're always looking for a way to avoid leaving our cubes. Next up: George Foreman Grills at every workstation.



Coincidence Or Mischief?

After reading the e-mail in the last issue about Mega Man & Guns n' Roses, I have noticed something kind of strange, I wonder if you'll agree. FFX has some strange coincidences with the PlayStation RPG, Legend of Legaia. But why would Square do that? Well, look at this...

1. LoL world's name: Legaia
FFIX world's name: Gaia
 2. LoL's problem in the world: Mist
FFIX problem: Mist
 3. How the Mist is made: generators
FFIX mist: through generators
 4. Name of Gaia's ra-seru: Ozma
FFIX hard to beat boss: Ozma
- LoL came out before FFX. Similarities? How very creepy!

Krista Collins
chinadoll66102@hotmail.com

Not really, Krista—once you learn that Ozma is the most popular name in Japan for both boys and girls and even pets, and that generated mist is the leading cause of death over there. That Legaia/Gaia thing is pretty spooky though.

LETTER ART

WINNER

Clarence J. Goode
Richmond, VA

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

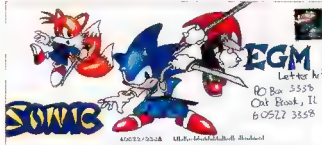
(All entries become the property of Ziff Davis Media Inc. and will not be returned)

Close, but no controller

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



Kail McKee
Long Beach, NY

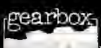


Jared Kasl
Lincoln, NE

H A L F



Animated Blood
Animated Violence

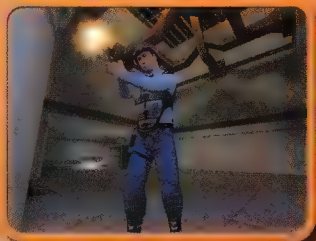


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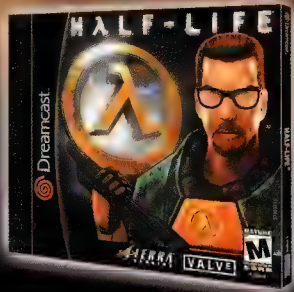
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Sega Dreamcast screen shots.

MOST WANTED

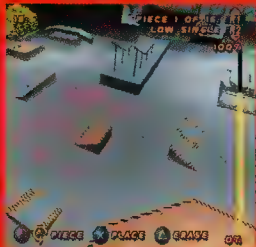
#1 MOST WANTED PLAYSTATION GAME - OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE'S TOP 10 CHARTS (MARCH 2001)



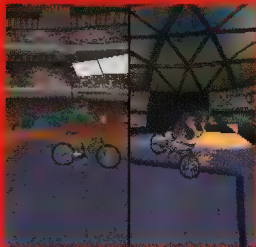
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in 8 levels.



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IN STORES MAY 2001

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NEVER SOUT



Animated Blend
Mild Animated Violence



GAME BOY
COLOR

ACTIVISION





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

Press Start

The Hottest Gaming News on the Planet

Japan Pockets Game Boy Advance

The wait is finally over. On March 21, Nintendo launched its long-awaited super handheld, Game Boy Advance, in Japan. While some lucky gamers (like us) managed to lock down early reservations at Lawson convenience stores throughout the country, many consumers had to get their GBAs the old-fashioned way: by waiting in line. In a frenzy not unlike that of the PlayStation 2 launch last March, hopeful gamers began lining up at game shops as early as 9 p.m. the night before, in hopes of assuring their chances of getting one of the prized systems before they sold out. And sell out they did—Nintendo shot through all 650,000 units that were available on day one in a matter of hours. An additional 450,000 units were shipped to retailers between launch and March 31, and they quickly disappeared too.

Software was no slouch, either. In the first week, Super Mario Advance took the top spot, selling in excess of 200,000 copies. F-Zero did well, too, as did some of Konami's more Japan-friendly titles (Power Pro Kun Pocket 3, Yu-Gi-Oh! Dungeondice Monsters) and Capcom's Rockman EXE. But not everyone enjoyed such success. When you release 25 titles on the same day, there are bound to be some poor performers, and as a result, a majority of the launch titles came in selling less than 10,000 copies. Japan's slumping economy certainly didn't help the matter, but GBA sales are expected to continually increase as the year goes by. Without a doubt, the launch of the GBA was a smash success, and the likelihood of a repeat performance when it arrives in the States is very good.



The Card-Reader peripheral attaches to the back of the GBA and can be used to read and view data held on trading cards.

Japanese Launch Proves Handhelds Still Rule



Eager Japanese gamers line the streets for another console launch. Even after selling out over a million units, GBAs were hard to come by in Tokyo.

GBA OWNS YOU

On March 7, two weeks before all the launch madness took place, Nintendo held a special "Game Boy Advance Preview" event at Zepp Tokyo, a popular nightclub in Odaiba. It was there that the company laid out their post-launch plans for GBA, which included several big-game announcements that basically cemented what we've already known for a long time: Game Boy Advance is going to rock.

First and foremost, Satoru Iwata, Nintendo's director and general manager of corporate planning, announced that the company has several franchise titles in development for GBA. Mario Advance and F-Zero were only the beginning—later this year, Nintendo will release Mario Advance 2, which is based on Super Mario World for the SNES, and sometime after that they'll release Mario Advance 3, which is based on the NES Super Mario Bros. 3.

Iwata also confirmed that ports of Yoshi's Island and Yoshi's Story are under way as well. "Each of these games will be enhanced with GBA's characteristic features, and can be played anytime and anywhere," according to Iwata. But that's not even the best of it. Iwata

went on to reveal that Nintendo is working on a brand new Metroid game for GBA, tentatively titled "Metroid for Game Boy Advance." Unlike the aforementioned games, which are all ports of existing titles, Iwata stated that this new Metroid is going to be "a sequel which features brand-new elements."

We expect to hear more about Metroid at the upcoming E3 show in May. Iwata also said to look forward to games that propose "a new style of playing." Undoubtedly, the first of these games is Pocket Music, which was unveiled at TGS. See page 28 for details.



Game Boy fans pack the floors of a Nintendo-sponsored GBA event on March 7.



Think your Milky Blue GBA is the coolest of the cool? Think again. In typical Nintendo fashion, the company has released an exclusive Pokémon GBA with a sexy metallic blue tinge, called "Suicune Blue" after Pokémon #245, Suicune. The unit features small silhouettes of Pikachu and Pichu below the screen on the front of the unit, and just like previous Pokémon-adorned Game Boys, it's only available at the two Pokémon Center stores in Japan.

POKÉMON RETURNS

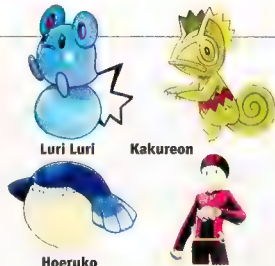
NCL also revealed that they are working on a version of Pokémon for Game Boy Advance, due out sometime in 2002. Three new Pokémon were unveiled at the event—Ruriri, Kakureon and Hoeruko (Japanese names)—as well as a young boy, who could just be the main character of the new game. According to Tsunekazu Ishihara, President of Creatures, this new game will be the origin of a brand-new Pokémon World.

Ishihara also showed off an innovative new peripheral for the Game Boy Advance, dubbed the Pokémon Card-e reader (tentative name). This device, which plugs into the cartridge slot of the GBA, uses Olympus's Scan Talk technology and

works with Card-e cards, a new type of trading card that Nintendo plans to release. Basically, the cards can hold loads of data on tiny barcodes (such as monster stats, sounds, tips, etc.), which can then be scanned and viewed using the Card-e reader and a Game Boy Advance. This quirky little device has loads of potential, and could revolutionize the way trading card games are played. No word yet on a U.S. release, but as long as the kids keep begging for Poké-anything, the odds are good.

The Advance hits American soil June 11, so check back next month for coverage on all the launch titles, as well as previews for upcoming games.

—By John Ricciardi



Luri Luri

Kakureon

Hoeruko

Nintendo revealed three new Pokémon during the GBA launch, as well as an anonymous boy character that could be the hero for upcoming games.

Old Peripherals and a New Nightmare at the Game Developers Conference

The 2001 Game Developers Conference went off a lot like previous years' shows—lots of stuff for developers and little info for console gamers, but there were a few highlights. Infogrames unveiled **Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare** at a private party in San Jose, which was attended by the game's theme song composer, accomplished musician and percussion legend, **Stewart Copeland**. The game has some gorgeous prerendered

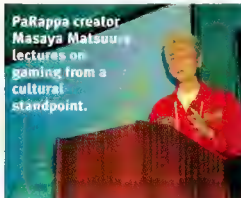
backgrounds, but so far plays like a typical Resident Evil title.

PS2 is the console of choice for peripheral makers at the show, though no one won any creativity points this year. An **LCD visor** for first-person shooters and a **glove device** for use in lieu of a controller were two of the "hasn't someone tried this before?" attractions. **Iomega**, while not exactly flooring anyone with their **Zip drive** display, has made the thing **compatible with the PS2**, supporting 100 MB and 250 MB disks. It could be mildly handy for downloading maps and sharing data over the Internet someday. The PS2 Zip should be out at the **end of the year**, provided developers start supporting it, but Iomega wouldn't disclose any.

Xbox ringleader **Seamus Blackley** managed to make some waves with his keynote address. Unable to offer any Xbox updates whatsoever, Seamus filled a huge void that was supposed to



contain information about Japanese support for the 'box with some light-hearted return-fire at the press and lots of damn witty banter, for a Microsoft employee. For the lowdown on Gates's overseas accomplices, see our **Tokyo Game Show** coverage this issue.



PaRappa creator Masaya Matsuno lectures on gaming from a cultural standpoint.

VITAL STATISTICS

Measuring up

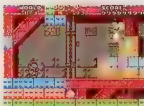
The GBA is the fifth edition of Nintendo's portable, and certainly the best in terms of graphics and gameplay. Below, see how it measures up against its predecessors in other areas.

SYSTEM	RELEASE	PRICE	WEIGHT	BATTERIES & LIFE
Game Boy	4/21/89	12,500 yen	220g	35 hours on 4AA
Game Boy Pocket	7/21/96	6,800 yen	125g	8 hours on 2AA
Game Boy Light (Japan)	4/14/98	6,800 yen	140g	20 hours on 2AA Light (Japan)
Game Boy Color	10/21/98	8,900 yen	138g	20 hours on 2AA
Game Boy Advance	3/21/01	9,800 yen	140g	15 hours on 2AA

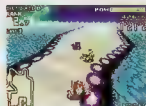
Top-Selling GBA Launch Titles, March 21 - 25

Source: Daily Famitsu (www.famitsu.com)

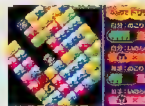
- 1) Super Mario Advance (Nintendo) - 219,551
- 2) F-ZERO: Maximum Velocity (Nintendo) - 116,116
- 3) Powerful Pro Kun Baseball 3 (Konami) - 74,549
- 4) Dungeondice Monsters (Konami) - 61,325
- 5) Kuru Kuru Kururin (Nintendo) - 57,145
- 6) Mega Man EXE Battle Network (Capcom) - 43,048
- 7) Mr. Driller 2 (Namco) - 42,525
- 8) Napoleon (Nintendo) - 26,152
- 9) Castlevania: Circle of the Moon (Konami) - 22,224
- 10) Konami Krazy Racers (Konami) - 12,063



Mario Advance



F-ZERO



Mr. Driller 2



PRESS
START

Gamestock Lights Microsoft's Fire

Burning Questions are Answered About Xbox's First-Party Game Lineup, but Can They Extinguish the Competition?

Woodstock may have been about people coming together in honor of peace and harmony, but the only tune coming out of Microsoft's Gamestock was an Xbox battle hymn.

There were no joints, Winnebagos or naked hippies to be seen at this 'stock. In fact, the grassroots-themed event couldn't have been held at a more corporate location. Microsoft's Executive Center served as the launching pad for Xbox's first big software presentation, whose informality and over-the-top, forced enthusiasm made it feel like a few of Bill Gates' kids misbehaved and designed a game system so they could hang with the popular crowd. The project's general, Ed Fries, vice president of games publishing, couldn't have fired off the first volley with a more quirky demeanor.

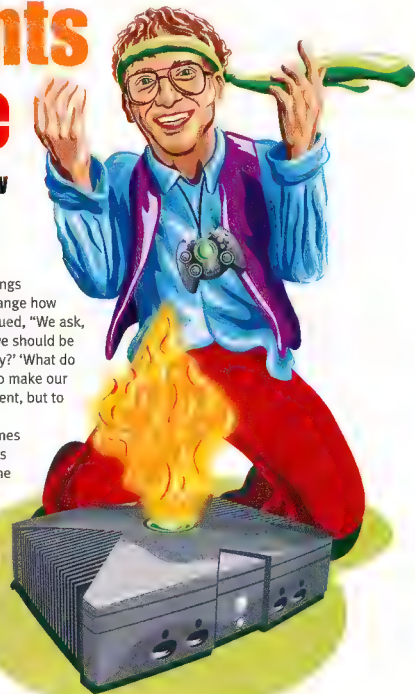
"We are finally ready to leave the cartoon world behind," declared Fries. "Because of the technical limitations of [consoles] in the last 20 years, the best we could do is make fancy cartoons," who then suggested that the Xbox was needed to "break out of the cartoon world to reach the mass audience."

"For a technological advance to happen it takes something to push it," said Fries, who drew a comparison between this console war and the 1960s' space race between the U.S. and Soviets that pushed us to land on the Moon. "We have that epic battle [now]: You've got the world's largest software company fighting the world's largest consumer electronics company and arguably the world's largest toy company, and they're all spending millions of dollars to push these systems forward. That battle will drive innovation. It will give us a chance to push things further than they've ever been pushed before. Hardware won't be the only determining factor in this battle," said Fries, stressing the need for amazing games. "A great book, a great movie, a great play. They're about more than just

killing time. We need to create things relevant to [gamers] and try to change how they view the world," Fries continued, "We ask, 'What kind of game is this?' But we should be asking, 'What are you trying to say?' 'What do you want it to mean?'" We need to make our goal to not just create entertainment, but to create art."

But the eight playable Xbox games unveiled after the keynote address were far from being considered fine art. The fledgling lineup covered many genres, but didn't seem to transcend them as Fries would like to see. None of the games appeared to be doing anything that the PS2 couldn't, but it's important to note that these are first-generation titles with over a half-year of development left to go. The programming teams haven't had the luxury of smelling a complete Xbox system yet and all of these have been created on half-powered Xbox hardware that doesn't even have a finalized sound chip as of press time.

Here's a glimpse of what we saw and played at the event:



NFL Fever 2002

The Skinny: A football game from the creator of the long-running Front Page Football series of PC games.

Prognosis: This is one of the big disappointments of the show. Unlike past early glimpses of NFL 2K and Madden for PS2 that knocked our socks off, NFL Fever's unfinished graphics didn't show a lot of promise, and the feature list seems a little too shabby. Every nuance that was pointed out to us as being a highlight ("Look at the receiver drag his feet out of bounds on the catch!") has been done on just about every other football game many times over. With NFL 2K2, Madden NFL 2002 on the Xbox's horizon, this football game might be pointless.

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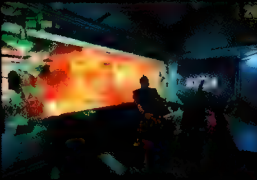
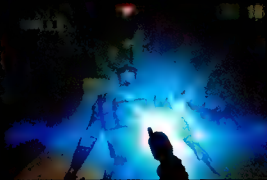
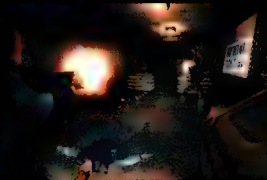
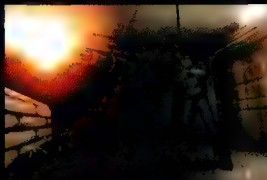
It's time to realize that conditions on Mars will not improve. It's time to stand up and fight! We must fight for our rights, for our freedom, for our very lives! We've got the weapons, the vehicles and the technology. Now all we need is you!

Be ready to strike with us. Wait for my signal. When it comes, strike hard and strike fast. We must free Mars!

BETTER RED THAN DEAD

FIGHT BACK

We've taken out control towers with our new Geo-Mod™ technology, hijacked Ultor's vehicles by ambushing supply lines, and raided bunkers to amass a huge arsenal of weapons. Check out this surveillance footage from our most recent assault.



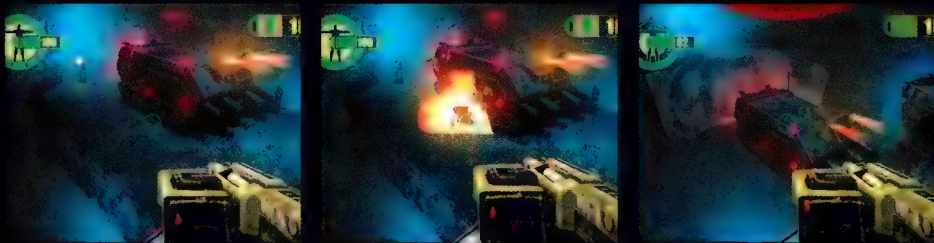
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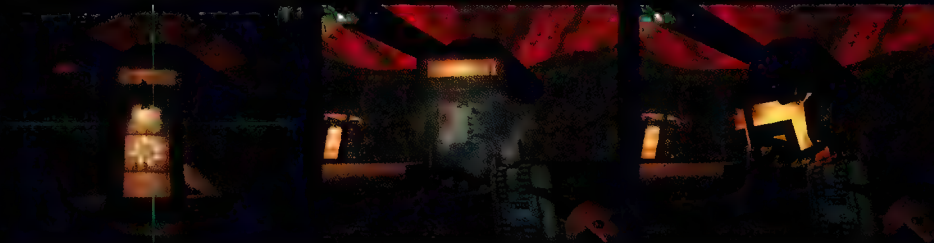
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There's no need to spend large amounts of ammo eliminating this highly armed convoy. With Geo-Mod technology, just two strategically placed blasts to the bridge from the Rocket Launcher will send them all tumbling into the abyss.



No time to pick off enemies in a guard tower one by one? Blow out the base of the tower and bring the whole thing crashing down.

YOUR ARSENAL

Gear up with over 15 different weapons to destroy Ultor's guards and mercenaries. All the weapons have secondary firing capabilities, making them some of the most sophisticated in the solar system. Here's a sample:



Heavy Suppression Machine Gun



Remote Mining Charge



Sniper Rifle



Flame Thrower



Magnetic Rail Driver



Rocket Launcher
(with infra-red scope)

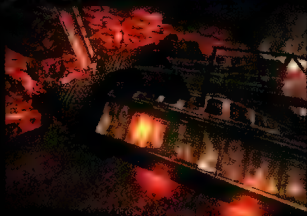


Riot Stick & Body Shield

THE VEHICLES

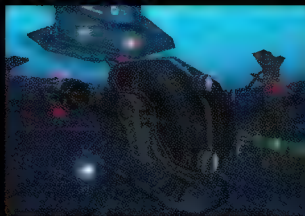
We have land, sea, and air vehicles, each with a unique arsenal of weapons and capabilities.

Driller



Drill through walls!

Submarine



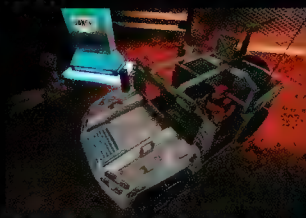
Fire homing torpedoes to eliminate subs and other underwater foes!

Aesir Fighter



Wield the flying Aesir's mighty weapons to wipe out enemies below!

ATV



Handle the Martian landscape with this rugged all-terrain vehicle. Utilize the mounted machine gun to wipe out enemies!

APC



Bomb, strafe, and crush foes in the awesome Armored Personnel Carrier!

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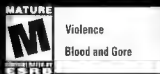
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FLAMES OF LOVE

"The time I burned my guitar it was like a sacrifice. You sacrifice the things you love. I love my guitar," said Jimi Hendrix as his guitar burned at the Monterey Pop Festival in 1967. That moment helped the international festival become the root of future rock festivals, such as Woodstock and Live Aid. Perhaps Bill Gates should have considered a similar show of affection with his Xbox at Gamestock to get a similar impact.



Nightcaster

The Skinny: A third-person game that drops Gauntlet into a more colorful and mystical world.
Prognosis: The straightforward hack-'n'-slash gameplay in this third-person action game was inviting, but the large selection of spells is what really caught our eye. For example, shooting a single fireball at an enemy caused the ground below to crackle and crumble behind the heat trail, making for some utterly delicious carnage. And that's only a few of the early spells. The stuff we got to conjure later on nearly made us wet our diapers, so naturally we can't wait for more.

Halo

The Skinny: This high-concept, first-person murder-simulator is being pushed as a "killer app." That is: It's supposed to make you want to buy an Xbox on Day One.
Prognosis: While computer geeks were chuckling at Halo running on a lower resolution than their PC monitor, we were marveling at the flexibility of Halo's world. The short demo we saw allowed us to drive a high-tech jeep into enemy territory while a computer-controlled soldier in the back mowed down aliens with ease. Not many games let you find your way into the compound you're about to trash, and this is only one of the immersive designs that should set Halo apart from the usual glut of first-person shooters.



Fuzion Frenzy

The Skinny: A four-player futuristic "party" game that's low on innovation, but high on eye-candy.
Prognosis: This is another one of those titles that strings together a huge set of simple mini-games and uses a common theme as an excuse to put them all one disc. Nintendo has Mario Party, PlayStation has Crash Bash, but we're not sure that putting the letter Z into the word "fusion" will give this game the character it needs to make people care about this great-looking, "me too" party game.

Codename: Project Gotham

The Skinny: It's not a Batman game as the title suggests, but rather a misleading placeholder name for this Gran Turismo-style game from the makers of the Dreamcast racer MSR.
Prognosis: Showing this title at Gamestock was nearly as much a surprise to the developers as it was to us, since they had only been working on the game for a couple of months. Even in its



early state, this driving game looked impressive. Bizarre Creations is promising around 20 licensed "Supercars," and lots of meticulous re-created locales that are home to over 300 race circuits. Check out our full preview on page 75 for more info.

Azurik – Rise of Perathia

The Skinny: A young man, a heroic journey, and weapons based on fire, earth, air and water elements. This third-person game has all the makings of a cliché adventure, but maybe there's something up the developer's sleeve.
Prognosis: But then again, maybe not. Azurik might as well be the living incarnation of dead Kain. His weapon has two edges instead of one, and it sparks a little bit brighter, but we got déjà vu of Soul Reaver the minute we started impaling enemies with his fiery (or electric, or watery) staff. The emphasis on cinematics and story is welcome, but it'll take more than a handful of impressive real-time cutscenes to get us excited.



Amped: Freestyle Snowboarding

The Skinny: A pure free-styling snowboarding game that may actually give the genre a breath of fresh (big) air with its unique perspective.
Prognosis: Most sports get criticized for athletes being too self-absorbed, but in Amped, you get rewarded for it. The basis of this game isn't head-to-head competition, but rather improving your skills so you can land a new contract, a magazine cover, and anything else associated with fame or fortune. If they incorporate trophy wives, then we don't see how they could go wrong.

Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee

The Skinny: The long-awaited, high-concept Xbox game that was too demanding for the PS2. Microsoft is betting that you'll want to buy an Xbox to play this game, but the jury is still out.
Prognosis: You know a game isn't close to being done when the creator (Lorne Lanning) has to stand in front of a wall-sized monitor with a microphone to "narrate" the character's dialogue during a demo (he did a damned good job, too). It's not clear why this couldn't work on a PS2, but it is clear that this is a platform game that tries harder. Solutions to puzzles involve more than hitting a switch and jumping on something—teamwork and smarts are needed to help your big-eyed character stay alive. And we assume Lanning won't be included in the box to do vocals when it ships at launch.

—Kraig Kujawa





PRESS
START

TOKYO GAME SHOW 2001 REPORT

Which of these high-profile games shown at the recent Tokyo Game Show was the most impressive?

Source: videogames.com



Cold Spell Hits Tokyo

Xbox the only spark at Spring TGS

Gamers braved unseasonably cold weather and snow at the recent Spring 2001 Tokyo Game Show to view the latest the Japanese industry had to offer—which wasn't much. The show was smaller than usual, with many companies cutting costs by featuring smaller booths or no booth at all, no doubt saving their big titles for the upcoming E3 in May. But despite the show's decreased scope, there were still a few standout titles and announcements.

Xbox Comes to Japan

Perhaps the biggest news out of the show (and what the crowds turned out for) was Bill Gates' Xbox keynote speech. It included the first announcement of an alliance between Microsoft and Sega to develop 11 titles for Xbox, four of which were named at TGS: Jet Grind Radio Future



(tentative title), a sequel to last year's Dreamcast cult hit; a new Panzer Dragoon game; a new version of the racing franchise Sega GT; and Smilebit's arcade action shooter Gun Valkyrie, previously in development for the Dreamcast. These games will, according to the announcement, premiere first on Xbox (no word if versions will be released on other hardware

down the road).

The other big alliance announcement from Microsoft was with Japanese telecom company NTT Communications to provide broadband connectivity in Japan through ADSL. A specialized "Broadband Adapter" (little more than a large DSL modem with an Xbox-ish

Continued on page 32

THE BIG GAMES

SILENT HILL 2 (PS2)

Konami's macabre survival-horror game was shown in playable form for the first time at the show and looked great (set for an autumn release). Its graphics have a thin layer of noise, making it look like film grain and adding to the game's sinister nature. While there was really just one area to explore (a hospital), you could tell this game will deliver plenty of chills. The Dual Shock vibrates to mimic your character's heart beat. View is restricted to a single light source once again (from the flashlight on your coat), so it's sometimes hard to tell when you're approaching a monster (blank-faced, convulsing corpses) until it's in your face.



DEAD OR ALIVE 3 (Xbox)

The best-looking Xbox demo was Tecmo's three-minute clip of Dead or Alive 3. Combatants threw each other through glass, electric signs, columns of ice and off of buildings—all in rapid succession and in real-time, without blinking. A fantastic looking beach sequence (which apparently uses the hard drive in some way) finished things off. Considering the project's only 10 percent complete at this point, it was damn impressive.



POCKET MUSIC (GBA)

The sole new game from Nintendo in their Handheld Corner was this do-it-yourself music title. It's your standard music game—press the right combination of buttons and directionals to "play" music. But there's also a freestyle mode where you choose guitar, drums or keyboard and play any song you can think of, or link up with three others to form a full band. Due this summer, Pocket Music even comes with a mini-amplifier that straps to your waist so others can rock out to your jams. Songs include licensed classic rock hits like "Highway Star" and "Smoke on the Water," plus old-school Nintendo tunes.





You grow about 15% taller during your teen years.

KEVIN GARNETT ©2001 AMERICA'S DAIRY FARMERS AND MILK PROCESSORS



ALONE
IN THE
DARK
THE NEW NIGHTMARE

It's what you fear.

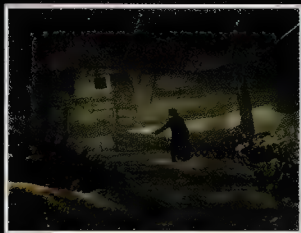
It's dark, It's dangerous, and your
worst nightmare has come to life.

Armed with only your wits, a
flashlight, and a revolver, can you

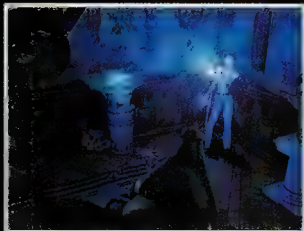
unravel a mysterious island's

untold secrets and survive one

night of true terror?



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and scarier than ever.



Join Edward Carnby and Aline Cedrac
as they confront an epic journey of terror.



Solving this mystery won't be easy.
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DARKWORKS
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Screenshots are from PlayStation game.

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PRESS
START

Special 24-page Famitsu Xbox (Famitsu being Japan's #1 game magazine) was given to TGS attendees.



An ad for Xbox seen at restaurants near the show.



Xbox banners took over the train station near Makuhari Messe.

TOKYO GAME SHOW 2001 REPORT

Continued from page 28

design) will be made available to consumers there who want to take advantage of high-speed connections. The partnership is designed to foster broadband options which are currently limited in Japan, and will launch in 2002.

Microsoft also showed the smaller Japanese Xbox controller, and revealed that their Japanese first-party game group has 10 titles currently in development (although none will include online connectivity).


Microsoft elicited mixed impressions from gamers at the show. Despite a few big announcements (mostly the Sega games, Silent Hill X from Konami, and Dead or Alive 3 from Tecmo), other developers seem to be taking a



Sega's Tetsu Kayama tells the crowd about the alliance between them and Microsoft.

"wait and see" approach to the Xbox, either making smaller titles or signing on as a developer but with no specific games in the works (like Capcom, although producer Yoshiki Okamoto did reveal that their Xbox game was something from "a big series"). The lack of playable games at Microsoft's booth and the large size of the console were other concerns among the Japanese audience.

Not a Lot of New Games

Even the major companies didn't have much to tantalize consumers. Sony had about a half-dozen first-party titles on show for PS2, including a fantastic and finished-looking Gran Turismo 3 A-Spec and a mosquito simulator called Ka (Mosquito). Announced but not shown were Hot Shots Golf 3 and Ape Escape 2. PaRappa 3 and Ico were MIA. 



Nintendo promoted its just-released Game Boy Advance at the first Tokyo Game Show the company has attended.

Crazy Taxi PS2

As the fifth best-selling DC game in the U.S., it's no wonder that Acclaim's first DC-to-PS2 port, due in May, is Crazy Taxi. What we were surprised to hear, though, is that Acclaim is handling the development in-house. Given their spotty past, who's to say what could happen? To be fair, though, the early build we've got looks good. Previously there were rumors about a five-game deal between Sega and Acclaim. While we can't confirm that, we do know that Acclaim will be bringing 18 Wheeler to the PS2 at some point. The name Zombie Revenge has been thrown around too, but Acclaim says not to expect a U.S. release.



Sega's Okawa Passes

Isao Okawa, the man who helped keep Sega afloat in recent years, passed away on March 16 at the age of 75 due to heart failure. A



Sega.com dedicated its front page to Okawa's memory.

leading proponent for the advancement of technology and a kind philanthropist whose Okawa Foundation donated grants to worthy academic recipients, he founded CSK, Sega's parent company. Without him, Sega would most likely not be where they are today. Imagine a world without Sonic, or other cherished Sega icons and you can understand why Okawa-san will be missed.

DEVELOPER PROFILE

Bungie

Year founded: 1991
Location: Redmond, WA
Web site: www.bungie.com
of people: 50



Previous games: Oni, Myth II: Soulblighter, Myth: The Fallen Lords, Marathon Infinity, Marathon 2: Durandal, Marathon, Pathways Into Darkness, Minotaur: The Labyrinths of Crete

Current projects: Halo and "secret" stuff
Halo is called Halo because: The original title, "Big Floaty Circle Of Death In The Sky," did not test well. Second attempt, "I Know What You Did On That Abandoned Ring Structure In Deep Space Last Summer," had trademark problems.

Reason why our games usually have one-word titles: In fact there are only three titles in the Bungie canon with a single word as the title—all the others have two or more words, often separated by punctuation. Much like proctologists, Bungie fans see a lot of colons.

Difference between making a game on Xbox and on PC: Less waiting and gnashing of teeth.

Concepts we thought about putting in the game, but won't make it: The Jeep's in-dash boomin' stereo system and a large collection of literary classics on CD.

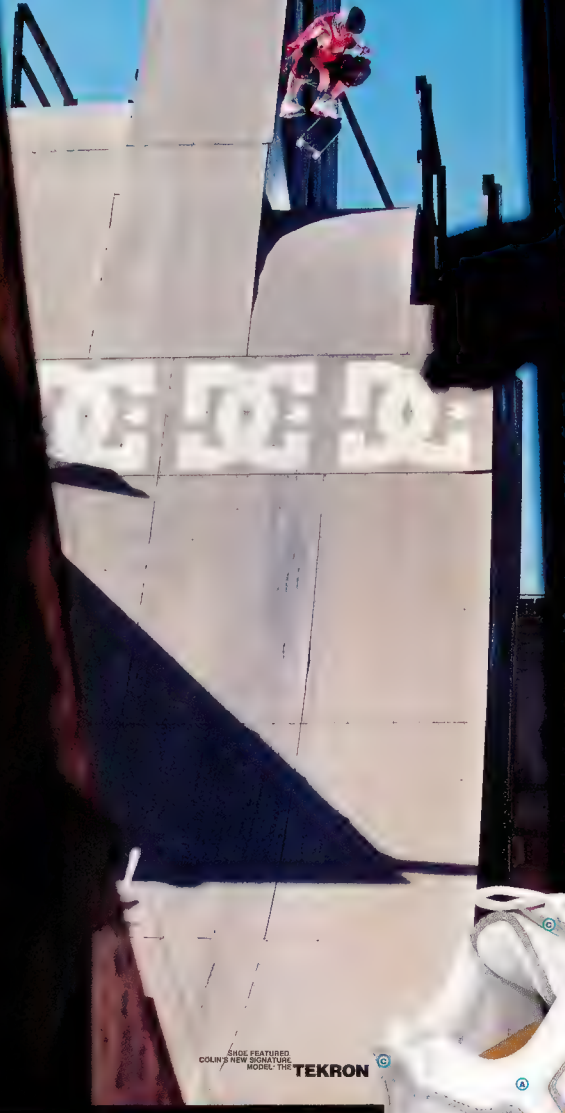
During late-night programming sessions we: code and yawn.

Music that inspires us around the office: Grieg's "Hall of the Mountain King," "Hot for Twinkles" by the Go-Nuts, "Knuckles the Dog (Who Helps People)" by Killdozer, and the Slinky theme song.

Story behind our name: Early in life, one of Bungie's co-founders had to rob a grave as part of a fraternity hazing. The name of the corpse was Eduardo Roderigo Guantanamo de la Bungie. True story.

ANOTHER DAY AT THE OFFICE?

COLIN MCKAY KICK FLIPPING INTO
THE 20 FOOT TALL DC SUPER RAMP.



SHOE FEATURED
COLIN'S NEW SIGNATURE
MODEL: THE **TEKRON**

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PRESS
START

TOKYO GAME SHOW 2001 REPORT

Once Yuna summons a Guardian Force monster, she greets it (here snuggling with the new griffon beast Velfare and on the shoulder of everyone's favorite fire devil Ifrit), then stays behind while her new friend fights it out with enemy monsters.



FINAL FANTASY X

A first peek at Square's next mega RPG is shaping up

You mean, besides Final Fantasy X?" If you asked anyone at the Spring 2001 Tokyo Game Show last month in Chiba, Japan, what games they liked at the show, that was most likely the first thing out of their mouth. After so many years and so many Final Fantasy sequels consistently raising the bar for the role-playing genre, it wasn't that surprising that part X played and looked fantastic. But judging from the long lines for the playable demo at the show, that didn't mean everyone wasn't still excited for a hands-on peek at the first PS2 Final Fantasy adventure before its release in Japan this July.

GRAPHICS

Rather than the cartoony, deformed designs the last Final Fantasy (X) and most of the early series followed, part X marks a return to the more realistic style of FFVII and VIII. In fact, if the characters remind you of those from either of those two games or Square's The Bouncer, there's a simple reason—character designer Tetsuya Nomura worked on them all. That means characters with normal-size heads and feet, eyes (more or less) proportional to their faces, and a hero with tousled hair and a large necklace of some sort. Check, check and check.

The graphics, of course, have received a major facelift: The prerendered backgrounds of the past are gone, making way for fully real-time settings that nevertheless still feature astonishing amounts of detail and awesome



The second boss in the demo was this giant blob—notice the new battle meter in the upper-right corner displaying the order of upcoming attacks (the B stands for boss).

effects. (Although you don't have control of the camera as you wander through the fully 3D dungeons, there is a handy map that appears in the corner of the screen to help you keep your bearings, as well as keep track of other items such as treasure and save spots.) Tropical trees and even blades of grass sway in the wind, waterfalls cascade lazily down from towering heights, and eerily real fog drifts in and out of focus. Bright colors also abound, more like the vibrant Crono Cross than the somewhat drab FFVII and VIII. Overall, just from the short demo we saw, FFX looks easily as good as the best the

next generation of PS2 titles has to offer (Gran Turismo 3, Metal Gear Solid 2).

