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PS2, CUBE:
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PlayStation 2 • Xbox • GameCube • Dreamcast • PS one • Game Boy Advance

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ABOUT THIS BAD BOY

KUNG-POWEY PREVIEWS!

- TEKKEN 4 (PS2)
- BLOODY ROAR (GC)
- VIRTUA FIGHTER 4 (PS2)
- WWF RAW IS WAR (XBOX)
- X-MEN: NEXT DIMENSION (PS2)

THE #1
VIDEO
GAMES
MAGAZINE

ZIFF DAVIS Atlanta Issue 152

March 2002 \$4.99/\$6.50 Canada

03>



EGM.GAMERS.COM



REVIEWED:

- NBA 2K2 (PS2)
- Sonic Adventure 2 (GC)
- Genma Onimusha (Xbox)
- Super Mario World (GBA)



PREVIEWED:

- Star Fox Adv. (GC)
- Tony Hawk 3 (Xbox)
- The Terminator (PS2)
- Star Wars: Racer Revenge (PS2)

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PEOPLE FILL THE SCREEN - EACH CITIZEN
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PlayStation 2



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Some shots taken from PlayStation 2
computer entertainment system game play.



BRUTAL BEYOND BELIEF.



Game Directory

Features

Departments

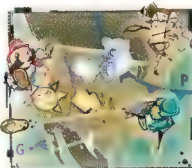
- 135 Airblade
87 All-Star Baseball 2003
88 Animal Forest
73 Barbarian
142 Blood Wake
90 Bloody Roar: Primal Fury
146 Columns Crown
144 Digimon Rumble Arena
76 Ecco the Dolphin
139 ESPN International Winter Sports 2002
139 ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding 2002
94 Evolution Worlds
86 Fatal Frame
86 Freakstyle
141 Genma Onimusha
96 Gun Valkyrie
76 Headhunter
135 High Heat Baseball 2003
87 Hitman 2: Silent Assassin
66 Hot Shots Golf 3
102-103 Jet Set Radio Future
103 Jonny Moseley Mad Trix
108 Knockout Kings 2002
112 Lunar Legend
138 March Madness 2002
136 Maximo
146 Mortal Kombat Advance
138 MotoGP 2
138 NBA 2K2
140 NBA Courtside
108 NBA Inside Drive 2002
94 NBA Street
108 New Legends
144 NFL 2K2
141 NFL Quarterback Club 2002
144 Nightcaster
110 Pro Race Driver
146 Puyo Pop
106 RalliSport Challenge
112 Robotech
141 Simpsons: Road Rage, The Sled Storm 2
87 Smash Court Tennis
139 Smashing Drive
94 Soccer Slam
146 Sonic The Hedgehog Adventure
139 Sonic Adventure 2: Battle
90 Star Fox Adventures
64 Star Wars Racer Revenge
82 Stuntman
145 Super Mario World: Super Mario Advance 2
74 Tekken 4
74 Terminator, The
106 Test Drive
110 Thing, The
82 TimeSplitters 2
106,112 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3
82 Triple Play 2002
141 Universal Studios Theme Park Adventure
76 Virtua Fighter 4
73 V-Rally 3
104 WWF Raw Is War
86 X-Men: Next Dimension



Start practicing your combos and taping your fingers because *Tekken 4* and *Virtua Fighter 4* headline our first look at the next generation of fighting games. Turn to **page 74** and let the fist-de-cuffs begin.



All right, so they don't have a football team (or a cheerleading squad), but some DigiPen grads could render them. Get an inside look at the tough university that teaches how to make games on **page 124**.



To hell with the weather. Tune to our fearless **2002 Forecast** on **page 34** and find out which console's skies look brightest.



See if Sega's *NBA 2K2* scores big on the PlayStation 2, and if Capcom's *Genma Onimusha* is worth the wait on **page 141**.

Remember a certain side-scrolling horror game by the name of *Ghosts 'N Goblins*? Well, if not, let **Maximo** refresh your memory. On **page 126** we take a gander at the story behind the game, and how Capcom entrusted their first American studio to rejuvenate the classic franchise. And finally, our review on **page 136** will show if their faith was well-founded.

14 Editorial

22 Letters

34 Press Start

Think you know everything about raising hell in *Grand Theft Auto III*? You don't. Learn all of the game's dirty secrets in *Afterthoughts*. Also: Find out if fresher games are better, plus the skinny on a GameCube that plays DVDs.

50 Gossip



63 Previews

Get ready for the spring sports-game invasion! *Hot Shots Golf*, *All-Star Baseball 2003* and *Triple Play 2002* lead the way on PS2, while extreme fare such as *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3* makes its skinny on the Xbox and Game Boy Advance.

134 Review Crew

Sonic has found a new home on the GameCube, but can the spikiest blue wonder still work his magic on a Nintendo box? Also: See if a bizarre GameCube title based on Universal Studios can save you the trouble of seeing the theme park in person.

148 Tricks

This month, your handy cheating headquarters comes stocked with never-before-seen cheats for *Halo*, *Super Smash Bros. Melee* and *Metal Gear Solid 2*. Also, check out the codes for four new Xbox games.

154 The Final Word



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.

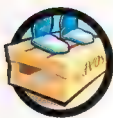


Your office is a 20,000 seat arena, your salary has a whole lot of zeros, and "Who stole my stapler?" is "Who's picking up Vince on D?" You wanted real, you got real. Build an all-NBA team during the draft. Check your team's actual NBA playbook, and call those plays with real-time coaching. And details? You can count the players' cornrows. Have your secretary take a memo — this rules.

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It's a living.



By Dan "Shoe" Hsu • shoe@ziffdavis.com



EDITORIAL

The N Factor

Because we aren't afraid to take a stand (everything from our monthly reviews to issue #149's Xbox vs. GameCube verdict), we inevitably get flak from readers who think their opinions are the only ones that are "correct." That goes with the territory; if we're not like it is, we're gonna have to hear that vocal minority tell us what it should be instead. But when people accuse us of being biased against Nintendo because we cover their products so lightly, that's when I have to step in and enlighten everyone. Observe this typical dialogue:

EGM: We need screenshots of your new and exciting games, please.
Nintendo: We're working on it.

EGM: We need playable versions of your new and exciting games to preview and review. Please.
Nintendo: We're working on it.

EGM: We need a debug system. You know, the special machine that lets us play early GC games, including those from third parties, so we can preview and review their games and yours? Please!?

Nintendo: We're working on it.

(Note: "We're working on it" = "You're not getting squat.")

So if you see late or little GameCube coverage from us, you now know why. Mario and Co. just ain't giving up the goods. Even GameCube game makers like Electronic Arts are peeved at Nintendo about this whole mess, since the big N hasn't given us, the press, a way to play any preview or review GC discs.

Why are they stalling us? The Japanese parent company is so protective of its assets, they're willing to hide almost everything from the press in exchange for the warm, fuzzy feeling that their unfinished products are not being judged by the public. Needless to say, this is frustrating for us because we can't cover these great GC titles that we're excited to play and you're keen to read about. We've even sent a joint industry letter (along with our friends at a half-dozen competing magazines and Web sites) to Nintendo, complaining about the situation. (The reaction to the letter? "We're working on it.") But while we're waiting for old man Nintendo of Japan to ease up on his stinginess, we'll make the best of things and continue to provide the best GameCube (and other console) coverage possible. **Shoe**

Contributing Writers



Shane Bettenhausen

EGM recruited Shane yet again this month for his previewing and reviewing expertise. Now if only he'd lay off the boozing and womanizing, and make gaming his focus...



Peter Lenok

On his second issue with EGM as a contributing freelancer, Peter's enthusiasm for our Tricks section has us convinced he's definitely one of us gaming geeks.



David Kushner

A writer for *Killing Storm* and the *New York Times*, David covered DigiPen, the Nintendo-funded institute where playing games is considered homework.



Christian Nutt

Christian's found enough time to hop on the EGM boat again this issue, despite all his work on the *Pikmin* and *Crash Bandicoot* (GBA) games for Pocket Games.



Gary Mokohango

In addition to EGM, Gary regularly contributes to *GameNow!*, *Pocket Games* and *Better Homes and Gardens*. (OK, he doesn't really contribute to *Pocket Games*.)



John Ricciardi

John has been writing for video games for the better part of the last decade. He now lives in Japan, where he works as EGM's International Editor.



Eat My Shorts!

Look around this issue for quotes from *The Simpsons* or a famous movie. Find one, e-mail it (and your mailing address) to us at EGM@ziffdavis.com (Subject: *Eat My Shorts—EGM #152*), and you may be one of five lucky winners (chosen at random) who will win a copy of this month's *Game of the Month*.

- Some quotes from the issue #152:
- "If you're not a cog, you're little people." (*Blade Runner*, pg. 90)
 - "Meet exotic treasures from Lush new worlds...and kill them." (*Vul Metal Jaker*, pg. 134, OK, so this is a full loose reference, but we'll give you credit for it.)
 - "Come with us if you want to live." (*The Terminator 1 of 2*, pg. 114)

- Issue #150's winners of *Halo* (Xbox):
- Seth Miller—Akron, OH
 - Carl Stargel—Orlando, FL
 - Cyrus Youness—Beverly Hills, CA
 - Kyle Yusev—Streamwood, IL
 - Jason Massengale—Dacluta, GA



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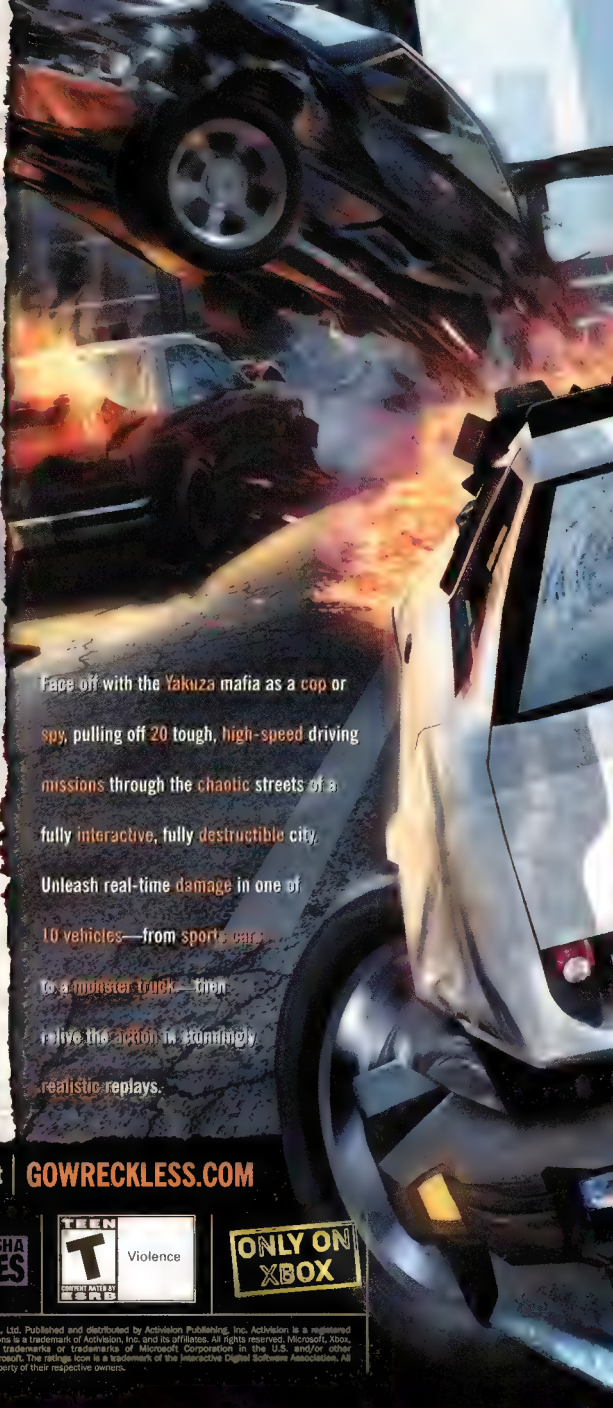
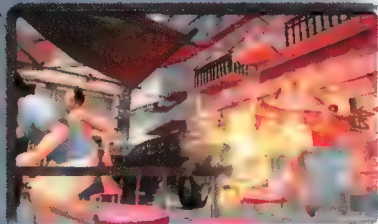
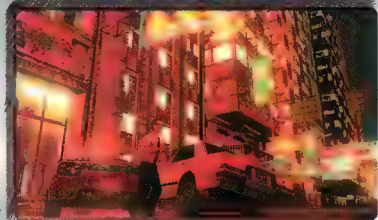
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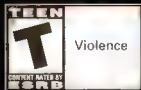
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The Yakuza Missions

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— OFFICIAL XBOX MAGAZINE (JANUARY 2002)



Someone call the janitor, the hardwood is about to get messy. Kick your game into high gear with 18 one-touch player controls including pump fakes, screens, auto defend, signature dribbles and moves. Run with the team of your choice or create your own player and see how you match up against the NBA's best. Oh, and tell that guy to bring a buffer and some extra wax, rubber doesn't come up easy.





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"...the team behind the wheel is Reflections, the folks who brought you the addictive and challenging Drive, so you can count on it being full of huge crashes, out of control power slides, and deadly near misses. Sounds like a recipe for some awesome vehicular carnage." IGN.com



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PlayStation 2

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- Christmas cards from readers: **23**
- Boxing Day cards from readers: **0** (Take THAT, Sewart!)
- Messages in bottles: **1**
- Letters in alphabet: **26**

Letters to the Editors

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Dialup Letdown

Phantasy Star Online has had a rather profound effect on my life. I was playing over the network several months ago when I met this girl named Rinoa in the lobby. We played together for a week or so when I realized I started to have feelings for her, so I tried to play with her as much as possible. I worked up the nerve to tell her how I felt (by the way, she's 27 and I'm 15, so it wasn't easy), and to my amazement, she felt the same way as I did!

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



After that, I was with her all the time online, but I had a little problem. Before I met Rinoa, I had this little "almost" relationship with Dark Crystal (that was her character name, anyway). I didn't want to hurt her feelings or anything, so I sorta kept it going with her on the side. Things were great until Crystal wanted to meet Rinoa! We all got into a game together, but I had to duck out for a bit, and while I was gone, Crystal told Rinoa we were still together!

Rinoa was furious, and it took me several days to smooth things over.

Then Rinoa met this other guy online while I was on vacation. I can't stand him, naturally. Well, my DC broke shortly thereafter and I was off for like a month. It was really depressing. Rinoa doesn't talk to me anymore, so I've kind of given up on her, but my friend is going through the exact same thing right now with his girl. Hopefully he'll have better luck with online love than me. Do you guys ever have problems like these?

