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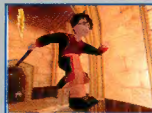
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(Yes, this is a cude. It's FFX's Tidus.) ▶



REVIEWED:

- Legends of Wrestling (PS2)
- Madden NFL 2002 (GC)
- Star Wars: Obi-Wan (Xbox)
- Harry Potter (PS, GBA)



PREVIEWED:

- Maximo (PS2)
- Spider-Man (PS2)
- Soul Calibur 2 (GC)
- Genma Onimusha (Xbox)

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PlayStation 2

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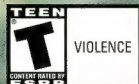
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*Day 7:
Combined fire and earth elements
to kill sleeth. Axion causing blisters,
out of bandages.*


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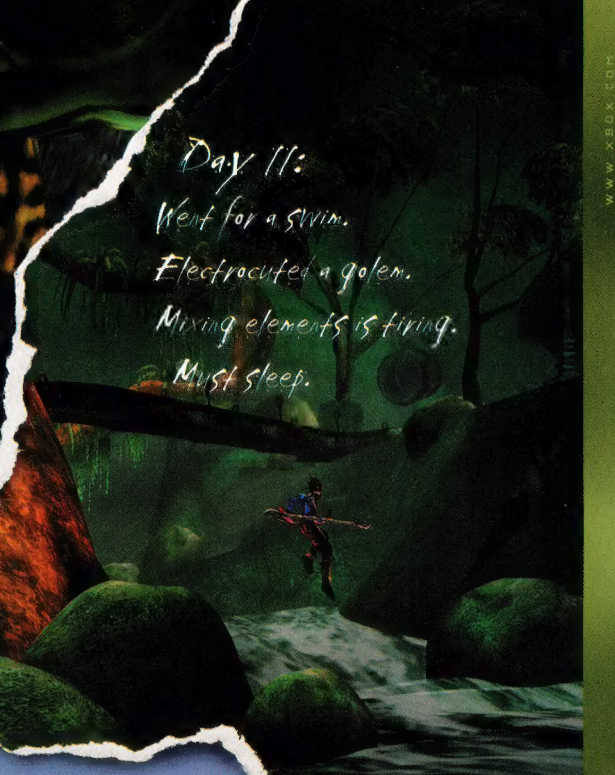
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It's a journey to save a world, and all you have is your trusty axion. Combine the elements of fire, water, earth, and air to fight and explore your way through the 6 vast realms of Perathia. Prevent the apocalypse and, well, survive.





*Day 11:
Went for a swim.
Electrocuted a golem.
Mixing elements is firing.
Must sleep.*

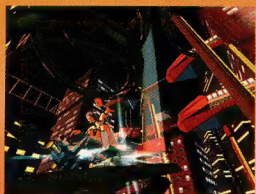
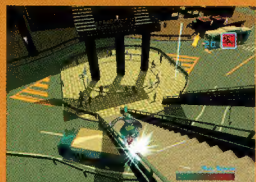


*Day 19:
Saving the world is lonely. Axion only friend.
Named him Bob. Funny Bob.*



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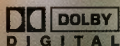
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PlayStation 2



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NAUGHTY DOG



Violence

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Game Directory

Features

Departments

- 93 AirBlade
- 158 All-Star Baseball 2002
- 168 Arc the Lad Collection
- 164 Azurik: Rise of Perathia
- 93 Blade 2
- 106 Bloodrayne
- 107 Blood Wake
- 98 Chris Edwards Aggressive Inline
- 106 Circus Maximus
- 164 Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2
- 90 Deus Ex: The Conspiracy
- 148 Drakan: The Ancients' Gate
- 168 F1
- 164 FIFA 2002
- 150-151 Final Fantasy X
- 156 Forever Kingdom
- 94 Freestyle
- 104 Genma Onimusha
- 148 Gitaroo Man
- 156 Grandia II
- 170,172 Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone
- 90 Herdy Gerdy
- 168 Hoshigami: Ruining Blue Earth
- 148 Jade Cocoon 2
- 108 King of Fighters EX: Neo Blood
- 152 Legends of Wrestling
- 164 Madden NFL 2002
- 88 Maximo: Ghosts to Glory
- 158,166 Max Payne
- 172 Mega Man X6
- 172 Mega Man Battle Network
- 154 Mobile Suit Gundam: Zeonic Front
- 92 Monster Jam: Maximum Destruction
- 94 MotoGP 2
- 154 NFL GameDay 2002
- 168 NHL Hitz 20-02
- 154 PaRappa the Rapper 2
- 106 RalliSport Challenge
- 102 Resident Evil
- 98 Resident Evil Survivor 2 Code: Veronica
- 156 Rez
- 156 Shadow Hearts
- 100 Smashing Drive
- 108 Sonic Advance
- 99 Sonic Adventure 2 Battle
- 100 Soul Calibur 2
- 92 Spider-Man
- 108 Star Giants
- 158 Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force
- 92 Star Wars: Jedi Starfighter
- 168 Star Wars: Obi-Wan
- 86-87 State of Emergency
- 160,162 Super Smash Bros. Melee
- 172 Tekken
- 94 Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002
- 158 Tsugunai: Atonement
- 107 Unreal Championship
- 158 Wizardry: Tale of the Forsaken Land
- 104 Wreckless: The Yakuza Missions



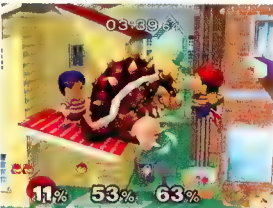
Let's face it, a few of us have lives to live (or like to think that we do) and there just isn't enough room in them to play every 40-hour role-playing game that we come across. Thumb through our 14-page **RPG Survival Guide** on **page 114** to find out which ones are worth your precious free time in the new year and beyond.



"Um, remember that time when Solid Snake dragged that girl? That was awesome!" Discover some tips and insight on Metal Gear 2, Halo and Tony Hawk 3 when we interview the developers in **Afterthoughts**, starting on **page 50**.



Got Hobbits? Not one, not two, but *three* new Lord of the Rings games are headed your way. Lace up your curly little shoes and follow us to **page 38**.



Wondering what's going to be hot in the next year of gaming? The **EGM** crew pulled their crystal ball out of storage to conjure up the **Slick List**. Find our predictions on **page 136**.



If you thought the L.A. riots were cool, then **State of Emergency** will make you purr. Put on your brass knuckles and turn to **page 86** to find out how you can beat up innocents and burn down landmarks like never before.

Looking to feed your hungry GameCube? Turn to **page 160** to check out our reviews of Super Smash Bros. Melee, Madden NFL 2002, All-Star Baseball 2002, FIFA 2002 and Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2.

Editorial 14

Letters 22

Press Start 36

Stood in line for a GameCube or Xbox? You weren't alone. Come along with **EGM** as we follow the lunacy behind the launches. Also, find out what the man behind the music for Streets of Rage and Shenmue is up to.

Gossip 64



Previews 83

It's a PS2 bonanza! Check out Capcom's next big game, Maximo; LucasArts' *Episode II* romp, Jedi Starfighter; and more. Also: Sonic Adventure 2 on GameCube and Unreal Championship for Xbox.

Review Crew 146

If you're one of the few souls who didn't catch the Harry Potter movie, then take pride in your defiant hipness and ignore our PlayStation and Game Boy Advance reviews of the video game adaptations. But you can't miss our gargantuan reviews of Final Fantasy X and Legends of Wrestling.

Tricks 174

So you're not as good a gamer as you thought, eh? Try our fresh new codes that include Tony Hawk 3 (GC), Rogue Leader (GC) and Grand Theft Auto III (PS2).

The Final Word 188





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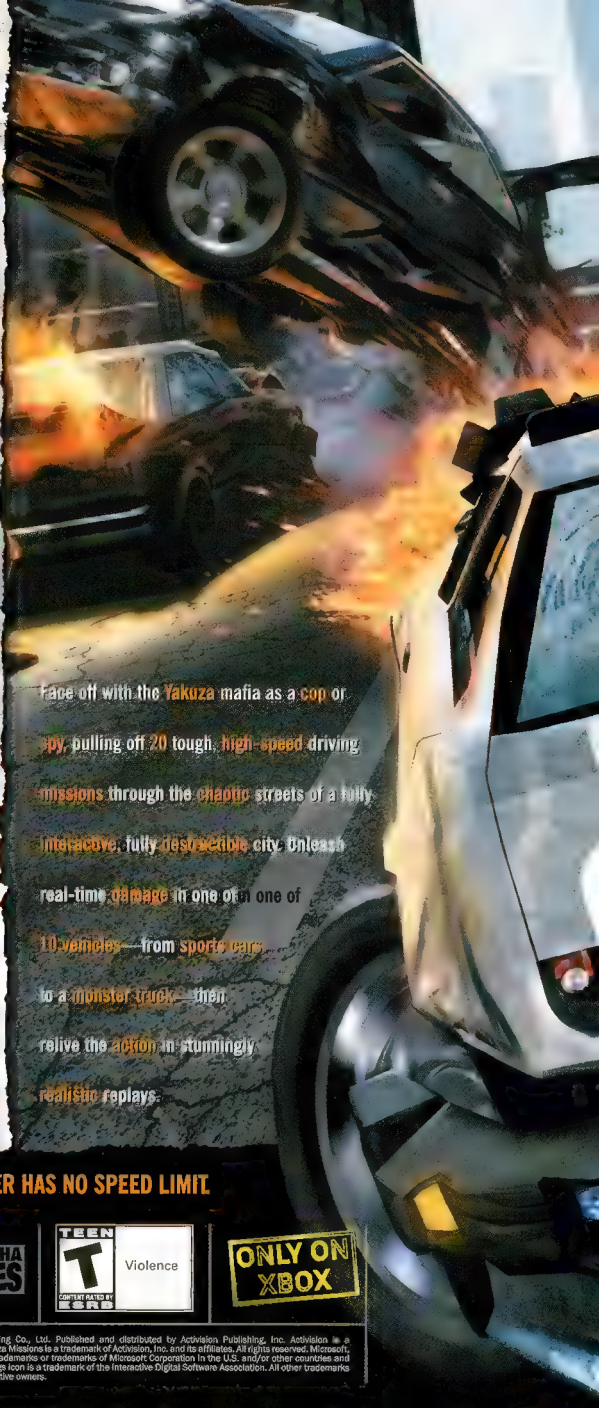
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MAY TAKE THE CLASSIC OLD SCHOOL BRAWLER
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SEEN AND PLAYED, IT'S AS FUN AS THEY COME."



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PEOPLE FILL THE SCREEN - EACH CITIZEN
REACTS DIFFERENTLY TO EVENTS



PICK UP ITEMS OFF THE STREET AND
USE THEM TO FIGHT YOUR OPPRESSORS



DEEP SELECTION OF HAND-TO-HAND
FIGHTING MOVES AND TONS OF SUPER-
DESTRUCTIVE WEAPONS ARE AT YOUR DISPOSAL

PlayStation[®]2

VIS



Shrapnel impact at 600+mph
Mon Calamari.

Swapping paint with Skywalker.
Tatooine.



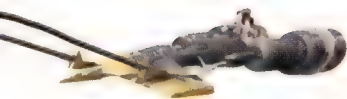
Turbo-boost slice between canyon wall and Dud Bolt.
Sullust.

PlayStation 2

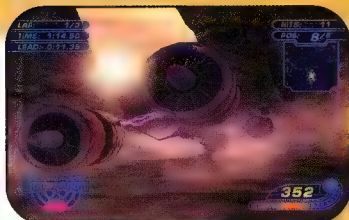
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- Letters written without the use of the letter "n": 17
- Love letters to Jeanne Kim: Zero. Zero?! What happened to all you guys?
- Number of letters successfully diagramming cold fusion: One. Nice work, kid.

Letters to the Editors

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Unlikely Inspiration

A couple of my friends and hundreds of others like them have never had the joy of playing video games. When their parents hear some anti-video game advocate spouting out all types of horrible things that will happen to their kids if they set hands on a controller, they keep their kids away. But for every bad story we hear in connection with games, there is at least one good story.

Look at all the creative exploration in the form of fan art that has spawned

pressures growing up, and there is no one solution (like cutting out or avoiding video games) to the different problems children end up having. It is the parents' responsibility to moderate a child's activity and have the intelligence to make specific judgment calls. Knee-jerk reacting to every bad incident reported that has a remote or coincidental link to video games is just grasping for a quick answer.

Jason H. Wells
Chesterfield, MO

"The content, music and technical prowess of some games can awaken talents that people might not know they have."

from video games. A friend of mine, who is now in art school, got her start drawing Cloud from Final Fantasy VII because she liked the game so much. I have another friend who is now an accomplished pianist. The first thing that got her playing was the theme from Star Ocean 2. After finishing Suikoden II, I was curious about all the dishes the chef was making in the game (tempura, croquettes) and decided to learn to cook them myself. I know several bright kids who went into programming or math because of their interest in computer and video games.

Not every video game is centered on violence and killing. The content, music and technical prowess of some games can spawn talents that people might not know they have. Kids face a lot of

We couldn't have said it better ourselves, Jason. Video games always get blamed for a lot of the incidents involving youth violence because they're an easy target. It's just as wrong as lashing out at movies, television or the media. It's up to the parents to control their child's exposure to these different elements. Hopefully people will come to realize this in time. Video games are slowly working their way into our culture as a more legitimate form of entertainment than the mindless activity many still see them as. For all those with parents like Jason described: Keep on sticking up for what you believe in, and don't let the man get you down...or something like that.

Congratulations Jason Wells. You win an InterAct GameShark for PlayStation 2, Dreamcast, Nintendo 64 or Game Boy Color.



Games have been making a positive influence on society for decades. Rampage 2 inspired King Kong to scale the Empire State building in the '50s. "I was intimidated at first," Kong admitted, "but the game made it look easy. I'm glad I did it; I'd do it again."

Halo Hella Hard

Like many kids, I have asked my parents for an Xbox this holiday. All the commotion surrounding Halo makes me think it's a must-buy for me. The problem is that I'm not a great gamer. You guys mentioned that Legendary difficulty was the best way to play Halo, but I'm afraid I won't be able to beat it on that level. Is Halo worth buying if I'm not good enough to beat the game?

Danny Wardwell
DRWFUNNY@aol.com

You raise a good point, Danny. While we recommend that anyone who buys Halo play and finish it on Legendary, it's not a difficulty level for those who haven't played a good deal of first-person shooters in the past. You may even have trouble with Normal mode; it's not very easy itself. If you do end up with an Xbox, pick up Munch's Oddysee or Col Damage if you want a fun game that doesn't require a lot of technical mastery. Definitely put Halo on your list further down the line, though. You'll thank us when you're old and gray.

E3 Show: Go, Or No?

Ever since I read about the Electronic Entertainment Expo in 2001, I've been wanting to know all about the next show. When is it? How old do you have to be to get in? Where is it and how much does it cost to go? It is my destiny to go!

Danny Wardwell
DRWFUNNY@aol.com

Whoa! Slow down there, little buddy. You've got moxie, but that'll only get ya so far. Technically, E3 is a trade show open only to industry types like game developers, publishers, journalists (cough!) and caterers. But, we'll make you a deal. For three grand in small bills...no, no, that's not what we meant to say. What we meant is that you can go to www.e3expo.com and learn all about the nitty-gritty rules and regulations surrounding the industry mecca. You have until May 2002 to get a job in the biz, or if it's like politics, you can probably buy your way in somehow.



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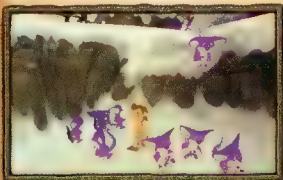
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A New Hero.

PlayStation®2



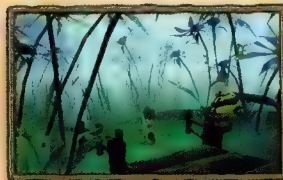
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HERDY GERDY™

February 2002



LETTERS

SHORTS

Shorts spelled backward is **Strohs**. Don't drink beer, kids.

I read your review on Halo last month. It sounded like a good game with a good story and great multiplayer, but I was wondering if the multiplayer is better than GoldenEye's? It may have more levels, better graphics, and can handle more players, but is it better?

porsche_lover43@yahoo.ca

Imagine, if you will, the largest pile of steaming manure you've ever seen in your entire life. Magnify it 300 times and you've got the very tip of a much larger, steamier pile of horse waste that represents every second spent playing multiplayer GoldenEye that could be spent playing multiplayer Halo.

With *GameFan* and *NextGen* now gone, I only get two magazines a month. I used to buy your mag all the time at the newsstand. I never subscribed because I always wanted a reason to go to Electronics Boutique. Needless to say, I never pay more than \$12.95 for a subscription, so if you bill me for that amount, I will send you a check.

wayne7@adelphia.net

Needless to say, you're just going to have to keep getting your free issues of *Hit Parade* every month if you're not willing to pay whatever nominal fee we're charging nowadays. This ain't a used-car dealership, bub. Our subscriber fees are not negotiable.

If You're So Damn Smart...

We asked you to send us your picks for best and worst games of all time, and boy, did you let us have it. Here are some that didn't make our lists. Feel free to compare these reader choices to the correct answers in *EGM* issue #150.

Personal Tops



I believe that two glaring omissions do exist in your otherwise perfect list. The one that stands out in my mind as the most unforgivable is the omission of **River City Ransom** for the Nintendo.

Kirby's Superstar for the Super Nintendo should also be on the list.

magitower@yahoo.com

Secret of Mana was possibly one of the greatest Super Nintendo games ever (next to **Super Metroid**, of course). The story was great, the characters were memorable, the music was amazing, and it's the greatest co-op game I've seen in a while.

slmjim1414@hotmail.com

What happened to **Xenogears**? I kept on wondering why you guys would skip the best RPG of all time! It had great gameplay and plot. Its only rival was **Persona 2**. How about an honorable mention for it?

Battleoid@aol.com

I'm not trying to tell you how to run a magazine, but **Jet Grind Radio** and **Shenmue** should have placed in the Top 100.

redarwing3@yahoo.com

The best game ever, without a doubt, is **Final Fantasy VIII**. It's so different from any RPG that came before it. It eradicated the tired concepts of leveling up and the old "dungeon-town-dungeon"-style of progression. The story was driven by its cast, not by its plot—the characters are the most relevant of any RPG.

MUDIogenesis10@aol.com

Terrible Flops

Home Improvement for the Super Nintendo. It's based on the TV series and has as much to do with the show as comedy. It's basically Tim "The Tool Man" Taylor stranded in a jungle armed with a staple gun, which he uses to attack armadillos, crows and other animals not found in jungles.

jeff_hardy17356@yahoo.com

Ever play **Plumbers Don't Wear Ties** for the 3DO? It was a dating sim where making the right decision could get you (a plumber) the blonde. If you gave her the seven correct lines, you won the game and got to watch some crappy pictures. Just thinking about it makes me want to cry.

zap4099@lycos.com

My worst Christmas ever followed my opening **Bill Laimbeer's Combat Basketball** for the Super Nintendo. The closest it came to basketball was the resounding slam-dunk into the trash can. Thanks for the memories.

josh.5674@rcn.com



Last Action Hero. The game was awful for the same reason that **Total Recall** was: Arnold would get his head beaten in by any street thug in the first level. After the 12th time that happened, I had to take the thing back to the video store before I broke it clean in half.

josh.5674@rcn.com

King Arthur's World. It's a good thing the Super Nintendo mouse cord is so short; this game makes you want to hang yourself.

quaes@yahoo.com

Question of the Moment

Were you able to buy your console of choice, and are you satisfied with it so far?

I bought an Xbox on the day it came out and have had many sleepless nights playing Halo and Project Gotham Racing since. Then I figured out how to play Halo online, and I forgot what sleep and work was. Holy cow, this thing is fun! It's heaven in a big old black box.

Ben_Elper@csx.com

No, but if I could it would be GameCube. I think I'm getting one for Christmas and if I do, I will play nonstop!

noodlesnose88@hotmail.com

I was able to purchase both consoles on the launch days, expecting to like GameCube more. But so far, I've found myself playing Xbox way more. It just has better games.

Bence@home.com

No, I did not! The guy at the counter was like, "Philips CD-1?"

m_richard_albert@hotmail.com

I spent my money on the one system guaranteed not to flop: **Game Boy Advance**. Now excuse me, but Castlevania beckons.

z5redheads@mymailstation.com

I got a GameCube and I absolutely love it. I have Luigi's Mansion (which is REALLY good) and Rogue Leader. I also plan to get an Xbox in early 2002 'cause it has a crapload of potential.

MicroKaje@aol.com

Luckily, I got my PS2 for my b-day, and I love it! Not only for the games, but because I can play DVDs! Very cool (thanks Dad).

mfamily4@msn.com

What the heck? Already? I don't have enough money to spend on all of them! I just got a Dreamcast, and now I'm saving for a PS2!

b69812@cswebmail.com

Next Month's Question of the Moment:

What one thing do you most want to see change about video games in 2002?

Send your short but sweet responses to: EGM@ziffdavis.com

with the subject heading:

Ch-Ch-Changes

GII

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Mild Violence



PlayStation 2



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Oak Brook, IL
60522-3338
e-mail: EGM@ziffdavis.com

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

Also note: Although we can't respond to every letter, as far as you know, we do read them all. Also, everything you send us is ours to keep!

Metranroyed

I read your top 100 games of all time, and thought it was pretty good. But the question I must ask is, why Super Metroid? I never played the game until a couple of weeks ago. I went to my local pawn shop and picked up the game. I was expecting something absolutely incredible, but what I got was the same spikey heads rolling around the floor that were in first place. I gave it an hour, and I was still shooting the spikey heads.

A while later my friend came over and started to point and laugh, telling me that the game is a complete pile. At that point, I shut the game off. I, too, thought the game sucked! How can both of us be completely wrong? I mean this game doesn't come off to me as good, let alone the best game of all time. I could go on about MDK2, San Francisco Rush 2049, Tekken 3 or DOA2.... Could you at least explain to me what the big deal is about this game?

Dave
davemay89@hotmail.com

To each his own, Dave. But we've got a feeling you're going to be getting a lot of surprised, angry or at least explanatory letters via e-mail from other readers. Maybe you need to give the game more time, but maybe you and your friends are just into different types of games than we are; none of the games you mentioned even made our list.

It sounds like you're into a lot of predominantly multiplayer stuff, and many of us feel that a very strong single-player title deserved our top pick. Without reprinting what we already said in the feature text about it, that's what Super Metroid is to us: an incredible solo adventure. Give us the benefit of the doubt and play through it. If you still feel the same way, no biggie. We'll just file your letter under "alien weirdos."

Misplaced Regression

Can you guys help me find my Super Nintendo and Atari? I can't find them anywhere. My parents put them somewhere, but I don't know where, so

you'll have to think like parents if I'm going to find them. I think it's probably in the attic or that place where you put a car...

Brian
Gohan-X@Lelola.zzn.com

The garage, Brian? Is that what you're thinking of, the garage? That's not a bad place to start, or if you think it's in the attic, go for it. You might just want to try asking your parents, too, but we're not going to tell you your business. We're always eager to help, though. So we asked our art director and resident parent, Cyril Wochok, for his advice:

EGM: Hey Cy...
Cyril: What? What the hell is it now?
EGM: Where would you put a Super Nintendo and an Atari if you were storing them at your house?
Cyril: You kids get off my damn lawn!

Sorry, Brian, it's no good. I guess it's true that DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince say: Parents just don't understand.

MORE SHORTS

I just got an Xbox and have 100 bucks to spend. I want to get Halo, but my parents are not letting me. Any tips on how I can get them to let me have it? It looks like the best game ever; I must have it!
the_calt57@hotmail.com

We try to stay out of family issues, but may we suggest pointing them to our review, in which we discuss the game as a legitimate piece of art? You should also tell them that it will keep you away from temptations like drugs and girls. If that doesn't work, whip out some BS about hand-eye coordination improvement.

Props to Seanbaby

I just wanted to let you know that the "Crapstravaganza" feature was, hands down, the funniest thing I've ever read. My roommates and I read it part by part so we could savor the literally tear-inducing, 12-year-old schoolgirl laughter that left us feeling like we'd just done 400 situps. Keep it up; you've got a dedicated cult following as of now here in Tucson. When you want us to start the riot, just say the word.
xriskbreakerx@hotmail.com

Shh, Ix-nay on the iot-ray. Seriously, though, thanks for the kind words, guys. We can't take the credit for that so Worst Games feature, it was all Seanbaby (with a side of Crispin Boyer), but at least you're enjoying the mag.

Oops

In issue #150's Top 100 feature, we showed a shot of Samurai Shodown II! where we should have dropped in a picture of Samurai Shodown II. We noticed it, but a little too late...

LETTER ART, DRAGONBALL FREE FOR 15 MONTHS

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Congratulations, M. Bellabe Castlevania certainly 'rules.' Your prize is on the way—an InterAct GameShark for PlayStation 2, PlayStation, Dreamcast, Nintendo 64 or Game Boy Color.



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(or e-mail EGM@ziffdavis.com)

Be sure to include a mailing address, and tell us what system you'd like your prize for, in case you win. All entries become the property of Ziff Davis Media Inc. and will not be returned!

Not quite Sharkworthy...

Close, but no tame. Better luck next time.



Brenton Smelser
Edgewood, MD



Jason Osborne
Anaheim, CA

For Letter of the Month and Letter Art of the Month contests, no purchase is necessary. If we really bore and want to read the complete contest regulations, please visit egm.gamers.com or write us at: EGM Contests Legal Rules Report, EGM, Box 3338, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3338. After reading the rules, please get a life. Don't forget to tell us what system you'd like your prize for, and don't forget to give us your physical mailing address. Otherwise we won't know where to send your final breath.

Oh Vince, I did
so want to move
to Los Angeles.

Yeah, well bust out
the mittens, Buttercup.
I just signed for
7 with Toronto.



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XBOX

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PlayStation 2

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AND MIX.

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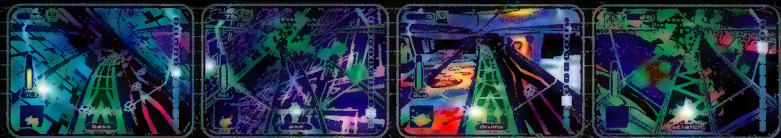
DX-1700 NAMING PROCESSOR

MONEY
MONKEY
MOOSE
MOP
MOPED
MUDBALL
MULLET
MUMBLE

THING
MONKEY

STATUS:
NAMING IN PROGRESS
MC SOUR MONKEY

**NAME THAT FITS
SKILLZ.**



FREQUENCY

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CONTENT RATED BY
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Mild Lyrics

ZOO



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PlayStation 2

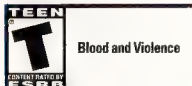
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By Chris Johnston chris_johnston@ziffdavis.com
& Jonathan Dudlak jonathan_dudlak@ziffdavis.com

Press Start

The Hottest Gaming News on the Planet

Game(Cube) On!

The system with a handle launches in the U.S.



The line for GameCube at the Aurora, Ill. Babbage's.

Christmas came early in the middle of November when not one, but two consoles launched three days apart—Xbox on Nov. 15 and GameCube on Nov. 18. That week, both machines battled not only each other, but the release of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* and the biggest PlayStation 2 release of the year, *Metal Gear Solid 2*.

Gamers with leftover cash on Sunday strolled into their local game store and walked out \$200 lighter, GameCube in hand. Lines formed early in the morning, but chances are if you were there on day one and wanted a system, you didn't go home disappointed. After all, there were 740,000 of them for the whole continent. In informal polls taken by the EGM staff, *Rogue Leader* and *Luigi's Mansion* seemed to be the

most popular titles, with the 'Cube Madden close behind.

Not to be outdone by the weekend's other hot property, Nintendo boasted that GC was "hotter than *Potter*," racking up hardware and software sales totalling an estimated \$98 million, to *Potter's* box-office take of \$90.3 million. (Although if movie tickets were \$200 apiece, we're sure the scales would be reversed... slightly.)

It's a bit premature (and too close) to call a winner until the sales numbers are accurately tallied. Both are declaring victory in their own way. Nintendo says they sold more GCs than Xboxes, while Microsoft is content to say they sold more games per system (and will not divulge how many units they shipped). Whatever the case, the battle is far from over. We'll be there to keep you updated.



A girl snatches a GC from a helpless Mario, whose costume unfortunately lacks articulating hands.



When you leave dozens of GC titles on the counter, an angry mob of gamers comes and buys them all.

THE WORD ON THE STREET

We stopped some of the new 'Cube owners leaving the local Babbage's store on launch day to ask 'em a few questions. Here's what they had to say:



What games are you looking forward to on GameCube?

"Metroid Prime and the new Mario game that's coming out next year."

And do you like the GC's mini-DVD format?

"It's fine. It's about the quality of the games and how much fun it is, not the size of the discs."

— Rob Shelby, Naperville, IL

Why'd you pick GameCube over Xbox?

"I think Microsoft should've stayed out of it. Nintendo's always done the best game systems ever."

— Joe McCune, Oswego, IL



Why'd you get GameCube over Xbox?

"For one thing, it's cheaper. You can get the system and a couple games for \$300, and it would take that much just to get the Xbox system. And it's just as powerful."

You can't store as much memory on the GameCube, but when it comes down to graphics and gameplay, it's just as good."

— James Keathley, Chicago, IL

What makes GameCube the best system?

"Well, I like Nintendo systems. And I like the GameCube. It looks really cool."

What's your favorite Nintendo game? "Ummm...

[pauses] I have a lot. I like all of 'em."

— Kevin Long, Naperville, IL





WHEN GOOD PIKMIN GO BAD

Here you see Captain Olimar cleverly disguised as a human leading a herd of Pikmin to a Los Angeles Target location. Or it might just be a bunch of gamers dressed as Pikmin harassing some guy as he goes to pick up his "Cube on launch morning. Yeah, we liked the Captain Olimar version of the story better too.

Xbox Sees Green

Microsoft enters the lucrative console market



The first Xbox buyer at the Microsoft-sponsored launch party at San Francisco's Embarcadero Electronics Boutique.

Two years ago, you couldn't talk about Microsoft without Windows and Bill Gates popping up in the same sentence. The corporate goliath launched a major upgrade to their trademark operating system in the form of Windows XP on Oct. 25, but millions of eyes were instead focused on mid-November, when the hype-laden Xbox took to store shelves. Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates makes the distinction that while both XP and Xbox are "super-important" to the company, they "didn't bring The Rock to the Windows XP launch." (The Rock was on hand for Microsoft's big Xbox launch event at the newly remodeled Toys R Us store in Times Square).

Nov. 15 marked Microsoft's first foray into console gaming at a time when Sony's PlayStation 2 and Nintendo's GameCube (the latter of which came out just three days afterward) would pose formidable competitive threats. But Microsoft didn't seem to mind being the greenhorn in this multibillion-dollar industry. "If you had to ask us, we'd say that PS2 is somewhat more of a direct competitor than GameCube," Gates admits. "We take them both very seriously. There are things they've done well, and then there are things that



Microsoft Chairman and Chief Software Architect Bill Gates shows off his mad Xbox gaming skillz at the system's official launch in Times Square.

they've done that really leave a huge opportunity for us."

The launch-time fever surrounding the Xbox was minimal compared to the PS2 release in October of 2000. But with two consoles debuting simultaneously and a faltering economy, it's not surprising that demand for the Xbox fell where it did. Microsoft and Nintendo are reporting almost identical sales during their first few weeks on the market. Most of the Xbox units that shipped sold through (estimated to be around 300-400,000 units), but after the morning assault on electronics stores had subsided, many stores still had plenty to go around. Nonetheless, lots of retailers had people lining up as early as the afternoon before launch day; worried consumers thought they might get the PS2 launch shaft all over again if they didn't get out early. When sales began, Halo, Dead Or Alive 3 and Project Gotham were the decided favorites, with Munch's Oddysee close behind.

According to Gates, however, it's not just the games that make Xbox different. "There's no way this would have made sense or been possible five years ago," Gates says, "There's a fundamental capability that we have

THE WORD ON THE STREET

New Xbox owners couldn't escape our roving reporters either. Here's what they told us about their new purchases and the competition:

How long have you been in line?

"I'm not in line for Xbox. I'm just here to get a PS2 game [Metal Gear Solid 2]."

Can you believe that there's a line this big for Xbox?

"Yeah. But I think there'll be a bigger line for GameCube."

So are you gonna be in line for GameCube?

"No."

—Rob Aters, Earlville, IL

What games are you getting today?

"I want...what's that game? Halo."

So why Xbox and not GameCube?

"Cuz it's like 20 times better. And it has more gigabytes and everything. And it has a Pentium 3 processor. And all that stuff."

—Nick Konen, Naperville, IL

Are you buying an Xbox for yourself or someone else?

"My kids."

What about GameCube on Sunday...are you going to get that too?

"No, no...I haven't heard of that."

It's a new Nintendo system that's coming out on Sunday...

"Don't tell me about it. I don't want to know."

—Anonymous Mom, Naperville, IL

here...most importantly to inaugurate the idea of online broadband gaming." Online gaming, eh? Well, we haven't heard a concrete word about how and when the Xbox will go online, but Xbox General Manager J Allard certainly has high hopes: "On Xbox World [Microsoft's virtual world to which online users will connect], gamers of all interests and ages can log on and find their friends, be guaranteed there's not going to be any cheating, and just have an overall tight experience."

Microsoft plans to have 20 games running online by the end of 2002.



PRESS
START

Our Heroes

Although we expect announcements of more games that feature different members of the Fellowship, 2002's batch focuses on these three guys...



ARAGORN

a.k.a.: Strider

The hero of EA's *The Lord of the Rings*: His deal: He's a Middle-earth freedom fighter and the rightful heir to the crown of Gondor.

Not to be confused with:

That Strider

Shining moment: Hacking off an orc chief's melon in the caverns of Moria



RING IN THE NEW YEAR

Holy Hobbits! A fellowship of *Lord of the Rings* games will put hair on your feet in 2002

Tall, dark and dead: You better believe the Nazgûl riders will factor heavily into the games. This big guy is from Universal's Xbox title. Inset: Nazgûl riders from the movie.



Back in yonder hippy days, more than a few flower-powered college kids scrawled "Frodo Lives" on campus walls. Turns out they were right—just early with the info. This year, that waist-high Hobbit at the center of the *Lord of the Rings* books-and-blockbuster-movie maelstrom is not only alive and spry—he's got a life bar, special moves and loads of power-ups, thanks to the trio of *Rings* games sallying forth this year.

But because *LotR* is a 50-year-old franchise with shards of its license scattered hither and yon, these games are coming from not one, but a party of publishers who've each carved out their own corner of J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle-earth. We embarked on a perilous quest (hey, those Holiday Inn beds are lumpy) to discover exactly who's making what for a console near you.

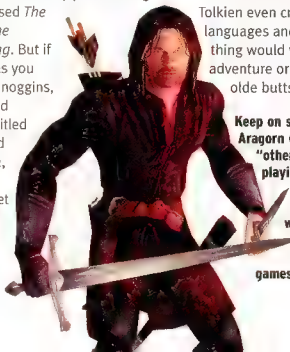
The game based on the movies...

Electronic Arts owns the rights to games based on all three of New Line Cinema's *LotR* films, which are hitting theaters every year starting with the newly released *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*. But if watching the flick has you itching to lop off orc noggins, you better take a cold shower. EA's game, titled *Lord of the Rings* and due on PlayStation 2, won't hit until fall 2002. Still, you do get a consolation prize: The game will likely include characters, environments and

events from the second film that arrives next December, as well as the first flick.

Now you'd think that with fantasy source material as rich as the *LotR* saga (cripes—Tolkien even created his own Middle-earth languages and history), EA's first big *Rings* thing would wind up as an RPG or an adventure or a strategy game. Hold on to your olde butts: *Lord of the Rings* is a 3D

Keep on stridin': EA's game focuses on Aragorn (here's his in-game model), with "other members of the Fellowship playing a very active role during gameplay," says EA's Scott Evans. Hmm. Kinda makes us wonder if other characters will get their own games, too. "We'll tell you about the other games later," Evans says.





FRODO BAGGINS

a.k.a.: Mr. Underhill

The hero of: *Universal's The Fellowship of the Ring*
His deal: He's the Hobbit in charge of chucking the One Ring into Mount Doom.

Not to be confused with: That little bastard who steals your stuff in Golden Axe while you're sleeping
Shining moment: Taking a cut at one of the Nazgûl



BILBO BAGGINS

a.k.a.: The Ring Finder

The hero of: *Sierra's The Hobbit*
His deal: He's the guy who found the One Ring and got Middle-earth into this mess.

Not to be confused with: That other little bastard who steals your stuff in Golden Axe while you're sleeping
Shining moment: Rescuing his dwarf buddies from an Elven dungeon



Environments, such as Moria here, from EA's *LoTR* game will be based on those in the movie.

action game, in the same vein as Golden Axe or a medievalized Final Fight. You control Aragorn, the trilogy's brooding badass-who-would-be-king, through environments taken from the movie, while dicing enemies with combat moves that vary depending on the weapon he's wielding. But EA promises this will not be a mindless button-masher.

"We've put a lot of effort into the enemy A.I.," says Scott Evans, producer at EA. "Hack 'n' slash will only get you so far against these baddies."

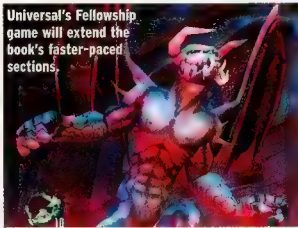
We played an early version of the game—through a level set in the dungeons of Moria—and this thing's already lush and atmospheric. Credit that to the artists' full access to trilogy director Peter Jackson's concept sketches and on-the-set photography, which they've used as a springboard to give their own creative oomph to the game's creatures, costumes and weapons. EA wasn't ready to share any shots of the action, so you'll just have to whip up your own mental imagery. "You can well imagine that players will be going head to head with the big bosses seen in the films," Evans says. "Imagine a 50-foot cave troll coming at you with a club the size of a Volkswagen..."

The game based on the books...

The literary rights to all three *LoTR* novels belong to Universal Interactive, which they claim grants access to "all of Tolkien's original storylines and characters, so we can create the most complete Middle-earth experience," says Universal's Jeff Everett. He's the producer of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, the company's first *LoTR* game, which is due for Xbox in the second half of 2002.

Where EA's title packs an action wallop, Fellowship—which features Frodo as the main character—throws RPG elements into the fray. "It's more like a combination of the new *Zelda* games in terms of puzzles and character interactions, and more like *Soul Reaver* for the combat," says Associate Producer Chris Taylor. Seattle-based developer WXP is crafting the game for Universal—and extending many of the action sequences from the *Fellowship* novel, which is the most sluggish-to-get-go" book in the series. "Moria is almost pure action and is the largest region in the game," says Everett.

Although WXP can't rely on the film for source material, they did enlist other resources to make a Middle-earth that Tolkien geeks could believe in. Daniel Greenberg, a Tolkien scholar and game designer, is providing input, and Universal hired



Universal's *Fellowship* game will extend the book's faster-paced sections.

Cliff Broadway, best known as "Quickbeam" of www.theoneering.net, to act as an Internet consultant. Such high production values extend to every part of the project. "All our dialogue will be spoken by voice actors...and for very important scenes we have full-motion videos," Taylor says. "The budget for FMVs alone rivals what games cost a few years ago."

The game based on *The Hobbit*...

No batch of *Ring*-themed games is complete without the adventure that started it all. And so we end our quest at the doorstep of Sierra, which owns the rights to *The Hobbit*, Tolkien's 1937 *Rings* prequel that first introduced us to Middle-earth and its fuzzy-foot inhabitants. All Sierra will reveal about its *Hobbit* game is that it's coming to next-gen systems sometime in 2003, it stars Bilbo Baggins as the hero, and it will be an "action-oriented adventure."

Meanwhile, we'll keep on our dogged quest for other *LoTR* titles. With the trilogy finding gold at the box office, you better believe there's more games where these came from. "The best part is that this is just the start of what could be 10 or more years of *Hobbit* madness," says Sierra PR Manager Adam Kahn. "We're in it for the long haul, and we expect great things from our development teams with these games." 🐉

Game: *The Fellowship of the Ring*

System: Xbox

Release: Second half of 2002

Publisher: Universal Interactive

It's based on: The first book in Tolkien's *Rings* trilogy

The hero: Frodo Baggins

The gist: It's an action-RPG that punches up the pace of the slow-moving book. For instance, expect Frodo to be less of a wuss when he encounters the Hobbit-eating tree Old Man Willow in the game.



Game: *The Lord of the Rings*

System: PlayStation 2

Release: Fall 2002

Publisher: Electronic Arts

It's based on: The first movie and most likely the second one

The hero: Aragorn

The gist: It's a 3D action game with visuals influenced by the movies and gameplay inspired by coin-op classic Golden Axe.



Three Games to Rule Them All

Game: *The Hobbit*

System: TBA

Release: 2003

Publisher: Sierra

It's based on: Tolkien's *Rings* prequel novel

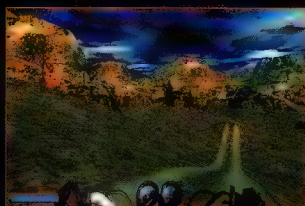
The hero: Bilbo Baggins

The gist: It's an action-adventure based on arguably the most action-packed Tolkien novel: Bilbo encounters mountain trolls, hostile elves, giant spiders, and a town-size dragon in only 300 pages.



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Violence

PlayStation 2



MONOLITH



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PRESS
START

VOTE FOR GAME OF THE YEAR

Beginning Jan. 7, we're taking your votes for the 2001 EGM Readers' Choice Awards online at egm.gamers.com. The polls will be open for two weeks, and if you want your voice to be heard, you've gotta vote. Do it now!

Ever Wondered?

Each month we dig through our mailbox for a gaming mystery to solve. We put on our detective caps and go after the answer, then report it to you. Here we go:

Gettin' Jaggy Wid "Jaggies"

Q: Why do the visuals in some PS2 games have jaggies while others are smooth?

A: Aliasing is what you're really talking about when referring to "jaggies." This is the stair-step, jagged look of polygon edges you see on early PS2 games like Ridge Racer V and DOA2: Hardcore (among others). As Alex Rigopoulos, CEO and founder of Harmonix, developer of PS2's Frequency, explains, "When rendering a polygonal model, only the screen pixels that are inside the edges of projected polygons are colored. This leaves a jaggy appearance, especially noticeable on horizontal edges."

The phenomenon isn't new, but stands out more on Sony's next-generation machine. That's because the PS2 has no default way of anti-aliasing (getting rid of the jaggies). In the early days of PS2 development, programmers



DOA2: Hardcore and Ridge Racer V are two of the early games with jagged polygon edges.



hadn't figured out a method of getting around it, so the first games suffered the most. Designers solved it eventually, as evidenced by differences between the Japanese and U.S. versions of Tekken Tag Tournament. The U.S. version is jaggy-less.

A designer has three methods of anti-aliasing available. The first is by implementing a flicker filter, which averages and blends the vertical lines of resolution, resulting in a less jaggy but slightly blurred image. This is the most popular jaggy-busting technique. As an aside, Dreamcast's video output had flicker filtering turned on by default, which is why DC games look smooth.

The second way is edge anti-aliasing. Rigopoulos tells us, "Edge anti-aliasing is a way to reduce jaggies by only partially coloring

pixels on the edges of polygons. The amount of coloring depends on the percentage of the pixel area covered by the polygon." This method is meant more as a means of touch-up and may leave some jaggies lying around.

Last is full-scene anti-aliasing. This is accomplished by drawing the image in a higher resolution and then shrinking it before displaying it on screen. "Although it gives good quality results, full-screen anti-aliasing requires more memory and is slower," says Andrew Kirmse, graphics programmer on LucasArts' PlayStation 2 shooter Star Wars Jedi Starfighter.

Got a gaming mystery? E-mail it to EGM@ziffdavis.com with the subject header "Ever wondered?" and we'll solve it for you.

Exactly What Kind of Gamer Are You?

The question of which console to buy hasn't been this difficult since the days of 3DO and Jaguar. Still not sure which next-gen game console is right for you? No need to call Miss Cleo for psychic guidance; check out our killer app chart for some free advice.



Metal Gear Solid 2: Military Madness

What's it all about?

Picture directing and starring in a really good 15-hour spy flick. The plot is more convoluted than linear algebra, but the gameplay escapes from it unharmed.

Is it safe to show Mom?

If she can get past all the blood and death, Mom may actually find Solid Snake sexy.

Is it worth buying the console for?

Unless you're allergic to fun, are morally opposed to shooting ice cubes and/or people, or have had an aneurysm in the past 30 seconds, your answer to this question should be a resounding "yes."