Another big innovation is all the voicework—even though in-game dialogue appears in text along the bottom of the screen as usual, all characters actually speak their words as well. No confirmation yet on who will be handling the voices for the U.S. version of the game, but given the lineup of big-name stars Square signed up for the FF movie, we have high hopes.

COMBAT

Other changes become obvious only once you

Final Fantasy: The Movie(s)

Although most of it looks as good in real-time as the full-motion video from previous games, yes, FFX has FMV cutscenes as well. Square showed a good amount of sections from these impressive movies (shown at right, everything else is real-time from the game), including the scene pictured here of Yuna walking on water and casting a spell, plus an epic Braveheart-esque battle featuring a chocobo-riding army that took our breath away.





Your first encounter with the feline beast-man Kimari doesn't go so hot—you fight each other until you realize you're both on the same side.

enter battle. Random enemies still attack as you wander the dungeons, shattering the screen and sending you into combat, but with boss battles the transition is more subtle. In the demo we played at the show, a short real-time cutscene played out before each major showdown, setting up the boss fight just how it would appear once menus popped up.

Anyone familiar with the series will recognize most of the terms once battle begins: Hit Points, Magic Points, attack, defend, use items, cast spells or summon monsters—often also called Guardian Forces (GFs). The difference in FFX is these summoned monsters are more than just fancy one-shot special attacks: Once GFs like Shiva or Ifrit appear (they're both back in part X, along with some new beasties), you control them as you would any other character: You can have them attack hand-to-hand, cast any of the magic they know, or use their special attacks—and they don't disappear after just one move, but stick around until they die or you call them away. Although you usually have the now-standard three characters for battles (only one remains to babysit when

you summon a GF), you can now swap other party members in and out during combat with a quick press of a shoulder button.

Lastly is the new battle meter. Replacing the Final Fantasy staple Active Time bar, this new chart in the upper-right corner of the screen always makes it clear exactly whose turn is next. Less complicated than the Grandia meter but similar in some ways, it shows pictures of characters in order of upcoming turns. If someone is affected by haste or slow spells, for example, now you can tell exactly how often they will get to move in the future. The battle meter seems to display other info as well, although at this point we aren't exactly sure what it all means.

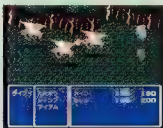
Despite this quick peek, many questions still remain—what is the overall theme of Final Fantasy X, and how exactly do all the characters relate to it? Where's the big, central villain? What about the overworld and mini-games? Seems like the only thing we really know for sure is how bad we want to get our hands on the final version. 🍀



All of Final Fantasy X's cutscenes, real-time (as pictured here) or pre-rendered, feature real voiceover for all of the game's dialogue—a historic first for the series.

Final Fantasy II and Chrono Trigger on the way to USA

RPG fans would say these two games should have been re-released a long time ago, but late is better than never. After much tribulation, Square EA is planning to release Final Fantasy IV and the much-desired Chrono Trigger for the PS one this July under the blanket-title "Final Fantasy Chronicles." While fans might argue that FFIV should have been packed with FF Anthology and that Chrono Trigger should or could have been packed with Chrono Cross, for continuity's sake, the story goes

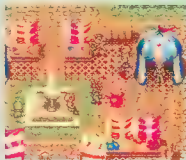


Final Fantasy IV (aka II)

deeper than that. With Final Fantasy IV, there were issues with Tose, the original localization team, for FFIV (FF II in the States). Legal matters held up the localization of FFIV, which is now being handled internally at Square. As for Chrono Trigger, the reason boils down to the immense fan support Square EA received requesting that the game come out for the PS one in the States. Guess your vote does count after all!

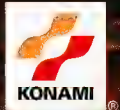
With the RPG market for the PS one looking pretty barren for the next six months, Square EA has decided now would be a great time to unleash these two classics to the public in optimized, finetuned form. Chrono Trigger features some added sequences that make its connections with its sequel, Chrono Cross, more evident, and a revamped localization of the text. Final Fantasy II will also include some text changes and other elements (like the stripping dancing girl, no doubt) originally edited out of the U.S. Super NES version, plus an added dash feature, FMV sequences and improved balance for increased difficulty.

So why don't they just call it Final Fantasy Anthology II? Apparently Sony no longer permits volumized game titles. Personally we could care less what they call it, we're just happy those two great games are coming back.



Ah, Chrono Trigger





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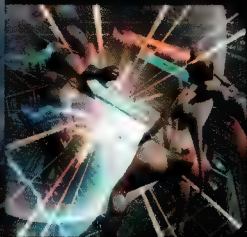
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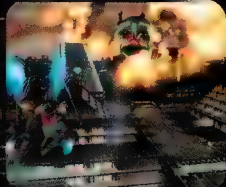
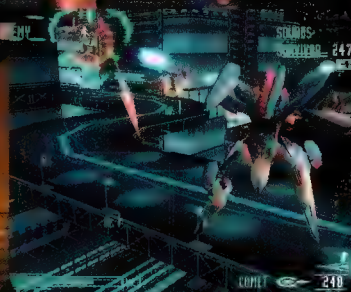
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Official PlayStation Magazine

versus Mode for heated, 2-player battles.



entire space colony. Life and death decisions aren't easy, but when the time comes, you'll know what to do.



Missions change when re-played.

ZONE OF THE ENDERS
Z.O.E.

Fast-paced battle sequences with multiple
enemies in full 3D environments.



Produced by Hideo Kojima





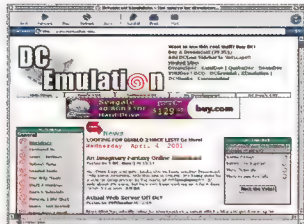
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It's been a year—where the *hell* is Bleemcast (you know, the PlayStation emulator for Dreamcast)? Good question—we were wondering the same thing. Despite Internet rumors proclaiming the company's death, bleem!'s Will Kempe told us that they're still alive and that Bleemcast is still on the way. When? They won't say. Will they have an E3 booth? No. Anything to show us or for preview? No. That can't be good.

Play Nintendo Games On Dreamcast*

*and other cool stuff hobbyist programmers are doing on the DC



You can find the hobbyist-programmed DC applications at www.dcemulation.com.

Even as Sega announced they'd stop producing new titles for Dreamcast by 2002, a growing number of fan-programmed applications for the system have popped up on the Internet. We saw the first signs of homemade life in mid-2000, mostly in the form of MP3 (DCMP3) and MPEG movie players (Gyplay), and the Dreamcast

hobbyist-development scene exploded from there when the first emulators (software that allows you to play games originally created for other systems) arrived. Now it's possible to play Genesis, Super NES, NES, NeoGeo Pocket, Game Boy and Sega Master System games on the DC, just to name a few.

The majority of these titles were created using a freely available programming library called LibDream, which hobbyist programmers compiled by studying the Dreamcast hardware. But before you run off to download it and make your own games, bear in mind that most of the people behind these projects have years of programming experience under their belts, in intimidating languages like C and C++. (If you're hellbent on doing your own DC thang, dive into the sites to the right for some how-to help).

When downloaded and burned to a CD, these applications can be played on any older-model DCs sold prior to January 2001 (these models are capable of playing CD-

LINKAGE

Dreamcast Programming:
<http://mc.pp.se/dc/>

DCDev:
<http://dcdev.allusion.net/>

Dreamcast Development:
<http://www.julesdcdev.com/>

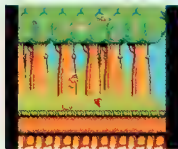
Kamka's DC Programming:
<http://www.barcode-search.com/kamka.htm>

RAMTronics VMU Development:
<http://vmudev.dcemulation.com/>

ROMs). While it's perfectly fine to create, own, and operate the emulators themselves, to actually play any games you'll need the game ROMs, which are illegal to download and distribute. Many in the emulation scene argue that because most of these titles are no longer commercially available, the only way you can play them is via emulation, so where's the harm in that? Also, those in the DC-development community want to make it clear they don't consider what they're doing as promoting piracy, and they don't condone the copying of commercial DC games. "Writing an emulator is a hobby that most do for free," Ken Friece, author of Nester DC, told us. "We don't write emulators to hurt video game companies; we write emulators because we love their hardware and games."

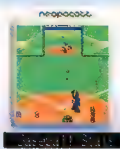
Besides, emulators aren't the only projects hobbyists are taking on for the DC. Australian developer Titanium Studios brought Quake I to Sega's system to prove how easy it is to port a game from PC. Unfortunately it ain't exactly *legal*, and Titanium told *EGM* they don't support its distribution. Other original tech demos and games are appearing as well (check the links above for examples). They may be incredibly simple (don't expect Shenmue) but you have to respect the devotion of these game developers. 🎮

Homemade DC Killer Apps...



Nester DC
Author: Ken Friece
Comments: Plays NES ROMs in full-speed without sound. With sound

turned on, the games slow down. That gripe aside, Nester DC is still the best NES emulator you can find for Dreamcast.



Ngpcocalt
Author: Brian Peek, Bob Thayer, Julien Frelat (original)
Comments: Perfect way to play NGPC

games (without sound) on your TV. It's a lil' slow, but it's great to play these games on a big screen.



DreamsNES
Author: Per Hedbor, Marcus Comstedt and Peter Bortas
Comments: Slow but stable

Super NES emulator. It may lack sound, but there's just something undeniably cool about playing Castlevania IV with a DC pad.



Quake DC
Author: Titanium Studios
Comments: It's Quake I on DC with Quake III

DC-style joypad controls, plus keyboard/mouse support. Character animation is choppy (like it was on PC) but it moves fast!

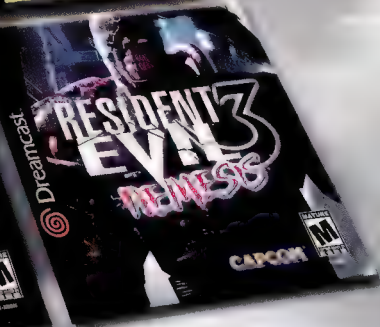
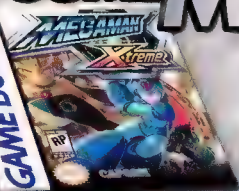


Dan Potter's Ghetto Pong

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GAME BOY COLOR



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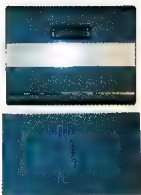
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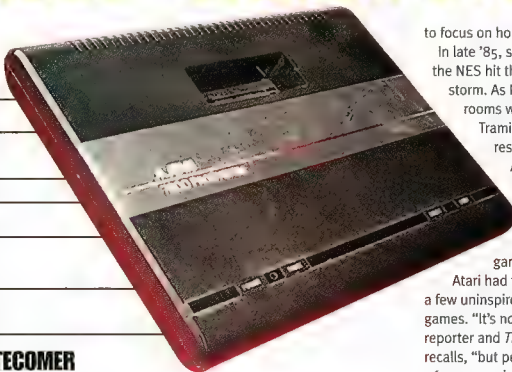
SPACE INVADERS

Consoles tend to slim down as time goes on (with the possible exception of the Xbox), but despite its age, the Atari 7800 is just about the size of the modern PS2. While not all that impressive by today's standards, it was a huge improvement over Atari's mammoth 5200 console of 1982.

GOLD SCHOOL : SYSTEM OVERLOAD

ATARI 7800

Years Available	1986-1990
Units Sold	2 million
Processor	1.79 MHz custom 6502C (8-bit)
System	Same as 2600
Price (at launch)	60+
Backward compatibility	Backward compatibility
Notable titles	Few if any stellar titles



to focus on home computers instead. In late '85, soon after Atari's fateful decision, the NES hit the states and took America by storm. As Nintendo spread into U.S. living rooms with unprecedented popularity, Tramiel saw a chance to get in on the resurgence of video games. In 1986, Atari polished up the 7800 and sent it into the market with six games. But it was too late. By that time Nintendo had 80 percent of the market and the games that every kid wanted. All

Atari had to offer was a redesigned joystick, a few uninspired titles, and the ability to play old games. "It's not a bad little system," MSNBC reporter and *The First Quarter* author Steve Kent recalls, "but people who saw the 7800 playing 2600 games immediately said, 'Why would I want this?' The 7800, especially with the software created for it, just did not look like it could measure up to the NES and [Sega's] Master System."

INSIDE ATARI'S 8-BIT LATECOMER

The year 1984 was a very crucial time for video games. The public was convinced that the industry, rooted in late-'70s diversions like Pong and Spacewar, was over after the crash of '83. Skeptical hardware developers scoffed at Japan's Famicom (Nintendo Entertainment System, or NES), citing its joystick-less control pad as just one of the reasons jaded American gamers would reject it. To give the biz a jumpstart, Atari hammered out a follow-up to the

5200 flop—the 7800. Developed in 1983 by seasoned game maker General Computer Corporation, the 7800 was a powerful console in its day. It met or exceeded some of the NES' specs and was backward-compatible with the huge library of 2600 games to boot. It also featured an encryption key which kept any unlicensed developers from putting product on the console (one of the 2600's biggest problems). If the system and cartridge keys didn't match, the system would stay in 2600 mode. Atari also developed a keyboard and storage cart for high scores, the latter of which was only recently released to the public. But innovative or not, the 7800 would never escape the looming shadow of its dying corporate parent. Under new direction from Commodore founder Jack Tramiel, the company shelved the 7800 before its planned retail debut

The 7800 controller was a vast improvement over the flaccid 5200 stick, while a keyboard opened the system up to BASIC programming, and a memory cart let you store high scores.



In other words, kids wanted Mario and Zelda, not Ms. Pac-Man, Centipede and Pole Position II. "Although the graphics on the 7800 and NES were comparable, everybody and their neighbor were buying NESes," recalls video game historian and author Leonard Herman. "Pity the poor kid who had an Atari 7800 when all his friends had an NES."

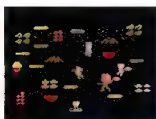
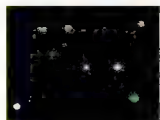
The 7800 began losing retail support in the early '90s. Though offered for a short time by Atari online, the system didn't outlast the onset of the 16-bit revolution. The 7800 quietly faded into video game obscurity, where it's remained as a fond memory of the Atari era for nostalgic gamers everywhere. "I remember being at a bar mitzvah. I mentioned the Atari (7800) to a group of 13-year-olds and none of them knew what it was," Herman reminisces. "It's a shame." 🎮



Despite high hopes at Atari and the console's raw power, the 7800 never had the backing it needed to succeed in a competitive market.

7800 CHOICE CUTS

ASTEROIDS DELUXE
Remade from the 2600 version, this space-combat title is still a solid buy for shooter fans.



FOOD FIGHT
Get to the ice cream across the room by wingin' grub at psycho chefs. Tasty.



MIDNIGHT MUTANTS
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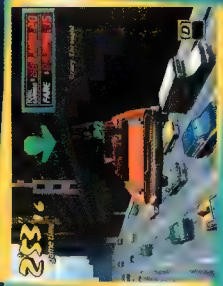
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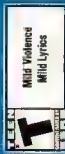
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Crazy Taxi New York Style!



Dreamcast

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PlayStation.2

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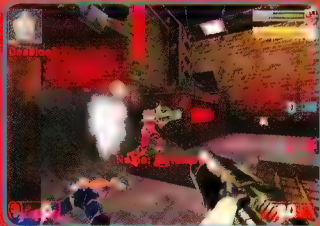
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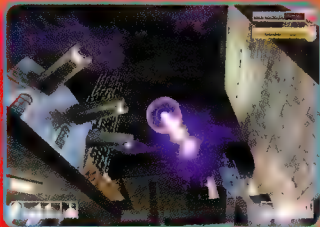
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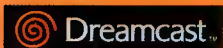
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PRESS
START

"We think [Duke Nukem's] just amazing. An American ass-kicking James Bond who saves the world from aliens, gets the girl, and is an all-around good guy. But he's also a bikini-bar babe-lovin', Jack Daniels-swiggin'... American kinda redneck guy."

-Threshold Entertainment CEO Larry Kasanoff, on the company's just-announced Duke Nukem movie

Phantasy Star Online Ver. 2



Import Pick of the Month: Sega and Sonic Team's update of **Phantasy Star Online** is sure to appease fans hungry for more online RPG action. The big question is, will there be a U.S. release?

PlayStation

5/24 Tear Ring Saga, Enterbrain (RPG)
6/7 Dance Dance Revolution Extra Mix, Konami (Music)

PlayStation 2

April Gran Turismo 3 A-spec, Sony CEI (Racing)
May Endonesia, Enix (RPG)
5/2 Harvest Moon 3, Victor Interactive (RPG)
5/17 Picture Boy 2, Irem (Misc.)
5/24 Phase Paradox, Sony CEI (Shooter)
June Gitaroo Man, Koei (Music)
June Maken Shao, Atlus (Action)
July Final Fantasy X, Square (RPG)

Dreamcast

5/17 Phantasy Star Online Version 2, Sega (RPG)
5/17 Sega Extreme Sports, Sega (Sports)
5/31 Crazy Taxi 2, Sega (Action)
June Gundam Battle Online, Capcom (Action)
6/14 Confidential Mission, Sega (Action)
6/23 Sonic Adventure 2, Sega (Action)

Game Boy Advance

4/27 Bomberman Story, Hudson (Action)
5/25 Final Fight One, Capcom (Action)
July Breath of Fire, Capcom (RPG)
July Street Fighter II Advance, Capcom (Fighting)

Nintendo 64

4/14 Animal Forest, Nintendo (RPG)

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

Quartermann - Game Gossip & Speculation

Hi-dee-ho Quartermaniacs. 'Tis I, the humble-yet-uproarious Q-Mann, your host for the evening. The space I get to deliver you the juiciest, freshest rumors has shrunken further this month (damn you, Newsies!) so let's get to it:

...O! Q and my cadre of spies are scratching their noggins right now over **Microsoft's online strategy for Xbox**. At first, Mr. Bill's gang in Redmond said we'd see games with **online support at launch**, but they've since begun **waffling**. Most confusing thing is, because the Xbox features a built-in ethernet port, there's nothing to technically keep developers from including online support in their games—they just need to run their own servers. But **Microsoft is discouraging that**. Instead, they want all games to run on their own proprietary network, and right now it's **doubtful it'll be ready for the fall launch**. Damn, now I'm gonna hafta play **Halo** on the PC if I want neta play. Cuz it looks like the Xbox will not be released without it. **Noool!** Oh well—there's always LAN...or (shudder) split-screen...**Cincinnati-style!**

...Speaking of **online**, we're finally starting to hear about big goings-on inside Sony's PS2 camp. Rumor has it that **Sony** is prepping **two first-party games for online play**—and one of them may be none other than **Twisted Metal: Black!** We don't know what that means for the game's release date (it's supposed to be due this summer), but we sure hope the rumors are true. The only third-party PS2 game we know of that supports online play is this month's cover boy, **Tony Hawk 3**.

...A couple bits real quick. Looks like **Sega** is considering farming out a lot (and I mean, a LOT) of its **older franchises to outside developers** to mess u—I mean, "port" to **Game Boy Advance**. Why, Sega, why? ...Remember Sony's Japanese PS2 RPG **Popolocrois 3?** Well, it may be the first of that series to come to America (**wahoo!**)...sorry dude, that **Duke** movie sounds lame...

...and that's all for this month, folks. Remember to send all your love, hate and rumors to quartermann@ziffdavis.com—see ya in the aisles at E3... - The Q

METAL GEAR SOLID 2 WATCH

? *Has MGS2 been delayed? When's it coming out now? What the hell am I supposed to do with my life until then?*

! Contrary to reports circulating over the Internet, MGS2 has *not* been delayed in the U.S., and is still scheduled for a November release. Until then? Um...why not play all the older games again. Or play the demo some more. Or learn a trade, like refrigerator repair. Hell, we don't know.

? *What of Metal Gear Solid X, the game Konami announced late last year for the Xbox and hasn't said a word about since? Is it a version of the original Metal Gear Solid (after all, Microsoft published the game for the PC) or is it a combination of Metal Gear Solid 1 and 2 (as some Internet sites have been reporting as fact)?*

! Neither! According to Microsoft (Konami PR in Japan and the U.S. both had no comment), Kojima and his team "intend to go beyond what they will deliver in Metal Gear Solid 2 for the PS2" in Metal Gear Solid X, although they wouldn't comment if

that means it will be a version of MGS2 with extras or an entirely original game. We'll be sure to ask Kojima himself next time we talk to him.

? *Bored with the MGS2 demo already? Get the Big Boss rating every time with your eyes closed?*

! OK, but have you seen Snake make his "O" face? Head to one of the lockers with the girly posters and stare at it in first-person mode for a

while, then quickly call Otacon on the Codec. Down boy! Down!

? *I got a question about Metal Gear, how do I get it answered?*

! E-mail it to us at EGM@ziffdavis.com, subject heading "MGS2WATCH"



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The Top 20 Best-Selling Games of February, 2001

Nintendo continues its dominance of the sales charts with strong Game Boy sales, though **Paper Mario** debuted at number one, ahead of all those little Poké-buggers. Meanwhile there's a gaggle of PS2 titles primed to move in for the kill for the second month in a row, if only the GBC market would slow down a little bit. Of course, mainstays **Tony** and **The Rock** are still strong on the charts, not to mention the return of games like **Spec Ops** and **Gran Turismo 2**. Surprises? How about the **Blue Bomber** clocking in at 15? Or **Phantasy Star Online** keeping the DC dream alive for gamers across America?

1	Paper Mario Nintendo	NEW!	9.5 Gg	9.0	9.5				
2	Pokémon Silver Nintendo		8.5 C r	8.5 C r	9.0 Chr	GAME BOY COLOR			
3	Pokémon Gold Nintendo		8.5 C r	8.5 C r	9.0 Chr	GAME BOY COLOR			
4	Mario Tennis Nintendo		8.5 rk	8.5	8.0	GAME BOY COLOR			
5	NBA Live 2001 Electronic Arts		8.0 rk	7.0	5.0	PS2			
6	Madden NFL 2001 Electronic Arts		9.0 rk	9.0	9.0	PS2			
7	Star Wars: Starfighter LucasArts	NEW!	7.5 rk	7.0 C r	7.5	PS2			
8	Knockout Kings 2001 Electronic Arts	NEW!	7.0 rk	8.0	7.0	PS2			
9	WWF SmackDown! 2 THQ		8.5 Gg	9.0 T	9.0				
10	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 Activision		10 Gg	10	10 C r				

11	ATV Offroad Fury Sony CEA		PS2	NEW!	
12	Driver 2 Infogrames				
13	Donkey Kong 64 Nintendo				
14	Gran Turismo 2 Sony CEA				
15	Mega Man X5 Capcom		NEW!		
16	Phantasy Star Online Sega			NEW!	
17	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater Activision				
18	Spec Ops Take 2 Interactive				
19	Super Mario Bros. DX Nintendo		GAME BOY COLOR		
20	Tekken 3 Namco				

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

JAPAN TOP 10			
1	Super Robot Wars Alpha Gaiden Banpresto		PS2 and GBA games dominated the Top 10 in Japan the last week in March. Out of 25 launch titles, only Nintendo's own games landed in the list. And one of them, Kuru Kuru Kururin , isn't on the schedule for a U.S. release (but it supposedly will be coming to Europe). The sole DC game on the list is from Sega's popular Sakura Taisen series.
2	Kessen II Koei	PS2	
3	Super Mario Advance Nintendo	GAME BOY ADVANCE	
4	Dragon Quest Monsters 2 Enix	GAME BOY COLOR	
5	World Soccer Winning Eleven 5 Konami	PS2	
6	F-Zero for Game Boy Advance Nintendo	GAME BOY ADVANCE	
7	Bio Hazard Code: Veronica Complete Capcom	PS2	
8	Kuru Kuru Kururin Nintendo	GAME BOY ADVANCE	
9	Gallup Racer 5 Tecmo	PS2	
10	Sakura Taisen 3 Sega		

Weekly Famitsu, week ending 4/1/2001



PRESS
START

Coming Soon — June 2001

May

Game Boy Color

Commander Keen—Activision	Adventure
Disney's Atlantis—THQ	Adventure
Hercules—Titus	Adventure
Kirby Tilt 'n' Tumble—Nintendo	Misc.
Legend of Zelda: Ages—Nintendo	RPG
Legend of Zelda: Seasons—Nintendo	RPG
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX—Activision	Sports
Max Steel—Mattell	Action
Portal Runner—3DO	Action
Razor Freestyle Scooter—Crave Ent.	Sports
Spider-Man 2—Activision	Adventure
Xena—Titus	Action
X-Men: Wolverine's Rage—Activision	Action

PlayStation

Batman: Gotham City Racer—Ubi Soft	Racing
Blaster Master—Sunsoft	Action
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX—Acclaim	Sports
Deep Sea Fishing—Acclaim	Sports
MLB 2002—Sony CEA	Sports
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX—Activision	Sports
Point Blank 3—Namco	Action
Ronaldo V Soccer—Infogrames	Sports
Roswell Conspiracies—Ubi Soft	Adventure
SeaDoo Hydrocross 2001—Vatical Ent.	Racing
Sheep Raider—Infogrames	Action
VIP—Ubi Soft	Action

PlayStation 2

Adventures of Cookie & Cream—AgeTec	Misc.
Cool Boarders 2001—Sony CEA	Sports
Dark Angel—MetroD	Action
Dark Cloud—Sony CEA	RPG
Gauntlet: Dark Legacy—Midway	Action
Gundam: Journey to Jaburo—Bandai	Action
Jungle Book R&G—Ubi Soft	Misc.
Motor Mayhem—Infogrames	Racing
Red Faction—THQ	Action
Rumble Racing—Electronic Arts	Racing
Tokyo Xtreme Racer Zero—Crave Ent.	Racing
Viper Heat—Titus	Racing

Nintendo 64

Mario Party 3—Nintendo	Misc.
------------------------	-------

Dreamcast

18 Wheeler—Sega	Racing
Commandos 2—Eidos	Action
Confidential Mission—Sega	Adventure
Crazy Taxi 2—Sega	Action
Dragon Riders—Ubi Soft	Adventure
Gorka Morka—Ripcord	Action
Legend of Blade Masters—Ripcord	Action
Shrapnel: Urban Warfare—Ripcord	Action

Spider-Man—Activision	Adventure
System Shock 2—Vatical Ent.	Action
Worms World Party—Titus	Misc.

June

Game Boy Advance

Army Men: Advance—3DO	Action
Castlevania: COTM—Konami	Adventure
Chu Chu Rocket!—Sega	Action
Dodge Ball Advance—Atlus	Sports
Earthworm Jim—Majesco	Action
Fire Pro Wrestling—Bam! Ent.	Sports
F-Zero: Maximum Velocity—Nintendo	Racing
High Heat Baseball 2002—3DO	Sports
Iridion 3-D—Majesco	Action
Konami Krazy Racers—Konami	Racing
Pitfall Mazy Adventure—Majesco	Action
Rayman Advance—Ubi Soft	Action
Ready 2 Rumble Round 2—Midway	Sports
Super Mario Advance—Nintendo	Adventure
Top Gear GT Championship—Kemco	Racing
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2—Activision	Sports
Tweety and the Magic Jewel—Kemco	Misc.

Game Boy Color

High Heat Baseball—3DO	Sports
The Land Before Time—Natsume	Action
Return of the Ninja—Natsume	Action

PlayStation

Alone in the Dark 4—Infogrames	Adventure
Arc the Lad Collection—Working Designs	RPG
Blast Lacrosse—Acclaim	Sports
Dracula—Dreamcatcher	Adventure
Motocross Mania—Take 2 Interactive	Sports
Time Crisis: Project Titan—Namco	Shooting
WDL Warjetz—3DO	Action

PlayStation 2

18 Wheeler—Acclaim	Racing
Bloody Roar 3—Interplay	Fighting
CART Fury—Midway	Racing
Championship Motocross 2002—THQ	Racing
Ephemeral Fantasia—Konami	RPG
Esc. from Monkey Is.—LucasArts	Adventure
Giants: Citizen Kabuto—Interplay	Adventure
Gran Turismo 3: A-spec—Sony CEA	Racing
Le Mans 24 Hour Racing—Infogrames	Racing
NBA Street—EA Big	Sports
Paris Dakar Rally—Acclaim	Racing
Portal Runner—3DO	Action
Seven Blades—Konami	Adventure
Test Drive Off-Road—Infogrames	Racing
Twisted Metal Black—Sony CEA	Action
Ultimate Sky Surfer—Crave Ent.	Action

WDL War Jetz—3DO	Action
------------------	--------

Dreamcast

Alone in the Dark 4—Infogrames	Adventure
Floigan Brothers—Sega	Adventure
Heroes of Might & Magic III—Ubi Soft	RPG
Outrigger—Sega	Action
Soldier of Fortune—Crave Ent.	Action
Sonic Adventure 2—Sega	Adventure
World Series Baseball 2K2—Sega	Sports

July

Game Boy Color

Alone in the Dark 4—Infogrames	Adventure
Playmobil Hype—Ubi Soft	Adventure
Toki Tori—Capcom	Puzzle
Troublans—Capcom	Puzzle
VIP—Ubi Soft	Action

PlayStation

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

PlayStation 2

Duke Nukem—Rockstar	Action
Ico—Sony CEA	Adventure
Klonoa 2—Namco	Adventure
Rune Viking Warlord—Rockstar	Action
Supercar St. Challenge—Activision	Racing

Dreamcast

Conflict Zone—Ubi Soft	Action
Evil Twin—Ubi Soft	Adventure

August

PlayStation 2

Commandos 2—Eidos	Action
Half-Life—Sierra	Action
Herdy Gerdy—Eidos	Adventure
Jekyl Hyde—Dreamcatcher	Adventure
Project Eden—Eidos	Action/Strategy
SoUL Reaver 2—Eidos	Adventure

Dreamcast

Ooga Booga—Sega	Action
-----------------	--------



Castlevania will be the one to watch this June when GBA hits.

LAST TIME ON HISS AND CHAN, THE ENIGMATIC SUSHI-KX RATTLED ON FOR A WHILE ABOUT... UM... ROBOTS... UM... TAKING OVER THE WORLD OR SOME SUCH THING. WE WEREN'T REALLY PAYING ATTENTION. JUST READ, YOU'LL FIGURE IT OUT.

HISU AND CHAN IN THE SUSHI SAGA!

PART THREE: "ELECTRIC BOOGALOO"





Previews

This Month in Previews

Dreamcast

- 54 Sonic Adventure 2
- 56 Outtrigger
- Dragonriders: Chronicles of Pern
- Heavy Metal: Geomatrix

PlayStation 2

- 62 Extermination
- 63 Ico
- 64 Devil May Cry
- 66 Resident Evil Code: Veronica X
- 67 The Lost
- 68 Rune: Viking Warlord
- NASCAR Heat
- Monster Rancher 3
- 69 Blood Omen 2
- 70 State of Emergency
- Smuggler's Run 2
- Madden NFL 2002

PlayStation

- 72 Dave Mirra: Maximum Remix
- Dance Dance Revolution 4th Mix
- Spider-Man 2: Enter Electro
- 73 Sheep Raider
- X-Men: Mutant Academy 2
- One Peace Mansion

Xbox

- 74 Bounty Hunter
- 75 Gotham

Game Boy Color

- 76 The Legend of Zelda: Oracle Series
- 78 X-Men 2: Wolverine's Rage
- Commander Keen
- Spider-Man 2: Sinister Six
- Mega Man Xtreme 2

Game Boy Advance

- 79 Mega Man Battle Network
- Spider-Man
- X-Men: Reign of Apocalypse
- Super Street Fighter II Advance



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.

It's E3 time again—that magical time of year when we get a glimpse into the future of our great hobby and realize just how hard it's gonna be to wait for all that cool new software.

In the meantime, we're here to bring you the latest screens of all the hot new games coming your way. It's like a little slice of E3 every month!

Especially this month, where we've tried to get as many of the titles being showcased at the upcoming show into the following pages. Not the least of which is Sega's Sonic Adventure 2. Dreamcast may be going down, but we're still excited about its games.

And what of the N64? This month we preview Mario Party 3, but that's the last of the first-party titles in the U.S. for this troubled system. Who's to say if our N64 section will return in the coming months?

But perhaps one of the hardest hits to take is the coming demise of the Game Boy. We've been playing the heck out of our shiny new GBAs this month, and the future of handheld entertainment is definitely here. The system with the strongest



The last great games for the Game Boy Color? It's a real possibility. But enough sadness, check out the new Zelda games on page 76.

run in history (1989-2001) is about to go the way of the dodo, and we can't help but get a little misty-eyed about it. Luckily we'll get one last Zelda game (actually, two), before the fat lady sings.

Now we need your help. We're looking for some feedback on this here Previews section. What do you like about it? What do you hate? What would you change? Do you want more blowouts or galleries? This is your chance to shape the magazine. E-mail suggestions to egm@ziffdavis.com, subject line "Previews."

TOP 5 Preview Picks

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Extermination | PlayStation 2, July |
| 2. Devil May Cry | PlayStation 2, Winter |
| 3. Sonic Adventure 2 | Dreamcast, May |
| 4. Mario Party 3 | Nintendo 64, August |
| 5. Resident Evil Code: Veronica X | PlayStation 2, July |

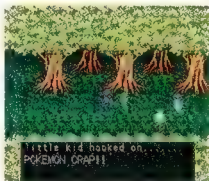
"Close, but no PS2..."

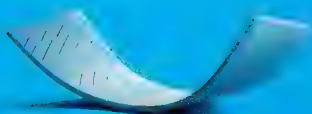
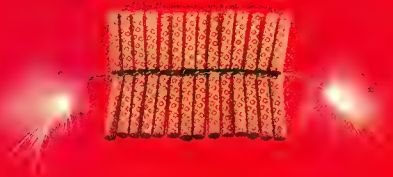
The RPG Maker Contest's Honorable Mentions

In the end, we received 60+ entries, and paring it down to a single winner was an incredibly difficult task. Sadly, we can only give out one PS2 (see the winner's review in Review Crew), but thanks to all for participating.

Contest Runner-up: "Poke-MADNESS," by David Schwarrz
Best Story: "The Legend of Magicrys," by Matt McCabe
Coollest Characters: "Robot Go Home," by Keith Golvellius
Most Laughs: "Crispin's Quest," by Joel Regus
Best Use of Monkeys: "Shadows of Fate," by Ben Houbler

Can Poké-Madness be stopped?





FOR ICE COOL BREATH THAT LASTS

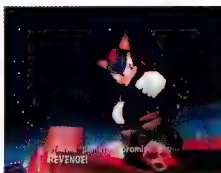




PREVIEW

Sonic Adventure 2

- Platform:** Sega
- Developer:** Sonic Team
- Players:** 1-2
- Genre:** Action
- Price:** 25%
- Release Date:** May
- Series:** Sonic Adventure
- Website:** www.sonicteam.com/sonicadv2/index_e.html
- Our Verdict:** It's a bit like Sonic Adventure, but faster and more fun.
- Highlights:** Only three real playing styles now.
- Must-Play:** Knuckles' counterpart, Rouge.



Shadow is a hedgehog-murder machine designed by the military. He also wears some funky-fresh roller skates like Tootie from *The Facts of Life*.

Sonic deftly avoids a bullet from a pair of Go-bot wannabes. Ever-present danger makes it hard to gawk at the lush foliage.



Lost Games




Sonic may still be a powerful icon in the gaming world, but a few of his titles have slipped through the cracks during the last 10 years. Cool arcade titles like *Sonic The Fighters* and *Segasonic The Hedgehog* (which *EGM* gave a perfect 10!) have never appeared on any home console. Perhaps Sega will realize that gamers would love to experience these forgotten classics and release a compilation packed with missing Sonic games.

Happy birthday, Sonic. For 10 years, Sega's lovable mascot has been saving defenseless woodland critters, collecting Chaos Emeralds, and making other video-game characters look lanky and sluggish by comparison. He now joins the ranks of other decade-surviving game stars, hobnobbing with Mario and Mega Man in the exclusive club of platforming longevity. Despite Sega's recent decision to publish on multiple consoles, this franchise appears to maintain its loyalty. *Sonic Adventure 2* debuts on the Dreamcast, proving that there is still plenty of life in Sega's aging hardware.

When designing this killer sequel, Sonic Team examined the million-selling 1999 original, *Sonic*

Adventure. Although the game was well-liked (not to mention the best-selling DC title worldwide so far), many complained about the snooze-inducing adventure sections that divided up the action levels. Now, these distractions have been bulldozed—SA2 is 100 percent action. Sonic Team's U.S. branch toiled to make the game instantly accessible to gamers in both America and Japan, streamlining it to be pure action and adding a two-player versus mode to give it that pick-up-and-play quality that its predecessor lacked.