Drew McGill
Sacramento, CA

Actually, West Coast Editor Che Chou ran into some trouble with a younger woman; it wasn't over the Internet, though. He still swears the girl said she was 18....

Too bad things didn't work out for you (unless of course she was really some old fat dude posing as a chick), but you were reaching into a cookie jar full of cyanide-laced hypodermic needles in trying to juggle two cyber-dates at once. We need the *Brady*

Bunch to make an Internet-related version of that one episode where Peter has to be on two dates at once to help us out of pickles like these. Until then, ponder this: She was at her first junior high dance while you were still a fetus. It wouldn't have worked out between you two.

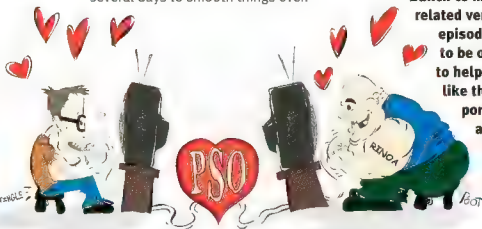


Illustration by Shawn Smith

Dreams Cast For Less

I'm a 14-year-old gaming fanatic and don't have a lot of income to spend on games. So this Christmas, instead of an Xbox, PS2 or GameCube, I received my very own Dreamcast. Now, some might have been disappointed, but I see a huge opportunity in my new console. I got three sports titles and *Crazy Taxi* with the system for Christmas, and then I found *Sonic Adventure* and *Soul*

Calibur brand new for next to nothing at the store. For about the price of a GBA, I got a ton of stuff for a really cool system and had my best gaming Christmas ever.

BikeOtaku@aol.com

Way to buck the hype, man. It's true, we get a little spoiled with all the shiny new games and consoles on the market. The DC is barely two years old and still has lots of great games that people may have missed

SHORTS

Letters for the impatient
You guys like AC/DC?

waco_kid34
@hotmail.com

DO we??? Is there anything else to jam when you're cruisin' in the EGM IROC?

in the fever of new console launches. Better snatch up as many games as you can before they disappear from store shelves, though. Remember what happened with the Saturn.

John of All Trades

I have a bunch of questions for you guys. First, is there a service to replace batteries in older games, particularly Nintendo and Super Nintendo games? Also, while I have tremendous respect for you guys and for your top 100 list, I would have to say that *R-Type III* is so much better than *R-Type Delta*. Not that *Delta* is a bad game, it's just the level design seemed a lot better in *III*. And finally, when I beat *Guilty Gear X*, I saw the name of John Ricciardi float across my screen. He was credited as their text editor. Is that THE John Ricciardi?

docbrown@cinci.rr.com

Awright, the easy stuff first. Yep, that's THE John Ricciardi, international man of English translation. Apart from working for EGM, he does some localization work out there in Tokyo to help fund his lifestyle in the most expensive city on Earth. Second, while we respect your opinion on *R-Type III*, please don't ever say that again. It makes Mark MacDonald cry.

As far as refitting batteries to your old games, it's something that you can actually do yourself without much hassle. We're putting together a small feature on that very subject as we speak, so if your games can hold out a little longer, look for it in one of the next few issues.

Double Coverage

I find it unfair that you gave *Final Fantasy X* all that space in the magazine and on the cover last issue (#151), but *Super Smash Bros. Melee* was the game of the month in the Reviews section. It should have gotten more space on the cover than *Final Fantasy X*. Why didn't it?

grahamgoff@hotmail.com

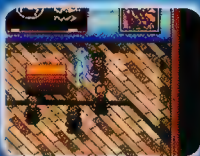
Well, we're just biased, we guess. It's as simple as that. No, actually, we often plan our covers way in advance of when we get the featured game in

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LETTERS

MORE SHORTS

What happened to Seanbaby? Did he get fired? Brenty989@aol.com

No, Brent, Seanbaby lives in a far-off land that is inaccessible to mere mortals like ourselves. Once in a while, he casts us a piece of writing and we put it in the mag, but he's not a regular staff member. You'll probably be hearing from him again in the very near future, though.

What's with all the v's where there should be u's in your *Circus Maximus* preview? SublimeSkandrn44@aol.com

Gather round, boy, and we shall tell ye a tale. In olden tymes, Romans didn't have the technology to make curved letters, so they had to use a v every time they needed a u. That's also why all their numbers are letters. Can you imagine having to write out all those blocky o's? Hope this helps. Feel free to ask us anything else you want to know about Romanian history.

for review, so we never know how it's going to fare in Reviews until the magazine's almost out the door. Take a look at this month's mag: **Maximo** is on the cover, but **Super Mario Advance 2** is our Game of the Month. Sometimes the cover game is coincidentally the Game of the Month, but it doesn't always work out that way. Just chalk it up to entropy.

Journey Defended

I saw your comments on the Journey game and band last month. *Journey* rocks, man. I mean, I never liked the band, but I have been playing the game every day for at least a year now. You guys should try it before you knock it.

sonofsam@charter.net

Actually, you've got something in common with our Features Editor Crispin Boyer! He, too, has been playing *Journey* on an emulator for more than a year now. Check out this sweet screen we grabbed from one of his many long sessions with bassist Ross Valory. We seriously doubted that anyone could play that game for more than about 20 minutes, but Crispin's clinically insane, so...what's your excuse?



Bassist Ross Valory stomps on space crap while the remaining members of Journey look on from their flaming starship.

Gamer Sick of Games

I was wondering about a video game-related sickness I seem to have developed. I was wondering if anyone else has ever experienced it, or at least heard of it. It is a nauseated feeling that develops in my stomach after a long period of playing first-person shooters (FPSes) that involve tight corridors and enclosed spaces. I suppose it could be termed "Video Game Claustrophobia." I'm not claustrophobic in real life at all, but it only takes about two hours of playing the right game to get me so sick that I can't play anymore. I even played *Medal of Honor* (PS1—the mission where you are in the corridors of the German ship) to the point where I threw up. Any ideas on what's wrong?

KrypticVoid@aol.com

This isn't the first time we've heard about this problem. In fact, it seems like for every couple dozen folks who are totally fine with FPSes, there's one who inevitably gets sick playing them. We haven't really heard of confined spaces making people nauseous. But gamers have complained that the bobbing motion some characters display when they walk (like in *Half-Life*) induces a seasick feeling. The choppiness associated with a low framerate (less than 30 frames per second) can also cause you to feel ill.

You might want to try playing *Halo* (are you surprised we recommended that?) or another FPS that has a lot of open environments and a high framerate to pinpoint your problem. Smoother or slower-paced games like this might not trouble you, so you may not have to miss out on the genre completely. Or maybe you should get out of the house after two hours and do something worthwhile! Hehe...just kidding, we're probably worse than you are.

Range Change

In your February issue you gave some tips on *Halo*'s weapons in the Inner Circle section. You said that the rocket launcher kicks ass close in and sucks

Question of the Moment

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

A successful online network for PS2 and Xbox. I want to be able to download expansions for *MGS2* and *Halo*!

beanboy86@hotmail.com

New game engines. I'd love to see some new genres develop this year.

TheGodFather1087@cs.com

Fewer *Metroid Prime* delays! I mean, what the @#%\$%\$#@!&\$#!@#%\$ Hades!

nakedlettuca@hotmail.com

I want to see Square discontinue its exclusivity to Sony and test the waters on the other next-gen consoles.

ninjasrcrol@earthlink.net

Better sports games: Full color customization for home and away uniforms, and the ability to create expansion teams and logos. Also, we need better text recognition for announcing created players.

bullsfan@iland.net

Nintendo's kid-oriented image. I want to see more first-person shooters and RPGs on my GameCube.

swtrider@hotmail.com

It seems like all the good games on PS2 are really short. I want some quality games that take a long time to beat in 2002.

Method80@aol.com

We all love a well-crafted sequel, but for the love of God, stop franchising! I really don't want to play a *Tony Hawk 4* or another *Syphon Filter* game.

ramojo@fast.net

I want to see people's lips moving with their words, damnit!

MeltyMallowX@aol.com

Next Month's Question of the Moment:

What are you looking forward to most when the next-gen systems go online?

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

Net Gains

DANNYWAY

METHOD SKI ON THE WET DC SUPER RAMP. OLIVIERO TOSCANI



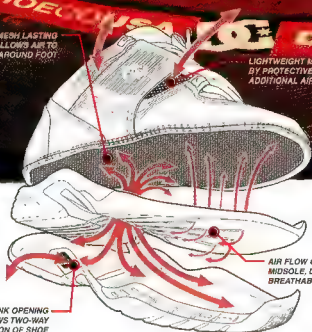
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Please note: We reserve the right to edit any correspondence for space purposes. If you don't want your name, city/state or e-mail address printed, tell us so (but please include your phone number, mailing address and system preference for Letter of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

at long range! I beg to differ. How can the rocket launcher be awesome at close range? Most likely you would blow the hell out of yourself and the enemy. From far away they could move out of the way, but at least you won't die. I'm not sure what short or long range is to you, but to me, close range is 10 feet, maybe. I don't want anyone to blow himself up 'cause you said the rocket launcher is good in close quarters.

DAVIDDj311@aol.com

Au contraire, good Halite. Play anyone who's worth his salt in *Halo*, and you won't see him getting hit by a rocket from across the field. It's too easy to see coming, and no good *Halo* player stands still long enough for you to land a shot from long range. If you wield the launcher well, you can crush people in close quarters (yep, that means 10, 20 feet) without even damaging your shield. OK, if you're practically standing on the guy, the shotgun's a safer bet, we'll give you that. But for general purposes, the rocket launcher is the weapon of choice for close-range fights.

I fell in love with *FFX* because the story was so gripping and I really got to know the characters.

Lonestar2k2@cs.com

Based on what we've seen of the game from Japanese beta testers, it's going to blow your pancreas straight out the front door. True, it's not the same as the typical *FF* formula. But if anything, we think the story will be more epic, when you factor in all the character interaction and questing possibilities that come with a worldwide player arena. C'mon, you're always wanted to summon Ifrit on some dude from Iceland....

Induced Stress Tests

My friend and I were looking through old issues of *EGM* and saw the piece about the GBA that was dropped, burned, stepped on and flushed, and it still worked. So we decided to test out some other electronic toys for durability. Here are a few of the things that *didn't* withstand the tests:

1. Remote-controlled I-Dog puppy



I see so many nerds over there working at EGM, yet not even ONE has a ponytail! Come on, dudes, get with it. That's a requirement.
iExtraSoldier!
@aol.com

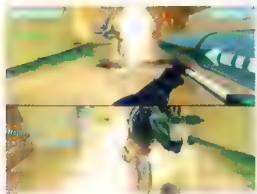
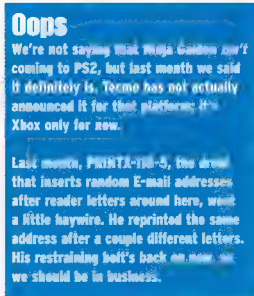
What are you talking about? Jeanne Kim's got a wicked ponytail! Mark MacDonald had the long hair goin' on for a while, actually, but it got stuck in the copier...it wasn't pretty. We all keep it short now. Well, gotta get back to nerding it up. Later!

2. Handheld *Space Invaders* game
3. *Tiger Sports Feel* baseball game
4. Some other stuff that would prevent me from getting a GameCube if my parents found out.

Nick Taylor
St. Charles, MO

Some of OUR follow-up stress tests:

1. Teddy Ruxpin: Failed
2. Lite-Brite: Failed
3. Skid Row cassette tape: Failed
4. Real Doll: Passed (and how!)



A well-placed rocket at 10-15 feet will resurface the floor with your enemy and leave you unscathed.

Un-XI-ted

I'm worried about *Final Fantasy XI*. Though I am always excited when a new *FF* comes out, I worry that the online component will make a thousand different people play the same *Final Fantasy* with other adventurers. As cool as that is, I'm afraid that because there are so many players, the game will lose the epic story quality that makes it so cool.

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Guy W. All Jr. • Clearwater, FL

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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 cannoli. Better luck next time.

Roland Sabalza
Seattle, WA

Timothy Dawson
Porter, TX

For letter of the month and Letter Art of the Month contests no purchase is necessary. If you're really bored and want to read the complete contest rules files, please visit www.egm.com or write us at EGM Letters, 1401 Lakes Road, P.O. Box 3338, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3338. After reading the rules, please go a/c. 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 you "hot" bait!

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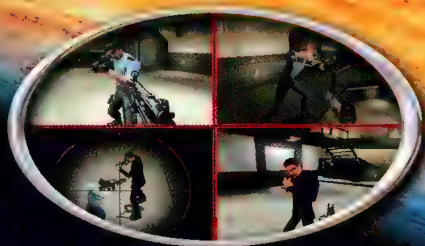


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Xbox screen shots shown.



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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

System Forecast 2K2

EGM's detailed outlook of the next big game front



Illustration by Pixel Pushers Design

We feel your pain. You bought a shiny new next-generation system (or got one as a gift) during the blockbuster blizzard of '01, when great games came out at the pace of three a week. Now you're lucky if you can get *one* good game a month, without a ray of *Mario Sunshine* in sight. But before you do something drastic

and put that slightly used, not-so mint-in-box console up on eBay, take a look at the extended forecast for each system on the next two pages. They've been lovingly crafted to give you the heads up on games and trends coming this year that should be on your radar (if they aren't already). Commit it to memory. There'll be a test later.

Which system has the most games you're looking forward to in 2002?

GameCube - 20%

Xbox - 29%

PlayStation 2 - 51%

Source: Gamers.com poll, Dec. 2001

Metroid Prime - 32%

The Legend of Zelda - 38%

What 2002 GC game are you most excited about?

Mario Sunshine - 18%

Star Fox Adventures - 12%

Source: Gamers.com poll, Dec. 2001

GameCube

Current Conditions

"More than 18 games are coming from Nintendo and third parties in the first quarter of 2002 alone," says Perrin Kaplan, VP of Corporate Affairs for Nintendo. Translation: Get ready for a whole bunch of PS2 ports. Fans hoping for the promised bounty of Nintendo originals will have to wait a bit. The next two releases have suffered slight delays—Rare's *Star Fox Adventures* to April and Silicon Knights' *Eternal Darkness* will follow a month or two later. U.S. releases of Nintendo's Japanese GC games are also still up in the air. True to form, Nintendo will only say they are "assessing the viability" of titles like *Animal Forest* (see preview on page 88) and *Doshin the Giant* (God game starring a fuzzy yellow giant).

Extended Forecast

The real excitement starts in the second half of the year. That's when your 200 bones starts paying off and hotly anticipated titles

like *Mario Sunshine*, the new *Legend of Zelda* and *Metroid Prime* are scheduled for release.