Halo: Burning Ring of Firefights

As the cream of the Space-Marine crop, it's your job to investigate a mysterious, alien-packed ring-shaped world. Oh, and kill them. Did we forget to say that?

You're only killing aliens, so it's cool. Unless of course you happen to be in an alien family.

If you get motion sickness from first-person shooters, nope. Otherwise, this should be the first game whose box you even look at as an Xbox owner. Hey! We see you eyeing Shrek. Cut it out!

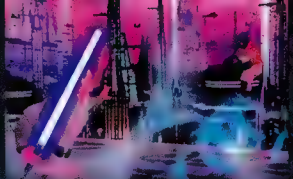


Luigi's Mansion: Minion's Mystery App

Equipped with a vacuum and endearing childlike mannerisms, Luigi sheepishly tracks and captures a gang of bad-appleghosts that holds Mario hostage.

Yep, thanks to the family-friendly patina that coats nearly all of Nintendo's games. It's kid-tested, Mom-approved.

If one condensed this game into a thick syrup, it would contain the very essence of Nintendo's trademark jokes, puzzles and cutesy style. If that syrup sounds like a tasty beverage to you, then yes.



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PRESS
START

TIDBITS

Bleem Closes Its Doors

The company that made it possible to play PlayStation games on the PC and Dreamcast is no more. Rising legal costs and the dwindling DC market are cited as reasons for the shutdown.

DC Price Drops Again

We aren't car salesmen, but we'd still like to act like them for a moment and tell you that "there's never been a better time to buy a Dreamcast!" Sega of America once again lowered the price in mid-November, from an "OK, maybe it's still too pricey" \$80 to an "I'll take three" price of \$50.

Battlebots Are Coming!

Battlebots, the popular Comedy Central robot combat show, is coming to PS2 and GameCube from THQ later this year. Shibby!

This Month on Electric Playground

Sick of all those reality TV shows? Then check out

Electric Playground, which moves to Thursdays in January at 8:30 p.m. EST in the U.S. on Discovery Science (Canadians, check your local listings for times and channels). *EP* gives you

plenty of good gaming info and reviews with hosts Tommy Tallarico and Victor Lucas (and maybe a familiar face or two from *EGM*). Here's what to expect on the show in January:

Episode 7-10: James Bond is back in Agent Under Fire, Galleon takes to the high seas, cell phone and PDA games, and a look at Universal's *The Thing*.

Episode 7-11: Midway sets its sights on real-time strategy in *Legion: Legend of Excalibur*, the *EP* crew hits the links for a few rounds of *SimGolf*, a sneak peek at *Deus Ex PS2* and reviews of *Munch's Oddysee* and *Devil May Cry*.

Episode 7-12: *EP* sits down for a conversation with *The Sims* creator Will Wright, arcade machines for the home, and explore the world of EA Big's extreme sports.

Episode 7-13: Storm the beach with *Medal of Honor*, get online with *The Sims*, a profile of industry vet Mark Cerny, the next steps for Xbox and reviews of *Pikmin*, *Jak & Daxter* and *Project Gotham*.



LAST-MINUTE UPDATE

We got these in just as we were going to press, but they look so fancy we just had to share them with you guys. These are actual shots of *Tekken 4* running on the PS2, slated for release this spring. We'll be back next month with more screens and details, but if you can't wait that long, head to egm.gamers.com for larger, hi-res screenshots.

Essential Gear

The best peripherals for your gaming needs



I need more Xbox controllers for my friends to play multiplayer Halo!

Try this **MadCatz Control Pad Pro**. It's **\$34.99** (compared to \$40 for the official Xbox controller) and features rubber grips, heavy-duty buttons and most importantly, a lifetime guarantee.

This GameCube pad sucks ass for playing Madden NFL 2002!

Wouldn't it be great if you could use your trusty PS2 pad with your new GameCube? You bet it would! The **Nyko Play Cube** retails for **\$9.99** and lets you do just that. You'll be able to put those extra PS2 controllers to good use and save big bucks.



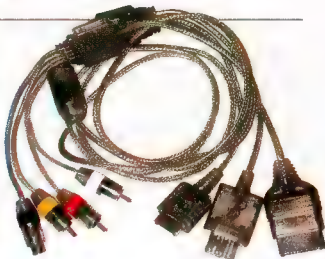
My memory cards have Alzheimer's!

Nothing's worse than abruptly losing that football franchise you've simmered through 10 Super Bowls, but it does happen with cheap memory cards. **MadCatz's** new slick and sturdy **8 MB Xbox Memory Cards** not only come in plenty of colors that help you sort your mess of saved games, like the Control Pad Pro, they offer an all-encompassing lifetime guarantee. As an added bonus, they come preloaded with exclusive saves for an assortment of EA Sports games and 4X4 Evo 2. Not a bad package for **\$24.99**.

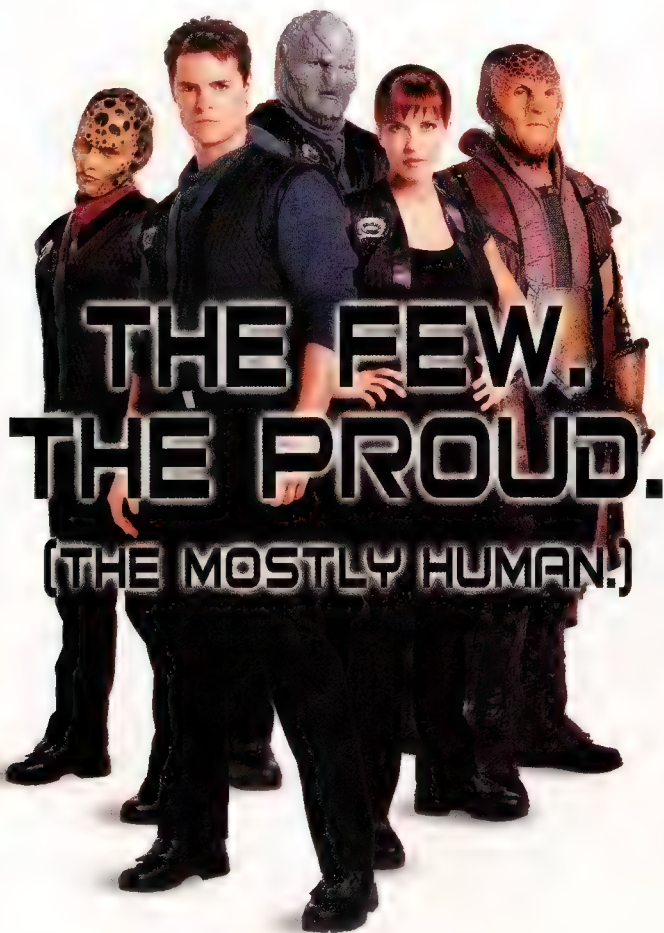


My pet raccoon was almost strangled to death by my Xbox, GameCube and PS2 cords!

Scrounging up the dough to buy all three systems is hard, but keeping your crowded game room from becoming a wirey death trap is tougher. The **Target**-brand **Universal S-AV Video cable**, priced at **\$14.99**, is smaller than a clunky A/V switchbox, not to mention cheaper. In fact, it's become standard issue for frugal *EGM* editors.



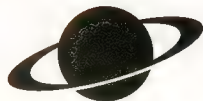
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PlayStation.2





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small brawl



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1.8 million

copies of Metal Gear Solid 2 were shipped to U.S. stores in its first two weeks of release.



Afterthoughts: Metal Gear Solid 2

Each month, *EGM* takes a long, hard look at the best and brightest of recently released games. We ask the producers for their thoughts on the titles from a development standpoint, and cover each one in-depth in this section. This month, we've got an inside look at Halo and Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3. But first, let's check in with Hideo Kojima, director of Metal Gear Solid 2, for his post-release perspective on the PS2's biggest winter release. You've got no excuse for not having played this game yet, but if you're somehow still an MGS2 virgin, be warned of spoilers ahead.

EGM: Were you nervous how people would feel about not playing as Snake anymore?

Hideo Kojima: I was a bit concerned, but I thought providing a typical mediocre sequel would be even more sinful. I did gamble, but I had no second thoughts. I wanted to "betray" fans' expectations in a way but still keep the same focus. The most important element of the MGS series—the main character—is still Solid Snake. In MGS2, you can observe Snake objectively rather than subjectively, which gives him more depth. MGS1 is the game in which you become Snake. MGS2 is the game in which you infiltrate and fight with Snake.



"Was MGS2 as good for you as it was for me, baby?"

EGM: What do you think the public reaction to Raiden has been?

HK: We don't know what it will be like in Japan, but we are getting both positive and negative reactions. Some people say they like the strong and rugged Solid Snake but hate the weak-looking Raiden. That's probably because Snake looks tougher than ever in MGS2. You don't get to control Snake much, but this makes him stand out; you end up liking him even more. If you play the game until the very end, you will know that Snake is the main character. The game begins with Snake's monologue and ends with Snake's monologue. I was able to learn once again that people really love Snake very much. I am very happy about that.

EGM: Had you written all of the story before development on MGS2 had even started?

HK: Everything existed since the plan draft in November, 1998. Game specs and events have been modified during development, but the skeleton has not changed since.

EGM: We loved the vast gameplay possibilities in MGS2; the way you could take out every boss with just about any weapon, or get through tricky areas in a variety of ways. Was it difficult to design

and program such an open-ended game?

HK: Yes, it was very difficult. Allowing multiple strategies is one difficult task, and making all of them equally enjoyable is another. We repeatedly simulated different situations, for example, in which the player could encounter the boss before the boss battle. The more ways a player can fight an enemy or boss, the harder it is for us to account for all these potential scenarios from a programming standpoint. This open-ended gameplay, as we all know, is what makes MGS fun. But we had to spend extra time making sure these multiple strategies worked.

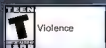
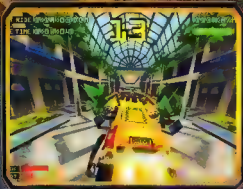
EGM: What happened in the FA-MAS rifle that we saw in the trailers? We also noticed a lot of items you didn't really have to use in order to beat the game (such as the C4 and the cell phone). Did you have more gameplay stuff planned for these items but run out of time?

HK: The game was first developed with the FA-MAS, but we turned it into the M4 to be consistent with the story. [Graphics Supervisor] Yoji Shinkawa and others who know a lot about guns begged us to drop the FA-MAS. Many people who saw the early trailer have said that the gun should not be a FA-MAS, as well. We had to drop



The FA-MAS rifle didn't make it into the final version of MGS2, according to Kojima. But the feisty firearm is an unlockable (with a PS2 GameShark) weapon in the MGS2 demo that came with Zone of the Enders. Enter ecb79ff8 1456e60a as the main code, then 4cb53d8 1456e788 to open up the FA-MAS with unlimited ammunition. Now you kids have some fun.

SMASHING DRIVE™



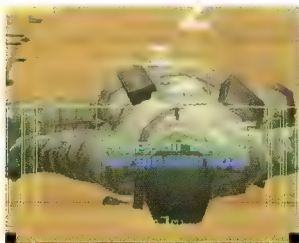
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HIDEO'S SECRET STASH

You've beaten MGS2 and gotten all the dogtags, you haven't seen anything until you've seen everything. Turn to page 186 and find out how to make an old woman pee her pants, reveal the ghost of Kojima, see the new modes added to the Japanese version and other cool, secret stuff. You go now!



Once you've nabbed a soldier's tags, go back to him on his birthday, look at him through the binoculars, and Press Triangle for a special message.

all the polygon models and character motions involving the FAMAS as a result. What a waste!

As for the C4 and cell phone, we have made no changes. They appear in the game as intended in the original game plan. We had to introduce the C4 later in the Plant chapter because of the Fatman bomb-diffusing event. It wouldn't really work to have Raiden setting C4 while diffusing Fatman's bombs.

The original cell phone only vibrated and didn't ring. I wanted to fool the player by making him think that he was incurring damage when actually all that was happening was that the phone was ringing. But then so many of our staff who did not know about the cell phone making the controller vibrate thought the vibration was a bug. That's why we added a ringing sound. In Japan, lots of people have downloaded unique ring melodies onto their cell phones, so the cell phone in the game does not simply ring. You hear a melody instead.

There are many other items that did not make it into the game—decoy balloons, X-ray goggles, water gun, penguin suit...

EGM: A lot of our readers wonder why there wasn't a boss fight with Ocelot or a real fight with Fortune?

HK: Fortune's character does not allow her to be defeated. She is cursed with the inability to die, that's why the battle with her went the way it did. I understand that players of the game would love to fight Ocelot the most. That's why I intentionally did not include a battle with Ocelot. Not being able to fight the most hateful enemy increases your anger toward him. That makes him an even more hateful villain.

EGM: What advice do you have for gamers trying to collect all the dog tags in MGS2?

HK: If you press the Triangle button while looking at a soldier with the binoculars or while in the first-person view, you can see the name of soldiers whose dog tags you have already obtained. So if his name shows up, you already have his tags and don't need to bother trying to make him drop them.

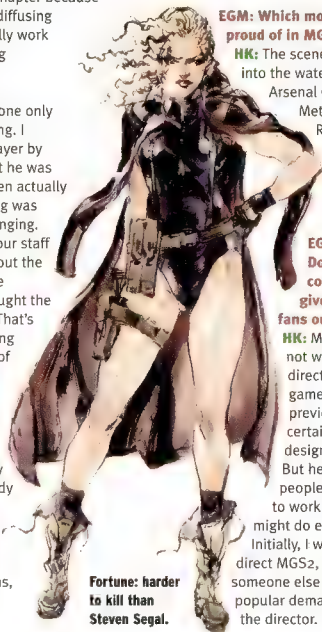
EGM: Which moment are you most proud of in MGS2?

HK: The scene where Snake jumps into the water from the top of Arsenal Gear while chasing Metal Gear Ray. While Raiden is tied up, Snake breaks the handcuff himself and chases Ray. I really like this contrast.

EGM: Is MGS truly over? Do you have any parting comments you'd like to give all the Metal Gear fans out there?

HK: MGS is not over. I might not work on the script and direct and design the entire game myself like the previous MGS games. I will certainly work on the game design and as the producer. But hey, you never know. If people really, really want me to work on [the next] MGS, I might do everything myself again. Initially, I was not supposed to direct MGS2, I was planning to have someone else direct it, but due to popular demand, I ended up being the director. 🐶

Fortune: harder to kill than Steven Segal.



TACTICAL MARKETING ACTION

Solid Buys

You've played the game, now buy all the useless crap that says to your friends, "Hey, I played the game."



Re-enact all your favorite MGS2 scenes in full stiff-plastic animation. These little guys are the latest addition to Medicom's Kubrick line of toys. Solid Snake, Hal Emmerich, Revolver Ocelot, Olga Gurlukovich, Soldiers in Woodland and Tiger camouflage, and a seventh surprise character (hmm, who could it be?) will be available in the U.S. in March through Diamond Comics. Head to <http://csls.diamondcomics.com> to find a comic shop near you that can order 'em.

McFarlane Toys did an awesome job on the original Metal Gear Solid figures, so it's no surprise that they're making the sequel's toys. The figures are in video game specialty and toy stores now. You can buy all the main characters from the game, and they look fantastic.



If you were one of several million gamers living in Japan when Metal Gear Solid 2 came out in early December, you had a shot at buying a limited-edition collector's pack. You also had the chance to get your copy signed by Director Hideo Kojima and Character Designer Yoji Shinkawa. The pair made a public appearance for the game's release at the Tsutaya store in Shibuya (Tokyo). Now that's priceless.



PRESS
START

PLAY HALO ONLINE!

Yes, online. As in, over the Internet. After you're done reading what the creators of Halo have to say here, warp over to our Halo Inner Circle on page 182 and learn how. You'll also find strategies and tricks to humiliate and impress your friends.



Afterthoughts: Halo

Jason Jones, lead designer on Halo and co-founder of Bungie Studios, is one of the major players behind the best console first-person shooter in existence. We think that's a pretty big deal, so we had some questions for him. And he had some answers:

EGM: Halo, at one point, was a third-person game.

Jason Jones: Yes, that's absolutely true.

EGM: And a real-time strategy (RTS) game at some point as well?

JJ: (laughs) Yeah, it actually was.

EGM: So, how did it get to where it is today?

JJ: We keep things pretty freeform around here, and sometimes that leads to problems or delays, but one of the cool things is that it lets all the good ideas come out. Halo was an RTS when it was very, very early. We came up with this really cool vehicle simulation that had all these tanks driving around. They would do all the things you see the Warthogs doing in Halo. After watching the demo run for a while, we eventually hooked up a joystick one day for the vehicle, and it was so damn fun. We figured we'd be wasting all that technology if we didn't use it.

The third-person thing was inspired a lot by Oni [PS2, PC]; it had fantastic animations and really good characters. For a long time, that's where we thought we were going to go with Halo. But we changed that focus a good six or eight months before we moved out to Seattle because you just don't get the same feeling, the same emotions playing a third-person game versus a first-person game. Even when we had the third-person camera in and you could see more of the area around you, people here actually preferred to play in first-person mode because it just felt better.

EGM: We love the enemy AI (artificial intelligence)—it's brilliant in Legendary mode. How did you guys do it?

JJ: Right from the beginning, when we started working on the solo game, we knew we wanted to give players something much more interesting from the AI besides "target blindly trying to kill you" AI or "stand in place and wait to get gunned down" AI. We wanted a lot more



movement than that, so we had one guy working really solidly on the artificial intelligence the whole time. He just kept adding cool stuff until the very end. For example, if a marine is riding with you in the Warthog and he gets struck by a plasma grenade, he'll jump out of the jeep rather than stay and get you blown up, too.

EGM: How much of the combat is scripted and how much happens on the fly?

JJ: I think games that follow a script too closely end up feeling kind of fake. Every game has some scripted points, but we wanted to keep as much of Halo's illusion as possible and create a world that would still exist without you. The scripting we did do was more for the cutscenes and for control; we tried to save it for that. Almost everything else is on the fly.

EGM: Why wasn't the Scorpion tank used more in the game? Because it's too powerful?

JJ: The tank is a really satisfying, powerful weapon that we wanted people to just have fun with. It wasn't so much about balance in the solo game, but we thought we'd limit it to the one segment where you can just go nuts with it. Have you discovered how cool the Marine snipers are in that part?

"We knew we wanted to give players something much more than 'stand in place and get gunned down' AI."

EGM: Yeah, that one part at the bottom of the hill in the snow level where you load 'em up on your tank...

JJ: Yeah, I remember the last night of testing, we had just gotten final production Xboxes and the master copies of the game. It was like four in the morning and I was sitting there with one of the testers playing on Legendary. We got the Sergeant sniper and he was riding on our tank, and a Covenant grunt in some totally ridiculous way just barely picked him off. It was so late, we really wanted to go home at that point, but we just looked at each other and were like, "We gotta save the Sarge!" So we restarted just on principle alone.

EGM: Any cool atmospheric subtleties you can think of that we might have missed?

cont. on page 54



THIS IS WHY THEY MAKE VIDEO GAMES.



DAVE MIRRA

CORIKSCREM, CARL, HYNDMAN SEQUENCE

THE BEST FRIEND OF
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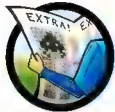


BMX superstar **Dave Mirra** is the sport's most celebrated athlete. He owns 13 X-Games medals, headlines a self-titled nation wide tour, and is the star of his own BMX video game. Dave's signature shoe, the **Mirra**, is the ultimate combination of function and style, crafted to his exacting standards.



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PRESS
START

Halo Aftershoots cont.

JJ: Well, when you take down one of the elites or come on real strong, all the grunts will run away. Also, have you heard the grunts say, "Oh no, not again!" or "I get his gun!" and take credit for the kill if they take you down? We had all this Marine dialogue that we recorded, so the sound guys just pitch shifted it up or down for the alien grunts and elites. It's not even a voice actor; it's just one of the guys here (laughs). It's really corny, but we came to love it.

EGM: How many Marine personas are there?

JJ: I think there are six. They all have the same AI, just different voices, but they're great to listen to. They say some weird stuff. One of the snipers, after he takes a guy down, says, "I would have been your daddy, but that dog beat me over the fence!" One guy screams, "Cancel Christmas!" after taking someone out with a grenade. Also, for a treat, you should check out the opening cinema on Legendary. Listen to the Sarge—he's taken his pep talk up a notch.

EGM: Why limit people to carrying only two weapons at a time?

JJ: We made a lot of departures from the traditional first-person game: a recharging energy shield, dedicated grenade and melee buttons instead of having an alternate weapon fire.... We wanted to keep players making decisions and choosing the right weapons for each unique scenario. You can't just run around with every weapon at once; what you choose to carry can be crucial to your success.

EGM: Are some levels designed around teaching people to use specific weapons for certain situations?

JJ: We try to do that in a whole bunch of places and lead people slowly through, almost beat them over the head with it sometimes. For example, the assault rifle usually shows up



The assault rifle mows down Covenant grunts like so many blades of grass.



READ MORE ABOUT IT

Where did Captain Keyes get that pipe he's always carrying? Who is Cortana? And just exactly what the hell is the Master Chief anyway? The official prequel novel, *The Fall of Reach*, has all the background info any Halo dork would need to know and then some, leading right up to the start of the Xbox game. Find it at finer—and even rather crappy—game and bookstores everywhere.



Jason likes the sniper rifle or shotgun, depending on how far he is from the action.

where there are lots of grunts; it's great for mowing them down. There's also a range somewhere between that of the shotgun and the pistol where the AR always wins a firefight.

EGM: Why no bots in multiplayer mode?

JJ: We really wanted to focus on the single-player game with the time we had; it was just a question of priorities and programming the AI. There's also a question around here of what the role of bots is. Are we trying to make it so four people can play Capture the Flag against four bots? That's a very noble goal, in terms of getting the AI down. I also don't think it's that fun to have eight people fighting each other and just have bots filling in the cracks.

EGM: So what didn't make it into the game besides the flamethrower we saw in previous screenshots?

JJ: We had all these ideas.... There was this really cool gravity rifle, I don't want to go into it too much.... (laughs).

EGM: No, no, tell us!

JJ: Well, how 'bout I tell you about this alien that got cut?

EGM: (sigh) OK...

JJ: We called him "The Engineer." Imagine a huge, long slug with pouches of gas bubbles bulging out of his back. He would float everywhere, he had these six manipulator tentacles, and he was the guy the Covenant sent down to Halo to suck all the secrets out of the machines. His role in combat was basically to add a shield to the Covenant around him. He was a total coward; he'd hide from everything, so he was kind of hard to kill. It definitely made the fighting interesting and different.... I shouldn't be talking about all the stuff we had to cut (laughs). We had a ton of things that didn't make it, but I think that's really healthy, to have the option to keep only the best stuff. 🍄

PICKS OF THE PROS

If I Were You...

Whether you're trying to hack your way through *Legendary* mode, linking four Xboxes, or just having a friendly one-on-one, Bungie's Jason Jones recommends the following to make that Halo game even better, if that's possible.

Favorite Multiplayer Games:

Arena: Hang 'em High

Weapons: Rockets Only

Vehicles: None

Game Types: Any, but *Slayer* or *Oddball* are recommended.

Why It Rocks: The rockets make everything from body parts to flags to skulls (which you have to hang onto in *Oddball* games) oh-so volatile. The expansive arena gives all that junk lots of unpredictable places to land after a rocket blast.

Arena: Blood Gulch

Weapons: Your Choice

Game Types: Capture the Flag, Capture the Flag: Assault, Team Raid

Vehicles: Warthog

Why It Rocks: The level layout is so perfect for anywhere from 4-16 players. **CTF:** Assault involves you trying to get your flag INTO the opposing base, and it makes for some really unique defensive strategies.

Controller Setup:

"Everybody here sets up their controls a little differently," Jones tells us, "but we all play a standard control stick (not inverted). One of the guys here plays with a look sensitivity of 3 (I use a 5), and he's much better with long-range shooting on larger maps. But when he gets in close quarters, it's tougher for him to keep up. Myself, I love *melee* fighting with the shotgun, and you need the higher sensitivity for that."

Weapon Combinations:

Multiplayer: shotgun and either sniper rifle or Marine pistol

Vs. multiple Grunts: assault rifle and either Marine pistol or rocket launcher
Vs. Elites and Jackals: plasma pistol and Marine pistol

Vs. Flood: shotgun and assault rifle

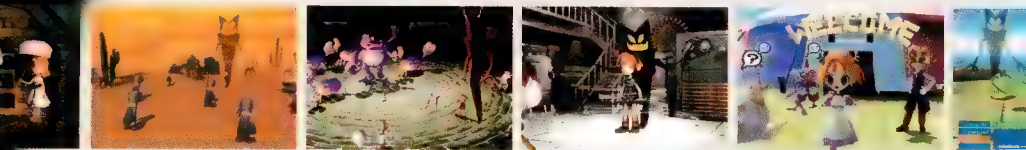




PlayStation.2

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OKAGE

shadow king





PRESS
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“We don’t really like games that force you down a narrow, limited path. We try to provide as broad a palette of moves as possible, and let players explore the tricks and try to use them in their own creative ways.”

—Scott Pease, producer, *Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater 3*



Afterthoughts: Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater 3

Until Tony Hawk came along, the appeal of skateboarding had pretty much been buried with *Back to the Future* in the ‘80s. Tony Hawk’s *Pro Skater 3* is keeping street surfing very much alive, thanks to the series’ producer, Scott Pease, and Neversoft President Joel Jewett, who discuss the sickeningly popular shred sim in this edition of *Afterthoughts*.

EGM: Can we expect any extras in the Xbox version of the game?

SP: We’ve rewritten the engine and special effects to take advantage of the Xbox hardware capabilities. Also, since the engine was written after our PS2 engine, it’s even faster and smoother, especially in two-player split-screen.

EGM: What’s your favorite way to quickly rack up a huge score?

SP: Combo like mad, and use everything in your arsenal—grinds, flatland tricks, reverts, special tricks, manuals, hidden combos, gaps, etc. You can easily score in the millions from a single combo. You’ve got to mix up your tricks and not rely on any one trick in particular. Having 10 special tricks will also help a good deal in building your score.

EGM: Has anyone on your staff ever linked an entire run by using manual and revert moves?

SP: You bet, and he’s known around here as “The Kracken.” Currently the Foundry is the level of choice for The Kracken, and he can bust out nearly full two-minute combos.

EGM: Do you think the revert in THPS3 is as revolutionary as the manual was in THPS2?

SP: I think so; there are a lot of ways you can use the revert—it links a lot of different tricks. For example, aside from the standard vert-landing revert, you can also revert out of a lip trick, or when you lean back in after grinding a halfpipe. In THPS2, manuals opened up more rail-to-rail lines, acting as a flatland linker. With the revert, now you can bring the vert areas into play and keep your combo going around the entire level.



EGM: THPS3 didn’t force you into a playing style. You could theoretically finish the game without ever having explored all the new moves you guys threw in. Was this intentional? Did you keep the game open-ended on purpose?

SP: Definitely. We don’t really like games that force you down a narrow, limited path. We try to provide as broad a palette of moves as possible, and let players explore the tricks and try to use them in their own creative ways. There are lots of different play styles. For example, one guy here just uses inverts like mad, and we feel the different strategies keep the game fresh.

EGM: Why did you get rid of the money system from THPS2?

SP: We’re always about trying something new. The money system was fine for THPS2, but it also made the game a bit too linear. We really liked to see people hopping back and forth among the Career levels, which seemed to be more prevalent in THPS1. And buying tricks with cash? Who the hell thought of that? (smiles)

EGM: Did you get to implement all the online multiplayer features you wanted?

SP: We barely scratched the surface. This go-

around was all about laying the foundation for what is to come. There is an infinite number of possibilities that online play opens up, and we’ve got a ton of ideas. At the same time we’re pretty proud of what THPS3 has to offer, being the first ever online-enabled PS2 title.

EGM: So why is Darth Maul in the game?

Joel Jewett: We didn’t have a choice. Darth came into the office one day and said he wanted to be in the game. I told him to take his little double-bladed lightsaber and get lost. Next thing I know, I am floating a couple of feet up in the air and I can’t breathe. Then he showed us a couple of his moves...he skates pretty well, and he definitely pushes the fashion envelope.

Get Maul’d in THPS3

Darth Maul is the first of many unlockable characters in *Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater 3*. To open him up, you’ll first have to win all the game’s tournaments, getting all the gold medals and clearing every goal along the way. Then sit back and enjoy Darth Maul’s lip tricks and wacky Sith antics as you introduce innocent skate-shop employees to the dark side of the Force.

In-line skating

Mini donuts

Fire

Downloading tunes

These pretzel things with cheese in the middle

A driver's license

Cereal

Breaking stuff

Making up words like "wankstain"

Lighting their farts

Beef jerky

TV channels that are scrambled

Couches

Vending machines

New games for Game Boy® Advance

Eating chips

Referring to strangers as "Slappy"

Bacon sandwiches

Sleep

Calling girls and hanging up

Shaved monkeys

Female wrestling managers

Late night cable

Finding the remote

Getting whiskers

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“When I was in high school, I listened to game music from Konami, Namco and Sega. This made me want to try to compose game music.”

—Yuzo Koshiro

Where Are They Now?

Yuzo “Gaming Soundscapes” Koshiro

Gamefather of video-game music

Yuzo Koshiro, whose music accompanied the urban beat-'em-up Streets of Rage, ninja action game Revenge of Shinobi and god game ActRaiser, talks about breaking into the game music biz and fraging fans in first-person shooters.

ActRaiser for the Super Nintendo. Streets of Rage for the Genesis. Shenmue for the Dreamcast. Heard the music? It's worth the price of admission alone. And when you think back to the heady days of the Super NES—when squeezing symphonic sounds out of that gray and purple brick was akin to shoving a watermelon through the eye of a needle—you have to admire the soundsmiths of the time. Rising to prominence in the early 1990s, celebrated composer Yuzo Koshiro returned from a hiatus in the latter

half of the decade to deliver the magnificent co-composed Shenmue soundtrack. He is still one of Japan's favorite video game musicians, and it's easy to see—and hear—why.

“When I was a grade-schooler, I got addicted to Space Invaders,” says Koshiro, who's the son of a pianist and learned to play the piano, cello and violin in his childhood. “When I was in high school, I listened to game music from Konami, Namco and Sega. This made me want to try to compose game music.”

Koshiro went for a job interview at game developer Nihon Falcom—in his school uniform no less—and got temp work cranking out tunes. “I did music for a PC game called Xanado Scenario 2. That was my first game.”

Two years later, at age 18, Koshiro composed the music he's most famous for: the funky thumping beats for Streets of Rage on the Genesis. Although his previous work had been more classically orientated, Koshiro created trendy club music to match the game's grimy downtown atmosphere. “Usually, I come up with music from looking at the actions or moves of the characters,” Koshiro says. “But in the case of Streets of Rage, I went to [dance] clubs once or twice a week at that time.” With bars and clubs as his research facilities, it's little wonder that Streets of Rage was Koshiro's favorite personal project. It's to Sega's and our detriment that the innovative Koshiro wasn't hired years later for Daytona, partly because we'd have finely crafted tunes roaring in unison with the cars' engines, but mostly because we wouldn't have to listen to Warrant.

Where is he now?

Koshiro has formed a game-development company in Japan called Ancient with the funds he acquired during his tenure as a master musician. Their most recent creation is Gekio! Car Battler Golf for the Game Boy Advance. And although Koshiro does want to remix tunes for forthcoming GBA ports of Streets of Rage and the Saturn action-RPG Legend of Oasis, he seems just as intent on spending equal amounts of company time both on new compositions and first-person shooters. “Mainly I'm enjoying Team Fortress and Day of

Gamester Rap: What makes this creative mind tick?

Favorite Movies!

“The first trilogy of Star Wars! But [Episode I] was no good!” [laughs]

Favorite Music!

“I adore Anton Bruckner [an Austrian composer, born 1824, died 1896, composed classical music influenced by Beethoven and Wagner].”

Favorite Food!

“I like Indian and Tibetan foods. I like spicy foods. And sushi too!”

Favorite Game!

“I only play Team Fortress and Day of Defeat these days. But before that, I played through every game in the Street Fighter II series. When I immersed myself with Street Fighter, Zangief and Ken were my characters!”

What is your motto?

“Be balanced and harmonious to everything.”

Game Music Created:

Partial list: Xanado Scenario 2, Romancia, Yes, Ys II, Dragon Slayer 4 [Legacy of the Wizard], Sorcerian, Beyond Oasis (The Story of Thor), The Revenge of Shinobi, ActRaiser, Super Adventure Island, Culdcept Expansion, Streets of Rage 1, 2, 3, Shenmue.

Defeat,” he says. “Our company has servers for both games.” You can find them at <http://www.ancient.co.jp/~game> and Koshiro's nickname is [ANC]prince. So if you've ever wanted to frag the composer of The Revenge of Shinobi, now you can. 🎮

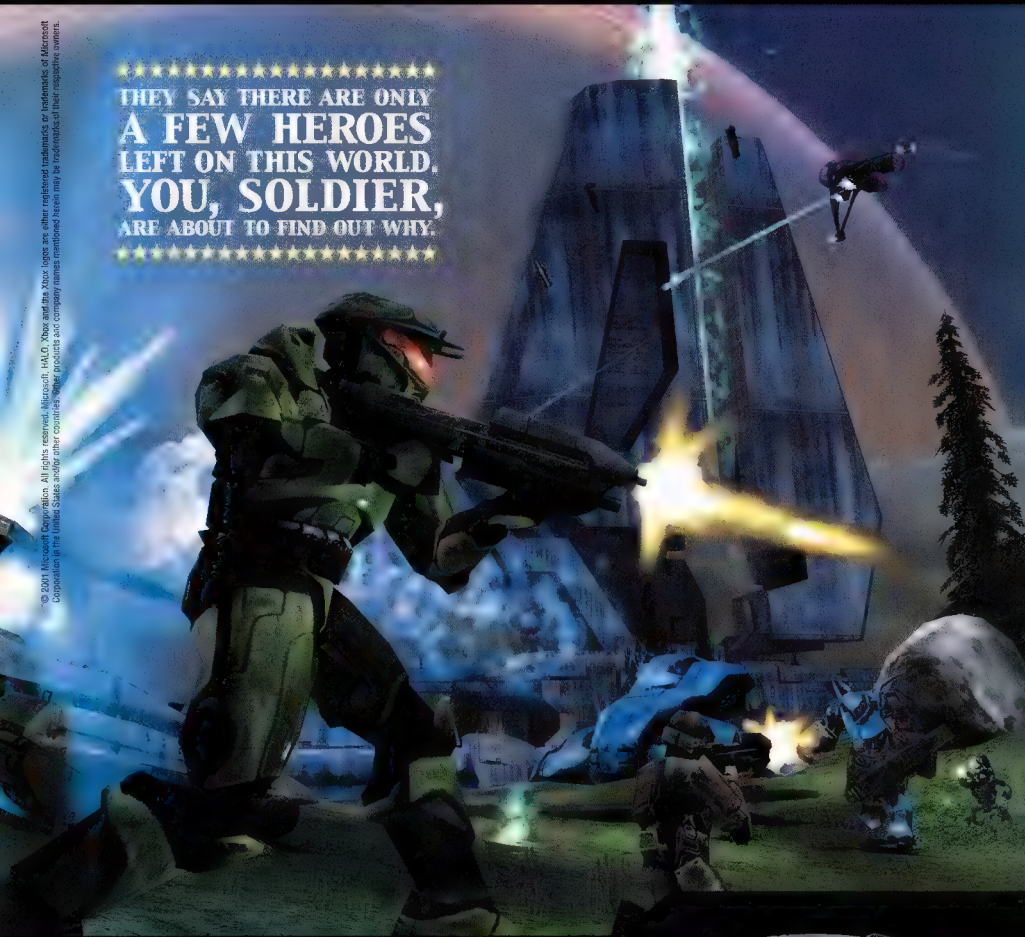
—David S.J. Hodgson



Photography by Shuji Kondo

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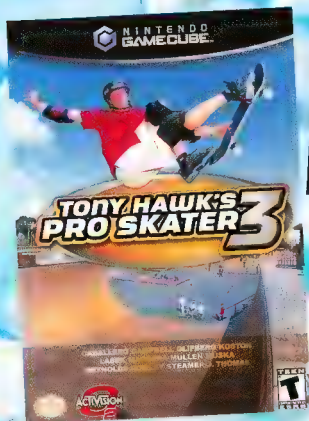


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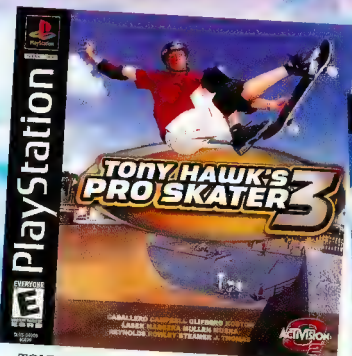
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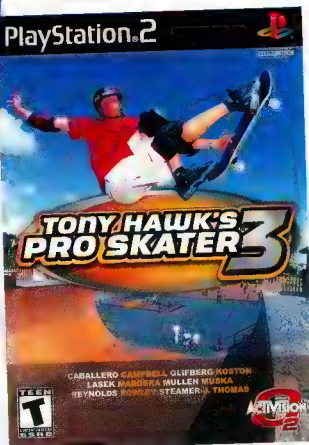
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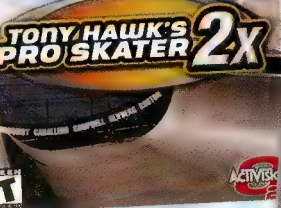
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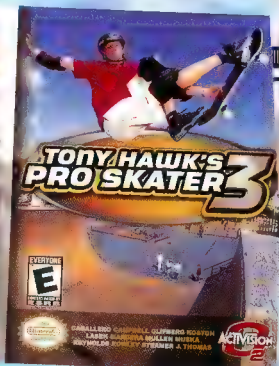
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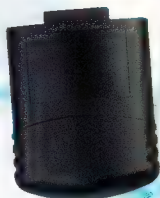
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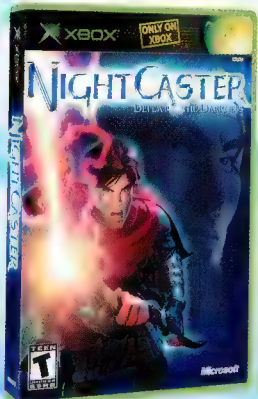
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A VERITECH IN EVERY HOME

Here it is. Soak it in, Protoculture fans. At left is a screen from the GBA version of *Robotech*, the first of TDK Mediavite's games based on the mid-'80s anime import. *Rich Hunter* and the rest of the SDF-1's crew are headed to all major systems this year, including GBA (spring), PS2 (late summer), Xbox and GameCube (both fall/winter).

DEVELOPER PROFILE

Bunkasha Games

Location: Tokyo, Japan

Year Founded: Late summer 2000

Web Site: www.bunkasha-games.com

of people: 11

Current Projects: *Wreckless: The Yakuza Missions* (Xbox)



Wreckless: The Yakuza Missions is an arcade-style action driving title for Xbox, coming in February from Activision.

During late-night programming sessions, we: Program 'til we fall asleep.
Music that inspires us around the office: None, just the sound of cars.

Favorite snack foods: We're probably a lot healthier than most developers. We only have two fat guys. Three of us drink coffee, and most of us don't eat snacks.

What is the inspiration for Wreckless? The main programmer's interest in physics and cars; the mixture of both became Wreckless. A few of us liked the game *Destruction Derby*. I guess you can call that an inspiration as well.

Are the two female cops in Wreckless based at all on the Japanese anime/manga series *Taiho Shichouzo* (*You're Under Arrest*)? Unfortunately, no.

We have a big manga fan on our team, but he's more of a Gundam guy. He buys a new plastic Gundam model every week.

Why develop this game on Xbox rather than PlayStation 2 or GameCube? The PS2 already had a lot of games, and the GameCube, at the time, looked like the target was for a younger audience. We figured that the Xbox had the biggest audience that would enjoy Wreckless.

How do you think Xbox compares to the PS2 or GameCube? The Xbox is a very powerful and flexible machine. In 2001, the Nvidia graphics technology was probably the best in the world.

Quartermann - Game Gossip & Speculation

It's time for The Q to make his New Year's resolution, so listen up, Q-fans. This year, if you truly starts a game, he's going to finish it. That one didn't stick last time around, so let's hope it does this year. On to the rumors:

...Konami's going on a bit of a retro kick, and in the near future they'll be bringing a collection of classic games to **Game Boy Advance**. **Rush N' Attack**, **Time Pilot**, **Gyruss**, the original **Frogger** and **Yie Ar Kung-Fu** will all be included....Sorry folks, no plans for a Metal Gear redux....



...On the **Metroid** front, it looks like Samus won't be blastin' aliens 'til at least **Turkey Day '02**. Buzz is going to slightly more positive levels, but I'm stayin' skeptical of the whole business. At least we know that the Nintendo-developed **GBA Metroid IV** will be good....Remember when **Frequency** was supposed to have **online play**? That kinda fell

apart when Sony's online push was delayed until this spring. But the good news is that Frequency's online play is **not dead**. Q-spies that have infiltrated the House of PlayStation have heard that when the Network Adapter launches, it may be bundled with a version of the game that's netplay-enabled...

...Thanks to the Xbox's on-board hard drive, we may be enjoying upgrades to today's games, later. **Tecmo's Tomonobu Itagaki** has already said that **Dead or Alive 3** will be upgradeable using the drive. Rumors are also circulating about **Halo 1.5**, an upgrade that would include additional missions and a smorgasbord of new multiplayer options. Finally, as if Halo wasn't rocking our collective worlds enough, more **Xbox FPS** action is on the way, including versions of **Doom III** and **Return to Castle Wolfenstein**. Let's hope they're online—The Q needs to get his sniper on....Won't you be my target?

That's it for this installment, boys. If you're so inclined, drop me an e-mail at quartermann@ziffdavis.com. Bye! —The Q

The Skinny on Pokémon Mini

Pokémon Mini is a nifty little gadget, available exclusively at the New York City **Pokémon Center** in Rockefeller Center (or at www.pokemoncenter.com). It's available with one game (**Pokémon Party Mini**) for \$40 or with all four available titles for \$82. Its features include built-in rumble support, an infrared sensor for wireless link with up to five other **Pokémon Minis**, and a "shock sensor" that registers how many times you shake the unit. But will anyone besides 5-year-olds and hardcore **Poké**-freaks care?

Pokémon Party Mini (1-6 Players) Included with the system, this is a collection of six mini-games and a **Pokémon-themed alarm clock** (apparently). The games are extremely simple, offering very little variety. There's real fun to be had.

Pokémon Pinball Mini (1 Player) Ninety pinball-esque stages where the objective is to "knock into" ball-mounted versions of targets.

Pokémon Puzzle Collection (1 Player) Eighty puzzles on the tile/block/placing variety. Not as fun as Pinball, but still some.

Pokémon Puzzle Collection (1 Player) Eighty puzzles on the tile/block/placing variety. Not as fun as Pinball, but still some. The large apartment puzzles are particularly tedious, but certainly will keep the youngsters occupied.

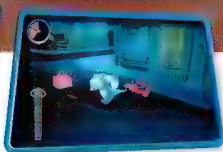
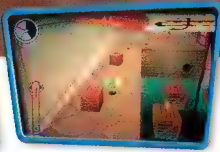


Pokémon Zany Cards (1-5 Players) Four simple card games (playing cards, **Pokémon cards**, if you want to play with **Rummikub**, **3x5** and **Party**). But may we suggest **Monopoly** and **Backgammon** instead?

The Verdict Interesting and affordable, but ultimately just a novelty for the occasional hardcore **Pokémon** fan. Unless you're the type who wears **Boards** and **cardigans** to work, you'll probably find more fun elsewhere.