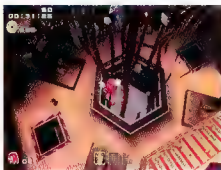
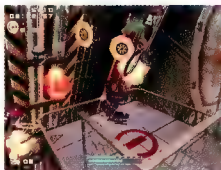
One successful aspect of the first SA was the multi-character concept, so the sequel takes that feature even further—now players control three "Hero" characters and three "Dark" characters. Sonic, Tails and Knuckles comprise the all-star hero team while Dr. Robotnik joins two new villains, Shadow the Hedgehog and Rouge the Bat, to form the Dark team.

Playing as the three heroic characters yields a familiar plot of good triumphing over evil, but controlling the dark crew offers an insidious new perspective on the action. *Sonic Adventure 2*'s director, Takashi Iizuka, comments: "The cool thing is that because there's a whole dark story line, there's a happy ending for each of the dark characters as well."

Sonic is still the same 'tude-filled bundle of spunk and speed you know and love, but he does sport some "xtreme" new moves thanks to his officially



All the world's Chaos Emeralds are mine to keep!





licensed Soap grinding shoes. Hipper and edgier than ever, Sonic now surfs through the air, grinds on rails, dodges rampaging semis, vaults on monkey bars, and bungee jumps from majestic rainforest trees. Shadow the Hedgehog is Sonic's new nemesis, a mysterious red and black 'hog wearing rocket-powered rollerblades. His levels are very similar to Sonic's—breakneck speed, thrilling loops and extreme grinding abound.

Surprisingly, Tails' gameplay has completely changed in this sequel, as the shrimp-y fox now pilots a large mechanized robot. His mighty mecha can lock on and fire missiles at encroaching enemies. Tails' levels may lack the sheer speed of Sonic's stages, but the strategic shooting action adds a bit of Panzer Dragoon-style variety to the gameplay. SA2 also offers players their first chance to control the nefarious Dr. Robotnik, whose gameplay mirrors that of Tails...only more evil.

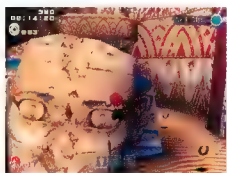
As in the first game, Knuckles' quests involve locating the missing shards of a shattered Emerald. The hot-tempered echidna possesses a bevy of useful maneuvers—he can climb, dig, glide and has brutal hand-to-hand punching combos. His foil is newcomer Rouge, an unscrupulous female bat with an eye for expensive jewels. Her moves are similar to Knuckles', but she dishes out a flurry of kicks with her stiletto heels in lieu of punching. Rouge is also

notable for being the first Sonic character to feature polygonal breasts that bounce. We've come a long way in 10 years.

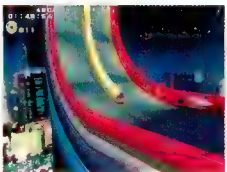
One would expect the Dreamcast to be showing its age in comparison to the newer consoles, but Sonic Adventure 2 defies all graphical expectations. In fact, the sheer beauty of this blockbuster sequel might cause you to question why the DC is headed toward a premature curtain call. A rock-steady 60 fps framerate, lushly complex textures, and unbelievably large environments demonstrate just how much can be squeezed out of the Dreamcast by the right developers. Sonic games have always featured imaginative, attractive levels, and Sonic Adventure 2 maintains this proud pedigree. Sonic veterans surely recall the first time they played the unforgettable Star Light Zone 10 years ago: A pulsing techno beat played on as Sonic sped through a metallic wonderland beneath a star-filled sky. Blazing across neon-lined lanes of SA2's Radical Highway Zone rekindles the spirit of that classic level, capturing the unique blend of style and substance that has always defined the series.

Although SA2 focuses squarely on action, Sonic Team has not forgotten about the Chao mini-game, a cute virtual-pet distraction that many considered a highlight of the first game. Our preview build was sorely lacking in the Chao department, but Iizuka-san assures us "that the Hero and Dark concept also extends to raising your Chao." What kind of nasty virtual pets would a team of diabolical super-villains have? We can't wait to find out.

So far Sonic Adventure 2 seems to live up to the hype, as it improves on all of the finest aspects of the first game while ditching the slower portions that dragged it down. We'll know for sure once we can unwrap Sonic Team's heart-felt birthday present this summer. 🍄

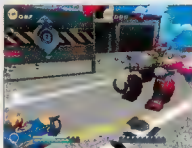


Textures this good really make you wonder why we're seeing the Dreamcast die already. The mind boggles.



VERSUS MODES

Sonic The Fighters



Sonic Adventure 2 revives the competitive thrill of the two-player Vs. mode, a feature that debuted in Sonic The Hedgehog 2 for Genesis. It's a battle of Hero versus Dark; each character faces his or her rival in a series of brutal challenges.

Sonic faces Shadow in a seizure-inducing split-screen race to the finish. Players can use collected rings to hinder their rival's progress.

Tails and Robotnik duke it out deathmatch-style, shooting missiles and snagging rings in a battle arena. Who knew that fox had such violent potential?

Knuckles and Rouge engage in a frantic scavenger hunt to find one missing Emerald shard.

Sadly, the framerate takes a dive from 60 to 30 fps during the split-screen contests, but hey, many other "next-generation" platform games can't pull that feat off in single-player mode, so we aren't complaining.



PREVIEW
GALLERY



METAL'S HOT DEAD
Though some may argue that Iron Maiden is the heaviest metal on earth, the correct answer is actually Mercury (as compared to other metals at a liquid state, that is). With an atomic weight just over 200, imagine how heavy a barrel of Mercury would be. How heavy, you ask? Very heavy indeed.

Outrigger

Question: What happens when **Sega's AM2** division, creators of *Virtua Fighter*, take on the first-person shooter genre? Answer: *Outrigger*, one of the many murder simulators hitting consoles this year. Customize your player and jump into one hell of a rocket arena-derived experience. Like *Quake III*, the main appeal here is online play against human opponents—better bring along your DC mouse this **summer**.



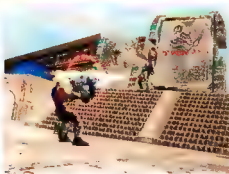
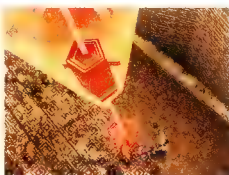
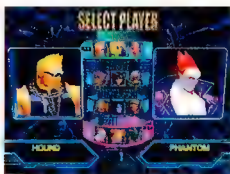
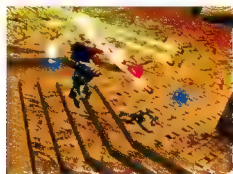
Dragonriders: Chronicles of Pern

Anne McCaffrey's best-selling sci-fi series, *The Dragonriders of Pern*, provides the basis for **Red Storm Entertainment's** epic new adventure game for Dreamcast and PC. The game begins in the mythical land of Pern where its leader, the Weyrwoman, whose duty for generations has been to protect her people from a destructive alien cataclysm called Thread, has just died. With the Weyrwoman's passing, her ancient ally, the queen dragon—matriarch of Pern's dragon clutch whose fiery breath is what can destroy Thread—is weakening. It is up to you to find a new and worthy rider for the queen dragon before it's too late. With your spiritual fire lizard companion, explore over 120 detailed locations spanning three continents, and search through worlds where wit, as well as weapon wielding, will be put to the test. Due for a **May** release, *Dragonriders: Chronicles of Pern* offers devoted McCaffrey fans a first look into a world they've only imagined until now, while also introducing newcomers to a long and successful sci-fi fantasy series.



Heavy Metal: Geomatrix

Not since *Spawn* was ported to the DC several months ago (also by **Capcom**) have we seen a comic-book-to-action/shooter translation like *Heavy Metal*, so it's not too surprising the two games look similar. Staying true to its name, the four-player fragfest will feature brand-new tunes from some of metal's biggest names (think Megadeth) and looks great thanks to creative direction by the ink version's writers and artists.



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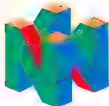
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PREVIEW

Mario Party 3

Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Hudson
Players: 1-4
Genre: Party
% Done: 95%
Release: May 7
Also Try: Sonic Shuffle (DC), Adv. of Cookie & Cream (PS2)
Web Address: www.nintendo.com
 www.marioparty.com

The Good: Duel Mode adds a new dimension to the game.

The Bad: Does anyone really play more than 35 turns? Anyone?

And The Ugly: What could be uglier than Waluigi's 'stache'?



Like the Mario Party games, sometimes you're given the chance to win an item instead of having to buy it at a shop.

In **Duel Mode**, you battle your opponent each time you meet up with him/her on the board. Better have reinforcements ready.



NEW ITEMS

Cellular Shopper
Buy items from a shop anywhere on the board.

Lucky Charm
Anyone you choose can play a Game Guy mini-game.

Koopa Kard
Withdraws all the coins from the bank as you pass.

Boo Repellent
Automatically gets rid of Boo when he comes a-calling'.

Lucky Lamp
Changes the location of the star on the map.

Bowser Phone
Call Bowser and make him visit any opposing player.

Wacky Watch
In a hurry? Using this sets it so only five turns remain.

Barter Box
Use this to switch all your items with another person's.

Poison Mushroom
Make any other player move backward.

Mario Party sits at the top of the party-game genre, challenged by the likes of Sonic Shuffle and Crash Bash, but never toppled.

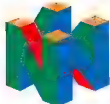
If you've never played a Mario Party game, imagine a board game where you try to gather stars by circling the board and competing in mini-games against up to three other players. The reason all the Mario characters are duking it out this time around is to get possession of the Millennium Star. This third installment is more refined than its predecessors, boasting more mini-games (over 50), new items (that really help make the game more balanced than before), boards, and the addition of Princess Daisy and Waluigi from Mario Tennis to the cast of characters. The multiplayer mode may not have

changed much from the last Party, but the real attraction to the third game is a two-player grudge match called Duel Mode.

In it, you compete against either the computer or a friend, circling a smaller board, claiming every space you land on as yours. Land on a space you own and you get coins. Land on a space the other guy's claimed and coins are taken away from you (and given to him). Run into your opponent anywhere on the board and you battle. But you're not defenseless. Each time you pass your starting square on the board, you're given a partner, selected by spinning a roulette wheel, to help you out. You can have up to two partners, one in front and one in back to either attack or defend against your opponent. Each has different attributes—hit points, attack/defend ratings, and a salary you need to pay in order to keep them around each turn. If you can't pay, you lose them and are left open to attack. The game ends when your hit points are depleted or you run out of turns—whichever comes first. Duel Mode's still got mini-games to compete in for coins and there are shortcuts on the board which you can take to catch up to an opponent.

This may be one of the last new Nintendo 64 titles we see in the U.S. So, if you're planning a little get-together soon to mourn the passing of the system, why not remember it playing the latest of one of its great franchises? 🎮





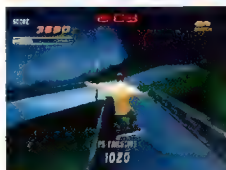
PREVIEW GALLERY

SIMPLY THE BEST

You can't keep a good game engine down. Neversoft's Tony Hawk game engine has proven so successful it's been used in no less than five games thus far. They include: Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 1 and 2, Spider-Man 1 and 2, and Matt Hoffman's Pro BMX.

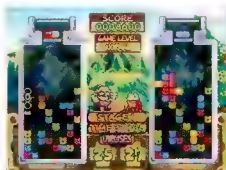
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2

Why has it taken a few extra months for Tony Hawk 2 to hit the N64? For one, the naughtier songs had to be cleaned up—it is an "E"-rated game after all. Second, a special "N64-exclusive" bonus level was added. So basically—it was time well spent. Hey, it'd be worth the wait even without the bonus level. For those who haven't tried the sequel on other systems, improvements over the original include a great 3D park editor—complete with ramps, rails, pipes, bowls and more—plus the "manual" maneuver (balancing on two wheels indefinitely) which allows trick linking for huge point totals. Several new pros (12), multiplayer modes (Tag and an enhanced version of HORSE), and real-world skate parks are also included in this April release from **Activision**.



Dr. Mario 64

Hold up, next-genners, the N64's not gone yet. **Nintendo** is gunneering their NES/GB puzzle classic to the '64 early this April, just in time to bolster a relatively sterile spring for the console. Patients of the original title will recognize that along with a major graphical facelift, Nintendo's prescribed some cool story mode cinemas in between stages, featuring the starring players rendered in Paper Mario fashion. Up to four can play simultaneously in any of three competitive games, or a pair can go head-to-head in traditional versus mode. Perhaps the best news is the modest price tag you'll find grafted to DM64's box—Nintendo's discharging it at an unprecedented \$30, which makes it an awfully easy pill to swallow. Take a sick day for this one, but don't OD, DM64 is an addiction you can afford.





PHYSIO
The art of movement



Dennis' hair and outfit were changed from the Japanese version of Extermination to make him look less like *Syphon Filter*'s Gabe Logan.

Extermination

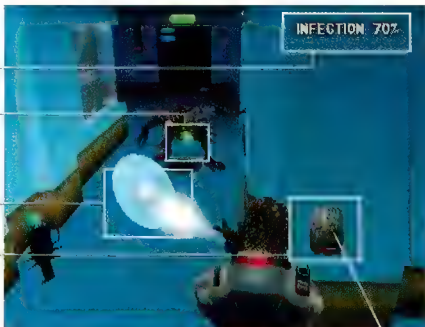
- Publisher:** Sony CEA
- Developer:** Deep Space, Inc.
- Players:** 1
- Genre:** Action/Adventure
- Release:** July
- Also Try:** *Syphon Filter* (PS one)
- Web Address:** www.playstation.com
- The Good:** Good set of controls, cool items and weapons.
- The Bad:** Import version was way too short and easy.
- And The Ugly:** What happens to your buddy once he gets infected—ick!

If this reaches 100%, you're screwed. Use the vaccine stations close to save spots to bring it back down to 0.

Most enemies have a specific weak point, like the green section in this monster's chest. Switch to first-person mode to hit it.

The lights are out in this area, so you need to use your gun's flashlight to see.

Don't try to walk past this tripwire or you'll set off a booby trap; cut it with your knife instead to pass safely.



CUSTOM WEAPONS

Gun-Damn

Gun freaks will love all the extra parts and optional attachments you can find for your rifle in *Extermination*. On top you can opt for the standard laser sight, a zooming sniper lens, or a night-vision scope. Under the main barrel you can choose from a flashlight (to light up darker areas), shotgun or flamethrower—both of which have their own ammo scattered throughout the complex (normal gun bullets can be replenished at ammo stations). Also well hidden in various parts of the game are the three parts to the "Ultimate Weapon." Don't get too excited—it's pretty much just like a grenade launcher, though nice to have when you face the final boss.

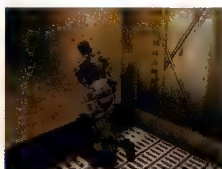
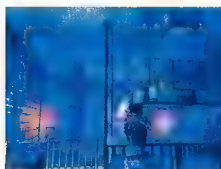
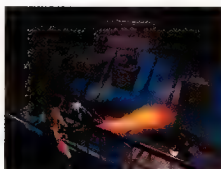
It's a little *Tomb Raider*, minus the boos. It's a little *Resident Evil*, minus the zombies. It's a little *Syphon Filter*, a little *Metal Gear* and a dash of John Carpenter's movie *The Thing* for good measure; it's *Extermination*, and if you are desperate for some action along the lines of any of the above titles on your PS2 this summer, it might be your only hope.

You play U.S. special forces member Dennis Riley, sent to investigate an unknown incident at a top-secret military base in Antarctica. Once you arrive, (surprise!) all hell breaks loose: The place is teeming with mutant insects and infected scientists. After piecing together what went wrong, you've got to not only escape but prevent the virus from ever spreading any further.

Although most of *Extermination* takes place from a behind-the-back, third-person view, you can toggle it at any time to first person for pinpoint aiming. This comes in handy against all of the game's bosses, but even minor enemies usually have a glowing

weak point you can hit for quicker kills. If you're low on ammo, you carry a knife that, unlike any in *Resident Evil*, is actually worth a damn: Use it to unlock doors, cut the wires to security sentries and booby traps, or instantly kill weaker enemies. Another key item is the rechargeable battery you carry—for opening electronic doors, activating various machines, and saving your game at designated spots.

In addition to a handy map, you have a nice range of moves to help you explore *Extermination*'s 3D levels: You can crawl through vents, jump, climb, crouch, roll, sidestep and eventually even slide down suspended wires. Unfortunately there's not too much room to use all these maneuvers—we finished the import version in just a couple days. Sony has made some changes for the U.S. version, though, to increase the difficulty and hopefully the length: Expect tougher enemies, plus less ammo and health items. Will it be enough? Check back next issue to find out how the final product turns out.



Clockwise from top left: Use the flamethrower to light up rooms and enemies at the same time. A look at the sometimes complex 3D levels. Each time you get hit your infected meter rises; when it reaches 100% your max health drops and you slowly lose life until you vaccinate yourself. Use the Zoom Scope and flashlight to flush out enemies. And get help from friends—you'll need it.

Similar in style to Panzer Dragoon and Klonoo, the language in Ico was created specifically for the game. While Ico himself has the benefit of English voiceover whenever he speaks, only one other character, the Queen, will have subtitles, and only when she addresses Ico directly. The meaning behind any other dialogue in the game remains a mystery until you play through Ico a second time, when all the subtitles will be unlocked, granting you insight into the mysteries introduced the first time around. Talk about replay incentive!



PREVIEW
GALLERY

Ico

Banished to an abandoned castle because he was born with horns, Ico (pronounced "ee-ko"), the title character of Sony's newest action adventure, finds himself tasked not only with escaping the confines of the eerie citadel, but freeing a princess mysteriously trapped within the very same walls. To meet these demands, Ico must jump, climb, swing, swim, swat, push and pull his way to freedom, all the while keeping the princess safe by his side. While at first glance the game appears to be more of the same ol' business, the hook here is you need the princess around in order to progress. Only with her can you make it through magically sealed doors and use save points.

The sense of scale in the game is immense, with Ico dangling precariously over chasms hundreds of feet deep, or scaling mountains equally as high. Problem-solving is far more natural than any "puzzles" you'll find in, say, a Resident Evil game. From figuring out how to lower the princess from the cage that contains her, to sorting out exactly how to bridge the chasm that lies before you, there's always a logical solution to be found. The graphics take a subtle leap beyond what we're accustomed to with plenty of elegant light-sourcing, fluid animation, and wonderfully rendered characters. There is little music involved, as the excellent use of ambient sounds creates a greater tension than an army of flugelhorns could ever hope to achieve.

Mining the same emotional caverns occupied by such diverse sources as *Where the Wild Things Are*, Panzer Dragoon, Heart of Darkness and Out of This World, this boy-meets-girl-and-takes-on-the-world tale of survival has "sleeper hit" written all over it. Discover what we're talking about for yourself when Ico ships this August.



Once you liberate the princess, there's barely a moment she leaves your side. While you lead her by the hand for the most part, some puzzles require you to be separated. Thankfully, you can always call out to her, and barring any physical obstacles preventing her progress, she'll catch up with you quick as a whistle.



Integral to any game of this nature, reliable controls are a definite must. Thankfully the handling in Ico is very forgiving when it comes to grabbing ledges, recovering from ill-timed jumps, and leaping from suspended chains. Even novice players can rest assured that they'll have a fair time playing this game.



The sweet light of day contrasts starkly to the enemies in Ico. Hordes of shadowy wraiths will periodically materialize and try to abscond with the princess. You can swat at them with your torch, causing them to dissipate with each strike, but if they kidnap the princess, you'll have to restart from the last save point.



Devil May Cry

Publisher:	Capcom
Developer:	Capcom
Players:	1
Genre:	Action/Adventure
Release:	Winter
Also Try:	Dino Crisis 2 (PS one)
Web Address:	www.capcom.com

The Good: Unique yet fantastic controls, superb graphics, haunting and rockin' tunes—take your pick.

The Bad: Hopefully it will last longer than Onimusha.

And The Ugly: When the evil spirits wrap their legs around you and slice you with both hands—ouch!



Recover glowing orbs from defeated foes: red ones to open locked doors, green ones to restore health.

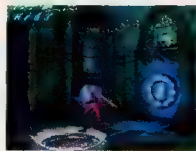


Use sword attacks to swoop enemies into the air, then blast them with your pistols repeatedly—they hover, suspended in mid-air, twitching helplessly. Hell yeah.

Devil May Think



Of course DMC isn't all action—there are a few sections even in the short demo where you've got to put down your weapons and figure out how to proceed. Like *Resident Evil*, usually it's simply a matter of finding the right key. Other times (above) you need to use items to unlock secrets. Another example: The eye on the wall below glows each time you swipe it with your blade—hit it repeatedly to activate an elevator on the floor. Nothing complex to be sure, but a nice break from the frantic action.



The game may be called *Devil May Cry*, but it's PS2 owners who will be weeping once they finally get their hands on this highly anticipated new adventure from *Resident Evil* mastermind Shinji Mikami—weeping tears of joy, that is. Capcom has combined the visceral run-and-gun action of *Dino Crisis 2* with the intense swordplay of *Onimusha* for a game that looks—and feels—far beyond any of their previous survival-horror titles. If that sounds like a bunch of empty hype, don't take our word for it—give the demo shipping with *Resident Evil Code: Veronica X* a whirl yourself and try to prove us wrong. Go ahead, we dare you.

What has us so damn confident you'll get excited about *Devil May Cry*? Sure these screens look good, but you need to see the game in action to really understand what we're talking about. First, all the backgrounds are real-time, which means the camera can pan in, around, and over any of the incredible



From the one-handed shotgun reloads to the way Dante strolls past enemies as he blasts, DMC's style can only be described as "bad ass."



Think you've seen too many *Resident Evil* clones? Try living in Japan, where survival horror has seeped into just about every genre—including, yup, bass fishing!



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RESIDENT EVIL
Milla Jovovich plays Alice in the upcoming movie *Resident Evil: Ground Zero*, slated for an October 2001 release. Looks kinda like a cross between Claire and Jill, doesn't she?

Resident Evil Code: Veronica X

Publisher:	Capcom
Developer:	Capcom
Players:	1
Genre:	Adventure
% Done:	100%
Release:	July
Also on:	Dreamcast
Web Address:	

www.capcom.co.jp/bio5th/

The Good: More revelations about Umbrella and Wesker.

The Bad: What are you going to do with your Dreamcast RECV?

And The Ugly: The screen-loading doors are uglier than ever. Why?



In this new cutscene, Wesker gives Claire a passionate beat-down, but keeps her alive to use as bait for his true nemesis—Chris Redfield.

Claire's first encounter with Wesker lasts for only a minute. RECVX has approximately 10 minutes of new footage.



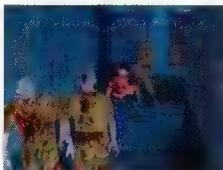
A lone in the Dark might have silently kicked off the "survival-horror" genre as we know it, but it was Capcom's Resident Evil that broke the sucker wide open. After years of refining the RE titles, Code: Veronica is simply the pinnacle of where the genre is today.

First released on the Dreamcast in 2000, CV was the first in the RE series to employ 3D polygons for both characters and environments. While the game didn't carry the weighty title of "RE4," its taut and tension-filled narrative revealed more about the insidious Umbrella Corporation than perhaps all the previous RE titles combined. But even more daring was the fact that as a DC-exclusive title, CV was potentially alienating the very fan base that created

the phenomenon in the first place. With the PlayStation 2 version of CVX, all that's about to change.

Despite rumors on the Internet (no way!) that say CVX suffers from slowdown and aliasing problems, we noticed nothing of the sort. In fact, the PS2 and DC versions look nearly identical. So what's CVX that your DC version didn't have? Aside from the ubiquitous "X" in the title (there goes the naming convention for CV on the Xbox), CVX contains nearly 10 minutes of new in-game cinematics. The focus of the new cutscenes deals with Albert Wesker, an ex-Umbrella scientist and member of S.T.A.R.S., who was thought to be destroyed by his own creation in RE1. We won't spoil all the surprises, but the extra footage does provide you with much better understanding of what went on behind the scenes during CV and even earlier RES. And Capcom, to be sure, is banking on your dying curiosity.

The one other major change is that Steve Burnish, the DiCaprio look-alike you loved to hate, now sports a hipster Britpop 'do complete with shaggy bangs. Why? We haven't a clue. But the real question about CVX is: Should you give a damn about a PS2 version if you've already been there, done that? Probably not. But for the hardcore RE contingent out there, CVX is definitely worth picking up, just for the Wesker footage alone. As for all you CV virgins out there—we envy you. We really do. 🍌



SPECIAL DVD

Wesker's Report



If you follow the import scene, then you already know that the release of Code: Veronica X on the PS2 coincided with Biohazard's 5th anniversary in Japan. Picking up the game guaranteed you a playable demo of *The Devil May Cry*, as well as a special DVD called *Wesker's Report*, narrated by none other than Albert Wesker himself. The report sheds new light on everything from Umbrella and S.T.A.R.S. to the Tyrant and the deadly T-Virus. Also featured are interviews with the creators of the RE series. Capcom has not commented on whether or not they'll pack in *Wesker's Report* for the U.S. release.

CRITIC'S CHOICE

The boys at Irrational games are responsible for some of the most critically acclaimed PC games in history. Namely: System Shock 2 and Thief: The Dark Project. A few of the members even had a hand in Ultima Underground and the original System Shock.



The Lost

The guys over at **Irrational Games** have decided they want to redefine the survival-horror genre with their first console game, *The Lost*. Being released by **Crave** this winter, the game is very loosely based on Dante's *Inferno* (the story of a man forced to take a journey through hell). *The Lost* is actually about a woman named Amanda who enters hell to save her recently deceased daughter, Beatrice (a reference to the poem).

Since the game is based on the different levels of hell, the developers have taken a lot of creative license to make each area unique, from a World War II setting to run-down ancient Roman architecture. Amanda herself will learn to take on four different forms, each with its own personality and ability. One will be a fighter, while another is a thief. Choosing the right form for each situation will be the crux of the game, while the warring personalities of each form will drive the story.

Although the demo we got of *The Lost* is still very early, just now starting to run on the PS2 dev kits, it's looking solid. Given the past accomplishments of the Irrational team (see topper), we can expect a highly suspenseful, well-written story to accompany the action.



CHUCK LIDDELL "THE ICEMAN"

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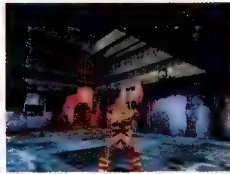
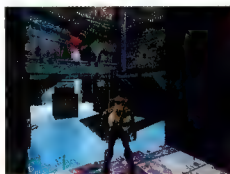


RUNE THE MYSTERY WITH KNOWLEDGE

Runes are an ancient Germanic alphabet, used for writing, divination and magic. They were used throughout northern Europe, Scandinavia, the British Isles and Iceland from about 100 B.C. to 1600 A.D. Runic inscriptions of great age have even been found in North America, supporting stories that the Vikings arrived in the Americas long before Columbus.

Rune: Viking Warlord

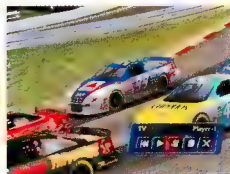
If you were Ragnar the Viking, what would you do? Would you explore 40 different environments, hacking up hellhounds, frost giants and the reanimated Ragnarin? Hell yeah! Would you use your berserker powers to decimate your foes, and would over 15 different weapons, 7,000 animations and a split-screen two-player mode be enough to satiate your bloodlust? Find out when **Take 2 Interactive** releases *Rune* this **July**.



NASCAR Heat

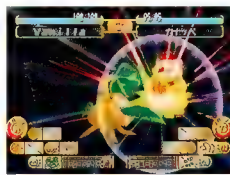
Infogrames knows that *NASCAR 2001* left a lot to be desired, so they're taking on EA in their press materials for *NASCAR Heat*, directly comparing the two games. By the time *Heat* is released this **summer**, expect to find 19 real Winston Cup tracks (excluding some like Indianapolis and Chicagoland Speedway), 26 real drivers, and all the updated rosters and paint schemes that EA's game lacked.

Of course, all the play options that made *NASCAR Heat* so unique on the PS one will return on the PS2. Sure, it still has Championship and Single Race modes, as do all racing games. But the thing that makes *Heat* stand out are the Beat the Heat and Race the Pro options. In *Beat the Heat* you need to pass a series of tests (reminiscent of the license tests in *Gran Turismo*) created by *NASCAR* drivers themselves. Then in *Beat the Pro*, go up against the best laps in the game from guys like Dale Earnhardt Jr., Jeff Gordon, Mark Martin and Rusty Wallace. It's a *NASCAR* fan's dream come true.



Monster Rancher 3

Tecmo overhauled the graphics for the third installment of the *Monster Rancher* series (available this **summer**). This time around, Tecmo has added the ability to create monsters from DVDs. The main human characters are also now drawn in a more cartoony style and monsters are all done using cel-shading. If you're unfamiliar with the previous games in the series, you use CDs to create new monsters, then train them and put them into battle. As in previous versions, the goal is to become a champion breeder, eventually getting a monster of "S" rank. New evolutions and attacks have been added to each of the many types of monsters. Now when you explore the areas you're in, you get to take control of your monster, steering him to find good items, while hopefully avoiding enemy confrontations. Your battlin' pet can also wear masks, which—in the Japanese version—can be personalized by importing and manipulating an image from a Sony PictureParadise-compatible digital camera.



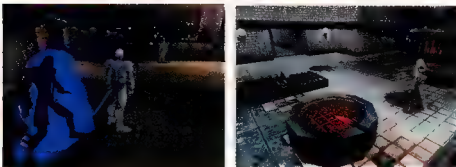
UP-AND-COMER

The NASCAR series has a new superstar in Kevin Harvick, the 24-year-old rookie who took over the Goodwrench Chevy after the Daytona tragedy this year. In only his third race, Kevin brought his car to victory lane at Atlanta Motor Speedway. He's one to watch.



Blood Omen 2

Well, Soul Reaver 2 may be in the proverbial can, but Kain will be stepping back into the limelight with **Crystal Dynamics'** Blood Omen 2. Set two centuries after the original PS saga, the game puts you in charge of the villainous Kain, who is out to recover the stolen Soul Reaver sword. Along the way, you'll have to rely heavily on loads of gory combat skills to succeed, with weapon-dependent attacks and unique stealth kills helping you dispatch your nemesis. Bear in mind, though, that Kain's vampiric leanings require occasional fill-ups at the expense of helpless townspeople, or whoever's handy at the time. You'll have to be a slippery little devil if you want to knock off some enemies, and even moreso if you want to relieve them of their life-sustaining juices. What's more, Kain will have several supernatural powers at his disposal, such as telekinesis, which he'll have to use to solve many of the game's puzzles—a major focus of the gameplay. Hopefully they'll be more creative than Soul Reaver's. **Eidos** is hosting Kain's triumphant re-emergence at retail this **Christmas**. Now if only they could get Raziel back into the release picture, it'd be a happy, happy world.



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10 SHOULDER
CRANKS



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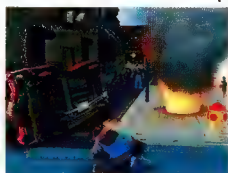
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State of Emergency

Causing a commotion seems to be **Rockstar's** forte as they prepare to unleash yet another urban assault this **fall** with *State of Emergency*. Incite the masses to riot in over 80 different missions spanning four cities. A fully destructible environment is provided, enhanced behavioral AI tickles the crowd into naughty deeds, the corrupt government begs to be overthrown, and gangs roam the streets. *Slashout* meets *GTA3*?



Smuggler's Run 2

Rockstar has teamed up with **Angel Studios** once again to bring us a sequel to their top-selling PS2 launch game, *Smuggler's Run: SM2* will use an updated version of last year's engine, with the same go-anywhere gameplay. **Rockstar** has told us they're very aware of the odd difficulty curve in the original game, and that it'll be fixed for this **fall** release. These screens are actual game shots.

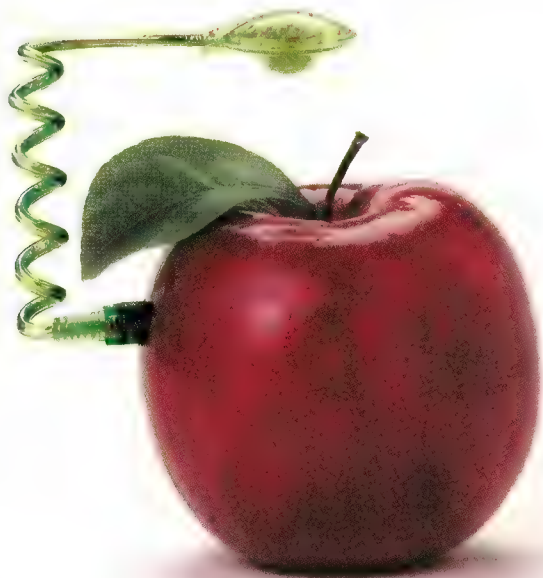


Madden NFL 2002

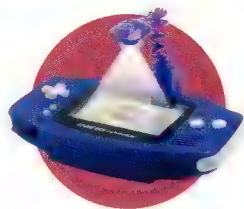
Despite the hype surrounding the debut of *Madden 2001*, it very nearly lived up to expectations. In the end though, a sluggish framerate and limp hits—not to mention the absence of online play—kept it from achieving greatness. So is 2002 fixed in all the right ways? According to EA the gameplay is faster, but we won't know for sure until after E3. There's no sign of online play either, but there's still time. The changes are mostly cosmetic: new animations, more detailed player models (including faces), new Madden Cards, plus you can play and draft with the new Houston Texans. In addition, widescreen TV support will allow a deeper view.



Worms are an essential part of a gamer's diet



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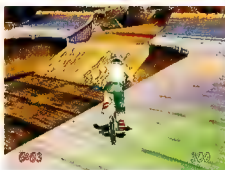
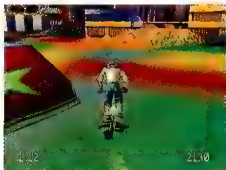


HERE THAT'S WORTHWHILE

After two major PlayStation games, maybe you're wondering if you'll ever get to see the Spidey movie. Well, you'll find that answer and much, much more at www.spidermanhyype.com, the site that *Entertainment Weekly* called "The CNN of Spider-Man's Internet World." We're not sure if that reference is a compliment, or not, but we can tell you that no one beats this site when it comes to insider info and sneak peeks at the movie.

Dave Mirra: Maximum Remix

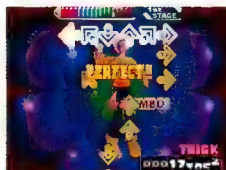
Not quite a sequel (could that be in the works for the PS2?), this is the original Dave Mirra Pro BMX with the added bonus of eight more tracks (for a total of 20), a new Expert difficulty level, plenty of new tricks, and a slew of cool new tunes. Hardcore fans of the first game will want to dig in (if they can pull themselves away from Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX). Expect Maximum Remix to hit store shelves in **late May**.



Dance Dance Revolution 4th Mix

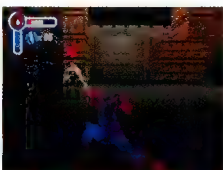
Now this is the version **Konami** should have brought to the U.S. Already **out in Japan**, DDR 4th Mix features an entirely new playlist with very few remixes from 3rd Mix and songs that are, on average, about a half-minute longer than earlier games in the series. The famous Diet Mode makes a return in 4th Mix as well.

Perhaps the coolest addition, though, is the new six-panel playing style. Basically you need to pay attention to up, down, left and right, as well as two diagonal pads. It makes DDR a whole new experience, especially to those of us who've been playing for quite a while now. DDR freaks: Don't wait any longer, import this version of DDR and get dancin'!

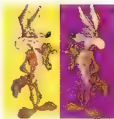


Spider-Man 2: Enter Electro

Supervillain Electro has found a way to amplify his lightning-welding powers, and to stop him from raising hell, Spidey must foil his plans to high jack three essential parts needed to construct the device. Many of New York's famous landmarks serve as the battlefields for the action, which is similar to the original game, but with a few, new wrinkles. A host of new web attacks give Spidey the ability to freeze and electrify his enemies, and there's also a few helpful combo moves and armored suits he can don. And after you use those weapons to finish up a tough day at the office by beating an end-level boss, you're treated to snapshots of your battle, so be sure to smile for the camera when **Activision's** franchise swings into stores this **fall**.