The second half will also see the emergence of Nintendo's online strategy. *Mario* creator Shigeru Miyamoto has already gone on record with Japanese newspaper *Mainichi Shimbun*, saying, "There is a large number of online games in development, which are secret." Damn. At least one online game, Sega's *Phantasy Star Online*, is already on the slate.

And just in case you've forgotten, Nintendo has one more ace up its sleeve for this year: *Pokémon*. Last summer Nintendo unveiled the first four new creatures from the next-generation Pokéverse and confirmed that both a GC and a GBA title are on the way.



Star Fox Adventures



Metroid Prime



Mario Sunshine



Resident Evil

ON THE RADAR

Resident Evil, Capcom — A graphically tweaked-out remake of the survival-horror zombie shoot-'a-thon. **May/June**

Phantasy Star Online, Sega — GC version of Sonic Team's ferociously addictive futuristic online RPG. **TBA**

Star Fox Adventures, Nintendo — See preview, page 90. **April**

Mario Sunshine, Nintendo — The next game in Nintendo's *Mario* series takes the plumber to a sunny paradise. **Summer**
Metroid Prime, Nintendo — First- and third-person action shooter starring Samus Aran, a female bounty hunter. **Fall**

Eternal Darkness, Nintendo — A macabre, multi-pathed survival-horror game from *Legacy of Kain* creators (and Canadians). **Silicon Knights. May/June**

The Legend of Zelda, Nintendo — Cartoonish installment of Nintendo's second-most popular series. **Fall**

Announced: From Nintendo—*Animal Forest*, *Super Mario Kart*, *Pokémon*, *Donkey Kong Racing*, *Disney's Mickey for GameCube*, *Kameo Elements of Power*, a new *Pokémon*, and a new *Kirby*. Third-party software—*Soul Calibur 2* (Namco), *New Ridge Racer* (Namco),

Turak: Evolution (Acclaim), *Mortal Kombat* (Midway), and *Skies of Arcadia* (Sega).

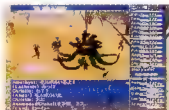
Rumored: *Perfect Dark Zero*, *Banjo-Threeie*, *Pikmin 2*.



PlayStation 2

Current Conditions

Last year was very hot for PS2. *Gran Turismo 3*, *Devil May Cry*, *Metal Gear Solid 2*, *Grand Theft Auto III*, *Jak & Daxter*, *Ico*, *Final Fantasy X*...we're getting dizzy just trying to think of all the great games on PS2 in 2001. If you're a new PS2 owner looking for games, it might be best to try to catch up on the blockbusters you missed last year. Sony's got a few games on the horizon, though. Namely *Hot Shots Golf 3* in March and *SOCOM: Navy Seals* later in the spring.



Final Fantasy XI

Extended Forecast

Beware the sleeping giant. While Sony hasn't said anything publicly about most of their 2002 lineup, we do know that online connectivity will be a big part of it. When? We're not sure. Sony recently stopped shipments of their PS2 hard drive in Japan—a required component for those eager to play *Final Fantasy XI*. That could signal a potential delay in the U.S. introduction of the hard drive and

Network Adapter until the summer or even fall. And any delay in that hardware means it'll be longer before we can play *FFXI*, *Twisted Metal Online* and the online enhancements of games like *Tony Hawk 4*.

ON THE RADAR

Final Fantasy XI, Square — Go on a quest in a huge online world with other Final Fantasy fans. **TBA**

Tomb Raider: The Next Generation, Eidos — Lara Croft returns after an extended sabbatical for more raidin'. **Late 2002**

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4, Activision — The Hawkman cometh again to PS2. **Winter**
New Gran Turismo, Sony CEA — Whether it's online or just a U.S. concept-car version, you can expect more GT in 2002. **TBA**

Tekken 4, Namco — The fourth installment of Namco's popular arcade fighter. **Fall**
Twisted Metal Online, Sony CEA — Incog Inc.'s car combat game goes online in a Net version of *Twisted Metal: Black*. **TBA**

Shrapnel impact at 600+mph
Mon Calamari.

Swapping paint with Skywalker,
Tatooine.



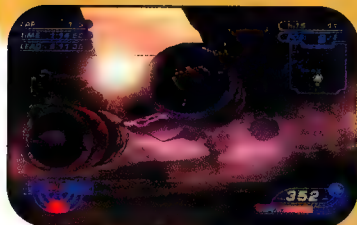
Turbo-boost slice between canyon wall and Dud Bolt,
Sullust.

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Tusken Raider target practice,
Badlands.



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EXTRA!
START

System Forecast 2K2 continued

Kakuto
Chojin - 3%

Halo
sequel - 43%

What 2002
Xbox game
are you most
excited
about?

Metal Gear Solid X - 39%

Bruce Lee - 15%

Source: Gamers.com poll, Dec. 2001

Xbox

Current Conditions

With the holidays over, the barrage of titles from Microsoft has subsided to barely a whisper. So what's left for the first half of this year? David Hufford, Xbox product manager told us, "Some we can't talk about yet, but I will mention *RalliSport Challenge*, *Kung Fu Party* and *Whacked!*, just to pique your curiosity." Details on *Kung Fu Party*

have yet to come to light, but we can tell you that it's a cartoony action title from the boys at U.K. developer Just Add Monsters.

Other unique Xbox titles you'll be hearing about soon are *Sneakers* (the U.S. title for the Japanese mouse battle game *Nezumix*), *Decayden* and *Kakuto Chojin* (a 3D fighter by *The Bouncer* creators Dream Publishing). So Xbox owners won't be left idling for long. While waiting for those, you've got good Xbox original third-party titles waiting in the wings like *Jet Set Radio Future* (Sega), *WWF Raw* (THQ) and *Wreckless: The Yakuza Missions* (Activision), all of which should be in stores this month.



The characters of JAM's *Kung Fu Party*.

Extended Forecast

The big Xbox attraction this year is the broadband online gaming through one dedicated network that will launch in the summer. And don't worry, you'll get to kill stuff. "We didn't put a hard drive and ethernet port inside every box to make it a chess or checkers experience," Hufford told us. "Our ambitions are a bit more lofty." Microsoft's making it super-easy to hook up, too. If you have a broadband Internet account (DSL, cable modem, etc.) you'll be able to play. J Allard, platform general manager for Xbox told us, "Out-of-the-box, setting up system link play is a piece of cake on Xbox with no information [like DNS settings, IP addresses and all that good stuff] required at all. 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." The first network-compatible games you'll be kicking ass on? *Unreal Championship*, and if we're lucky, *Halo Online*. Let the games begin!

ON THE RADAR

Panzer Dragon, Sega — Ride on the back of a legendary dragon, shooting down evil wherever it may be. **TBA**

Phantasy Star Online, Sega — Sonic team's online RPG. Thankfully there's no Xbox GameShark yet, ya cheaters. **TBA**

Shenmue II, Sega — Join Ryo as he continues the adventure in Yu Suzuki's modern RPG. **Summer**

Metal Gear Solid X, Konami — Solid Snake and the cast of *MG2* return for this enhanced Xbox version. **TBA**

Sega GT 2002, Sega — Wow Entertainment updates their simulation-style racer for Xbox. **Summer**

Kung Fu Party, Microsoft — Is it a *Mario Party* clone, a cartoony action game or a *Smash Bros.* style fighter? **TBA**

Sneakers, Microsoft — Lead your mice to victory against other rodent factions in this mouse-battlin' title. **Spring**

Kakuto Chojin, Microsoft — Dream Factory's 3D fighting game. Literally means "Fighting Supermen." **TBA**

Project Ego, Microsoft — Peter Molyneux's open-ended medieval RPG lets you decide what kind of hero you want to be. **Fall**

Announced: Dino Crisis 3 (Capcom), *Crazy Taxi Next* (Sega). **Rumored: Return to Castle Wolfenstein, Halo Online.**

Game Boy Advance

Extended Forecast

With all the action going on in the home console market, it's easy to forget about GBA. That'd be a mistake though, since there's a lot of good games coming for the system. Here's a quick rundown of the titles you should watch for:

Nintendo's *Super Mario Advance 3* will continue the series of Mario game ports to the portable, this time with the 8-Bit classic, *Super Mario Bros. 3*. A fourth title further down the line is (you guessed it) *Super Mario Advance 4: Yoshi's Island*.

Konami's 2D experiment with *Castlevania: Circle of the Moon* paid off big time, selling

Mario 3: Coming soon to GBA.



far better than the publisher imagined (especially in the U.S.). A second GBA game is reportedly in development.

The first of Rare's GBA titles will hit this spring, including *Sabrewulf*—a new game starring an aging explorer who must nab artifacts and make it out alive Indiana Jones-style.

Expect *Pokémon* to make a big splash on the system as well (likely utilizing GC-to-GBA connectivity), along with a few original titles. One potential sleeper hit could be the Nintendo platformer *The Legend of Starfi*. Right now it's Japan-only, but it's definitely U.S.-friendly. And finally, who could forget about *Metrod IV*? Samus returns in a 2D GBA adventure in addition to her GC outing.

ON THE RADAR

Super Mario Advance 3, Nintendo — A port of *Super Mario Bros. 3*. **Summer**

Super Mario Advance 4: Yoshi's Island, Nintendo — The last 4-Bit Mario goes portable. **Winter**

Metrod IV, Nintendo — Samus eradicates a Metrod menace inside a space ship. **Summer**

Grand Theft Auto III, Rockstar — A portable version of the Ps2 hit. **March**

The Legend of Starfi, Nintendo — A marooned star prince fights underdog buddies in this platformer. **Summer**

Diddy Kong Pilot, Nintendo — Aerial racing starring DK's pal. **Summer**

Benji-Kazeo, Nintendo — The Benji goes on a new adventure. **Summer**

Pokémon Next, Nintendo — Add more GBA graphics and GC connectivity, and you have one hell of a Pokémon. **Fall**

A game that's **knucklehead** and shoulders above the rest!

Join the zany masters of mirth – Moe, Larry and Curly – on a quest to save an old lady's orphanage and her three b-e-a-utiful daughters from the cruel clutches of an evil banker. With only 30 days to collect \$5,000 smackers, the Stooges prove that when it comes to fun, three heads are wotterly better than one!



Turn of events and frantic action, including pie throwing, prize fighting, and hospital hij-jinx!

Outrageous, family-oriented fun, including trivia!

Original Stooges animation and classic scenes!

Hours of slapstick gameplay as Moe, Larry, and Curly

GAME BOY ADVANCE

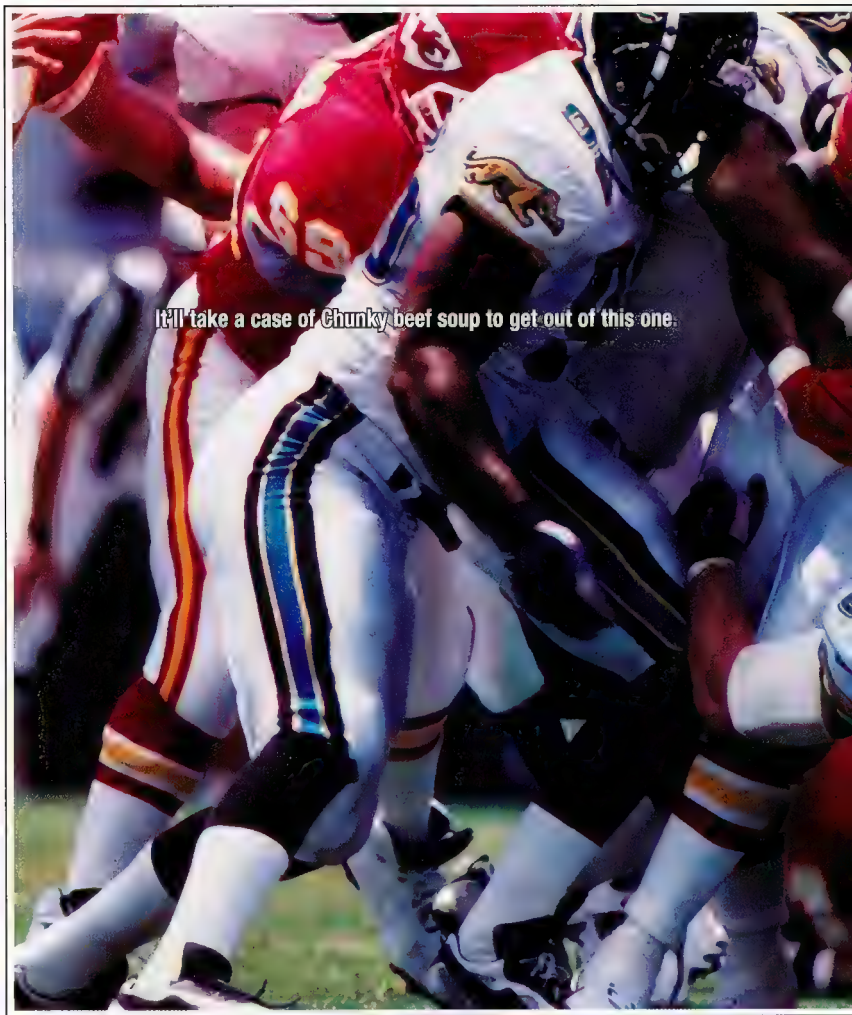
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It'll take a case of Chunky beef soup to get out of this one.

QB's and RB's start stocking up on those Camoflex® Chunky soups. And while you're at it, throw in some hearty tomato soup, too. Because with our new smothering defense, you're going to need some hero soup. For the first time ever in a game, we've got two and even three man tackles. So you'll see backs wrapped up in terracous gang tackles, defensive tackles breaking through the line and passes broken up by tenacious double coverage. You know what? Better get some chowder and mirestrone, too.



PlayStation 2



www.989sports.com





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Afterthoughts: Grand Theft Auto III

Thought *GTA3* was controversial? Have a look at these remarks from Leslie Benzies, producer at DMA Design, who developed the mobster megahit.

EGM: *GTA3* is definitely a game for adults. Was there anything you wanted or thought about putting in the game that you either pulled out or just decided, "No, no, that's just too naughty?"

Leslie Benzies: Not really. We didn't make the game to be controversial, but we also didn't try to be less naughty because we were worried we might get told off. We wanted to develop and expand on the ideas of *GTA* and *GTA2*, namely freeform, open gameplay, non-linearity and contemporary gangster styling.

We set out to make a believable and unique world in which everything felt like it was part of the same universe, so some things didn't make it because they didn't fit. The limitations, such as they were, were to do with time. It would have been great to have more pedestrians, more missions, more indoor spaces, more fighting, etc. But with a game as open-ended as this, you have to draw the line somewhere. We felt every aspect of the finished game was very well-done and could co-exist with the rest of the game.