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The Top 20 Best-Selling Games of October 2001

Devil May Cry, but **Capcom** sure as hell won't, thanks to all the money they're raking in. With **DMC** and **Grand Theft Auto III** both topping the charts, maybe an "M" rating on a video game doesn't automatically hurt sales anymore. This is definitely a boom time on the **PS2**, but we're sure to see some **GameCube** purple and **Xbox** green next month. Meanwhile, the **Dreamcast** continues to hang on by its fingernails, enjoying that post-mortem rush it's been on. And in case no one noticed, the **Hawkman** is returning to form with not one, not two, but three games in the top 20 during October.

| | | | | |
|-------------|---|-----------------------|------------------------|--|
| 1 | Devil May Cry Capcom | | | |
| NEW! | 8.5 Jonathan | 9.0 Mark | 9.0 Milkman | |
| 2 | Grand Theft Auto III Rockstar | | | |
| NEW! | 9.0 Greg | 9.0 Crispin | 10 Milkman | |
| 3 | Madden NFL 2002 Electronic Arts | | | |
| | 9.5 Dan L. | 9.5 Kraig | 9.0 Dean | |
| 4 | Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 Activision | | | |
| NEW! | 9.5 Che | 9.5 Dean | 9.0 Gary M. | |
| 5 | Pokémon Crystal Nintendo | | | |
| | 7.0 Chris | 7.5 Jeane | 3.5 Mark | |
| 6 | Spy Hunter Midway | | | |
| | 8.5 Dean | 8.0 Greg | 8.0 Kraig | |
| 7 | NBA Live 2002 Electronic Arts | | | |
| NEW! | 4.0 Dan L. | 6.0 Dean | 4.5 Kraig | |
| 8 | Mario Kart: Super Circuit Nintendo | | | |
| | 8.0 Chris | 9.0 Crispin | 8.5 Jonathan | |
| 9 | NBA 2K2 NBA | | | |
| NEW! | 9.0 Dan L. | 9.0 Dean | 8.5 Kraig | |
| 10 | Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 Activision | | | |
| | 10 Crispin | 10 Dean | 10 Greg | |

| | | | | |
|-----------|--|--|--|-------------|
| 11 | Silent Hill 2 Konami | | | |
| 12 | Super Mario Advance Nintendo | | | |
| 13 | Driver 2 Infogrames | | | |
| 14 | Ace Combat 04: Shattered Skies Namco | | | NEW! |
| 15 | NFL 2K2 Sega | | | |
| 16 | NASCAR Thunder 2002 Electronic Arts | | | NEW! |
| 17 | NHL 2002 Electronic Arts | | | |
| 18 | Madden NFL 2002 Electronic Arts | | | |
| 19 | Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 Activision | | | |
| 20 | Gran Turismo 3 A-spec Sony CEA | | | |

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Service. Call Kristin Barnett-von Korff at (516) 625-2481 for questions regarding this list. Chart description written by EGM staff. "It's gonna be a hot summer for teenage boys!" — Ethan Einhorn, GameNOW previews editor, on summer 2002

| JAPAN TOP 10 | | | |
|--------------|---|--|---|
| 1 | Seaman: A New Beginning Asci | | <p>It seems like only yesterday we were caring and nurturing our lil' Dreamcast... ahem...Seamen through the early stages of life. Now they're all grown up and have moved to a bigger pond, the PS2. And this week, they've been able to fend off the Pachinko sims and Konami baseball. But it won't last, as the Japanese MGS2 and Smash Bros. are just around the corner.</p> <p>A wily lil' Seaman.</p> |
| 2 | Busin: Wizardry Alternative Altus | | |
| 3 | Pachinko Slot Aruze King 5 Aruze | | |
| 4 | Pro Baseball Japan 2001 Konami | | |
| 5 | Shin Sangoku Musou 2 Azei | | |
| 6 | Battle Pachislot: Winning Tech. Sammy | | |
| 7 | Seigi no Mikata Sony CEI | | |
| 8 | Gun Survivor 2: Code: Veronica Capcom | | |
| 9 | Pikmin Nintendo | | |
| 10 | Power Smash 2 Sega | | |

Source: Weekly Famitsu, week ending 11/18/2001

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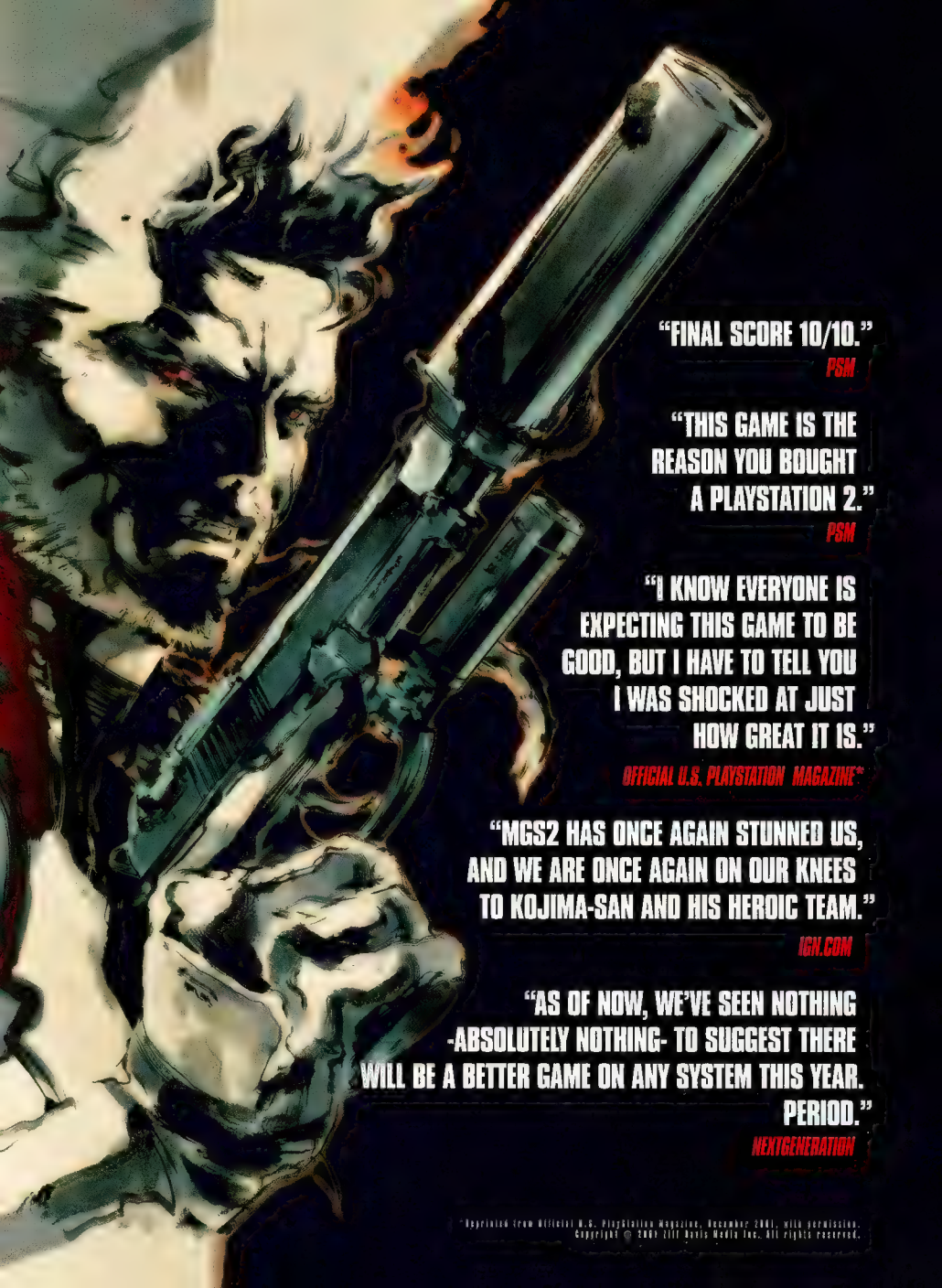
PlayStation.2



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“FINAL SCORE 10/10.”

PSM

**“THIS GAME IS THE
REASON YOU BOUGHT
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PSM

**“I KNOW EVERYONE IS
EXPECTING THIS GAME TO BE
GOOD, BUT I HAVE TO TELL YOU
I WAS SHOCKED AT JUST
HOW GREAT IT IS.”**

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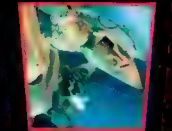
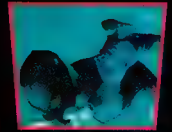
**“MGS2 HAS ONCE AGAIN STUNNED US,
AND WE ARE ONCE AGAIN ON OUR KNEES
TO KOJIMA-SAN AND HIS HEROIC TEAM.”**

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WILL BE A BETTER GAME ON ANY SYSTEM THIS YEAR.
PERIOD.”**

NEXTGENERATION

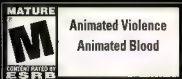
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PRESS
START

Coming Soon

January

| | | |
|--|-----------|--|
| PlayStation 2 | | |
| Commandos 2—Eidos | Strategy | |
| Deus Ex: The Conspiracy—Eidos | Action | |
| Dragon Rage—3DO | Adventure | |
| Drakan II—Sony CEA | Adventure | |
| Duke Nukem—Rockstar | Action | |
| Forever Kingdom—Agetec | RPG | |
| ESPN Winter Sports 2002—Konami | Sports | |
| Gitaroo Man—Koei | Music | |
| Hot Shots Golf 3—Sony CEA | Sports | |
| Monsters, Inc.—Sony CEA | Action | |
| NBA 2K2—Sega | Sports | |
| NBA ShootOut 2002—Sony CEA | Sports | |
| Rez—Sega | Action | |
| Salt Lake 2002—Eidos | Sports | |
| Shadow Man: Second Coming—Acclaim | Action | |
| State of Emergency—Rockstar | Action | |
| The Lost—Crave | Adventure | |
| World of Outlaws: Sprint Cars—Infogrames | Racing | |
| GameCube | | |
| 18 Wheeler American Pro Trucker—Acclaim | Racing | |
| Lights of Wrestling—Acclaim | Action | |
| NBA Courtside 2002—Nintendo | Sports | |
| NFL Blitz 20-02—Midway | Sports | |
| Dreamcast | | |
| Driven—bam! Entertainment | Racing | |
| Duke Nukem—Rockstar | Action | |
| NFL Blitz 20-02—Midway | Sports | |
| NFL 2K2—Sega | Sports | |
| Thunder Strike: Operation Phoenix—Eidos | Action | |
| Dreamcast | | |
| NHL 2K2—Sega | Sports | |
| Game Boy Advance | | |
| Aerial Aces—Majesco | Action | |
| Dark Arena—Majesco | Action | |
| Duke Nukem—Rockstar | Action | |
| MotoGP—THQ | Racing | |
| Street Fighter Alpha 3—Capcom | Fighting | |
| Tekken—Namco | Fighting | |

February

| | | |
|--|-----------|--|
| PlayStation 2 | | |
| Aliens: Colonial Marines—Electronic Arts | Action | |
| Barbarian—Titus | Fighting | |
| Caesar's Palace—Take 2 Interactive | Gambling | |
| Downforce—Titus | Racing | |
| Dune—Dreamcatcher | Strategy | |
| ESPN NBA 2Night 2002—Konami | Sports | |
| Evil Twin—Ubi Soft | Adventure | |
| Herdy Gerdy—Eidos | Adventure | |
| Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen 2—Eidos | Adventure | |
| Maximo: Ghosts to Glory—Capcom | Action | |
| Mobile Suit Gundam: Zeonic Front—Bandai | Action | |
| No One Lives Forever—Sierra | Action | |
| Pac-Man World 2—Namco | Action | |

| | | |
|--|-----------|--|
| Pirates: Legend of Black Kat—Electronic Arts | Adv. | |
| RLH: Run Like Hell—Interplay | Action | |
| Shifters—3DO | Action | |
| SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs—Sony CEA | Action | |
| Star Trek: Shattered Universe—Interplay | Action | |
| Star Wars Racer II: Revenge—LucasArts | Racing | |
| GameCube | | |
| Dark Summit—THQ | Sports | |
| Eternal Darkness—Nintendo | Adventure | |
| Phantasy Star Online—Sega | RPG | |
| Sonic Adventure 2 Battle—Sega | Action | |
| Game Boy Advance | | |
| Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind—Bethesda | RPG | |
| ESPN NBA 2Night 2002—Konami | Sports | |
| Gunma Onimusha—Capcom | Action | |
| Jet Set Radio Future—Sega | Action | |
| Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen 2—Eidos | Adventure | |
| New Legends—THQ | Action | |
| Transworld Snowboarding—Infogrames | Sports | |
| Game Boy Advance | | |
| Creatures—Conspiracy | Misc. | |
| Hercules: The Legendary Journeys—Titus | Action | |
| Monster Jam: Max Destruction—Ubi Soft | Racing | |
| Pocky and Rocky—Crave | Action | |
| Robocop—Titus | Action | |
| Snowboard—Titus | Sports | |
| Super Mario Advance 2—Nintendo | Action | |
| Top Gun—Titus | Action | |

March

| | | |
|--|-----------|--|
| PlayStation 2 | | |
| Britney's Dance Beat—THQ | Music | |
| Eve of Extinction—Eidos | Action | |
| King's Field 4—Agetec | RPG | |
| Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2—Activision | Sports | |
| Pryzm: The Dark Unicorn—TDK Mediative | RPG | |
| Rally Simulation—Ubi Soft | Racing | |
| Rayman Arena—Ubi Soft | Action | |
| Star Wars: Jedi Starfighter—LucasArts | Action | |
| Test Drive—Infogrames | Racing | |
| The Weakest Link—Activision | Misc. | |
| Transworld Surf—Infogrames | Sports | |
| Virtual Fighter 4—Sega | Fighting | |
| World of Outlaws: Sprint Cars—Infogrames | Racing | |
| GameCube | | |
| Galteon: Islands of Mystery—Interplay | Adventure | |
| Jimmy Neutron Boy Genius—THQ | Action | |
| MX2003 Feat. Ricky Carmichael—THQ | Sports | |
| WWF Wrestlemania 2002—THQ | Sports | |
| Game Boy Advance | | |
| Back Pedal—THQ | Sports | |
| Test Drive—Infogrames | Racing | |
| Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon—Ubi Soft | Action | |
| Unreal Championship—Infogrames | Action | |
| Game Boy Advance | | |
| Jungle Book—Ubi Soft | Action | |

Compiled by Jonathan Dudlak jonathan_dudlak@ziffdavis.com

IMPORT CALENDAR

GT Concept Tokyo 2001



Import Pick of the Month: Gran Turismo Concept Tokyo 2001. Think of it as GT Lite: fewer cars (all concept cars from Japan's top automakers), fewer tracks and only the Arcade mode. And Sony's not releasing it in the U.S., so if you want to play it you'll have to buy the import. At least it's cheap (about \$30 in Japan).

PlayStation

1/31 **Beatmania 6th Mix Core Remix**, Konami (Music)

PlayStation 2

1/1 **Gran Turismo Concept Tokyo 2001**, Sony CEI (Driving)

1/31 **Grandia II, Enix** (RPG)

1/31 **Grandia Extreme, Enix** (RPG)

1/31 **Virtua Fighter 4**, Sega (Fighting)

Feb. **Space Channel 5**, Sega (Music)

Feb. **Space Channel 5 Part 2**, Sega (Music)

3/7 **Onimusha 2**, Capcom (Action)

Dreamcast

Feb. **Space Channel 5 Part 2**, Sega (Music)

Game Boy Advance

1/1 **The King of Fighters EX**, Marvelous Entertainment (Fighting)

Jan. **Legend of Starfi**, Nintendo (Adventure)

Jan. **Tomato Adventure**, Nintendo (RPG)

Feb. **Goemon: A New Age**, Konami (Action)

Feb. **Lunar Legend**, Media Ring (RPG)

GameCube

1/24 **Virtua Striker 3 Ver. 2002**, Sega (Soccer)

3/22 **Biohazard (Resident Evil)**, Capcom (Survival Horror)

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

CONFIDENTIAL 11/6

MISSION BRIEFING

OBJECTIVE: Clear name of
falsely accused crimes.
Save world from Syphon Filter virus.



RECOMMENDED WEAPONRY: X-ray gun, nightvision rifle, taser,
M-16, proximity mines and others

ASSIGNMENT LOCATIONS: (SEE ENCLOSED PHOTOS)

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS: Failure is not an option. Watch your back.

passwd: arsenal



Costa Rica

Tokyo

Australia

South Africa

CONFIDENTIAL



Blood
Violence



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NHL 2K2

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Dreamcast

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
Violence

HSU AND CHAN
GAME DESIGNERS IN:
'FANTASTIQUE'

IF THESE REALLY WERE FINAL FANTASIES SHOULD THEY HAVE STOPPED NINE GAMES AGO?

WE SUE!

HELLO, VIDEO GAMERS, AND GO SEAT YOURSELVES BEFORE YOU BREAK SOMETHING.

HSU AND CHAN: MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE. WE EXAMINE A GAME THAT MAY WELL CHANGE THE COURSE OF ALL GAMES TO COME!

GRAND THEFT AUTO??

FINAL FANTASY!

BULL! I'M STILL PLAIN!

AS WITH MOST PRODUCTS THAT GO ON TO CHANGE THE COURSE OF HISTORY, WE CAN EXPECT THIS GAME TO BE BOTH INNOVATIVE AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, INSANELY PROFITABLE.

IT IS THIS SECOND FACET WITH WHICH WE ARE CHEIEFLY CONCERNED-- DO YOU REALIZE THAT IN JAPAN, THE FINAL FANTASY SERIES IS SO POPULAR THAT ADVANCE COPIES OF THE GAMES ARE ROUTINELY TRADED ON THE BLACK MARKET FOR FIRSTBORN SONS? IT'S SO POPULAR, HOT JAPANESE GUYS SOMETIMES DRESS AS FF CHARACTERS OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL!

I'VE SEEN IT HAPPEN! AND THE SERIES IS NO SLOUGH IN THE STATES, EITHER!

WHAT IS IT ABOUT THESE GAMES THAT'S SO APPEALING, SO GOSH-DARNED MARKETABLE?

IS IT AESTHETIC QUALITY?

IS IT SOMETHING AS SIMPLE AS MERE ESCAPISM?

IS IT THE ABILITY TO LIVE AS SOMEONE ELSE IN ANOTHER WORLD FOR A SHORT TIME?

IS IT THE NEED TO BLOW A RANDOM RED-STRIKIN' HEAD CLEAN OFF WITH A SNIPE RIFLE FROM ATOY PARKING GARAGE?

A THOUSAND PARDONS, BROTHER. I MUST'VE BEEN PLAYING THIS GAME A LITTLE TOO LONG.

HEH.

KEEP AN EYE ON THE BOY SHOOT IF YOU HAVETD.

FINAL FANTASY X IS NOTABLE IN THAT IT DISPENSES WITH MANY OF THE CONVENTIONS OF THE SERIES IN TERMS OF GAMEPLAY MECHANICS, PRESENTATION, PRESENCE OF WEIRD ANDROIDOUS BLONDE KID WEARING SHORT PANTS...

SANKO!

BUT BENEATH IT ALL, THE MEAN'Y AND SOUL OF THE SERIES REMAINS--

--AND THAT MEANS CASH! GODS AND GODS OF SWEET CASH! HA HA HA HA HA!!

HOW CAN I GET IN ON IT, YOU ASK? LET'S EXAMINE THE ELEMENTS IN DETAIL!

THE FIRST SELLING POINT OF ANY FINAL FANTASY GAME-- THE WORDS "FINAL FANTASY" UPON THE BOX COVER!

YOU COULD GO GOLD WITH A SEVEN-YEAR-OLD PONS CLONE IF IT CARRIED THE FF LOGO... WE KNOW!

WORKED PRETTY WELL, TOO. THE GUY WHOMERS MADE US CUT IT OUT!

BUT WAIT--

IS BRAND RECOGNITION ALONE ENOUGH TO TRULY MAKE YOUR RPG A FINANCIAL SUCCESS?

OKAY, I GUESS IT IS, BUT WE STILL HAVE SPACE TO FILL, SO WE MUST MOVE ON.

THE SECOND NOTABLE FACET OF THE FINAL FANTASY SERIES IS IN INTRODUCING THE PLAYER TO A BEAUTIFUL, EXPANSE FANTASY WORLD...

...AND THEN SUBSEQUENTLY INTRODUCING AN OPPOSING FORCE THAT THREATENS TO BLOW IT ALL THE HECK UP!

COME TO THINK OF IT, THIS IS PERHAPS NOT SO MUCH A NOTABLE FACET AS IT IS A WARNING FACET TO RPG DESIGNERS AGAINST SHOOTING THE WORKS SO EARLY IN YOUR GAME SERIES.

AFTER YOU BLOW UP THE WORLD ONCE, THEY EXPECT IT EVERY TIME.

START SMALL!

CATASTROPHES SUCH AS THIS BRING US TO OUR THIRD CHARACTERISTIC-- HALF-BASED PHILOSOPHY UPON THE GENERAL THEMES OF LIFE, DEATH, LOVE, WAR, AND WHATEVER SINGSTER FORCE IS CURRENTLY THREATENING THE UNIVERSE

DEMONSTRATE, CHAN!

IS LOVE EVEN REAL? AND WHN DOES IT ALWAYS LEAVE YOU FEELING LIKE YOU'VE BEEN HIT W/ THE STREPK?

WELL, SPOKE!

WHEN IN TOP FORM, THIS SORT OF THING CAN ACCOUNT FOR A FULL 2/3 OF TOTAL GAME TIME, A REMARKABLE FEAT...

... GIVEN OUR FOURTH CHARACTERISTIC, WHICH IS THAT FF TITLES, FOR THE MOST PART, ARE VERY, VERY LONG. AVERAGE FINISHING TIME TENDS TO BE IN THE REALM OF 25-35 HOURS, ASSUMING YOU FINISH AT ALL!

MANY PEOPLE GET HALFWAY THROUGH AND GIVE UP, MEANING THAT THEIR FINISHING TIME ACTUALLY EXTENDS TO INFINITY!

THAT'S BEA VALLE!

I'M ALMOST UP TO SEPURTHO! DARN TOOTH!

SO LET'S SUM UP THE FINAL FANTASY FORMULA FOR FINANCIAL EXCESS!

- o LONG PLAY TIME
- o SUMMER HIGH PHILOSOPHY
- o WORLD IN PERIL
- o SOMETHING THAT LOOKS UNUSUALLY LIKE THE WORDS "FINAL FANTASY" ON THE BOX COVER

ALSO, HAVING SEVERAL DOZEN TEAMS OF PLANTED PROGRAMMERS, ARTISTS, WRITERS AND COMPOSERS FITS IN THERE SOMEWHERE, BUT WE'LL COVER THAT AT A LATER DATE.

AND THERE YOU HAVE IT, VIDEO GAMERS! NOW YOU TOO, CAN MAKE YOUR OWN TOP-SELLING RPG IN THE FINAL FANTASY VEIN, ALTHOUGH PLEASE NOTE THAT AS WE DID JUST ONE YOU THE IDEA, YOU CAN EXPECT THE LAWSUIT FROM US OVER THE RIGHTS AS SOON AS IT TURNS A PROFIT!

THE NEXT TIME, I'M HSU TANAKA, BIDDING YOU HAPPY GAMING!

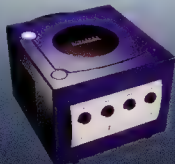
SAY GOODNIGHT, CHAN!

YOU SAID GOODNIGHT SUCKER!

THE END! P.S. - DON'T SIT TOO CLOSE TO THE SCREEN. -NORM



NBA
COURTSIDE
2002



Crazy handles. Killer crossovers. And mad hops. Your prayers have been answered. NBA Courtside 2002 with Kobe Bryant, only for Nintendo GameCube.



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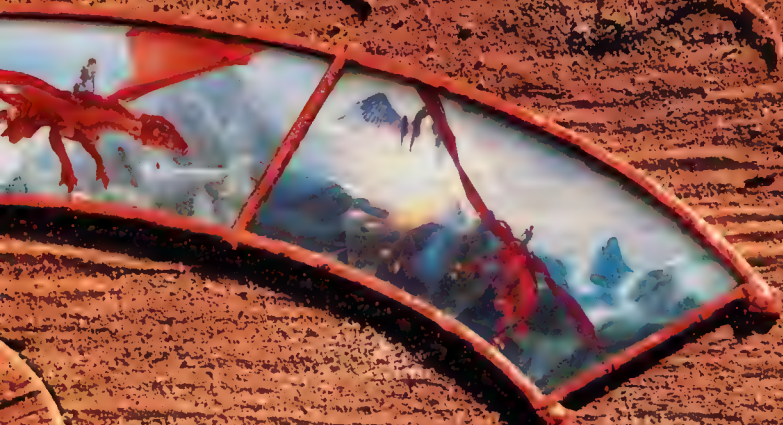
Choose Your Battle

No matter how far from the skies below to the skies above, evil
you'll fight the forces of darkness that threaten civilization.

MATURE



Blood and Gore
Violence



DRAGON THE ANCIENTS' GATE

*will attack from all sides. As Rynn and Arella
So sharpen your swords and prepare for battle.*



PlayStation 2



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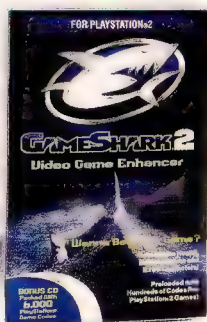


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Strong Language



PlayStation 2



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Previews

PlayStation 2

86-87 State of Emergency



- 88 Maximo: Ghosts to Glory
90 Herdy Gerdy
90 Deus Ex: The Conspiracy
92 Spider-Man
92 Star Wars: Jedi Starfighter
Monster Jam:
Maximum Destruction
93 Blade 2
Airblade
94 Freekstyle
MotoGP 2
98 Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002
Chris Edwards Aggressive Intine
Resident Evil Survivor 2
Code: Veronica

GameCube

99 Sonic Adventure 2 Battle



- 100 Soul Calibur 2
Smashing Drive
102 Resident Evil
104 Wreckless: The Yakuza Missions
Gonna Onimusha
106 Circus Maximus
Bloodrayne
RalliSport Challenge
107 Blood Wake



107 Unreal Championship

Game Boy Advance

- 108 Sonic Advance
King of Fighters EX: Neo Blood
Star Giants

This Month in Previews

The presents have been unwrapped, the tree has been dumped on the neighbor's lawn, and the Canadians have celebrated Boxing Day, whatever that is. Christmas is over, and you're likely standing knee-deep in a pile of games like Metal Gear Solid 2 and Halo, wondering what's worth looking forward to.



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.

That's what we're here for, brother and/or sister! Game publishers aren't slowing down just because the holiday rush is over. In fact, some really cool games are coming our way over the next couple months, not the least of which is the latest congressman's wet dream from Rockstar Games, State of Emergency (pp. 86-87).


If you're looking for a little old-school flavor, Maximo (page 88) should be right up your alley. Look for an in-depth feature on this Ghoul's 'n Ghosts-inspired action title in our next issue.

Meanwhile, you GameCube and Xbox owners might be feeling a bit of post-lunch depression as you realize all the



And here we thought **Reviews/Previews Editor Greg Sewart** was the only one **manly enough to wear heart-embroidered boxers. Check out Maximo on page 88.**

best titles for your systems hit in late November/early December. But check out our Previews sections on those two systems for some early looks at a few very promising games.

Finally, something to chew on: Combining a volatile features editor (Crispin Boyer), office furniture, a garbage can full of last night's leftovers, and four straight Halo CTF losses is not a good idea. Soy sauce was everywhere. It wasn't pretty. 

TOP 5 Preview Picks

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. State of Emergency | PlayStation 2, January |
| 2. Sonic Adventure 2 Battle | GameCube, February |
| 3. Maximo: Ghosts to Glory | PlayStation 2, February |
| 4. Resident Evil | GameCube, March (Japan) |
| 5. Wreckless: The Yakuza Missions | Xbox, February |

How to Remedy Your Crappy-Present Blues

No one likes getting McDonald's coupons, tube socks or cruddy video games for the holidays. But don't take it out on Aunt Mabel's weak back (though it *is* tempting). Follow these easy steps to turn your post-holiday woes into a veritable treasure trove of games.

PROBLEM



You woke up Christmas morning to find Kabuki Warriors (Xbox) and the official strategy guide in your stocking.



All you got this holiday season was U.S. savings bonds and commemorative coins from your annoyingly patriotic uncle.



No gift. Immediate family unexpectedly converted from Christianity to Buddhism the week before Christmas.



Parents mistook *Star Wars: Episode I* DVD for GameCube's *Rogue Leader*.

SOLUTION

This one's easy. Return these to the store before the price drops. The two may be worth a Halo and a good chunk of the DVD remote.

Sell 'em at a discount to the collector geek down the street. You'll take a slight loss, but lame flag coins won't pay for Luigi's Mansion.

This is a tough one; second-tier relatives are clutch. Take Grandma to Best Buy and play the sympathy card in front of Madden 2002.

If it fooled Mom and Dad, it'll probably fool Johnny Checkout at Blockbuster. Get us?



PLEASE WASH HANDS
BEFORE
RETURNING
TO
REALITY

DOWNLOADING

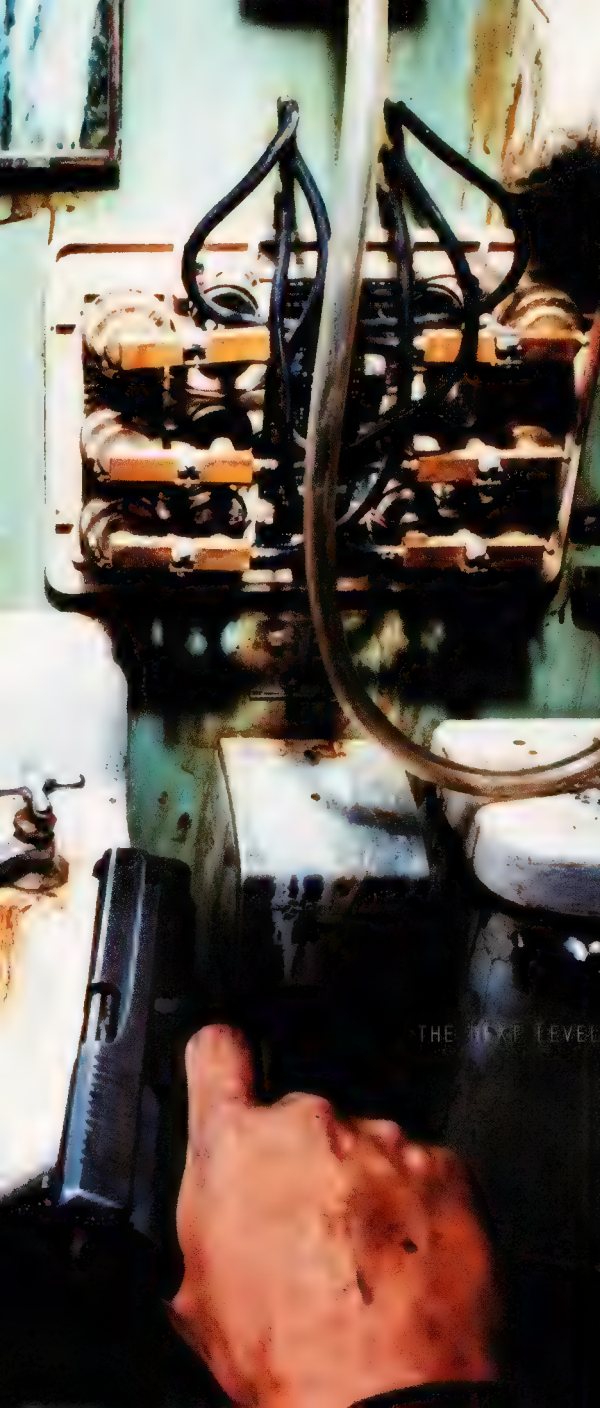
MATURE
M
CONTENT RATED BY
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Animated Blood
Animated Violence



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PlayStation®2

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USE STEALTH, STRATEGY, OR SHEER FIREPOWER.
THE CHOICES ARE YOURS AND SO ARE THE CONSEQUENCES.



WILL YOU BE THE CHARISMATIC MASTER MANIPULATOR, THE SIRENA,
AND STEALTHY TACTICIAN, OR THE DEADLY AVENGING ANGEL?



DEUS EX HAS BEEN VOTED GAME OF THE YEAR BY OVER
20 MAGAZINES, WEBSITES, AND READER SURVEYS.

THE NEXT LEVEL OF INTERACTIVITY IS HERE.

DEUS EX
THE CONSPIRACY
WWW.DEUSEX.COM

State of Emergency

Publisher: Rockstar
Developer: VIS
Players: 1
Genre: Action
% Done: 80%
Release: February 2002
Also Try: Grand Theft Auto III
Web Address:
www.stateofemergency.com

The Good: Old-school arcade gameplay mixes with postmodern bloodflow to re-invent brawling.

The Bad: No multiplayer modes? What's up with that?

And The Ugly: Spanky.

REAL-LIFE RIOTS

Video Mania

This game is inspired by riots, but sometimes games themselves inspire people to extreme violence. Here are some chilling examples.



When the PlayStation 2 launched in France, three teens were hospitalized when a crowd of eager PS2 shoppers surged toward the counter.



In Tokyo, several small children were assaulted and robbed on their way home from purchasing shiny, new copies of Dragon Warrior VII. Our John R. made it home safely.



Having already lowered the bar for good taste in gaming with Grand Theft Auto III, Rockstar now takes that bar and hits someone over the head with it in State of Emergency. If you've ever wanted to run through a crowded mall while mowing down innocent shoppers with an M-16, or take a grenade launcher to storefronts and parked

innocent populace. Citizens rebel, starting riots and inciting chaos in the streets. This is where you come in. At the outset, you choose between two streetwise gang members: Mack, an ex-cop gone bad, and Libra, a sultry lawyer fed up with injustice. You'll unlock other unruly badasses as you progress, including Spanky, SoE's ghetto-thug poster boy.

"...it will allow consumers to let off steam in their living rooms as opposed to the streets..."

—Jamie King, Rockstar director of development

cars, this is your game. SoE offers violent, vicarious thrills that are socially unacceptable, brazenly immoral and a helluva lot of fun.

The game begins in a world not unlike our own, yet gripped with madness. The ATO, a hugely evil corporation, has seized control of a major metropolitan city, imposing strict rules on the

You can bust stuff up in two different play modes—Revolution and Chaos. Revolution is the game's meaty Story mode. Similar to GTA3, it offers hundreds of wild, law-breaking missions. Tasks range from bombing retail stores to old-fashioned gangwars. The mayhem starts in a gargantuan shopping mall but later spreads to Chinatown, an uptown 'hood





WHO MADE THIS?

State of Emergency came from out of nowhere from VIS, a virtually unknown developer. Who knew that the team behind Tom and Jerry: Fists of Furry (N64) was capable of this?



and the skyscraper-filled downtown area. Four levels may seem tiny, but each zone is massive. Chaos mode dispenses with the plot, focusing solely on attaining a high score or killing every innocent bystander within a certain time limit.

State of Emergency's gameplay will feel very familiar to fans of Final Fight and its ilk. You can punch, kick, pick up weapons and even unleash a special move that costs you a bit of life, just like in Capcom's classic beat-'em-up. You'll find a slew of weapons lying about, from staples like bats and pepper spray to heavier stuff, like flamethrowers and a minigun.

In fact, assaulting passersby might be the game's best aspect. Initial specs claimed that SoE could handle 100 characters at once, but Rockstar's Director of Development Jamie King now boasts, "Over 200 people can be displayed on screen at any one time, with up to 500 AIs being processed simultaneously." And the frenzied crowds react realistically to what's happening around them. "Each AI has its own particular behavior, values and allegiances which determine where it goes, and who it'll attack or defend en route." If you start peppering the mob with bullets, all hell breaks loose. Most folks won't fight back, but some of the more aggressive ones may pick up a trashcan and toss it through a window. Even more dangerous are the rival gang members and cops who will assuredly use violence to quell your killing spree.


The whimsical, cartoony graphics provide a stark contrast to the absurd violence happening on screen. Sure, severed heads are bouncing around in a bloody pool, but the slapstick visuals lend the gruesome affair an *Itchy and Scratchy* vibe. Jamie King reminds us that,

"While real riots are far from funny, this game is far from realistic...we made the game to be fun and to appeal to the target audience—I think we've

"While real riots are far from funny, this game is far from realistic."

—Jamie King

succeeded. If you don't like it, don't play it."

Gory, funny and technically impressive, State of Emergency will undoubtedly make an impact when it crashes into stores this spring. Your local news will probably see it as a threat to the impressionable minds of America's youth, but in reality, it's just a slap-happy evolution of classic arcade gameplay. Hey kids, just remember—don't try this stuff at home, OK? 

—Shane Bettenhausen



COULD'VE BEEN

Pikmin Riot



When Rockstar first showed an early build of State of Emergency at the 2001 Electronic Entertainment Expo, it was a very different game. Instead of being a bally brawler, the game mixed fighting with complex real-time strategy elements. Your goal was to incite a crowd to riot against a rival gang. Producer Jeronimo Berrera describes the previous concept as Pikmin meets the L.A. Riots. "It was a curious concept, but the gameplay was a bit lacking. Personally, we find the Pikmin a little creepy, so we spray the office with bug spray."

Maximo: Ghosts to Glory

A four-level demo of **Capcom's** olde-school action platformer, *Maximo*, has found its way into your *EGM* offices. It's got a very strong *Ghosts 'n Goblins*-turned-3D feel, which Capcom intended as a tribute to the popular 8- and 16-bit series. Here's a "brief" look at the **February** release so far.

1. Following an untimely death at the hands of his girl-stealing nemesis, Maximo is pulled out of the grave and into the graveyard by the Grim Reaper to seek revenge.

2. Mystery power-ups can be worth the price if you're in need of health or an extra life, but 150 hard-won Battle Koins are tough to come by.

3. Our hero quickly learns the importance of keeping his armor. Exposed to hordes of undead and boiling lava, the lowest of his four armored forms leaves him dangerously close to death or revealing himself. At least it's not cold out.

4. A familiar yet pesky wizard temporarily renders Maximo a helpless child. Could be worse; he could have turned him into a toad.

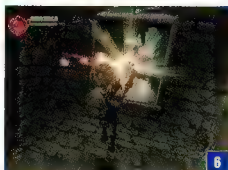
5. The grisly image of the graveyard boss is rendered in stained glass throughout the level. Naturally, Maximo's instinct is to bust it...

6. ...which gains him entrance to formerly inaccessible areas filled with power-ups and treasures.

7. It's not only fun to take time out and whack junk with your sword, but also rewarding. Collect 50 fireflies by smashing marked gravestones and receive an extra Death Koin, which can be used toward continuing when you die.

8. Sometimes, though, you get your sword stuck in the foliage. It's an occupational hazard.

9. After finishing all four graveyard zones, the path to boss *Ghastly Gus* is unlocked. You'll need skill and cunning to face the over-grown gravedigger, and you still might just die anyway.



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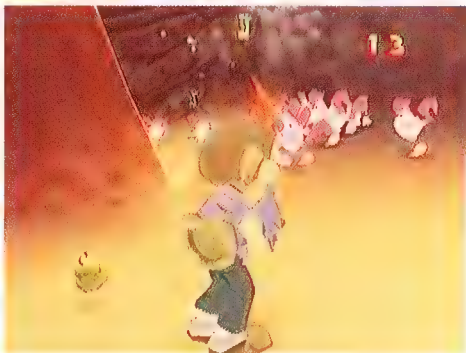
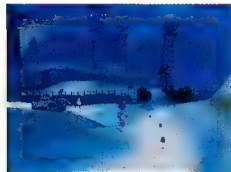
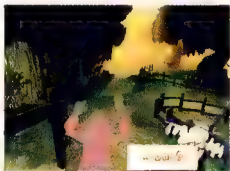
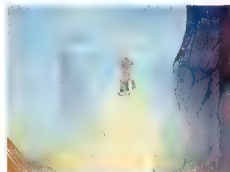
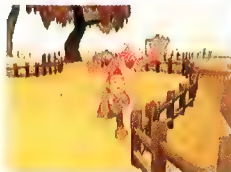
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If you feel like role-playing *Deus Ex* in real life, why not check out one of many conspiracy-related Web sites out there, including www.conspiracyplanet.com, where you can freely discuss all your paranoid delusional fantasies without being ridiculed.

Herdy Gerdy

With Disney-like animations and dialogue, plus pastoral cartoon environments, each frame a picturesque snapshot in itself, **Eidos'** playful puzzle-and platform-style adventure is poised to please. An array of intelligent creatures with different temperaments challenges one to strategically herd them to solve puzzles, while a charming story unfolds around how Gerdy saves his sleep-cursed father. Due in **February 2002**.



Deus Ex: The Conspiracy

In an alternate near future, society is on the brink of collapse. The middle class no longer exists, and an incurable disease has a death grip on the world. If you're not cop, you're little people. Thankfully, you're anything but little people in **Eidos'** *DX*. In fact, you're J.C. Denton, an operative in an anti-terrorism coalition, who must uncover a global conspiracy that threatens to enslave mankind.

What sets *DX* apart from other first-person shooters is its open-ended gameplay. Go guns blazing through the front door, or keep it on the down-low and use your hacking or sneaking skills to go unnoticed—the choice is yours. Next to *Halo*, *DX* isn't the prettiest game, but its immersive simulation is definitely compelling stuff. Let the paranoia set in **March 2002**.



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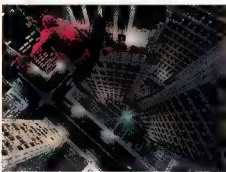
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Spider-Man

This **May**, for the first time on the PS2, Marvel Comics' iconic superhero saves the day in a webslinging adventure based on Sony Pictures' upcoming blockbuster Spider-Man film. Loosely based, that is. While the game's style closely resembles that of the movie—organic webshooters and all—you've got a few more villains than just that Green Goblin guy to deal with.

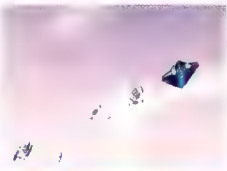
As in past Spidey outings from **Activision**, Shocker and Scorpion plan to torment our hero, while the Vulture soars into the mix for the first time. And as you might expect, ol' Webhead has never looked better, with developer **Treyarch** using its new combat engine to add to and enhance the already solid repertoire of moves established in the PS1 games. (Just wait 'til you check out those souped-up web attacks!) And, of course, what's a Spider-Man game without plenty of wallcrawling and slinging throughout the NYC skyline? The new aerial combat mode actually has you fighting for Spidey's life while dangling high above the New York streets.



Star Wars: Jedi Starfighter

The *Episode II* marketing blitz starts hitting video games in the **spring** with this sequel to **LucasArts'** popular space-combat game. The game may look the same, but the rules have changed a little. Jedi powers now complement your pilots' dogfighting skills to form a unique combo of mind and matter aerial attacks. You are a Jedi Master who can sap enemy shields, render opposing pilots unconscious, and make the action move in slow motion. Suffice it to say, these powers impress the chicks.

Four craft can be piloted in air and land missions that take place in the time between *Episodes I* and *II*. The best part? As we see more screens of Jedi Starfighter, us Star Wars geeks get a sneak peek at all the new ships in the next movie!



Monster Jam: Maximum Destruction

Rednecks, get a tissue and some Handy Wipes because your (wet) dream game has finally arrived: a monster truck combat game. Apparently, **Ubi Soft** is hoping to sell lots of games to the trailer-park demographic this **summer**.

Monster Jam sports 30 real-world rigs with heartwarming names like Gravedigger, Gunslinger, Bulldozer and Wild Thing. Don't expect the usual mashing and clashing, however. To win the championship you'll have to use more than your over-inflated Goodyears to deal damage. Guided missiles, buzzsaws and chains inflict more pain than an episode of the *Jeff Foxworthy Show*. You can even upgrade your truck with the money you get from winning contests.



PS2

PREVIEW
GALLERY

Blade 2

With *Soul Reaver 2*, *Blood Omen 2* and now **Activision's** *Blade 2* lurking in the shadows, vampire sequels are hotter than capri pants these days. This **summer** follow-up to last year's *Blade* will have a different storyline than the upcoming movie sequel, but it will feature a lot of the same characters and concepts. A bloodlust meter makes sucking cool by giving *Blade* new vampiric special attacks.



AirBlade

The "extreme-sports game with a plot" genre seems to be growing these days. First it was *Dark Summit*, now it's *AirBlade*, which bears more than a passing resemblance to developer **Criterion's** previous futuristic boarding game, *Trickstyle* (Dreamcast). In *AirBlade* you play Ethan, a young feller who battles the evil GCP corporation with the help of his friend Oscar's powerful hoverboard invention. In fact, Oscar's the one you're actually saving from said evil corporation. Chuckle! Beyond the gripping story mode, the game features the usual training, freestyle, score attack and two-player split-screen options. **Namco** will release this handsome game in **February**.