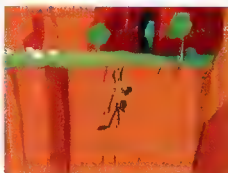
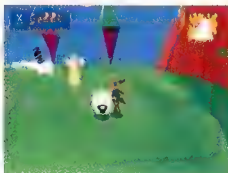


Ever wonder why Wile E. Coyote looks so much like Ralph Wolf from the Sam Sheepdog episodes? Or, ever mistakenly call Ralph, Wile. E. Coyote? Well, prepare to be enlightened. Wile E. Coyote is Ralph Wolf. Yes, you heard right. Looks like Chuck Jones wanted to see if his lupine lemon could fall as successfully in other scenarios. Boy, can't a coyote wolf get a break in this business?



Sheep Raider

Dive into the wacky world of Daffy, Porky and the star of **Infogrames'** new Looney Tunes game, Ralph Wolf, in *Sheep Raider*. Over 15 levels of varied terrain await Ralph, who'll hide, swim, fly and sneak in order to poach sheep from under Sam Sheep-dog's nose. Out in **June**, *Sheep Raider* offers gadget-based puzzles and plenty of platform-style action.



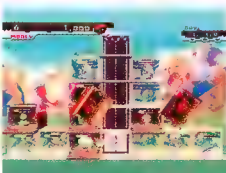
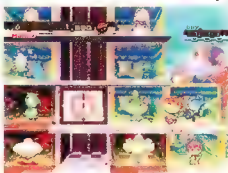
X-Men: Mutant Academy 2

More is better, or so the newest installment of **Activision's** X-Men fighter would imply. The gameplay in this series hasn't changed much apart from the new attacks and aerial moves that have been added to combat. Instead, the rosters of arenas and fighters have each been increased by six. Rogue, Forge, Nightcrawler and Havok are now playable, in addition to two other characters who must be unlocked. If you ever wanted to rough up the X-Mansion, this is your chance, but this **fall** release's biggest draw could be the supplemental material that includes concept art, sketches and costumes from the movie.



One Peace Mansion













In an attempt to stretch the definition of the "puzzle game" to unheard-of lengths, **Capcom's** *One Peace Mansion* thrusts you into the role of an apartment-building superintendent. You have to manage who lives next to who in each apartment, making sure their different personalities don't clash. Comfort is of utmost importance, and tenant juggling will be the order of the day when the game ships this **summer**.

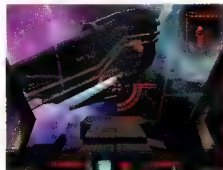




PREVIEW

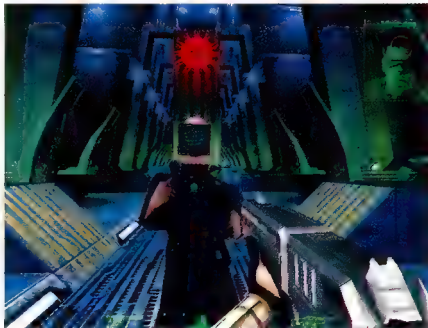
Bounty Hunter

-  Crave Entertainment
-  Warthog
-  1
-  Flight Sim/FPS
-  50%
-  Winter
-  StarLancer (DC)
-  www.cravegames.com
-  It's like Wing
-  Commander meets Half-Life.
-  No planned multiplayer or online options.
-  The Order of Virtual Light cult getting pissed off.



Huge ships aren't just there to stare at or blow up—you can actually fly into them and search around on foot.

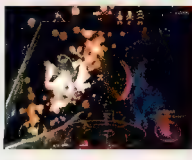
The Order of Virtual Light cult members are actually unwitting host bodies for The Watchers, a powerful alien race.



Street Cred

Warthog should be familiar to any space-flight nuts out there. Having cut their teeth on StarLancer (for Chris Roberts, creator of Wing Commander), they've also visited the Star Trek universe with Activision's Star Trek: Invasion on the PS one.

Other games programmed by Warthog include Asterix the Gaul for PlayStation and PC, plus Tom & Jerry for PS one and Game Boy Color. OK, so maybe there's a few chinks in the armor. Unless you love Asterix like young Dudlak does.



What better way to launch a franchise on a new platform than to try something unique? Warthog has made their mark with space sims, but now Crave has them taking it a step further by getting the player out of the cockpit for a little down-'n-dirty combat on the ground as well.

Truth be told, Bounty Hunter will be more of a first-person shooter than a flight sim. But rather than magically dropping you into a new level it's up to you to fly there, through hostile space, land, and set off on foot.

Similar things have been tried on PC games with mixed results. Warthog says the reason is that most of those games used one of two separate engines

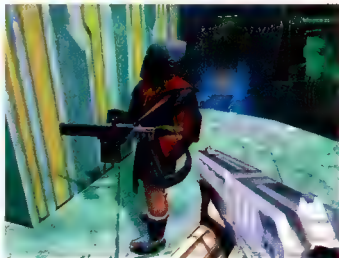
depending on whether the player was in his ship or out on foot. But Bounty Hunter uses just one graphic engine—and one control scheme—no matter where you happen to be. The result is a silky-smooth transition from one game mode to another, anywhere from space to a planet's surface, to the inside of a capital ship, and everywhere in between.

From what we've seen so far, it works great. In our brief demo, we started the game in the midst of a firefight in deep space. Then, turning toward a huge ship on our left, we saw a landing bay was open. After flying in and touching down, our hero grabbed a gun and proceeded to pick his way through the ship and rescue a concubine. Very cool stuff, and all seamless.

Although the first-person shooter aspect of Bounty Hunter will be its main focus, let's face it, Warthog's made its name with space-flight sims. Keeping that in mind, the ship-to-ship combat in the game promises to be very involving. Basically think StarLancer with nicer graphics and up to six different ships you can fly.

The overall game progression will be totally plot-driven, with cutscenes ushering the player to his/her next objective. Crave and Warthog are both adamant that all the cinemas will use the actual game engine—no rendered characters or cheesy FMV here.

Online deathmatches? Crave says no. The developers are more worried about making a kick-ass single-player game, and getting it finished in time for the ship date. Ah well...next time. ☹





PREVIEW

Gotham

- Microsoft
- Bizarre Creations
- 1-2
- Racing
- 30%
- Winter
- MSR (DC)
-
- www.bizarrecrations.com
- Amazingly accurate cityscapes.
- No solid release date.
- Streets devoid of all human life.



Bizarre is quick to point out the cool, real-time reflections on the finish of each car.



Bizarre already has some pretty nice weather effects going on, and the build we saw isn't nearly done.

EXCLUSIVES

Lip Service

"Over the last year, we started doing a lot of research on what should be our crown-jewel racing title, what type of racing-title partners should we be working with," Garrett Young, program manager of sports and racing at Microsoft, told us. "Of all the people we met, working with Bizarre Creations made the most sense. They were awesome with MSR last year, which was great, they have history with Formula One games, they've done some other titles like Fur Fighters. So in the end, it made the most sense to work with Bizarre, and it ended up the coolest thing we could have done on the racing front."

That's all very true, Bizarre does have quite a history when it comes to racing games. Their F1 titles in particular were critically acclaimed on the PS one (especially in Europe). This seems in keeping with Microsoft's policy of doing what's best for their gamers. Let's hope the results are as spectacular as they promise.

Microsoft's been aggressively courting developers to work on its console and certainly trying to cover every important genre. Racing games are key, so it was no surprise when we saw this little number spinning its wheels at the recent Microsoft Gamestock event.

For developer Bizarre Creations working on Gotham for the Xbox is déjà vu all over again. Twenty-four months ago they were in a similar situation, working on MSR for the Dreamcast with unfinished devkits. Managing Director Martyn Chudley relishes the chance to further develop the Kudos system and take city-based racing to the next level: "When we finished MSR, we knew we were going to do another city-based racing game but didn't know for which format. So we fiddled around on the PC, where we had time to rewrite the physics. And we knew Xbox was going to be Nvidia, so we worked on GeForce cards."

The Gotham team is crafting the game with quiet confidence, and only a scant few months into the project there are already quite a few improvements: The cars feature real-time reflections and the resolution and texture quality have been updated dramatically. Like MSR, though, expect all those realistic streets to remain eerily void of pedestrians. "We won't be populating the streets of Gotham due to car-licensing issues," says Chudley, "however, we are gonna try to put in more ambient noises, load more things like rubbish and stuff you can interact with,

steam coming out of vents, leaves blowing around, smoke. Just try to make it far more immersive."

Gotham is built of mostly new code and technology specifically for the Xbox. Microsoft and Bizarre are keen to point out this is no port, but an extension. There's more emphasis on arcade action and all the tracks are getting seriously spruced-up with redone textures and more poling; it's the New York City area that's the most exciting new feature.

Striking the right balance between arcade and in-depth gameplay was an area some found faults in MSR, so care is being taken that Gotham will be far easier to get into and more rewarding as well. "That's the biggest thing, broadening the appeal," Chudley explains. "We've done the niche thing with the DC. With the Xbox we have a bigger target audience. We let people see more of the game."

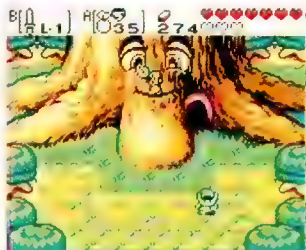
But the true innovation of MSR was the Kudos system, which rewarded the player for his/her driving skill rather than just speed, and Chudley wasn't entirely satisfied with how that turned out in MSR either. "The kudos system was sort of hidden, under the surface. You did some cool things but you also got lots of penalties, so we are making it more friendly."

Bizarre will take the time to get it right, because, let's face it, there's some pretty stiff competition out there. "This is not a GT clone by any sense of the imagination," says Microsoft's Garrett Young, "but that's the bar we measure ourselves against."



The Legend of Zelda: Oracle Series

- Publisher:** Nintendo
- Developer:** Capcom
- Players:** 1
- Genre:** Action RPG
- % Done:** 100%
- Release:** May 7
- Also Try:** Link's Awakening DX
- Web Address:** www.nintendo.com
- The Good:** Old-school Zelda gameplay, cool Link System.
- The Bad:** Technically not much different from the first Game Boy Zelda.
- And The Ugly:** Originally there were going to be three games, not two!



The Meka tree is in both games, though it changes gender depending on which one you're playing.

CLASSIC ZELDA

A Link to the Past

Both Oracle games are filled with nods to past Zelda titles. For example, in Oracle of Seasons, you can burn down trees to find hidden treasures ("It's a secret to everybody." "Pay me for the door repair charge," etc.). And in Oracle of Ages, you can ride on a raft in the first time since Zelda II: The Adventure of Link.

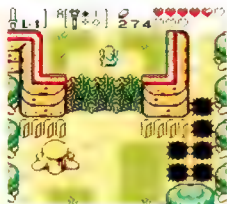
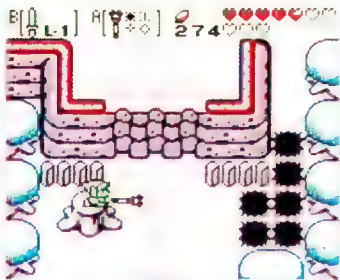
In development for nearly three years, The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Seasons and The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Ages have gone through numerous changes on the road from initial concept to final product. Formerly known as *Mystical Seed of Power*, *Mystical Seed of Wisdom* and *Mystical Seed of Courage* (when the duo was still a trio), the games have finally been released in Japan and are scheduled for release on May 7 in the States. The two titles were actually developed by Capcom and scripted by Flagship (the guys behind the Resident Evil story lines), marking the first time a "real" Zelda title has been developed outside of Nintendo (no, those crappy

CD-i games don't count).

When Capcom first approached Nintendo about working together to develop these new games, the plan was actually to create four titles, but that soon dwindled to three and eventually ended up as the two titles that you see here. According to Yoshiaki Okamoto, producer of the Oracle games, the third chapter—which was completely finished before it was cancelled—was actually a remake of the original NES *Zelda*. Will it ever be released? "We'll be debating over it later," says Okamoto in an interview with Japanese writer and Nintendo superfan Shigesato Itoi. One can only hope...

Fans of Link's Awakening DX, the previous Game Boy *Zelda*, will no doubt feel right at home with Oracle of Seasons and Oracle of Ages. The games use the exact same engine as DX, only slightly modified to take advantage of the Game Boy Color's full color palette (the Oracle games won't run on old-school Game Boys). Animations have been improved, and the life bar has been moved to the top of the screen, but otherwise the interface is almost identical.

What sets these games apart from their predecessor (and any other *Zelda*, for that matter) is the innovative "Link System," which allows the two games to interact with one another in a variety of ways. You see, Oracle of Seasons and Oracle of Ages are meant to be played back-to-back, in either order. Upon finishing one game, you're given a password to






enter into the other game, which then alters the second adventure, depending on certain actions you took and events that occurred in the first game. Only after finishing both games in succession will you get to see the true last boss and the "real" ending. Even better, the second quest is filled with special passwords that you can obtain, and carry back to the first game to exchange for some great items and power-ups (see "The Link System" sidebar). The way the two games interact is exciting and original, and makes for great replayability.

Story-wise, the two games are similar enough. Seasons begins with the Maiden of Earth, Din, being kidnapped by the evil General Gorgon. Her kidnapping causes the four seasons to get all confused, and as a result, Link needs to locate the Rod of the Seasons so that he can restore order to the land and rescue Din. In Ages, it's the Maiden of Time, Nayru, who gets whisked away by a wicked sorceress named Veran. Veran possesses Nayru and takes her back in time to screw up the past in an effort to take over the world in the present. Link must locate the Harp of Time and use it to travel back and forth between the past and the present in order to right Veran's wrongs and rescue Nayru.

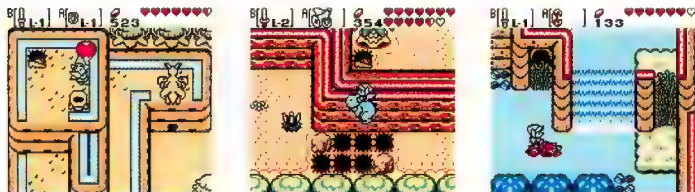
Interestingly enough, Oracle of Seasons and Oracle of Ages were specifically designed to appeal to different types of Zelda fans. Seasons is much more action-oriented, with hordes of bad guys at every turn, while Ages has far fewer enemies, but more brain-bending puzzles and interesting dungeons. Despite this, the games still have plenty in common. Both games feature five kinds of Mystical Seeds, each of

which has different properties (one lights fires, another lets you run fast, etc.), as well as Gacha Seeds, which, when planted, grow into trees that provide special items and rupees. Both games have animal friends who help you out, and a clumsy witch who drops items every time she flies in your path. Plus special rings hidden throughout the two games (64 in all), once identified at the Ring Shop, grant special abilities or power-ups when equipped. There's plenty more where all that came from, too. We haven't even touched upon the new items (Pea Shooter? Magna Glove? Swap Hook?) and the returning cast of characters from the N64 Zeldas. But since much of the fun of playing through a Zelda game is discovering its secrets, we'll hold off on revealing too much.

Needless to say, these two games are indeed epic, and despite being developed by an outsider, they're very worthy of bearing the Zelda name. If you're a fan of the series, you owe it to yourself to give both Oracles a spin. Chances are good you won't be disappointed. 

ZELDA ON GBA

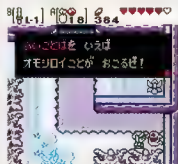
Well, kinda. When GBA launches in the U.S. on June 11, be sure to pop in your Zelda: Oracle games and take a look around. In addition to a slightly altered color palette, you'll find that each game has a special shop that's only accessible when playing on a GBA. What rare goodies lurk inside? You'll just have to find out!



For the first time ever, Link now has support from the animal kingdom. Ricky (left) can jump up cliffs and has a wicked left hook. Moosh (center) can fly over large gaps and do a powerful butt stomp. And Dimitri (right) can traverse deep waters and climb waterfalls.

The Link System

In addition to the first password you receive, which lets you continue from one Oracle game to the next, there are several other passwords that you can find during your "second quest" which allow you to obtain some great items and enhancements.



Step 1) After finishing Seasons and starting Ages, you'll run into characters who give you special passwords. Write these down and then head over to your finished Seasons game.



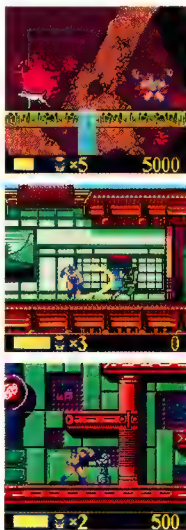
Step 2) Find the person you you're supposed to deliver the password to in Seasons, and you'll get something for use in your Seasons game as well as a new password.



Step 3) Finally, bring the new password to Farore at the Maka Tree in your Ages game, and she'll grant you the same item for your Ages game that you just received in Seasons. Sweet!

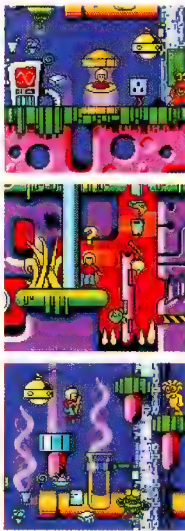
X-Men 2: Wolverine's Rage

Wolverine's gonna be pissed off come this **May**, and with good reason. Seems like supervillains are always passing time constructing evil devices, and this time Lady Deathstrike, Cyber and Sabertooth are targeting ol' Wolvie by making a weapon that will melt his metallic skeleton into sludge. To foil their plans, you take to the streets with your claws sharpened. **Activision** has given our hero a few other powers to spice up the traditional side-scrolling action: Along with Wolverine's regenerative ability that allows him to slowly regain his strength, he also possesses a "Bestial Rage" mutant attack that drains his life force, but deals much major damage to enemies. Hopefully this variety will distinguish X-Men 2 from the glut of mundane GBC beat-'em-ups that crowd store shelves.



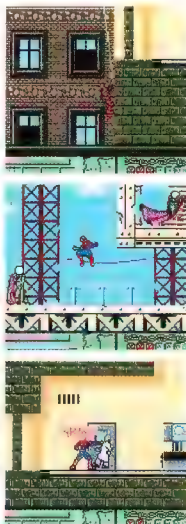
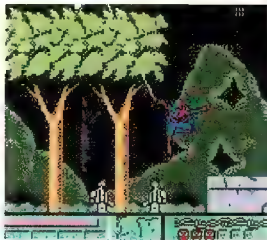
Commander Keen

Adapted from id Software's old PC title, Commander Keen is being developed by **David A. Palmer Productions** for **Activision** on the GBC. A side-scrolling platformer, the game promises several returning characters, but will send its pre-teen hero off on an all-new romp. Aside from some really vibrant graphics, CK's three separate worlds host over 30 alien foes and tons of puzzle-filled gameplay. Watch for it this **summer**.



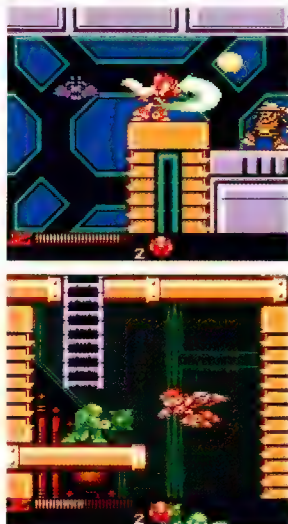
Spider-Man 2: Sinister Six

Activision will come out swinging with a new Spider-Man game this **spring**. America's fave arachno-hero's got some funky new moves to immobilize, evade or "spin-kick" his attackers. Power-ups like the Spidey Shield are also featured additions. If villains are your thing, expect to see Doc Ock, the Sandman and Kraven, just to name a few.



Mega Man Xtreme 2

Mega Man Xtreme on the GBC was, in many ways, just a compilation of the first two Mega Man X titles for the SNES. Mega Man Xtreme 2 takes up where its predecessor left off, but this time you have the option of playing MM or his counterpart Zero throughout the game. **Capcom** has upped the ante by allowing you to switch, on-the-fly, between the two do-gooders. The cool thing is, MM and Zero will also have different level layouts and end-bosses. MMX2 comes out **late summer 2001**.





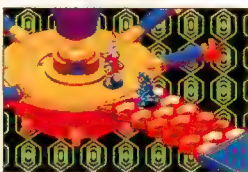
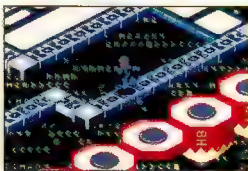
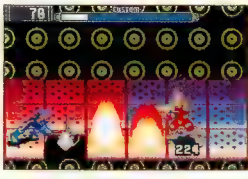
MEGA MAN
 Capcom's decade-running franchise has some of the most hummable songs in all of video gaming. OK, so it's not MP3, but do check out The Mega Man Mod Archives (<http://24.16.84.122/~rockman/m3a/index.shtml>) to download music from the long list of classic Mega Man games.

GAME BOY ADVANCE

PREVIEW GALLERY

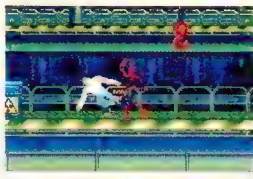
Mega Man Battle Network

Mega Man Battle Network takes place in the distant future where everybody owns a "virtual pet" version of the Blue Bomber. Take your pocket-gotchi Mega Man deep into an insidious online network and battle evil computer programs. Exploration takes place in a top-down isometric view, while combat is an interesting combination of real-time and turn-based mechanics. It feels kind of like a first attempt at a Mega Man RPG of sorts. While we're sure most people would have preferred a classic **Capcom** side-scroller, we'll still play this with an open mind this **July**.



Spider-Man

The evil Master of Illusion, Mysterio, takes the helm in the battle against good in the first Spider-Man game on the Game Boy Advance. Good thing our friendly neighborhood wall-crawler is ready for the job. According to **Activision**, our web-slinging friend hasn't been slacking since we last saw him. Spidey's got a new wardrobe of protective suits (including a "very secret black suit") at his disposal, multiple power-ups for health and web formula upgrades, and kick-boty special attacks. Sounds like Spidey on the GBA has lots in common with his PlayStation game from last year. Heading for a **fall** release, along with Tony Hawk Spidey looks ready to be one of the strongest American titles on the GBA during the launch period.



X-Men: Reign of Apocalypse

It may look like the standard side-scrolling dreck you're used to seeing in Game Boy Color games, but there's a surprising amount of depth and variety in this **Activision** title. Coming this **fall**, X-Men's Story Mode allows you to play as Rogue, Wolverine, Storm or Cyclops as you fight to escape an alternate timeline. Points are earned by performing special attacks that can be used to improve your character's abilities. If you're not in the mood for adventuring, then there's also a handy Versus Mode that serves up a simple one-on-one fighting game.



Super Street Fighter II Advance

Essentially the same game as Super Street Fighter II Turbo, with its super meter, hidden characters and overhauled combo system. Fighting fans can take it on the road when **Capcom** releases Super Street Fighter II Advance for the new Nintendo handheld this **summer**. With 32 bits of 2D power at its disposal, we expect GBA owners with a link cable to be in two-player Hadoken heaven. We had a chance to play this one at TGS and were impressed: Tapping buttons for light attacks and holding them for medium ones works all right and, outside of some slight slowdown, the game stands up pretty well next to its SNES brethren.





Tony Hawk's
Pro Skater 2X
Page 89
THPS2:GBA
Page 88

Mat Hoffman's
Pro BMX 2
Page 91

Shaun Palmer's
Pro Snowboarder
Page 90

Kelly Slater's
Pro Surfer
Page 92

Appearing Out of Big Air...

**You ready
for a rush?
Activision
thinks so.**

**By Evan Shamoon
and Crispin Boyer**

You'd expect to sniff a lot of not-so-fresh odors at the offices of a hard-working developer like Neversoft. But instead of stale pizza, spilled beer or sweaty T-shirts we smell—sniff, sniff—what's this? New-carpet aroma? "We had to move to new offices last year because we needed room for that thing," Neversoft prez Joel Jewett says, pointing to a larger-than-life-size statue of Spider-Man slinging webs in the spotless lobby.

Spider-Man was a fine game, but he's not the big reason behind Neversoft's on-fire rep and push new digs (their conference tables haven't even been scuffed by visiting skaters yet). This is the house Tony Hawk's Pro Skater built. And what's good for Neversoft is good for Activision, which owns the studio and publishes its games. All told, the Tony Hawk titles accounted for about 25 percent of Activision's publishing revenues last year—and this is a company with a broad range of games, everything from Disney to Quake. "If you sort the [sales] data by extreme sports, we have a 67

Look—up in the sky! Is that a bird? No, it's a Birdman. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 drops for the PlayStation 2 this fall with—get this!—online play. And in roughly 2,216 words, here's why neither work, family nor unrequited love will matter when the Birdman lands.

"Life is little more than the long wait between new versions of Tony Hawk's Pro Skater." That's perhaps one of the lesser-known ancient Chinese proverbs, sure, but

also a sentiment echoed by millions of fanatical humanoids around the world. Aside from humdingers like fire, the printing press and the Beatles, few cultural phenomena have been quite as captivating since the dawn of civilization. And now it's high time for a relapse: Neversoft's newest Tony Hawk sequel arrives on the PS2 this fall. But you PS one owners shouldn't feel left out; a scaled-down THPS3 from a different developer will hit it the PlayStation 4 around the same time, and pretty much every other system that matters will get a version of the game next spring. (Note that we're focusing on only the PS2 version of

THPS3 in this feature.)

"We're in a really good position, because even though we started over from scratch and rebuilt everything [on PS2], we're doing it with the knowledge we gained over two years," says Joel Jewett, the aforementioned president and chief trash-talker of Neversoft. "We know the game inside and out, we've made all the mistakes before. I'd hate to have to compete with us right now."

And by the looks of things, so would we. Mere seconds after THPS3 materializes onto Neversoft's huge flat-screen TV, it's clear we're in for a treat of the hardcore persuasion. In the grand tradition of both Brian Boitano's trousers and the American prison system, Tony Hawk 3 is literally bursting at the seams. With more realism, more fantasy and the promise of—we'll say it again—online play in the cards (see sidebar on page 87), Neversoft's newest baby should grow up to meet all those impossibly high expectations.

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3



The series' move to PS2 means THPS3's environments are bigger and much more interactive. See that freeway buckling behind Tony? Trigger a tremor and it shakes down in real time, opening new grinding opportunities. Nice.

Hurts? Not Exactly

The most immediately impressive thing about THPS3 is the sheer size and creative depth of its environments. The level furthest along is Los Angeles—hometown of Neversoft, Activision, and innovative new uses for silicone—and it's absolutely teeming with life. Not only are these environments going to be roughly twice as big as those in the two prequels, they will be far more engaging as well. Traffic races realistically through the streets, pedestrians bustle about, tectonic plates push together; these guys are building living, breathing worlds. "We tried some of that stuff in Tony Hawk 2, but the PS one hardware limited us in terms of what we could pull off," says Scott Pease, producer of the first two games and now lead producer on THPS3. "Seeing the helicopter take off and then just hearing it crash above you [in THPS2's Hangar level], for example—we had to kind of fake it. But now we can really mess the environment up,

percent market share in 2000, and that's just from Tony Hawk 1 and 2," says William Kassoy, Activision's director of global brand management. Expect this stranglehold on extreme sports—actually, they're called action sports now; the term "extreme" is sooo last week—to tighten on May 15. That's when Activision launches its own action-sports sub-brand called O2. (It stands for "big air." Get it?) The tagline: "Sports Revolution." "Initially, the line was 'Sports Evolved,'" says Kassoy, "but these sports didn't evolve out of the traditional big-five sports, stuff like football or basketball."

Instead, we're talking BMX, snowboarding, surfing and, of course, skateboarding—and all that pretty much sums up Activision's action-sports lineup for the next year. The games begin with Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX, which launches the same day as the brand. This fall we'll see Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 and Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder. Then we get Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2 and Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer next spring. We know a wake-boarding game is also in the works,

but after that? "We're going to look at sports that have that lifestyle element attached to them," Kassoy says, "so we're not going to do extreme skydiving, because there's not a huge lifestyle around that."

O2 is Activision's first sub-brand, and they're thinking big. In fact, they don't even see extreme games from similar-minded brands like EA Big as competition. "Both of our Tony Hawk's Pro Skater titles exceeded the sales of Madden, NBA Live—with Jordan even—NASCAR and Tiger Woods in 2000," Kassoy says, "so we really see our primary competition as traditional sports brands like EA Sports and 989 Studios." To rattle the competition, Activision has locked more than 40 action-sports athletes into exclusive contracts and is having all its action-sports developers implement the easy-to-learn/hard-to-master Tony Hawk control scheme in their games. After all, THPS is the O2 brand's flagship title, and now the franchise is making the leap to PS2. You thought Mr. Hawk flew before? Get ready to watch him soar.



move things around, create entirely new lines. Some of the cars will actually stop for you, slamming on their brakes. Pedestrians will actually walk around and interact with each other while you're not there. If you get up close enough you can even hear them speaking to each other." It's this sense of place—the reality that your actions actually have consequences in the world you inhabit—that gives the game such tremendous screen presence.

Even better, this depth is embedded

directly into the gameplay itself. Level goals will be drawn thematically from each city, and interacting with/manipulating the environment will be part of completing your allotted tasks. Pease demonstrates this for us in the Los Angeles level by grinding several specific rails, each of which causes our surroundings to tremble slightly. "Each of these little tremors kinda weakens the thing...and then it's this last rail that sets off the Big One," he says, just as an earthquake begins to tear through the city. Pease spins the camera around to give us an up-close and personal vista of what appears to be a stretch of the 405 freeway crumbling before

Neversoft has completely redone the game's animation system, packing in about five times the amount of data that was in THPS2. You'll see plenty of new bail animations, but look for subtle stuff, like the way skaters wobble their arms for balance when they grind.

our eyes in real time. This, in turn, opens up a series of provocatively strewn-about rails and elevated lines, many of which allow access to previously unreachable areas. "So you can see," Jewett grins, leaning forward in his chair, "we've got some pretty cool stuff going on."



We sat down with the Hawkman himself and tawked amongst ourselves about Pro Skater 3, Girl Scouts, a skater's diet and the meaning of life.

EGM: It's been awhile (well, a year, really). How's things?
 Tony Hawk: Good, yeah. Just super busy—the new game and working on all the other projects I've been working on, everything keeps getting crazier and crazier. Working on our next gigantic skatepark tour, and we've added Europe—so that's been a big task for me...and for everyone.

EGM: Big continent...
 TH: Yeah, and through that we've been also working on what was going to be the next game, you know, also have a game based on the tour and what have you, and so basically we

just came to the conclusion that 3 will be for both PS2 and PS one. And that's pretty cool—but, I mean, PlayStation 2 is quite a beast...

EGM: So we hear. Is it killing those guys?
 TH: Yeah—they're actually ahead of schedule, but it's just been hard work. I see how comparatively far along number 2 was to its release date, and comparing it with what number 3 is now...But as it gets going things are getting exponentially easier and easier.

EGM: How in the name of Tony Hawk can this game possibly improve upon the last one? The transition from 1 to 2 was more than anybody could have expected.
 TH: Yeah, and I think this will be the same way. I mean, I hope that in the PlayStation [version] the leap will be just as great as from 1 to 2, but I know that it will be on the PS2. I've got a



The team has one guy dedicated to creating scripts for the game's teeming population of pedestrians, who will interact with you and each other. Some cities are even involved in your mission objectives. In one level, for instance, you'll need to show a bunch of kids how to perform specific tricks.

Some of the other level goals will involve interaction with the pedestrians and cars that cruise around the environments. "You'll see a short little cinematic that shows a looter robbing our liquor store next to Fixy-Broke TV over here," explains Jewett, pointing to a seedy corner of the L.A. level. "You'll have to recognize the car [he gets into] and chase him down; perhaps to stop him you'll have to alter the environment in his path. Then you'll see another snippet of the cinematic showing you what happened." As we watch the demonstration, subtle details abound, such as fluorescent lights and wooden desks inside the office buildings, visible through their semi-transparent windows. ("Just wait 'til we've got the porn theater working the way we want it," Pease deadpans.) Everything around us appears to be exploding with activity and personality, begging to be explored and experimented with. "It's something players might not notice," says Jewett, "but having these little scenarios going on really brings the level to life and also gives us a chance to infuse them with our own twisted brand of humor."

Skate or Diet

What has kept millions of helpless souls glued to their television sets for the past few years, of course, hasn't been actual glue but rather the Tony Hawk engine's perfectly realized control—a mind-numbing recipe that simply made everything feel so damn right. Fully aware of this fact, Neversoft is well on its way to recapturing said feel and will spend the next several months working to ensure THPS5 continues the trend in faultless control. (When asked if the formula had perhaps been somewhat

super-early build and it's already awesome; the textures and the motion are just insane.

EGM: Do you see any new gameplay element in THPS3 having as much significance as the manual?

TH: I think the balancing scheme will be much improved—specifically with manuals and with grinds...things like that. It's not gonna be so distorted, the leaning and whatnot. It will be way more realistic—not in the way you link tricks, but in the way you play and the way it feels, and how you know when you're too close to falling over.

EGM: What's the toughest thing to translate from real skateboarding into the video-game version of the sport?

TH: I think really making the animations look legit, and also having them at your control. There are so many games where you press some buttons and give up your control of when it's

going to finish or how to adjust it to land right. And I feel like in this game, you're always in control—even if you're doing some intricate move, you can always lean or direct it to land on something else...I think that's the hardest thing to create. You know, when we're skating, if something's not quite right, usually we can make an adjustment or try to bring it back.

EGM: Is there anything you feel that the last version of the game didn't get right? I noticed that it didn't shoot out delicious cookies for me to eat.

TH: Hmmm...The only thing I ever said about THPS2 was that the rodeo flip is actually not spinning the right way. And, well, nobody would ever notice that.

EGM: Have you heard anything about music in the third game?

TH: There are definitely some bands that I've been pushing



The Los Angeles (top) and Canada (above) levels are the ones farthest along in development, but bear in mind that everything here is still very work-in-progress. Neversoft plans to add more pedestrians and traffic, and particle effects still haven't been implemented. Expect lots of eye candy.



stumbled upon by chance, Jewett is markedly defensive: "Partially chance?" he cries. "There was no chance involved! Eight billion focus tests, 8 billion comments later and 8 billion tweaks of every single variable was what got us there.")

When it comes to improving upon this established control paradigm, the Neversoft guys certainly have their work cut out for them. The introduction of the manual in THPS2 presented an entirely new dimension of subtlety and technique, drastically revising the core THPS gameplay: Linking tricks into combinations was expanded to actually linking the combinations themselves together—with effectively infinite results. The inability to manual out of vert tricks thoroughly shifted the crux of the game, however, to hinge upon grind-manual-grind chains, since pulling off a vert trick essentially represented the grinding halt of this otherwise on-and-on-and-on progression.

Neversoft's answer to this stylistic imbalance is, in fact, twofold. The developers are not only experimenting with a method of linking moves out of vert tricks (they're devising a landing trick, similar to the manual, that you can pull while landing on a quarterpipe to keep your combo going), but they're also looking to expand the gameplay contained within the tricks themselves. Pease explains: "We're gonna try to bring back the combo ability of the vert moves that got lost in THPS2, which just became kind of a grind-and-manual fest. We'll be adding in a lot more natural combos and moves—almost fighting-game

for. It was really hard with the first two games, because people wanted too much money and didn't see the value of just being in it for the sake of being in it. I think they do now, and also Activision's in a much better place to ask for music. So some of the bands that I wanted to get in the second one are more likely to get in the third one.

EGM: Any specifics?

TH: Hmm...Let's just say I'm pushing for some early punk stuff [grins]. My favorites in the first game were the Dead Kennedys and Primus tracks; in the second game I dug the Millencolin song and, of course, Rage.

EGM: What's your personal high score for a single trick in THPS2?

TH: Somewhere around 250,000 or 300,000.

EGM: Aside from your competitors, what do you eat for breakfast, lunch and dinner?

TH: Well, skating keeps me in shape, but I try to stay away from red meat as much as I can. And, you know, I don't just sit around and eat junk food all day long [stuffs two Thin Mints into his mouth and smiles].

EGM: Favorite movie of all time?

TH: Recent years: *The Big Lebowski*. Early years: *Weird Science* [laughs].

EGM: Done your taxes yet?

TH: Yeah, well...no. I'm in the middle of them.

EGM: What was Tony Hawk like in the four-year open-heart surgery known as "high school"?