EGM: What do you think of all the hubbub surrounding *GTA3* and its violent content?

LB: It's pretty boring. There is still this belief, at least in Washington and the newsrooms of major television stations, that games only exist for the under-5-year-old [crowd] and that this game is being sold and marketed to children. The game went out with an M rating and was supposed to be sold only to those over 17. Nothing in the game could be taken that seriously by someone actually playing it, as the whole thing is obviously funny, over-the-top and absurd. But of course, people need stories to sell their newspapers and "controversial video games" is a very popular one among unimaginative news editors.

EGM: Have you considered giving *GTA3* an online component so that multiple players could compete in the same city?

LB: Yes, it was part of the PC versions of *GTA* and *GTA2*, although a little limited due to the



available technology at the time. In the future, of course, we'd like to do it as a [multiplayer] 3D city, as human opponents are always more fun than digital ones.

EGM: Ever thought about giving the player a choice of using a male or female character? Imagine all the possibilities for politically incorrect behavior (to put it lightly) a female protagonist would have at her disposal.

LB: No, it would have been very difficult to make a story and have it work the same if the character could be male or female. The way people respond to men and to women are totally different, so for a game as interactive as *GTA3*, it would represent a huge increase in work load for little payback. Also, gangsters and car-jackers tend to be male, so we didn't think it would really work with a female character. Besides, female characters in video games so far have tended to be a little uninspiring....

EGM: The game's been kicking ass sales-wise for the last two months now. Was there ever concern that the game might not be successful?

LB: You always want to be successful and your games to be well-received. It's very nerve-racking, but we were confident that *GTA3* was a unique game that delivered on our expectations, so we thought people would be blown away because we were, as everything finally came together.

CODES OF VIOLENCE

As if *GTA3* didn't have enough to keep you busy, try out some of these codes (enter 'em anytime in the game, and there's no time limit). You'll become more powerful than you can possibly imagine.

Full Armor: R2, R2, L1, L2, L, D, R, U, L, D, R, U

Full Health: R2, R2, L1, R1, L, D, R, U, L, D, R, U (Note: Car damage will be repaired, but not visibly.)

Reset "wanted" level to clean: R2, R2, L1, R2, U, D, U, D, U, D

EGM: A lot of our readers have expressed frustration with the targeting system, especially when things get hectic. Any advice for those looking to rock the streets on foot?

LB: First, practice. I think the game is very intuitive and easy to play, as I believe the targeting system is. But if you're having trouble, practice with it for a while. The targeting is trying to do the thinking for you, so it will always be prone to making different decisions than you. Always keep a lot of bullets in your gun, and make use of the shoulder buttons to scroll between targets when locked on.

EGM: Much of the action in *GTA3* revolves around driving. Will we see more footwork in the next game?

LB: Does it? When I play, most of the action takes place out of the car, on foot, using the weapons. Obviously, the quickest way around the city is in a car, but once you get



NOA'S MAIN MAN RETIRES

Minoru Arakawa, president of Nintendo of America for the past 22 years, retired from the company on Jan. 7. For two decades he led NoA from a fledgling Japanese subsidiary trying to sell the Nintendo Entertainment System after the video game crash of '83, through the rise of the company to a powerhouse with a name now synonymous with games in America. The full story of NoA and Arakawa's rise through Nintendo is contained in the pages of *Game Over* by David Sheff, available at bookstores everywhere. Good luck, Arakawa-san!



somewhere, you have to be out of the car in order to do whatever you have to do. Surely this is like real life, no? If it seems different to you, then maybe that's a good thing. It would mean that the game can be played very differently from player to player, which was definitely our intention.

EGM: What is your favorite vehicle/weapon combination in *GTA3*?

LB: I like Catalina's helicopter with the rocket launcher.

EGM: Which is the best car in the game?

LB: Well, the police car is the fastest, but I think the Diablo car is the coolest.

EGM: Does having Hollywood-caliber voice actors make a big difference in a video game?

LB: Of course. Acting is a skill, if not an art form in its own right. It turns out that Hollywood actors don't get there by chance, but

because they can act a whole lot better than you or me. The voice actors in *GTA3* are amazingly talented, so hiring them really helped bring the characters to life. But voice actors only work if the writing is good; that's what's so exciting about *GTA3*—the diversity of talent involved in creating it, and the way it builds on techniques and expertise from a number of different environments.

EGM: Do you think *GTA3* will pave the way for the development of more mature games, like *State of Emergency*?

LB: Probably, because publishers will see that there is a market for them. We really don't want to be seen, however, as paving the way for a lot of rubbish controversial games. I'd hope *GTA3* would be remembered for its quality, and for the fact that it gives people freedom never previously experienced in a game rather than because it's naughty. It is a gangster game; it has to be about naughty things, but it is also a uniquely open-ended piece of software unlike any other. People aren't obsessing over it because of any cheap shock value; they like it because of its multifaceted gameplay. People might find an interesting news story in the controversy, but that's not what makes for a fun 100-hour experience. If *GTA3* proves once and for all that there is a market for games aimed squarely at an older audience, and that games are not the preserve of 5-year-olds or fantasy-obsessed teenage boys, then it will have done its job. 🎮



control.

I push the button, the secret agent shoots. I hold left on the analog stick, he runs left. Pretty simple stuff. So when I go to buy that second gamepad, I'll just grab one—They're all the same. It's not like these things are complicated devices like a GameShark.

Of course, if a company can develop a product as sophisticated as GameShark, they could probably make a pretty nice gamepad, right?

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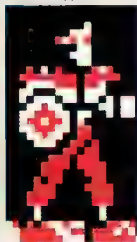
NEWS TIDBITS

Rygar Resurrection

Move over *Ninja Gaiden*, Tecmo's reinvented yet another classic arcade/8-bit NES title this summer: *Rygar*. Anyone who remembers *Rygar's* spinning, razor-sharp Diskamer (that shield thing with the spikes) will be glad to know that the game will be pretty faithful to the original, but in super-snappy 3D. Watch out—we predict a lot of running, jumping and smacking down bug-like enemies. We can't wait.

Old Rygar

New Rygar



EA Delivers New Bond

Electronic Arts has announced it will bring another James Bond title to next-gen consoles in late winter 2002. The working title is *James Bond 007 in Phoenix Rising*, a combination of first- and third-person action for PS2, Xbox and GC.



WHAT IS THE ONION?

Capable of turning a frown upside down even the most cynical bastards out there, *The Onion* is the nation's premiere social satire and funny paper. We dig their stuff, and think you will too. That's why, starting this month, *The Onion* will be joining us in the pages of *EGM* to bring you gaming news that matters (below). Oh, and also be sure to check them out online at www.theonion.com.



the ONION

VOLUME 37 ISSUE 16

AMERICA'S FINEST NEWS SOURCE

Local Man Exhausted After Long Day Of Video Games

SAGINAW, MI—Jon Brokowski, a 22-year-old Saginaw liquor-store clerk, described himself as "completely wiped" Monday after a long, hard day of video games.

"I'm totaled," said Brokowski, tossing his PlayStation 2 controller onto the floor following one last "cool-down" game of *Madden 2001*. "That shit really takes it out of you."

Brokowski, who has logged two decades of back-breaking toil on systems ranging from Intellivision to Sega Genesis, woke up at the crack of noon and went straight to work.

"I had the whole day off from the liquor store, and I thought, today's the day I roll up my sleeves and earn all the extra characters in *SSX Snowboarding*," Brokowski said. "Man, it was a grind."

"They make you snowboard over the same course and do the same tricks, like, a thousand times to get a new character," said Brokowski, who, through discipline and a strong work ethic, was able to earn the snowboards *Sumo Slick*, *Chaos Crippler*, and *Bloo Gee* after four hours of labor. "I must've traveled 50 miles before I got complete brain fade."

After a brief lunch of toast, jelly, and a Coke, Brokowski turned to *Tomb Raider 2*, a game he admitted he had put

off finishing for more than a year.

"It was time to bunker down and get it done," Brokowski said. "I'm kind of sick of the whole Lara Croft thing, but I decided I'd procrastinate long enough. I was determined to get to the end of this game, even if it killed me."

Though he "gusses!" he enjoyed himself, Brokowski said the three-hour session of *Tomb Raider 2* was by no means easy.

"I must've dragged about 2,000 blocks around and climbed over the damn things," he said. "And I kept getting killed, so in the end I wound up doing it 11 times on the Tibetan Catacombs level alone. And those blocks they made me drag were as big as me."

"As big as Lara, I mean," Brokowski added.

At approximately 7:30 p.m. he finally completed *Tomb Raider 2*. After watching the game's 90-second closing video, a reward he called "hardly worth all the effort."

Brokowski tidied up his memory-card files and resumed the robot quest he began last Thursday on the rented game *Zone Of The Enders*.

"I wanted to finally kill 'em-pot without wrecking all those buildings," said Brokowski, his fingers numb from prolonged exposure to



Movie: A visibly drained Brokowski gathers the strength for one more game.

DualShock controller vibrations. "I had, like, \$9 in late fees on the game, but I wasn't taking it back until I got an A rating on all the missions, rescued all the colonists, and got to the versus mode. It takes about eight hours, but it's the best part of the game. It sucks that I had to light about 200 other Orbital Frame Robots to get there, though. I'll be paying for that tomorrow, that's for sure."

Sometimes shortly after midnight, Brokowski decided he was "in a major robot rut" and opted to "cleanse his tired palate" with a sports game.

"If I went right to bed after *Zone Of The Enders*, I knew I'd be seeing robots in my

sleep, so I decided on a quick game of *Madden 2001*. Said Brokowski, who played half a season as the Baltimore Ravens before noticing the VCR clock reading 4 a.m.

"Christ, am I blown out," said Brokowski, twisting and stretching to ease the strain on vertebrae which had not moved appreciably for an entire day. "My eyes feel like they're on fire, and I never did unlock the last two hidden arenas in *Zone Of The Enders*. It never ends."

"I suppose I should return that game to Blockbuster tomorrow, if I have the energy," he continued. "Sure is a long walk, though." ☺

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More of the Rings

Now that J.R.R. Tolkien's first *Lord of the Rings* book has become the greatest show on Middle-earth, it shouldn't be a surprise that more *Hobbit*-themed games are crawling from their holes every month. The total tally of *LoTR* titles has just risen to four now that Universal Interactive has announced *The Lord of the Rings, Part 4* for Game Boy Advance, due in late 2002. This RPG lets you control all nine members of the Fellowship and follows their adventures from the beginning of Tolkien's *The Fellowship of the Ring* to halfway through *The Two Towers*, the second book in his *LoTR* trilogy.

This GBA game joins the three other *Rings* titles we told you about last month: EA's



Lord of the Rings for the PS2, due out fall 2002, is based on the first and second movie due out fall 2002; Universal's *The Fellowship of the Ring* for Xbox, which follows the book and arrives in the second half of this year; and Sierra's *The Hobbit*, due on next-gen systems in 2003. Of those three, we've learned a few new details of Universal's

Xbox title. This third-person action/adventure title will allow you to play as Strider and Gandalf, as well as Frodo, in a journey from the Shire through the depths of Moria all the way to the River Anduin. We've nabbed a couple of new shots of the game to tide you over until the next batch of *Rings* games is announced.

THE KINGS OF CARTOONS

Before *Pokémon* and *Digimon*, animated versions of Sonic and Mario wowed the youth of America. If by chance you missed this television magic, you can now catch both shows on VHS and DVD. Two volumes of each (*The Super Mario Bros. Super Show* and *Sonic The Hedgehog*) on VHS, and one on polyphonic DVD will be released by Trimark on Feb. 26. We're lining up already.



Love Bytes

Video games taught us everything we know about love.

Why, if it weren't for them, none of us would have a beautiful princess waiting back at each of our mansions in the clouds. So we thought we'd do a Valentine's Day tribute to the best (and worst) game lovers we know.

Classic Love Triangle:

Mario, Pauline and Donkey Kong (*Donkey Kong—Arcade*)

It never fails. Just when things are going well with your lady friend, some big, hairy dude tries to muscle in. Brute force and the promise of a bigger banana may have taken young Pauline from her pipe-clearing beau, but we don't remember her trying to flee all that desperately until Mario finally iced the ape. Suspicious....



Kinkiest Physical Relationship:

Dante & Trish (*Devil May Cry—PlayStation 2*)

When a girl busts through your wall on a motorcycle, runs you through with your own sword then says, "It may not look like it, but I'm not your enemy," you know you're in for a long night. This pair also gets an honorable mention for melodrama. Dante to Trish: "I should have been the one to fill your dark soul...with lllllllllllt!"



Ultimate Marriage of Convenience:

Pac-Man & Ms. Pac-Man (*Ms. Pac-Man—Arcade*)

If you're a Pac-Man, it's not like you can just meet honeys out in the maze every day. So when a gal comes along who's even the same 3/4-moon species as you, it's a red-letter day. We imagine this meeting pretty much went down like, "Hey, you're into little white pellets, I'm into little white pellets, let's hook up."



Biggest Bonehead Maneuver:

Ryo, to Nozomi (*Shenmue—Dreamcast*)

After relentless advances and subtle hints, Nozomi has to practically draw Ryo a diagram to get him to understand that she's into his scene. She finally lays it all out and says she's moving away to Canada, and the big lug is unphased. Nice work, genius—you're not going to get that kind of no-strings-attached offer ever again.



Steamiest Encounter:

Hiro & Lucia (*Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete—PlayStation 1*)

Hiro and Lucia start out soaking innocently enough in separate areas of the same bath house. Then Lucia decides she's a little lonely and goes over to visit Hiro in his half of the bath (cue funky porno music)...naked. This particular scene accounts for 97.3 percent of what makes *Lunar 2* a fantasy RPG.



Most Jerry Springer-Caliber Issues:

Vamp and his entourage (*Metal Gear Solid 2—PlayStation 2*)

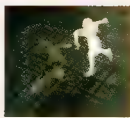
Within the 40-car pile-up that is the *MGS2* story, everyone's got some major relationship problems. While Otacon pulling an Oedipus on his stepmom is bad, Vamp is the one we'd most expect to see on *Springer*. He's apparently invincible, potentially shacking up with Fortune, and definitely doin' her dad...what's next?



Highest-Maintenance Relationship:

Ico & Yorda (*Ico—PlayStation 2*)

You know you're in trouble when your partner can't even be bothered to make it from point A to point B without a guiding hand. Poor little Ico doesn't know what he's getting himself into: a lifetime of ballet tickets, \$300 Sweetest Day dinners and "I dunno, which do you like better, the red or the black pumps?"



cheat.