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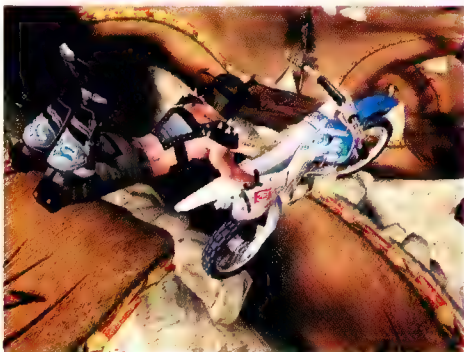


TIGER GETS BUFF

Tiger's newly muscled physique isn't the only reason he wanted to be motion captured for PGA 2002. Apparently his swing has changed so much, his old 1999 mo-cap footage just wouldn't look right. Here's to sweating the details.

Freekstyle

At some point, EA decided their **March** release, Supercross 2002, wasn't edgy enough for the modern, MTV generation. To get hip fast, they undressed the riders, gave them mad trick abilities, and set 'em loose on nine fantasy courses. Beyond the layers of moto-attitude, you'll find a competent, freestyle-centric game that packs in 80 back-breaking moves. For the tragically unhip, traditional racing can be found as well.



MotoGP 2

Last year, Namco's MotoGP gave us the chance to slice through an S-curve at 150 mph, and keep our kneecaps firmly attached to our legs. The realism was unparalleled. MotoGP 2 brings back the same killer gameplay and fortifies it with five additional tracks (including Le Mans), and 20 real riders from the 2001 GP season. It also boasts feistier drone riders and sharper graphic detail, and should be out **now**.



Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002

Tiger may be a true-life golf whiz, but his namesake games are a few shots over par. To change its fortunes, EA got radical with this latest installment. Say goodbye to the swing meter—it's gone. Like it or not, the analog stick has replaced it. As for multiplayer, a Speed Golf mode lets you race your buddy to the hole. We'll see how ol' Tiger stacks up against Hot Shots Golf 3 this **February**.



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PlayStation 2



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If you think a "McTwist" is something you can buy at McDonald's, or that the "Running Man" is just an old Arnie flick, then maybe you aren't quite ready for the bruising world of *Aggressive Inline*. If you want to get hip to the jive, point your browser over to www.seas.smu.edu/~justin/inline_terms.html. Here, you can learn all of the hardcore inline terminology, so even if you can't walk the walk, you can talk the talk.

Chris Edwards *Aggressive Inline*

We can't believe it took this long for someone to exploit inline skating in the same fashion as every other extreme sport, but **Acclaim** has decided to fill the void. This **summer**, you'll be able to play with the godfather of inline skating, Edwards, as well as its modern-day stars. Since the developers of *Dave Mirra* are handling this game, we expect it to include similar controls and gameplay.



Resident Evil Survivor 2 Code: Veronica

Granted, the first *RE Survivor* wasn't so hot...all right, it sucked. Sucked *oss*. But with **Capcom** bringing all the new mainline *Resident Evil* games exclusively to the GameCube, this import-only light-gun game is the only new zombie blaster PS2 owners are going to get for some time (the poor bastards).

Like the arcade game it's based on, *Survivor 2* loosely follows the events of *RE Code: Veronica*. Unfortunately, controls are still a problem, whether you use the *Dual Shock 2* (what genius decided not to use the second analog stick in a first-person shooter?) or, even worse, the *Guncon 2*. And the blurry, blocky graphics are an embarrassment to the detail and intricacy we expect from this series. But it's not all bad—familiar monsters (like the Nemesis from *RE3* and *RE2's* Lickers) and some extra modes added for the home version (including a Roach mode where you blast rooms full of the lil' suckers) should at least please die-hard fans who might import this.



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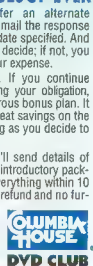
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HOLD ME!

Here's a sweet little nugget you may not have known about hedgehogs. Aside from being impossibly cute, hedgegs keep their bad selves lookin' good by covering their spines with saliva and mucus. Makes ya just wanna fry 'em up and eat 'em!



PREVIEW

Sonic Adventure 2 Battle

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Publisher: | Sega |
| Developer: | Sonic Team |
| Players: | 1-2 |
| Genre: | Action |
| % Done: | 75% |
| Release: | February 2002 |
| Also On: | Dreamcast, sort of |
| Web Address: | www.sega.com |
| Waiting Per: | Nights 2 |
| The Good: | Sonic's all grown up and has left home. Sniff! We hope he packed an umbrella. |
| The Bad: | More crap camera angles than a one-hour photo lab. |
| And The Ughy: | Can Sonic Kick Mario's ass on the plumber's own turf? |



Tails gets Eggman in his crosshairs and prepares to blow that bald, porky punk over the edge of this pyramid.

Now there are even more multiplayer levels than before. Take Sonic, Shadow or Metal Sonic on a trip downtown!




While the battle for console supremacy is fought out by not two, but three mighty superpowers in 2002, the levelheaded among us might want to keep an eye on a particularly potent pairing. Sega's Sonic the Hedgehog (the only mascot to give a certain paunchy plumber a run for his money) will soon find a new home on Nintendo's GameCube. A partnership like this will be hard to top.

Although little more than a slightly updated version of the not-so-old Dreamcast game (see *EGM* #146 for a full review of the DC version), *Sonic Adventure 2* comes prepared with some compelling new features that should intrigue both veterans and newcomers alike.

Aside from the Chao raising/GameCube/GBA feature (see sidebar), the main addition to SA2 Battle is the slew of new multiplayer levels that weren't technically feasible on the Dreamcast. Dozens of stages that used to be exclusive to the

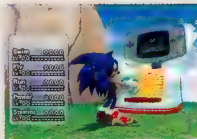
single-player mode can be unlocked for split-screen, two-player competition.

But the additions don't end there. A group of new playable characters has been added to the GC version as well. Now you can pit Sonic or Shadow against Metal Sonic in a high-speed race, hunt for treasure using Knuckles, Rouge or Chaos (the boss from the first *Sonic Adventure* on Dreamcast), or stage a shootout between Tails, Eggman or a Chao Tank in a wide variety of locales.

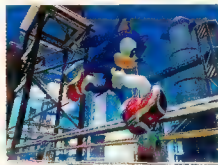
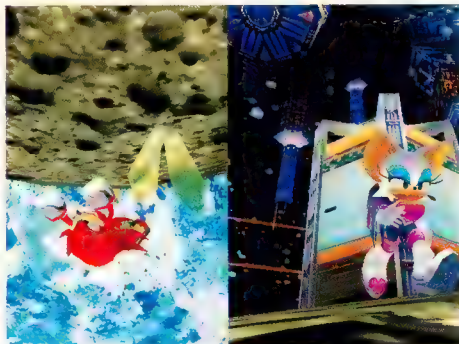
Nitpickers will be happy to know that SA2B runs faster than the DC version, controls just as well (although the camera angles are still problematic), and looks even better. Sonic Team has added a lot of graphical touches to the game, such as realistic shadows and updated Phantasy Star Online Ver. 2 billboards. So, if you've bought a shiny new GameCube and need some 3D platform action, you need only wait for a certain high-speed hedgehog to make his bow.  —James "Milkman" Mielke

ON THE GO

Tao of Chao



SA2B's GameCube to GBA Chao-raising feature is so slick you don't even need a copy of *Sonic Advance* to take your Chao on the go. If you have a Chao in SA2B, you can download it into a cartridgeless GBA and still play all of the minigames to raise their stats. You can't turn the GBA off, but thanks to a "sleep" mode that uses 1/10th the battery life, you can leave your GBA on and upload the Chao back to your GameCube later. Naturally, *Sonic Advance* owners can save their Chao at any time.



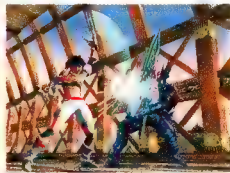


PREVIEW GALLERY

Soul Calibur 2

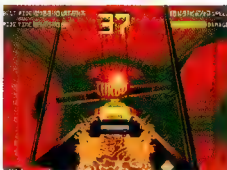
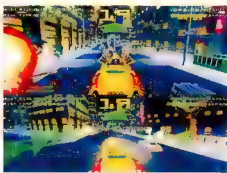
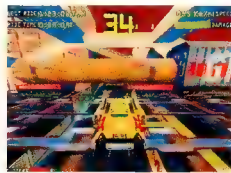
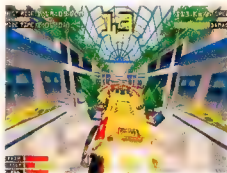
Do we really need an excuse to show off more SC2 screenshots? If you're just joining us, here's everything we know so far about **Namco's** hot sequel: Alongside the returnees from part one are a handful of new characters like Tarim, a Southeast Asian chick wielding bladed tonfas; Tsung, a hot-blooded Korean, deadly with a Chinese sword; and Cassandra, the younger, sexier sister of Sophitia.

SC2 will retain its predecessor's quick gameplay pace while simplifying the overall controls to make the game more accessible to casual players. The series' 3D movement system (eight-way run) will get an overhaul, so it feels more natural and realistic. Along with ring-out tactics, players will also be able to slam opponents against walls, thanks to the newly added 3D environments. All eyes will be on SC2 come **May 2002**.



Smashing Drive

Programmed by **Gaelco**, an obscure Spanish(!) developer, Smashing Drive is like Crazy Taxi with a side order of extremeness. By extreme we mean using battering rams and buzzsaw power-ups to clear a path through your rush-hour or graveyard shifts. Power-ups are integral to earning the most money and points in the shortest amount of time. Play against a friend or the CPU when **Namco** ships the game in **early 2002**.



A handprint is formed by thick, expressive brushstrokes of red and black paint on a white background. The fingers are spread, and the overall shape is a clear silhouette of a hand. The red paint is layered over the black, creating a sense of depth and intensity. The text 'wounds will heal...' is written across the palm area in a golden-yellow, serif font. The word 'wounds' is in a smaller, italicized font, while 'will' is also italicized and slightly larger. 'heal...' is the largest word, with three dots following it. The background is plain white, which makes the dark and vibrant colors of the handprint stand out prominently.

wounds
will
heal...



PREVIEW



Image from badassbarry.evilmag.net

WE ♥ BARRY

Women can't resist him. Men are powerless in his presence. Even dogs and guinea pigs find themselves strangely attracted to him. He is Barry Burton, bearded supporting character in Resident Evil and star of Resident Evil Gaiden. Read more about him at badassbarry.evilmag.net.

Resident Evil

And you thought *Luigi's* mansion was scary—take a look at this old house of pain (double pun! Triple word score!). The blocky original PlayStation Resident Evil is still the favorite of some *EGMers* for its creepy horror bent (before the series veered off into action), so we're all over this GameCube remake like stank on poo.

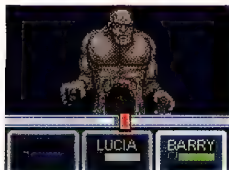
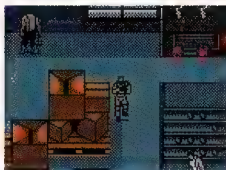
Capcom's Japanese Web site has been posting new info on the game every week, including comments from RE bigwig Shinji Mikami himself. Check egm.gamers.com for the full bonanza of screens and movies, but here are the choice bits, just between us....

Worried about violence and gore getting removed for the younger GameCube audience? Don't be. Mikami says he's including a bit less goo to make things more realistic, but everything still bleeds, and you can still blow zombie heads clean off with the shotgun. (Shouting "Huzzah!" while doing so is still optional.) The all-new motion-captured animation should be smoother too, while the soundtrack remains minimal—mostly remixed versions of the same music. No U.S. date yet, but RE is due in Japan on **March 22**.



RE GBC? YIPPEE!

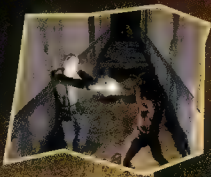
Three screens on this page are from the upcoming Game Boy Color game Resident Evil Gaiden. Can you guess which ones? (It's tough, we know.) Gaiden has you switching between three characters (including "Hairy" Barry Burton from RE) in order to rid a cruise ship of zombies.





... but
 your
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SILENT HILL 2



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Violence
 Blood and Gore



PlayStation 2

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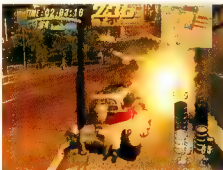
Imagine our surprise when we learned that Bunkasha Games—developer of *Wreckless*—is a branch of the publishing company that distributes *Penthouse* (among other adult magazines) to the lonely, hairy-palmed men of Japan. At least games and nude mags cater to the same market.

Wreckless: The Yakuza Missions

This February release is definitely odd. Two female cops go on a quest for revenge when Yakuza members unintentionally cause them to—gasp!—spill their pudding and ruin their lunch break. The story practically writes itself.

Stupid premise aside, *Activision's* *Wreckless* is, by far, one of the coolest-looking driving games we've ever seen. Tear through the streets of Hong Kong, destroying everything amidst a hail of shattered glass, rush-hour traffic and terrified pedestrians. Think *Driver* meets *Runabout* with really good graphics.

The missions are varied, too. Race a rival in a bad-ass sports car. Destroy dim-sum stands in a hippied-out love bug. Or just run over lots of stuff in a monster truck. We can't wait for this one.



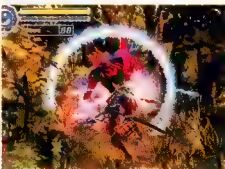
Genma Onimusha

Capcom insists the improvements in this Xbox version will make *Onimusha* worth playing again come February, and we'd have to agree it boasts more new goodies than your average director's cut. In addition to HDTV and Dolby 5.1 surround support for crisper graphics and sound, *Genma* ups the difficulty for hardcore gamers and anyone who's already mastered the PS2 game. That means tougher enemies and more of them, like the two new nasties you see on the right. And if that doll with the four-foot blades for hands doesn't scare you, consider this: Like a demonic ex-girlfriend, she stalks your room to room, and can't be killed.

Onimusha vets will should also look for another optional Dark Realm challenge area and new ninja outfit.



Enemies can now suck the green spirit juice left by their fallen comrades, leading to a tug-of-war (left) when you try to grab it. If you win, the energy powers your special attacks (below); lose, and the baddies turn red and grow stronger.



CHAMP

OR CHUMP

what's it gonna be this year?



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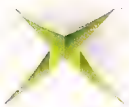
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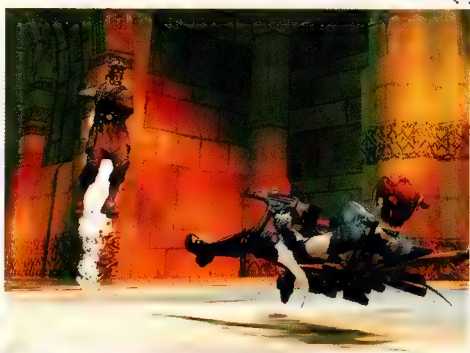
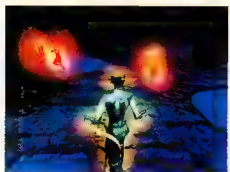
Circus Maximus

Now this is a new one. Choose a team of gladiators, a chariot and some horses, and go on an all-out, kill or be killed race through the jungles of Africa, arenas in ancient Rome and more. If your opponents dare get close to you, make them pay with a wide range of weapons like the sword, mace and club. **Encore's** new racer is definitely weird, but it's actually kind of cool. Look for it in **early 2002**.



Bloodrayne

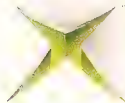
If Blade had breasts, then the heroine in **Majesco's** dark adventure might be the result. Next **winter** you'll slip into the high-heeled boots of a half-human, half-vampire with supernatural powers that let her dodge bullets and see in the night. These powers make her a hit at parties, but they also let her stop undead Nazis from ruining the 1930s. And here we thought Indiana Jones had the market cornered on that sort of thing.



RaRiSport Challenge

So far, no really exceptional rally games have surfaced on the next-generation consoles (unless you count the rally mode in Gran Turismo 3). This **spring**, **Microsoft** hopes to change all that with RalliSport. We'll admit, even in these early stages this game is looking impressive. GT3's killer? Too soon to tell. But with Colin McRae Rally 3 still a ways off, at the very least RalliSport should make the wait a little easier.

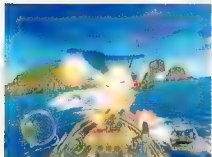




PREVIEW
GALLERY

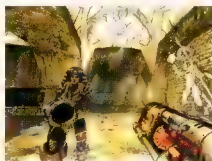
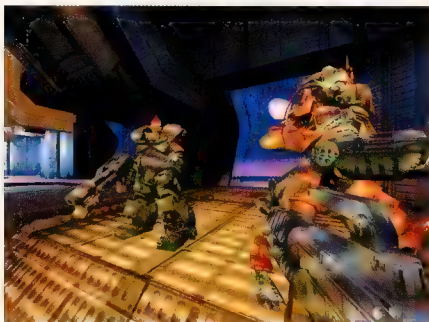
Blood Wake

Take Hydro Thunder, add better water effects, throw in a little Asian flavor (but hold the "character"), and you'll end up with Blood Wake. One to four players (via split-screen) can enjoy moist combat while letting fly with torpedoes, chain guns, rockets and mines. But if you prefer your action solo, **Microsoft** claims the 25 single-player missions should keep gamers happy. It's out **now**.



Unreal Championship

Unreal Championship may lack a coherent single-player experience, but it's the only game we think has a chance to knock Halo from its multiplayer throne. **Infogrames'** latest fragfest features nifty ideas like characters that actually perform differently in combat, as well as using armored body parts to deflect incoming shots. UC will ship when the Xbox's broadband network launches in **Q3 2002**.



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PlayStation 2



Marvelous Entertainment is releasing a limited-edition Game Boy Advance to coincide with *King of Fighters EX: Neo Blood* in Japan. The unit will sell for 15,600 yen, which is just under \$150. It's doubtful that such a niche handheld will come to the States, so get an import order placed ASAP.

Sonic Advance

Now that we've had a little time to play **Sega's** Sonic Advance, we can say that fans of Sonic's Genesis games are in for a real treat.

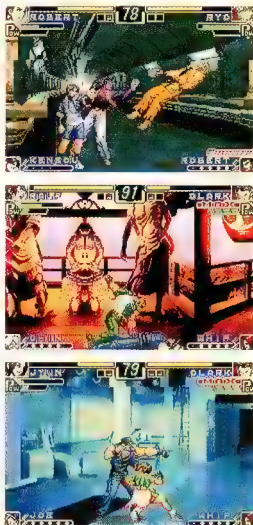
The game is actually kind of short, but you can play through it as Sonic, Knuckles, Tails or Amy. (Super Sonic makes an appearance, too.) The beauty is each character is unique—Amy can't run fast but wields a hammer, Tails can fly, Knuckles can punch and climb walls, etc.—so it's actually worth using each of them to explore all the levels. Sonic should be out **now**.



The King of Fighters EX: Neo Blood

It may be RIP for SNK, but a good fighting game is hard to keep down. So **Sammy** has picked up the reins on this excellent GBA version of *The King of Fighters*, developed by **Marvelous Entertainment**.

Like *KOF Evolution* on the Dreamcast, *Neo Blood* uses tag-in "strikers" to help you out in single-player, team or versus modes. And while it doesn't look like any new faces will pop up for this incarnation, Neo•Geo disciples will recognize the 26 classic *KOF* characters that will appear as either playable fighters or strikers. Excited yet? Get out your calendar and put a big circle around **March 2002**.



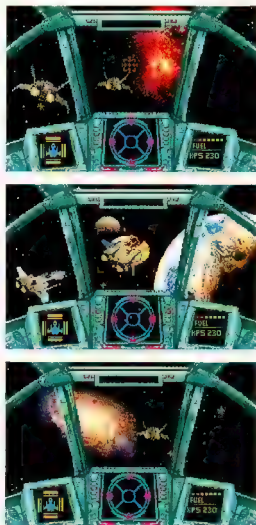
Star Giants

Italian developer **Raylight Studios** is hard at work on this space-combat sim that bears more than a passing resemblance to Origin's classic *Wing Commander*.

It's no coincidence, as this game is based on the best PC titles in the genre, and will offer a very similar experience. Considering the hardware it's on, that's no mean feat.

What's exciting about *Star Giants* (outside of the pretty graphics) is the multi-player modes **Raylight** is planning. Up to four players (linked) can play deathmatch, team deathmatch, or even the regular missions in a co-op mode.

As of this writing, *Star Giants* still has **no confirmed release date or publisher**, but here's hoping it will soon.



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PlayStation 2

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OR DIE... FAST.

RLH

RUN LIKE HELL

HUNT, OR BE HUNTED

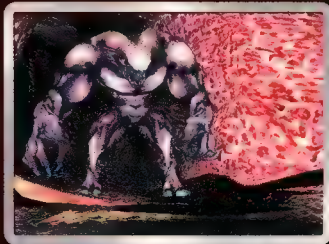
Your pulse pounds in your temples. Your crewmembers lie dead or dying around you. All you know for sure about the alien invaders is that you're next on their hit list. Time is running out. So is your life.



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EPISODE 2002: ATTACK OF

Role-playing games are everywhere in 2002. Join EGM's party as we brave the onslaught

Hark, readers—your lives are in grave peril! But not from everyday hazards like second-hand smoke or bad sushi. Instead, we fear for your social life, which is in danger of being sucked away by the greatest deluge of console role-playing games since Yr Olde RPG Avalanche of '99, when more than a dozen of these time-sappers hit the PlayStation.

Nearly 30 adventures of every epic type—action-RPGs, traditional RPGs, online RPGs, monster-breeding RPGs, you name it—are headed your way in 2002, for every gaming system. So what's a role-playing freak with only so much free time to do? Equip yourself with caffeinated soda and join our party as we quest through the mess to find out which games are worth losing your life to.

The attack of the RPGs begins now. Come with us if you want to live.

The Monster Meter™

Be on guard for these four monsters, whom you'll spy roaming the next 20 pages. We've enlisted their aid to help show how jazzed each game gets us. The fiercer the monster, the more

Hiya! stoked we are about the RPG. And if a game is reviewed, our little hero here will point you to the right page.

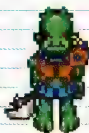
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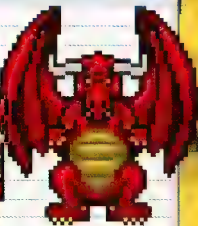
Yawn



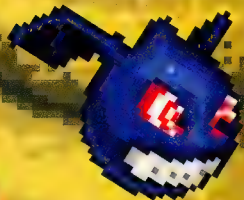
Hmm



Whoa



Yikes!



THE RPGS!



OUR INVENTORY...

- 116 Final Fantasy X
Project Ego
- 117 Kingdom Hearts
Jade Cocoon 2
- 118 Final Fantasy XI
Dragon Warrior IV
- 119 Hoshigami: Ruining
Blue Earth
- 120 Suikoden III
RPG Maker 2
Arc the Lad Collection
- 124 Grandia Xtreme
Wild Arms: Advanced 3rd
Shadow Hearts
- 126 Xenosaga
Star Ocean 3: Till the
End of Time
- 128 The Elder Scrolls III:
Morrowind
Evolution Worlds
- 130 Tactics Ogre Gaiden: The
Knight of Lodis
Tsubunai: Atonement
Fengshen Yanyi:
Legends of Gods & Heroes
Forever Kingdom
Wizardry: Tale of the
Forsaken Land
Magical Vacation
Shining Soul
- 132 Phantasy Star Online
Grandia II
Skies of Arcadia

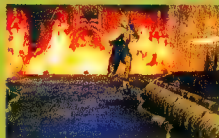
FINAL FANTASY X

System: PlayStation 2

Release: Out now

Type: Traditional

Mama's Boy: FFX's whiny protagonist Tidus is the Raiden of RPGs



The arrival of Final Fantasy X proves that, even with all the distractions of making the computer-animated equivalent of *Waterworld* (i.e., *FF: The Spirits Within*), series creator Hironobu Sakaguchi still has what it takes to crank out a top-notch RPG. As with every episode of FF thus far, the good-'lookin' cast of FFX is all new, and the game's

storyline is unrelated to epics past. But for all its new-to-the-series gameplay tweaks, FFX's plot doesn't venture far from your typical band-of-teenagers-saves-the-world schlock. The narrative revolves around protagonist Tidus, a shaggy-haired sports celebrity, and six of his friends who're on a quest to eradicate an evil entity known only as "Sin."

Reviewed on PG. 150



Summoned beasts will fight until they're dismissed...or killed off.

Lederhosen

Tidus, the hero of FFX, reintroduces a fashion footnote we never expected to see in a modern RPG: the lederhosen, pants worn by horn blowers who traipse through the Swiss Alps. This hot item will, no doubt, be the latest rage at a comic convention near you.



Through subquests along the way, you'll become acquainted with your party.

And now for those gameplay tweaks we talked about. Aside from being the first FF to land on the PS2, FFX is also the first in the series to feature voice acting for every character. FFX also ditches Active Time Battles, a mainstay of the series' combat system, to opt for a methodical, turn-based engine where selecting the right people for the right situations is the key to success (insert FF's battle victory jingle here).

But don't worry—even with all these fundamental changes, FFX still retains its FF pedigree. This means hardcore bastards will still find a ton of secrets, hidden weapons and summons to unearth in far, obscure corners of the world map. And of course, no FF of late is complete without the gratuitous computer-generated movies that make all those hours of pure dungeon crawling worthwhile. With the PS2 hardware at its disposal, Square is making sure those gorgeous cutscenes sound better than ever with the support of Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound.

Is it your kinda quest?

FFX shows the world that Square still has the magic touch, which is a good thing in light of the company's spectacular failure with their foray into Hollywood.

New Blood

At a glance, you might think FFX looks and plays like its prequels, but invest a chunk of time in it and you'll see that this FF plays like no other game in the series. Square gave Tetsuya Tsuchida, the director of the Front Mission strategy games, full control to re-create FFX's battle system from the ground up. The result is a finely balanced, turn-based battle engine that plays out like chess, without the checkered grid.



Side Quests

Along the bottom of this feature, we've scattered even more RPGs for you to discover this year

Project Ego

System: Xbox

Release: Winter 2002

Type: Action

Lionhead's Project Ego, one of the most open-ended and graphically impressive action RPGs we've ever



seen, lets you begin the game as a young buck. How you develop your character through adolescence determines how the game adapts its inhabitants and subplots to your actions. Too good to be true? We'll see.



KINGDOM HEARTS

System: PlayStation 2
Release: Fall 2002

Type: Action

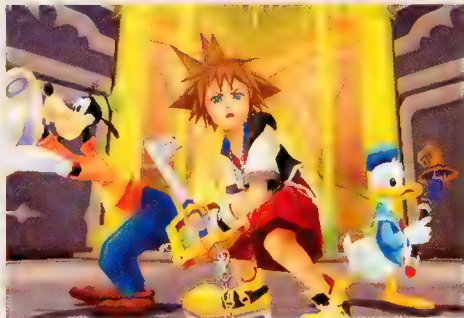
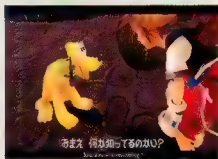
Goofy: If Goofy's a dog, how come he talks but Pluto can't?

Legions of Final Fantasy fanboys were rocked by Square's announcement of Kingdom Hearts, a collision of serious RPG developers and... well, Mickey Mouse. There's a time and place for lovable Disney characters, to be sure, but do gamers really want to embark on a quest in which you role-play as Goofy himself? Don't answer "no" just yet—this game is surprisingly intriguing.

Kingdom Hearts unites the worlds of Disney and Square by combining well-known cartoon franchises with an all-new fantasy world. The game's spiky-haired star is a lad named Sora. A powerful storm decimates his



"OK. So, you grab the kid and I'll knock his ass out. Then we cook him. Ready?"



home on Destiny Island, and he begins a journey to locate his missing friends amid the wreckage. During his adventure, he'll encounter characters and locales from the full roster of Disney classics, including *Alice in Wonderland*, *Hercules*, *Tarzan*, *Pocahontas*, *The Little Mermaid* and other familiar favorites.

OK, so the whole thing reeks of a spectacular marketing ploy, but how does KH actually play? The battles blend aspects of FF with elements from action-oriented games like *Zelda* to create an intriguing hybrid. Combat occurs in real-



time, but attacks and spells are selected via pop-up menus. All this action lends the combat in KH a frantic, frenzied pace that delivers a solid kick in the ass for traditional RPG mechanics.

Is it your kinda quest?

While it's not exactly the RPG dream team we had in mind, KH does have the potential to deliver something fun and unique. The only thing we're sketchy on is how Square'll handle Disney's stable of superstars. Given limitations with the story, it'll probably be impossible for KH to do all the characters any true justice.



Bitchin' Cameos

Fans of the series are fully aware of just how self-contained each Final Fantasy game is. Although they share similar themes and concepts, the amount of legitimate crossover between titles is nearly zilch. Kingdom Hearts kisses that rule goodbye and crams a veritable who's who of FF guest-stars into the game. You'll find Cid and Yuffie from FFXII, Squall and Selphe from FFXIII, and Tidus and Wakka from FFX, all coexisting in Sora's star-studded world.



The King of Kingdom Hearts

Who's behind this unlikely product? None other than famed FF character designer Tetsuya Nomura, who has worked on FFXII, FFXIII and *Parasite Eve*. He spearheads the Kingdom Hearts project as director and handpicked the rest of his team from Square's massive talent pool. "I got the event director from *Vagrant Story* and many upper-level members who worked on FFXII and VIII," he tells us. "I'm very satisfied with my team."



Reviewed on pg. 248

Jade Cocoon 2

System: PlayStation 2
Release: Out now
Type: Traditional
 Collect, hatch, breed, merge. Four simple words that if you follow, in that order, capture



the essence of Genki's Jade Cocoon 2. Much more of an actual RPG than the first game's simple Pokémon-style collect-a-thon, JC2 features a full quest that takes you to four unique regions of its world. Beyond the game's

pleasing aesthetics is a complex creature-development system that literally gives you thousands of permutations, depending on how you breed your monsters. Then you sit back, and let the little critters do all the dirty work.



FINAL FANTASY XI

System: PlayStation 3, PC

Release: Winter 2002

Type: Online/Action
Reach out and touch someone with your Bahamut.

The prospect of playing yet another sequel—even in the mega-hot Final Fantasy series—within such a short time since the last game might prompt groans of overkill. But this follow-up ain't your everyday FF: Like Phantasy Star Online on the Dreamcast, FFXI's drama unfolds in cyberspace. And the distinction here is that this game is a "massively multiplayer online RPG," similar to EverQuest on the PC, meaning thousands can frolic online at the same time (early estimates put the limit at 5,000 players per world), while mere "multiplayer online RPGs" such as PSO and Diablo only let a few questers hang together.

So what are all



Several thousand RPGers can co-exist in one FFXI city, and battles can erupt anywhere in the land.

these people gonna do? Square says the game will have an overall quest like every past FF title, but they've yet to reveal how this story will fit into the online world. FFXI takes place on a planet called (get ready for the fantasy mumble jumble now) Vana'diel, a place populated by three character types: the Hume (humans), the

Taru Taru (small Ewokish creatures) and the Elveren (tiny elvish humanoids). Vana'diel is split into three huge kingdoms—Bastuaque, Sandoria and Windus—which can be explored by FFXI participants on PS2s and PCs alike. Some areas are accessible only to certain character types, and we figure each race will find mini-quests specific to them in those parts of the world.



What's even more astounding is that all of this will happen remarkably soon; FFXI is slated to hit Japan in spring 2002 and could reach the U.S. by the end of the year. Still, a key detail Square has yet to discuss is how FFXI will shatter the language barrier for its proposed community of international subscribers. PSO packs an elegant, if limited, system of phrases translated



FFXI gives players the chance to play dress-up with its unique customization system. Weapons, armor and clothing appear on your character when you equip him/her. Just remember what Mom told you about storming dungeons in your skivvies.



Dragon Warrior IV

System: PlayStation

Release: Summer 2001

Type: Traditional

Following the release of the Dragon Warrior III remake on the GBC, Enix is dipping into the



archives once again to bring us their biggest and best old-school update yet: DWIV for the PS2. Using the same game engine as Enix's newest epic, DWVII, DWIV takes place in full 3D, making it feel almost like an entirely new

game. The unique five-chapter setup of the original version is back, complete with new scenarios and an in-depth ranking system that keeps tabs on your progress. Watch for this one to hit around the middle of the year.





What would FF be without Ifrit, our favorite demon spawn from the depths of hell. Here, a FFXI player dances with the baron of brimstone.

into multiple languages—perhaps FFXI will follow suit. A companion disc with the Japanese version of FFXI and a teaser video of Japanese gamers sending e-mail to pen pals in America via Square's PlayOnline service. Whether this sort of feature ties in with FFXI is also yet to be revealed.

Is it your kinda quest?

If the popularity of PSO is any measure, FFXI, running on the millions of PS2s and PCs around the world, should be infinitely more stimulating (and successful). While we hate hooking a keyboard up to our PS2s, we'll do anything just to scratch that +9 Vorpal itch.

Calling All Nations

With Sony still vague about its online plans, Square has devised alternate means to get PS2 owners online in Japan, at least. Noted hardware provider NEC has whipped up a PlayOnline-branded broadband adapter for Square, which will most likely arrive on store shelves simultaneously with FFXI. The chances of a stateside release, however, are slim, as Sony's own network will be running full steam ahead by the time FFXI hits here.



Window to the World

Can't get enough of reality-TV shows? Then check out Square's virtual-reality TV and take a peek at the actual FFXI world in action. Head to www.playonline.com/allvecam/livecam for a peek into FFXI's actual beta-test environments. At the time of this writing, there is little to no activity, but things should get busy when play-testing begins later this month. By the time you read this, thousands of eager Japanese volunteers will be playing Square's most unique FF yet.



Reviewed on
pg. 168.

Hoshigami: Ruin Blue Earth

System: PlayStation

Release: Out now

Type: Strategy

Strategy fans waiting for a sequel to Final Fantasy Tactics



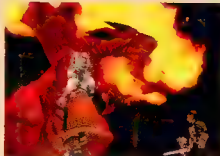
will have to settle for the next best thing—Hoshigami. Developer MaxFive takes everything great about FFT's battle system and adds several innovative features to help elevate it from its obvious inspiration. With more

than 40 scenarios to conquer, scads of character-customization possibilities and a solid story, Atlus' latest strategy-RPG should hold over FFT addicts until Tactics Ogre Gaiden arrives on Game Boy Advance late this year.



SUIKODEN III

System: PlayStation 2
Release: Spring 2002
Type: Traditional
Chemistry: Pair up characters to discover special attacks



Konami's Suikoden games have been known for their excellent twisting storylines and huge cast of memorable characters. If you've followed the series since its inception on the PS1, you'll be glad to know that Suikoden III will tie up some of the loose ends left behind at

the end of the last game. The most obvious change for the series is the switch from primarily 2D graphics to a fully 3D world. Also revamped is the battle engine from the first two games. Instead of the old



system, which keeps your characters grouped together during the battle, now your characters attack from anywhere on the field, depending on where they end up after their move. If an ally is in between your character and the enemy, you may want to rethink your strategy as friendly fire is a part of the equation.

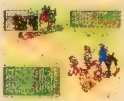
Is it your kinda quest?
 SIII's production values may not be on the level of FFX, but we look forward to the excellent story and gameplay standards set by the last two games. If SIII maintains the warmth and charm of the series, it'll be all good.

Fowl Play
 Kingdom Hearts ain't the only game in this feature with a talking duck. Suikoden III actually has an entire city of them, called the Duck Clan. They're an enclave of war-hardened fowl you encounter along your quest. With enough skillful conversation, a sty wit and the power of suggestion, you may even manage to recruit a bold, brave bird named Major Joe into your stalwart band of adventurers. And good for you: This duck packs a mean peck. Just keep him away from your car after you wash it.



An Army of Heroes

While having too many playable people in an RPG can compromise character development (Chrono Cross, we're looking in your direction), Suikoden has always managed to offer a sizeable assortment of adventurers (the first two games had 108 each) without losing their distinct personalities and strengths.



Choose Your Own Adventure

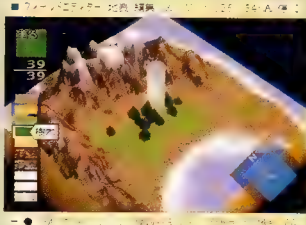
What, you want *more* RPGs? Then make your own with RPG Maker 2



If you've ever played an RPG and thought to yourself, "Even if I was in a drunken stupor, I could write better dialogue than this," then just chill

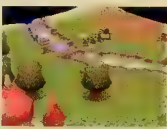
underwhelming) and more powerful editing tools. The game gives junior dungeon masters everything they need to crank out next-generation quests, save them to memory cards, and submit their friends to the magic of mediocre game design.

But seriously folks, in the rare hands of those who know what they're doing, RPG Maker 2 could produce some surprising results. We found out for ourselves last year



when EGM and Agetec co-sponsored a contest for the best reader-designed RPG. If RPG Maker 2 turns out to be as versatile as the PlayStation prequel, you can bet we'll run a similar contest this summer.

out until this summer, when Agetec plans to release RPG Maker 2 (working U.S. title) here in the U.S. for the PlayStation 2. This RPG construction kit for ASCII and Enterbrain is a sequel to Agetec's RPG Maker on the PlayStation, except supremely jazzed up with 3D visuals (that are still rather



Reviewed on pg. 168

Arc The Lad Collection

System: PlayStation 2
Release: Out now
Type: Traditional
 The handful of RPGs that mark the end of the PS1's life cycle include the long-overdue Arc the Lad.

Collection from Working Designs, and it's ironic that one of the very first RPG series on the system (in Japan) should also be one of the last ones released in the U.S. All three Arc games feature a



very traditional overhead-view party system and battles reminiscent of games like Shining Force and Vandal Hearts. This is a dream come true for hardcore fans. As for the rest of you, well... just go read our review.





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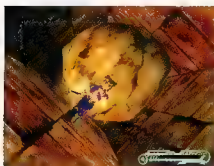
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GRANDIA XTREME

System: PlayStation 2
Release: TBA
Type: Traditional
Also known as: Grandia Rad to the Max

Generally, games with the word "Xtreme" in the title involve surfing through the air, bungee jumping into lava, or pulling a wicked hand plant on a monster half pipe. So your guess



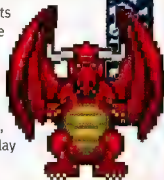
on why the latest Grandia is dubbed "Xtreme" is as good as ours. The game stars Evan, a gruff bounty hunter who eschews standard RPG hero conventions by actually being kind of a jerk (think Han Solo). In a stunning twist of fate (which you'll foresee five seconds into the game), Evan accidentally gets sucked into a complex plot of war, betrayal and intrigue after visiting a mysterious ancient ruin. Game Arts is



developing GX, and the folks at Enix will publish the title in Japan (a U.S. publisher hasn't been finalized, although the game is definitely coming here).

Is it your kinda quest?

We're not too keen on the title, but if Game Arts can bring back more of what makes the Grandia series so good (innovative combat system and likeable characters), GX will be a must-play this year.



Synchronicity

Grandia Xtreme builds upon Grandia II's innovative battle engine by introducing "Synchoflash," a special timing attack that allows multiple characters to gang up on an enemy simultaneously. Correctly setting up the timing for these powerful strikes will be tricky—the battles in GX, like those of its prequels, combine real-time and turn-based elements.



WILD ARMS: ADVANCED 3RD

System: PlayStation 2
Release: TBA
Type: Traditional
Also Try: Fievel Goes West for Super Nintendo

Much like the classic films that obviously inspire it, Sony's Wild Arms series features the good (innovative puzzles), the bad (hackneyed plots) and the ugly (wretched battle graphics) of RPGs.

Luckily, this third installment appears to finally have shaken those monkeys off its back, thanks to the brave developers over at Media Vision.

While the first two WA games dabbled with Wild West themes, WA3 truly embraces this gritty facet of the American frontier. Each of the game's characters brandishes a firearm, the settings range from dingy ghost towns and

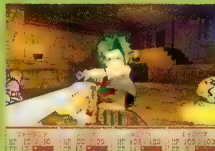
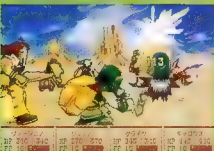


dusty corrals, and the score bristles with a Sergio Leone spaghetti-Western flair. The real point of departure for the series, however, is its art direction. Characters and monsters now sport a cel-shaded cartoony look defined by games like Jet Grind Radio (DC) and Cel Damage (Xbox).



Is it your kinda quest?

Wild Arms finally gets a little wild. Hopefully, these changes will re-energize this stagnant series.



RPG Cel-a-bration

Wild Arms features trendy cel-shaded graphics, but it ain't the only adventure to swipe that look. Harvest Moon: Save the Homeland for PS2 was the first cel-shaded RPG to hit stores. And then there's the game that never made it: Sony's Popolcois III, the latest in a whimsical storybook-style Japanese series, first shown for PS2 in 1999. Several delays later, it's now slated for a Japanese release "sometime in 2002."



Reviewed on
 pg. 156

Shadow Hearts

System: PlayStation 2
Release: Out now
Type: Traditional
 This unusual RPG comes from developer Sacnoth, who brought us the lackluster Koudelka on the



PS1. Published by Midway in the U.S., Shadow Hearts tells the story of a psycho named Yuri, who's commanded by voices to rescue a young girl from a serial killer named Roger Bacon. You pursue him through the Chinese

countryside, then embark on a grander adventure to put a stop to his sacrificial, often demonic shenanigans. Oh, and have we mentioned that Yuri can transform into an assortment of violent beasts to kick supernatural ass?





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XENOSAGA

System: PlayStation 2
Release: Fall 2002
Type: Traditional
Prerequisite: Philosophy 101

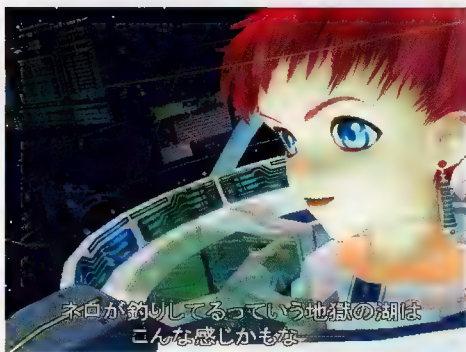


years before Xenogears, this game is the true genesis of the epic—Episode I, if you will. So fans of the first game will recognize a few familiar faces and places, but the gulf of centuries separating the titles means most of the content here stands firmly on its own.

Visually, Xenosaga offers complex environments and 3D, anime-style characters. Unlike the fantasy setting of most RPGs, the game's world is sci-fi-geek heaven. You'll encounter giant robots, have love affairs with sultry androids, and embark on intergalactic travel. But just wait until Xenosaga hits you with its storyline: a pilgrimage to uncover the truth about God and the secrets of the universe. Yikes! Well, it sounds more fun than church, anyway.

Few games have sparked as much heated squabbling as Square's Xenogears for the PS1. Some praise it for tackling tough topics like sex, religion and drug abuse (while not suggesting that one necessarily leads to the other). Others dig its obscenely long quest and creative battle system. Then, of course, there are those who call the whole thing a load of pretentious crock. For the second game in the series, Square has bowed out of the argument and handed the torch over to Namco to publish Xenosaga, a PS2 prequel that will likely reignite the tumultuous Xenodebate.

Just as the original *Star Wars* is actually Episode IV, it turns out that Xenogears was the fifth chapter of a much larger tale. Taking place roughly 10,000



Is it your kinda quest?

Overall, this promising prequel seems even more ambitious than its awesome predecessor. Still, the potentially heady mix of religion and philosophy might be too baffling for mainstream gamers and Bible-thumpers alike.



Xenogears Returns

Square low-balled Xenogears' prospects when it was released in 1998, so only a limited number of copies were produced. As fans spread its gospel throughout the RPG community, the game became increasingly scarce. By late 2000, Xenogears was going for \$100 and more on eBay. Thankfully, Square finally rereleased the game in 2001. You should be able to snatch a copy for \$39.99 at your local retailer now and experience this controversial classic firsthand.



Thinking Inside the Box

When Xenosaga launches in Japan this February, hardcore fans can dish out the extra dough for the limited edition. A massive white box houses a special keychain, a figure of robotic hottie KOS-MOS and the two game discs (with special, full-color labels). Namco hasn't commented on whether U.S. gamers will receive a similar offer, but we're guessing no.



Star Ocean 3: Till the End of Time

System: PlayStation 2
Release: Fall 2002
Type: Traditional
 While Tri-Ace's Star Ocean series enjoys massive popularity in



Japan, it has only enjoyed modest success here in the U.S. Fortunately, Enix is planning to give the series another go—later this year in the form of the absolutely beautiful-looking Star Ocean 3. Once again mixing

sci-fi with fantasy, the game marks the series' first entry into full 3D. Enix is keeping quiet on gameplay details thus far, but given Tri-Ace's excellent track record, we'd say there's plenty to get excited about.