TH: Um, an outsider I guess. I just spent all my time at the skate park, so as soon as the schoolbell rang I was out. I didn't know anyone at the school, I didn't go to any school events, I didn't go to my prom, I didn't go to football games or anything like that. My community was at the skate park,



style—that you'll be able to do." Players will actually be able to break out of certain moves and pull off new ones, uncovering hidden tricks, combos and brand-new gameplay territory in the process. And since THPS3 packs what Pease estimates to be "50-100 percent more tricks than THPS2," that should entail quite a bit of experimentation.

Beautiful Day

Though still relatively early in its development cycle, THPS3 is visually

stunning—this is already one of the finest graphics engines we've seen on PS2 to date. "Everything is built from scratch," boasts Pease. "Each skater model is rebuilt with about 3,000 polygons, all the animation is totally redone for a more advanced hierarchy that includes things like hands and fingers." The impressive level of detail remains consistent whether the camera is pulled out to a bird's-eye view of the city or up close to an individual character, verifying the excellent versatility of their engine. Oh, and here's a cool new perk: You can use the

right analog stick to peer around your skater and take in all the splendor—or just try to figure out the best way to get to that rail way up on the church roof. You'll even be able to pick from a few different camera vantage points behind your skater.

The improved detail and resolution is, of course, accompanied by a dramatic improvement in the animation. "We now have dynamic balance animations, for example, for every single grind, and for the smooth new bails as well," Pease says. Sure enough, we see Tony spread his arms and

and mostly they were older but I didn't care...we all held a common interest. I mean, my first kiss was at the skate park.

EGM: In regard to skating, was there any single event that determined how you wanted to live the rest of your life?

TH: I think it was when I first started learning moves that no one else had done. That got me really fired up. It got me motivated to keep trying new things and see what was possible. Because when you realize that something you're doing—that you can be your own pioneer, go in different directions, and not everything has been done before—then you feel like anything's possible. If you feel like there's an echelon you reach and that's as far as you can get, then maybe you're not as inspired to keep going. In skating, it seems like there's always something new to learn. I'd say that happened was when I was about 11 or 12.

EGM: Guilty pleasures? Perhaps an unhealthy obsession with Hello Kitty lip gloss, or a burning desire to be in a boy band?

TH: Well, neither one of those. I'm a pretty bad gambler though. I'll stay at the tables until I've lost way more than I wanted to.

EGM: Even though you've got so much backup fundage now?

TH: Well, it's hard 'cause the stakes are higher—to make it interesting, you want to make it risky. So, yeah, I'm bad. I never ever admit to my wife how much I lost. But my biggest obsession is electronics, buying everything new, whatever's updated. I just bought a G4 Powerbook without even worrying about what's going to happen to my old one. But the rest of my family's thankful, 'cause they always get my old stuff. Err, as in, like, four months old...



We're not sure what impresses us more: the size of the levels or their massive draw distance. See those buildings in the background? They're all fully 3D and part of the level. (You can even see inside their windows when you skate by!) Plus, you can use the right stick to look around and eyeball the levels now.

teeter a bit when he grinds. Pease estimates THPS3 packs roughly five times the amount of animation data as THPS2. On top of that, the levels boast an unlimited draw distance—kiss the fog and faded-in environments of the prequels goodbye. And the whole thing is already running at 60 frames per second. Needless to say, the game is going to look very, very nice, but it's

also comforting to see that the look and feel are undeniably consistent with the universe Neversoft has forged with its prior Tony Hawk games.

Which is not to say that any of this has come easy. How has it been working on the PlayStation 2? Pease explains the two sides of Sony's imposing black box: "Development is difficult because it's a much more advanced machine, but the cool thing is that you have to be really good to get a lot out of it. Take the high resolution—if you don't have bad-ass artists, your levels simply aren't going to look great. I think the new machines are going to really expose some developers who can't hide their deficiencies anymore. So we're actually glad the new machines are so complicated, 'cause it will just weed the competition out."

Jewett adds, "On the PlayStation you had to worry about every vertice, every little poly in the game, and not waste anything to really attain the level of quality you wanted to achieve. And quite frankly, it's the same exact way with the new machines! There's more of it, but to get the best of the best out of it you have to pay attention to every little detail. And now there's more details....Nothing comes easy."





Welcome to the Terrordome

The team is expanding nearly every other conceivable aspect of the game, including an enormously enhanced custom character builder that allows for a wilder variety of clothing ensembles than an Oscars pre-show (and thankfully without a skeletal Joan Rivers prancing around asking, "Who are you wearing, honey?"). But the big addition here: It will even allow for a—ahem—"diverse" set of female characters, which should be popular with the game's

predominantly male fan base (you'll be able to doll up your female skater in outfits as skimpy as a bra and see-through skirt).

Career mode is likewise being refined, and money will no longer be collected; instead Neversoft is aiming for a more free-form progression through the game. "We've come up with a system which preserves the customization of THPS2, but keeps the flow a bit more non-linear like THPS1," explains Pease. "In the second game, your cash just kinda ramped up, so in career mode there

wasn't much reason to go back to the early levels. In THPS1, however, every goal was worth the same amount—it was worth a tape—so if you got stuck in a later level, you could come back to an earlier one to try to solve the puzzle there and move forward."

Certain goals in Career Mode will also depend on the particular character you pick. Jamie Thomas, who's a street skater, for example, might have to hardflip a certain gap to complete a goal, while Tony Hawk might need to pull a gooo over a channel. Custom skaters will face a more generic set of challenges. For the hardcore players—whose goal is to beat the game with every character—touches like this will provide for an immensely richer single-player experience.

The return of THPS2's skate-park editor is still up in the air at this point because of the increased complexity and size of this sequel's environments ("We want to be careful not to do anything half-assed," says

Ready to Grind Online?

Neversoft unveils the skate park of the future

OK, you might want to sit down for this: Neversoft is building online play into THPS3, making it one of the very first online PS2 games. The team told us they're 100-percent confident they'll get this feature in the game. "I just can't tell you how in-depth it will be at the moment," says senior producer Scott Pease, "as a lot of it depends on Sony and other hardware-support considerations." Neversoft has been implementing online modes in THPS3 over the past few months, and we're told Sony has given them full support in this endeavor. Details are still a little sketchy on how all this will work, since Sony has yet to reveal their online plans to the world. Be patient—those announcements are forthcoming. But it's interesting to note that the version we saw was hooked into the office network via an off-the-shelf USB ethernet adapter, and Neversoft told us they even plan to support USB 56k modems.

We expect to see the original head-to-head multiplayer games such as Trick Attack, Graffiti and Tag playable online, and Pease says the network modes will support a minimum of four players at once—and hopefully up to eight. In fact, don't even bother looking for a four-player split-screen feature. "We've looked into it and decided our game is just too chaotic for four-way split, especially on a small screen," Pease says, "so we'd rather spend the effort on the online side of things—it's a lot more fun for four players when each has his own screen."

As cool as the concept of online Trick Attack might be, the

folks at Neversoft recognize that creating an online community is perhaps even more intriguing—a sort of "online skate park" if you will. "To help broaden the whole Internet base, you need to build [the game] so that people want to go online to hang out with the friends that they've made," says Neversoft prez Joel Jewett. "If you're just competing all the time, you're not really making buddies...you know, you're either kickin' their ass or getting your own ass kicked." The developers are therefore also interested in creating a more open environment, where individuals can come and hang out, chat (Neversoft is including support for USB keyboards), show each other new tricks they've learned, trade gear, and possibly even come up with their own games and competitions. "Many of the levels are section based," points out art director Chris Ward, "so you can choose to hang out wherever and with whomever you choose. Skate in the parking lot, inside a warehouse...it's up to you."

Using the right analog stick to look around is especially handy when playing online, because it helps you watch and keep track of your buddies. You can take your turn in a pipe, for example, then hang to the side and watch your pals go through their routines. We played a networked game at Neversoft's offices, and it only took a few minutes of us watching other skaters zip around us before we envisioned the online community that will surely build around this experience. "It's amazing, really," says Pease. "If you sit and think about it for like five minutes, you can think of 100 cool things we can do online—it's enough for a whole other product."



thus, every free hand at Neversoft is working on this game. Still, this ain't no walk in the skate park. "The problem, see, is that you can never really quit working on the levels," art director Chris Ward explains in his thick Yorkshire accent. "You could literally work on 'em for two years, improving, tweaking them, but you've got to stop sometime."

Jewett grins. "And then we have this weird thing about wanting to ship the game as soon as we can," he says. "Hate to keep the fan-base waiting. We've put ourselves on the line, but I think we can do it."

"Yeah," Pease quips from the other side of the table. "Just ignore the beads of sweat beginning to form on our brows."

Jewett), but don't rule the editor out; those decisions are still pending.

In the multiplayer department, you're going to find pretty much the same modes—Trick Attack, Graffiti, Tag and Horse. Of course, the big addition here is the inclusion of online play.

Grind Now, Pay Later

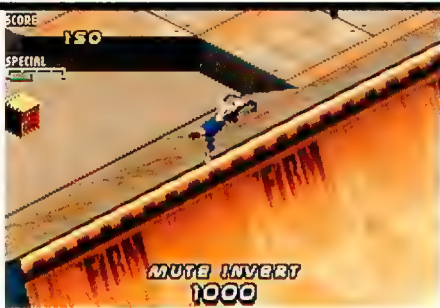
The team is planning to include between eight and 10 levels, and they're doing so with double the number of designers, artists and programmers who worked on their previous games. The Tony Hawk and Spider-Man teams combined to work on Tony 3;

Tony on the Go

THPS2 on the Game Boy Advance proves big things do come in little packages

We'll admit it—we were jealous. The real Tony Hawk got to play the GBA version of Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 a few days before we did. But we sure can't argue with the Birdman's to-the-point evaluation of his game: "The Game Boy Advance is awesome! THPS2 for the Game Boy Advance is awesome!" Hawk wrote in a terse e-mail to Activision after a little hands-on time with this GBA launch title.

Squint your eyes and this game looks remarkably like the PlayStation original. It's played from an isometric perspective, but "the game world internally is 3D," says Karthik Bala, CEO of developer Vicarious Visions. "That means all the surface information such as half pipes, ramps, rails, etc., have real geometry data associated with them. And the skater is a real-time 3D polygonal model, using a custom 3D software renderer, with all the character animation from the PSX game." So, as you zip around the environments, your skater's orientation and collision are based on the surface geometry of the level. That means you can perform all the same moves—including the manual—and catch the same air you could in the PS one version.



Best of all, THPS2 GBA runs at a blazingly smooth framerate. And despite the top-down view, the game's levels (you get six in all—five from THPS2 and the warehouse from the THPS) look right out of the PlayStation games. Even the new midi soundtrack is surprisingly rockin'.

The GBA's lack of buttons meant Vicarious Visions got creative with the control scheme: You use the shoulder buttons for kick tricks and grabs, while A and B ollie and grind. A tutorial mode eases you into this scheme so that any THPS fan will get the hang of it in no time. "We've had testers do 400,000-point combos and two-minute runs of 1.4 million points," Bala says. THPS2 GBA lacks create-a-skater, the park editor and multiplayer modes, but even without that gravy this game launched to the top our list of most-wanted on-the-go games faster than you can say, "Game Boy Color who?"

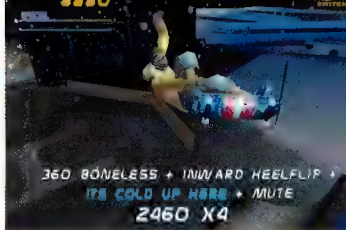


While PS2 will be the main recipient of Neversoft's latest skate opus, Activision hasn't forgotten about that "other" big black box looming on the horizon. Not only will Microsoft's Xbox likely get its own version of THPS3 early next year—it will also launch with an exclusive Tony Hawk title, christened with the suffix 2X. Developer Treyarch (the same gang behind the excellent Dreamcast versions of the first two games) is working to make THPS2X improved enough for even the most demanding critics—and when those critics are jaded gamers tired of Tony Hawk ports, that's saying a lot.

In a nutshell, THPS2X takes everything from the first two games and makes it—oh, how you say—better? "There's a lot of

power under the hood of this thing," says Nigel Mills, the game's producer, gesturing toward his towering Xbox development kit. "and we'd like to use as much of it as we can." When all is said and done, this incarnation will pack versions of every level from both THPS1 and 2, plus three brand-new ones. Combine that with greatly enhanced graphics locked at a silky-smooth 60-frames-per-second framerate and Treyarch is on the verge of building the ultimate THPS collectors' edition.

More advanced geometry is the order of the day here, which essentially means everything will look sharper and more detailed. Half-pipes are perfectly rounded; rails are rebuilt in full 3D; lighting is far more complex; and backgrounds will be brought to life with pedestrians, birds and other details. While the skaters will be built



from the same number of polygons as those in the DC version, each one is being retextured for a noticeably crisper look. "Believe it or not, we've got 12 artists working on staff right now—which is a lot for a game that's already out," Mills muses.

The team is adding Xbox-specific features, such as the ability to replace the in-game music with tunes you've ripped to your Xbox hard drive (these tracks will be selectable within the game). And THPS2X will park itself onto the drive the first time you play, drastically reducing load times in future sessions (levels load so fast it's like playing a cartridge). Other goodies include four-

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2X



The guys at Treyarch have donned their tool belts and added new areas onto old parks, such as the control tower tacked on to the hangar (above). And look for visual frills like lens flare and new level geometry (see those rafters below?). But the big plus is being able to manual in levels from the first game.



player split-screen for the multiplayer modes, VGA support, female Create-a-Skater and a more robust level-editor.

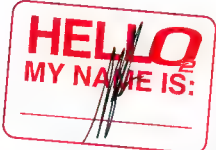
Fine, but what about the online play that was originally supposed to be in the cards? Well, that's up in the air now. Treyarch is including support for up to eight players online—we've even played the game over the network at Treyarch's offices—but the team says it's up to Microsoft to determine whether THPS2X will be playable online at launch. After all, Microsoft still needs to sort out its broadband plans. We asked the boys in Redmond for the skinny. "We're not announcing whether there will or won't be online games at launch, but certainly the ability is there," says Xbox marketing director John O'Rourke. Um, OK, not exactly the confirmation we were looking for. Long story short: If Microsoft has its broadband network ready for launch, expect to play THPS2X online. If not, you'll still be able to play on Xboxes linked together in a local-area network. Not a bad consolation prize.



Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder, due this fall on PlayStation 2, has the potential to be to snowboarding what Tony Hawk's Pro Skater is to skateboarding. Developed by UEP Systems—the originators of the Cool Boarders snowboarding franchise—Pro Snowboarder melds the near-flawless trick system of THPS with the solid engine of Cool Boarders: Code Alien. "Anyone who can play Tony Hawk's Pro Skater can pick up this game and be

good at it," says Michael Fletcher, producer of Activision.

Adopting that style of control makes it easy to grind on just about anything in the game, a fact not lost on Activision, which has increased the number of grindable surfaces nearly ten-fold over those in Code Alien. And since it's set on slopes and not the streets, Pro Snowboarder will feature much bigger air than THPS, allowing more time to pull off an even greater number of tricks. "We've redesigned the basic boarder physics and motions to create a game where



Ask Shaun Palmer who the hell he thinks he is and he'll tell you he's just a kid who grew up

snowboarding, skiing and riding BMX and motocross in South Lake Tahoe. Truth is, this five-time winner of the International Snowboarding Federation's World Boardercross is the cockiest über-athlete you'll ever meet. Will the real Shaun Palmer please stand up...

EGM: What's your philosophy toward competition?

Shaun Palmer: When I go out it's definitely to win. I respect my peers, but when I'm competing, it's war.

EGM: What would you say to us if we were competing in the same event?

SP: Well, to your face it'd be all good sportsmanship, and I'd wish you good luck, but in the back of my mind I'll be thinking, "I'm kickin' your ass!" A little while ago, before the start of a race, I yelled out "Who's racing for second?" Luckily I came in first that race so it turned out pretty cool.

EGM: Just like Babe Ruth calling "the shot." How does it feel having a game revolve around you?

SP: It feels pretty good. I've always loved working with kids, and it's cool when someone asks you for an autograph. So now that kids can play as me, it's pretty cool.

EGM: You're known for picking up just about any sport that catches your eye and excelling at it. If you could have any other sport in the game, what would it be?

SP: Motocross is my passion. For the last five years I've raced boardercross, but I love racing motocross.

EGM: You have nine Cadillacs tattooed on your arms. What's so special about Cadillacs?

SP: I've always loved Cadillacs—loved 'em since I was 16. I own a bunch now.

EGM: Should we expect a Cadillac-shaped snowboard in the game?

SP: There might be some exciting stuff hidden in there [wry smile].

EGM: Did you ask for anything specific to be put in the game?

SP: I wanted to make sure the tricks are exciting. I mean, you wouldn't be rail-sliding on chairlifts in real life, but it's fun when you're doing it in the game. You know. There'll be some good "breakin'-the-law stuff" so you can have some fun without getting into trouble.

Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder



the player links tricks to score big points," says UEP Systems director Sunaga Makoto. UEP is also punching up the visuals to compete with that "other" killer-looking PS2 snowboard shredfest, SSX. "We have created highly detailed levels based on 10 real-world locations," Makoto says.

Shaun Palmer himself picked the boarders in the roster, along with the courses, and he helped the designers capture the subtleties of each trick. Still, as in THPS, this game is more about breakneck fun than realism. Within the Squaw Valley course, for example, you'll find the Olympic village from the 1960 winter games and a ski jump you can launch off for massive air, as well as bobsled course you can tear through. Imagine the downhill courses from THPS2; that's what we're talking about here. Except—in case we haven't emphasized this enough—with much bigger air.



Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX should hit stores any minute now (check next month for a review), but Activision already has a sequel in the works, with a new developer and a new direction—hint: think bigger. Rainbow Studios, the team behind ATV Offroad Fury, is building this sequel from scratch on PS2. And although the game's release is still over a year away (it hits PS2 in March 2002, then other consoles after that), it's already clear this thing packs the sprawling level design that Rainbow Studios is famous for.

The level we played was set in an immense city full of curbs and benches to grind, culverts to use as half-pipes,

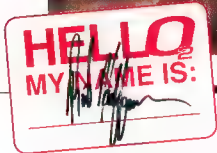
and a muddy park area crammed with dirt jumps. In other words, you'll find a jumbo-size combo of street, dirt and vert elements in each of the game's 10 levels. As in THPS3, the environments here will teem with pedestrians and traffic, too, and you can expect to see a lot more texturing special effects than these early screens show. "We plan on having all kinds of shaders that we've not been able to support in the past," says Rainbow Studios game designer Robb Rinard, "things like real-time specular mapping, environment mapping, gloss mapping, projected texture shaders and a truly amazing lighting model."

The same eight bikers from the first game return, as does the park editor,



which has been expanded to give you bigger levels to work with as well as more control over elevation. "I personally like making the big dirt downhill with some kind of crazy ramp at the bottom," says Dave Stohl, producer at Activision. "It's, like, how high can I jump?" The team is even trying to infuse more of the BMX culture into this sequel. Instead of just cruising from level to level in a generic career mode, Pro BMX 2 will pack more of a story—you'll progress through the game on a bus tour with your biker buds and go back and forth between tour stops to accomplish goals. The trick system, on the other hand, will remain basically the same, except now you'll be able to add in trick modifiers like in Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX. "This game is all about getting big air and pulling off insane tricks," Rinard says, "but big air can also mean big, bone-crushing bails that will make you cringe as you laugh out loud."

Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2



If you think of Activision's action-sports athletes as paratroopers about to leap out of a plane, then

Mat Hoffman is the next dude out the door—his first game comes out next month. And heck, a parachute might be just what this guy needs; Hoffman plummeted 60 feet onto his noggin while trying to beat his world record for highest air in late March. We catch up with the Condor, recuperating at his Oklahoma City home base...

EGM: So what happened?

Mat Hoffman: I hit pretty hard. I wasn't feeling right, my body position or my timing was weird. I was just trying to figure it out, and on one of the airs I completely dead-sailed it. I hit my head so hard that I don't remember any of it. It shattered my helmet and split my lip in two right down to my chin.

EGM: Ugh. Are you all right?

MH: Yeah, I feel pretty good. I am doing better now I think, kinda healing up, relaxing and getting stitches out each day. I was kinda in a daze for the first three days. I've crashed a few times and have hit my head to where it shocks me, but

with this one I could tell I was higher than normal. When you hit your head hard it all feels the same because you get knocked out. But I'm just real sensitive about making sure it didn't affect me too bad or mess with my brain.

EGM: Well it's a good thing for that helmet. So, are you happy with how the first game came out?

MH: For me, it's almost like the sport's immortal now. Like right now, I haven't been able to ride for eight days because I've been injured, but I feel like I've been riding every day because I've been playing the video game.

EGM: Let's say someone plays your game and wants to get into it. Any advice on a first bike?

MH: I started Hoffman Bikes so I could recruit people into the sport, and I started thinking about the new audience that would be interested in bike riding with this game, so I've been working out this deal to where I'm taking a bike from my line that just has everything you need to get started riding, and I'm working on having it distributed in Toys R Us, Costco, places like that. We're trying to price it around \$129. It's called the Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX Bike, and it has the same



graphics as the video game. It's not designed by a big corporate company—it's designed by a bunch of bike riders who are into biking and would love to get new kids into bike riding and do it on a bike that's just awesome.

EGM: Cool—we can't wait to get ours. Back to the game, anything you want in the sequel?

MH: There's so many more things you can do now that it's on the PlayStation 2. I just told them yesterday, and I don't know if I'm gonna be able to get this, but I want to have one segment that's on the moon, and it's like all the physics are completely changed to be like the physics on the moon. I always wondered what it would be like to ride a vert ramp on the moon. I know I'll never be able to experience it for real, but I can kind of experience it by designing it into this game.

EGM: And you can play it without risk of concussion.

MH: Exactly.

Flight of the Condor: That's 26-and-a-half feet of wide-open air between Mat and the tip of his custom-built 24-foot vert ramp. He set that record in March, a few days before plunging 60 feet onto his head. To build the speed needed for such big air, Mat gets towed to the ramp by a motorcycle zipping up to 50 mph. Mat even planned to have pal Evel Knievel tow him for one record attempt. The accident foiled that scheme, so the two friends just hung out.



If we learned anything from *Fast Times at Ridgmont High's* star stoner Jeff Spicoli, it's that all surfers crave the perfect wave. So it's a good thing Kelly Slater's *Pro Surfer*—not due on PS2 until next spring—will ship with the ultimate wave editor.

"You can do things like set the speed of the wave, the depth of the barrel, the fatness of the wave, how it closes out and stuff," says Dave Stohl, producer at Activision. "We have to make it very customizable because every level is based around waves."

But just 'cause this game's set on water doesn't mean it'll lack the classic THPS controls. "A lot of these board sports have similar tricks," Stohl says.

"Even the names are similar. There are obviously not kick tricks, but there are grabs. And floaters [grind-like moves where you balance on the tip of a wave's whitewash] are a big part of surfing."

Pro Surfer is a pet project for the Oz brand. After all, this is an untapped genre; there have been very few surfing games—and only a couple of recent forgettable duds. The last thing Activision wants to do is wind up all wet with this game. "This one's going to have some time put into it," Stohl tells us. "We want to make it the Tony Hawk of surfing. I don't think there's room for any mediocre surfer games."



Of all the "lifestyle sport" athletes covered in this feature, Kelly Slater lives the life that makes us most jealous. This 29-year-old pro moves

from one tropical locale to the next, was featured in *People Magazine's* 50 Most Beautiful People, spent a couple of seasons on *Baywatch*, and dated Pamela Anderson. Meet our new hero...

EGM: Did you really surf on a door once? Kelly Slater: A friend of mine, he's a musician and a filmmaker, thought of this project to have me surf on a door because he thought it would be cool to do a piece called "Kelly Slater Goes to Work." He had me put on a suit, carry my door down to the beach and paddle out on it, and he filmed it.

EGM: So how would you rate the door?

KS: I'd probably give it a .02 out of 10—probably the worst board I've ever ridden.

EGM: Can you name any good surfing games from, like, ever?

KS: I don't think there's been one. We were always excited as kids thinking there would be a surf game, and I remember a couple different ones came out, but they really weren't surfing. It's yet to be really tapped.

EGM: Your game will change all that?

KS: That's definitely the goal, and I don't think there's anyone involved who will let it out there until it is that.

EGM: What's the hardest thing to capture in a surfing game?

KS: Creating a wave that's real looking and true to physics, the way it breaks and such. That's been a huge focus for this game.

EGM: Ever have any run-ins with sharks?

KS: I got stung by a man-o-war two days ago. That's pretty common—and painful. If it stings you on the chest or near your armpits or groin, the poison gets into your glands. The pain is unbearable. There's really not a whole lot of reason to be scared of sharks. I've seen them swimming right around me when I'm diving. I've been surfing for almost 25 years and have never been bitten.

EGM: Still, we figure surfing is the only sport where you might get eaten.

KS: Yeah, it's kinda up to the athletes in the other sports to get injured. I guess in snowboarding you may have to worry about being bitten, but I don't think a bear can catch you when you're going down a mountain. 🐻

Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer



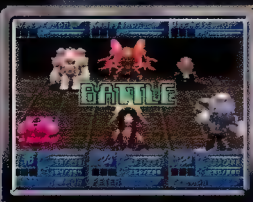
The team is concentrating on getting the wave physics true to life before going whole hog on the visuals—hence the lack of effects in the above shot.

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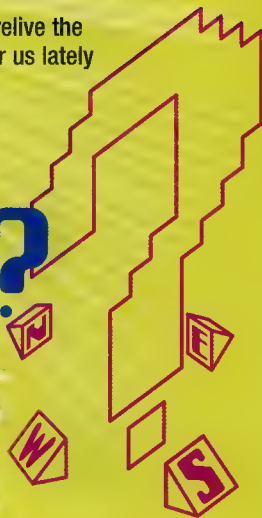
IMPROVE YOUR GAME PLAY! Escape to a safe place if you're in danger! You can do anything when it's your turn!

We catch up with four of gaming's godfathers to relive the good ol' days—and find out what they've done for us lately



By David S.J. Hodgson

Where Are They Now?



David "Pitfall" Crane Gamefather of the Classic Console Game

A game-creating fiend with over 50 titles to his name, David Crane talks us through designing the seminal Pitfall!, speaks about the genre he helped spawn, and explains the value of Cheech and Chong in video-game advertising.

In the first half of 1982, David Crane wore many hats while crafting an enormous variety of games for the Atari 2600. He was a designer, animator, sound-and-music guy—even a tester. "In the early '80s we estimated there were only two or three dozen individuals in the world with both these left- and right-brain skills," he tells us. "In the design lab of the early Activision, we had five of these individuals."

As a member of this "Activision quintet," Crane started with a pencil, some paper and an original idea—which eventually blossomed into one of the most

beloved games of all time. He explains: "I vividly remember sitting in the lab with a blank sheet of paper, and saying to myself, 'I've always wanted to do a game with a little running man.' I drew the man on the paper and asked, 'What is he running on? A path. Where is the path? In a jungle. Why is he running? To collect treasure.' I drew the man, the path, a few trees, and a bar of gold. I incorporated a vine to swing on and the old cartoon effect of running across the heads of alligators, and the game was essentially designed." Right then and there, Crane created the premise of Pitfall! in about 10 minutes. The actual building of the game, however, took about 1,000 hours of drawing, programming, testing and debugging.

When it was time for gameplay tuning, Crane turned to the pros—the other guys in the office. "We each made suggestions, and we all knew a good idea when we saw it." From early on, Crane and his cohorts had a good feeling about his rope-swinging quest for cash. In fact, the only real predicament was deciding on a name. "The working title was 'Jungle Runner,'" he says, "and it came dangerously close to going to market with that name. In the 11th hour, after two weeks of brainstorming, I finally suggested 'Pitfall' as a pun. Someone else dubbed the hero Pitfall Harry, and the name stuck. That was really fortunate when you consider that the second choice was 'Zulu Gold.' Without Cheech and Chong as spokesmen, I don't think that name would have worked."

But Pitfall! did go on to smoke the competition in terms of sales. It spent 64 weeks at number one on the charts, sold over 3 million copies in one year, and became

Activision's top-selling game. It remained one of the best-selling titles in the history of the Atari 2600. And, of course, it helped expand the popularity of the platform genre, which was established by Shigeru Miyamoto's 1981 arcade hit Donkey Kong. "By the end of the '80s," Crane says, "there were more than 500 games in this genre developed."

Where is he now?

"I left Activision in 1987 and did some [freelance] 2600 work," Crane tells us. "I then joined some friends at Absolute Entertainment doing NES and Super NES games. In 1995, I co-founded the Internet company Skyworks Technologies. We never believed that these mega-games were any more fun than a good single-screen game. We came to view the Internet as the latest video-game system, and with limited bandwidth, it is more like the systems of the past. We have to trade off memory, graphics, processor speed, and download time just like the old days." Check out the newest Crane creations at www.skyworkstech.com.



Gamester Rap:
What makes this
creative mind tick?

Favorite Game?
"Tennis. I am a tournament-level player. You expected some electronic or board game? Reality is more meaningful. There are more important things in life than pixels."

Favorite Game Character?
"How about my least favorite character: any karate-chopping, street-fighting, personal-combat game character. The worst prediction of my career was when I said [karate] games wouldn't last a year. In its purest form, a karate game represents good hand-eye skills and rapid analysis to counter an opponent. But when blood and gore were added to appeal to a 10-year-old's basest impulses, I was appalled."

What is your motto?
"Crane's Law: that 'Man always uses his highest technology to amuse himself.' I came to this realization as a kid, [and] it still holds true today. IBM's Big Blue got no respect until they taught it to play chess. Today's video-game systems contain more technology than any system in use for serious work. I live by that motto—technology should be enjoyed."

Gameography:
Too many to list, but here are the highlights: Outlaw, Canyon Bomber, Slot Machine, Dragster, Fishing Derby, Laser Blast, Freeway, Grand Prix, Pitfall, The Activision Decathlon, Pitfall II: Lost Caverns, Ghostbusters, Transformers, Little Computer People Research Project, Skateboardin', Super Skateboardin', David Crane's Amazing Tennis, A Boy and His Blob, The Rescue of Princess Blobette.

Photography by
Claudia Goetzelmann

"I drew the man, the path, a few trees,
and a bar of gold...and the game was
essentially designed."

—David Crane



"My favorite character is still Ryu—I've been using him for over 10 years!"

—Akira Nishitani



Akira "Street Fighter II" Nishitani

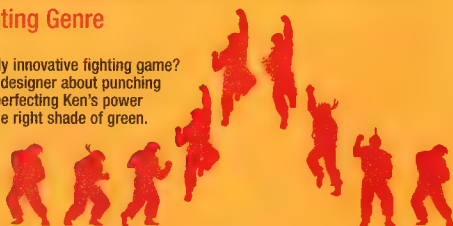
Gamefather of the Fighting Genre

What's it like to create the first really innovative fighting game? We talk with Street Fighter II's lead designer about punching pads, pioneering joystick motions, perfecting Ken's power uppercut, and getting Blanka just the right shade of green.

Back in 1990, three years after the initial Street Fighter had hit arcades, Akira Nishitani—then a lead designer at Capcom Japan—was told to start sketching character designs for a sequel. Little did he realize it would become the first and most popular fighting-game franchise in the world. "We were told that Street Fighter was having a good response in overseas markets," he tells us, "but I wasn't satisfied with many aspects of the [first] game. I wanted to play as a character that best suited me, and there weren't too many games where you could choose your player at that time. That was my initial motivation." Out came the pencils and sketchbook, and the classic look of Ken and Ryu were created first. "They are the main characters after all," he says. Next came Sagat. Then came the obsessing over details.

Discussions about every nuance of Street Fighter II—from joystick motions to the look of the characters—continued for days. "Blanka's concept was a 'wild boy' from the very beginning," Nishitani says, "so his look wasn't very different from how it is now. He had much lighter and natural-colored skin at first. Then, someone suggested, 'Let's make him more butt-kicking!' and he ended up having green-colored skin [laughs]!" As for everyone's favorite sumo, Nishitani explains that "Honda was literally a normal Sumo at first. Then I asked the designer to make him look more Japanese, and he got a Kabuki-style make-over and yukata kimono." Despite all the new characters, there's still only one fighter for Nishitani-san: "My favorite character is still Ryu—I've been using him for over 10 years!"

The plan wasn't to craft a simple rehash of the original game. For a



start, some of the Street Fighter arcade units came with punching pads: analog cushions that caused more damaging attacks when walloped with force. "I [initially] wanted to use those buttons for Street Fighter II so bad," Nishitani says, "but there were problems, such as the maintenance, the cost...so the idea was turned down." Nixing the whack-a-mole-style buttons created a more intricate game, however—one in which artful joystick wiggling and combination attacks took the place of puffy-button mashing. "If we chose the [punching pads], the



series might not have lasted this long," Nishitani says.

Of course, some of the first game's features did make it into the sequel. Nishitani's favorite is his preferred characters' flagship flourish: "Ryu and Ken's power uppercut," he says. "If you are a man, go with a Dragon Punch [laughs]." Then came more innovations. "The button combinations are really the fun factor, but some people have difficulty with them," he explains. "So I came up with the idea of charging or tapping as a new input method." And although these ideas created a new gaming genre, Nishitani still wasn't satisfied.

"Even when Street Fighter II was

finished, I still tweaked it," he says. "That ended up as SFII Dash [Championship Edition]. But after Dash was released, I still wasn't satisfied. I think that's the way it is for developers."

Even during the early stages of SFII development, Nishitani knew he had an addicting experience on his hands—especially as precious programming time was spent playing the game instead of fine-tuning it. "We were playing two-player mode all night long for over 100 matches consecutively," he says. That didn't stop the team from losing sleep over the game's chances. "This may not be easy to believe, but there was no custom for Japanese gamers to play against strangers in arcades, so I thought a two-player game might not be successful in Japan," he says. And he was initially correct—it took 12 months for the two-player fighting-game craze to catch on. But when it did, Street Fighter II kicked off a decade-long run of competitive play and paved the way for many more multiplayer games—as well as almost every fighting game you've heard of.

Where is he now?

After the frenzied success of SFII, Nishitani stayed on at Capcom, intent on perfecting the fighting engine he helped create. Working on the seminal X-Men: Children of the Atom was just one of his fondly remembered tasks. Then he left Capcom and established a company called Arika. "Now I make more games," he says. "Remember that name: Arika!" One such game was the realization of the Street Fighter engine in three dimensions: Street Fighter EX. Nishitani isn't happy with how games have progressed—he'd like to see more innovation. And at this moment, he is developing a game called Diver for the PS2 at Arika. "Remember Diver!" he says.

Gamester Rap: What makes this creative mind tick?

Favorite Movie?

"Titanic. I was almost crying in the movie theater, but the film also has an action element as well—that's why I liked it."

Favorite Music?

"Mostly I listen to game music."

Favorite Food?

"I used to enjoy a lot of meat and beer, but perhaps because of my age I now eat lighter meals—Japanese, like mother used to make. No more half-cooked onion!"

Favorite Game?

"Crazy Climber, from Nichibutsu, is the best, most innovative game of all time. The idea of climbing a building and the two joysticks for control is so original. I haven't seen any other game surpass that in my opinion."

What is your motto?

"Life is a game."

Are you happy with how your video games have progressed?