Sure, some people call it cheating. To me, it's "video game enhancement." Either way, I prefer using GameShark to explore every level without worrying about how many bullets I have left, or where I can find some stupid health pack. If you enjoy dying and replaying the same levels, that's your choice. But InterAct has made my gaming much more fun with GameShark.

So go ahead, call it cheating.
I call it fun.

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BRITNEY DANCES TO YOUR BEDROOM

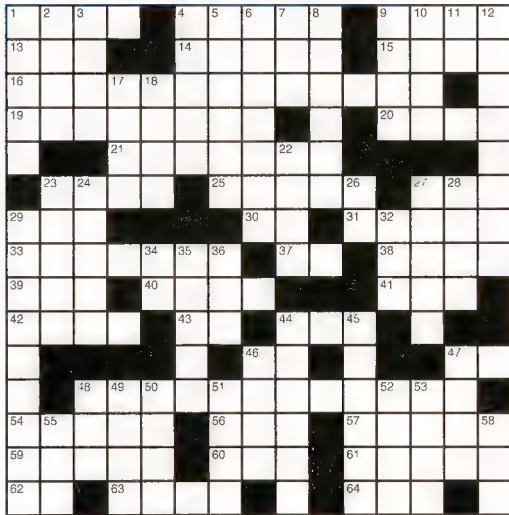
Here at EGM, Britney Spears is A-OK. We're not like all the other editors out there who despise her because they know they'll never have her. We got over that months ago. That's why we don't have a problem giving you the lowdown on Britney's Dance Beat, the teen diva's PS2 debut from THQ due out this spring. Let your fingers do the dancing (i.e., tap the buttons *PaRappa the Rapper*-style) and join Britney in her upcoming virtual tour. And if that's not enough for you, a GBA version is also on the way.

Welcome to the first-ever EGM crossword puzzle. Each month, we'll be testing how well you can apply all that gaming knowledge your parents and spouse said you'd never use. With Valentine's Day around the corner, we're highlighting a few of gaming's memorable pairs throughout this puzzle. Puzzle too easy? You need to learn to appreciate the great outdoors a little more. Stumped? Turn to the Internet, or to page 155 for the answer key, if you must....

Popular Pixelized Pairs

ACROSS

1. It gets "busted" frequently in *Grand Theft Auto III*
4. Smallest button on the GameCube controller
9. Media used by all next-gen consoles
13. Donkey Kong Jr., to Donkey Kong
14. It goes over Maximo's boxers
15. Setting of *Dynasty Warriors 3*
16. "Funky" Genesis pair
19. Changes with pitch in flight games
20. *Vegas Dreams* (NES) diversion
21. Fails to defeat
23. *Final Fantasy III* (VI) artist
25. Saves progress in *Tomb Raider IV*
27. Dr. Ross in the *Final Fantasy* movie
29. Object of *WWF SmackDown!* 2
30. Enemies, bots
31. Jetman (NES)
33. Gameplay in *Gauntlet* and *Tetris*, for example
37. Forest-dwelling fairy of *Rayman 2*
38. *Tekken 2* tough gal
39. Saturn platformer *Bug!*
40. Saves Luigi in his mansion
41. Horny little guy
42. GoldenEye creators
43. Can be sound or special
44. Trippy Sega shooter (PS2)
46. *Chrono Cross* Kid's catch word
47. War, to Raw
48. Naughty Dog's new trick
54. *Warriors* (NES)
56. RC Pro-Am hazard
57. Ancient Amiga vertical shooter
59. Milton Bradley military action game (NES)
60. Number of buttons on the Atari 2600 controller
61. Where *NHL '94* takes place
62. *Grand Theft Auto III* pick-me-up
63. Partner to a NES Boy
64. *Gan Turismo 3's* 289 bhp Acura



DOWN

1. Early Saturn platformer
2. Soft drink mascot spinoff game
3. Need one to catch monkeys in *Ape Escape*
4. Retro game girl
5. What you did to get all 151 Pokémon
6. Conrad's ailment in *Flashback: Quest for Identity*
7. Found on the balcony in *Shadowgate*
8. *Castlevania III's* Belmont
9. Doctrine of *Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha*
10. *Baldur's Gate 2* developer Black
11. "Yes," to *Sunset Riders*' El Greco
12. *Bust-A-Groove's* dancing duo
17. "Master of unlocking," according to Barry
18. *R-Men: Children of the Moon 3*
22. What a leaf gets you in *Super Mario 3*
23. Squall's main squeeze
24. Site of huge battle late in *Rogue Leader*
26. Sweet TurboGrafx CD RPG
27. ... in *Wonderland* (GBC)
28. Sonya's nemesis
29. Original Metal Gear creator
32. Preceded Bungie's *Halo*
34. #1 on EGM's 20 Worst Games list
43. *Toshinden* whipstress
35. Licia's special weapon in *Simpsons Wrestling*
44. Dragon-like boss of *Metroid's* Norfair
45. Early Sega isometric shooter
46. *Final Fantasies'* equestrian summon
47. Your older brother might have driven one when Nintendo was popular
48. *Street Fighter II's* weakest punch
49. *Prince of Persia*, for one
50. First-person shooter primary objective
51. *Mortal Kombat 3's* Saibot
52. EGM's Halo evaluation
53. They brought us *Dragon Warrior*
55. Titus's pugilist kangaroo
58. 8-bit power player

TIDBITS

Fresh Outta Japan

Remember when we said bizarre Japanese bug sim *Ka* (*Mosquito*) would never in a million years come out in the U.S.? We take it back. Eidos has started a new label called Fresh Games to release niche Japanese PS2 titles like *Ka* (below, called *Mister Mosquito* in the U.S.), *Legia Duel Saga* (sequel to *Legend of the Legia*) and music title *Bravo Music* (as *Mad Maestro*).



Mr. Mosquito

New Ways to Look At Your GBA

So you have a GBA, but making out the screen has turned portable-game time into a living hell. Well two handy remedies are making their way to market, and (surprise) they're not from Nintendo.

The name may be a bit deceptive, but www.portablemonopoly.com might have the answer to the GBA's dark display. The good folks over there are currently working on a side-light that fits inside your GBA and can be toggled on and off with a switch. No release date is set for the product yet.

Those of you who want to bypass the Game Boy Advance's screen entirely can pick up a television adapter. Gametech offers one (available from Upstate Games at www.upstategames.com) for around \$100 (ouch!). It requires some slight modification to your GBA and looks less than stellar, but it plugs into any TV with a composite or S-Video input and means not having to ruin your eyes on a dark handheld screen. GameGizmo.com offers a similar product for closer to \$75, but we haven't seen it in action yet....





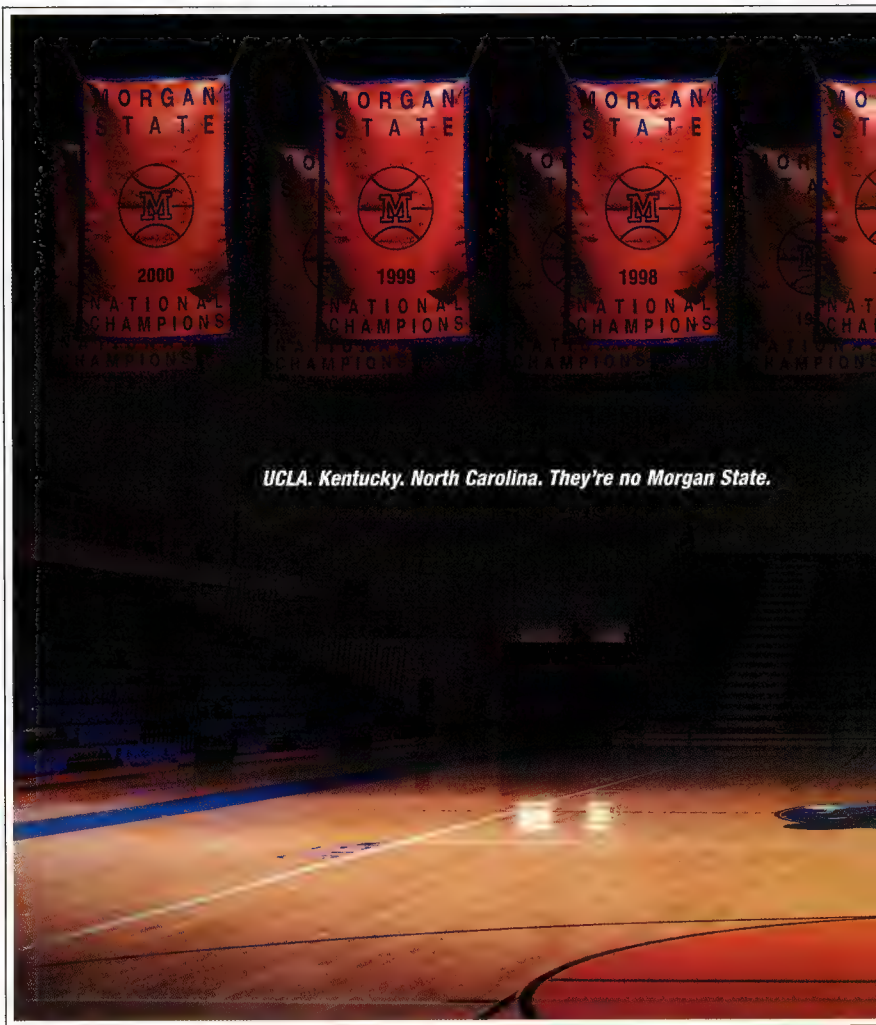
i control. i connect. i cheat.
am interact.

You play your game perfectly, tightly gripping an InterAct gamepad. From behind the TV, an S-video cable brings you crisp, clear picture and sound. Your frustration level is low because you're using GameShark® for infinite health and ammo.

No, we don't make games. But we do make your gaming experience more enjoyable. GameShark and Gamepads. Memory Cards and Monitors. Even simple stuff, like Adapters and AC cables.

We are one with the game. Play With Us.





UCLA. Kentucky. North Carolina. They're no Morgan State.

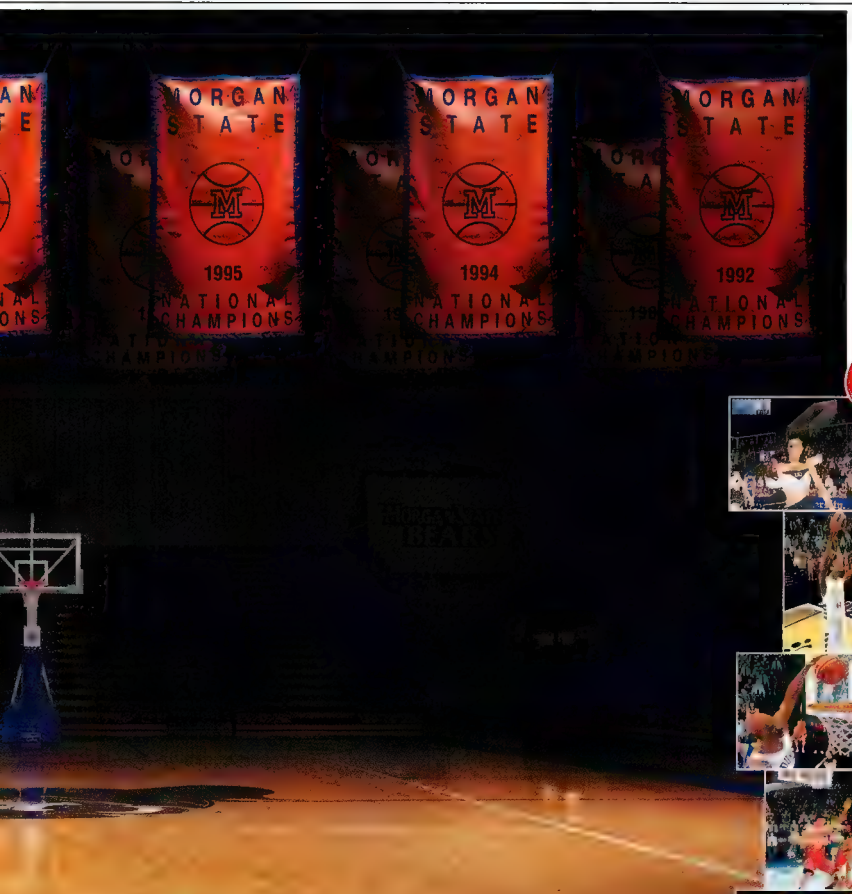
Warm up your cupboards. It's time to take the Morgan States's, North Texas's and Prairie View A&M's of the world to the Big Dance. Because with our new Career Mode you'll experience everything a real coach does, including a total lack of job security. Start with an assessment at a small school then, well, you can walk your way up the ladder to head coach of a major college. Or, you can Experience it all in a gripping college hoops action as you try to turn your program into a dynasty. Or, you're fired. Is this game real? Sure. What?



PlayStation 2



NCAA





PRESS
START

Quartermann - Game Gossip & Speculation

Merry Groundhog Day, Quartermanniacs. 'Tis I, your loyal purveyor of gaming gossip, The original Q, here to give you the latest scoop. And I give you my word, the info contained on this page is better than Kate & Leopold. Not that I saw it...why are you looking on me like that?! On to the rumors!

...*Grand Theft Auto* fans won't go long without another fix of wanton violence and pillaging. *GTA3 Xbox* is a given (with online play?), but we'll also soon hear the first details on *GTA4*. *Rockstar's* stayin' silent on the subject, but I could name a few hundred thousand fans ready to part with \$50 apiece for it. The current talk indicates that DMA will take the *GTA3* framework and turn it into a **massively multiplayer online game** for the fourth installment, where you're free to create your own mobs and anyone in the city could be a "real" person. Word is it'll



also be set in a real U.S. city this time. Sounds sweet!... Lots of action's afoot on the **Tomb Raider** front. Core Design is taking their time with *TR5*, which hits PS2 this year. It might (stress the "might") jump to other systems if Sony doesn't stitch it up as an exclusive title. An **Xbox port of the PC version** would be very easy to do, ya know. Also, it seems **Angelina Jolie** made such an impression on audiences as Lara that she may become the voice of the digital version of the sultry succubus in the games, too. Yowza! As long as they aren't only using movie sound clips....