JEREMY McGRATH

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PRODUCTS RANGE FROM EVERYONE TO TEEN

E-T
 CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Mild Lyrics
 Mild Language
 Mild Violence



PLAYSTATION 2



THE ELDER SCROLLS III: MORROWIND

System: Xbox

Release: Spring 2005

Type: Action

Broken back + 4: The game packs more than 2,000 objects you can find and carry



RPG fanatics weaned on the linear storylines of traditional console role-playing games might think their beloved genre's gone goofy when they play Morrowind, the Xbox's very first RPG, courtesy of Bethesda Software. This PC port doesn't yank you from one plot point to the next, roll cutscenes every 10 minutes, or any of that other hand-holding stuff common to console RPGs. Instead, it's just a behemoth adventure set in a sprawling land where any hero with time to spare will find a bazillion things to do.



Who's a good monster? Who's a good-yikes, stay back, monster! The combat here is in real time.

That's not just 'cause the game world here—which encompasses about 10 square miles—is huge. And it's not because the game lacks a point. Although you can take on hundreds of mini-quests (everything from hunting down a monster to escorting a character from one place to another), your character still has one main goal: to save the province of Morrowind from an ancient cult. The main reason this RPG is such a time-waster is its immensely immersive world, detailed right down to the forks and spoons on villagers' dinner tables. "Walk into a guy's house and you can look through his cabinets and find his extra pants or read all the books," says Project Leader Todd Howard. "You can go out back and see what crops he's growing, pick berries off them, eat the berries and try to figure out what they may do to you." To top that off, the berries will regrow, and you can mix them into potions.



Sir Doug thought the time-share sounded a lot nicer in the brochure.

Of course, poking around in people's private areas can get you into hot water. "You can pick up anything you can carry," Howard says, "but just like real life, if someone catches you taking something they own, they'll either attack you or report you to the authorities." It's this freedom of choice that makes Morrowind such an open-ended adventure. Your actions shape the reactions of people around you and the types of quests you get. But will console RPG fans wanna take on all this responsibility? "I think they want it that way!" Howard says. "You can do what you want, but we still show you the path to success if you want to follow it. The game's similar to Grand Theft Auto III in that respect, just 100 times bigger."

Is it your kinda quester?

If you're the kinda gamer who dug going through cupboards and drawers in Dreamcast Shenmue, Morrowind's hyper-detailed world is perfect for you, even if the muddy visuals aren't Xbox-caliber.

Elderwhatsit?

Morrowind is the third entry in the Elder Scrolls saga, an acclaimed only-on-PC series that began in 1994 with Elder Scrolls: Arena and continued with Daggerfall. But that doesn't mean console gamers will feel lost if Morrowind is their first foray into the franchise. "We like to keep each Elder Scrolls game fresh, so they aren't actually sequels story-wise to each other," says Bethesda's Howard. "People who've played the previous games will just be more familiar with the names and culture of the world."



Book Learnin'

Instead of building up your character the old-fashioned way, via experience points, Morrowind takes a use-'em-or-lose-'em approach with your character's skills, which you choose when you create your dude. The game packs 27 abilities broken into three categories—combat, stealth and magic—and you increase these skills by

using them, or paying for training, or reading books you find scattered throughout the world (the game packs 300 books in all). "A warrior will raise his level by using heavy armor and swords," Howard says, "but a thief will rise by using skills such as Sneaking and Marksman. It's a great system that rewards you for staying in character, as opposed to just killing things."

Evolution Worlds

System: GameCubes

Release: Summer 2005

Type: Traditional

The latest chapter in Ubi Soft and developer Sting's ho-hum Evolution saga, which made its



debut on Dreamcast, is heading to the 'Cube later this year. It plays a lot like the first two games: You lead cute, colorful characters on treasure hunts through randomly generated dungeons loaded with turn-based combat. Sure, the

gameplay is pretty basic, but at least RPG fans'll have something to play on their GameCubes. And Evolution fans will be glad to know this sequel packs characters and storylines from the first two games, as well as all-new content.



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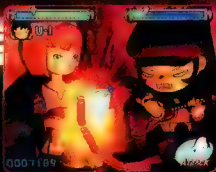
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EVERYONE
ESRB

Mild Language

PlayStation®2

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TACTICS OGRE GAIDEN: THE KNIGHT OF LODIS



Platform: Game Boy Advance
Release: TBA

Type: Strategy

The original Tactics Ogre (PS1) was an absolute gem of a strategy-RPG, with incredibly deep turn-based play. TO Gaiden, due out in 2002 from Nintendo and Quest, aims to surpass its predecessor with an all-new epic story, tons of enhancements and even a two-player battle mode.



FOREVER KINGDOM

System: PlayStation 2

Release: Out now

Type: Action

Agetek may not want you to know this, but this game is EverGrace II, the sequel to From Software's flaccid PS2 launch title. Featuring party-based fighting and improved graphics, FK is a quirky and eccentric entry foray into action-RPGs.

Reviewed on
pg. 156



TSUGUNAI: ATONEMENT

Reviewed on
pg. 158



System: PlayStation 2

Release: Out now

Type: Traditional

Take possession of heart sick characters in this unique RPG from newcomers Cattle Call. Atlas brings us this story of a young warrior whose spirit is ripped from his body. You jump from host to host, helping people right the wrongs in their lives. It's a bit like *Quantum Leap*, but that's a good thing, isn't it?



FENGSHEN YANYI: LEGENDS OF GODS AND HEROES



System: PlayStation 2

Release: Spring 2002

Type: Traditional

Koei excels at making games about Chinese history seem oddly fun, so let's hope FY continues the trend. You'll amass a party of bad-asses from across China, battle demonic forces with your trusty Bao Bei (whatever that is), and bone up on your history along the way.



WIZARDRY

Reviewed on
pg. 158



System: PlayStation 2

Release: Out now

Type: Traditional

Wizardry, the original dungeon crawl from our Apple II days, is back with a vengeance, thanks to the efforts of untested RPG developer Racjin and publisher Atlas. This game teleports you back to the golden age of RPGs before stuff like story and overworlds were in vogue.



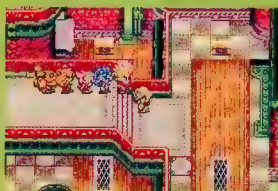
MAGICAL VACATION

Platform: Game Boy Advance

Release: TBA

Type: Traditional

This new "communication" RPG from Nintendo and newcomer Brownie Brown features a unique six-man turn-based battle system, 16 different types of magic and lots of multiplayer elements (hence the communication moniker). And to top it off, the game looks fantabulous. A U.S. release is expected before the end of 2002.



Shining Soul

System: Game Boy Advance

Release: TBA

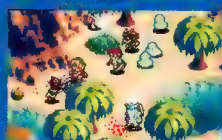
Type: Action

Set in the world of the Shining Force series of strategy-RPGs, Sega's Shining Soul is an action-



based affair that opens up a new dimension in handheld role-playing: four-player simultaneous play. Scant details have been revealed thus far, but we do know that there'll be a heavy focus on dungeon exploration and item col-

lecting. We'd be excited even if it were a plain ol' one-player Shining game, but the promise of link play has the Fantasy Star Online addict inside us squirming with anticipation. Expect a U.S. release from THQ or Sega later this year.



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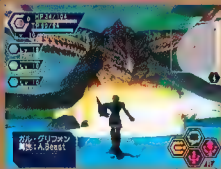
YOUR SECOND CHANCE

So you skipped out on the Dreamcast? Then you missed some amazing RPGs. Thankfully, these classics are being rereleased on current systems (PS2, Xbox and GameCube), giving a whole army of users who never opted for Sega's little white box a chance to try out some of the best games in the genre.

Reviewed on
pg. 156

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

System: GameCube, Xbox
Release: TBA
Type: Action/Online
Limit Breaks: Server-fee
Smash, Free-time Drain



The world's first online console RPG has also become one of Sega's key titles in its multi-system strategy. Sonic Team's action-adventure puts you in the boots of a warrior dropped onto the mysterious planet Ragol, left with the task of investigating the tragedy of a destroyed colony. But screw all that back story stuff, because all you really

have to do in PSO is wander through the same five dungeons for hundreds of hours, killing the same few enemies over and over again. Sound tedious? No way—we love this game, and so will you.

Should I play this game if I already have the DC version? Most likely, yes. If you were into the original, there's even more for you to love here. Graphical overhauls are the least of it; the GameCube is getting an honest-to-goodness new jungle dungeon (as opposed to the weak extra modes tacked onto PSO Ver. 2 for DC). We're guessing the Xbox version may have more goodies for returning PSO fans as well.



GRANDIA II

System: PlayStation 2
Release: Out now
Type: Traditional
Bonuses: Hero Sarcasm +40
Heroine Naivete +30



Developed by Game Arts, the creators of the Lunar series, Grandia II tells the story of Ryudo, a hardened mercenary hired to escort a whiny priestess named Elena to sacred ground, all while fighting the encroachment of a dark god called Valmar. This sweeping epic even packs a convoluted love triangle that makes up for the backbone of Grandia II's character development. Ubi Soft's translation preserves the game's charming dialogue, and an excellent battle system sets it apart from the pack.

Should I play this game if I already have the DC version? In a word, no. Some of the real-time cutscenes are being replaced by full-motion video on the PS2 (thanks, but no thanks) and nasty graphical glitches have worked their way into this rushed port.

SKIES OF ARCADIA

System: GameCube, PS2
Release: TBA
Type: Traditional
Awarded: Most traditional 3D
RPG

Just because an RPG is old-school doesn't mean it has to look like ass. Take this game, for instance: Skies of Arcadia adheres to RPG traditionalism to the letter and yet manages to look absolutely stunning. You assume the role of Vyse, a young

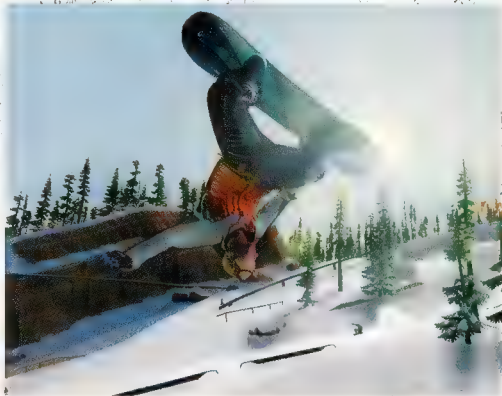
Blue Rogue pirate who steals from the rich and gives to the...middle class. After you and your feisty pal Aika rescue a quirky sorceress named Fina from the Valuan Empire, all hell breaks loose. You're forced to go on an epic crystal-fetching, swashbucklin' adventure, while experiencing some of the best graphics, characters, plot twists and music (not to mention some of the most frequent random battles) in recent RPG memory. But all this should come as no



surprise to any self-respecting Dreamcast owner. SOA features many of the same folks (now at Sega's Overworks development studio) behind the original. Phantasy Star games on Sega's 8-Bit Master System and 16-Bit Genesis.

Should I play this game if I already have the DC version? SOA was an instant classic on the DC and should lose nothing in its transition to newer, more powerful systems. There are also rumors of GBA-linked enhancements for the GameCube.

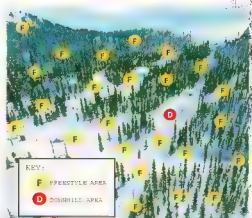
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"THAT WAS A NICE
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FREESTYLE:
"DAG!"

ENGLISH:
"I LIKE YOUR
PANTS."
FREESTYLE:
"DAG."

ENGLISH:
"I THINK I'VE
FRACTURED MY
PELVIS."
FREESTYLE:
"DAG."







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XBOX

RPGs at a Glance

| THE GAMES | SYSTEM | RELEASE DATE | THE HERO | THE QUEST | THE LOOK | BATTLE SYSTEM |
|--|---|--------------|--|--|---|----------------------|
| FINAL FANTASY X |  | Out now |  Tidus | A timeless tale of love, religion and scoring...goals, that is | Will make your other PS2 games jealous | Turn-based |
| XENOSAGA |  | Fall 2002 |  Shion Uzuki | Unravel the mysteries of God, the universe and sex with robots | 3D anime style | Turn-based |
| SKIES OF ARCADIA |   | TBA |  Vyse | An old-school globe-trottin' crystal search. The old stories are still the best | Beautiful, luscious 3D environments and anime-style characters | Turn-based |
| KINGDOM HEARTS |  | Fall 2002 |  Sora | Square, you've just made FFX, where are you gonna go now? Disney World, of course | Final Fantasy meets Fantasia | Real-time with menus |
| DRAGON WARRIOR IV |  PlayStation. | Summer 2002 |  You name the heroes | Boy (or girl) bands together with seven unlikely heroes (and a horse) to save the world from an evil demon | Ugly, but after a few beers, it's almost as pretty as FFX. Almost | Turn-based |
| PHANTASY STAR ONLINE |   | TBA |  You | Meet exotic creatures from lush new worlds...and kill them with your buddies online | Delicious techno-style future chic | Real-time |
| WIZARDRY: TALE OF THE FORSAKEN LAND |  | Out now | You're the hero in this one, too. Go look in the mirror and imagine that you're a hobbit. Try squinting | There's a deep, dank cavern somewhere waiting for you to explore its depths | Solid like a rock, and about as exciting | Turn-based |
| ELDER SCROLLS III: MORROWIND |  | Spring 2002 |  Whoever you want—you make your own dude | Hundreds of quests, but ultimately you wanna stop a cult from defiling the land, kinda like Ozzy did | Medieval Times meets the apocalypse | Real-time |

With more than 27 RPGs to play between now and the end of 2002, who's got time to read a big-ass feature? We give you a shortcut with our handy RPG crash course

below, where we break down eight games into bite-size essentials. Next time you're at a party, bust out with your wealth of RPG trivia. Then watch the ladies swoon.

| LOVE INTEREST | UNIQUE BECAUSE | YOUR PARTY RIDES | YOU COLLECT | INSPIRED BY | WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH |
|---|---|---|--|--|---|
|  Yuna | It's Final Fantasy. 'Nuff said |  Airships | Monsters. Gotta catch 'em all! Or something | The beauty of southern Japan...and visions of a giant mountain of money | Blitzball, a turn-based underwater sport? |
|  Jesus | It drops more religious names than Creed's last album |  Big fat mechs | Rare artifacts, kind of like the <i>Antiques Roadshow</i> | The anime series <i>Evanangel</i> | The incestuous mother-son romance subplot? |
|  Not one but two saucer-eyed hotties | It's an amazing game that's getting the second chance it really deserves |  Airships | Hidden crystal shards called Chams | Classic 16-bit-style RPGs and the creator's love of traveling | All those random battles? Be warned: You're going to spend a ton of time in combat |
|  Mrs. Potts | It's a Disney game you won't be embarrassed to buy |  Dumbo | Millions of dollars in licensing revenues. No wait, that's Disney | A chance elevator meeting in the building shared by Disney and Square in Tokyo. It's true! | Pocahontas? Wasn't one game based on that crappy flick enough? |
| None. If you were a blocky squat munchkin, your prospects wouldn't be so hot either | The multi-chapter set-up makes for an interesting twist on the way RPG stories are usually told |  A Wagon | Tiny medals that you trade in for fabulous prizes | The success of <i>Dragon Warrior VII</i> in Japan | The pitiful graphics? Get with the times, Enix |
| Only if you participate in one of them embarrassing online marriages | It's the world's first online console RPG | A broadband connection | Cool rare items and monthly subscription fees | Yuji Naka's nostalgia for programming the original <i>Phantasy Star</i> | The lack of dungeons? Sure, they're beautiful and bear repeating, but we crave more than five |
| You're on your own there, chief | We haven't seen a game like this in years. But then again, we don't play PC RPGs | A wave of nostalgia | Dust | <i>Dungeons & Dragons</i> , some magic mushrooms and the sewers | This game? All right, who busted out the ol' Apple II emulator? |
| This hero's got no time for lovey-dovey crap | It's wide-open world'll take you weeks long to explore |  Giant bugs called Siltstriders |  Anything that's not nailed down | Ye olde fantasies of every console gamer who's ever thrown a 20-sided die |  Your hero's bony bod, Ally McBeal could whup his ass |

THE SLICK LIST

PEOPLE HARDWARE CONCEPTS SOFTWARE

With the launch of Xbox, GameCube and Game Boy Advance—not to mention amazing games like Halo, MGS2 and Tony Hawk 3—all crammed within its 12 months, 2001 was one heckuva year, packed with so much stuff we figure we need to spend 2002 in hibernation to recover from it all. But don't break out your stocking-feet pajamas just yet: 2002 promises to unleash enough new innovations, hot developers, cool gadgets and—most important of all—great games to keep us wide-eyed for the foreseeable future.

And that's where the *EGM* Slick List comes in. Now in its fourth year, this annual honor roll of innovation lays out our set of predictions for what will be big in the game biz between now and the close of 2002. The people, hardware, concepts and software highlighted over the next five pages will be more than just slick this year—we fully believe they'll be significant enough to change the face of the industry itself and how we're likely to interact with it. And if we're wrong, at least you'll finally be able to get that sleep we were talking about.

STILL SLICK

While the *EGM* editors squabbled over which items to include in this year's Slick List, we kept running into the same problem: Many of the things we highlighted as hot stuff last year

will still be a big deal in 2002. So what could we do? Easy—we're giving the best of last year's list another go by running the stuff that's still slick along the bottom of this feature. Consider it bonus sickness, free of charge.

The Revival of Fighting Games

Are You Ready for Another Round?

Virtua Fighter 4, Tekken 4, the new Mortal Kombat—classic arcade fighter franchises are bursting onto consoles in 2002.

And now that the home hardware can duplicate an arcade-perfect experience (minus the greasy punk players and sticky floors), why not? Mortal Kombat co-creator Ed Boon thinks it's high time for rebirth: "In arcades, we had to concern ourselves with giving the player as much entertainment as possible for his 50 cents. Now we're wiping the slate and completely reinventing MK." Cool, we got next game.

Console Hard Drives

The New Secret Weapon

A couple of years ago, hard disk drives seemed as important to console design as keyboards and mice. But in 2002, console mass storage will begin to deliver enough added frills that we'll wonder how we ever got along without it. The Xbox's built-in HD offers the most obvious benefits. Beginning with Xbox games like Unreal Tournament, you'll be able to download new levels and other extras (and that doesn't count perks such as disk-caching for quick loading times and larger game worlds). Sony has similar plans for its PS2 hard drive, due for release when the company's online network launches this spring.

Satoru Iwata

Nintendo's Next President?

This man is fast becoming the new face of Nintendo in Japan, where he serves as the company's director of corporate planning. Formerly a 17-year veteran of Hal Laboratory, Iwata was responsible for the creation of some of Nintendo's biggest franchises,



including Kirby and Super Smash Bros. Now he's in charge of everything from overseeing internal and external development projects to formulating the company's top-secret online strategy. "Quality games in a variety of genres that were not found on former Nintendo platforms will be announced and launched next year," he tells us. Keep an eye on this guy—analysts in Japan think he could be Nintendo's next president after current prez Hiroshi Yamauchi finally steps down later in 2002.



Mario

Finally Back in the Game

May seem hard to believe, but the last time Nintendo's Italian stallion had a game all to himself was way back in 1996, in Super Mario 64. And, no, the Mario Party games and Paper Mario—all of which star an ensemble cast of Nintendo characters rather than focus on the main mustachioed man—don't count. But this summer, we'll see our hero back in the spotlight in Mario Sunshine (working title). With seemingly Mario 64-style gameplay, a mysterious backpack contraption and the horsepower of the GameCube powering it, Sunshine's got "success" shining all over it.

The Birth of New Franchises

Over the past couple of years, we saw several new games—such as SSX, Jet Grind Radio, Smuggler's Run and TimeSplitters—that are well on their way to becoming established series, and this year the trend continues. Take Halo, which is on the brink of white-hot franchisedom. And if you don't believe us, you musta never played it.



Online Voice Communication Headset Radio

When broadband online gaming hits consoles by mid-2002, it's bringing one heck of a perk with it: online communication via headset microphones. Both Microsoft and Sony are readying these chatty gadgets for their respective systems, and it's possible these mics will be released in bundle deals: Microsoft is thinking of packing the Xbox Game Commander microphone in with subscriptions to their online service, while Sony may include theirs with the online shooter SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs. And while this technology has delivered novel but disappointing results on the Dreamcast (in Alien Front Online, which only let you transmit five-second barks of chatter), Sony and Microsoft's mics promise to be way more high-tech. "[The Xbox] communicator allows for continuous chatter," says Tim Hess, producer of the Xbox online shooter Unreal Championship, one of the first games to take advantage of the gadget. "You can mute yourself, but you can still hear other players." The headsets will also allow you to talk to your entire team, or just single out individual players for one-on-one strategy sessions.



Game Commander



Lord of the Rings

One Franchise to Rule Them All

Well, it's high time the late John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (that's J.R.R. to his friends and 50-million fans) got the cred he deserves in the game biz. "Til now, his beloved *Lord of the Rings* books have been the basis of a paltry few sub-par console titles. But now that the first film in the LoTR trilogy is a bona-fide blockbuster, this whole Ring thing

has suddenly become one hot game license, right up there with that Harry Potter fella. Since LoTR began nearly every fantasy cliché in the book, we can't think of a saga more ripe for the video game pickin'. "The problem becomes, 'How much of all this cool stuff can we include?'" says EA's Scott Evans, producer of this fall's *Lord of the Rings* PS2 game, one of two Rings titles hitting in 2002. "That's a great challenge to have."

Video Game TV Shows

Finally Ready for Prime Time

Entertainment Tonight makes megabucks covering movies, TV shows and Jennifer Aniston's hairstyle, so let's see about time video games got the same treatment? More than a few new shows—and even a couple of entire TV networks—think so. MTV is a newly forming network at least partially funded by Sega, while broadcast giant Comcast is developing the G4 network, headed by two former E! execs. (Shame they don't



Victor Lucas and Tommy Tallarico host *Electric Playground*

call it VI.) And that's not counting shows like Tech 1's *Extended Play* and Discovery Science's *Electric Playground*, which have been around for years. "People are starting to realize that video games are no longer just variations of Pac-Man and Defender," says Victor Lucas, executive producer of *Electric Playground* (which hits Discovery Science every Thursday night at 8:30 EST). "TV shows are a natural extension of the public's growing fascination with the medium."

Garage Game Development Size Doesn't Matter

Used to be the only consoles that amateur game coders could develop for were niche open-source systems like VM Labs' Nuon, the lamented Indrema and now the Dreamcast (courtesy of the programming library LibDream). But all that's about to change. The biz's biggest players are thinking small and making it easier for indie developers to get their code on.

Microsoft has kicked off their Xbox Incubator Program (for details, go to <http://dev.xbox.com/dev/incubator.htm>), through which approved small-fry developers can license a dev kit and create game prototypes to shop around to publishers. "Every big developer out there started small, often with a couple of people, an idea and a passion to make something great," says Xbox Program General Manager J Allard. "Somewhere out there are the people who will make the next genre-busting hit game." Even Nintendo President Hiroshi Yamauchi has ponied up more than \$160 million to fund software start-ups, and Sony is expected to announce that they're bringing the PS2 Linux Kit to America. So if you thought you'd need \$10 million to realize your console dreams, think again; you might just need a good idea.



The PS2's Linux kit is U.S. bound

Samus Aran

When we put *Metroid's* supergal on our list last year, we didn't know that her GameCube game wouldn't be released until well into 2002—or that it would be a first-person shooter. But that doesn't diminish how jazzed we are to see this old-school star climb back into her orange armor in 2002.

Phantasy Star Online

In 2001, Dreamcast owners got their first real taste of online addiction in the form of this online multiplayer masterpiece. This year, it's everyone else's turn. *PSO* is on its way to Xbox and GameCube and will help kick off both system's online plans (although we're still in the dark on how you'll play this game online on your 'Cube).

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Online Console Gaming Let's Try This Again

The great experiment that was SegaNet—which at the height of its popularity had more than

250,000 subscribers slugging it out in online Dreamcast titles—showed we were all ready to play Net-ready console games. And who knows: If the DC had been a hit for Sega, online gaming might be a legitimate console genre right now.

Well, we won't have to wonder what could've been much longer:

By this summer, both Sony and Microsoft will have taken their consoles online in a big way, and if any companies can make online gaming fly, it's these two deep-pocketed giants. (Meanwhile, killer online apps like *Xion Hawk 3* and *Final Fantasy XI* could lure an army of PS2 gamers into logging on.) We're beginning to glimpse the

gameplans that'll make it all possible: Simplicity seems to be the order of the day. "Setting up system-link play is a piece of cake on Xbox with no info required at all," says Microsoft's J Allard. "We'd like for broadband setup to be as simple. We're hoping that all you'll have to provide is your contact and billing information, and we are confident that, with the majority of broadband providers, it will be a plug-and-play experience."



Bungie Studios

An Xbox Owner's Best Friend

As if creating Xbox launch hit Halo wasn't enough, Bungie is one developer that actually (gasp!) appreciates their fans. Just look at www.bungie.net: You'll find Halo tips, help finding nearby players for multiplayer matches and more. "[We] are fans too," says Studio Manager Alex Seropian, "so we're personally motivated to do things fans tend to appreciate—like participate in our forums, events and community. Bungie considers our fans our friends." Great, but guys, don't spend too much time with your friends until we get that online update to Halo.



Video Game Bonus Features

Not Just for DVD Movies Anymore

Ever wish you could hear the original Japanese voices in a badly dubbed game? (Cough, Shenmue.) Or watch alternate endings when the original one sucks? (Ahem, *Metal Gear Solid 2*.) That day is sooner than you think. Just as the greater storage space of DVDs led to movies including goodies, games are popping up with bonus features. *SSX Tricky* (PS2) and *Rogue Leader* (GC) hint at the possibilities: making-of movies, developer commentaries—maybe even tips and strategy guides.



Tecmo's Tomonobu Itagaki

Ninja Gaiden's Cocky Master

One of the most opinionated voices in the biz, Team Ninja leader Tomonobu Itagaki gains notoriety by the day for his work—and his mouth. He led development of Xbox's *Dead Or Alive 3*, the most beautiful fighting game in existence, while referring to the competition's games as a "piece of s#@." "I only hope that my opinions on Tekken 4 and VF4 will stimulate the much-needed competitive spirits of my fellow game makers to change the face of the fighting genre to push ourselves to the next level," he tells us. But why should we give a crap about what this guy thinks? Because he delivers and clearly believes in himself and his team. Now that Team Ninja is working on the next installment of the *Ninja Gaiden* series for PS2, we're excited about the rebirth of one of gaming's best-loved franchises.

Tetsuya Mizuguchi

"I feel I need to make more innovative games to expand the game market," says this head of Sega's United Game Artists, which just mixed shooters and music games to make 2002's first revolutionary title, *Rez* for PS2. Next up: a *Space Channel 5* sequel.



Smilebit

This Sega studio wowed everyone last year with their innovative *Jet Grind Radio* for Dreamcast. But now the team seems on the verge of repeating history with follow-up titles: *Jet Set Radio Future* and *Gun Valkyrie*, both for Xbox. But it's their Xbox *Sanzer Dragon* game that's got us keeping our eyes on these guys.

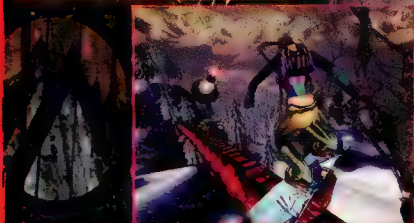
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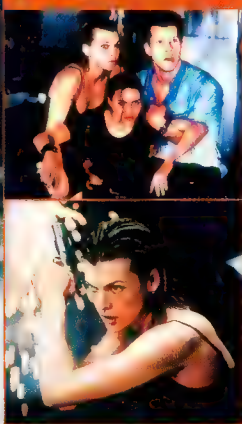
It doesn't feature characters from the game, but *Resident Evil* does star Milla Jovovich, wearing stuff like this, so we'll see it anyway.



Video Game Flicks

That's Entertainment!

The *Tomb Raider* and *Final Fantasy* flicks may have established new lows in cinema, but there's hope yet for gaming on the big screen. Franchises currently getting the Hollywood makeover in 2002 include *Crazy Taxi*, *Duke Nukem* and *Max Payne*. But the one flick we're praying won't suck ass is *Resident Evil*, directed by Paul Anderson and starring Milla Jovovich. While the RE gurus over at Capcom had little to do with the movie's bio-terror screenplay, they're confident RE the movie will be just as gripping as the RE games.



Cell-phone Gaming

Your Arcade's Ringing

Wireless networks like Japan's i-mode have revolutionized the way people in Europe and Asia kill time on the subway, and now it's finally time for Americans to horn in on the action. The thought of playing games on cell phones still reminds most people of tiny, blurry, black-and-white screens. That'll all change this year, with everyone from NEC to Ericsson putting out handsets with full-color graphics. Building Java into the phone is quickly becoming a standard, allowing for far more complicated games than the basic stuff we've grown accustomed to. Even more exciting is the 3G standard, rolled out in limited quantities in Japan last October and set to debut in the West this new year. It combines a high-speed Net connection with powerful graphics hardware to allow services like streaming video, real-time multiplayer gaming and more. 3G phones are still expensive—\$400 and up—but it's only a matter of time before the price is right for most gamers.



The color screens on 2002 phones like Ericsson's T68 open up new gaming possibilities.

Home-theater Gaming

You Mean this Thing Plays Movies?

The tight-of-budget could always make their PlayStation 1 double as a CD player, but consoles nowadays are taking that concept much further to become the centerpiece of all home entertainment. The PS2 and Xbox (if you buy a remote) play DVDs and are wired for Dolby Digital Surround Sound, while the GameCube's audio capabilities have yet to be fully revealed. Sure, you'll need to buy a high-definition TV and upscale audio receiver to get all these perks, but trust us—it's worth it.

Old School Goes New School

Revival of the Fittest!

You've seen it before: Once a major publisher gets a decade under its belt, it'll dig through its catalog to find a popular game from the old days to shine up with 10 graphics for release to nostalgic gamers. In previous years, one or two games would get the update treatment. But in 2002, the flashback floodgates will bust open and unleash new installments

#1 Nintendo's *Metroid* on GC and GBA, Tecmo's *Ninja Gaiden*, Midway's *Mortal Kombat* and *Defender*, and Konami's *Castlevania*. Why the recall of these old-school heroes? "Since the NES days, attempts were made by various internal teams to revive *Ninja Gaiden*, but none of them made it to the final approval until now," says Tecmo's Tomonobu Itagaki. "Of course, I'll make sure to satisfy the expectations of fans from the old days."

Factor 5

Last year, we highlighted this crew for their work on the GameCube's stellar sound system. Now, after crafting GameCube killer-app *Rogue Squadron 2: Rogue Leader*, Factor 5 can seemingly do no wrong. We're betting their mystery project *Thornado*, an action game that harkens back to the team's Turrican roots, will finally see the light of day in 2002.



Harry Potter

With his flick setting box-office records and his games whizzing off store shelves, Potter's power won't fizzle out anytime soon. 2002 will see the release of a new book, the next movie and more games for the newer systems.

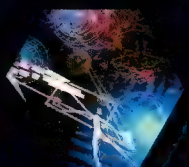


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Pirate Games

Shiver Our Timbers

No, we ain't talking about the naughty bootleg kind of pirated software. Mates, we're saying you better buckle up your swashes for the peg-legged, hook-handed, parrot-crap-down-the-back variety of pirate games. More pirate-themed titles—from Westwood's *Pirates: The Legend of the Black Kat* for PS2 to the spaceway-sailing sci-fi buccaneers of *Falcone: Into the Maelstrom* on Xbox—are washing ashore in 2002 than even vampire games (another hot trend). Why are so many developers raising the skull and crossbones? "For my game, it's just the visual part that looks piratey but not the actual story theme," says Toby Gard, designer of the high-seas adventure *Galleon* for GameCube and Xbox.

"I guess the idea is that this theme gives [*Galleon*] its own flavor that's different from anyone else's." Well, different from everyone but the shipful of companies making ridiculous pirate games. Arrgh, the irony!



PC-game Developers

Cashing in on Consoles

For console gamers, the grass sometimes seems greener on the desktop, where PC titles often have better graphics and easy access to online connectivity. But the scales of software exclusivity are rapidly tipping in favor of consoles. Besides all the PC titles that have already found their way onto consoles as ports, 2002 will see some of PC gaming's biggest names—like *Half-Life 2* and *Deus Ex 2*—debuting on consoles first. Why? Simple economics. "We have to consider any platform where there are customers for us," says Randy Pitchford, head of Gearbox, the folks behind *Half-Life* on the PS2. And these days, the consoles are where developers are finding the most customers. With the ease of development on Xbox and game profitability at an all-time high, look forward to a whole lotta console love coming from PC developers in 2002.

Sega Reborn

Sonic for Everybody

"It's an ugly business to enter. Sega of America Prez Peter Moore says of his company's decision to leave the hardware market and publish games for every system. "But we became a phoenix, rising from the ashes." Talk about a maiden flight: Famous names like *Sonic*, *Phantasy Star*, *Jet Set Radio*, *Sega GT*, *Panzer Dragoon*, *Skies of Arcadia* and more are headed to a console near you. In 2002, now everyone will learn what Sega loyalists have always known: this company's got game!

The GameCube-Game Boy Advance Connection

Nintendo's Strongest Link

If you're lucky enough to own both a GameCube and a GBA, you'll soon be able to mate the two via Nintendo's new GC/GBA link cable (which should be available here in January). "The [GBA] becomes a versatile controller for the [GameCube] with unlimited expansion capability," says Satoru Iwata, Nintendo's Director of Corporate Planning, who adds that the GBA screen will display weapons, health, sports plays and other pertinent stuff, depending on the game. Additional uses include downloading minigames into your GBA's memory, and monster building and exchanging (can you say *Pokémon*?). The first GBA game to take advantage of this union will be *Sonic Advance*, which links with *Sonic Adventure 2 Battle* on GameCube. Find out more about both games in this month's previews section. 🐉



Slick Disasters

Five things that shoulda been slick but weren't...

The Indrema—A lack of funding killed this Linux-based console, which was to usher in a golden age of indie-game development.



Sony's online plans—Uh, what happened to them?

The Dreamcast—Support for this killer system is dismal now that Sega is focusing on all consoles.

Bleem!—A protracted, legal battle with Sony wore down this maker of the Bleemcast PlayStation emulator for PC.

The *Final Fantasy* movie—Moviegeers said, "Huh? What's a *Final Fantasy*?" and ignored this flawed but decent flick.

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PlayStation 2



THE TIME
FOR JUDGMENT
HAS COME



M
MATURE
Blood and Gore
Violence



Review Crew

Our Philosophy

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. In the middle lies the average grade, 5.0. We repeat: 5.0 IS AVERAGE. Simple, ain't it?

Our Awards



Platinum Awards go to games that get all 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 (but lower than 9.0) receive **Silver Awards**.

The Crew



Crispin Boyer
Features Editor

Cris built a LEGO robot to wait in line and snag a 'Cube and Xbox for him. It's too bad the little droid became self-aware, strangled his master, then sold both systems on eBay. Don't buy from ManDROIDe!

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure
Current Faves: Final Fantasy X, Rez, Halo



Dan "Shoe" Hsu
Editor in Chief

The bullhorn didn't work. Neither did the massive payouts and the after-hours spankings. So Shoe's new method of disciplining the staff: Telling them they can't play Halo at work. Now they're listening.

Favorite Genres: Everything but the sports sims
Current Faves: Smash Bros. Melee, Halo, Rez



Mark MacDonald
Executive Editor

As if his 14-volume Metroid fan fiction wasn't bad enough, when we caught Mark reading the Halo novel this month, we beat him out on general principal. "But it's for work!" he pleaded. Then we beat him harder.

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure, RPG
Current Faves: Halo, Final Fantasy X, Rez, MGS2



Che Chau
West Coast Editor

No rest for the weary. During winter break, Che plans to hand lots of people their asses by playing lots of Halo online. Maybe you'll be the lucky one. Merry Christmas, and a happy new year!

Favorite Genres: Fighting, Racing, RPG
Current Faves: Golden Sun, Halo, Rez, MGS2



Chris Johnson
News Editor

Since Super Smash Bros. Melee arrived in the month, Chris has been nothing but a bucket of expletives. It's those darn cheap quacks Dr. Mario and nurse Peach in Event mode. Will he ever find peace?

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure, Music
Current Faves: Super Smash Bros. Melee



James Mielke
West Coast Editor/Webhomme

Seeing the French movie *Amélie* has invigorated the Milkman, inspiring him to frequent instant photo booths, ride a bicycle/ette, eat fresh vegetables and visit Montmartre. He was last seen skipping stones.

Favorite Genres: Combat, jouer un rôle, aventurier
Current Faves: FFX, SSBM, Golden Sun, *Amélie*



Jonathan Dudlak
Associate Editor

Economically battered following the dual console launch, Jon has made some revisions to his holiday shopping plan. You'd be surprised how far the penny tray at the 7-Eleven can go if you really dig in.

Favorite Genres: Fighting, Action, Adventure
Current Faves: Halo, Super Smash Bros. Melee



Jeanne Kim
Associate Editor/Art Director

It's been nothing but RPGs for Jeanne this month, and she couldn't be happier. In fact, she's enjoying herself so much, she keeps having dreams of turn-based battles with spike-haired hotties.

Favorite Genres: RPG, Action, Adventure
Current Faves: Co-op Halo, Jade Cocoon 2, FFX



Greg Sewart
Reviews/Previews Editor

We had to have Sewart committed this month after he went mad thanks to the onslaught of RPGs. He was raving about things like his Dodge Pool, and how +2/+2 sword affected his INT level. Weird.

Favorite Genres: Racing, RPG, Action
Current Faves: Final Fantasy X, F1 2001, MGS2

Team EGM

These are the sports nuts on the Crew, but that doesn't mean they're not into all types of games. It just means you

can be sure that sports reviews are being done by the sports enthusiasts and not by some schmucks.



Dean Hager
Managing Editor

Ever since the Huskers lost their butts to the Colorado Buffaloes (ouch), Dean has lost all interest in college football. Thankfully, he still has video games and beer to keep his spirits up. Thank you, Amstel.

Favorite Genres: All the genres Shoe dislikes
Current Faves: Halo, NASCAR Thunder 2002



Kraig Kujawa
Senior Associate Editor

Kraig confronts a difficult decision every single day. Should he play Halo or Madden 2002? If there was just some way to combine the games, it would be perfect. EA, Microsoft—are you listening?

Favorite Genres: Sports, Strategy
Current Faves: Halo, Madden NFL 2002, Halo



Dan Leahy
Editor in Chief, GameNOW

Leahy's hometown Browns are doing well, but we're not too keen on his contribution to the holiday office party: chocolate-covered dog biscuits. His office also has a "Beware of Dog" sign. Ugh.

Favorite Genres: Sports, Action
Current Faves: Madden NFL 2k2, NBA 2k2, Halo

Game of the Month

Super Smash Bros. Melee pg. 160

You mean something topped Final Fantasy X? Barely, but yes—Nintendo's other Super Bros. series butt-stomped our expectations and tossed all our free time right off the screen. The only thing you won't like about it is spending \$100 on controllers for your buddies.



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PlayStation.2



SEGA



Drakan: The Ancients' Gate

Publisher: Sony CEA
Developer: Surreal Software
Featured In: EGM #149
Players: 1
Try Instead: Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance
Best Feature: Fun to fly around on a dragon
Worst Feature: You don't always ride the dragon
Web Site: www.scea.com



Drakan's got everything an Ann McCaffery-novel-readin' fantasy geek daydreams about: an epic plot with lots of exotic names (Arokh the dragon, any-one?) and a dragon-riding warrior chick who saves the world wearing nothing but a leather bustier. When Drakan sets you up soaring on the back of one of these mythical beasts, raining magical death from above, you can actually see the potential behind this game. So what's with the score, you ask? **Drakan falls apart when you're forced to do many of the laborious dungeons on foot**, and vote to the player, these Tomb Raider-esque levels take up nearly half the game. Many of the indoor stages feature excellent ambience, but they're populated with some of the stupidest monsters ever. You can literally hide behind a rock, watch them get stuck against an object trying to reach you, and hack (or shoot) them with impunity. Now repeat this process about 200 times (replacing "rocks" with ice columns, wooden crates, etc.) and you see how tedious Drakan can be. You've got no choice but to exploit Drakan's AI like this because the auto-targeting system doesn't lock onto your nearest threat, only what's in front of your character. Get yourself surrounded by a group of creatures and soon it's time to reload that saved game. Even if you absolutely must own any game featuring chicks riding dragons, I cannot recommend this turd.

Che

Three minutes into Drakan, it's not hard to see its PC roots. Console role-playing buffs should give it a chance, though; if you can get past some pretty elementary RPG clichés, it's actually a decent game. Unfortunately, it experiences some definite flaws in its transition from keyboard to joypad. Targeting weapons, using spells, and accessing your menu items are atrocious. The game keeps running while the near-full-screen menu pops up, so plan on dying a lot as you try to get at your inventory. You can assign items to a "hot-slot," but you still have to cycle through a clumsy interface to use them, so it kind of defeats the purpose.

Jonathan

Drakan does its job setting up a believable fantasy world, with a story interesting enough to keep the game fresh. As dragon-riding fantasy chick Rynn, you'll traverse the usual murky swamps and pastoral countryside, slicing up orcs, trolls and the like. The game's graphics are solid, and the gameplay is pretty tight. Unfortunately, **Drakan suffers from a steep difficulty curve**. Blame it on the excessive enemy quotient, the steep cost of healing and the unwieldy inventory control. This is not a game you want to check into if you're easily frustrated. It's a cohesive fantasy that doesn't quite come together.

Christian

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

7 7 4 3



Gitaroo Man

Publisher: Koel
Developer: 326
Featured In: EGM #145
Players: 1-4
Supports: Multi-tap
Best Feature: Amazing soundtrack
Worst Feature: Way too short
Web Site: www.koelgames.com



Gitaroo Man swaggers on to the music gaming stage with rocking licks that'll make crusty old ladies swoon in the aisles. GM's soundtrack captures each scene to the 16th note with its perfect pairing of excellently composed reggae, pop, techno pieces with a wacky cast of gitaroo-wielding level bosses. **Every well-crafted stage flows like a mini-rock musical**, illustrating a dizzying vignette on how one geeky adolescent underdog comes out on top. To help our hero U-1 defeat the bully and get the girl, hand-eye coordination is an absolute must (and a bit of rhythm wouldn't hurt, either); for not only does GM force you to bust out crazy square, triangle, circle, X button combos, but the innovative analog stick controls are quite challenging as well. Mastering them is worth it, though, since they give you a real-life instrument-playing feel. However, although GM's got most of the bases covered for music game lovers, (i.e., cool graphics, amazing soundtrack and innovative controls), **GM's single-player game is very short and fails to offer much replay value**. Its two-player two-team versus option sounds inviting, but only amounts to battling on one level setting with a songs. An unlockable, higher difficulty Master Player mode also doesn't markedly stimulate replay since it's the same story, and a side Collection game is negligible. Still, if you don't mind short but tres sweet, GM's definitely one rockstar-glittered cupcake.

Jeanne

First, a warning to potential Gitaroo Man: You will have the "Legendary Theme" stuck in your head for a week afterward—it's that good. And the rest of the game is just as infectious. **It's a great combination of frantic, Japanese guitar rock and wacky anime-inspired action**. It's not without problems, though. Like most story-driven music games (PaRappa and Space Channel 5), Gitaroo Man's a tad short, and the levels vary widely from awesome (with Kiriah) to so-so (reggae robot Ben-K). Also, the control has a tendency to cramp up your hands as you try to follow the music trail with the analog stick. GM's nothing revolutionary, but it's still great fun.

Chris

First Yanya Caballista and now this? Koel's going a bit far releasing really weird games. And while I applaud them for it, I'm afraid only the hardcore music game crowd will get much out of this short title. The songs are awesome and GM features a better-than-PaRappa 2 multiplayer mode, but once the game was over, the only reason I felt compelled to go back and play was to hear the cool love theme (and subsequent power ballad) one more time. I'm a big fan of all these quirky music games hitting our shores lately, and I hope to see the trend continue. I just pray that the developers start adding a little more replay value to them in the future.