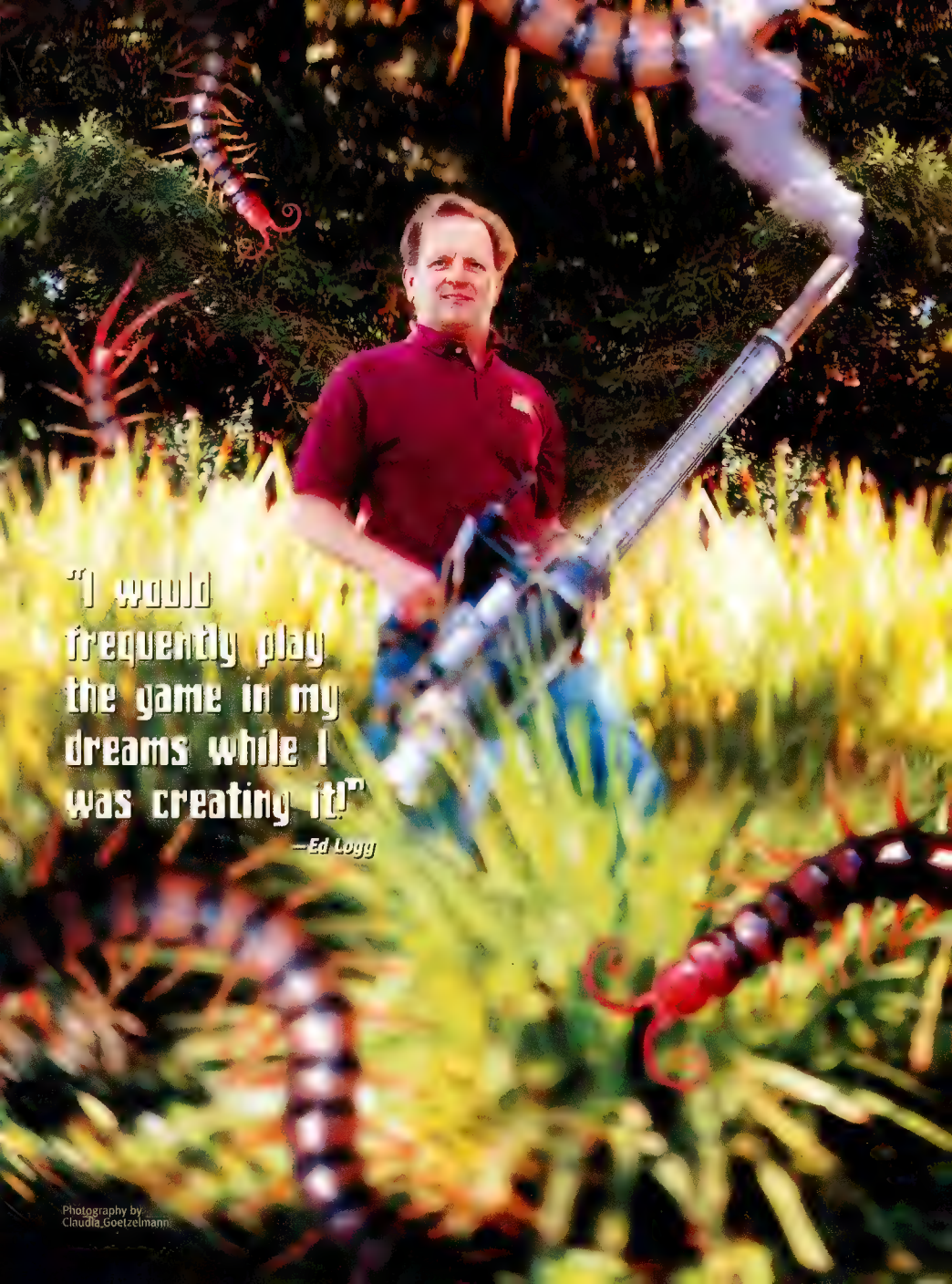
"Street Fighter has evolved and diversified. If you compared SF to a man, he could be a middle-aged and austere guy. So I think it's about time for him to take a break!"

How would you like to be remembered?

"I'd be happy if someone remembered me by starting a story with 'there was this huge video-game freak...!'"

Gameography:

Lost World, Mad Gear, Final Fight, Street Fighter II, Street Fighter II Dash (Championship Edition), X-Men: Children of the Atom, Street Fighter EX, Street Fighter EX plus, Fighting Layer, Street Fighter EX3 (plus many others in a consulting or supervisory role).

A man in a maroon polo shirt stands in a field of tall, yellow-green grass. He is holding a large, futuristic, multi-barreled weapon that is emitting a plume of white smoke from its top. The scene is surrounded by several large, colorful centipedes, some in the foreground and some in the background, creating a surreal and fantastical atmosphere. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

"I would frequently play the game in my dreams while I was creating it!"

—Ed Logg

Ed "Centipede" Logg

Gamefather of the Classic Arcade Game

He helped create Super Breakout, Asteroids and Centipede. Now Ed Logg talks about Gauntlet, paper trails, the power of vector graphics—and the bugs in Centipede that weren't for shooting.

After ditching Stanford University in 1972, Ed Logg joined the Control Data Corporation, where he spent far too much time playing a Star Trek text game, as well as Adventure (the precursor to the Atari classic). Converting the games' code so it ran on the CDC mainframe computer, Logg got himself "in trouble more than once playing games," he tells us. Lucky for him, Logg attended a friend's party in December 1977 and played an early prototype of the Atari Video Computer System (VCS). "I naturally decided to go across the street to a company called Atari," he says. Soon after, the first of many arcade classics—Super Breakout—was born. Between then and 1992, Logg helped produce, design and program 10 more arcade favorites. And those were just the games that made it. "In those days, it was usual to have half the games killed sometime along the process," Logg says. "For example, I started Road Runner, a videodisc game using real Road Runner cartoon footage, but the videodisc market collapsed, and I was asked to do a standard PCB [Printed Circuit Board version]. I turned them down—I had a better idea." This idea was Gauntlet.

Creating these games was initially a primitive affair. For 1978's Super Breakout, Logg and the guys had one main digital computer. He explains: "We had several gals who would enter our hand-written pages into our programs and give us back a computer printout and a paper tape. Yes, a paper tape. We would then feed the tape through the development system into the RAM, replacing the game ROM on the PCB. We would debug this using primitive tools and a hardware analyzer and write our changes on the paper printout." Character design was also less evolved. Logg

says he would create the graphics by entering the data by hand. "I personally created the graphics you see in both Asteroids and Centipede," he says. By 1985, however, professional artists created and animated the characters in Gauntlet.

When Logg wasn't creating games at work, he was sleeping on the job. "I would frequently play the game in my dreams while I was creating it!" he says. This in turn led him to solve problems he'd been working on in the waking world. But that's not the only reason coworkers were happy to see Logg head home for nocturnal brainstorming. "Others at Atari would ask me when I was going home so they could play my game on my development station," he says.

Logg's many contributions and creations started so many genres that he himself isn't sure how many he's responsible for. "The success of Asteroids created a boom for vector-monitor-style games," he says, while Gauntlet "caused a whole number of similar four-player games, such as the Simpsons game." But don't let your teary-eyed nostalgia for Logg's creations lure you into thinking they were perfect in every way. "There was one rumor that a player was so good at Asteroids that he amassed so many extra ships that the game would slow down and eventually crash," Logg says. "I've never seen this, nor reproduced this bug, but things like that can happen. The crash is probably the watchdog circuit on the PCB deciding the game is hung and resetting itself." Er, obviously.

Asteroids wasn't the only game to bug out. Logg also heard a tale "that someone could start a new game of Millipede with 1,000,000 [points]. Some of my friends were trying to discredit the person who said he could do this. I went back

and found a bug in my code that would indeed allow this to happen. Whoops!" On another occasion, Logg was walking by the cocktailable version of Centipede (on which play switches vertically from one end of the monitor to the other) when a colleague asked Logg why player two always seemed to get higher scores. "I watched him play when I noticed something unusual," Logg says. "It turns out the spider does not reduce its range for the second player, which would mean the spider would stay away from the player once the score gets large." The culprit? "Oops, another programming bug," he says. "There are way too many stories that would fill this article. Maybe another time..."

Where is he now?

After working on Othello for the VCS, Logg programmed Centipede for the NES. Then he became one of the first folks enthralled by Tetris. While asking Atari's legal counsel to grab the rights, Logg created an NES version that was sold under the company name Tengen, thus kicking off one of the biggest legal brouhahas in the industry's history. Nintendo bought the rights "with some slick maneuvering after we'd already started selling [Tetris]," Logg says. After losing the court battle over Logg's version of Tetris, Atari had to pull and destroy all its unsold copies. "It is still considered the best version of Tetris on the NES and commanded a \$150 price tag for several years," he tells us. For the past five years, Logg has been programming away at Midway, his most recent title being Rush 2049 for the Dreamcast and Nintendo 64. And when he plays Gauntlet, he always uses the wizard.

Gamester Rap: What makes this creative mind tick?

Favorite Movies?

"I'm a sucker for a well-done romantic movie such as *Ever After*. I really like movies where I can't tell what comes next, [like] *Animal House*."

Favorite Music?

"Sixties Rock 'n' Roll."

However, in the past 10 years, I've gotten into Country."

Favorite Game?

"Robotron [is] my favorite coin-op game—it's like an O.D. of caffeine. Spacewar Ho is my favorite computer game. If I had to pick one of my games, this would be tough. I guess Centipede because I still haven't perfected several of the strategies I've seen."

What is your motto?

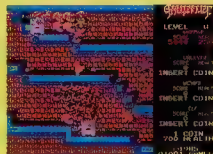
"Persistence! Persistence! Persistence!"

Are you happy with how games have progressed?

"Actually, no for the most part. I don't like the fact that it takes two years to do a solid, quality, major game. I like games that give me all the information but require me to try different strategies. Most games now hide so much information and require the player to spend large amounts of time before [you get] into the game. Most older games were unique in their day, but almost every game out now is similar to one from the past."

Gameography:

Othello, Super Breakout, Video Pinball, 4 Player Football, Asteroids, Centipede, Millipede, Gauntlet, Gauntlet II, Xybots, Steel Talons, Space Lords, Tengen Tetris, Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey, San Francisco Rush, Rush 2: More Extreme, Rush 2049.



Alexey "Tetris" Pajitnov

Gamefather of the Puzzle Genre

After 10 years without royalties, the creator of the most infuriatingly addictive puzzle game talks vodka, student drivers, Bust-a-Move and getting his due.

Imagine a small studio apartment in Moscow. The year is 1985, and a young Alexey Pajitnov is mulling over an idea. Just as the Hungarian Erno Rubik proposed a puzzle cube blueprint 11 years earlier, Pajitnov is on the verge of designing a fiendishly addictive puzzler of his own. But this involves a different spark of brilliance, and a different method for moving square blocks. Pajitnov had originally worked on a two-player board game called Pentamino, where the objective was to pack different shapes into a small box. Expanding from this, he applied these ideas to a computer program. "The moment piece rotation started working on my computer screen," Pajitnov says, "the idea of a real-time game came to me."

That game was Tetris, the most popular, most-cloned puzzle phenomenon in gaming history. "The first version [of Tetris] was done on an alphanumeric screen, with no graphics at all, and certainly no colors," Pajitnov explains. "To draw the Tetris pieces, I used pairs of squared brackets." These brackets were linked together to form all possible shapes made of four squares—the end result being a brain-mangling conundrum of falling blocks that Pajitnov himself couldn't stop playing. "I remember very well when the falling shapes appeared for the first time on my



screen," he says. "I had no score, no text, no [block] acceleration, but I couldn't go and finish these parts of the game because I just sat and played with my half-working program."

When a red-eyed Pajitnov finally unhooked himself from his prototype, he proudly showed the game to the dozen colleagues who shared the computer room with him at Moscow's Academy of Sciences. It was at this point that he realized he'd invented the puzzle-game version of crack. "It was not just myself who was hooked but everyone else who touched the game," Pajitnov says. Next came the plan to turn everyone else into Tetris addicts, and the game was ported from the venerable Russian computer "Elektronika-60" to the PC in 1986. Copied from disk to disk, Tetris started to spread across Europe.

Eventually, the infection became global. "My friend Henk Rogers was the first in Japan to publish Tetris," Pajitnov says, "and he proposed the game to Nintendo." The game soon wound up at the center of a legal maelstrom over the rights to the console version. Pajitnov meanwhile—who didn't receive a dime in royalties until the mid-'90s—first realized Tetris' worldwide blockbuster appeal in 1989 on his first trip out of Russia. "It was in Japan," he says. "I saw people playing Tetris on keychains in the game

centers...everywhere."

After Tetris' success came the questions: What does Tetris mean? Why wasn't Pajitnov paid royalties? And that rumor about him inventing the game after a Vodka binge—was it true?



Pajitnov is happy to elaborate, firstly, about the name: "Tetra is 'four' in Greek, and 'Tetramino' is the shape made out of four squares. So, I took 'Tetr' for the name and added 'is' to make it sound better," he explains. And about those royalties? Pajitnov says, "I didn't get any money for Tetris for the first 10 years. [In the] last four years, the rights are back to me and I am getting royalties. I am happy with what I have.

OK, but what about that Vodka rumor? Completely false: "I don't even like Vodka," he says, "and never drink it



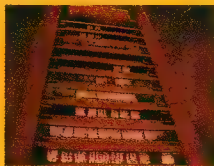
'voluntarily.' I can't drink while I work, and the pleasure of Tetris is much stronger than that of drinking [laughs]." In fact, Pajitnov has been told that Tetris is good psychological training for student-drivers. ("It trains them to make good decisions in

a limited time," he says.) Tetris' edutainment value aside, this game definitely has a different

set of addictive qualities, a mystery that not even its creator can describe. "I wish to know myself what the nature of [the] magic of my game is," he says.

Where is he now?

Once the worldwide clamor for Tetris had somewhat subsided, Pajitnov spent more of his time creating cranium-straining follow-ups. "I made the game called Welltris," he tells us. "I participated in Super Tetris, and



Gamester Rap: What makes this creative mind tick?

Favorite Movies?

"Old Italian, French and Russian films."

Favorite Music?

"Classical: Chopin, Beethoven."

Favorite Food?

"Almost all cuisine. I love Asian food."

Favorite Game?

"Cards and board games. I play lots of puzzle games on computer and consoles. Today, my favorite is Bust-a-Move."

Favorite Game Character?

"Pac-Man—he is never tired."

Are you happy with how video games have progressed?

"[Kind of. [There has been] tremendous visual and technological progress [but] with the obvious intellectual degradation."

How would you like to be remembered?

"As a good man."

Geography:

Tetris, Welltris, Matris, Faces, Knight Move and Pandora's Box.

I looked after the Next Tetris development." Recently, Pajitnov moved to the West coast, and is currently "working full time at Microsoft," he says. "I am involved in several projects." One of these was a huge collection of visual puzzles called Pandora's Box—a must for gamers still enthralled by moving rapidly falling shapes to infuriatingly catchy music. 🎮

To be continued...

We liked catching up with our heroes so much we're going to profile a different pioneer each month in news. Next up: Toru "Pac-Man" Iwatani. How did one slice of pizza lead to the creation of gaming's oldest icon? Find out in 30 days.



Pajitnov's Tetris has surfaced again and again over the years on every platform, in every shape and size. We've played it on our keychains (right). Heck, students at the Brown University Tech House in Providence, R.I., played it on a building (far right).





"It was not just myself who was hooked but everyone else who touched the game."

—Alexey Pajitnov



Review Crew

This Month...

Season change, people change, Review Crews change." So the great song goes and so it is this month, with new and returning faces on the crew. Don't be afraid, gentle readers. It's nature's way. Watch *Disney's The Lion King* a few times if you're still having trouble dealing with it.

But enough of our self-absorbed jibber-jabber—what we really want to know is about you; what do

you think of reviews? Too long? Too short? More bigger reviews, or more bite-size ones? More or less handheld reviews? Are the smaller ratings for visuals and stuff handy or worthless? We want to know what you think, and we wanna know now! E-mail us at EGM@ziffdavis.com, subject REVIEWS and let us know. Who knows, you might even get to see your name here! (No, not really.)

The Crew



Crispin Boyer

It didn't win our RPG Maker contest, but "Crispin's Quest" is still Crispin's favorite entry. He says it's the best RPG starring Crispin Boyer he's ever played.

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure



Che Chou

After leaving Chicago and spending a year wandering the dotcom wasteland, Che is back on *EGM*, ready and waiting to feel the love.

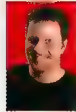
Favorite Genres: Fighting, Driving, RPG



Jonathan Dudlak

Having spent lots of time with the Devil May Cry and MGS2 CDs this month, Jon is now resorting to flight and rigidity tests to decide which is better.

Favorite Genre: Fighting, Action



Dean Hager

It's baseball time again. Dean wishes he could take the best parts of All-Star, Triple Play and High Heat Baseball to create the perfect game.

Favorite Genres: Sports, Racing



Chris Johnston

Anyone who's ridden in Chris' car gets to hear bands like They Might Be Giants and Pizzicato Five. They may not like it, but it gets horribly stuck in their heads.

Favorite Genres: Adventure, Puzzle



Jeanne Kim

Start Transmission Greetings gamers. I come in peace. Do not let my appearance fool you. *End Transmission* (Gwa-ha-ha! Got 'em right where I want 'em.)

Favorite Genres: RPG, Adventure



Kraig Kujawa

EGM's debate about baseball games has been interesting, but Kraig figures now the first to let you hit a dove at 90 mph with a pitch will take the gold.

Favorite Genres: Sports, Strategy



Mark MacDonald

The result of an experiment combining the DNA of Kubla Khan, Napoleon and other great leaders, Mark disappointed his creators by just reviewing games.

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure



James Mielke

Possessed by Castlevania: COTM for the GBA, Milky can be found lurking about the streets of San Francisco squinting at the overly dark GBA screen. Got a light?

Favorite Genres: Action, Fighting



Greg Sewart

With the release of DDR 4th Mix, Sewart's been a dancing fool. You thought Travolta was good in *Saturday Night Fever*? You ain't seen nothin' 'yet.

Favorite Genres: Racing, RPG, Action

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 Enhorn

We know Ethan is the secret identity to some superhero, we just aren't sure which.

John Davison

John is looking forward to cutting his lead down to a light, 80-hour work week.

Dan Leahy

We moved Dan here to make room for the new girl. Don't worry, he's still reviewin'.

Ryan Lockhart

Ryan is on to bigger and better things, and we wish him luck; Huzzah and god speed!

Todd Zuniga

Visit Todd's Web site at www.opium-magazine.com if it'll help keep him quiet.

Our Philosophy

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

EGM rates games based on how they compare with other titles on the same system. The highest score we'll give a game is a 10. When a game receives a 10, you can rest assured it's one of the best games ever made—a revolutionary title that truly stands above everything else in its genre for its time. At the other end of the spectrum sits the lowest score a game can receive: a 0.0. This is the kind of game you want to avoid at all costs. It's pure crap, as our scale (above) explains. In the middle lies the average grade, 5.0. We repeat: 5.0 IS AN AVERAGE GRADE. Simple, ain't it?

Game of the Month



Rumble Racing

Page 109

No, the RPG Maker contest winner doesn't count—we rated it only against other contest entries. Game of the Month actually goes to EA's PS2 driving/jumping/flipping/shooting/exploding sextavaganza, *Rumble Racing*. It's thrilling San Francisco Rush-esque over-the-top racing reborn.

EDITORS' CURRENT FAVES

- Castlevania: Circle of the Moon
Konami
- F-Zero Maximum Velocity
Nintendo
- Devil May Cry (Demo)
Capcom
- NBA ZKI
Sega
- Super Mario Advance
Nintendo
- Zone of the Enders
Konami
- Triple Play Baseball
EA Sports
- NFL ZKI
Sega
- Dance Dance Revolution 4th Mix
Konami
- Paper Mario
Nintendo



Publisher: AIA, USA
Developer: Crazy Games
Featured In: EGM #139
Players: 1
Supports: Jump Pak
Best Feature: Crisp, creepy visuals
Worst Feature: Super-weak voice acting
Also Try: Resident Evil Code: Veronica

As the sun sets on the novelty of games like Resident Evil and Silent Hill, one game picks up the dying survival-horror torch, douses it in gasoline, and throws it into your treehouse, laughing all the while. That game's *Illbleed*. Make your way through a virtual-horror theme park to rescue lost friends, marking traps before they spring and nail you. Each stage offers something different as far as completion goals and gameplay, but the **psychotically gorgeous visuals and enemies** are persistent 'til the bitter end. *Illbleed* can't be taken too seriously; the gallons of blood and frequent behind-the-scenes looks at the park's operators trying to keep you immersed in the horrific world will convince you of that. I can't even begin to describe some of the insane circumstances and disturbing occurrences popping up left and right in this game, though, which make for a totally unorthodox gaming experience. Still, there are a few gripping attributes that drag down some of *Illbleed*'s finer moments. The voice acting is not only poorly executed and confusing at times, it's also damn difficult to understand thanks to some sub-par sound design. The controls could use a touch-up, as well. The difference between walking and running can mean life or death, and the analog control seldom lets you choose one with certainty over the other. Nonetheless, *Illbleed* had me totally intrigued and won't disappoint horror fans.

Jonathan

As hilarious and campy as *Illbleed* is, it made me jump out of my seat quite a number of times. It's a B-grade game designed to emulate the cheap thrills often associated with B-grade horror flicks. It's true, **the gameplay isn't much to write home about**, but it certainly doesn't get in the way of exploration either. You don't actually fight until later on in the game and this is both a blessing and a curse—a curse because the game can get quite frustrating when all you do is run from danger...but a blessing because mastering combat proves to be quite a chore. It's a strange game full of great moments, but be warned, it's not everyone's cup of tea.

Che

Pig butts farting in your face, killer carrots, psycho baseball players: **This game is beyond odd—it's freaking bizarre.** But being a fan of both survival-horror and quirky, offbeat games, I find *Illbleed*'s goofy voices, hilarious parodies and over-the-top camp (The Home Run of Death) a hard combination to resist. The gameplay certainly should be better: Controls are frustrating (especially the whole walk/dash thing), combat is simplistic and awkward, and constantly switching to first-person mode to search for traps isn't really much fun. But the freaky plots and (often unintentional) humor kept me wanting to see more. A fun rental with like-minded friends.

Mark



Great selection of Ducati bikes in several areas
Lacking in several areas
Supports Jump Pak
Also Try: www.acclaim.com

It looks like Acclaim simply adapted this PS game to the DC with little attempt to spruce things up. It could've been a lot prettier—sadly, it's on the plain side (some parts are downright ugly). To be fair, it is smoother than its PS counterpart, but that won't stop me from wishing for more—more speed, wider and longer tracks, authentic Ducati motor sounds, and on and on. The courses are compact and peppered with sudden corners, surprise dips and far too many tunnels. Negotiating them with the faster bikes is a lesson in frustration—plunge from side to side, scrape the wall, drive halfway up the wall, have horrendous crash, etc. Additional open terrain and long sweeping curves would've done wonders. The AI bikes are a puzzling bunch as well. Their crash-inducing maneuvers are tailor-made for Road Rash but seem out of character here, especially since the game strives to be a sim experience. On the upside, the vast selection of Ducati bikes (40+) is fantastic—especially for a fan like myself. **But all told the game doesn't generate much excitement.**

Dean



Great selection of Funny story
Worst Feature: The game's too buggy

Nice cartoon-style graphics, tons of transitional cinematic snippets, good voice work, and darn tricky puzzles that'll get any hardcore adventure gamer scratching his head more than he'd probably like to admit put *Stupid Invaders* at the top of the (admittedly short) list of Dreamcast point-and-click adventures. The jokes, albeit a bit childish at times, (toilet humor, anyone?) can be written off as just silly, but underlying this loose facade is a tight story about some funny, unintelligent life-forms who crash land on Mother Earth. Bud, Candy, Stereo, Etno and Gorgious have personalities ranging from girly-girl hyper-femminism to disgusting Ren 'n' Stimpie-like goofiness. **It's actually quite heartwarming seeing how well these aliens have adopted humanity's age-old practices of foul language, toilet humor, gluttony, using the bathroom, and of course, TV.** The only major gripe worth mentioning concerns some bugs DC gamers may not be used to dealing with (DC, not PC, mind you). So be wary of inventor problems or floppy action cursors.

Jeanne



Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Nintendo
Featured In: EGM #140
Players: 1-4
Supports: Transfer Pak
Best Feature: Playing Pokémon in 3D
Worst Feature: The cheating computer
Web Site: www.pokemon.com

If you've never played a Pokémon game in your life, then stop reading this review—Stadium 2 is not for you. It's definitely a game for fans of Nintendo's critics, and not just any fans, but really hardcore Pokéheads only. The tutorials are handy, but if you don't already know how to play Pokémon by the time you've put this cartridge in your N64, you've made a big purchasing mistake. That's because, like the first Stadium, the computer is one big bad cheating mofo, except now it's even more blatant. In the GBC Pokémon games, the combat is pretty straightforward: it's almost like a game of Rock-Paper-Scissors, but with the possibility that with persistence and plenty of health, Scissors could actually beat Rock. Stadium 2 turns that all topsy-turvy, so it doesn't really matter if you're the same level and have the upper-hand type-wise against the computer—you can still get your ass whupped. And not just barely, but one-on-one kills. It's super-annoying. That's why this game won't appeal to the non-hardcore Pokémon fan. Gameplay has evolved from the GB versions, but not in a fair way. The addition of monsters from Gold and Silver and new mini-games are the only bright points of this game. Graphics and animation are almost identical to the previous version: character animations look fine, but the attacks and hits are pretty weak. Even if you're a Pokémon fan, I'd think twice before stepping into Stadium 2.

Chris

If you're still hot for Pokémon, then Stadium 2 will fit right into your blasted collection. With improved graphics, sleeker interfaces, more dynamic and varied animations, and of course the ability to interact with the GBC titles, Stadium 2 offers it both more poké-ud to chew for those who don't expect Stadium 2 to greatly surpass its predecessor, since it doesn't really offer any more (as far as gameplay goes) than a visual makeover. So, if you're on the beer-there-done-that kick with all this Pokémon stuff like me, knock yourself out.

Jeanne

For dedicated followers of the franchise, this cart is a must-have: Finally, all the Gold and Silver Pokémon you've been spending months training can be seen in full 3D! But if you don't have any of your own collected Game Boy Pokémon to bring to the party (via Transfer Pak, which is not included in the box this time), don't bother with this package—using "rental" Pokémon in battles gets boring fast. Apart from a slew of new minigames and a terrific "Training University" sequence (even Pokémaniacs will learn a few things here), the game is virtually identical to the first, save for the new monsters. Translated: lots of turn-based fighting, and little else. Just for fans.

Ethan



Aidyn Chronicles



Publisher: THQ
Developer: H2O
Featured In: EGM #140
Players: 1
Supports: Expansion Pak
Best Feature: Well, it is an RPG for the N64
Worst Feature: Don't get me started...
Web Site: www.thq.com



Can't blame someone for trying, but RPGs are an easy thing to botch, considering how many elements must come together harmoniously. Cutting to the chase, *Aidyn Chronicles*: The First Mage is a well-intentioned RPG for sure, but role-playing is more than applying the clichéd trappings of every sword-and-sorcery "epic" that has come before it. In spite of all the tiny woodland creatures basically dissing you up and down with sub-Yoda-speak through the first half of the game, you never quite feel sorry for the much-underestimated Alaron, who comes across like a medieval Keanu Reeves (Will you drop the item? "Oops! No way!"). Finding your way around is a challenge, due to the tree-ish wallpaper that surrounds you outdoors, and the camera-placement nightmares that the interiors level at you. A more efficient overworld map would have been great. The worst part is the battle system. Despite being an "action RPG" in the Zelda-sense of the term, it's really more of a turn-based effort—an effort that finds you surrounded by lava-lamp-like barriers that indicate your available range. The creatures you fight are also restricted by the same rules, but the battles are lacking any sort of snap, crackle or pop, with giant rats mooing contovastically when slain. The sound effects are muddy as hell, and the visuals are rough. **Between this and Quest 64, N64-owning RPG fans have it rough.**

Milkman

Give a guy a sword, shield and quest, and you've got an RPG, right? Heck no! But that's about all *The First Mage* offers, besides leaving you dumfounded by how much the game takes itself and you for granted. **The battle system is especially unpolished, unimaginative and counter-intuitive.** It's hard enough trying to play a PC-style RPG with an N64 controller, let alone working with utterly useless movement points in a turn-based system, a problematic inventory screen (which doesn't let you equip your guy by clicking and dragging items on him—why the f---, god knows), and shamelessly dull animations. **RPGers** stay far, far away.

Jeanne

Oh my—it looks like someone nearly beat this game to death with a ugly stick. **Never has there been an N64 game with muddier textures or choppier animation.** And to those who say an RPG is all about the story, not the graphics, be forewarned: *Aidyn Chronicles* is in that category, too. The narrative is a yawningly "Young man uncovering his forgotten past" type of thing, complete with poorly developed characters and awkward dialogue. The battle system is the game's only high point, and even there, it's little more than a lift of the *Shining Force* engine. If you haven't gotten *Ogre Battle 64*, yet, get that instead, and if you already have it...play it again.

Ethan

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
3	3	3	3

Aladdin in Nasira's Revenge



Publisher: Sony
Developer: Argonaut
Featured In: EGM #137
Players: 1
Supports: Dual Shock
Best Feature: Voices from TV Show
Worst Feature: Lackluster gameplay
Web Site: www.playstation.com



Disney properties made into games are a rare event, especially ones coming from Sony. No, wait, that's a silly lie. *Aladdin* comes straight on the heels of Sony's game adaptation of *The Emperor's New Groove*, also from developers Argonaut, and also seemingly using a modified Croc engine. There is one major difference, though (aside from the themes, of course): *Aladdin* is nowhere near as good. I don't know what it is; *New Groove* was a slightly unspired Spyro clone that was still fun to play, while *Aladdin*, to put it simply, is not. Perhaps it's the lackluster graphics, or the muddy gameplay, or the way the freaking genie has the need to remind you exactly what the fruit are used for nearly every time you pick them up. Oh, and the music. When I turned up the volume for the "end stage" screen, I actually heard laughter emanating from nearby cubicles. But what it all boils down to is ***Aladdin* suffers from some major control and camera problems**—trying to leap from rope to rope (with burning coals under your feet, of course) is aggravating to the point of being ludicrous, and fighting the many foes you face is just frustrating (did I hit him? Or not? Gahh!); it almost seems like moves come out a half second after you hit the button. Seriously, this game is for kids, but thanks to the unresponsive control, even older kids might find ourselves belting out adult words from time to time.

Ryan

Somewhat this one got past quality control. Why oh why did they use FMV of barely animated, badly textured in-game models for cutscenes? If it's FMV at least make it look good! *Nasira's Revenge* is basically a **hodge-podge of action-platform clichés nonsensically cut and pasted together.** Control is poor, especially on the ridiculously difficult "bonus" stages and areas where you do anything besides run and jump (like swing on ropes/vines/etc.). Polygon draw-in is really distracting and animation on characters and enemies aren't what you'd expect from a Disney title. It's got plenty of levels, and it'll keep you busy for a while—it's just not a good game.

Chris

Maybe it's my soft spot for the original *Aladdin* movie, but I think *Nasira's Revenge* would be a **fun title for anyone inexperienced enough to appreciate a very simple 3D platformer** and tolerate the dodgy controls. It's definitely not breaking any ground, and the story is drier than the desert setting it takes place in, but there's lots of emphasis on the familiar cast (play as several different characters at scripted points during the game) and reprised *Aladdin* music that fans should appreciate. I felt frustrated trying to land critical jumps at times, so it requires some patience, but *Aladdin* rubbed my lamp the right way for a little while.

Jonathan

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	5	4	4

The Simpsons Wrestling



Publisher: Activision
Developer: Fox Interactive
Featured In: EGM #133
Players: 1-2
Question: Why do all Simpsons games suck?
Best Feature: Realistic voices
Worst Feature: Totally uninspired gameplay
Web Site: www.activision.com



Look on up there and read that title again if it didn't quite sink in the first time. Now, I know that pesky old intuition is probably saying, "Man, this can't be good." Give that defense mechanism a pat on the back, "cause in the immortal words of Bart Simpson, **it's crapacular.** The title could be taken as an insult by games like *SmackDown* and *No Mercy*, since the combat consists entirely of sloppy, flailing-limb attacks and annoying special moves that are either useless or totally crippling toward opponents. The only grappling move I could pull off was to toss into the ropes, and there's really no good way to finish it, since it's nearly impossible to fling your opponent with any accuracy. What's more, with such a huge, familiar cast on the show, it's a wonder that there are only seven unlockable fighters. I suppose when playing each character requires no strategy or individuality whatsoever, what's the point in expanding the roster, eh? Instead, those color-coded Springfielders not fighting, line the edges of the ring like cardboard cutouts, occasionally adding a forced-sounding remark to the mix. The only consolation is the realistic voice-over work by the show's cast, though the frequency with which catchphrases are uttered is cranked way up to obnoxious. This thing's only for hardcore Simpsons fans trying to round out their ridiculous collections of memorabilia—or anyone actually looking for a fun game forget it.

Jonathan

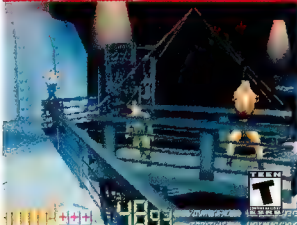
When Fox started shopping around for someone else to publish this title, you knew there was a problem: I'm sure the characters alone will sell loads of *Simpsons Wrestling* stock, but personally I'm not impressed. What this comes down to is a kind of stoppy-looking game that's **nothing more than a button-masher.** Yeah, there are a few neat moves you can do when you power up, and having so many *Simpsons* characters and voices is a definite plus, but boredom set in for me almost immediately after I started playing. Imagine this thing with a game engine close to something like *SmackDown 2*. Now that would be loads of fun.

Greg

These days in the industry, you'd think designers would take graphics a bit more seriously, especially for big licenses. Unfortunately, the "big license-so-it's-OK-to-skip-on-graphics" demons got their claws on this one. When I think about how much fun I could be having if this game didn't look so unfinished, messy and pixelated, I just want to "doh!" out in agony. Distorted faces, broken, flimsy outlines, a bad cardboard cut-out crowd, and lazily designed interfaces make this game look like it came off some dude's fan site. But at least then it'd be excusable. In fact, think about it like that and it's fun; that is, if, and only if, you can take the usual nonsense. **Jeanne**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
4	5	3	5

Time Crisis: Project Titan



Publisher: Namco Hometek
Developer: Namco
Featured In: EGM #140
Players: 1
Supports: Guncon
Best Feature: Solid light-gun action
Worst Feature: Dated graphics, mediocre design
Web Site: www.namco.com



Project Titan, Namco's latest Time Crisis home offering is a tough pill to swallow. If you weren't already a perfectly capable single-player version on the PlayStation, a thrilling two-player version in the arcade, and an absolutely kick-ass sub-machinegun simulator called Crisis Zone, then PT wouldn't feel nearly as mediocre as it does. The story this time involves the assassination of some president in a banana republic and Richard Miller has been framed for the crime. There's an action/reload button that you use to duck in and out of cover, and in this respect, PT feels patently Crisis-esque. It isn't the gameplay I take issue with in PT, but rather, the game's style—or lack thereof. The first TC had all sorts of cool design elements that are missing in PT. Instead of medieval castles and dagger-throwing mini-bosses, we get warehouses and cleaver-tossing chefs. TC also always had an incredible sense of tension as you moved from one area to the next. Everything felt cohesive. PT loses the suspense as Miller hops on airplanes and takes cab from one zone to the other. **What PT needs is pacing—something which the original TC had in spades.** And if you're going to use a four-year-old graphics engine, make sure it looks better in 2001 than it did in 1997. PT isn't a bad gun game, but this is a Crisis game—it shouldn't look and feel like that Area 51 arcade shooter you see in dive bars all across America. **Ethan**

Many of you are probably wondering what's new about Project Titan, as compared to the original Time Crisis. Well, if you look past the main title, you'll notice Namco's added a very distinct "Project Titan" epithet. This will be the major distinguishing feature of the game. Keep the two very separate on your shelf, and never swap the discs and cases—you'll never figure out which is which. Graphically, there's literally no improvement, and the new shootout venues are highly forgettable. Didn't we see all these areas in TC 1 and 2? PT's fun for a short time if you're just looking for some action, but **it plays like an expansion pack at best.** **Jonathan**

The first Time Crisis was a nice diversion from the Virtua Cop style of non-challenging gameplay, adding the innovative duck feature and a time element that gave TC a tension lacking in most light-gun games at the time. Project Titan, TC's pseudo-sequel (not the TC2 that appeared in arcades) for the PS one, is certainly more of the same, but **it contains neither the spark of its predecessor nor the hallmark level of quality Namco is usually known for.** Once you memorize the level layout and enemy placements, the game becomes a breeze, something I don't recall saying after playing the first game. The original is better. **Milkman**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	6	4	6

RPG Maker: Remote Control



Winner: 1st Prize EGM's RPG Maker Contest
Developer: David Erwin
Featured In: EGM #142
Players: 1
Price: PS2 and games
Best Feature: Incredible minigames
Worst Feature: Silly story
Find it at: www.zdnet.com/egm



In an industry that seems to far break new ground, it's unusual to put your hands on a piece of work that's both inventive and massively entertaining. "Remote Control" fits this description—its author, David Erwin, has taken RPG Maker's generic templates and crafted a gem that is more engaging than most published titles in the genre. The story: Three teenage suburbanites get trapped inside a television set. To make their way back home, the trio has to fight through a series of elaborate television parodies. It's a flimsy narrative, but the vignettes are so well-written and imaginatively conceived, you quickly forget about the absurdity of it all. Xena, Monty Python and Pokémon are cleverly deconstructed, and the game's dialogue is rife with funny pop-culture references, but **the title's crowning feature is an "arcade" stocked with a set of playful minigames, each one entertaining in its own right.** The best of them: an incredibly intricate, gut-busting funny dating simulation. Interestingly, very little emphasis is placed on turn-based fighting; battles don't pop up until a good half hour into the game, and even then, they're creatively integrated into the narrative itself. I picked up a personal copy of RPG maker and a couple memory cards just so I could share Remote Control with friends outside of EGM—it's that good. If you can obtain a DevX drive copy of this, do so—you'll be blown away. **Ethan**

Back when we kicked off this contest (like, nine years ago), our guidelines for the ideal home-brewed RPG were simple: We wanted witty, fun games we could beat in a short amount of time—not the final Fantasy. Didn't matter. We still got a lot of epic quests anyway, and though enjoyable, too many of them overflowed with RPG clichés. Then came Remote Control. **If only more "real" RPGs offered as much variety and humor as David Erwin's little gem.** You want minigames? It's got them. You want parodies? They're there. Sure, it lacks custom art, and fewer inside jokes would be nice, but Remote Control still overflows with ingenuity. **Crispin**

One of the best measures of a game is how effectively it uses the available development resources, a factor that really turned me on to Remote Control. Instead of just stamping out a linear quest, **RC digs into RPG Maker's possibilities with minigames, side-quests and an intricate story** that comes across really well. Taking itself just seriously enough to make it feel like a sincere adventure, Remote Control also flashes its humorous side now and again, with countless film and game references throughout. What's more, all the dialogue is coherent and spelled correctly (which is more than we can say for a lot of the entries)! Nice work. **Jonathan**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	6	10	6

Point Blank 3



Publisher: Namco
Hometek
Developer: Namco
Featured In: EGM #140
Players: 1-8
Supports: Guncon, Dual Shock
Web Site: www.namco.com

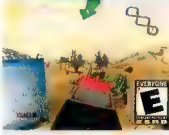


Best Feature: Party mode
Worst Feature: Do we really need another Point Blank?