...Remember **Insomniac Games**, the folks who brought us *Spyro the Dragon*? Now that they've handed off the dragon hero to Universal (to uh, continue), they got a new game in the works to wow PS2 owners. Look for more info from the E3 show in May, but I feel the **birth of another new Sony franchise**

coming on.... Early work has begun on **Soul Reaver 3**. The game will be the last in the *Reaver* series and won't be out 'til 2003. **Crystal D** will soon dust off another of its neglected characters, a green TV-lovin' tail-swingin' fighting machine. Curses! I've said too much.... A few quick tidbits before I dine 'n' dash for the month.... **Gran Turismo 4** will basically be an **online version of GT3**. Look for it this year. I haven't been able to nail down concrete info on the persistent rumor that **Final Fantasy Tactics 2** is in development, but **Square** fans will have another **Front Mission** game before too long on PS2. And finally, **Bungie's** working on a new Xbox game codenamed **Phoenix**. No, it's **not Halo 1.5**...it's something new. Can't wait...

With that, it's time to wrap up another installment of Gaming Gossip. It's been real, yo. If you want, you can E-mail me at quartermann@ziffdavis.com. Ciao! — The Q

In-Depth Look At Panasonic's "Q" GameCube/DVD Hybrid

What is it? You're lookin' at SLGC-10, also known as the "Q," released by Panasonic in Japan last December. Panasonic has no plans to bring the machine to the U.S.



What can it do?

Besides GameCube games, the Q plays DVDs. Video CD-format discs and audio CDs. It's packed to the rafters with AV features, too—it's got outputs for all kinds of TVs, including a digital video-out for D-terminal HDTVs (only available in Japan), S-Video, component and composite signals. It's got stereo outputs for the sound and even an optical audio-out socket for gamers fortunate enough to own a 5.1 surround-sound receiver. Can it play U.S. games? Yes, well...sort of.... Like Japanese GameCubes, the Q can be modded to accept American "Cube titles. DVDs are another story. The Q only plays Japanese Region 2 DVDs, rendering its video playback capabilities useless for most U.S. viewers, even after modding.



Is it any good? To be sure, it's the gaudiest-looking video game system ever. But it's darn cool, and a must for the game collector who just has to be different (put it next to your gold N64). It comes bundled with a very nice gray Panasonic-branded controller and a remote control that can be used (if you're the sneaky type) to switch the Q off when you're losing a *Smash Brothers* battle. ("It must've been a brownout, I swear. We get those all the time.") The drawbacks are few but important to note: Only being able to play Region 2 movies is a buzzkill. Also, the unit itself is bigger than the normal

GC, and it could be difficult to find a good spot for it in your entertainment center. And though the blue lights that emanate out of the front of the Q are dazzling, they're a bit bright when playing or watching movies in the dark.



Ohh, I want one, how much? This sweet baby will set you back 39,800 yen (about \$305), twice as much as the standard GameCube costs in Japan. And if you're looking to buy it from an import shop in the U.S., expect to pay around \$450.

Where can I get one? That's the hard part. They're being produced in rather limited quantities. Not many U.S. import shops carry them, but we were able to find one place that gets them in stock sporadically—National Console Support at www.ncs3.com. Good luck.

—Jonti Davies

Okay, this is not an invitation. **It's** a three alarm wake-up call. A hello-things-are-gonna-be-**different** wake up call. That "we're not in Kansas anymore" feeling you get right before you go **down**. Wanna see?

Enter **here** ►







The course is picture perfect. **It's** your game that's not. Hey, today could be **different**. Maybe you chase this round **down** with pin-point accuracy and the speed of a cheetah. Or maybe you leave **here** the same way you came.

If it's in the game, it's in the game.



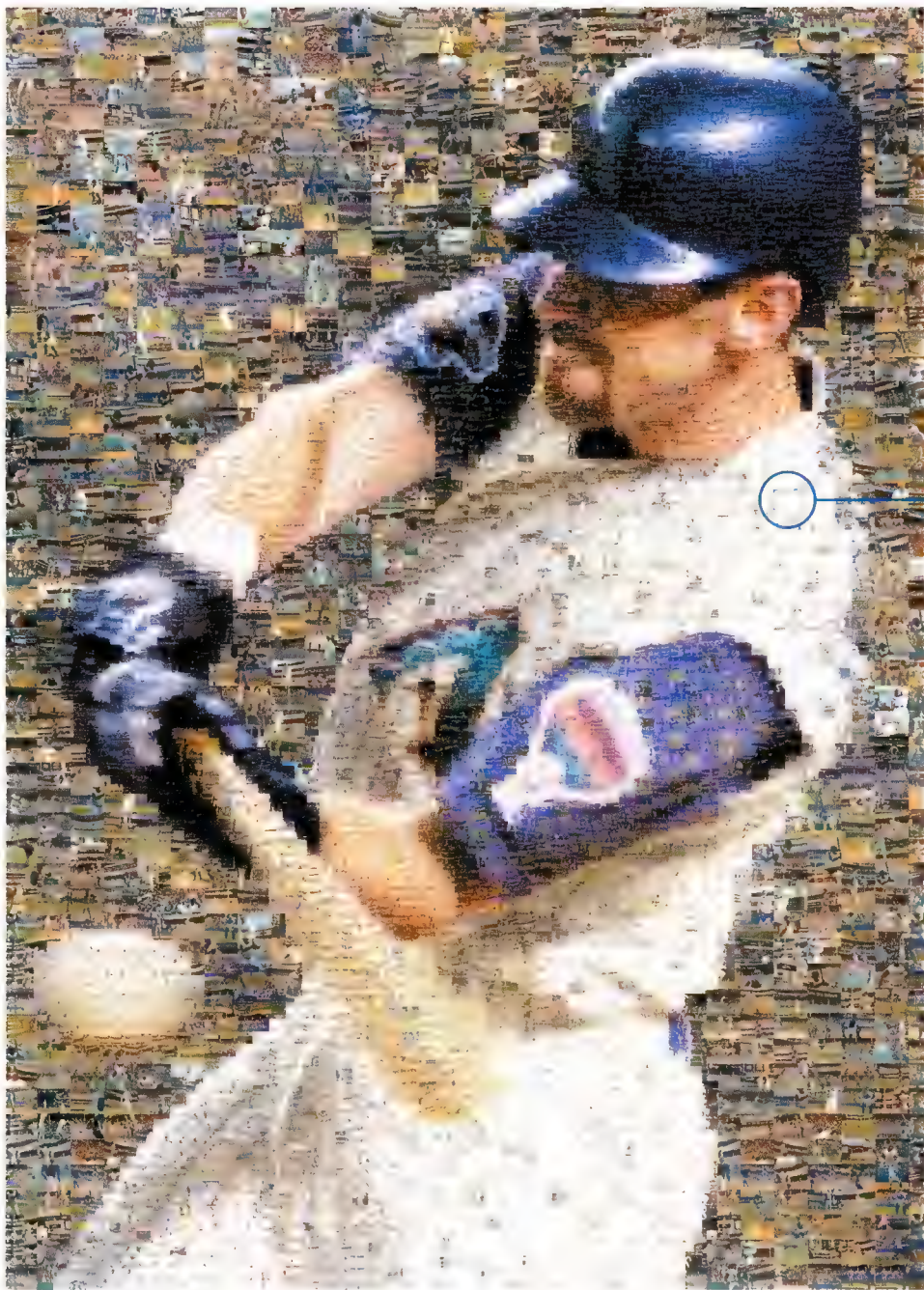




It's not every day you find yourself in another human being's face. Perhaps things would be **different** had you not invited him to swallow your fist. Somebody's going **down**. Act fast. Act ruthless. Get your facial contusions **here**. Anyone? Anyone?

If it's in the game, it's in the game.





EA
SPORTS
**TRIPLE
PLAY**
2002



Step up to the World Series pressure-cooker. **It's** time to dance to sixty-thousand **different** heart beats. One thunderous crack of the bat and you re-write history on the all-too-real faces **down** in the other team's dugout. So **here** goes nothing.

If it's in the game, it's in the game.





**It's
different
down
here.**

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easports.com AOL Keyword: EASPORTS



PlayStation 2



PC





PRESS START

The Top 20 Best-Selling Games of November 2001

Man...almost nothing besides Rockstar's **Grand Theft Auto III: Too Hot for Australia** managed to hold or gain positions this month. And it's easy to see that EA is going to clean up with the **Harry Potter** license, since muggles everywhere seem to dig the boy who lived no matter which system his games are on. As for how the **Xbox** and **GameCube** games fared? Pretty well, we reckon. We do see a familiar pattern forming, though. Notice how only a couple of GC games sold super-well while a larger group of Xbox games are scattered throughout the charts? Reminds us a lot of N64 vs. PlayStation.

1	Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty Konami			
NEW!	9.5 Jonathan 9.5 Mark			
2	Grand Theft Auto III Rockstar			
	9.0 Greg 9.0 Crispin 10 Milkman			
3	Luigi's Mansion Nintendo			
NEW!	9.0 Chris 8.0 Mark 5.5 Shoe			
4	Star Wars Jedi: The Academy LucasArts			
NEW!	10 Che 10 Jeanne 10 Kraig			
5	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 Activision			
	9.5 Che 9.5 Dean 9.0 Gary M			
6	Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone Electronic Arts			
NEW!	4.5 Crispin 6.5 Mark 6.0 Shane			
7	Star Wars Rogue Leader LucasArts			
NEW!	9.0 Crispin 9.0 Shoe 9.0 Shoe			
8	Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone Electronic Arts			
NEW!	8.5 Shane			
9	Madden NFL 2002 Electronic Arts			
	9.5 Dan L 9.5 Dean 9.0 Kraig			
10	WWF SmackDown! Just Bring It THQ			
NEW!	8.0 Greg 8.0 Kraig 7.0 Gary M			

11	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 Activision			
12	Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone Electronic Arts		NEW!	
13	Project Gotham Racing Microsoft		NEW!	
14	Dead or Alive 3 Tecmo		NEW!	
15	NBA Live 2002 Electronic Arts			
16	Pokémon Crystal Nintendo			
17	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 Activision			
18	NFL Fever 2002 Microsoft		NEW!	
19	Monsters, Inc. THQ			
20	James Bond in Agent Under Fire Electronic Arts		NEW!	

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. Happy Fun Ball contains a liquid core, which, if exposed due to rupture, should not be touched, inhaled, or soaked at.

JAPAN TOP 10			
1	Winning Eleven 5 Final Evolution Konami		<p>In the U.S., you'd never see a soccer game topping the charts. Sorry all you footy fans, it just ain't gonna happen. Yet it occurs frequently in Japan. Not surprisingly, the newly released Mario Advance 2 is right behind it. And what's this? Smash Bros. Melee (called DX in Japan) above MGS2? I guess being stealthy isn't as fun as beating Pikachu about the head.</p>
2	Super Mario Advance 2 Nintendo		
3	Monotaro Railroad X Hudson		
4	Gundam: Federation Vs. Zeon DX Bandai		
5	Animal Forest + Nintendo		
6	Dairantou Smash Bros. DX Nintendo		
7	Dragon Quest IV Enix		
8	Pachislot Anze King 6 Anze		
9	Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty Konami		
10	Battle Network Rockman EXE 2 Capcom		

Source: Weekly Famitsu, week ending 12/16/2001



PRESS
START

Coming Soon

February

PlayStation 2	
Caesar's Palace—Take 2	Gambling
Commandos 2—Eidos	Strategy
Deus Ex—Eidos	Action
ESPN NBA 2Night 2002—Konami	Sports
Evil Twin—Ubi Soft	Adventure
Herdly Gerdy—Eidos	Adventure
Maximo: Ghosts to Glory—Capcom	Action
Mobile Suit Gundam: Zeonic Front—Bandai	Action
No One Lives Forever—Sierra	Action
Pac-Man Fever—Namco	Action
Pac-Man World 2—Namco	Action
Parsons: Legend of Black Kat—Electronic Arts	Adv.
RLH: Run Like Hell—Interplay	Action
Star Trek: Shattered Universe—Interplay	Action
Star Wars Racer II: Revenge—LucasArts	Racing
World Tour Soccer 2002—Sony CEA	Sports
Worms Blast—Ubi Soft	Misc.
GameCube	
Dark Summit—THQ	Sports
Smashing Drive—Namco	Racing
Sonic Adventure 2 Battle—Sega	Action
Circus Maximus: Chariot Wars—Encore	Racing
Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind—Bethesda	RPG
Gun Valkyrie—Sega	Action
Jet Set Radio Future—Sega	Action
Smashing Drive—Namco	Racing
Tetrís Worlds—THQ	Puzzle
Transworld Snow—Infogrames	Sports
Wreckless: The Yakuza Missions—Activision	Action
WWF Raw Is War—THQ	Sports
Xbox	
Columns Crown—THQ	Puzzle
Crash Bandicoot—Universal	Action
Creatures—Conspiracy	Misc.
Duke Nukem—Rockstar	Action
ESPN Int'l Winter Sports 2002—Konami	Sports
Jonny Moseley Mad Trix—3DO	Sports
Moto GP—THQ	Racing
NBA Jam 2002—Acclaim	Sports
Pocky and Rocky—Craze	Action
Puyo Pop—THQ	Puzzle
RoboCop—Titus	Action
Sonic Advance—THQ	Action
Super Mario World—Nintendo	Action
Top Gun—Titus	Action
Worms Blast—Ubi Soft	Misc.
Zone of the Enders: Fist of Mars—Konami	Strategy

March

PlayStation 2	
All-Star Baseball 2003—Acclaim	Sports
Britney's Dance Beat—THQ	Music
Conflict Zone—Ubi Soft	Strategy
Duke Nukem—Rockstar	Action
Eve of Extinction—Eidos	Action
Freestyle—Electronic Arts	Action
Hot Shots Golf 3—Sony CEA	Sports
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer—Activision	Sports
King's Field 4—Agetec	RPG
Knockout Kings 2002—Electronic Arts	Sports
Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen 2—Eidos	Adventure
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2—Activision	Sports
Medal of Honor: Frontline—Electronic Arts	Action
MLB 2003—Sony CEA	Sports
Monster Jam Maximum—Ubi Soft	Action
Need for Speed: Pursuit 2—Electronic Arts	Racing
Przybyz: The Dark Unicorn—TDK Mediactive	RPG
Rally Simulation—Ubi Soft	Racing

Rayman Arena—Ubi Soft	Action
Simpsons Skateboarding—Electronic Arts	Action
Sled Storm—Electronic Arts	Action
Star Wars: Jedi Starfighter—LucasArts	Action
Test Drive—Infogrames	Racing
The Lost—Craze	Adventure
The Weakest Link—Activision	Misc.
Tiger Woods Pro Tour 2002—Electronic Arts	Sports
Transworld Surf—Infogrames	Sports
Triple Play 2002—Electronic Arts	Sports
Virtua Fighter 4—Sega	Fighting
World of Outlaws: Sprint Cars—Infogrames	Racing
GameCube	
Back Pedal—THQ	Racing
Bloody Roar: Primal Fury—Activision	Fighting
Donald Duck Goin' Quackers—Ubi Soft	Action
Galleon: Islands of Mystery—Interplay	Adventure
James Bond: Under Fire—Electronic Arts	Action
Jimmy Neutron Boy Genius—THQ	Action
Legends of Wrestling—Acclaim	Sports
MX2003 Feat. Ricky Carmichael—THQ	Sports
NBA Street—Electronic Arts	Sports
Rayman Arena—Ubi Soft	Action
Tetrís Worlds—THQ	Puzzle
WWF Wrestlemania 2002—THQ	Sports