Greg

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

8 9 7 4



Jade Cocoon 2

Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Genki
Featured In: EGM #149
Players: 1-2
Also Try: Pokémon Crystal (GBC)
Best Feature: Beautiful graphics
Worst Feature: Simplistic battle system
Web Site: www.ubisoft.com



It may be set in the same world as the first game, but Jade Cocoon 2 plays very differently from its predecessor. The story begins with the familiar tale of a young boy trying to become a legendary monster trainer (called Beast Master here). But in a refreshing twist, it quickly veers off that well-trodden road, and the would-be hunter becomes the hunted. Another thing that sets Jade 2 apart from other creature catchers is its circular battle system. Assembling a circle of monsters balanced between attackers, defenders, and healers across the four elements (Earth, Wind, Fire and Water) takes some getting used to, but it's got a good amount of strategy. Battles aren't the usual quick skirmishes found in most RPGs. You're always switching between all the monsters in your party, alternating between offense and defense in long, drawn-out fights. But as strong as the battle system is, **it doesn't give you enough control**. You can't command your beasts to use specific attacks on specific enemies. One button makes your front line attack, leaving you to pray they connect. The visuals are gorgeous, with beautiful character designs and equally evil-looking monsters. It's easy to get lost in the lush, maze-like forests—if you've seen one, you've seen them all. Jade 2 isn't the deepest RPG, but it's good for Pokémon masters like me who are a bit tired of Nintendo's cute beasts.

Chris

What an oddity. The main allure of JC2 is the raising and breeding of "divine beasts," and as far as I'm concerned, it's a blast. This sharp-looking game offers a wealth of options for developing the diverse and well-bred stable of pets that you need to succeed in your quest. But why are you limited to simply picking which of your beasts you want to attack with, and not the specific enemy you wish to attack? I'm not sure, but **it's little details like this that make JC2 feel like your success is as much a game of chance as it is skill**. Still, the unique presentation and top-notch (if slightly overdone) voice acting make JC2 worth checking out.

Milkman

Bursting with an ingenuity cure for jaded RPG gamers, **JC2 inspires the sleeping role-play addict to awaken**. Taking some elements compatible to Pokémon-style monster collection, battling and evolving, but making understanding a monster's type and its abilities even more critical to strategically winning battles, JC2's unique revolving-disk combat system invigorates the old turn-based standby and is the game's biggest plus. JC2's weakness lies in its repetitive levels, which formulaically offer what to explore and fight. But the charming capsule of JC2's story and cool NPC interactions make it extremely hard to put down.

Jeanne

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

8 7 6 5

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GAME BOY ADVANCE



PlayStation 2



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Final Fantasy X



Publisher: Square Electronic Arts
Developer: Square
Featured In: EGM #150
Players: 1
Farewell: Active Time Battle system
Best Feature: Stellar graphics
Worst Feature: Quest is too linear
Web Site: www.playonline.com



play mechanics. It's just done in such a way that you don't groan every time you get hit with a random battle. Even fighting the most lowly creature benefits from strategy, and the reward is usually a visit to the Sphere Grid, where you get to choose how each of your seven characters develops.

The whole experience is wrapped up in a wonderful story. Due in no small part to the introduction of voice acting to the series, the characters in Final Fantasy X have loads of personality. And since you can hear all the emotions they experience, it brings you closer to them than you've likely been to anyone in

past fantasy games, Final or otherwise.

Unfortunately, with this new feature comes a more linear game than previous installments. Not until the very end of FFX can you actually stray from the beaten path and find cool little side quests and hidden goodies. You're constantly being herded to the next major battle or plot point, which really detracts from the game.

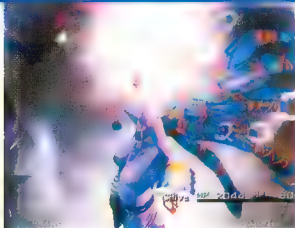
Nonetheless, this is the RPG to own on the PlayStation 2. While the genre is booming on the system right now, no other games even come close to matching FFX for graphics, story or sheer enjoyment.

We think most people will agree when we say that the three PS1 Final Fantasy games were pretty griffin' good. But after 10 titles in 12 years, we started to wonder if Square would always be happy to rest on their laurels and never introduce any real innovation to the series.

On the surface, it would seem so with Final Fantasy X. The screenshots alone make it look like yet another in the long, tired line of swords-'n'-sorcery RPGs we've all grown accustomed to. With the wholesale changes made to both the battle and experience systems for FFX, though, it feels like a whole lot more. It's refreshing to see a publisher make such a ballsy move with a revered franchise. Especially when the results are this good.

But don't be deceived. FFX still features the same "kill everything so you can become powerful enough to defeat the next boss"





Aeons (a.k.a. Guardian Forces) are actually playable characters in Final Fantasy X. They can attack, use magic and even level up.



Join Seymour in his search for a new stylist. This imposing Maester intends to help young Yuna in her quest to bring "the Calm" to Spira.

Square took a shot at a unique, new mini-game for Final Fantasy X called Blitzball (below). Unfortunately, this sports game with RPG controls really doesn't work. We found ourselves avoiding it all the chances to play it.



BATTLE PLANS

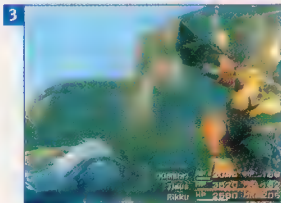
The biggest difference between FFX and all previous Final Fantasy games is the totally revamped battle system, which is much more strategy oriented. Here's a quick rundown of a typical random fight to give you an idea of the new battle commands.



A diverse group of baddies faces our heroes. Rikku takes out this Machina enemy easily enough.



The Sensor ability on Tidus' sword tells us the Skull on the right is weak against fire and thunder. So we...



...order Tidus to equip a blade imbued with a Firestrike attack and use it to slay the Skull. Only one enemy left...



However, it's almost impervious to physical attacks. So let's swap in Lulu, the party's black mage...



...to cast a frosty Blizzara spell. Since switching characters doesn't cost any turns, she attacks immediately.



The fiery fiend melts, and the battle is over. Now we can visit the Sphere Grid to build up our characters some more.

I could go on and on about FFX's stunning graphics or gorgeous music, but we almost take that for granted in a Final Fantasy game at this point. What I will talk about is what a smart move it was to totally overhaul the battle system. The series was in real jeopardy of becoming stale (some would say it already had), but this revamped fighting style makes FFX feel like a completely new beast. I personally hope they never go back to the old Active Time Battle formula. I also love the new Sphere Grid level-up approach. Not since the very first Final Fantasy—where you got to customize and name your entire party—have I felt like I had total control over the characters in one of these games (although I never did play FFV). Instead of feeling like you're just along for the ride, your success depends more on careful planning of your characters' progression along the grid than simply fighting battle after battle. Actually, that's also my main gripe. Should you not realize the above early enough, you'll hit a wall at the end of the game. After investing 45 hours into FFX and reaching the final boss, I was annoyed when I realized I had absolutely no chance of beating the final boss without another good seven hours of leveling up my characters. I felt like I was being punished, even though I worked so hard to get to that point. I'd hoped FFX wouldn't fall back on something so frustrating in order to make the end of the game more challenging.

Greg

As I expected, FFX is a technical milestone, a stunning example of what oodles of money and expertise can extract from the PS2. The graphics shine, the battles thrill, and the voice acting entertains. However, that's not why it is the best Final Fantasy of the last decade. All those glorious graphics are just gravy, as the lovable characters and compelling story provide the true heart of FFX. Few RPG narratives have the capacity to pull on my rusty heart strings, but **Tidus and Yuna's epic quest genuinely moved me.** From the foreboding opening to the shocking finale, FFX proves that RPGs can weave a tale comparable to the finest books and films.

Shane

While initial impressions of FFX suggest a high-quality time that's not much different than those that have come before it, **extended play reveals a much more rewarding experience.** Once you get past the initial lump of plot-setting cinematics (complete with quality voice-overs), the beauty of the revamped, strategically oriented battle engine kicks in. And while I hate random battles, I love being able to swap out any of the seven party members at will. It makes matching them up against the game's enemies quite satisfying. But the thing that really hooked me on FFX was the story itself, which is revealed in gripping fashion one gorgeous step at a time.

Milkman

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

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9

7

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Legends of Wrestling



Hogan lifts Superfly over his head in celebration as he wins the Geritol Belt (left). Rob Van Dam suffers a fate no man deserves (below). Isn't that just a disturbing image? I mean...just the sweat alone...(shudder).



OK, I have to ask. Where the hell is the Macho Man? If he and a couple other key guys were in this game (Ric Flair or Rowdy Roddy Piper, perhaps?), it'd get a higher score. That aside, Legends of Wrestling is perfect for guys who grew up watching the likes of Hulk Hogan, Jimmy "Superfly" Snuka and The Million Dollar Man beat the living snout out of each other every week. Those were the days. On top of the nostalgia factor for old-timers like me, LoR features intuitive controls and wrestling action that rivals the current genre leader, WWF SmackDown! Just Bring It. Almost immediately after turning on the game, I was able to pull off just about every move with every character, thanks to the simple, single-button commands. Plus, once you have an opponent in a throw, the handy modifier bar that pops up under his name helps you do extra damage, or assists him in reversing your throw. I love it 'cause it takes all the guesswork out of the fighting—you're not jamming on the buttons in the hopes that something cool's gonna happen. In fact, I like almost every aspect of this game, save for the exclusion of certain guys (like the ones I mentioned above), the lack of real move variety between wrestlers, and the lame music. Overall, it doesn't excite me as much as SmackDown! I sequel with another year or so of development on a sequel (please?) and a more rounded roster, the next LoW could be truly great.

Greg

LoW totally cracks me up. I swear, the Three Stooges couldn't perform better in this three-ring grappling circus. When you're not getting sucker-punched in the beanbag, you're being beat down with a guitar or a two-by-four. *Maybe I'm sadistic, but it's the funniest stuff I've seen in a long time.* If those things don't fill your jocular meter, Create-A-Legend surely will. Play Frankenstein with a crapload of different body parts and accessories, including you-design-'em tattoos. It's a great time. As funny as the game is, I wouldn't be as high on it if the gameplay sucked. Happily, it's nice and responsive, not to mention fairly intuitive. Long live the Legends.

Dean

Even if you think Hulk Hogan's heyday was his role in *Thunder in Paradise*, you still can't help but appreciate this piece of nostalgia. This browser lives up to its name by having an impressive roster of dudes who don't mind punching each other's sacks (a real move, folks) in trashy arenas with patched-up rings. It's a cool contrast to the Vince McMahoned WWF we're used to, and it's pretty damn fun too. Handy graphics make the great combo attacks and reversals easy to learn, and the in-depth wrestler creator is the best I've ever seen. Were it not for the average graphics and awkward camera angles headlocking it, this would have been something special.

Kraig

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

7

5

6

8

Publisher: Acclaim
 Developers: Acclaim Studios Salt Lake
 Featured In: EGM #148
 Players: 1-5
 Supports: Multi-tap
 Best Feature: The wressler roster
 Worst Feature: Bad camera angles hide the action
 Web Site: www.acclaim.com

Back before we could smell what The Rock was cooking, a handful of men worked their asses off to thrill crowds and make wrestling the gargantuan draw it is today. Now, for the first time ever, you can pit many of those men against one another in the squared circle, thanks to Legends of Wrestling.

Now get those old Acclaim WWF games out of your head. Yes, they sucked, but you should know this is an entirely new game engine, and it actually works pretty well. Since all the moves—from strikes to grapples to throws—are based on simple one-button and direction combinations, LoW is really easy to get into. Having on-screen modifier and reversal meters while you're doing a throw is a nice touch, too.

While this game lacks the polish of SmackDown! Just Bring It, it is solid. Old-school wresslin' fans will really enjoy it.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Hulk Hogan

The Hulkster is currently getting a new federation, the XWF, up and running. Legends like Curt "Mr. Perfect" Hennig, Bobby "The Brain" Heenan and the Nasty Boys, among others, are reported to be on board.



Bret "Hitman" Hart

The best there is, best there was and best there ever will be has retired from wrestling due to injuries. He's currently living in Alberta, Canada, working on an autobiography and trying to start an acting career.



Ted Dibiase

The WWF's greatest heel is no longer affiliated with any wrestling organization. The Million Dollar Man, who once told us that "everybody has a price," has rediscovered Jesus and founded the Heart of David Ministries.



George "The Animal" Steele

In 1998, this brute with a taste for tumbuckles was still wrestling at age 61 for some small, independent organizations on the west coast. In between matches, he's appeared in a few movies, most notably *Ed Wood* and *Blowfish*.

PlayStation 2



airblade

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Mild Violence
Mild Language



namco
WWW.NAMCO.COM

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Publisher: Bandai
Developer: Bandai
Players: 1
Needs: A two-player battle mode
You Play As: The bad guys
Best Feature: Super-freaking-detailed robots
Worst Feature: Real-time battle controls need work
Web Site: www.bandai.com



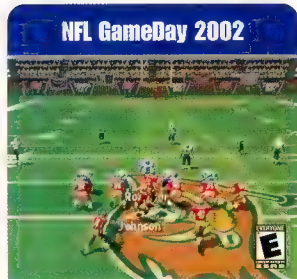
Unlike the other Gundam games you may have played on the Dreamcast or PS2, *ZF* is an ambitious action/strategy hybrid reminiscent of squad-based shooters like *Rainbow Six*. I'll tell you right now, this isn't an easy game to sink into. Sure, there's a tutorial that shows you the basics of how to move, fire your gun, and so on, but after that you're on your own. It's particularly daunting because, while you manage your own squad of giant robots in real time, the other mechs on the map are AI-controlled and follow waypoints that you set up before each mission. The amount of detail you can pre-program into these routes is staggering. For instance, you can set one squad of mobile suits to charge head-on against an enemy base, while setting the other two teams to flanking positions. You can even tell these units to sit tight and wait for your signal to coordinate a synchronized attack. The better you pre-plan your missions, the higher you're graded. It's just too bad all this open-ended mission scripting is wasted on the game's overly simplistic (or even downright clunky) controls. And at the end of the day, that's all that really matters because you've still got to play this thing like an action game that gets through the missions. Although *ZF* does a great job of sucking you into a world of squad-based heavy-metal warfare, I can't recommend it to anyone but hardcore Gundam fans. **Che**

Taking a stab at Gundam history from the bad guys' perspective is akin to playing *Star Wars* game as the Empire—piloting a Zaku against mobile suits wildly reverses the roles of hero and enemy. Too bad this radical retelling stumbles with inconsistent presentation and lackluster gameplay. Although the mechs look gorgeous, the drag levels seem uninspired. The actual battles offer simple, woefully average squad-based shooting. Early levels are a cakewalk, yet later ones are nearly impenetrable. Oh, and don't get me started on the translation. After numerous references to fighting in "New York" and checking my "Rader," I was cracking up. **Shane**

If you were to judge this game by the opening cinema, you'd probably expect *Zeonic Front* to be freaking amazing. And while it's not quite that, it's still pretty damn good. The tutorial stages do a good job of acclimating you to the somewhat-complex controls of the Zaku mechs, and for folks still daunted by the mission objectives, you can call upon the advice of tactical officers and technicians. It's this attention to detail that made me feel as if I had all the necessary tools at my disposal to kick Earth Federation ass. The mechs look awesome too, but the environments are pretty bland. Overall, *ZF* is an excellent game for fans of Gundam. **Milkman**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

7 7 7 7



Publisher: Sony CEA
Developer: Red Zone Interactive
Featured In: EGM #148
Players: 1-8
Supports: Multi-tap
Best Feature: Tackle animation
Worst Feature: Bad slowdown
Web Site: www.985sports.com



Despite a redesigned engine, whatever that means, *GameDay 2002* stays true to its PS2 roots...it still stinks. 989 would be wise to set up customer support at thisgamestinks.com, but I don't see them using that option yet. From the second you hike the ball, you'll smell the pungent aroma of gaming trash. One of the first things any PS2 player expects is, at the very least, a somewhat smooth experience, right? Well, I could've sworn that the game locked up several times, but that was just the severity of the choppiness that occurs. It's reminiscent of some of the worst *Mega* and *PS* football efforts. Once you get past the "Wow, did they really think this was good?" feeling, you'll see a host of other problems. One small highlight (or lowlight) or my experience was when a wide receiver fought off would-be tacklers, while standing still, for no less than 20 seconds. Other funnies included phantom penalties and some tackles that defied the known laws of gravity, time and space. Notice I said "known." Maybe the developers at 989 have created something so revolutionary, so mind-bendingly advanced, that we cannot fathom what we're seeing. That's gotta be it. Maybe Stephen Freaking Hawking himself developed the algorithms for *GameDay*. Maybe we'll see the genius years from now, but it's lost on me. Aside from a slightly better look, and some neat animations, *GameDay* is what you'd expect. Stay away. **Dan L.**

When I play a football game, I like to think I'm impacting the action on the field, rather than passively watching a sequence. I strive to be the hero who bats down passes, intercepts the ball, or makes a touchdown-saving tackle. Unfortunately, *GameDay* deprives me of my Kodak moments. How can I show off my skills when the computer won't give me control of the player closest to the ball quick enough? Sure, it works OK some of the time, but when it lags even once in a four-down sequence, I'm screwed. Unresponsive control, especially with player-switching, is death in any sports game. Among *GameDay*'s flaws, this is the worst. **Dean**

Just when I think 989 can't make this franchise any worse, they pull more crap out of a hat. This fiscal feat is months late, and I have to wonder what they spent all the time on. The players look horrible in comparison to Madden and NFL 2K2, and they move more sluggishly than Oprah after brunch. I'd imagine that this must be what it's like to play football in a swamp. Even if you can put up with that, the buggy gameplay will screw you more than Wilt Chamberlain. Once I saw receiver Marcus Robinson fight off 20 tacklers for a minute while standing still. Yeah, it sounds like a tall tale, but it's just another day on the putrid *GameDay* gridiron. **Kraty**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

4 4 2 2



Publisher: Sony CEA
Developer: NanaOn-Sha
Featured In: EGM #149
Players: 1-2
Also Try: Um Jammer Lammy (PS1)
Best Feature: Retro level
Worst Feature: Too short
Web Site: www.scea.com



When I first booted up *PaRappa 2*, I was pumped. I'd been waiting for this ever since the credits of the first game teased at a real sequel (not just a cameo in pseudo-sequel *Um Jammer Lammy*). From the first stage on, I never dropped far below rappin' "good," always pressing the right buttons to make lil' PaRappa match his teachers' rhymes. After eight stages and an hour of playing, it was over—PaRappa had vanquished the Noodle Syndicate and proven to his girlfriend Sunny that he wasn't a baby. But I felt empty, unfulfilled. So I searched for secrets—something, anything that would extend the game's life. Secret characters, like Lammy? No dice. A two-player co-op mode? Fuggeddaboutit. I played through four times, and all I could find was a sound test (snore). The music isn't as catchy and the story isn't nearly as fun as *NanaOn-Sha's* previous work. And after a stage or two, you'll want to take a baseball bat to that annoying talking boom box that starts every stage. Each time you finish the game, PaRappa's hat changes color and the songs get progressively harder, yet it's never as challenging as the original or Lammy. It's so forgiving that you can screw up an entire line and still squeak past by frantically tapping buttons in rhythm. The Versus mode is disappointing too, and (again) not as good as Lammy's. That's the problem—it's good, but too short and easy, and it doesn't offer anything new. **Chris**

PaRappa hit the streets back in 1997 and became a music-game headliner. But now, it looks like celebrity stardom's gotten to his head. Sure, PaRappa's armed with a new set of tunes, a house party-full of old and new friends, and his cute hip-hop style, but as *PTC* shows, he's no O.G. Due to how terribly short it is and a counterproductive "freestyle" option (which basically lets you press any string of buttons with zero rhythmic groove and still foot the computer), *PaRappa 2* offers less gameplay than the first and lacks the ingenuity and novelty. It's definitely a disappointment for adoring PaRappa homies and aspiring rapping puppies everywhere. **Jeanne**

If you count *Um Jammer Lammy*, the PaRappa series is now three games old with no evolution in sight. This is technically the same game most of us have played twice already. Of course, that in itself isn't necessarily bad. The new songs are great, the charming cast of characters is engaging—I like the references to PaRappa 1 and Lammy throughout the adventure—and having to play through the game multiple times with increasing difficulty is kind of cool. But I just wish they'd give me a reason to go back to this game after I've finished it once or twice. Heck, even a decent multiplayer mode would be enough. Good, but not worth 50 bones. **Greg**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

7 7 1 3

THINK YOU CAN RIDE LIKE ME?

SHAUN PALMER'S PRO SNOWBOARDER



Trick off anything in 8 real world destinations.



Force your opponent off the screen in the all new PUSH mode.



Real boards, real riders, real mountains, real attitude.

"Shaun Palmer is a dream come true."

—Game Informer, Dec '01

"...mad trickin' and two player fun."

—EGM, Jan '02

"...intuitive and challenging trick system."

—GameSpot, Nov '01



Session with me and some of the best pro riders including Tara Dakides, Shaun White, Ross Powers, and others as you drop into 8 levels based on real world-class locales. With an insane trick style game-play, this video game is the ultimate snowboarding challenge. Still think you can ride like me? Well step up or step off.

Features songs by Static-X, Papa Roach and Alien Ant Farm.



PlayStation 2



GAME BOY ADVANCE



SPORTS REVOLUTION

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Rez

Publisher: Sega
Developer: United Game Artists
Featured In: EGM #150
Players: 1
Feels Like: You're inside a strobing disco ball
Best Feature: Audio/visual sexual chocolate
Worst Feature: Basic gameplay
Web Site: www.sega.com

Reviewing Rez with printed words is a bit like trying to tell Helen Keller about a Pink Floyd concert—it's an experience so wrapped up in sight and sound that conveying it without using both just doesn't do it justice. But since the written word is all I got here [Santana didn't bring that direct-to-reader's-mind link I asked for], I'll include audio and visual cues in brackets, like this: [boxing bell]. Ready? OK. At its center, Rez isn't [piled calculus equation] at all, quite the opposite. But grafted on top of its [Space Harrier] core are **layers of eye and ear candy** so sweet that [old lobo smiling with no teeth]. It's no accident a Japanese version of Rez comes with eye drops: The visuals are so [fireworks exploding] and [cheetah with a rocket on its back], that it feels [roller coaster], sometimes almost [bunny having a seizure, then its head explodes]—and I mean that in a good way. As for the music, I don't generally enjoy [loud, obnoxious German techno club], but Rez's thumpin' beats had me [man looking at pornography, bow tie spinning]. And the way the graphics, music, sound effects and gameplay feed and complement one another is [Albert Einstein]. I do wish the gameplay had more meat to it; despite the A/V craziness and a bevy of extra modes and unlockables, the game itself is disappointingly [vanilla ice cream]. Ironically, I think it's both non-gamers and the hardcore (both searching for something different) who will dig Rez most. **Mark**

This is one of the coolest games my eyes and ears have ever soaked up. **At first glance, Rez will evoke a "What the f—?" response from most people.** But dim the lights, slap on the headphones, and crank up the volume and bass. When the game gets going and the music (and DualShock 2 starts thumping, you'll see and hear what I mean. If you're down with this techno affair, you can probably overlook the fact that the core game is incredibly basic and shallow; if you like Rez, it'll probably be more for its tripped-out visuals, funky weirdness, great music and other superficial stuff...not the core gameplay (same way one would like a PaRappa, for example). **Shoe**

You could say that Rez basically boils down to a 3D shooter, but then that would be shortchanging its **radical departure from the sights and sounds of gaming as we know it.** For a title that's so visually "out there," it's amazing how everything, from the ticks of your lock-on meter to the gyrations of your onscreen persona, pulsates with such aesthetic coherency. And somehow, behind the mess of psychedelic effects, everything makes sense. There's never a question of what you're shooting and where you're dodging—just you know. It's the first shooter I've played that's demanded not just my reflexes, but also my intuition. A trip worth taking. **Che**

| VISUALS | SOUND | INGENUITY | REPLAY |
|---------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 8 | 9 | 8 | 7 |



Shadow Hearts

Publisher: Midway
Developer: Sanoth
Featured In: EGM #142
Players: 1
Best Feature: Mature humor and themes
Worst Feature: Lack of interesting monsters and exciting or challenging battles
Web Site: www.midway.com

Cross sexual humor, gore and themes of psychosis threaded throughout an amusing story somewhat redeem Shadow Hearts' mediocre gameplay, but fail to raise it any higher than **so-so RPG status.** SH puts a nice twist on the typical RPG gameplay experience with a speed-dial battle system (which requires hitting a particular place on a turning dial in order to execute a desired action). Sanity points (SP) that work like health points, only they keep you from going nuts, and Yuri's ability to morph into monsters and use their skills add interesting layers to battle strategizing. But since the speed-dial system takes no time to master, and maintaining SP amounts to nothing more than popping potions, some of the most promising elements in SH lose their novelty quickly. Monsters appear only slightly varied in animation and design, and unexceptional bosses make battles more a nuisance than a catalyst for the unfolding mystery plot. Quite unfortunate considering if more work was put into creating monsters as dynamic as the cast, the dark humor and internal conflict within Yuri may have distinguished this from the sea of RPGs out there. Confusing Japanese dialogue, only slightly better-than-PS2-looking graphics, and illustrated stills substituted for most cutscenes also don't help. Overall, SH may pique one's interest at first, but for most RPGers, it's not worth the time. **Jeanne**

Sure, every RPG fan—heck, just about anyone—has FFX on the brain. But what to play next? Allow me to humbly suggest Shadow Hearts, a surprisingly good role-playing game from, of all companies, Midway. Now, keep in mind that this doesn't come close to Square's masterpiece in terms of visuals, story, scope and gameplay. What you do get is a **unique, offbeat, dark and sometimes funny story with a modern, real-world setting; and a fun, reflex-based combat system with some intense boss battles and great music that stands among the best of the genre.** And for the hardcore fanboy, there's even a cameo from none other than Koudelka herself! **Gary S.**

Final Fantasy meets Persona in this horror-drenched RPG. I can't say it emphatically enough—this game shamelessly aces FF. Of course, building upon a solid foundation gives you room to grow, and there's a lot of uniqueness here. The story is excellent, featuring tons of twists and turns as you journey through a demon-infested hell-on-earth. You'll run afoul of the Japanese army, Russian spies and Chinese sorcerers—gripping stuff. **The game's "Judgment Ring" is the best solution yet for adding timing to RPG battles.** While the graphics look like PlayStation 1.5, the atmospheric soundtrack, tried-and-true gameplay and chilling plot fill in the gaps. **Christian**

| VISUALS | SOUND | INGENUITY | REPLAY |
|---------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 4 | 7 | 6 | 3 |



Forever Kingdom

Publisher: AgeTec
Developer: From Software
Players: 1
Music Sounds Like: Sgt. Pepper's played backward, mixed with Enya
Web Site: www.agetec.com

Don't be fooled. Behind this seemingly innocuous name lurks the sequel to Evergrave, From Software's PS2 launch action-RPG. The crafty title switcheroo is actually a good idea, since FK smokes its unpopular forerunner in every way. While the first game was a substandard Zelda clone, this sequel feels more like a **single-player Fantasy Star Online set in a trippy fantasy world.** Controlling three characters simultaneously is a breeze, and the complex combo system makes trouncing enemies fun. Visually, FK succeeds with creative, strange-looking environments. The bizarre architecture and odd color choices lend the world a distinct graphical style. That weird vibe continues with the absolutely insane soundtrack. Mixing acid jazz, eerie chanting and ambient craziness, this avant-garde score may be the most ambitious video game music yet. It might drive some people crazy, but I was groovin'. My ethereal buzz was dampened a bit by the sometimes difficult puzzles and tired tech effects. Even so, it's a heady RPG alternative to the mainstream fare. **Shane**

| VISUALS | SOUND | INGENUITY | REPLAY |
|---------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 6 | 9 | 6 | 3 |



Grandia II

Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Game Arts/Rocket
Featured In: EGM #149
Players: 1
Try Instead: The DC version
Web Site: www.ubisoft.com

I know what you're thinking. Grandia II is supposed to be really good, right? The Dreamcast version even snagged a gold award in these very pages back in the day. However, this shoddy PS2 port taints the good name of Grandia. Inexplicably horrible graphics completely ruin an otherwise splendid title. **These visuals aren't just slightly worse; they're unforgivable, amateurish and unfinished.** Murky, pixelated textures replace detailed Dreamcast ones. Visual glitches run rampant, as shadows flicker with lines, black triangles randomly appear on the ground, and malfunctioning spell effects only fill half of the screen. Worst of all are the slowdown and choppliness that transform the game into a virtual slideshow. Seriously, the wretched graphics detract so much from the Grandia II experience that simply walking around towns is a chore. It's a damn shame too, because beneath the sloppy exterior lurks a quest full of cool characters, hilarious dialogue and fast-paced battles. If you want to play Grandia II, play it on Dreamcast instead. **Shane**

| VISUALS | SOUND | INGENUITY | REPLAY |
|---------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1 | 7 | 3 | 2 |



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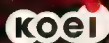
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www.koegames.com

Max Payne



Publisher: PS2
Rockstar
Developer:
 Rockstar Canada
Players:
 1

Mr. Payne Is Like:
 Duke Nukem, only
 lighter on "silly"
 heavier on "bad ass"

Best Feature: Slow-motion
 gunplay, Matrix-style
Worst Feature: Jittery graphics
 and animation

Web Site: www.maxpayne.com

Max Payne is not for kids. It's not for the wimp of heart, either. It is for people who like their game violence tough, gritty and full of testosterone. This is a no-holds-barred experience, and if you're responsible enough to handle it, you'll find Payne worth checking out. The environments are fantastic; first time you see the blood-smeared floors of a dingy subway station or a drug-induced "dream world," you'll know you're in for a not-so-average gaming experience. MP's main attraction, though, is Bullet Time, where the action slows mo (a la *The Matrix*), and you can watch bullets fly around and smack their targets with prejudice. This draws lots of "oohs" and "aahs" from folks who see Payne for the first time. But because the game has you taking on thugs, thugs and more thugs, once Bullet Time's novelty wears off, you're left with a repetitive shooter, blasting the same species of enemy over and over. Also, the PS2 version loses some value because it's much choppier than the PC and Xbox editions. Luckily, an overly forgiving auto-aim helps to compensate.

Shoe

| VISUALS | SOUND | INGENUITY | REPLAY |
|---------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 6 | 7 | 6 | 2 |

Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force



Publisher: PS2
Majesco
Developer:
 Pipedream
Featured In:
 EGM #148
Players:
 1-4

Supports:
 Keyboard, Mouse
Web Site:
 majescosales.com

Best Feature: Story integrates
 into gameplay well
Worst Feature: Choppy,
 low-resolution graphics

Aside from porn stars, no one likes sloppy seconds. But that's what Majesco is shamelessly serving up with this effortless rehash. Over a year ago, this was a fun PC first-person shooter, despite being based on the lukewarm Trek series best known for Borgette Seven-of-Nine's bust size. I don't know about you, but virtual jugs don't do it for me. And even if they did, it wouldn't matter since these blocky graphics make hers look more like lunchboxes. After feasting on gorgeous eye candy in shooters like Red Faction, it's hard to stomach cheap weapon effects and blotchy environments that look like abstract art. You would think that the crappy graphics would at least allow Voyager to move silky smooth. Instead, the choppy movement nearly gave me an epileptic seizure when I had to mow down hordes of attacking Borg. And they're the slowest-moving phaser fodder; the enemies get speedier as you progress. All of this adds up to one barely playable game. Which is too bad because the story is actually better than most of the TV episodes. Not a huge accomplishment, I know.

Kraig

| VISUALS | SOUND | INGENUITY | REPLAY |
|---------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 3 | 5 | 1 | 1 |

Tsugunai: Atonement



Publisher: PS2
Atlus
Developer:
 Cattle Call
Featured In:
 EGM #148
Players:
 1

Also Try:
 Okage
Web Site:
 www.atlusc.com

Best Feature: Unique plot
 and character development
Worst Feature: Slow battles
 bog down the action

This RPG was published by Sony in Japan, but they skipped it to release Okage in the U.S. That's confusing, because there's absolutely nothing wrong with Tsugunai. Quite the contrary; while it won't be giving FFX a run for its money, this tale of a warrior whose soul has been split from his body offers a clever narrative and lively characterizations. You, as the warrior, must possess others and heal their hearts. That could be as easy as finding someone's lost wallet, or as complex as mending the relationship of an estranged father and daughter. This look into people's lives gives Tsugunai a very unique feel. Its graphics are respectable, its battles are a touch slow but totally acceptable, and its soundtrack, composed by Yasunori Mitsuda of Chrono Cross fame, is haunting. The best word to describe Tsugunai is "solid." Be warned, though, if you want an epic about saving the land from apocalyptic evil, this is not one for you. If, however, you want something smaller with a focus on character development, give Tsugunai a whirl.

Christian

| VISUALS | SOUND | INGENUITY | REPLAY |
|---------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 7 | 9 | 7 | 4 |

Wizardry: Tale of the Forsaken Land



Publisher: PS2
Atlus
Developer:
 Racjin
Featured In:
 EGM #148
Players:
 1

Also Try:
 Dysting off your NES
Web Site:
 www.atlusc.com

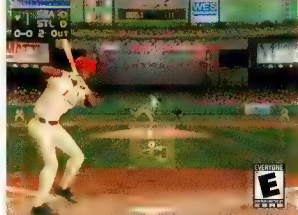
Best Feature: Stylish character
 artwork and dialogue
Worst Feature: A maze of
 twist passages, all alike

Back in the old days, there was a certain sub-genre of RPGs that has since all but died out—first-person dungeon crawls. Dispensing with years of progress, Wizardry ascribes to this time-worn tradition. Thankfully, there are a lot of touches that elevate the game above its ancient kin. Lush fantasy illustrations represent the game's characters, unique twist system governs the relationship you have with your party, and the game takes entertaining stabs at dialogue. The truth is, though, there's a reason this sub-genre has all but perished. All Wizardry really has to offer is a lengthy maze. You're going to be trudging through the labyrinth "til your hair turns gray. The battles are very basic and set to grating music. So-called "Allied Actions," or team attacks, try to add a layer of complexity to the turn-based back and forth, but it's just window dressing. Everything is built upon a rotted foundation. I find it difficult to imagine that anyone really wants an endless dungeon crawl in this vein anyway. But if you do, you'll like Wizardry. It's the ultimate evolution of this sub-genre.

Christian

| VISUALS | SOUND | INGENUITY | REPLAY |
|---------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 6 | 5 | 2 | 7 |

All-Star Baseball 2002



Publisher: Acclaim
Developer:
 Acclaim Studios Austin
Featured In:
 EGM #148
Players:
 1-2
Best pitch: The slider
Best Feature: Batting interface
Worst Feature: Stilt big
Web Site: www.acclaim.com



I know it's not Acclaim's fault that the GameCube launched in November, but why release a 2002 baseball title AFTER the season is over? I'd prefer they put more time resources into All-Star Baseball 2003 on the Cube, but hey, I'd prefer that Acclaim just go back to the formula that made ASB such a great series on the N64. Blend the fun with the realism. In ASB 2002 they went so over the top trying to make pitching realistic that it saps life out of the game. The speed of the pitches, on the higher levels, is unholy fast. To illustrate, I did a real-world experiment where Dean fired a couple fastballs at me from 1.5 feet away. If I started swinging before Dean picked the ball up, I had a chance (also had a chance of fracturing Dean's nose for standing so close). That's what ASB feels like. Sure, it might be realistic in the sense that hitters have to guess and swing against a Roger Clemens, but give Joe Videogamer a chance. Once into the game, mild annoyances gradually clipped away at my tolerance level. There's a long transition from the time you hit the ball to the time you see the ball in flight. And the bat-on-ball animation is missing as well. Fielders act like robots, very stiff and mechanical-looking, and pitchers tire too quickly. Basically it's all the same stuff that annoyed me about the PS2 version released eight months ago. Now it all annoys me even more. Wait for spring training and next year's batch of baseball games.

Dan L.

When this arrived on the PS2, it nearly drowned in glitches. Much to my chagrin, a few still live on in this edition. Nothing is more frustrating than losing because of a bad call, and chances are that you'll suffer at least one questionable play every game. If you can bear those flubs, you'll find that the rest of the gameplay is realistic and solid. I really dig the batting interface. It's a cinch to direct your hits, and pitchers can counter with a wide variety of throws that pack nasty mojo. The bizarre downside is that you don't see the ball leave the bat when you hit it. It takes some getting used to, but all this give and take makes playing this feel like marriage.

Kraig

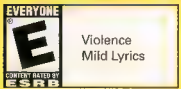
I love this game's stinkin' fast-pitch delivery. Facing a 98 mph heater has never been so intimidating (at least, in a video game). If that were the only thing that mattered, ASB 2002 wins. What happens after the hit, however, isn't always as rosy. Fielding bugs: I hate 'em. More than once I was called out on an obvious safe slide into second. Arg! I wanna reach in the set and slap the ump. That's the story of ASB 2002, though. It'll perform great for a few innings, and then BAM! Bad base running or some other glitch strikes. Overall, it flashes moments of brilliance, but until Acclaim can squash each and every bug, the game hovers in the good-but-not-great category.

Dean

| VISUALS | SOUND | INGENUITY | REPLAY |
|---------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 7 | 5 | 5 | 6 |

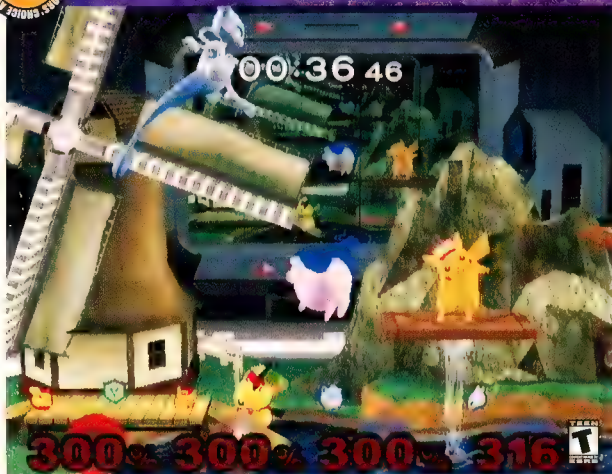


COMING FEBRUARY 2002





Super Smash Bros. Melee

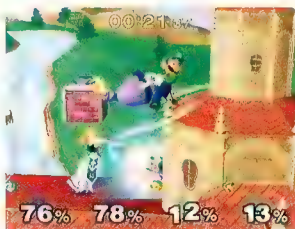


Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: HAL Laboratory
Featured In: EGM #149
Players: 1-4
Also Try: Every Nintendo game ever created
Best Feature: Lots of cool stuff to unlock
Worst Feature: The computer's a cheap bastard
Web Site: www.smashbros.com



Melee's got everything you could possibly want in a sequel to Nintendo's 1999 N64 brawler. Rehash? Not bloody likely. So much in *Melee* is new or improved over the first game that kicking Pikachu's ass is more satisfying than ever. You'll find more of everything: characters, moves, combos, environments and a Tournament mode. Think of it as *Super Street Fighter II Turbo* to the original *Street Fighter II*. The single-player game has been significantly beefed-up (see sidebar), and there are so many secrets to unlock, it could take weeks to get them all. But *Melee*'s also more than just a fighting game. It's a tribute to everything we've all loved about Nintendo through the years, filled to the brim with nostalgia from days gone by. That includes around 300 collectible trophies featuring famous Nintendo characters and locations, with information on each one. Simply put: This game is a Nintendo fan's dream.

cont. on page 162



Luigi, stop that! Zelda, no! Bad princess!



Mr. Game & Watch kicks old-school ass.

MORE THAN MULTIPLAYER

Melee's not just a fun multiplayer game. Several of the game's modes are tailored specifically to solo players.



Adventure mode transports you into the finest Nintendo games of yore. Ever been stranded alone and on foot in the middle of an *F-Zero* track during a race? That's just one of the things you experience in this mode. Nintendo's fashioned many of the levels into 3D versions of their old-school counterparts, with the occasional fight thrown in.

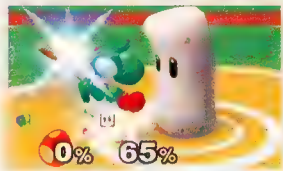
That alone is worth the price of admission. But wait, there's more! In **Event mode** you have to perform specific tasks in order to win. For example, you might have to defeat only the pink-colored Nana from two groups of Ice Climbers in less than a minute,



Look familiar? Mario takes one for the princess in Event 19: Peach's Peril. The goal is to keep her alive for a full minute.

or beat up 128 Marios. (Yes, it's crazy.) Fifty-one event challenges await you, and believe us, they're damn tough.

Last but not least, **Stadium mode** features three minigames: Target Test (where you punch targets around character-specific stages), a Home Run Derby and five types of Multi-Man *Melee* competitions. So as you can see, even if you have no friends, this game's got something for you.



WHO THE HELL?

Remember Maruo Maruhige (right)? Or how about Donbe & Hikari (far right)? If not, don't fret. Info on these Nintendo game stars who never made it to the U.S. is included in *SSBM's* Trophy Gallery. It puts a virtual museum of Nintendo game history right at your fingertips. (Psst...they're from *Card Hero* and *Shin Oni Ga Shima*, respectively.)



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Super Smash Bros. Melee (cont.)

SECRET, SECRET, I'VE GOT A SECRET

Melee is filled with loads of secret stuff: trophies, characters, stages and modes. We know you're going to want to catch them all. Here's how you unlock these goodies:

Secret Characters

- Dr. Mario**—Complete Classic with Mario.
- Falco**—Complete 100-Man Meleé.
- Ganondorf**—Complete Event 29.
- Jigglypuff**—Finish Classic with any character, on any difficulty.



Before you can play as the secret characters, you've got to fight them. And they're not always easy.

Luigi—Cross the finish line of the first stage of Adventure (based on Super Mario Bros.) with 2 as the last digit of the seconds counter. For example, 03:42:00. Your next battle (after watching some sibling rivalry) is against Peach and Luigi. Beat both of them in under a minute and finish the remainder of Adventure. Once the credits have rolled, Luigi will challenge you.

Marth—Use all the standard (non-secret) characters in Vs. mode. Marth is a character from Fire Emblem, an RPG series released by Nintendo in Japan.

Mewtwo—Rack up 20 hours or 700 rounds of Vs. Mode play.

Mr. Game & Watch—Complete Classic or Adventure with all characters (including secret characters), or 1,000 rounds of Vs.

Pichu—Clear Event 37 or 200 rounds of Vs.

Roy—Clear Adventure or Classic with Marth. Roy's also from Fire Emblem.

Young Link—Complete Classic 10 or more times, or 500 rounds of Vs. mode.

Secret Arenas

Battlefield—Finish All-Star mode (see below) with any character, on any difficulty.

Big Blue (F-Zero)—150 rounds of Vs. mode.

Brinstar Depths (Super Metroid)—50 rounds of Vs. mode play.

Flat Zone (Game & Watch)—Complete Classic Mode with Mr. Game & Watch.

Four Side (Earthbound)—100 rounds of Vs. mode play.

Mushroom Kingdom II (Super Mario Bros. 2)—Get the Birdo trophy.

Pokémon Floats—200 rounds of Vs. play.

N64 Smash Bros. Arenas

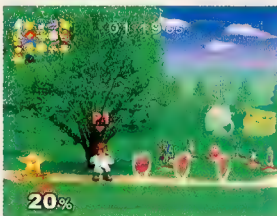
Congo Jungle—Clear the 15-Minute Meleé with any character.

Kirby's Dreamland—Clear Target Test with all characters, including secret characters.

Yoshi's Island—Hit the sandbag over 1312 ft. with any one character (hint: Use Yoshi).

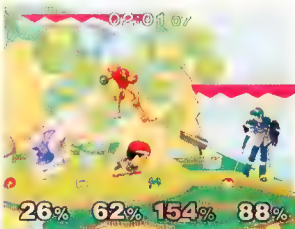
Secret Mode

All-Star mode—Complete Classic mode with every character, including the secret ones. In this mode, you have to defeat every character in the game (versus up to three of them at once) in one life. Between fights you're sent to a grassy field where there are three heart containers. Finish All-Star and you get another trophy featuring a new pose of that character.



Between rounds of All-Star mode.

To be defeated in Smash Bros. you have to get knocked out of the ring. The percentages at the bottom of the screen aren't health meters, but the higher the number, the more likely you'll be KO'd.