In light of the video-game violence stuff in the media lately, it's no surprise companies have kept light-gun titles on the down-low. However, unlike Sega's gutless stance on light gun support for fine titles like House of the Dead 2 and Confidential Mission, Namco's pushing two Guncon games out the door this month (also see the Time Crisis: Project Titan review). What I do like about PB3 is that it ditches the "quest" aspect from PB2 and gets straight to the wacky mini-games. And in that respect, PB3 succeeds in being a lighthearted romp through a pixelated carnival wonderland. PB3 really shines in its "Party Mode" where up to eight players compete to take the top spot. (And like most party games, PB3's fun-factor is somewhat enhanced by the magical properties of alcohol.) But after your friends have gone home, all you're left with is a pair of Guncons, a nasty hangover and a handful (more than 80 new mini-games!) of distractions that get old after 15 long minutes. Basically, **if you've seen one Point Blank, you've pretty much seen them all.** **Che**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	5	3	7

4X4 Evolution

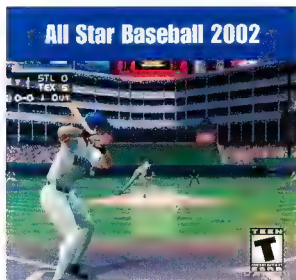


Publisher: GODGames
Developer: Terminal Reality
Featured In: EGM #139
Players: 1-2
Supports: None
Web Site: www.godgames.com

Best Feature: Lots of SUVs, trucks and modifications
Worst Feature: Sluggish gameplay

Off-road racing is like politics: The dirtier it is, the better it gets. With that mantra in mind, **this squeaky-clean off-roading romp isn't as nasty as it should have been.** I locked forward to taking its Gran Turismo-like laundry list of vehicles on a hellish test drive through mud, rock and rain, but I never got the feeling that I was putting the vehicles through a rigorous test. No matter how much sludge I drove through, how many walls I hit, how many trailer homes I side-swiped, my SUV still came out unharmed, without a speck of dust on its exterior. And why can't I plow through those wimpy bushes and trees in my way? Visuals aren't the most important thing, but this sluggish game could have used peppier sights to make it more exciting. The speed on these souped-up off-roaders isn't fast enough to get the blood pumping, and even worse, sometimes your 4x4 will even get stuck in terrain. Since one mistake can cost you the race, 4x4 often turns into a methodical game of playing not to lose instead of letting your hair down in a rampage to victory. **Kraig**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	4	5	6



Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Acclaim Studios Austin
Featured In: EGM #141
Players: 1-2
Supports: None
Best Feature: Realistic batting
Worst Feature: Buggy
Web Site: www.acclaim.com



Hats off to Acclaim Studios Austin—certain portions of **ASB 2002** are amazingly well-done. The flight of the pitch is killer—the arc is subtle, the velocity just about right, and most importantly, the ball (while on the small side) stays in focus from the pitcher to the strike zone. It's pretty damn hard to hit, especially since the batting cursors are small as well. I'm not complaining though. Yes it's challenging, but in a very realistic way—something we haven't seen in console baseball. Unfortunately other portions aren't as spectacular. More than a few things stand out: The "bat to ball" contact animation is missing (I hate that). You only witness a millisecond of swing before the camera abruptly pulls back—cheap. Half the fun of hitting is watching the ball launch off the bat. The camera woes aren't restricted to hitting alone: Fly balls are followed too closely, cutting out much of the surrounding view. A traditional, wide-angle perspective would be much more useful. There's no manual replay, and last but certainly not least, it's a bit buggy—mostly in fielding (players suck up balls like a Hoover), bad calls and outfield weirdness. The verdict? It isn't as tight as its N64 forefathers but it's not bad either. If for no other reason, rent it to experience the hyper-fast batting interface. If you can hit well on All-Star Mode, you're a god amongst boys—it's really fun. With some polish I think ASB 2003 could be a serious threat. **Dean**

If there's ever a poster child for a buggy game that should have been great, it's this one. **ASB strikes a great balance between realism and fun**, but its widespread glitches collectively bring it dangerously close to mediocrity. The batting interface and directional hitting cursor are very cool and intuitive, but you can't see the ball leave the bat. So much for getting a jump on it with your fielders. And once you do get within scooping distance, beware: The computer may pick a canned animation you didn't expect, making you miss the grab. Acclaim should have taken time to smooth this out, and I suspect that it will be a bigger contender next year. **Kraig**

While All-Star Baseball doesn't reach the train-wreck proportions of Quarterback Club, it is pretty sad considering its roots as the top sports franchise on the N64. After the nice looks, there isn't much here. **The game has a fatal flaw in the batting cursor, where analog control acts as if it's digital, resulting in a lack of ability to gently feather the cursor to track the pitch.** Set it to top difficulty and it's a nightmare. Deploable baserunning AI and a considerable delay between the swing, hit and transition to the field also mar the fun. And get these sequences: ball fielded by foot, thrown over head...magically in mitt! Collision detection anyone? **Dan**



Publisher: 3DO
Developer: 3DO
Featured In: EGM #137
Players: 1-2
Supports: None
Best Feature: Smooth graphics
Worst Feature: Seen this before
Web Site: www.3do.com



Army Men: Air Attack 2 for the PlayStation 2 is just like Air Attack 2 for the original PlayStation, it just looks a whole lot better. And, considering the PS one version wasn't that bad to begin with, 3DO has finally delivered a PS2 game that doesn't make me cringe. Wait, that's harsh. **Air Attack 2 is actually a good game by any standards**, one that's certainly worth trying out, even more so if you were a fan of the old Strike series from EA. For those who've passed up on the previous Air Attack games, the basic premise is a simple one: You control a small toy helicopter and must fly over evil Tan Army-controlled "real world" areas (like a backyard, park, alleyway, or park), trying to take out their forces by hooking onto "life-sized" items (such as huggie frisbees and the such) and throwing them into your foes. The main thing that comes to mind while playing isn't that the game just looks better texture-wise—and it most certainly does—but it's also stunningly clean and fast. The framerate always stays smooth, and the control and physics are excellent. I do wish they would have taken the time to really update the game and make a true sequel instead of just a pretty remake, but I'm still more than happy with the results. It's a strange feeling actually looking forward to a new 3DO game, but I can't help but be interested to see what they do with this series in the future—their's definite potential here. **Ryan**

In a sea of mediocre games for the PS2, here is one that's actually worth purchasing. Air Attack 2 is basically a clever lift of EA's Strike games, but where that franchise concentrated on strategy, this title sets its sights on arcade action. Control is tight and intuitive, levels are intelligently designed, and the graphics are surprisingly good. It's a tough one to put down, especially when you play in cooperative mode (no slowdown, kids!). If there's one con, it's that the game is a bit on the easy side. But a staggering number of levels more than makes up for that. **This is substantially better than any other Army Men release**; Sarge might make a fan of me yet. **Ethan**

I know what you're thinking—a good Army Men game? But let's face it, **Air Attack is still the only Army Men game worth playing.** Graphics may be plain, but they fit the toy-world atmosphere. The framerate might've been better kept at a constant 30 fps and the collision detection is occasionally suspect, but it's still a fun game. Playing co-op is a blast ("Oh crap! It's the toy clowns! Cover me!"), and you're given a fair amount of lives to complete a mission before having to start over. Too bad 3DO opted for a port instead of using this opportunity to make this a new game or hybrid of missions from 1&2 using the cleaned-up PS2 game engine. Give it a try. **Chris**



Publisher: 3DO
Developer: 3DO
Featured In: EGM #139
Players: 1-2
Supports: None
Best Feature: Lots of fire!
Worst Feature: The most mundane shooter ever
Web Site: www.3do.com



Creating a half-decent shooter isn't rocket science, so it's hard to understand how this creatively bankrupt action game was conceived. The goal is to kill hordes of boring tan soldiers that retaliate by firing slow-moving bullets. To spice things up, a "special" blue and gray soldier armed with a slow-firing rocket launcher or a slower-spewing flamethrower will attack. This "variety" is what makes Army Men an incredibly boring license, and to top it off, you'll fight the most spectacularly unspectacular end-level "bosses" you've ever come across in a game. The surfaced shark sub and the platoon of army men hiding under a tree are a couple of my personal favorites, but there's plenty of others whose mundaneness will awe you. After a while, the slow-motion gameplay turns the battle against the Tan Army into a struggle to stay awake. If you aren't comatose after playing a few levels, you'll be wired with frustration over the problems that stem from the ugly, sparse terrain. Rambo has never been done in by an encounter with a tree, but your beefy commando gets stuck helplessly behind a bush or a rock as the camera moves forward. Even worse, invisible walls are arbitrarily placed throughout levels that bait you into making a dangerous run for a power-up, only to be stopped right in front of it. At that point, the battle isn't against the Army Men. Instead, you're actually fighting the game itself. **Kraig**

This game is so obviously unfinished, so obviously rushed out the door, so obviously completely half-assed that I feel sorry for anyone who has or will come into contact with it. Personally, the idea of some old-school kilt Warriors-style shooting action sounded great; little did I know it would be saddled with amateurish graphics, next to no effects, lame power-ups, and plodding, monotonous, repetitive gameplay. How about some cool bosses? Satisfying explosions? Background interaction? Different enemies (and no, blue soldiers instead of tan ones don't count as different)? Something! Anything! **Mindless fun for 15 minutes, then just mindless.** **Mark**

When you consider the Green Rogue is an amalgamation of Sarge and his heroes, **is it any wonder this game never stood a chance?** I really like the idea behind it—an old school shooter with control reminiscent of classics like Robotron and Smash TV. The problem is that Green Rogue's collision detection is so picky that you can fire off a bazooka into an enemy's face and he won't so much as flinch, let alone take any damage. To cap it off, the animation sucks, the levels are bland, and the buddies only come in one flavor, albeit in different colors. This game needed to be faster, with nicer graphics and more forgiving collision detection. **Greg**



Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2



Publisher: 3DO
Developer: 3DO
Featured In: EGM #135
Players: 1-2
Supports: None
Best Feature: Great CG movies
Worst Feature: Tons of cheap one-hit deaths
Web Site: www.3do.com



Before playing Sarge 2 into your PS2, make sure you're papping with a durable controller. Why? Because if you play this on normal or hard mode, that pad will be hurled against the wall of your living room countless times with great force. Yes, boys and girls, **this is the type of game that likes to kill you so minutes into a mission with one hit from a rocket-toting tan soldier.** Often times these enemy forces will be off screen when they attack, making it impossible to avoid their fire. I may have had more patience with this if the game offered exciting tactical gunfights—a la Winback—but capping tan soldiers with dinky plastic weaponry is not very satisfying. Oddly, though, despite these frustrating issues, when the game was turned on, I found myself hard-pressed to stop playing. This was due in good part to the beautiful CG sequences, which are a great reward for progressing through the missions. It was also due to the inventive settings (the pinball machine being my personal favorite), and the impressive graphics. The title's enormous explosions and real-time reflections are just flat-out gorgeous. Cooler still, this is more than just a straight N64 port; the developers have thrown in a few exclusive PS2 stages and a handful of brand-new items to pick up. If you can handle the intense frustration factor, there are a couple of good things to be seen here, but on the whole, *Air Attack 2* is a better buy.

Ethan

Whether you like Army Men games or not, Sarge's Heroes 2 comes "this close" to being a worthwhile purchase. Mission objectives are fair, the graphics are occasionally slick, control is decent (but not great), and the variety of things to do is fine. Yet, 3DO needs to learn how to button up the things that could take their games to the next level. The AI is so stupid that Wicky will stand there and vacantly fire away at a crate (even if you stand in the way) during one early mission. The Tan Army is even worse. And why does Sarge have a real-time shadow but Wicky only a grey blob? **Inconsistency mars what would otherwise have been a very decent game.**

Milkman

This sequel should be mindless fun. It ain't, and I blame the shoddy control. It's too touchy when you're turning or trying to snipe in first-person view, and overall the control just feels too jerky. To make matters worse, most objects seem to have an invisible force field around them, which makes it impossible to blast enemies while you're trying to creep out from behind cover—your bullets just disappear into thin air. The game looks OK, with crisp textures and some detailed environments (namely those levels set in our world). And you do get a lot of missions. Trouble is they're all boring, and the crap control just makes later levels frustrating.

Crispin

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

6 6 4 5

ESPN National Hockey Night



Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami of Europe
Featured In: EGM #139
Players: 1-2
Supports: None
Best Feature: Some good goalie cam replays
Worst Feature: Slow game play
Web Site: www.konami.com



Konami's timing with their latest sports release is, as always, atrocious. It might be worth to automatically downgrade a game because it's late, but then the breaks: Sports games are a fickle bunch, and unless a game is exceedingly good, we don't want it a full six months after the start of the real season. Please. The funny part is, you'd think Hockey Night would have the most up-to-date rosters, right? Wrong. No sign of the Keith Tkachuk trade or any other mid-season moves. Heck, goalies who have been bumped up or benched since the first game of the season are still in the wrong spot. Sad. **Even sadder is the game's basic engine, which sports almost zero AI and moves at a snail's pace.** Defenseless inch backward into the zone with no regard for where the puck lies, while typically blazing forwards lurch into the zone. Even the controls are slowed to a crawl, as each pass or speed burst is represented a full second after the press of the button. Try doing a quick cut or deke near the goal and you'll find your player careening into the goalie. Blech. Other lowlights include a lack of options and the hilarious inability to use in-game menu options. For example, go to change anything during the game (strategy, sub, goalie pull) and it will boot out to a loading screen instead of a pop-up menu. What the hell is that? No worries, though—as if you really needed a hockey game in June, right? You recommended.

Dan

ESPN Hockey Night—among other things—suffers from sluggish control and a slow game pace. I could live with the funky animation, so-so graphics and other minor quirks, but AI, good control and a decent tempo are a must. To compensate you spend a lot of time holding down speed burst trying to catch up with the puck. It's not the best way to play hockey, especially when more speed isn't necessarily the answer. **Unfortunately there's nothing to cover for the AI.** While the goalies aren't half bad, the other players often hesitate around the puck or just make bonehead decisions. In general, it's not playable but next to EA's NHL, it's below par.

Dean

What was Konami thinking releasing this game? The rosters are older than my great-grandmother, and Super Mario's nephew to be seen! There are a couple of nice features: The camera options are great, especially being able to choose which end of the ice you're skating toward. The color commentary's pretty detailed, too, but it's about a minute behind the action. It's too bad the game controls like crap. The players look like zombies—they're so slow it makes the rink seem a mile long sometimes. Plus they're dumb, just standing over the puck half the time. Konami should hire Don Cherry as creative director—then this would never happen.

Groo

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

5 5 5 6

ESPN MLS ExtraTime



Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami Honolulu
Featured In: EGM #139
Players: 1-2
Supports: None
Best Feature: Lots of teams to play with
Worst Feature: Atrocious defense AI
Web Site: www.konami.com



There was a time when I'd have been pushing people aside to get my hands on the latest variant on Konami's ISS game, Screw FIFA, it just didn't have what it took to be the seminal soccer sim. So what the hell happened? EA Sports has established itself as the king of soccer, and somehow the team at Konami has managed to mess it all up. Ever since they signed the ESPN license, things have been going downhill, but I have to say that this is the biggest disappointment yet. Sure, it has the requisite armis of international teams, supplemented by 12 MLS and two All-Star teams, but if you were to use this game as a way of judging the world's finest, you'd be convinced that there isn't a team in the world that knows how to play effective defense. If you'll permit me to show my age for a moment, many of the games reminded me of the soccer game in the Disney movie *Bedknobs and Broomsticks*, where the players diligently chase after the ball with scant regard for the position they're supposed to be playing. While this is somewhat amusing at first, it morphs into a trait that is absolutely unforgivable in a soccer game; **it's truly dull.** Very often you'll find that your opponent can nonchalantly trot the ball into your box with little or no interference from the defenders...thanks to the fact that they'd been galloping after the ball up the field two seconds previously. Go and buy FIFA. It's much better.

John

Let's get this out of the way quickly. This game is not better than PS2's FIFA. **That said, it's an OK soccer game plagued by some dicey AI.** I mean, too often I found that my opponent or I could saunter down the majority of the field unmolested. This could be a result of the auto-player switching, as the CPU assigns your control to whoever it feels is closest (without a button press). Offense is fun enough, and players animate and move fluidly. Visuals are just a notch above-average, and the presentation is spiffy. But taken as a whole, it's still all a bit bland. You'd think a game built around the old ISS engine would be a bit better.

Dan

All you really need to know about ExtraTime is that it uses Konami's ISS Soccer engine. **It's a damn fine engine indeed.** The only problem—the automatic player switching is a major kick in the ass. You know the story on that stuff: You're busy fronting a player when the computer abruptly moves control to the next closest man. If really sucks; I have to deduct a point or so just for that crap. Otherwise it's pretty good. Control is smooth and responsive, the animation is life-like and believable, and the AI does the right thing most of the time. Having only 60+ teams is a positive in my book as well—it keeps things on the simplistic side. The best ESPN game yet.

Dean

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

7 6 5 5



Publisher: 3DO
Developer: 3DO
Featured In: EGM#144
Players: 1-2
Supports: None
Best Feature: Immersive realism
Worst Feature: Graphics
Web Site: www.3do.com



High Heat Baseball 2002 is a different animal from anything you've played before. That's a good thing. While I've always been a fan of the batting cursor setup, HH aims for a true sim experience, and that means reading pitches. If you don't like that kind of guesswork and prefer the mingame within a game appeal of the cursor, then this game is not for you. For the rest of you stat-loving, reality-grounded baseball fans, I think you will find that **High Heat offers the best all-around baseball experience on the PS2 this year.** Hitting is appropriately hard against the league's best pitchers, which means moving runners from base to base becomes the goal. It's not all about the three-run homer. That makes for a bit more excitement to the actual event of hitting a home run. It's just too bad that HH is hard to love right out of the box. There's no wow factor to be sure. The graphics are poor and, in my opinion, don't even edge out last year's version of All-Star Baseball for the Nintendo 64. Empty dugouts, flat backdrops and collision detection problems plague HH. It's sad, really, because there are some nice details included. Umpires make check-swing calls on the spot, fans return home runs by opposing players, and there is a seemingly endless variety of hits that can occur. Still, it takes extended replay to appreciate these finer points. But extended replay isn't a bad thing now, is it?

Dan

If you're tired of arcade baseball games, then this offers a haven for you. But at a steep price: It doesn't look that pretty. While High Heat games of the past were visually dreadful, this one uses the power of the PS2 to be, well, tolerable. At least it's a step up. I didn't even grit my teeth as I played. **I found myself enjoying the process of stringing base hits together to generate runs** and dealing with a smart opponent that made key subs and fielding decisions. I liked thinking about pitches and strategic hits—something baseball games rarely do. But I wish I could have enjoyed the sights and sounds of the game—those cut for something too.

Kraig

PlayStation baseball has been a joke. Make no mistake. Any hardball you've seen has been so flawed graphically or gameplay wise, it makes me sad. Only now, with PS2's power, has a game come along to remedy that. While Triple Play Baseball feels like batting practice with fielders, and All-Star Baseball is about 50 percent of a video game, High Heat is everything and more. It's not perfect, but it is a legitimate baseball experience for legitimate baseball fans. Some will whine about the annoying lack of animations, others will bemoan the tough-to-master pitcher/batter interface. But no game is as airtight as HH. If you love baseball, buy it. If you don't, go away.

Todd

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

6 6 8 8



Publisher: Interplay
Developer: **Biosware/Digital Mayhem**
Featured In: EGM # 138
Players: 1
Supports: None
Best Feature: Improved difficulty settings
Worst Feature: Some lame textures
Web Site: www.interplay.com



Already acclaimed for its superior brand of third-person platforming action, MDK2's appearance on the PS2 brings with it a host of improvements almost anyone can appreciate. The most significant change is an easing-up on the difficulty scale. Instead of being a controller-throwing hardcore, Armageddon (more of a director's cut) offers a number of difficulty settings so that even novice players stand a chance of seeing the end of the game. The problem with having various difficulty settings is that it sidesteps the things that made the game so hard in the first place, and simply makes enemies go down faster, with less effort. It often feels as if you are being led by the hand. Another subtle change is a brighter, sharper-looking game (the DC version was extremely dark at times), although there have been some texture compromises made to accommodate the PS2's limited memory. The control also suffers somewhat, as the default Turbo-style controls of the DC version have been replaced with over a half-dozen different mappings to the PS2 controller, none of which seem to emulate the "just right" feeling of the former. Annoying controls aside, once you get used to it, you'll quickly discover the humor, great graphics and overall diversity of MDK2's gameplay. Sometimes, I wish the shooting action was a bit more intense, but little niggles aside, **for PS2 owners craving sheer invention, MDK2 delivers.**

Milkman

Although lacking some of the graphical loveliness of its DC brethren, MDK2 is still a damn fine shooter. I'm not sure it would be on my "absolute must-buy" list of PS2 games, but it's something different from the usual fare of robots boring each other to death. I also like it as it manages to introduce a concept sadly lacking in the majority of games: humor. While none of it is going to make you lose control of your bowels, **there are certainly some chuckle-worthy moments** involving household appliances. The three-character thing keeps the pace interesting, and there are some genuinely challenging moments. An acquired taste, but not an unpleasant one.

John

A game comes out for the PS2 and most people automatically assume it looks better than its DC counterpart. Armageddon is a nice example of why this isn't always the case. While the game certainly doesn't look half bad on the PS2, the environments lack the lush textures of its DC brother. Luckily, Armageddon makes up for some of the washed-out textures by improving other details such as better explosions and bloodier deaths. **Overall, a better package thanks to the difficulty select.** I personally found the dual analog sticks to feel more natural than a DC pad in MDK2. Definitely check this out if you haven't played the DC version before.

Che

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

8 8 8 7



Publisher: EA
Developer: Bullfrog
Also on: Dreamcast, PC
Players: 1-4
Also Try: TimeSplitters, Unreal Tournament
Best Feature: Smooth, crisp graphics
Worst Feature: Horrible AI
Web Site: www.ea.com



From day one, Quake III was conceived and built as a multiplayer game only—even when you weren't playing online, the single-player game was meant to make it feel like you were. The fact that poor enemy AI never really pulled that off could be forgiven on the PC and DC, since the excellent online matches more than made up for it. Unfortunately, that's not the case on the PS2. The huge, gaping wound left in gameplay from the necessary removal of the online option has been given a tiny children's band-aid of added bells and whistles that just can't cover the hole, leaving Revolution with the best version of the worst part of Quake III. A few nice new stages, the odd ability to level up your character in different attributes, new weapons (the gratifying chaingun and not-bad nailgun), and a couple more modes are cool, but the **horrendous AI and lack of options severely limit QIII** otherwise. It just isn't much fun fighting the computer—you learn its weird quirks in deathmatch, and in any other mode it behaves like a raving idiot. Other, admittedly minor, complaints: no mouse and keyboard support, horrible load times, and you can't give the AI bot orders. It's too bad, really, "cause it's certainly a beautiful game: gorgeous levels, cool enemy and weapon designs, and a smooth framerate, even in split-screen. Only for DC and PC-less llamas into same-screen multiplayer (which I personally don't really care for).

Mark

This may be the best-looking Quake game of the bunch, but it's also the worst-playing one. **The only "revolution" this has undergone is an aesthetic one:** The levels are more detailed and colorful than any other Quake game. Once the novelty wears off, the tired game behind it rears its ugly head. Without an online component, Quake has no heart. The split-screen multiplayer action helps to pump the blood, but the firefights are unsatisfying since the four-player split screen makes it hard to navigate. The single-player mode could have been a saving grace had the enemy intelligence been better. But they fight like this game is designed: half-assedly.

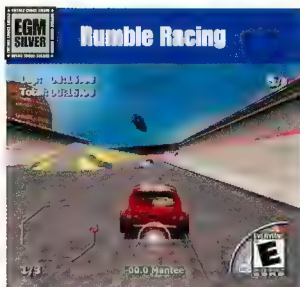
Kraig

As radical as the changes are, QIIIr is still a very playable game, and probably the best FPS you can buy for your PS2. I like the new weapons and Bullfrog's humorous touches throughout. The graphics are also impressive, considering there's none of the slowdown here that plagued the DC version. In four-player split screen, the game moves briskly along. But **why didn't they include USB mouse support?** I know we shouldn't get into the mindset that consoles should have mouse controllers, blah blah...but give me a break. Just because you move QIIIr into the "mainstream" doesn't mean you should also drop the option to use a mouse. Dig?

Che

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

8 6 4 6



Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: Electronic Arts
Featured In: EGM #142
Players: 1-2
Supports: None
Best Feature: Super-smooth framerate
Worst Feature: Some pretty bland cars
Web Site: www.ea.com

PS2

I was a big fan of NASCAR Rumble on the PS one, and since Rumble Racing is the unofficial sequel to that arcade racer, my expectations were high when I fired it up. I must say I'm not disappointed. Since MGS2 and ZOE have raised the bar significantly for PS2 games nowadays, some might not find Rumble's graphics to be overly impressive. Even so, the resolution is nice and the framerate never falters. Plus EA threw in some slick, if conservative, special effects when you use certain weapons. On the gameplay side, Rumble Racing really delivers. Lots of cool, arcadey tracks (some from NASCAR Rumble), and loads of cars to choose from make for the same variety as you work your way through the game trying to unlock everything. The biggest upgrade to this sequel would have to be the addition of stunts. Whenever you get airborne, pressing the stunt button and moving the control stick will flip the car in various ways. Land on all four wheels and you get a speed boost based on how difficult the stunt you just completed was. It's too bad you can only flip, but it does add some strategy to the game as winning a lot of races depends on finding ramps all around the track. Sure, GT3 isn't airt, but Rumble is definitely one of the better arcade racers on the PS2 to date. Fans of San Francisco Rush in particular should be sure to check it out. It's just too bad the NASCAR license is gone; the cars don't look as cool anymore. **Greg**

At first Rumble Racing seems like it's strictly for the kiddies—It's not. I usually only get jacked up for sims like NASCAR, Gran Turismo or other such fluff. I gotta admit, **RR is a blast—kiddie or not.** It plays a lot like the PS version but there's enough new tracks and variables to keep it fresh. I like that you can collect more than one power-up at a time. It comes in handy when it's road-clearin' time. Speaking of that, the tornado effect is awesome! It literally darkens the entire sky and clears a path for miles with its swirlin' goodness. Replay value is very high as well—unlocking cars, finding shortcuts, and experimenting with difficulty levels will hook you for a long time. **Dean**

Doth mine eyes deceive me, or has EA actually made a good racing game? Instead of trying to force out another realistic driving sim, they've expanded their stunt-race concept from the PS days and pulled it off beautifully on the PS2. It controls like a dream, never chugs while running some pretty darn good graphics, and promises tons (literally) of unlockable cars. The best way to describe the gameplay is SSX on wheels—it's quick, aggressive, and very exhilarating. The stunt possibilities are a little limited—it's basically a matter of choosing a direction to flip in—but the superb level design and intelligent use of shortcuts more than make up for it. **Jonathan**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY
8 8 8 8



Publisher: Lucas Learning
Developer: Lucas Learning
Featured In: EGM #140
Players: 1-4
Supports: Multi-tap
Best Feature: Cartoon Star Wars characters
Worst Feature: Total lack of fun
Web Site: www.lucasarts.com

PS2

Cool, super-deformed characters in a kart racing game on the PS2? What could possibly go wrong? Apparently, almost everything. Once the novelty of the Star Wars license wears off (somewhere in the 10 minute range), it becomes painfully obvious that this game is a total waste of time. It looks like nothing more than a high-res PS one game with some major clipping problems. And the slowdown! Man, some of it's just painful to watch. Hook up a four-player game and watch the entire thing slow to a crawl, making your character next to impossible to control. Even putting that aside, the balance here just sucks. While the computer controlled characters receive a bit of a boost if you take the lead, you don't seem to get that benefit should you fall behind the pack. That would almost be forgivable in a kart game that had effective weapons, but Bombad doesn't even do that right. The weapons are all so generic and useless that they're almost no help in getting your racer to the head of the field. Oh, getting a rundown of which characters have the best acceleration or speed would have been nice in the selection screen, too, even though their individual characteristics don't seem to make much difference in the race. Personally I suggest buying Star Wars Racer on the PC, DC or N64, before even considering buying Bombad. If you must have a kart racer, however, get Crash Team Racing instead. It should be cheap by now. **Greg**

This is not the Star Wars kart game we're looking for. First off, pay no mind to the license—the Episode 1 characters here are so deformed beyond recognition that this might as well be a kart game starring midget circus clowns. And the gameplay...ugh. Bombad Racing ignores a cardinal rule of the crowded kart genre: Vehicles lagging at the back of the pack should get artificial aid to help catch up (for instance, better power-ups). That doesn't happen here. Get behind and you'll likely stay behind. Control feels clunky, too; some walls jerk your vehicle a few inches to the side. Even multiplayer is blah. When you see this game in the store, just move along, move along. **Crispin**

Under any other circumstances I would be delighted to launch weaponry at Jar Jar and another annoying Episode 1 characters, but this kart game really took the fun out of it. Every hover-vehicle can be outfitted with a boring "arsenal" that consists of rainbow-colored streamers, neon green blocks, and other offensively cute power-ups. They're almost all useless at changing the outcome of the race since very few of them are geared to help you catch up. Instead, you're forced to find every little shortcut in the huge tracks in order to keep your lead, shifting the focus away from fun racing vehicle combat to a trial-and-error hunt for the shortest route to the finish line. **Kraig**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY
7 6 4 6



Publisher: EA Sports
Developer: EA Sports
Featured In: EGM #140
Players: 1-2
Supports: None
Best Feature: Big Air
Worst Feature: Cheat'n' AI
Web Site: www.ea.com

PS2

What happened to the "if it's in the game, it's in the career" spirit that made EA games great? Remember the ambulence in Madden? The blood in NHL? The saber-toothed goalie in Mutant League Hockey? I do. Those extras, along with rock-solid gameplay, gave EA games a flair and personality all their own. Lately, however, it's as if EA has become the McDonald's of sports games. This is no more evident than in Triple Play for the PS2. It just feels so watered-down from what a baseball fan would really want. TP gives us a taste of what could have been, with control that is decent, a nice batter/pitcher interface (cursor-style batting), and the best graphics of this year's baseball games (aside from the short, stubby player models). But after that, it just feels a little fake and unfulfilling. Scores tend to be on the bloated side, and managing your roster is nowhere near as important, or flexible, as it should be. The gameplay is also a bit weak, as TP remains true to its homer-heavy, arcade-style roots. I can only witness so many slugs before the excitement is sapped away. On the options side, TP is at the back of the bus for EA games, with no franchise mode, one camera angle, one replay angle, and single-player trades only. TP is OK for an occasional dash of fun, but if you appreciate the intricacies, strategy and action of real major-league baseball, I recommend giving High Heat Baseball a try. **Dan**

This is one of the few games that really nails the pitcher-batter duel. Don't get me wrong: This isn't the most realistic game in the world, but it doesn't try to be. What this excels in is letting you "see" the ball as a hitter instead of just guessing and swinging wildly. The ball hitting and leaving the bat just looks and feels right. Now if only the fielding were as refined. Catching incoming balls can be a pain in the ass when your fielders refuse to get a jump on them, and it's even worse when they miss the bag on a routine out. There's enough of these frustrating flubs to make you lose a game or two, but the additive batting will keep you coming back for more. **Kraig**

EA has remained faithful to its 40/60 ratio—I mean, 40 percent arcade, 60 simulation. It's a good mix for casual fans and may even attract moderate baseball elitists. Hardcore players, however, will scoff at the game's quirks and less-than-authentic approach. For example, the batting cursor is giant. If you can't hit using the humongous crosshairs you're hopeless. The sound effects and wild camera angles are brilliant as far as I'm concerned, yet may seem hokey to hardcore fans. Neither camp will like the sluggish fielding—especially during a double-play attempt. Still, overall TPB is an entertaining, albeit limited, baseball experience—arcade or otherwise. **Dean**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY
8 7 7 8

Zone of the Enders



Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami CEJ West
Featured In: *EGM #142*
Players: 1-2
Supports: None
Best Feature: Best-looking mech game yet
Worst Feature: Horrid voice acting
Web Site: www.konami.com



We're not sure why many of the cutscenes in ZOE are done via FMV when the in-game engine looks nearly as good.

Now that the Review Crew has finally put down the MGS2 Trial Version to check out the free game that came with the \$50 demo, our general vibe is that ZOE is... well, anticlimactic. As a giant-robot-running-amok type of game, ZOE is peerless in its visual panache. Graphically, this is stuff that makes you sit back and marvel at the fact that it's actually being played in your living room. A number of elements help make the game look so opulent: As you soar over cities, suburbs, and industrial factories in the space colony, you get a pressing sense that everything around you hangs in the delicate balance of your actions. Houses and skyscrapers all crumble beautifully if you're careless about where and how you engage the enemy. Another, more superficial way ZOE puts just about everything else on the PS2 to shame is how it handles under pressure, with a gazil-

lion visual effects going on simultaneously. Now, couple the icy glide of the steady 60 fps action with an intelligent camera system, and you've got a game engine that just begs to be used for other types of games. Take our word for it: ZOE looks fantastic. However, this is pretty much where the amazing stuff stops. Underneath the pretty exterior is a game that doesn't quite know what it really wants to be. As an action game, ZOE feels too bare-bones and simplistic; your choice of weapons, the number of moves you can perform, and the obligatory versus mode are all on the underwhelming side. Without the story (as you skip through cinemas the second time around), what was once exhilarating becomes rather repetitive. Nobody in their right mind would call this game an RPG, but even as an adventure title, it lacks the puzzles and narrative to make for a compelling experience. ZOE, while technically impressive, ultimately lacks the depth and longevity we look for in all truly great games. Now for the individual takes:

Finish ZOE once to unlock the two-player versus mode. Go through the game twice and you'll have access to a couple of the more powerful "boss" mechs. Check out that excellent blurring effect!