All-Star Baseball 2003—Acclaim	Sports
Buffly the Vampire Slayer—Electronic Arts	Action
Crash Bandicoot: Cortex—Universal	Action
House of the Dead 3—Sega	Action
Knockout Kings—Electronic Arts	Sports
Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen 2—Eidos	Adventure
NBA 2K2—Sega	Sports
Sega GT 2002—Sega	Racing
Test Drive—Infogrames	Racing
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon—Ubi Soft	Action
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3—Activision	Action
Triple Play 2002—Electronic Arts	Sports
Unreal Championship—Infogrames	Action
Game Boy Advance	
Atari Anniversary—Infogrames	Misc.
Colin McRae Rally—Ubi Soft	Racing
Britney's Dance Beat—THQ	Misc.
Grand Theft Auto III—Rockstar	Adventure
Ice Age—Ubi Soft	Action
Jungle Book—Ubi Soft	Action
Major League Baseball—THQ	Sports
Motocross Maniacs Advance—Konami	Racing
NASCAR Heat—Infogrames	Racing
Pinball of the Dead—Sega	Misc.
Power Pro Tennis—Konami	Sports
Ripping Friends—THQ	Action
Smuggler's Run—Rockstar	Action
Space Invaders—Activision	Action
Tom Clancy's Rogue Spear—Ubi Soft	Action
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3—Activision	Sports

April

PlayStation 2	
Aliens: Colonial Marines—Electronic Arts	Action
Barbarian—Titus	Action
SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs—Sony CEA	Action
Spider-Man—Activision	Action
GameCube	
Star Fox Adventures—Nintendo	Adventure
NBA 2K2—Sega	Sports
Spider-Man—Activision	Action
Xbox	
Spider-Man—Activision	Action
Game Boy Advance	
Dragon Ball Z—Infogrames	Action
Spider-Man—Activision	Action

IMPORT CALENDAR

Space Channel 5 Part 2



Import Pick of the Month: Ulala is back to dance her way to victory against marauding Morolians in this PS2 and DC sequel to Sega's cult Dreamcast hit, *Space Channel 5*. Swing it, Ulala-chan!

PlayStation 2

1/31 Final Fantasy X International, Square (RPG)
1/31 Virtua Fighter 4, Sega (Fighting)
2/14 Space Channel 5 Part 2, Sega (Music)
2/21 Grandia II, Enix (RPG)
2/28 Xenosaga Episode II, Namco (RPG)
Feb. Space Channel 5, Sega (Music)
3/7 Onimusha 2, Capcom (Action)
March Suikoden III, Konami (RPG)
March Popolocrois III, Sony CEI (RPG)
March Tekken 4, Namco (Fighting)

Dreamcast

2/14 Space Channel 5 Part 2, Sega (Music)
March Sakura Taisen 4, Sega (RPG)
March Sakura Taisen Complete Box (includes Sakura Taisen 1-4), Sega (RPG)

Game Boy Advance

1/25 Tomato Adventure, Nintendo (RPG)
2/28 Geomon: A New Age, Konami (Action)
March Lunar Legend, Media Ring (RPG)

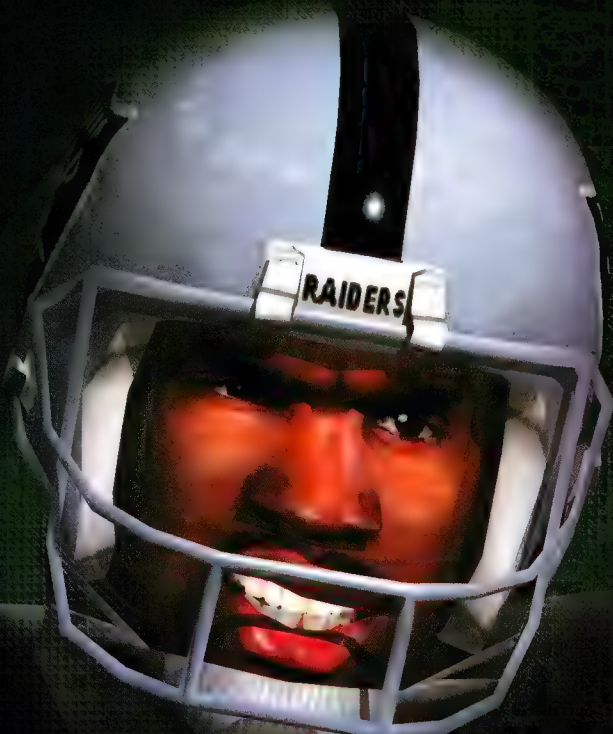
GameCube

2/14 Virtua Striker 3 Ver. 2002, Sega (Soccer)
2/22 Animal Leader, Nintendo (Simulation)
3/15 Doshin the Giant, Nintendo (Simulation)
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.

BLITZ

20 02



*actual in-game player model

WE GAVE THE ALL NEW NFL BLITZ 20-02
WHAT WOODSON GIVES OFFENSES.
A HUGE DOSE OF REALITY.



MIDWAY
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NFL Blitz 20-02 has evolved. Real teams, real players, real attitude, but totally reinvented for maximum impact. With an all-new engine powering B-on-B action, next-generation graphics and the revolutionary Impact Player customization feature, NFL Blitz 20-02 delivers "no refs, no rules, no mercy" football for the next millennium.

GAME PREVIEW AT WWW.NFLBLITZ.MIDWAY.COM

PlayStation 2



PlayStation 2



GAME BOY ADVANCE



NINTENDO
GAMECUBE

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Violence

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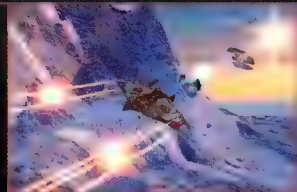
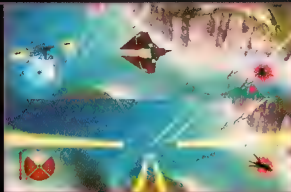


VIOLENCE



Official *Star Wars* Web Site www.starwars.com

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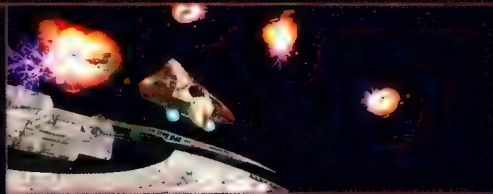
PlayStation®2



STAR WARS JEDI STARFIGHTER



Now, FORCE powered.



The Force is with you as you climb into the cockpit of the new Jedi starfighter — straight from *Star Wars: Episode II*. Take control of a true Jedi ship and use your Force powers of lightning, shield, reflex, and shockwave in more than 15 intensive missions. Even play with — or against — your friends in 2-player mode. And experience awesome flight action as only a Jedi can. Feel the power at www.jedistarfighter.com.

HSU AND CHAN

GAME DESIGNERS IN...

"REBIRTH"

OKAY, NOW THAT'S JUST WEIRD

IN GONNA GO FIND THE SOURCE MATERIAL!

HELLO, VIDEO GAMERS!

I'M HSU TANAKA, THAT'S MY BROTHER CHAN, AND WE WERE JUST DISCUSSING THE TREND, IN RECENT YEARS, OF REMAKING OLD 2-D GAMES IN 3-D - ZONG FROGGER, CENTIPEDE, SPACE INVADERS - BASICALLY EVERY AMUSEMENT MACHINE EVER TO OPENEN THE INTERIOR OF A MID-'80S PIZZA HALL HAS GOTTEN A POLYGONAL FACELIFT!

WHY ALL THE SUDDEN EXCITEMENT OVER BRINGING THESE OLDSKERS BACK TO LIFE? IS IT ALL JUST A CHEAP CORPORATE CASH-IN ON A FAMOUS, IF DISTINCTLY RETRO, LICENSING OPPORTUNITY?

OR COULD IT BE, JUST MAYBE, THAT THE GAMERS OF TODAY ARE FINALLY LEARNING TO APPRECIATE THE VIRTUES OF THESE OLDER TITLES, NOW THAT THEY'RE BEING RELEASED IN MORE ATTRACTIVE FORMS?

I'M GONNA HAVE TO GO LUTIN' CORPORATE CASH-IN' ON THIS ONE

OH, I KNOW, I WAS BEING RHETORICAL.

AT ANY RATE, WE HAVE TO GET BACK TO WORK ON OUR REMAKE OF THE HIT '80S ARCADE RELEASE, "SPACEWARK."

GONNA BE FULL 3-D!

THE KIDS WILL LOVE IT!

SEE THESE LIGHTNING EFFECTS? THESE'LL GET THE LITTLE HOOLIGANS QUAKING IN THEIR BIG PANTS! NOW WE ADD SOME PARTICLE!

WHAM!

WHAT WAS THAT?

FREEZE, HUMANIDS-- OR DIE!

EEEK! A WEDGE OF CHEESE HAS GROWN OLIVERS AND TURNED HOSTILE!

WHY DIDN'T YOU CLEAR OUT THE FRIDGE?

SILENCE!

I AM NOT CHEESE! I AM KREFLOR, CHIEF WARLORD OF THE NINTH GALAXY!

IT WAS I WHO LED THE GLORIOUS MISSION OF CONQUEST AGAINST THE PLANETS OF THE MILKY WAY AS WAS CHRONICLED IN THE VIDEO GAME "SPACEWARK."

OH, YES, RECOGNIZE YOU NOW

THAT DIDN'T TURN OUT REAL WELL FOR YOU GUYS, AS I RECALL

THERE WAS UNEXPECTED RESISTANCE IN THE FORM OF A SINGLE ASTROBOMB ON THE MOON'S SURFACE, ARMED WITH A LASER

WAS WE UNPREPARED. I DON'T LIKE TO TALK ABOUT IT

APPRECIATED. NOW, BEFORE WE GO AHEAD AND WALK YOUR PAPER-THIN BUTT OUT OF OUR OFFICE, WHY DID YOU COME HERE FIRST?

I AM HERE TO ISSUE AN URGENT DEMAND FOR YOU GUYS TO STOP THE "SPACEWARK" REMAKE IMMEDIATELY!

YOUR EYE-CATCHING VISUALS AND FLASHY COLORS DISHONOR OUR VETERANS OF THE GREAT WAR!

COUNTLESS OF OUR PEOPLE HAVE PERISHED BECAUSE THAT AS NATIONS WOULD BE ABLE TO ENJOY THE SAME UNCHANGING FIVE-MINUTE-AND-YOUR-BORED GAMEPLAY OF OUR ANCESTORS!

DO NOT SLUR THEIR NAMES!

WELL, KREFLOR, I UNDERSTAND YOUR CONCERNS, AND FRANKLY, WE DON'T LIKE THE SITUATION ANY MORE THAN YOU DO.

WELL, OKAY THAT'S NOT TRUE, WE'RE GETTING PAID.

BUT WE CAN'T BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR ANY FAILURE TO NEGOTIATE RESIDUALS.

LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE-- MOST OF THESE GAMES ARE OUT AND FORGOTTEN WITHIN THREE MONTHS, TOPS.

"THE NEW LEAVE IT TO BEAVER" WAS ON LONGER!

FOOLISH HUMANS!!

DO NOT TEST MY PATIENCE!

DO YOU NOT DETECT THE HORROROUS GAIT OF EVIL ON MY FACE?

UH... IS THAT WHERE YOUR EYES MOVE FROM SIDE TO SIDE?

UH, NO, THAT'S WHEN I'M CONFUSED, OR SCANNING THE HORIZON WITH MY MOUTH!

AWEN! NO HITTER! IT SEEMS YOU WILL NOT TAKE MY THREATS SERIOUSLY UNTIL I GIVE YOU A DISPLAY OF FORCE!

-GRANTS-

BEEET!

WAS THAT A POOP?

NO!! THAT WAS MY HYPER-SPACE FUSION LASER!

IT'S JUST LIVING THERE...

LAH OFF KAK!

NEED SOME ASSISTANCE, BOSS?

HA HA! IT APPEARS THE TABLES ARE TURNING! MEET MY SECOND-IN-COMMAND!

HE'S BASICALLY THE GAME AS MYSELF, BUT REVERSED!

SO, Y'KNOW, HE'S MORE... FIERCE... SPORTIER... GUSS.

LOOK, GUYS, YOU'RE 2-D YOU CAN MOVE ONLY ON THE X-Y PLANE, MEANING THAT EVEN IF YOU ARE ARMED WITH HYPER-SPACE FUSION LASERS, AND ARE NOT JUST OUTRIGHT DOING YOUR BUSINESS ON HIT US WHERE WE STANDING PARALLEL TO YOU, WHICH WE SIMPLY CHOOSE NOT TO BE

WELL, COULD YOU THEN?

...

FELLS, FACE FACTS! YOU CANT LIVE YOUR LIVES IN THE PAST! THE GAME IS OVER, IT'S TIME TO GET ON WITH YOUR FUTURE!

THE WORLD DIDNT STOP IN '85, THERE ARE ALL SORTS OF OPPORTUNITIES OUT THERE FOR A COUPLE OF TALENTED GUYS LIKE YOU!

YOU MEAN, LIVE MONEY? FAME? CONQUER?

UH... YEAH, SURE, AHEM

YES! THIS, THEN, IS WHAT WE SHALL DO!

OUR TALENTS ARE WASTED IN THE PALTRY FIELD OF GAMING!

THE WORLD WE ONCE FAILED TO CONQUER IS NOW OURS TO LUXURIATE!

WE WILL CONQUER THE PEOPLE'S HEARTS, INSTEAD OF THEIR HOMES, WITH OUR INDIVIDUAL SKILLS! NEEDLEPOINT! INTERPRETIVE DANCE!

YES, A GLORIOUS NEW BEGINNING FOR YOU, TO BE SURE!

NOW SCOOT, LAST ONE OUT GETS JAMMED INTO THE DOCUMENT SHREDDER

HA HA HA! FOOLISH THINGS, WE WILL USE YOUR OWN SENSES OF COMMERCE TO CONQUER YOU!

HA HA HA! COME, MY RED FRIEND, WE WILL USE YOUR OWN SENSES OF COMMERCE TO CONQUER YOU!