When we first got Melee in the office, I took it home, played a few rounds, and put the controller down, unimpressed. Maybe it was a rehash after all. Later, while exploring the game's many options, I stumbled into Event mode and suddenly couldn't stop playing. What I expected to be a tacked-on, half-assed extra mode was really the meat of the game. The enemies that were so simple to beat in Classic had suddenly become a serious challenge. This required strategy, defense, technique and mastery of the Smash attacks. It wasn't long after that I was back into Classic and Adventure, unlocking new trophies and secret characters. My mission was clear: I couldn't stop 'til everything was unlocked. A week later, I was still 'unlocking new trophies, arenas and characters—each one incentive to play again. I didn't even touch the Home Run Derby mode 'til the second week. And multiplayer's a blast too. Newbies will still be able to button mash while the pros combo their asses. Even better, a ton of options let you fully customize matches. I can't find much to complain about here. I do wish there were more levels like Brinstar Depths, with interaction between characters and their environments. And sure, I could mention a few other nit-picky details (like the cheap computer AI in Event mode and the higher difficulties), but who cares? Melee is still a great fighter that's got more than a Nintendo fan could ever want. Buy it. **Chris**

With the first Smash Bros., Nintendo delivered an awesome four-player game that offered inventive gameplay, chaotic action and a cast of characters and stages that'd make any Nintendo fan swoon. Suffice it to say, if the first game made you happy, this jam-packed sequel will make you **crap your pants with glee**. There's a mind-boggling amount of game here—tons of modes, over two dozen characters, hundreds of trophies to collect (it's like a virtual Nintendo museum), and enough secrets to keep you busy for weeks. Most importantly, it's still outrageously fun. Forget Rogue Leader—this is the reason to own a 'Cube. **John R.**

Take the original's winning formula, cram in even more Nintendo history than most people would know what to do with, and stuff it with an obscene amount of secrets and features. That's Melee in a nutshell. This Godzilla of a game really surprised me, as early demos indicated this was little more than a ho-hum update. But the final product is mind-blowing; it gives you so much to play with. The appeal here, however, may be for the hardcore only. The frantic, chaotic fighting may confuse more casual gamers, and the non-Nintendo faithful won't appreciate all the goodies from the venerable company. For the rest of us, this is the best reason to own a GC yet. **Shoe**



Here they are, the full cast of playable characters in Smash Bros. Meleé—25 in all.

Billy! Is the minotaur staying for dinner again?



FEBRUARY 2003

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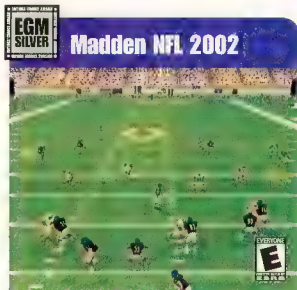
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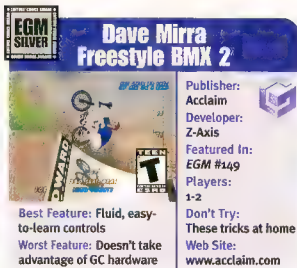
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: EA Tiburon
Featured In: EGM #145
Players: 1-4
Best Team: Chicago Bears
Best Feature: Outstanding gameplay
Worst Feature: Slightly blurry backgrounds
Web Site: www.easports.com



I always thought the N64 was a lame platform for Madden Football. Those goey-sof, blurry graphics didn't do the game any favors, and to a lesser extent, the GameCube edition has the same problem. The backgrounds (mostly the crowds and stadiums) are hazy compared to the PS2 and Xbox versions. The players, however, look fantastic. They resemble their true-life counterparts in every way. In fact, in that regard, it's better than the other two versions. The variety of animation is more robust as well. The way the players move is so convincing, you might just forget you're playing a video game. Overall, the quality of the Madden series never ceases to amaze me. Where other football games cheat to control the ebb and flow of a game by forcing too many turnovers and other unwelcome happenstance, **Madden relies on its competent AI to steer the events in a game in a plausible, fair way.** It's evident from the first time you start it up. You simply can't fake your way through (unless you're pitting the best team against the worst). It takes sound football strategy and patience to be successful, so when you finally beat the game on All-Pro mode, you know you've accomplished something big. That, my friends, is why Madden kicks butt. For the GameCube, you won't find a better football offering. Oh, one last thing, props to Tiburon for making use of the C stick on the controller (it's used for pump faking). **Dean**

GameCube gridiron freaks can wear their cleats with pride thanks to Madden's arrival. It's in large part the same excellent game that has impressed PS2 and Xbox owners this past fall. There, however, some weaknesses in the Cube world of Madden. First off, the game seems to have picked up some of that fuzzy world look we used to see in N64 games. Also, the limited memory card doesn't allow for the deep stat tracking or easy replay saves of the other two consoles. But hey, other than that, it's Madden goodness. There's **superb gameplay, deep season and franchise options, and enough realism to keep any NFL fan happy.** **Dan L.**

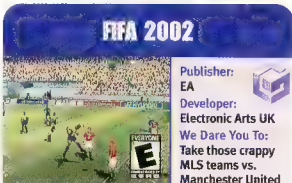
The last time the phrase "too much of a good thing" applied to me, I stayed up all night watching three Skinemax channels. I love Madden 2002, but I'll puke piggins if I have to review another. It's like comparing ham. Is there really a difference between Hormel and Oscar Meyer? This Madden is as gorgeous, realistic and fun as the others, complete with a few fringe benefits, such as updated rosters and muddier uniforms. It may bum out fantasy-football geeks that the stats have been slimmed to fit on the tiny memory card, but it hardly matters. This is the only way to get your realistic football fix on the GC, so let's breathe a sigh of relief that it's so damn good. **Kraig**



Best Feature: Fluid, easy-to-learn controls
Worst Feature: Doesn't take advantage of GC hardware

Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Z-Axis
Featured In: EGM #149
Players: 1-2
Don't Try: These tricks at home
Web Site: www.acclaim.com

Tony Hawk 3 on the GameCube, and now Dave Mirra 2...reviewing these two games has convinced me that most future titles getting the cross-platform treatment will play alike, with negligible visual and gameplay differences. Case in point: You'd be hard-pressed to find anything actually different about the GC and PS2 versions of DM2, except for two newly added levels that also appear in the Xbox edition. That said, DM2 on the GC is an extreme-sports tour-de-force. The controls are easy to learn but offer plenty of nuance for you to master. Veterans of BMX games will find DM2's button layout feels a lot like Activision's Mat Hoffman series. What gives Mirra the slight edge over its competition is the game's modier system that, at the press of a button, lets you tweak and customize nearly every trick in the game. Other niceties here include gigantic, beautifully designed levels and an above-average soundtrack with classic jams. Pass on DM2 for the GC if your PS2's already doing you right. Otherwise, definitely go for a ride with Mirra. **Che**



Best Feature: New precise passing controls
Worst Feature: Some sluggish animations

Publisher: EA
Developer: Electronic Arts UK
We Dare You To: Take those crappy MLS teams vs. Manchester United
Players: 1-4
Web Site: www.easports.com

Ninety percent of soccer is passing, which makes it surprising that it took FIFA this long to get it right. This year's edition realistically emphasizes passing to a spot on the field instead of right to the player. "Big deal," you utter. Well, it is. Say you want your teammate to charge the net so that you can softly lead him with a sweet pass that lands just in time to be kicked into the goal. Just hit the L button to tell him to make a run at the net, point toward the end of his path (which is highlighted on the field), and tap the pass button softly. Bingo. The goalie now hates you. I swear, you could probably nail players in the groin nine times out of 10 with these controls if you practiced enough. I only wish the players moved as precisely. As usual, FIFA's motion-captured animations look great (as does the rest of the game), but they bog the players down a little. I often get fed up with the clunky jukes and compensated with more downfield passes. Sure, it's still fun, but it does deprive you of the feeling you get when you score after juking a defender out of his jockstrap. **Kraig**



Publisher: Microsoft
Developer: Adrenium Games
Featured In: EGM #144
Players: 1
Try Instead: Oddworld: Munch's Odyssee
Best Feature: Giant world to explore
Worst Feature: Getting lost in that giant world
Web Site: www.azurik.com

I'll say this for Azurik: It's incredibly ambitious. Vast levels stretch to the horizon, covered by a maze of bridges, teleporters and caves. Puzzles, power-ups and enemies litter the landscape. Dawn turns to day, then dusk, then night, all in real time. An excellent orchestral score subtly stirs the inner Conan within us all. In short, Azurik wants to be nothing less than the all-encompassing Epic Quest, a la Zelda. But a game like Zelda needs plenty of time to refine and polish, whereas Azurik feels like it was pulled out of the oven half-baked. Except for one inspired aspect—the ability to quickly and easily combine any of your four elemental powers for different abilities—gameplay alternates between tedium and frustration. Tedium from wandering back and forth across those massive branching levels I mentioned earlier, without a clear idea where to go next; frustration from a floaty jump and a camera you need to adjust so often it starts to feel like you're playing a first-person shooter. As for combat, it lacks any real rewards or offensive/defensive variety; instead your best bet is the same attack over and over, or more often, just running right by the bad guys. And it doesn't help that Azurik is loaded with more glitches and painful screw-ups than the outtakes at the end of a Jackie Chan movie. Bad design (plastic environments and enemies straight off a bad fantasy-novel cover) further obscures any potential Azurik ever possessed. **Mark**

Great concept. Too bad the execution just missed the mark. Azurik should've been the Zelda-like adventure that the Xbox could really use. As it stands, this game only serves to remind us of what could've been. I certainly appreciate Azurik's attempt to be non-linear, but that open-endedness comes with a price. The huge plots of gaming real estate leave ample opportunity for players to go adrift, unsure of where to go or what to do next. Not only that, but the lands are populated with many creatures that all belong to genus *Frustratus Sonsoffitchus*; they do nothing but get in the way and annoy you, since there is little reward for defeating them. **Shoe**

It's hard to take a game seriously whose hero looks like a plastic, blue Reebok reject. I think Paul Reubens would have been more believable. Few things in this adventure are well-designed. The creatures and power-ups seem randomly dispersed and many of the huge environments seem big for no other reason than to make me feel lost. But finding the right path turned out to be the least of my problems. The floaty controls made me constantly miss jumps, forcing me to retrace my steps too often. If it weren't for the excellent soundtrack and elemental weapon, I might have lost my mind. Stay far, away; unless you have a thing for overgrown Smurfs. **Kraig**

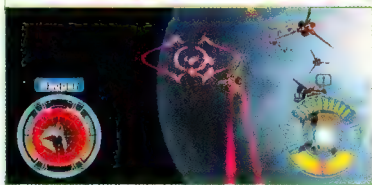
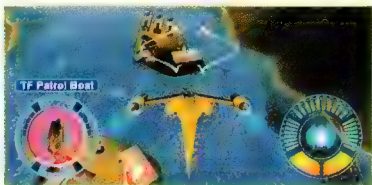




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VIOLENCE

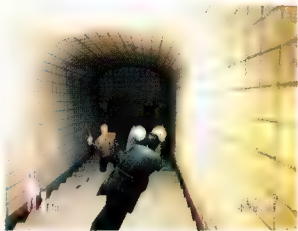


STAR WARS®
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Max Payne



If you occasionally stop to smell the gun powder in Max Payne, you'll see that the game sports a lot of nifty graphical detail. Check out the muzzle flash of his 9mm pistols as it reflects off Max's leather jacket.



Anybody who's a huge fan of the influences driving Max Payne will probably get through this game on fetish alone. There were moments in MP, when I dove sideways into a room full of thugs and plugged 'em full of lead, where I truly felt like I was living the scene out of some John Woo movie that never made it off the cutting-room floor. And herein lies the true appeal of MP. Fans of the genre will find themselves replaying certain scenes, if not to perfect their technique, then simply to witness again the slick sequence of events. It's just too bad MP **doesn't really do much of anything beyond giving us some really cool-looking firefights.** It appears developer Remedy spent most of their time perfecting all the little details having to do with guns, explosions and destructible environments, but ran out of time (or ideas) to include gameplay elements like real AI, or true background interaction. To give you an idea of how crap the AI can be, grab a baseball bat, get the attention of the bad guys and wait, just out of sight, in a doorway. Now swing that bat, and watch as goon after goon line up to get beat down. I guarantee you'll be watching a thousand. But terrible AI would be slightly more forgivable if the game had more than just another "If it moves, shoot it" mentality. Without a good story, open-ended levels or interesting puzzles, MP ultimately becomes a mind-numbing exercise in repetition. Not a game for everybody. **Che**

Publisher: Rockstar
Developer: Neo
Featured In: EGM #250
Players: 1
Imitation: Is the best form of flattery
Best Feature: Cool gunplay
Worst Feature: Terrible story
Web Site: www.maxpayne.com



Max Payne: an unfortunate man with an even more unfortunate name. Can't you just hear his cry of anguish? Nooooooo!!!!

Whoever said you can't have too much of a good thing never got to the end of Max Payne. The developers here certainly know that they like about Hollywood's pulp culture: stylish gun battles, wisecrackin' gangsters and the might-makes-right ethos of the mafioso underworld. But rather than building on those influences, MP ends up being just the sum of these parts—a trophy case of in-jokes and media references.

The game begins promisingly enough with an interactive gut-wrenching intro. All-American Max comes home one day to find his wife and child slain by homicidal junkies (um, bear with us here), so he becomes an undercover narc to exact his revenge on whoever's responsible. And it's a pretty compelling roller-coaster ride filled with thrills until...you find yourself at a gothic dance club, taking out a cult of heat-packin' Satan wor-

shippers. From there, the story is pretty much a downhill slide. You'll encounter a dozen more twists and turns, but who really cares? You no longer believe in Max's world.

Still, in a shooter, most of us are willing to forgive shoddy writing, as long as the action keeps us coming back for more. In this respect, MP's gameplay gets the job done. There's an endless supply of gorgeous, high-tension firefights where you'll fire thousands of rounds at hundreds of bullet-fodder. Even cooler is the fact that every shot you squeeze off has some sort of collateral damage effect on your surroundings. Empty the clips from your dual Berettas at some poor schmuck down the hall and watch him get chewed up in slow-mo among a hail of splintered wood and plaster dust. Poetry in motion.

That's basically MP in a nutshell. Like a lot of Hollywood action flicks, it's got a bunch of great action sequences that help offset an otherwise terrible script. Keep your expectations low and you'll have a good time with MP.



Dark, bloody revenge pulsating in an ex-cop's psyche drives the eerie narrative of MP, transforming shooter fans from innocent gamers to guilty fugitives. While graphic-novel snippets nicely balance a world alive with the sounds of corrupted streets and graphically unsavory NYC grit, MP's infamous Bullet Time feature (aka John Woo-style acrobatics at your trigger finger) **takes immersive action gaming to new heights.** Problem is not letting MP's good-cop-gone-bad style, which gets a bit melodramatic, jerk you in and out of an otherwise great story. But if you do buy into it, MP's hardcore action and hefty dose of vengeful cop syndrome won't disappoint. **Jeanne**

I was playing this game while lying on a couch in my office. Cy (our senior art director) walked in, watched me play for a bit, then commented, "This is why it's good to be a console gamer." He's right, you know. It's great to be able to play a picture-perfect port of a hit PC game, away from a desk and monitor. And for Payne in particular, the experience is extra bad-ass. This street-tough game has well-designed environments that give "gritty realism" a new meaning, sharp graphics and smooth animations, and that slow, not-lead violence that guy-movie fans will sit up. Only one problem: **After the novelty wears off, the gameplay can get monotonous.** **Shoe**

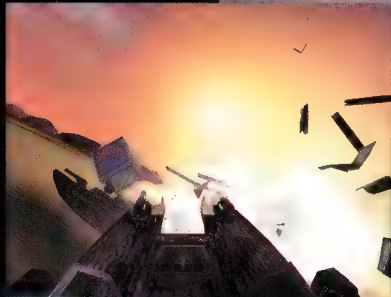


Out here,

amongst the clouds

and the sea,

a chain gun.



Set sail aboard a torpedo-laden gunboat and while away your days destroying Devil boats, forts and shore batteries. Paradise awaits in the Dragon Sea.



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XBOX



Publisher: LucasArts
Developer: LucasArts
Featured In: EGM #149
Players: 1-2
Also Try: Star Wars: Starfighter SE
Best Feature: Force powers
Worst Feature: Boring two-player mode
Web Site: www.lucasarts.com

If someone handed you a lightsaber, I bet you, like me, would want to rip a lot of things a new poopchute with it. Unfortunately, this isn't the **Ginsu simulator I was hoping for.** In this world, lightsabers are cheap knock-offs. You can't cut trees with them. You can't sever limbs with them. About the only thing you can slice with the shimmering things are ridiculous battle droids. Everything else has to be bludgeoned to death as if you were hitting them with light clubs, not sabers. Apparently LucasArts thought a slashfest would be inappropriate (even though *Episode I* saw it fit to chop Darth Maul in two). Although the choppin' is disappointing, the throwing is not. Envision an oversized piece of Samsonite luggage being thrust into someone's gut, and you'll understand the satisfying feeling I got from Force Pushing. It was infinitely more fun to kill enemies by redecorating the Naboo palace with the Force instead of hitting them with my club, er...saber. Shame you don't get to throw anything cool around. No matter the location, all you get to toss around are pipes and big boxes. What is this, Home Depot? The shallow, boring head-to-head two-player mode doesn't offer relief. It only shows further proof that these designers couldn't get worked up about yet another *Episode I* title. Without all of the cool saber whirs and familiar music, *Obi-Wan* is just a drab, buggy game with long load times. **Kraig**

Just like the *Episode I* flick, *Obi-Wan* is a dull experience that rewards you with a few now-thats-more-like-*Star Wars!* moments—like when you cut down a gang of battle droids, or kick on your slo-mo "Bullet Time," or Force Push baddehds off ledges. The game just feels clunky. It woulda been nice if the sprawling environments packed puzzles for you to figure out with your Force powers. Instead, you spend much of the game hacking enemies. (The second half does get more clever.) Control helps help. Jedi perform superhuman acrobatics in the movies, but I had a tough time just leaping across chasms. **It ain't Jar Jar-bad, but it's not Darth Maul-good, either. Crispin**

If *Obi-Wan* knew his Jedi training was going to be like this, chances are he would've gone into the more exciting career of pod-racer repulsor. I had more fun forcing the young Padawan to perform continuous handspins and cartwheels than I did actually fighting enemies. Part of the frustration is the clumsy control, but mostly it's just **poorly executed, original concepts.** You dive into a gaggle of lame enemies and start hacking away with your saber until they eventually fall. Wash, rinse, repeat. The crisp graphics are swell, but they come at the expense of bland backgrounds and loading times that would age an Ewan McGregor into an Alec Guinness. **Jonathan**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

EGM SILVER

EA
Developer: Electronic Arts UK
Featured In: EGM #146
Players: 1-4
Also On: PlayStation 2
Web Site: www.easports.com

Best Feature: Excellent handling and options
Worst Feature: Irritating to unlock standard modes

EA Sports games have seen more improvement over the past year than the last six combined. (We can thank all the new competition for that.) This is the **fastest, best-handling F1 game since Bizarre Creations' F1 '97** on the PS2. Plus it has some great AI. When I'm fighting for position and head into a corner, I know knowing that my opponent is going to behave realistically instead of diving into me to maintain the optimum racing line. It's something no other F1 game seems to get right. But if I have any complaint, it's that the game is needlessly complicated. F1 2002 features a series of tests—much like the license tests in GT3—that you need to complete in order to unlock certain features. Unfortunately, those features include such normally standard options as Season mode, tire wear and even regular circuit tracks. It's really irritating when I have to earn something I should be able to use right away. Other than that, though, I wholeheartedly recommend this to anyone who yearns for the good 'ol days of F1 video games. **Grog**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY



EGM SILVER

Midway
Developer: Black Box
Featured In: EGM #149
Players: 1-4
Also On: PlayStation 2
Web Site: www.midway.com

Best Feature: Mindless, fast-paced arcade thrills
Worst Feature: Goalies could pass a little faster

Midway doesn't get proper credit for their arcade expertise. Perhaps people have forgotten how innovative Blitz, Showtime and Hydro Thunder were back in the day. Hitz 20-02 doesn't stir the loins as briskly as those gems, but for people who would rather send an opponent crashing through the glass than extol the finer points of ice hockey, it's perfect. For starters, Hitz was built by Black Box Games—the same fellas that made NHL 2K for the Dreamcast, and that heritage has paid valuable dividends. Here's why: **The graphics are cleaner than Martha Stewart's countertops.** The ice, the players and the smoldering fire effects all look super-sharp. The gameplay is superb as well—no sloppy player-switching here, just responsive, fast control. And finally, the most important thing: It's a freakin' blast to play. Two-player matches are more about banging bodies to the ice than anything that resembles real hockey. The trick is to stay vertical long enough to drill a slapshot right between the goalie's legs. It's good, old-fashioned, mindless arcade fun. God bless it. **Dean**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY



Arc the Lad Collection

Publisher: Working Designs
Developer: Arc Entertainment (G-Craft)
Featured In: EGM #142
Players: 1
Web Site: workingdesigns.com

Best Feature: Three full-length RPGs in one pack
Worst Feature: The games are too old and expensive

This is the series that fanboys everywhere have been screaming to get in the U.S., ever since the first game was released in Japan back in '95. **Was it worth the wait? Unless you're a hardcore collector, no.** These games just haven't aged as well as the Final Fantasy or Lunar series. Here's a quick rundown: **Arc I** chronicles the journey of the title character and is only about 10 hours long. The whole thing is pretty uninspired, with boring characters, Super Nintendo-quality graphics and a just barely interesting, strategy-based battle engine. **Arc II** is an improvement, with prettier graphics, longer play time and a much better story. You control Elc and a new band of adventurers, but the game still plays almost exactly the same. This is probably the best of the series, but it's still pretty average. You can battle monsters you collect here in the equally mediocre **Arc Arana** if you really care to. Finally, **Arc III** brings the series into the realm of 3D (the backgrounds, anyway), but it still falls to be very interesting or exciting, since it's basically the same game for the third time. **Grog**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY



Hoshigami: Ruining Blue Earth

Publisher: Altus
Developer: Maxive
Featured In: EGM #150
Players: 1
Also Try: Final Fantasy Tactics
Web Site: www.hoshigami.net

Best Feature: RAP system for moving and fighting
Worst Feature: Lack of a job system

Hoshigami might disappoint PlayStation RPG fans hoping for the second coming of Final Fantasy Tactics, but as an FFT fanatic myself, I'm always stoked for a competent clone. Hoshigami looks and sounds just as good as Square's classic, with tasteful 3D maps, stunning character designs and a driving symphonic score. Likewise, the complex plot and occasionally insane difficulty level mimic FFT nicely. **Sadly, the developers forgot to steal the best parts:** Hoshigami has no real character classes or job system. Your character's dilly determines how you will perform against others in a rock-paper-scissors kind of way, but everybody can use any weapon or spell. Also, when characters die in battle, you have no chance to revive them...ever. At least fighting with these expendable party members is interesting, thanks to an ingenious system for gauging movement and attacking. Lamentably, this FFT Doppelgänger actually reminds me more of Tactics Ogre, and that's a step back for the genre. Recommended for hardcore strategy-RPG fans only. **Shane**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

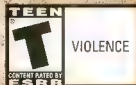




he land was eternally dark, evil prevailed,
and there appeared to be no hope at all.

And as if that wasn't enough, the young wizard had aged 30 years in a day and a pack of wild hell hounds was trying to devour him. He used his orb and a lava spell to torch the wretched beasts and ran for his life. He continues on his quest to become a master sorcerer, but he still has nowhere near the 45 spells he needs to defeat the darkness.

Not even near the end



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XBOX

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone



Nobody likes a Snitch: Quidditch matches (below) are one of the most elaborate parts of the game, but they still don't capture the white-knuckle thrills described in the book. Unless flying through rings is your thing.



You'd figure any game set in a school where one of the goals is to make it to class on time would pack the entertainment value of, say, *Army Men: Sarge's Insurance Seminar*. But we're not talking about an ordinary school here. *Sorcerer's Stone* is set at Hogwarts—sort of a DeVry Institute of Sorcery—and you play as wizardly whiz-kid Harry Potter. But despite the unlimited potential, *Sorcerer's Stone* still comes across as another ho-hum licensed title—at least for any gamer over age 10. The game boils down to you scurrying about Hogwarts' maze-like campus, leaping through occasional platform areas, while engaging in easy, often dull minigames. Even Quidditch—a wizard's version of rugby that could easily be the basis of an entire game itself—is nothing more than you simply whizzing through rings (topped off with touchy control and choppy visuals). Monotonous wandering plus lame minigames makes for a non-magical experience. **It's clear this game was developed by mere Muggles** (and if you don't know what a Muggle is, you really have no business playing this game). Fortunately, the story—which packs plot points not found in the book—rarely drags on, so you're seldom stuck wondering what to do next. The whole thing only takes about seven hours to beat, unless you dilly-dally to explore Hogwarts' nooks. But with gameplay this kiddified, I'd just as soon serve detention. **Crispin**

Unlike the books and the movie, this *Harry Potter* is obviously (and unfortunately) just for kids, so those of us over age 8 will just have to wait for the next batch of games. But strictly as a children's title, HP is pretty good. Simple, solid run-'n'-jump platforming and item hunts make up the bulk of the gameplay, with plenty of good voices to guide tots through the controls and where to go next. Fans will appreciate the musical cues taken from the film and characters that actually (for once) look like they do on the big screen. The graphics could be smoother and the game longer, but all in all, this is more than the quick license cash-in you might expect. **Mark**

I think Lord Voldemort cast a *Slowdown* Choppola spell on this PS game. Poor **Harry's world slows to a coma-inducing crawl** whenever he's running, flying or...well, moving. It's a real shame, too, as the expansive environments look sweet otherwise. The gameplay fares better, with an appetizing mix of *Zelda*-style adventuring and fun minigames. However, Potter-heads expecting the game to accurately follow the book and movie will be let down. Cinemas handle much of the plot, and the new tasks created for the game are dull (like gathering paperwork) or goofy (like herding farting monsters). I award only six house points to EA. **Shane**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

5 1 4 3

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: Argonaut
Featured In: EGM #149
Players: 1
Supports: Dual Shock
Best Feature: Well-paced story
Worst Feature: It's too kiddie
Web Site: hpgames.ea.com



POTTER BLOTTER

Does *Sorcerer's Stone* pack all the trademark goodies of the *Harry Potter* phenomenon? Let's run down the checklist...



Chocolate Frogs

These leaping confections pluck up Harry's health...and give him gas (we're not kidding).



Wizard Cards

Win these for achieving certain secret objectives. Collect 'em all and then, er, look at them for a while.



The Golden Snitch

Snag this to win the Quidditch match. The game includes several matches against the different houses.



Every-Flavor Beans

Find all these and the Weasly twins grant access to special items, such as the Nimbus 2000.



Diagon Alley Bikini Carwash

OK, so this ain't in the books, but criminy—this kiddie game needs somethin' for us grown-ups.

The ultimate test of any game with a mega license is to strip away the big name and consider only the gameplay. So, with that in mind, do you enjoy Simon-says-style memory games? Does chasing a peacock around a maze float your boat? Simple shell games turn you on? Can't get enough of retrieving paperwork bundles while slip-sliding across the glossy floor of Gringott's Bank? That's just a sampling of the minigames that pop up on a regular basis in *Sorcerer's Stone*. Needless to say, even the best of these diversions—such as Harry's flight from the mountain troll and a whipping mine-cart ride through a subterranean vault—will bore any gamer who's made it past grade school.

But the real shame here is that the game shortchanges the license's greatest strengths: its magic spells and twisting story. Dramatic scenes from the book are relegated to simple narrated voice-overs and still images. (It's like the developers are inviting us to read the story along with them, instead of actually taking part in it.) And spellcasting is, for the most part, an automatic process. Just jab the X button and Harry will cast whatever spell the situation calls for—except for a few areas where you engage in *Dance Dance Revolution*-style button-matching. It makes for brain-dead puzzles that take the wonder and mystery out of a book series famous for, well, its wonder and mystery. And when you take the magic out of Harry, what the heck do you have left?

FORGOTTEN REALMS



Baldur's Gate

DARK ALLIANCE

A new legacy begins

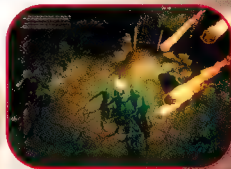


"THIS GAME IS A GRAPHICAL TOUR DE FORCE."

-Electronic Gaming Monthly



HACK YOUR WAY THROUGH COUNTLESS OPPOSITION



EXPLORE FANTASTIC ENVIRONMENTS



Blood
Violence
Use of Alcohol

PlayStation 2



developed by snowblind studios



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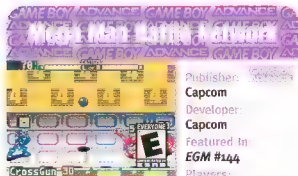
Mega Man X6

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Featured In: EGM #148
Players: 1

Best Feature: New character-specific power-ups
Worst Feature: Lame enemies and bosses

Worst Boss Name: Infinity Minjion
Web Site: www.capcom.com

I thought I'd sooner see Sasquatch ride a Chimera bareback through the streets than a bland series like Mega Man X last through six installments. At this point, Capcom is subscribing to the "ladel on more power-ups and push it through" philosophy. It feels slapped together after X5, a masterpiece by comparison that came out less than a year ago. With such a brief development cycle, it's no wonder X6 is a **fine specimen of a botched rush job**. Each short stage has two token unique enemies at most, and they're used nearly as creatively as in previous games. The rest of every level is half-assedly crammed with one type of flying robot, which gets old quickly. If you've played recent MMX games, you know that the story and bosses have gotten lazier with time, but X6 takes the cake. Metal Shark Player? Ground Scaravich? It's like Capcom is teasing us to see how far they can take this joke before we stop buying it. I could see some hardcore fans enduring this one, but most should avoid X6 like they hopefully avoided Mega Man VI on the original Nintendo. **Jonathan**

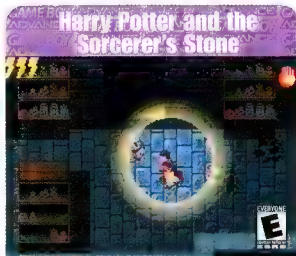


Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Featured In: EGM #144
Players: 1-2

Supports: Link cable
Best Feature: The deep, customizable battle system
Worst Feature: The perspective in Net areas

Also try: Mega Man Xtreme (GBC)
Web Site: www.capcom.com

Just when you thought the Mega Man series couldn't get any more convoluted between the original, X and Legends games, here comes another link in the chain. Battle Network is half Pokémon and half Mega Man. It's got all the bases covered: trading, battling, even an evil organization hell-bent on world domination through their outrageous antics (like Team Rocket). Instead of lil' monsters, everyone's got a computer program called a PET that they battle against each other and use to fight viruses inside the Net. The battle system is the game's biggest asset, allowing you to customize your attack repertoire in a way similar to that of creating a deck in a trading-card game. But as much as I like the action-oriented battle system, random enemy encounters are too frequent. It's especially annoying when you're trying to find your way through the maze-like, multi-level paths of the Net. The storyline's predictable, boy-saves-world stuff, just loaded with old-school Mega Man references. It's fun, but **it's more for Mega Man fans than anyone else**. **Chris**



Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: Amaze Ent.
Featured In: EGM #149
Players: 1

It's fun to say: Ripendo!

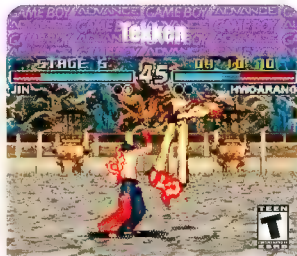
Also try: Harry Potter (PS, GBC)
Best Feature: Puts you right in the book/movie to experience Hogwarts as Potter

Worst Feature: Too short and repetitive
Web Site: hpgames.ca.com

Fans looking for a quick ride through the events of the book and movie will be pleased with Potter GBA, because that's all it is. You wander Hogwarts, stopping in for quick visits with characters before they send you on some sort of quest (e.g., collect X number of items for a teacher, sneak around at night Solid Snake-style, foil Malfoy's antics or play Quidditch). Admittedly, some of the missions are pretty good. The problem is they quickly get repetitive and are bogged down by unresponsive control. The speediest enemies can be right on you before you can pull off an attack because of the one-second delay it takes to conjure a spell. If they're too close, you won't connect (and no, you can't just hit them over the head with your wand). Control during flying sequences, including Quidditch, is equally bad. You're moving so fast that you can't turn quickly enough to avoid obstacles or Bludgers (to use Quidditch terminology). Visually, the game's a mixed bag. Nighttime areas are too dark for the GBA screen, leading to a lot of squinting to see all the black enemies you're trying to avoid. Daytime scenes are fine, but some could still use a little brightening up. Considering that it's a licensed game, Potter isn't the usual cookie-cutter crapola we get. However, the short length, slow control and repetitive gameplay bugs down what had the potential to appeal to everyone—not just 11-year-olds. **Chris**

With the Harry Potter hubbub flying circles around stary Hollywood and book stores, the GBA game will no doubt fall into squealing kids' laps everywhere. But with nil personality in character dialogue, repetitive puzzles, and task upon unexciting task to complete, HP's quite a task itself to carry out. Most puzzles boil down to either mazes or a follow-the-leader wand-waving minigame, while the story unravels like a rushed event checklist, leaving you with **all work and no pay-off**. Quidditch matches add some spunk to the game, but don't occur often enough to ripple the still pool of repetition. This is for the Harry wannabe, not the expert gamer. **Jeanne**

If you're looking for a great handheld version of Harry Potter's first year at Hogwarts...get the GBC game. Can't get enough of the spunky wizard? This lightweight action-adventure title might be worth a shot. Graphically, it's topnotch. Silky animation and lush backdrops invoke the look of the film perfectly. The storyline also follows the book/movie closely, yet **the gameplay fails to capture the magical spirit of Harry Potter**. Jumbling together ideas from Zelda, Metal Gear Solid, Nights and PaRaappa creates a confusing mix of disparate events that never really comes together properly. Even so, it'll keep younger Muggles entertained for a while. **Shane**



Publisher: Namco
Developer: Namco
Featured In: EGM #148
Players: 1-2

Supports: Link Cable

Best Feature: Quasi-3D characters fighting on a quasi-2D backdrop on a handheld
Worst Feature: The gameplay and features list suffer from an amazing lack of depth

Web Site: www.namco.com

Up until a year ago the thought of porting a PlayStation game to a handheld system was pretty much ridiculous. But now that the GBA (and all of its glorious 32-bits) is here, we can experience the joy of quasi-3D characters bobbing around on screen. In the case of Tekken, this is both a blessing and a curse. The good is that anyone who fancies Tekken's particular style of fighting action will marvel at the responsive controls (waited down to a punch, kick and throw), the fluid animations, and the faux-3D environments. The downside is that GBA Tekken also crystallizes everything that is wrong about the series. Lacking the finesse of certain other 3D fighters, Tekken has always been about pesky left punch, right kick, right punch, left kick-style combos, which puts the emphasis on stodgy button mashing and less on fluid movements. This game does nothing to alleviate the trend by stripping things down to three buttons. Mash, mash, mash and there you have it. **Less Bruce Lee, a more Van Damme than you can shake a stick at, Tekken is all about who can bludgeon you to death first**, whether you're playing against the computer or punishing a friend via the Link Cable. So, yes, the fact that Namco's managed to squash the essence of Tekken onto a 1" x 1.5" slab of silicon is nothing short of impressive. That, however, does not change the fact that this is an utterly average game. **Milkman**

Once in a while, I run into a game that I really don't care for, but have to give credit to for its technical prowess. While I'm not the biggest Tekken fan, that Namco was able to make Tekken's mock-3D gameplay work on the GBA this soildly is impressive. Tekken 3 players should definitely look into the GBA version; it's got a lot of the same characters and gameplay mechanics as T3. The only problem is that Tekken's fighting engine is so reliant on subtle punch and kick variations, scaling it down doesn't work so well. Many of these subtleties have either been cut out or obscured on the small screen, so the game feels a lot drier than it should. **Jonathan**

I'm blown away that Namco has managed to accurately port Tekken 3 to the GBA. Sure, with a slower game speed and only two buttons used for punches and kicks, you lose out on a lot of multi-hit strings, and most of the combo timing has changed; but make no mistake, this handheld version is definitely Tekken—only smaller and uglier. Since fighting games aren't worth more than their practice mode features in single-player, however, **Tekken loses out big time by not supporting the GBA's one-card-ridge multiplayer feature**. If all you're gonna do is play solo, why not stick with the real deal on the PS2 and pick up Final Fight One instead? **Che**





Tricks of the Trade

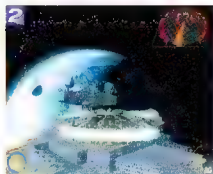
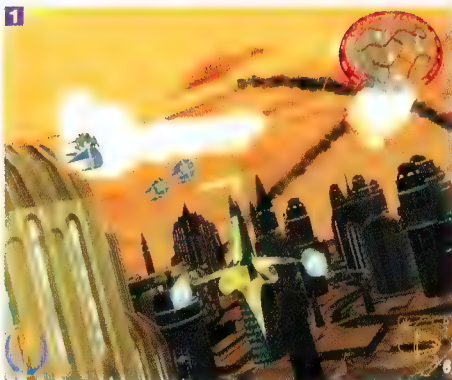
By Peter Feinik

Peter knows he's got some big shoes to fill after Terry "Trickman" Minnich's long stint as chieftain of EGM's Tricks section. But we think he's got a few tricks up his sleeve to keep the long legacy alive.

TRICK OF THE MONTH

WWF Smack-Down!: Just Bring It

PLAY AS FRED DURST
Choose Slobberknock Match. Then pick the Undertaker. Eliminate 15 opponents before the 10-minute timer expires. This will then unlock the Limp Bizkit front man himself. Who would have thought that he could wrestle?!



GAMECUBE

Star Wars Rogue Leader: Rogue Squadron II

WHAT DID HE SAY?
Audio Commentary

Unlock the commentaries for each stage by typing in BLAH-BLAH as a password. Head to the Special Features option and turn on Audio Commentary. Select a level and either play through with the speech, or pause to listen to them talk about the different aspects of the stage.

Documentary

After finishing all 10 main missions, you can get it under the Special Features menu option.

Unlock the Art Gallery

Throw in the passcode EXHIBIT! to unlock hidden game art.

Unlock the Concert Hall

Type in Composer.

UNLOCK HIDDEN SHIPS

Slave 1 Ship

Finish all missions with a silver medal or better.

1 Naboo Starfighter

Finish the Tatooine Training in all four time settings. You must get all discovery items, all objects and two hidden bonus items in each zone. Times are 6 a.m., 2 p.m., 6 p.m., 11 p.m. (You must make sure your GameCube internal clock is set.)

2 Millennium Falcon

Finish all missions with a bronze medal or better.

TIE Fighter

Steal a TIE Fighter and complete the Level Seven mission during the daytime and nighttime hours to unlock it as a bonus ship.

Darth Vader's Tie

Acquire 15 gold medals to unlock Darth Vader's TIE Advanced.

GAME A LA MODE

Black and White Mode

Type in LIONHEAD at the passcodes screen to play the game in black and white.

Ace Mode

Complete all the Tatooine Training objectives and finish the game with 15 gold medals to unlock Ace mode.

NHL Hitz 20-02

SWEET CODES

On the VS screen, use the B,Y and X buttons to switch the icons beneath the teams on screen. The list below indicates the number of times each button should be pressed. After the icons have been switched, press the D-pad in the indicated direction to enable the code. You will see the name of the code and hear a sound. More than one code may be activated per game; just make sure you enter them quick enough. For example, to enter 4, 2, 3, Right, press B four times, Y two times, X three times and then press Right on the D-pad. If you're playing the Xbox version, substitute buttons X,Y,B.

Show Shot Speed

1,0,1 Up

Rain Mode

1,4,1 Left

Ignore Last Code

0,1,0 Down

Bulldozer Puck

2,1,2 Left

Win Fights for Goals

2,0,2 Left

Tennis Ball

1,3,2 Down

Hitz Time

1,0,4 Right

First to 7 Wins

3,2,3 Left

No Puck Out of Play

1,1,1 Down

Pinball Boards

4,2,3 Right

Domino Effect

0,1,2 Right

No Fake Shots

4,2,4 Down

Big Head Player

2,0,0 Right

Big Puck

1,2,1 Up

3 Huge Head Team

3,3,0 Left

Big Head Team

2,2,0 Left

Huge Puck

3,2,1 Up

Huge Head Player

3,0,0 Right

No Crowd

2,1,0 Right

Input More Codes

3,3,3 Right

Show Team's Hot Spot

2,0,1 Up

Late Hits

3,2,1 Down

Turbo Boost

0,0,2 Up

No One Times

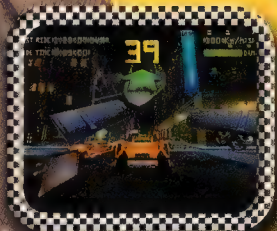
2,1,3 Left

Infinite Turbo

4,1,3 Right

cont. on page 176

BAD CAB



Ten levels. One goal: Beat the enemy cab to your destination.



Take short-cuts over buildings or through them. Don't use 'em. Don't expect to win.



Grab power-ups to turn your cab into a metal beast. Blasting ram. Monster truck tires. Gillet. Some blast horn. It's all good.

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and a gesture won't do.

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Violence



cont. from page 174

Snow Mode

- 1,2,1 Left
- Always Big Hits**
- 2,3,4 Down
- Skills Versus**
- 2,2,2 Down
- Hockey Ball**
- 1,3,3 Left

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3

MASTER MOVIES

Unlock Every Single Movie

From the Main Menu, select Options, then Cheats. Enter POPCORN. This will open all the movies for you.

Ahoy Sk8rz

To skate on the pirate ship, you must first go to Skater Island. Find the two flags that are side by side. Grind the one with the skull and crossbones on it. Then one of the garage doors will open, and you'll be skating with the pirates.

MY FINGERS HURT

Complete all 54 goals and get a gold medal at every compound.

Finish the game...

- 11 times** and you'll unlock snowboard mode.
- 12 times** and you'll unlock always special mode.
- 13 times** and you'll unlock perfect rail balance mode.
- 14 times** and you'll attain



maxed-out stats mode.

- 15 times** to unlock giant mode.
- 16 times** and you'll unlock slow-mo mode.
- 17 times** to unlock perfect manual balance.
- 18 times** to unlock tiny mode.
- 19 times** to unlock moon mode.
- 20 times** to unlock expert mode.
- 22 times** and you'll unlock first-person mode.

4. **Unlock Darth Maul**

Complete all 54 goals and earn golds at each competition with one skater.

Get Neversoft Eye

Similar to unlocking Darth Maul but do it with 21 skaters.

Get Skater From Hell

Do the same thing you did to unlock the other characters. Beat the game 10 times with 10 skaters.

Unlock Wolverine

Complete all 54 goals and get all golds at each competition with two different skaters.

Unlock the Bum

Complete all 54 goals and get a gold medal at each competition with seven skaters.

Unlock Officer Dick

Complete the 54 goals and get a gold at each competition with four different skaters.

Unlock Private Carrera

Do the same thing you did to unlock Officer Dick, but do it with one more skater.



Project Gotham

KUDOS TO YOU

Open All Cars and Courses

Enter your driver name as Nosliw (case sensitive).

Unlock Panoz Esperate

Obtain 25,000 kudos.

Medal Pursuit Paint Jobs

After five hours of gameplay.

Amped

RAVEN'S THE NAME

First get to the Options menu and pick Cheats. Then type in RidinRaven. When entered correctly the "RidinRaven" will vanish. Press B to exit.

NASCAR Thunder 2002

BONUS CARS APLenty

Enter any of the following Driver names at the "Create a Driver" screen to unlock the corresponding car in all modes.

- Joey Joulwan
- Michelle Emser
- Audrey Clark
- Dave Alpern
- Benny Persons
- Troi Hayes

- Buster Autou
- Chuck Spicer
- Crissy Hillworth
- Daryl Wolfe
- Dave Nichols
- Diane Grubb
- Jim Hannigan
- Dick Paysor
- Josh Neelon
- Katrina Goode
- Kristi Jones
- Mandy Misiak
- Rick Edwards
- Rick Humphrey
- Sasha Soares
- Scott Brewer
- Cheryl King
- Tom Renedo
- Traci Hultzapfle
- Ken Patterson

EXTRA TRICKS

Boca Chica

Finish first in points in the Road Course Challenge.

Devil's Canyon

Finish first in points in the Short Track Challenge.

Cocoa Beach

Finish first in points in the

TOP 5 TRICKS

The top 5 games of the last month for your tricked-out pleasure:

1. Grand Theft Auto III



Crazy Pedestrians

During the course of the game, enter these codes to check out the insane antics performed by the surrounding crowd of people: R2, R1, Triangle, X, L2, L1, Up, Down.