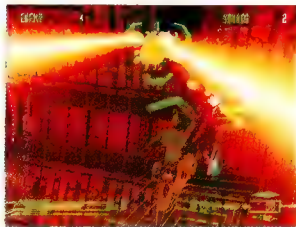


Theoretically, ZOE should have been right up my alley. As a freak for anything giant-robot-related, how could I not have fallen for the sleek, Evangelion-esque designs, the moral ambivalence of the story or the sky-high production values? But it wasn't enough to just like the game from a technical point-of-view. I was looking for some soul, and I came up empty with ZOE. Aside from the graphics and controls, there's just nothing exceptional about this game. Story-wise, the tale of a young boy forced to do the job of a soldier has almost become an anime cliché since Gundam was first introduced back in 1979. Of course, that's not to say that the formula doesn't work. However, in order for the story to carry any weight, you need a protagonist who can pull off the emotional transformation. Unfortunately, Leo just doesn't get the job done. Maybe it's a localization issue; or maybe it's just more convincing in Japanese—whatever the case, **ZOE has one of the most annoying main characters ever.** Another problem with the story line is that it's way too didactic. Any subtlety it could have toyed with is shot to hell because ZOE has a way of driving home its moral ambiguity with a baseball bat. Still, you might enjoy ZOE if you think of it as just an action game with a really elaborate story. It's difficult not to come down hard on ZOE because it's just pissing away so much potential. As it is, ZOE is decent, but alas, not great. **Che**

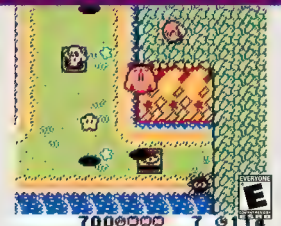
ZOE is to Konami what Omega Boost is to Polyphony Digital—a flashy mech-blasters long on style, short on substance. The technical level of detail is amazing, and it's currently the most striking game, visually, on the PS2. However, while the control and the fundamental gameplay is quite superb, you basically run the same routines throughout the 15 or so hours; it may take you to finish the game. Tedium aside, the heavy-handed story has you listening to your on-board computer, and some of the worst voice-acting known to man, for almost half the game. **You'll play it to death for a few days, but ZOE will fade from memory sooner than you think.** **Milkman**

With a name like Hideo Kojima attached to ZOE, some would say there's no way the game could live up to the lofty expectations of most gamers. While I wouldn't call it a disappointment, the game could have been better. The graphics are so good the entire experience looks like one big cinema scene, which is great. Huge buildings, and bigger mechs, plus the ability to destroy everything in each area are totally cool. But the game is way too short, and unlike MGS (another short game), doesn't seem to reach a real climax. Plus what is here is a **heavy-handed tale of morality that wears thin really quickly.** Still worth playing through once. **Greg**

VISUALS 10 **STORY** 10 **INGENUITY** 7 **REPLAY** 5



Kirby Tilt 'n' Tumble



Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Nintendo
Featured In: EGM #136
Players: 1
Supports: None
Best Feature: Kirby's back'd
Worst Feature: Tilt response technology
Web Site: www.nintendo.com

GAME BOY
Color

So you can fight, shoot and headbutt, but can you tilt? That's right, tilt. Well, Nintendo's new GBC platform-style action game, utilizing what they've coined "Tilt Response Technology," lets you do just that to shake, rattle and roll who else but Kirby? Everyone's portly pink friend is back and looking, sounding and chomping better than ever. Watch Kirby roll his spherical self over icy, sandy, rocky and grassy terrain, all the while dodging toy robots, spikes and other bad buddies in order to smite King Dedede's voracious appetite for stars. Everything seems kosher enough? Well, there's a problem. In fact, a pretty fat one. See, the point is now to play the game by tilting your GBC "every which way," right? Well, what if tilting your GBC means the screen gets lost in shadow and you can't see what the heck Kirby's doing? Try rolling Kirby straight down a narrow platform, Marble Madness-style, without seeing where he's going to end up. You'll soon grow accustomed to hearing Kirby's screams as he fades into the void. Even if you grit your teeth and play on, it's tough. **The game is designed for TRT, so when you tilt "every which way," Kirby gets lost "every which way."** In fact, if the TRT was tweaked or just not so hyped, then Kirby Tilt 'n' Tumble would be a solid GBC game. But unless you have patience, night vision, or an undying adoration for Kirby, let a friend buy the game and just borrow it for those long road trips. **Jeanne**

As a Kirby fan I'll say that I like Tilt 'n' Tumble, but it would've been better if there was an option to play it with the control pad. Its biggest problem is the tilt technology. You need to have the GB under direct light to see what you're doing, but you have to tilt it for control, making it nearly impossible to play unless you're in an area flooded with light (like outside on a sunny day). Forget about playing it on a plane, in a car, or with a third-party light. Plus it's not always easy to get the tilt calibrated. Aside from that, I love the mini-games (especially Do the Kirby) and the graphics are up to what you'd expect from Nintendo. Good fun, but the tilt drags it down. **Chris**

This is a quality game, no doubt: a nice mix of platforming and puzzle elements, with imaginative and varied level designs, including all sorts of clever devices that make use of the surprisingly responsive Tilt feature in ways I would have never thought of. There's just one problem: **It's hard to appreciate all this when you can't actually see what the hell is going on half the time.** See, you have to actually tilt the Game Boy in different directions to make the game work, and anyone familiar with Nintendo's handheld knows how hard the screen is to see on an angle, especially indoors. Innovative, but held back by the very feature that makes it so unique. **Mark**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

7 8 5

Mickey's Speedway USA



Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Rare/Disney Interactive
Also Try: A Disney Rush GBC
Players: 1
Supports: Link cable, IR Port, Printer
Best Feature: Driving animals are funny
Worst Feature: Holy slowdown
Web Site: www.nintendo.com

GAME BOY
Color

Rare may have overshot the mark a little on Speedway for the GBC. They were able to cram in a lot of nice features like time trials, a two-player mode, a tour scrapbook where you can print postcards from tracks around the U.S., and a driving school skill course. But while MSGBC mimics the N64 version in almost every respect (playable characters, story, unlockables), it lacks the friendly control and smooth gameplay of its console cousin. I'm all for powersteering, but races against even more surefooted kart jockeys end up in a battle for controlled skidding. The frame rate tanks when things get too hectic, and by hectic I mean more than two racers at once—not good. It would help if they zoomed out the view; the draw distance is way too short, making it impossible to read the course ahead of time. A little arrow atop the screen warns you of upcoming bends, but it seems like that was an afterthought and doesn't really help when heading into a series of S-curves. Add to that some very worthless power-ups (the speed boost sends you flying, then actually slows you down like a brake rather than letting you coast—what's the deal?) and Speedway goes south pretty quickly. By the time you get used to the **super-sensitive controls and pinball physics**, you've already squeaked through the game on third-place trophies and feel more like tossing it idly over your shoulder than playing through it again. **Jonathan**

I was happy when Rare announced they'd be doing some Disney games, since at last they'd be working with genuinely endearing characters rather than the vomit-by-numbers cutesy crap they'd been designing themselves as of late. MSUSA is a decent game, top-loaded with enough modes, options and incentives to make one want to play through and beat it. The gameplay is smooth and responsive, but the overhead perspective smacks of Micro Machines with a Disney tilt. The game doesn't let you off easy just 'cause it's cute either. **Younger gamers may be put off by the subtlety needed to master this above-average kart racer.** **Milkman**

Micro-machine-style racing featuring cute little Disney characters is what you get with MSUSA. **The other portions, such as driving school, only serve as a mild diversion and certainly don't hold as much weight as the racing.** So essentially, if you're not a fan of the ever tricky, overhead perspective, you'll end up frustrated here. The problem, of course, is the limited amount of track visible on the screen at any one moment. The direction arrow helps somewhat, but in the end it's all about memorizing each and every turn. Once you do that, and learn the intricacies of the vehicles, it's a good time. I only wish it had more of everything—tracks, cars, etc. **Dean**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

6 6 7

Razor Freestyle Scooter



Publisher: Crave Entertainment
Developer: Crawfish
Featured In: EGM #141
Players: 1
Also try: Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2
Best Feature: Sharp looks
Worst Feature: Poor control
Web Site: www.cravegames.com

GAME BOY
Color

On the PlayStation, Razor was an entertaining Tony Hawk clone designed for the younger set. **Now we're getting the Game Boy Color port nobody asked for, and—big surprise—it in no way captures the fun of the set-up edition.** This one focuses more on racing and less on pulling off stunts, which might have been acceptable if the cart had a solid game engine—but it doesn't. Everything is presented from a terribly awkward isometric perspective, and the control is horribly clunky. I mean, c'mon...a default setting in a racer that forces you to press up to go forward, instead of using the A or B button? What's up with that? Worse still, Razor GBC is quite possibly the easiest title in the history of video games to play through: Within one half-hour, I had managed to play through both the "novice" and "expert" modes in their entirety. Now, I grant, it's tricky to port a title like this over to the underpowered Game Boy: Watching an ant-sized figure pull off crazy stunts lacks drama, particularly when he's confined to 2D play fields. But both Dave Mirra and BXS managed to turn out well regardless, so there's little excuse for Razor's ridiculously dummed-down play mechanics. On the upside: The graphics are good, the backdrops are interesting, and the scooter theme is novel. If the game didn't control like mud, and the stages weren't so darn easy, this might have been worth a look. As it stands, though, it's not worth the cash. **Ethan**

When I first turned on Razor I was pretty impressed. Large, colorful graphics with interesting backgrounds and excellent animation (by GBC standards) greet any first-time player. I liked it right up until the moment I had finished the entire game less than an hour later. Now that I've done that, **I'm glad I didn't pay full price for Razor Freestyle Scooter.** This game has no longevity. Even though all the levels are pretty varied, it doesn't take long to realize that they all play exactly the same. The developers need to be given credit for re-creating the Tony Hawk-type theme so well on the Game Boy, but at the end of the day you'll only ever play this once. **Greg**

Freestyle Scooter is a surprisingly fun little game, and it's obvious that developer Crawfish has "borrowed" a few game play elements from Paper Boy. The courses pack a lot of the same generic obstacles (clutzy pedestrians, kids racing R.C. cars, etc.). Unfortunately, like most 8-bit games that try too hard, this thing suffers from sprite flicker: invisible objects will trip your dude once in a while. Although it's easy to pull tricks, the screen is zoomed in just a tad too much on the action, making it hard to align yourself for combo grinds. **This game killed my thumb after a while**, too, since you have to hold up on the pad to keep your scooter moving. **Crispin**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

5 5 4



Tricks of the Trade

By Trickman Terry
tricks@zilfidavis.com

TRICK OF THE MONTH

Test Drive Le Mans

All Cars, Tracks and Classes

From the main menu screen, select the Championship option, choose your class, team and difficulty. On the Star Entry screen, enter any of these names to get the results as shown.

Every Car in Race Mode

Put in MONSTA name and all the cars will be unlocked.

Every Track in Race Mode

Put in GOOZ/low gear option and all the tracks will be unlocked.

Every Class Unlocked in Championship Mode

Put in CARNAGE for the name and all the classes will be unlocked.



PS2 PLAYSTATION 2

NBA Hoopz

NUMEROUS CODES

On the "Tonight's Matchup" screen, enter these codes with the Turbo, Shoot and Pass buttons the number of times shown, and then press the D-pad in the direction indicated by the code (For 4-3-2 Up, you would press Turbo four times, Shoot three times, Pass two times and then press Up).

Show Shot Percentage:

0-1-1 Down

Beach Court: 0-2-3 Left

Show Hotspot: 1-1-0 Down

No Fouls (2P must agree):

2-2-2 Right

Away Uniform: 0-2-4 Right

No Hotspots (2P must agree):

3-0-1 Up

Big Heads: 3-0-0 Right

Tiny Heads: 3-3-0 Left

Infinite Turbo: 3-1-2 Up

Street Court: 3-2-0 Left

Home Uniform: 0-1-4 Right

1 ABA Ball: 1-1-1 Right

Tiny Players: 5-4-3 Left

Granny Shots: 1-2-1 Left

No Goaltending: 4-4-4 Left

Oni

POWER-UPS AND AMMO

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 first part, put in the rest of the codes as shown below for these results. (Note: The L3 and R3 commands



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

Stronger Hits

R3, L3, Circle, Square

2 Get Big

R3, Square, Circle, L3

One Hit Kill

L3, R3, Circle, Square

All Ammo and Hypo

Circle, Circle, Circle, R3

Infinite Ammo

L2, L2, L1, L3.

Invisibility

L1, R3, L2, L3

Star Wars: Starfighter

LEVEL UNLOCK AND MORE

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

3 Unlock All Levels

Put in OVERSEER for the password. This will give you everything except the bonus multiplayer missions.

Bonus Multiplayer Missions

ANDREW

Secret Ship for Bonus Missions

BLUESNF

Disable Cockpit Display

NOHUD

Ship and Cast Pics

HEROES

Pre-production Art

PLANETS

Pictures of Simon

SIMON

Development Team Pics

TEAM

View Credits

CREDITS



DEEMOAST

Army Men: Sarge's Heroes

VARIOUS CODES

From the main menu, access the Input Code option. On the Input Code screen, enter any one of these codes for the results as shown.

Every Character in Multiplayer

BTLN

Test Info

THDTST

4 Behind the Scenes

SFFRMV

NBA 2K1

CHEAT CODES

From the main menu, access the options screen, then select "Codes." On the "Cheat Codes" screen, type in your password as one of these shown below.

Be the Ball: betheball

Giant Heads: heliumbrain

Weird Commentary:

whatamisaying

Taunt After Shot is Made:

sohappy

NBA Hoopz

NUMEROUS CODES

On the "Tonight's Matchup" screen, enter these codes with the Turbo, Shoot and Pass buttons the number of times shown, and then press the D-pad in the direction indicated by the code (for 4-3-2 Up, you would press Turbo four times, Shoot three times, Pass two times and then press Up).

Show Shot Percentage:

0-1-1 Down

Beach Court: 0-2-3 Left

Show Hotspot: 1-1-0 Down

No Fouls (2P must agree):

2-2-2 Right

Away Uniform: 0-2-4 Right

No Hotspots (2P must agree):

3-0-1 Up

Big Heads: 3-0-0 Right

Tiny Heads: 3-3-0 Left

Infinite Turbo: 3-1-2 Up

Street Court: 3-2-0 Left

Home Uniform: 0-1-4 Right

ABA Ball: 1-1-1 Right

Tiny Players: 5-4-3 Left

Granny Shots: 1-2-1 Left

No Goaltending: 4-4-4 Left

Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear

CHEAT MENU

In the middle of the game, press and hold the L-Trigger+X+Y+A+B. With these held, press Down on the D-pad. A Cheat Codes menu will appear with four names. Choose one of the names to get a list of cheats you can activate. Here are the four names and what they give you.

Sherman: Avatargod, Teamgod,

Explore, Win Mission.

Rommel: Big Noggin, Mega Noggin, Clod Hopper, Stumpy
Ike: 5 Finger Dissout, 1-900, Turn Punch Kick, Silent but Deadly.

Grant: The Shadow Knows, Team Shadow, Fast Action Team, No Brainer.

Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2

UNLOCK ALL BOXERS

From the main menu, choose Arcade Mode. Then select one or two players. On the boxer select screen, press Left, Right, Left, Left, Right, Up, Down, R-Trigger, R-Trigger, R-Trigger, R-Trigger, R-Trigger, L-Trigger. A bell will sound and all the characters will now be available.

*Hi Rise
Chicago, IL*

Unreal Tournament

LEVEL SKIP

From the main menu, choose Tournament. Begin a new game. Choose your name, skill level and skin. Then begin the Deathmatch. On the match select screen, choose Oblivion. In the middle of the game, press START to pause. Then press Up, Down, Left, Right, Left. The game will take you back to the match select screen, and the next level will be open to play. Do this trick multiple times to open up every level and new ladders along the way.



Conker's Bad Fur Day

BAD FUR CODES

From the main menu (where you can choose chapters, options, etc.), access the options screen. Move down and select "Cheats." On the "Cheats" screen, put in any of these passwords for the results as shown.

Play as Weasel Henchman in Multi Games:

CHINDITVICTORY (Deathmatch and Race games.)

Play as the Cavemen in Multi Games:

EATBOX (Deathmatch and Race games.)

Play as Villager and Zombies in Multi Games:

BEEFCURTAINS (Deathmatch and Race games.)

Play as Sergeant and Tedi Leader in Multi Games:

RUSTYSHERIFFSBADGE (Deathmatch and Race games.)

Play as Grim Reaper and Skeleton in Multi Games:

BILLYMILLROUNDABOUT (Deathmatch and Race games.)

Play as Conker in Multi Games:

WELLYTOP (Deathmatch and Race games.)

Play as Neo Conker in Multi Games:

EASTEREGGSRUS (Deathmatch and Race games.)

Decapitation Effect in Deathmatch:

SPUNKJOCKEY (In the Multi Deathmatch (skull icon) game, choose a one-player game.



TOP 10 TRICKS

The top 10 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





TRICKS

TOP 10 TRICKS (CONTINUED)

codes to unlock the following features. The screen will shake when each of these tricks is entered correctly. **Unlimited Special 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, Square, X, X, X, Square. **Obese Skater:** X, X, X, X, Left, X, X, X, Left, X, X, X, Left.

3. Donkey Kong 64

Play Jetpac Anytime

After acquiring 15 Banana Medals, go to Cranky and play the Jetpac game. To obtain the Rareware Coin, you must get 5,000 points in the game. After you do this, take pictures of six fairies with your camera and you will be able to play the Jetpac game any time. Just go to the "Mystery" menu to find this option!

4. Mario Tennis

Cup Passwords

From the main menu, access the "Special Games" option. In the Special Games menu, choose the Ring Tournament. Now, on the "Code Entry" screen, put in the password for the Cup you want to play. After you play one of these tournaments, you will receive a new code to rank you on the mariotennis.com Web site. **Mario Cup:** A3W5KQa3C
Luigi Cup: M1C2YQM3W
Peach Cup: Of9XFQOFR
Donkey Kong Cup: MM55MQMMJ
Wario Cup: UOUFMPUOM
Waluigi Cup: LA98JRLAR
Bowser Cup: N24KBN2P
Mariotennis.com Cup: 4BHWOR482
Blockbuster Cup: ARM6JQARU

5. Super Smash Bros.

Borrow a Life

When playing a team multiplayer match, if you are defeated by your teammate

When you have a sword or chainsaw, hit an opponent. Some of the time you will get a cool rotation effect with the decapitation, but it is random.)

Open Heist Chapter:

CHOCOLATESTARFISH

Open It's War Chapter:

BEELZEBUBSBUM

Open Spooky Chapter:

SPANIELSEARS

Open Uga Buga Chapter:

MONKEYSCHIN

Open Sloprano Chapter:

ANCHOVYBAY

Open Bats Tower Chapter:

CLAMPIRATE

Open Barn Boys Chapter:

PRINCEALBERT

Open All Chapters and Scenes:

WELDERSBENCH

WCW Backstage Assault

1. NO DAMAGE

On the main menu screen, press R-Shift, R-Shift, B, R-Shift, R-Shift, B. When you begin a one-player game, your wrestler will not take any damage from the CPU opponent.



Fear Effect 2

MULTIPLE CODES

To do these tricks, you must beat the game at least once. Then begin a new game and wait until the cinema ends. After Rain goes into the next room, move Hana forward until the view changes. You will see a control panel on the left side of



the screen. Move up to the panel until you see the "Use" command appear. Press the Triangle button to access the panel. Once you do this, enter one of the following number codes to initiate these tricks.

Huge Head: 10397

Every Weapon: 11692

Infinite Ammo: 61166

Medal of Honor: Underground

PANZERKNACKER UNLEASHED MISSION

From the main menu screen, choose the options. Access the "Passwords" screen, put in ENTREZVOUS and press the Send key. Enter the password screen again, put in LEMONSTRE for the code and press the Send key. Now go to the Save, Load and Records screen and access the Mission Log. You will see the Panzerknacker Unleashed mission available on the bottom of the screen.

NBA Hoopz

NUMEROUS CODES

On the "Tonight's Matchup" screen, enter these codes with the Turbo, Shoot and Pass buttons the number of times shown, and then press the D-pad in the direction indicated by the code (for 4-3-2 Up, you would press Turbo four times, Shoot three times, Pass two times and then press Up).

ABA Ball: 1-1-1 Right

Show Hotspot: 1-1-0 Down

No Goaltending: 4-4-4 Left

No Fouls (2P must agree):



2-2-2 Right

Big Heads: 3-0-0 Right

Tiny Heads: 3-3-0 Left

Infinite Turbo: 3-1-2 Up

Beach Court: 0-2-3 Left

Granny Shots: 1-2-1 Left

No Hotspots (2P must agree):

3-0-1 Up

Street Court: 3-2-0 Left

Home Uniform: 0-1-4 Right

2. **Tiny Players:** 5-4-3 Left

Show Shot Percentage:

0-1-1 Down

Away Uniform: 0-2-4 Right



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

Power Rangers: Lightspeed Rescue

VARIOUS CHEATS

From the main menu, access the codes option. On the Codes screen, put in any of these passwords to unlock these features. Once you've entered the ones you want, move down to initiate the codes on the Activate Codes screen.

Level Select: OMEGA

Unlimited Health: D4B7E109G7
(Note: O = the letter O, not Zero)

Titanium Ranger: ULTIMATE
Continues: FOREVER

All Galleries: SHOWCASE

Unlimited Lives: IMMORTAL

Unlimited RPE Moves:
N7F6U2A5A1

Supercross

RIDERS' GALORE

On the main menu, access the Game Options. Then move down and access the Enter Codes option. Put in these passwords to unlock many different riders as shown.

- 4. Tricky The Clown:** POLKADOT
MR-34 Robot: METALDUDE
Billy Ray MudMullet: POSSUMPANCAKES
Happy Smiley: HAVENICEDAY
Bones: MARROWMAN
Sarcophagus Jones: PYRAMIDScheme
Space Overlord: BUNGAVEE
Harry Bigfoot: MMSQUIRREL
Astro Nut: ONESMALLSTEP
Hot Tub Harvey: HARVEYSAYSRELAX
Moto Samurai: HONORFIRST
Some Guy: WHOSTHAT
Doctor Invisco: LOOKMANOBODY
TieDye Guy: MELLOWOUT
The King: SIDEBURNS
Smitty Sugarlegs: ENDZONEDANCE
EA Guy: EASPORTSRIDE
Supercross Avenger: TRIPLELEAPER
Agent Albert: PEANUTBUTTER
Bob Page: FORTYFOUR
Brave Scotsman: PLAIDROCKS
David Bailey: IRONMAN
EA Gal: LETSGOEGAL
The Zombie: LOVESBRAINS
Ecko Rider: WWWCKOCOM
El Luchador: MASKEDMAN
Freedom Fighter: AMERICAN
Johnny O'Marra: 4XUSMXDNCHAMP
Roger DeCoster:



9XBELGIANCHAMP
Spitt Polish: THREEPICESUIT
Dave Davis: MACK DADDY

Triple Play Baseball

TRIPLE PLAY DREAM TEAM

On the main menu screen, choose Single Game. Then choose any difficulty setting, number of innings and controllers. When you reach the Team Select screen, press Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right. Now the Triple Play Dream Team will appear as a playable team.

GAME BOY COLOR

Army Men: Air Combat

LEVEL SELECT

On the main menu, press Down until the Password option appears. Now put in the following symbols to access these levels.

- Mission 2:** Box, Cross Medal, Box, Box
Mission 3: Bullet, Bullet, Bullet, Cross Medal
Mission 4: Stripes, Bullet, Box, Box

1-900-PRE VIEW

773 8439

The number to call for the latest cheats & gaming info

- Mission 5:** Cross Medal, Stripes, Cross Medal, Bullet
Mission 6: Helmet, Bullet, Stripes, Helmet
Mission 7: Box, Cross Medal, Bullet, Cross Medal
Mission 8: Bullet, Stripes, Cross Medal, Helmet
Mission 9: Stripes, Stripes, Bullet, Bullet
Mission 10: Cross Medal, Helmet, Cross Medal, Helmet
Mission 11: Helmet, Stripes, Cross Medal, Helmet
Mission 12: Box, Cross Medal, Stripes, Stripes
Mission 13: Bullet, Cross Medal, Helmet, Helmet
Mission 14: Stripes, Cross Medal, Box, Stripes
Mission 15: Cross Medal, Box, Stripes, Helmet
Mission 16: Helmet, Cross Medal, Bullet, Stripes

Star Wars Episode 1: Obi Wan's Adventures

LEVEL SELECT CODES

- On the main menu screen, access the Password option. On the Password screen, enter any of the codes listed to go to that level.
- Stage 2 - The Trade Federation Landing Craft:** BQVQK
Stage 3 - The Naboo Swamp: WNLRLM
Stage 4 - Naboo Swamp & Sacred Place: SDGNK
Stage 5 - Coruscant: CNLML
Stage 6 - The Catabombs of Theed: BXGTG
Stage 7 - The Streets of Theed: QSRVJ
Stage 8 - Queen Amidala's Palace: TKGJZ
Stage 9 - The Final Battle: LPZCP

TOP 10 TRICKS (CONTINUED)

still has one or more lives in stock, you can use one of his lives to get back in the action by pressing A+B+Z+START. Be sure to ask for permission from your friend.

Change Outfits

You can change your character's outfits by tapping the four C buttons at the character select screen.

6. 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 L2 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.

7. NBA 2K1

Hidden Teams

From the main menu, access the options screen, then select "Codes." On the "Cheats Codes" screen, type in vc as your password and then the Enter key. The screen will then say that the Superstars feature has been unlocked.

8. Tekken 3

Ball Mode

You must see all 10 of the original characters' endings. Once you do this, Ball Mode will be available from the main menu.

9. SSX

Unlock Everything

Down, Left, Up, Right, X, Circle, Triangle, Square. This will give you access to all riders, outfits, boards and courses in the game.

10. Driver

Invincibility

Go to the Main Menu /Title Screen and enter the tricks as shown. To activate the cheat, move right until you highlight the police car and then access the Cheats Menu. Press L2, L2, R2, R2, L2, R2, L2, L1, R2, R1, L2, L1, L1. The Invincibility option will now be unlocked in the Cheats Screen.

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE ADDICT

ファンタジーオンライン

Got your own PSO tidbit for us? Send us a letter or e-mail 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 something extra.

DARK FALZ'S 4TH FORM

When you fight Dark Falz Hard or Very Hard, he unleashes his fourth and most powerful form. In this form, he has three new attacks and two special forms of defense. His attacks always follow the same order:

First, he floats high into the air and hurls several blue balls of energy at you (these are easy to avoid if you just keep running), then he will cast Grants on you. This spell is unavoidable and does major damage. The only way to lessen the damage is to boost your Light defense, with armor, shields or Resist units (Resist/Saint is good and easy to find).

If you survive Grants, you should immediately heal yourself to full, as Dark Falz's next attack comes quickly. After he floats back down, he'll swipe at you with his arm for another huge chunk of damage. This is a physical attack, so you'll need high DEF to survive.

After Dark Falz's three attacks are completed, you have a chance to hit him. However, whenever he's flashing, your attacks won't do any damage. The one exception to this rule is fire spells, so use your Rafoie if you've got it.

His second form of defense rarely comes into play, but it's very significant. If there is a large, flashing red beam connecting you and him on your radar, DO NOT ATTACK at all. If you hit him, you will take the damage instead.

Your source for anything and everything to do with PSO

By Expert Gamer's Kenneth Miller

DOOR KUNG FU

Playing online with only three people but that door takes four people to open? No problem! Just use the mystical powers of the martial arts to walk right through the door. It takes careful positioning, but once you learn how to do it, it's easy (unfortunately, this trick only works in the Caves and Mines).

Move your character as far into the corner of a doorway as possible, then turn diagonally so that you're facing the wall and your back is to the door. Unequip your weapon so that you're bare-handed and use the three-hit punch/kick combo one time. If you were at the right place, you should now be a little closer to the door than when you started. Next, carefully turn slightly toward the wall again and then do the combo a second time. Keep repeating this until your character is clipping through the door. Once you're there, just push toward the door and wiggle the control to pass the rest of the way through.

You can also use this method to pass through some force fields. If there's a wall nearby, you can treat the force field just like a door. Wedge yourself in with your back to the force field and start choppin' away.

One of the most useful ways to use this trick is in the offline Mines. Normally, after you beat the boss of the Mines, you must return to the first three levels to activate the pillars that open the door to the Ruins. Why not just walk through the door? It works just like any other closed door. Do this at your own risk, however, as skipping to the Ruins like this can sometimes make the game lock up.

ICE TO SEE YOU

Got hit by an unexpected ice trap? One of those Chaos Sorcerers nailed you with Gibarta? Either way, there's a good chance you're frozen in a block of ice. If you're surrounded by enemies, this can be one of the quickest ways in the game to die. When you're frozen, you can't use any commands on your controller or cast any spells. However, you can use items

PB DIVIDE

There is a little-known technique in PSO known as the Photon Blast Divide (or PB Divide for short). To perform a PB Divide, your PB gauge must be at least at 10. Then, when another player uses a Photon Blast, wait for just a moment after they activate it (but before the attack actually goes off) and press the Y button.

If done correctly, you will lose 10 points from your PB gauge, but the person who performed the PB attack will start with a instead of zero. If you have 30 or more points on your PB gauge, you can perform the PB Divide up to three times once (if you press the Y button fast enough) to bring their gauge up to 36. As a result, if you're playing with four people and three of them use PB Divide three times, the person who used the PB attack will regain his or her entire gauge!

The PB Divide is particularly useful for Forces or anyone else who doesn't fill their gauge to "full" very often.

from your inventory. This means you can use healing items to restore life or even a Sol Atomizer to just break out of the ice all together. Hit START immediately and do it.

STAY THERE AND TAKE IT

Although they aren't as bad as being frozen, there are other things that will force you to stand still. Specifically, we're talking about the Grass Assassin's breath attack in the Caves and the falling traps in the Ruins. Normally, getting caught in one of those situations means you're gonna take some damage, but we found a trick to break free. When you're caught in either trap, drop any item (one Meseta is easiest), then simply walk out. Don't ask us why, but it works.

FOR YOUR EYES ONLY

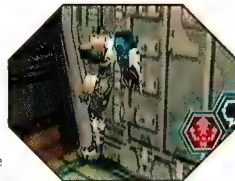
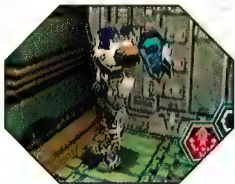
Curious as to what you look like to your fellow PSO players? It just so happens that you can see the world through their eyes.

Whenever you're in a dungeon with other players (it won't work offline or in town), just plug in another controller (it has to be an official Sega Dreamcast pad for some reason...) into any of the open ports on your Dreamcast. Then, hold L and R and press Up to switch between each person's view.

Not only is this fun, but it lets you keep tabs on another player who's in a different room. Unfortunately, if the player you're following leaves the level, your view will revert back to your own.

NEXT MONTH...

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



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FINAL WORD

Xbox and Sega get friendly



James Mielke



Chris Johnston



Greg Swart



Che Chou

James: When I first picked up the early vibrations that Panzer Dragoon might, inconceivably, make a return, I giggled. "No freakin' way," said I. Then when I learned that it would hit the Xbox, I blacked out. I immediately went back and played through the original Panzer Dragoon and then Panzer Zwei. Looking at what Team Andromeda did then, I could only imagine what Smilebit (composed of some key ex-Andromeda members) would do with the purported power of the Xbox. My dreams, as some would say, had come true. Panzer Dragoon had always been a stunning showcase of expertly used cinematics and simple, but evocative, gameplay.

"...even if the Xbox fails miserably, I'll still buy two just to play the new Panzer Dragoon."

Even today Panzer Zwei, and of course, Saga, look amazing, especially considering the hardware they were running on. Now Sega has nothing holding them back, and even if the Xbox fails miserably, I'll still buy two just to play the new Panzer Dragoon. Zwei and Saga are two of my favorite games ever and I haven't even discussed Gun Valkyrie and Jet Set Radio Future. Sweet Buddha! Pass the smelling salts, fellas. I feel faint.

Johnston: Having Sega develop Xbox games is certainly a plus for Microsoft. The only thing that would be better would be an announcement that Square's doing a Final Fantasy on it. Then again, Sega's going to be making games for everyone, including PS2 and GameCube. We still have no idea when these games will come out, and development is probably just getting started on Panzer and Jet Grind Future. Does this make me any more excited about Xbox? No. Maybe when I'm finally playing these games on an Xbox I'll be excited about it, but the mere announcement doesn't get me hot 'n' bothered for Microsoft's machine. It gets me about as excited as when Square showed off an N64 Final Fantasy-type demo or when Bernie Stolar said that Half Life would be one of the first online games for Dreamcast.

Sewart: I've gotta side with Chris here. While the Panzer Dragoon series is one of my all-time favorites, the mere announcement that the game should be coming to Xbox doesn't have me excited yet. Nostalgic, yes. I fired up all the old games after the announcement too and got a little teary-eyed over what Team Andromeda had accomplished on the Saturn. But, like CJ, I still remember when we were told that an online Baldur's Gate was a Dreamcast launch title, or seeing that famous Final Fantasy demo on the N64. The announcement isn't enough to get me that excited, I want screenshots. I want proof that the game is actually running on the Xbox and

that it's going to maintain the same epic look and feel of the original Saturn trilogy. Personally I'm still more excited about most of the upcoming Dreamcast titles than just about anything else right at the moment.

Che: Well it wasn't the Microsoft/Square announcement I wanted, but Sega on the Xbox is the next best thing. I'm hoping the list of stuff announced at TGS will just continue to expand as we move into E3 and beyond. Where's Virtua Fighter 4? Where will Sonic reside after his final hurrah on the Dreamcast? And with the popularity of Phantasy Star Online, which console will be the next to walk down Sega's bold new path? Unlike CJ and Greg (those haters!) I am certainly excited about Panzer Dragoon. Hello! This is Panzer Dragoon people! A franchise we thought was left for dead in the annals of vintage gaming. I'll reserve further hype until I actually find out more about the game and see some screens. After all, it could be some sort of Panzer Dragoon first-person shooter. I shudder to think. As for the health of the Xbox in Japan, things don't look so good. MS might have a little fanfare around its launch but without exclusive titles from people like Square or strong first-party developers (Bungie? Gimme a break), it will lose to Nintendo and Sony in the long run. Bring on GameCube!

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NEXT MONTH

July 2001

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Game Boy Advance

It's only the follow-up to the best-selling system of all time, so you better believe Game Boy Advance will get the blowout treatment next month. We investigate how this "Trojan Horse" system will work hand-in-hand with the GameCube. We pick the best launch games. We'll preview every title in the works. Before you pick up a GBA on June 11, be sure to grab this essential issue first.



It's a double-feature feature—we'll deliver insider info on both the Final Fantasy and Tomb Raider summer flicks.



- **18 Wheeler: American Pro Trucker** reviewed for Dreamcast
- **First Game Boy Advance reviews**
- **Gran Turismo 3** hands-on preview for PlayStation 2
- **Phantasy Star Online version 2** preview for Dreamcast
- **Dark Cloud and Extermination** reviewed for PS2

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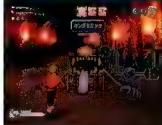
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- **Dark Cloud**
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- **Klonoa**
- **Pac-Man World**

"Zelda-killer." "Sony's Final Fantasy." By now you've surely heard the hype surrounding Sony's forthcoming "Georama" RPG. *OPM* tells you what it's all about in their in-depth feature. Plus, a look at all the latest games on display at this year's E3 show, including FFX, Silent Hill 2 and Alone in the Dark.



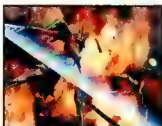
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- **Zone of the Enders BLOWOUT**
- **Mini-game strategies for Mario Party 3**
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Zone of the Enders

With excellent PS2 games finally starting to come in, it's no surprise that their lead strategy next month will be Konami's Zone of the Enders. Get all the info on ZOE and more in XG's next issue.



ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY

Trick of the Month

18 Wheeler: American Pro Trucker reviewed for Dreamcast

Letter of the Month

Dear Editor,

A Eligibility Contest open to residents of the United States and Canada. Winner: Non-compliance with the time parameters... (The rest of the text is partially obscured and difficult to read due to the image quality.)



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THREE HEROES ONE ENEMY ALL ACTION

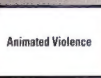
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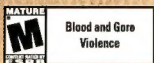
Cleverness is as deadly as the sharpest sword when wielded by one with ample fortitude and directness.



Strength in the physical being is multiplied tenfold by the Warrior who practices strength on matters of the mind and spirit.



Only through unyielding courage can a Warrior overcome those obstacles which at first appear overwhelming.



PlayStation 2



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