Enter this code to watch them lay the smack down on each other: Down, Up, Left, Up, X, R1, R2, L2, L1. You can even get the major beatdown from people in the crowds, whether it be a street thug, a walker, a common joe or anyone else you come across while running through the game.

For those brawler types who want to fight their way to the top, try Down, Up, Left, Up, X, R1, R2, L1, L2.

If you are more of an onlooker type, then fear not! We have a code where you can watch all the nasties fight each other. "Interesting" cannot describe the fights you will see. Press Down, Up, Left, Up, X, R1, R2, L2, L1.

2. NHL 2002



Barenaked Ladies

On the main screen, go to the Options menu. Choose the Create Player/Roster option. Choose Create a Player. Press START to continue to the next screen. Put in the first name and last name as any one of the band members: Jim Creggan, Tyler Stewart, Steven Page, Ed Robertson or Kevin Hearm. It will then ask if you would like to create a player like the one in the database. Choose "Yes" for your answer and the game will make a clone of your BNl member in hockey gear.

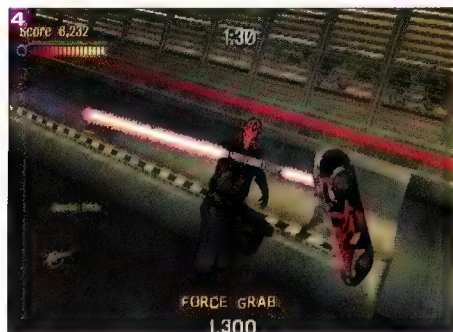
3. Batman: Vengeance



Weapons and Ammo Galore

Go to the Plant Electrocutron 2 level. You will start the stage by sliding down toward some holes in the surrounding area. Fall into the second hole and glide to avoid getting damaged. You will see a lit-up part of the zone. Glide there and pick up the item you find inside. Use the grappling hook along with the jump button to exit out of the hole. Finish sliding

Cont. on page 178

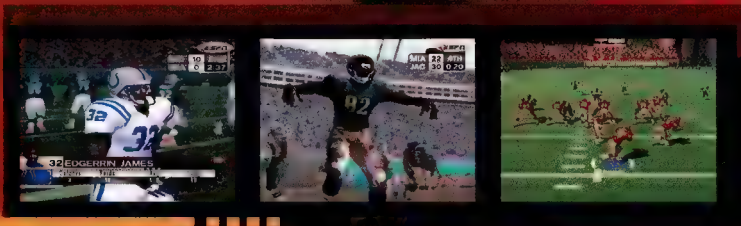


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PlayStation 2



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TRICKS

TOP 5 TRICKS (CONTINUED)

downward. The item you picked up is a key to the door on the side of the vines behind the glass. Go inside and fight the Plant-Man. You will find an envelope that has the letter "C" on it in this room. When you finish the game, you can activate this item for all weapons and infinite ammunition.

4. X-Men: Mutant Academy 2

Unlock It All

On the title screen, press SELECT, Down, R2, L1, R1, L1. You will hear a sound when the code is entered correctly. This trick will unlock everything in the game. From the main menu, choose the Cerebro option and highlight each character to see what you've unlocked. From here you can watch the outro FMV movies, see movie sketches, learn how to unlock the secret costumes, and more.

In Versus mode, you can choose the Pool Party stage to fight with the X-Men in their bathing suits.

To play as Spider-Man, go to the Character Select screen in Arcade or Versus mode, and highlight Cyclops. Press and hold L1 and you will see Spider-Man appear. Keep holding L1 and press X to choose him.

To play as Xavier (Professor X), go to the Character Select screen in Arcade or Versus mode, and highlight Magneto. Press and hold L1 and you will see Xavier appear. Hold L1 down and then press X to choose him.

5. Pac-Man Collection

Appendix Puzzle Mode

First, you must choose the Pac-Attack game. Then highlight Puzzle Mode and hold Right on the D-pad. While holding it, press A. The word "Appendix" will appear in the upper-left corner of the screen. Start a new game and you will see that the falling pieces will stay the same from level to level, making the game a little easier to play.



cont. from page 176

1 Superper Speedway Shootout.

Superspeed
Finish first in points in the Full Season.

Bonus Drivers

Every time you successfully complete Season mode, bonus drivers are unlocked. Complete Season mode eight times to unlock all drivers.

Championship FMV

Successfully complete Season mode eight times to unlock a championship video that corresponds to that number of wins.



Half-Life

AHH, ISN'T LIFE DELICIOUS

Slow motion

At the Cheats screen, input Right, Square, Up, Triangle, Right, Square, Up, Triangle.

1 Maxed Ammo

Head to the Cheats screen and press Down, X, Left, Circle, Down, X, Left, Circle.

Alternate Gravity

Get to the Cheats screen and press Up, Triangle, Down, X, Up, Triangle, Down, X.

Invincible

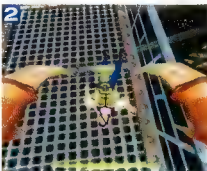
While at the Cheats screen, press Left, Square, Up, Triangle, Right, Circle, Down, X.

Invincible

Go to the Cheats screen and press Left, Square, Right, Circle, Left, Square, Right, Circle.

2 Alien Mode

Go to the Cheats screen and press Up, Triangle, Up, Triangle, Up, Triangle, Up, Triangle.



The Simpsons Road Rage

UGH, THE HOLIDAYS

Change your PS2's internal date to the following in order to unlock these secret characters:

3 New Year's Krusty

1/1/02

Thanksgiving Marge

11/22/01

Halloween Bart

10/31/02

4 Christmas Apu

12/25/01

WWF SmackDown! Just Bring It

WHOOOOOOOP IT UP

To earn these extra wrestlers you will have to choose a character who does not hold a title.

Jerry Lynn

Say that you do not want to form a tag team with Vince. Talk trash on the mic, then say that you were just messing. Let time run out in roaming. Win the battle royal, and show up on stage. Win this match and the following.

Mick Foley

Say that you do not want to form a tag team with Vince. Talk trash, then say that you want to kick his arse. Go to the parking lot to find Vince. Win the match. Show up on stage and win the match. Lose the next match at Wrestlemania. Foley will appear and make it a hell in a cell. Win the hell in a cell match.

Tajiri

Say that you do not want to form a tag team with Vince. Talk trash, then say you were messing around. To get to Regal's office, go downstairs. At the door near the vending machines look for Regal's office. Say that you do not want the Euro title match. Then in the next match, if you defeat Tajiri, you will unlock him as a playable.



Shane McMahon and Stephanie McMahon Helmsley

You will need to unlock all the SmackDown cards until there are three left: Shane, Stephanie and one other. You will unlock three to four cards each time you finish Wrestlemania or one card by defending a belt. When you are left with three cards, you will need to go through Story mode and win the WWF title at Wrestlemania. Say that you do not want to form a tag team with Vince. Trash talk on the microphone, then say you want to kick his arse. Go to the parking lot to find Vince. Win a random match, show up on stage, and win another match. Then win the final match at Wrestlemania.

OTHER WRESTLERS

Michael Cole

Meet Michael Cole in Story mode. Accept his challenge, then defeat him.

Rhyno

Tell him that you do not want to form a tag team with Vince. Run down and attack him. Then in the following match, knock out your opponent to win. Lose the next match, stay backstage, then go to Earl Heber. Tell him you are going after the Hard Core title. Defeat Rhyno to unlock him.

Spike Dudley

Accept a tag-team match. Find anyone to fight and win the match. Get your partner to find the third partner for a six-man tag. Go to the corridor where the APA office is located. Lend a hand to Spike, then win the tag-table match. Win the tag-team title match and Spike is yours.

New SmackDown Arena

Choose SlobberKnocker mode. Choose The Rock and defeat 18 wrestlers in 10 minutes or less. After doing the trick of the month, this should not be too difficult to accomplish.

cont. on page 180

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cont. from page 178



DOOM

HANDY CODES

Advance levels

Pause the game, then hold L + R and press A, B, A(2), B(2), A(2). You will advance about five levels, depending on the current level.

All weapons, items, keys

Pause the game, then hold L + R and press A, B(2), A(5).

Invisibility

Pause the game, then hold L + R and press B(3), A(5).

Advance levels

Pause the game, then hold L + R and press A, B, A(2), B(2), A(2). You will advance about five levels.

Computer map

Pause the game, then hold L + R and press B, A(7).

Radiation suit

Pause the game, then hold L + R and

press B(2), A(6).

1 God mode

Pause the game, then hold L + R and press A(2), B, A(5).

Tower Of Babel level

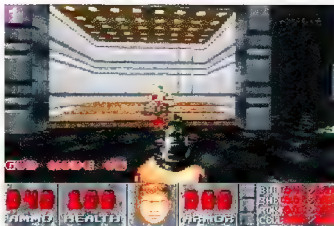
Pause the game, then hold L + R and press A, B, A, B, A, B(2), A

2 Berserk mode

Pause the game, then hold L + R and press B, A, B, A(5).

Hidden Military Base

You can find this area in the Toxic Refinery (Ep. 1, Lvl. 3). Complete the first half of the level (before entering the blue door), then go back to the starting point. Look inside the pool of waste and you should be able to see a platform (keeping in mind that you found and hit all of the switches in the first half). Walk across the platform toward the wall. It will open and you will have to defeat a series of opponents. Explore the secret area more, and you should find an exit door. Enter it and flip the switch (the stats will not appear). You will find yourself in an area called The Military Base. Hope you are up to the challenge.



GameShark Codes



Ace Combat 04

Must Be On

EC8785281438A94C

All Aircraft

1CBD844861DFB00C

4CBD844C1456E40C

Extra Paint Schemes

1CBD845061DFB00C

1CBD845061DFB00C

1CBD845461DFB00C

1CBD845861DFB00C

4CBD845C1456B00C

All Weapons

1CBD846861DFB00C

1CBD846C61DFB00C

1CBD847061DFB00C

Max Ammo A-10A

1CBD9E5014DF089C

4CBD9E521456E788

4CBD9E51456E788

4CBD9E5A1456E788

Max Ammo EF-2000

1CBD9ED014DF089C

4CBD9ED21456E788

4CBD9ED61456E788

Max Ammo F-117A

1CBD9EC014DF089C

4CBD9EC21456E788

4CBD9EC61456E788

4CBD9ECA1456E788

Max Ammo F-14A

1CBD9E4014DF089C

4CBD9E421456E788

4CBD9E461456E788

Max Ammo F-15

1CBDA14014DF089C

4CBDA1421456E788

4CBDA1461456E788

Max Ammo F-15C

1CBD9E9014DF089C

4CBD9E921456E788

4CBD9E961456E788

Max Ammo F-15E

1CBD9EB014DF089C

4CBD9EB21456E788

4CBD9EB61456E788

4CBD9EBA1456E788

Max Ammo F-16C

1CBD9E3014DF089C

4CBD9E321456E788

4CBD9E361456E788

Max Ammo F-22A

1CBD9E1014DF089C

4CBD9E121456E788

4CBD9E161456E788

Max Ammo F-4E

1CBD9F2014DF089C

4CBD9F221456E788

4CBD9E261456E788

Max Ammo F-5E

1CBD9F1014DF089C

4CBD9F121456E788

4CBD9F161456E788

Max Ammo F/A-18C

1CBD9E8014DF089C

4CBD9E821456E788

4CBD9E861456E788

4CBD9E8A1456E788

Max Ammo MIG 29A

1CBD9EA014DF089C

4CBD9EA21456E788

4CBD9EA61456E788

Max Ammo MIR-2000

1CBD9E6014DF089C

4CBD9E621456E788

4CBD9E661456E788

Max Ammo R-M01

1CBD9EE014DF089C

4CBD9EE21456E788

4CBD9EE61456E788

4CBD9EEA1456E788

Max Ammo S-37A

1CBDA13014DF089C

4CBDA1321456E788

4CBDA1361456E788

Max Ammo SU-35

1CBD9E0014DF089C

4CBD9E021456E788

4CBD9E061456E788

Max Ammo SU-37

1CBD9E2014DF089C

4CBD9E221456E788

4CBDA1261456E788

4CBDA12A1456E788

Max Ammo TND-ID5

1CBD9E7014DF089C

4CBD9E721456E788

4CBD9E761456E788

4CBD9E7A1456E788

Max Ammo X-02

1CBDA15014DF089C

4CBDA1521456E788

4CBDA1561456E788

4CBDA15A1456E788



Syphon Filter 3

Infinite Ammo (Most Weapons)

80066B6E 2400

Infinite Ammo Codes

9mm 3012D7E6 0064

Sil. 5mm 3012D7EA 0064

.45 MM 3012D7EE 0064

Falcon 3012D7F2 0064

G18 3012D7FE 0064

HK-5 3012D7FE 0064

3012D7FA 0064

PK-102 3012D802 0064

M16 3012D8060064

H11 3012D80E 0064

Mars 3012D8160064

Shotgun 3012D822 0064

UAS 12 3012D826 0064

Snip. Rifle 3012D836 0064

N.Vis. Rifle 3012D83A 0064

Crossbow 3012D852 0064

Grenade 3012D85E 0064

Gas Gren. 3012D862 0064

Unlock All Missions

8014F9C4 0013

Infinite Health (All Levels)

Do05AEFC AAAB

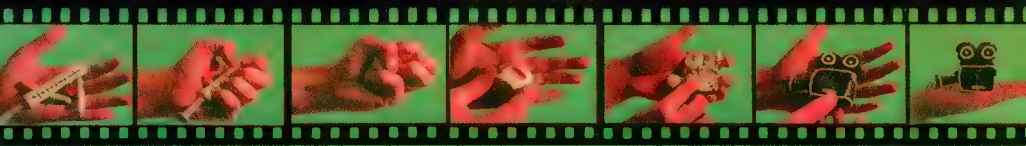
8005AEFA 0258

Do05AEFC AAAB

8005AEFG 2404

Do05AEFC AAAB

8005AEFA A4C4



clay animation

MY ANTI-DRUG.



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TRICKS

Halo's Inner Circle

By Mark MacDonald



MULTIPLAYER BOOT CAMP

Welcome to Halo's Inner Circle, where we delve into the secrets and strategy that will help you get the most out of Halo, both single- and multiplayer. If you've got a tip, game setup, or anything else Halo-related, email it to us at egm@ziffdavis.com (subject: Inner Circle), and you could see it here next month. Oh, and check out Bungie's Halo site at www.bungie.net for more great tips and tricks.



• You'll do double damage if you hit people in the head, so always aim high, except with...

• ...the rocket launcher, which you always want to aim at the ground near your target's feet.

• Try to get into the habit of tossing a grenade just before you die. You could get lucky and kill your killer, or set off the other grenades you drop.

• Power-ups are great, but don't let anyone see you grab them. Otherwise they will make

it a priority (as you should too) to kill the invisible or shielded player first.

• Jump or squat every now and then to throw off your attacker, and never stop moving. Predictability is the worst, and most common, mistake.

• When you're in a close fight, switch weapons as soon as one runs out of ammo to continue attacking with the other.

• The melee attacks are more powerful than you think— one



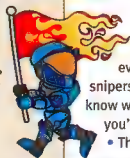
hit to the back of the head is always an instant kill, even against a guy with a full shield! Connecting from the air also results in greater damage.

OUR FAVORITE MULTIPLAYER GAMES

Team Slayer

General Tips:

- Once you choose a target, lock in until you get the kill, like a cheetah running down a gazelle. If it helps, repeat to yourself, "I am a cheetah, running down a gazelle. Grr."
- Find an area with both health and a good weapon, and make that your base. Of course you should leave for power-ups and just to mix things up now and then, but focus on one good area and you'll have a big advantage.
- Always take the higher ground. It's much harder for someone to shoot (or grenade) up at you than the other way around.



Capture the Flag

General Tips:

- Talk it up! As you see enemies, relay their positions immediately, and tell your teammates whenever you see vehicles, snipers—everything! Let them know where you are, and if you're on offense or defense.
- Think before you fire. Every opponent you kill will eventually respawn back in their base, making it harder to grab their flag. Timing is everything.
- Consider acting as a scout; set up in the middle of the field with a sniper rifle, and relay enemy positions to your team. Only attack when your team grabs the enemy flag or vice versa.

EGM's Top Slayer Maps:

- 1) **Battle Creek**—a nice average size, good power-ups, and lots of nooks and crannies (try getting on top of either fort).
- 2) **Derelect**—one big circle of death for non-stop fighting.



- 3) **Damnation**—a well-balanced, mid-size level good for teams or every man for himself.

EGM's Top CTF Maps:

- 1) **Blood Gulch**—Juuuuuust right. With or without vehicles, with anywhere from four to 10 players.



- 2) **Sidewinder**—Another favorite (try it with tanks), but it's so big games can stretch on for hours.
- 3) **Boarding Action**—Once you get an idea of the layout, this unique level makes for intense matches.

Team Oddball

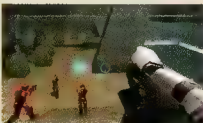
General Tips:

- Stick together. If the level has a spot with limited access in and out, have your ball carrier hide there and everyone else defend him.
- Act as a human shield for your carrier. Seconds you buy your carrier now may help him add minutes to your team's score later.
- Toss the ball at your enemy. He can't fire while holding it, giving you a few seconds before he drops it to drop him.
- If you can't get to the ball before the other team, try moving it with a rocket or grenade.



EGM's Top Oddball Maps:

- 1) **Hang 'Em High**—Almost anywhere in this huge level, you've got a shot at the guy with the ball. Use the tunnels!



- 2) **Prisoner**—One big, complicated room, perfect for small team games.
- 3) **Chiron TL34**—Complete and total chaos. You gotta love it.

PLAY ONLINE

Yes, you can do it! Here's what you'll need:

- A PC
- An ethernet hub with cables and at least three ports
- A credit card you can charge \$20 to
- A fat connection: DSL, cable modem, T1 line, etc. (A 56K modem connect to the Internet is just too slow for it to work. It sucks, we know.)

Got all that? Good. Now go to http://www.gamespyarcade.com/support/tunnel_xbox.shtml for software and instructions on how to get it running. Note: This network is neither endorsed nor supported by Microsoft. The software is also a bit buggy, but if



you're patient the payoff of unlimited Halo opponents is definitely worth it. Practice up and watch this space next month for a chance to play against the EGM editors.



Dracula X Original Soundtrack
KICA7760



Final Fantasy IX OST (4 CD set)
SSCX10043



Final Fantasy VIII OST (4 CD set)
SSCX10028



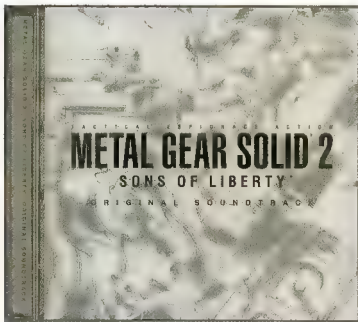
Final Fantasy VII OST (4 CD set)
SSCX10004



Final Fantasy VI OST (3 CD set)
(Final Fantasy III in US)
PSCN5011



Silent Hill 2 OST
KMCA120



METAL GEAR SOLID 2
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ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK
KMCA127



Sonic Adventure 2 OST
MJC80075



Chrono Cross OST (3 CD set)
SSCX10040



Yuna (FFX) Limited Edition
1/6 scale Soft Vinyl Figure



Chrono Trigger OST
PSCN5021

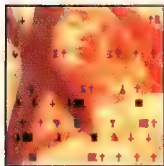
FINAL FANTASY X
Original Soundtrack
(4 CD set)
SSCX10054



FINAL FANTASY X
Original Soundtrack
Produced by Nobuo Uematsu
Music by Tsutomu Salazar, Masashi Hamauzu
And Takahashi Yoko



Final Fantasy VII Original
Soundtrack Piano Solo Arrangement
(DORE2698)

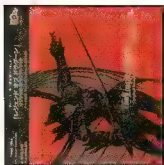


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TRICKS

Halo's Inner Circle cont.

SINGLE-PLAYER TIPS

Vehicles:

- Flip turrets and Banshees over with grenades to keep the aliens from taking them. Then if you want to use them yourself, just flip 'em back over and jump in.
- Run your enemies down! If you do so much as touch them (even with a tank turret or wing of a Banshee) they will die instantly.



Juggling Weapons:

Want the sniper rifle and the pistol, but can't bear to give up the rocket launcher? Don't! Juggle all three instead. Anytime you want to "carry" three weapons, just hold down the X button and move near top speed in the direction you want to go. You'll keep tossing the third weapon ahead of you.



Using Your Marines:

- Your Marines may seem like more of an annoyance than a help (especially on Legendary difficulty), but trust us, they come in handy. Attack the same enemies they do instead of choosing your own targets for quicker kills and to increase the odds of your Marines surviving the fight.
- If you have a Marine gunner in your Warthog, park it in a defensive position close to the enemy and get out on foot. While your buddy blasts 'em with the chaingun, sneak around the side and flank your enemies.
- Marine has a sniper rifle and you need ammo? Pop 'em in the head and take his. As long as you don't go nuts, killing one or two Marines here and there won't cause a mutiny. Sometimes you can pick up a few grenades as well. Don't worry, we won't tell anyone.



AND DID YOU TRY...

- Swimming out into the ocean in *The Silent Cartographer*.
- Blasting the ocean with a charged plasma pistol or grenade?
- Shooting Captain Keyes at the start of the first mission?
- Shooting 343 Guilty Spark?
- Finishing the game on Legendary difficulty (for a slightly different ending)?



BREAKING THE COVENANT

The best ways to swat those files during your bug hunt:

Grunts:

Almost anything will take out these wusses quick, but the pistol is especially effective. Or if you can attach a plasma grenade to one of a group of Grunts, there's a good chance it will panic and share the eventual explosion with its neighbors.

Elites:

Concentrate on killing these guys first. Sometimes when they die the accompanying troop of grunts will run away in a panic. And don't forget Elites have shields just like yours. Try an over-charged plasma pistol blast to take out their shields, then follow up with a few quick shots from your secondary weapon.

Jacksals:

Aim for the small notch on the sides of their shields to knock them off-balance, then follow up with a few body shots until they go down. (The pistol works perfectly for this.) Otherwise use the same strategy we talked about for the Elite's shields.

Hunters:

These guys seem tough, but one well-placed pistol shot in the back will take them down. (Aim for the brownish patch of skin.)

If you can't get behind them, try this: "circle strafe" close to them, moving around them but always looking at the Hunter. It will circle also, in some strange sort of polka dance or mating ritual. Spoil the mood by shooting the Hunter in the head until it falls or charges at you.



Maggots (Flood):

In small numbers, they're no problem—save your ammo and just let your shields absorb them three or four at a time. In groups, though, you'll want to fire bursts with the assault rifle or either of the plasma weapons. Try to hit 'em when they're close together in groups to cause a chain reaction.

Bomb guys (Flood):

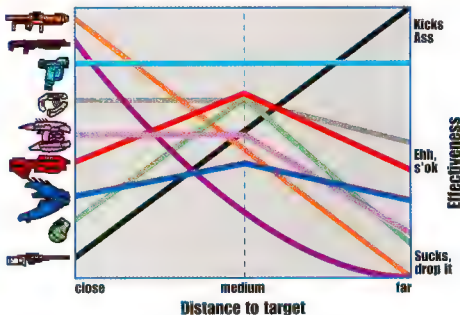
A mid-range shotgun blast will set these guys off almost immediately; try to hit them when they're around other Flood to use their explosive tendencies to your advantage. But do not grenade them. It will just throw them through the air (often toward you).

Main guys (Flood):

Two words: the shotgun. Dodge these freaks when they charge or jump and then force-feed them buckshot. Don't bother with the melee attack or sniper rifle against them.

GUNS AT A GLANCE

Since you can only hold two weapons, you need to know which to keep and which to throw away. Here's a handy chart detailing how we feel about the weapons at different distances:



Enemies have a lock on your tail,
 you barrel roll at mach 2 and let 'em have it...
ARE YOU READY FOR THIS KIND OF ACTION?



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TRICKS

METAL GEAR SOLID 2

MGS2 came out a while ago, but we're still finding secrets and other interesting oddities throughout the game. Here, we detail some of them, but there's still plenty more out there. So if you find something we didn't, email us at egm@ziffdavis.com (subject: MGSecrets). Maybe we'll include it next month. Now get crackin'!

CODEC MOMENTS:

Try checking in on everybody via the Codec at every opportunity for some funny dialogue. Here's a few to get you started:

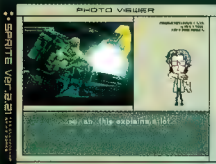
- Look at the toilet in the women's bathroom (on Strut C) and contact the Colonel. Then kneel down, look into the bowl in first-person mode, and call him again.
- Equip the cardboard box and call Snake for a hilarious glimpse at his box obsession.

THE TANKER CHAPTER: TRY THIS

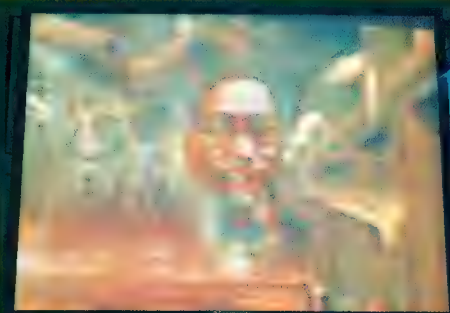
CAMERA PICTURES:

Take these shots and upload them to Otacon for some bizarre reactions. Try sending him any other interesting stuff you find too.

- The Vulcan Raven doll. Also try shooting it for a funny surprise.



- Olga lying unconscious.
- Commander Scott Dolph.
- Girlie picture on the wall in the engine room (there's a guard

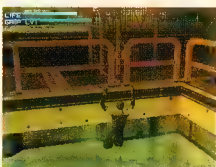


- near the middle of the room looking at it). Then try shooting it.
- The Marine wearing a kilt in the first hold.

- The right screen in Hold No. 2. Eaight! Hideo Kojima! He's watching you—and he heard what you said about the "dumb ending"!

THE PLANT CHAPTER: TRY THIS

Near the start:



- Get the razor in the first room by flipping over the railing by the water and climbing back up on the other side of the cage to the right. Then keep your eyes on Solid Snake's beard later on.
- Also in the first room, grab a ration from the locker and then crawl around in the bugs near the left wall. Check your rations—the bugs are there! Shake 'em off by moving your items up and down fast.
- Enter Hideo Kojima or Yoji Shinkawa at the name entry screen to see their birthdays and blood types.

After Meeting Solid Snake:



- Point your gun at Snake while he's dozing. Then shoot him.
- Keeping calling Snake with the Codec as he tries to sleep and hear what he's dreaming about...

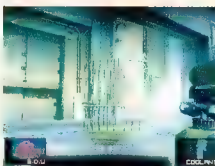
After Meeting Stillman:

- Once the cinema where you meet the bomb-disposal expert is over, run to the C-D connecting bridge to see Snake moving in his special disguise. Shoot him just for kicks.
- Keep knocking on the room where Stillman hides, and you'll start to really annoy him.
- Talk to Snake on the Codec over and over to eventually dis-

cover a whole lot more about Vamp's sexuality than you ever wanted to know.

- Equip any cardboard box and get on the conveyor belt in Strut E to quickly warp to different parts of the Big Shell.

Near the Hostage Room:



- Try using the coolant on the parrot in the computer room where you get the directional mic. Then try shooting it.
- Watch all the guards in the same room as the parrot; one goes back and forth looking at girlie pictures.
- The computer room also has an Easter Island head under one

of the desks. Can you find the others hidden throughout the game? There are at least three...

- Walk in front of all the hostages—some of them will trip you! How's that for gratitude?
- Ask the old lady to the far left corner if she is Ames—she will pee her pants.



- The only woman in the room who isn't old has her legs spread; she'll close them if you try to look. Of course, you could always shoot her with a tranq dart...(hey, we didn't make the game).
- Beat up hostages and prepare to get chewed out.
- Point the mic to the left when the scene with Ocelot and Solidus begins. It's Johnny

WATCH

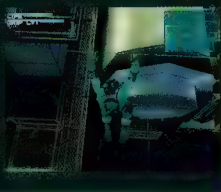
By Mark MacDonald



Here's a whole mess of other oddities you may have missed:

- Push R1 and L1 while any character is talking to you in the codec for some funny responses. Also try R2 and L2, or pushing the buttons harder and softer.
- Shoot Olga in the head after you defeat her to hear Otacon freak out.
- Keep hitting the switch next to the slide projectors in Hold No. 2 with the triangle button for a little peep show.
- Continually save with Otacon until he runs out of old Chinese proverbs. (Make sure you do it at different parts of the level.)
- Finally, Mei Ling from MGS1 will get tired of hearing him screw up and set him straight—you only hear her voice, though.

- If you fall and catch yourself on a railing, it counts as 10 pull-ups toward raising your grip strength. For some dumb reason, though, the game doesn't remember your grip strength when you save. Argh!
- There's a wire in the Engine room: It's over the rail to the right as you enter the room. Use it as a shortcut, but only if your grip strength is level 2 or higher. Oh, and try doing 300 pull-ups.



Sazaki, the guard with diarrhea from MGS1! Sounds like he's still eating those prune burritos....

After the harrier:

- Avoid being seen by guards in the windows and one will pee on you. Codec the Colonel for his and Rose's sympathies.

After Meeting Emma:

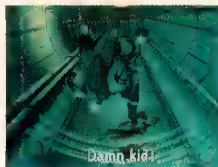
- Call Snake a few times back in the room where you fought Vamp. Otacon and E.E. will get into a huge argument.
- Knock E.E. out and listen to what she says. Crawl on top of her for fun.

During the Sniping Section:

- Use the mic on Emma while she's behind the first oil strut. She thinks you're wearing a wig! Confront her via the Codec. Listen while she's behind the second strut for more Johnny Sazaki fun. Also try eavesdropping on Snake with the mic to see what he thinks of Emma.
- Shoot Snake.

The Final Section:

- In the first room after you get off the torture rack, let a guard spot you. Now run back to the torture room and lean your back against the rack.



- Once you get the sword, try attacking Snake with it.



Otacon says: "That's all folks! Check back next month."

IMPORT MGS2'S EXTRA MODES:

The Japanese version of MGS2 may have come out a month after ours, but Konami packed in a few cool extras we didn't get. Check it out:



(top) MGS2 Snake takes MGS1 Snake hostage while Raiden looks on. And an old lady slices up MGS1's Ocelot.

Casting Theater:

Watch any of a handful of cinemas over again, only this time you can swap in and out different characters. Have Ocelot rescue Snake from Vamp and Raiden face Olga on the tanker. You can even use the old MGS1 models of Snake and Ocelot as actors. Cool!



Boss Survival:

Thought MGS2's bosses were pretty easy? Actually, so did we. But try this new mode: You fight all the bosses in a row, without all those rations to fall back on. See if you can beat your best time.

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FINAL WORD

New Year's Resolutions, EGM-Style

Shoe: For 2002, I promise to cut Halo-playing time by half when we're on deadline. Second, I promise to actually finish any RPGs that I start...this time, within the same year. Third, I promise to continue my winning streak in fighting games against Dudlak; I won't stop until he owes me \$100 in bets on our matches.

Jon: It's been a lackluster year, so I resolve to take back all the resolutions I made last year. That means I'm going to stop letting you win at Street Fighter, Shoe, just 'cause you're the boss. Sewart, I'm gonna need to start taking your lunch money again. Crispin, since I resolved to be a better roommate last year, I guess that means you're in for a rough year. I apologize in advance.

Mark: I promise to double the amount of Halo we play here, especially on deadline, when its *Deep Heating* action is needed most in our stress-filled Q-zones. I also vow to finally play Final Fantasy Tactics, and stop touching myself in my Q-zone.

Dean: My goal for the new year is to get Shoe interested in sports sims—specifically EA's NCAA Football. That way, we (Team EGM) won't have to sneak around when it comes time for the office tourney. Beyond that, I hope to avoid the RPG genre for a third consecutive year, and hug my fellow EGMers at least once a day.

Greg: I hope to keep Shoe from getting interested in sports sims—'cept NASCAR and hockey. That way, he'll like me more than Dean. I also plan to continue bombarding this staff with Canadian references and humor until the day I get deported.

Milk: I promise to swear less in the office. I feel it's time for one of my co-workers to do his @%#\$*ing share. I also resolve to have daily kickboxing sessions with Che, and to buy a new motorcycle and park it in my cube. Lastly, I swear to educate the average consumer on bogus terms

like "Gamebox," "Xcube," "PlayStation Advance" and "Nintendo tapes."

Jeanne: After some "polite" nudging from the boss, my New Year's Resolutions are to cut down on all the raunchy jokes, swearing and oral flatulence, all of which I've discovered has made my name in the office synonymous with "report to HR." Besides those, I pledge to finally win FFVIII (even though VII and IX rock on it), and continue to open up a new can of worms every time I open my big mouth....

Chris: My New Year's Resolution is to stop playing Pokémon and Dance Dance Revolution so much. It's wrong to focus on just two games when so many more out there are just as good. That is, of course, until Nintendo and Konami team up and make Pika Pika Revolution, a lethal hybrid of Pokémon and DDR. Curse them all!

Che: My one goal in 2002 is to master every nuance of Nightmare in Soul Calibur 2 and dominate our offices (West Coast and Chicago) like I did back in 1999. Plus, I vow not to smile in the new year.

Kraig: This year I promise to stop abandoning the running game even when I'm losing to Dan Leahy in Madden. Patience is a virtue, of course. And come to think of it, running the ball makes the clock run more. So if I run the ball more, that means I have more time for Halo and hangin' out at the mall. This may be my best resolution yet.

Crispin: I promise not to become obnoxiously loud and surly when I get frustrated playing my game tapes. I learned that lesson the hard way: Ever since I kicked the Nintendo off the top of the TV last week, Mom says I can't have friends sleep over anymore. Oh, gotta go—Al's on! (Actually, this is Crispin's resolution from 1987.)

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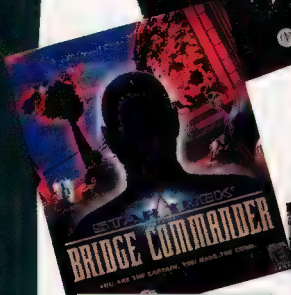
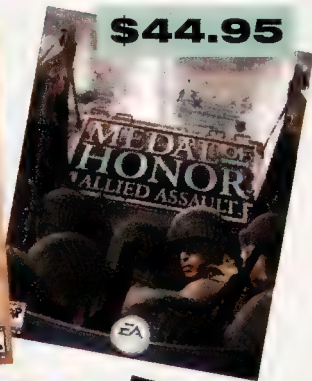
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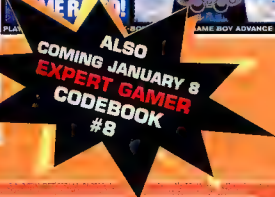
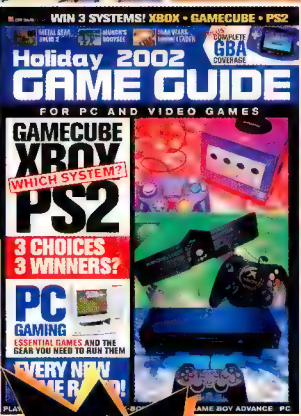
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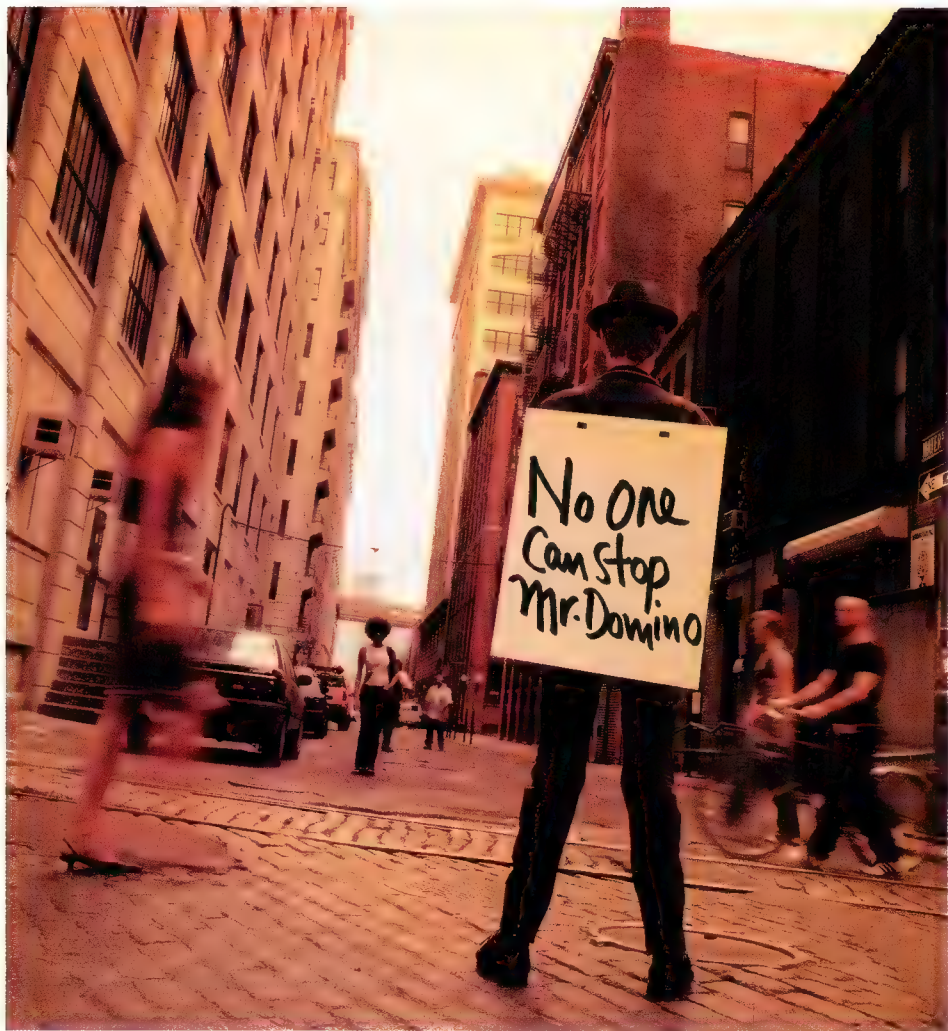


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Advertiser Index

| | |
|--|---|
| Acclaim Entertainment | 27, 82, 127, 131 |
| www.acclaim.com | |
| Activision | 16-17, 155 |
| www.activision.com | |
| Best Buy | 59 |
| www.samgoody.com | |
| Buena Vista Films | 91 |
| www.buenvistaentertainment.com | |
| Capcom | 70-71, 196 |
| www.capcom.com | |
| Chips & Bits | 189 |
| www.cdmag.com/chips | |
| Columbia House | 98a-b |
| www.columbiahouse.com | |
| DC Shoes | 53 |
| www.dcshoes.com | |
| Ecko Unlimited | 32-33 |
| www.ECKOUNLIMITED.com | |
| Eidos Interactive | 24-25, 84-85, 125 |
| www.eidos.com | |
| Electronic Arts | 4-5, 46-47 |
| www.ea.com | |
| Electronics Boutique | 62-63, 80-81, 122a-123 |
| www.ebgames.com | |
| Electronics Boutique/EBWorld | 161 |
| www.ebgames.com | |
| Encore Software | 163 |
| www.encoresoftware.com | |
| Full Sail Real World Education | 187 |
| www.fullsail.com | |
| Game Music Online | 183 |
| www.gamemusiconline.com | |
| GameSpot | 191 |
| www.gamespot.com | |
| Infogrames | 13, 93, 173 |
| www.infogrames.net | |
| Interplay | 110-111, 171 |
| www.interplay.com | |
| Koel | 129, 157 |
| www.koelgames.com | |
| Konami of America | 68-69, 101, 103, 121, 149, 177 |
| www.konami.com | |
| LucasArts Entertainment Company | 20-21, 43, 165 |
| www.konami.com | |
| Microsoft Corporation | 6-7, 29, 61, 95, 133, 167, 169 |
| www.Xbox.com | |
| Midway Home Entertainment | 109, 145 |
| www.midway.com | |
| Midway - San Diego | 67 |
| www.midway.com | |
| Namco | 50a-h, 153, 175 |
| www.namco.com | |
| Natsume | 139 |
| www.natsume.com | |
| Nintendo of America Inc. | 77 |
| www.nintendo.com | |
| Office for National Drug Control Policy | 181 |
| www.whatsyourantidrug.com | |
| Radica | 15 |
| www.radicagames.com | |
| Sega of America | 8-9, 74-75, 105, 143, 147, 159 |
| www.sega.com | |
| Sony Computer Entertainment of America | 10-11, 30-31, 48-49, 55-57, 65, 73, 78-79, 89, 96-97, 194-195 |
| www.scea.com | |
| Square Electronic Arts | 34-35 |
| www.squaresoft.com | |
| Take Two Interactive | 18-19 |
| www.rockstargames.com | |
| Tecmo | 112-113 |
| www.tecmoinc.com | |
| The SciFi Channel | 45 |
| www.scifi.com/bsrangers | |
| THQ | 2-3, 141 |
| www.thq.com | |
| Titus Software Corporation | 185 |
| www.titusgames.com | |
| Ubi Soft Entertainment | 107 |
| www.ubisoft.com | |
| US Army Command Headquarters | 23 |
| www.goarmy.com | |
| Yivendi Universal - Sierra On-Line | 40-41 |
| www.sierra.com | |
| Working Designs | 179 |
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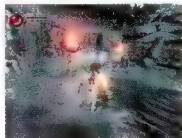
NEXT MONTH

March 2002 (Issue #152)

On sale Feb. 6

Maximo Exposure

Next month, *EGM* heads to Capcom for the scoop on their latest 3D adventure, *Maximo*. Find out if this homage to classic 2D platformers is the first great game of 2002. We also take you to the one school where you'd never want to cut class: Nintendo's DigiPen, a university where students learn the art of game design. Class begins in 30 days.



ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY

Reviewed Next Month:

- **State of Emergency** (PS2)
- **Sonic Adventure 2 Battle** (GC)
- **Sonic Advance** (GBA)
- **Wreckless** (Xbox)

Previewed Next Month:

- **NBA Street** (GC)
- **Animal Forest+** (GC)
- **Jet Set Radio Future** (Xbox)
- **Sega GT 2002** (Xbox)
- **WWF Raw Is War** (Xbox)
- **Test Drive** (PS2, Xbox)
- **Dragon Ball Z** (GBA)
- **Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3** (GBA)

All editorial content is subject to change.

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE

Feb. 2002 Final Fantasy X

On sale Jan. 16
Demo Disc
PS2 Videos

- **Batman: Vengeance**
- **Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3**
- **PS2 Playables**
- **Okage: Shadow King**
- **Dynasty Warriors 3**
- **SSX Tricky**
- **Final Fantasy X**

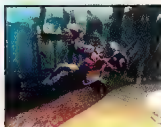
Celebrating what is bound to be one of the biggest games of 2002, *Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine* gives *Final Fantasy X* the "big fat review" treatment. Also featured: *State of Emergency*, *Harry Potter* and *Star Wars: Racer II*. Don't miss this issue!



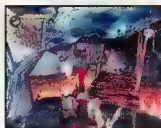
GAMENOW

Feb. 2002 On sale Jan. 23

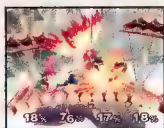
- **Jak and Daxter**
- **Maximo**
- **007: Agent Under Fire**
- **FFX Strategy and Tips**
- **Handheld Coverage**



Jak and Daxter



Maximo



Super Smash Bros. Melee

In their February issue, *GameNOW* takes an extensive look at *Super Smash Bros. Melee*. They'll break down character moves, secrets and provide a comprehensive review. The other top review of the month will be *Metal Gear Solid 2*. If you're stuck, or are curious to see what they thought of the wild plot twists, this guide is the place to look.

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

Feb. 2002 Medal of Honor: Allied Assault



Reviews

- **Dark Age of Camelot**
 - **Alien vs. Predator 2**
 - **Stronghold**
 - **Myth III: The Wolf Age**
 - **Empire Earth**
- #### Previews
- **Warlords: Battlecry II**
 - **NASCAR Racing 5**
 - **Freedom Force**

Medal of Honor: Allied Assault blew away everyone who saw it at E3, and now it's your turn. *CGW* has an exclusive hands-on look at EA's stunning World War II-era shooter, and even better, they have the world-exclusive demo so you can play it yourself. Also in this issue, *CGW* inducts two classic games and one legendary developer into the hallowed *CGW* Hall of Fame.

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