"IN PROTEST!"

THE END

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PlayStation 2



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Violence

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Violence



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PlayStation 2



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OPM

"...brimming with originality and innovation, and showcases some of the most fluid animation ever seen in a video game."

PSE 2

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IGN.com

"Every element in the game - from the largest hill to the smallest flower - is individually modeled, and the attention to detail is exquisite."

GameSpot.com

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Herdy Gerdy Game



Previews

This Month in Previews

PlayStation 2

- 64 Star Wars Racer Revenge
- 66 Hot Shots Golf 3
- 73 Barbarian V-Rally 3
- 74 Tekken 4
- 74 The Terminator
- 76 Virtua Fighter 4
- Headhunter
- Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future
- 82 Stuntman
- TimeSplitters 2
- Triple Play 2002
- 86 X-Men: Next Dimension
- Fatal Frame
- Freekstyle
- 87 Smash Court Tennis
- All-Star Baseball 2003
- Hitman 2: Silent Assassin
- Sled Storm 2

GameCube

- 88 Animal Forest
- 90 Bloody Roar: Primal Fury
- Star Fox Adventures
- 94 Soccer Slam
- Evolution Worlds
- NBA Street

Xbox

- 96 Gun Valkyrie
- 102-103 Jet Set Radio Future
- 104 WWF Raw Is War
- 106 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3
- RalliSport Challenge
- Test Drive
- 108 Knockout Kings 2002
- NBA Inside Drive 2002
- New Legends
- 110 Pro Race Driver
- The Thing

Game Boy Advance

- 112 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3
- Lunar Legend
- Robotech



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.

Can you feel the Sega love in this month's previews section? We have not one, not two, but six new Sega games to show you on the PS2, Xbox and GameCube. And that includes the highly anticipated *Jet Set Radio Future* (pg. 102-103). Even though Sega's released a handful of games for each system by now, we believe that their true coming-of-age game as a third-party publisher is *JSRF*.

If fighting games are more your speed, witness the return of the titans this month. New images for both *Tekken 4* (pg. 74) and *Virtua Fighter 4* (pg. 76) debut in the PS2 section. Could these brawlers mark the revival of the old Namco/Sega rivalry we enjoyed back in the early days of the Saturn and PlayStation? We sure hope so!

We even have some new GameCube games to show you (finally!). Ubi Soft takes the first stab at an RPG on the GC with *Evolution Worlds* (pg. 99), while fighting fans get *Bloody Roar: Primal Fury* (pg. 90) to tide them over until



Outside of *Halo*, *Jet Set Radio Future* is the game most of us have been waiting for on the Xbox. Get our hands-on impressions on page 102.

Namco's *Soul Calibur 2* hits the system. And to top it off, we have a blowout of *Animal Forest*, a late Japanese-only N64 game that's already been given the remake treatment on Nintendo's new system. Check it out on page 88.

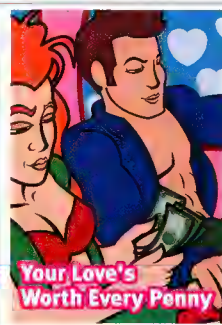
While nothing can match the sheer volume of great games released this past holiday season, it looks like the coming months are gonna come close. Who knows? Maybe the market can support three systems after all. 🎮

TOP 5 Preview Picks

1. **Jet Set Radio Future**
Xbox, February 2002
2. **Star Wars Racer Revenge**
PlayStation 2, February 2002
3. **Gun Valkyrie**
Xbox, March 2002
4. **Animal Forest**
GameCube, TBD 2002
5. **Hot Shots Golf 3**
PlayStation 2, February 2002

Happy Valentine's Day from EGM

Use these *MGS2*, *Smash Bros.*, *GTA3* and *Halo*-themed valentines to tell your sweetie how you feel about him or her this month. You're welcome.



Star Wars Racer Revenge

Publisher:	LucasArts
Developer:	Rainbow Studios
Players:	1-2
Genre:	Racing
% Done:	90%
Release:	February 2002
Web Address:	www.lucasarts.com
The Good:	More of that white-knuckle podracing action.
The Bad:	The storyline here has nothing to do with <i>Episode II</i> ...
And The Ugly:	...which means you don't get any Natalie "Padmé" Portman action.

WHINY HERDES

Darth Raiden



You won't find any *Episode II* movie tie-ins in *Racer Revenge*, but the game does have a 3D model of Anakin Skywalker, as played by teen stud Hayden Christensen. After seeing excerpts from his masterful performance in the *Episode II* trailers, we couldn't help but be reminded of another anti-hero we wanted to bitch-slap last November. That's right, we're talking about that whiny long-haired albino Raiden, from *Metal Gear Solid 2*. While *RR* will have Anakin sound bites, they're thankfully kept to just yelps and grunts.



As the *Star Wars* money machine gears up for a massive *Episode II* onslaught this spring, LucasArts will fire the opening salvo by releasing games that hope to take our minds out of Middle Earth, and back to that ancient galaxy so far, far away. One such console project is *Star Wars Racer Revenge*, a follow-up to the superb *Episode I Racer* (on N64 and DC) released in 1999.

RR takes place eight years after Anakin Skywalker served up humiliating defeat for his podracing arch-rival, Sebulba. Now the ugly little bastard (Sebulba, that is) is back and cruisin' for another bruisin'.

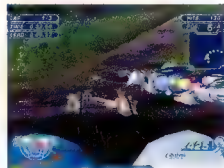
If, by looking at these screenshots, you think that podracing involves flying two massive jet engines by the seat of your Padawan jockeys at speeds of up to 600 mph, you're absolutely right. In a lot of ways, *RR* is essentially a beefed-up version of podracing for the PS2. That reckless sense of speed is back, along with 14 original tracks and a roster of opponents, both new and old. The play mechanics are faithful to that of the prequel, too. You turbo boost, at the risk of overheating your engines—or hit the airbrakes to

powerslide around those hairpin turns. Take too much damage and you may have to slow down to repair your ride.

The biggest change to the game is the behavior of the computer drivers. No, they may not be realistic or smart, but now they're pissed. Learn to drive offensively, or you'll literally get slammed off the track. If you thought podracing was fast before, it's just plain brutal now in *RR*. This tweak to the formula significantly changes the flow of the race. You're constantly watching your blind spots and driving to shaft the competition.

Admittedly, *RR* may not go out on a limb to create something totally unique, but it takes all that was great about the first game (speed and controls), and polishes the zero-g thrill ride to a glossy shine.

—Che Chou

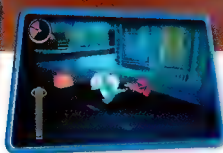


With *Racer Revenge's* more aggressive computer drivers, you'll spend more time defending your position than simply navigating the track.





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Scream Team



PREVIEW

Publisher:	Sony CEA
Developer:	Clap Hanz
Players:	1-2
Genre:	Sports
% Done:	90%
ESM Top 100:	#28 (<i>Hot Shots Golf 2</i>)
Release:	March 2002
Web Address:	www.scea.com
The Good:	Superb visuals, trademark <i>Hot Shots</i> gameplay.
The Bad:	Courses and (most) characters are fictional.
And The Ugly:	Wait'll you see how some of these guys dress....

NOT SHOPS

A brand-new feature to *Hot Shots Golf 3* is a special shop where you can purchase dozens of items, power-ups and other random goodies using the Hot Shots Points you earn during Tournament play.

Things you can spend your points on range from the very useful (clubs, balls, caddies and special moves) to the extremely frivolous (menu wallpapers, new outfits and replay camera angles). This new addition to the series should add some serious replay value. Shop 'til you drop, baby!



TALKES FROM THE GOLF COURSE

Several of the characters in *Hot Shots Golf 3* are lippped by John Cassir, the talented voice behind the Crypt Keeper from Sci Fi Channel's *Tales from the Crypt*. John's past video game-related voice work includes the loveable Snott Henchrat from the ever-popular *Earthworm Jim* animated series.

Hot Shots Golf 3



Crocodile Dundee is taking in a quick 18 holes before heading off on that jungle safari he booked (left). Meanwhile, a super-cool Sam Jackson look-alike contemplates beating his caddy to death (below).



As any PlayStation owner over the age of 25 will tell you, there's no better way to waste away a lazy Sunday afternoon than to grab three of your buds, some chips and a six-pack (fruit juice, of course), and hit the virtual links with the latest version of *Hot Shots Golf*. If you haven't yet had the pleasure of rubbing your best friend's nose in the cheese dip after a glorious Par 5 Eagle, you might want to start preparing yourself, because *Hot Shots Golf 3*, the series' first PS2 entry, is on the way.

The beauty of the *Hot Shots* games is that they're extremely easy for even newbies to pick up and play while still maintaining the depth and longevity that hardcore fans of the sport demand. More importantly, they're damn fun. *Hot Shots 3* continues the series' legacy by taking the tried-and-true gameplay of the previous two games and supercharging it with an all-new beautiful 3D engine, lots of subtle gameplay enhancements, new modes and of course, a fresh batch of characters, caddies and courses.

The biggest improvement to *Hot Shots 3* comes in the graphics department. The 2D characters of the previous games have been replaced by new 3D models, and the rough, grainy course graphics now look incredibly detailed and realistic. Weather effects abound, and each course can be played in any of the four seasons and at different times of the day, allowing for a wide variety of eye candy. Best of all, the camera movement is swift and smooth, making it easier than ever to get a good view of the course during each hole.

Further upgrades come in the form of an

enhanced putting interface (an extremely useful bar shows the lie of the green from the side), a cool new item shop (see sidebar), and a sweet National Tournament mode. Here, you can compete in special Internet competitions by downloading passwords from the official HSG3 Web site and inputting them in the game. According to Sony, not only will you be able to upload your high scores to the Net, but top-ranking players will be eligible to win prizes as well.

Needless to say, if you're a fan of prior *Hot Shots* games, or just looking for a fun, new multiplayer game to play with your pals, you're gonna love *Hot Shots Golf 3*. For those of you who might be sitting on the fence (about the game, we mean. Your other preferences are your business), look for our full review of HSG3 next month. But rest assured, after spending hours with the preview version, we think this is one of the best golf games out there.

—John Ricciardi



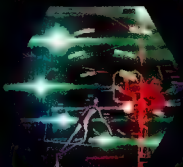


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MOP
MOPED
MHOBALL
MULLET
MUMBLE

THING

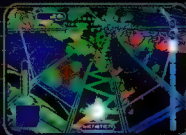
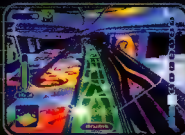
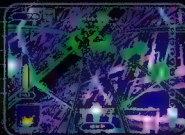
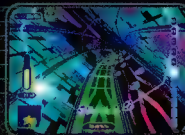
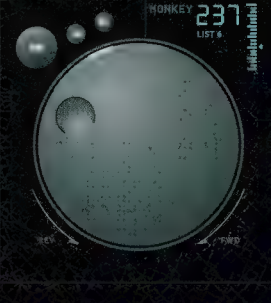
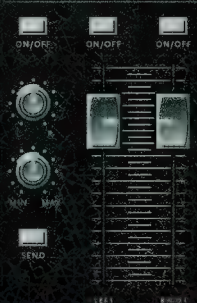
MONKEY

STATUS:
NAMING IN PROGRESS...
MC SOUR MONKEY

NAME THAT FITS SKILLZ.



TIPS
SHOW PEOPLE CAN'T REMEMBER MORE THAN THREE WORDS
USE YOUR INTERESTS
IF YOU HATE JOHN AND YOU REALLY LIKE HOT, REGISTER YAMS AND PING-PONG. WELL, TRY AND USE THAT.



FREQUENCY

EVERYONE



Mild Lyrics

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PS2

PREVIEW
GALLERY

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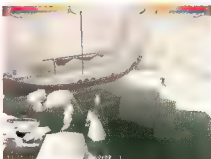
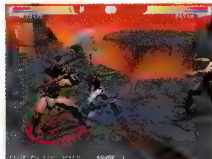
Can't get enough barbaric goodness? You're in luck. Rumors persist that Warner Bros. will produce a third *Conan* film in the coming years. Also, Mattel recently revived the sword-swingin' Masters of the Universe toy line. Huzzah!

Barbarian

When we think of barbarians, our minds fill with images of big muthas named Conan and Lothar bashing each other's skulls in with massive battle axes. That's why *Barbarian*, a four-player fighting game from **Titus** and **Saffire**, had us re-evaluating what it really means to be barbaric. Not only does the game let you play as that surly homo erectus with a battle axe, but the 10-character roster also lets you live out those melee fantasies as a wizard, a druid or an assassin.

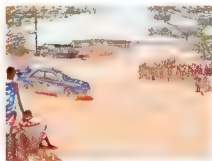
Similar to brawlers like *Power Stone* (DC) or *Ehrgeiz* (PS1), each fighter will have his or her own arena with plenty of background interaction. And although *Barbarian* is a four-player game, it also has a ton of single-player quests—Titus is claiming over 300 of them—for you to embark upon.

Check back next month, when we'll have the full scoop on this hybrid fighting game, slated for release **February 2002**.



V-Rally 3

The *V-Rally* games are widely regarded as some of the best in the genre. So it's no surprise that French publisher **Infogrames** is continuing the series on the PS2 in 2002. This time around developer **Eden Studios** has assigned a separate designer to each race course, assuring a unique experience in every event. As of yet, Infogrames has not announced a U.S. release for *V-Rally 3*.



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HOT GEAR, CIRCA 1991

Everyone remembers the punky young John Connor of *Terminator 2* who uses an Atari laptop to rip off an ATM. Well, if you have an interest in the computers of now-defunct Atari, check out www.atari-history.com for a wealth of information on the subject.

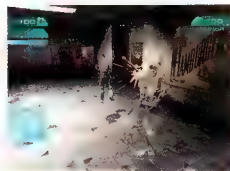
Tekken 4

Tentatively scheduled to arrive this **spring**, the fourth installment of **Namco's Tekken** series (not counting *Tekken Tag Tournament* or *Tekken GBA*) will soon make the trip home from the arcades to the PS2. Regarding *Tekken 4's* newly interactive 3D backgrounds, director Masahiro Kimoto says, "Depending on the character you choose, a stage can give you an advantage or a disadvantage." Sounds good to us.



The Terminator

In the first half of the 21st century, a satellite defense system called SkyNet achieves sentience and begins to wipe out mankind. Thanks to developer **Paradigm**, who brought us the rock-solid *Spy Hunter*, we'll get to see the rebellion against the machines firsthand. The rebel leader, John "No Problemo!" Connor, is the main character of this third-person action game. Expect it in **spring 2002** from **Infogrames**.



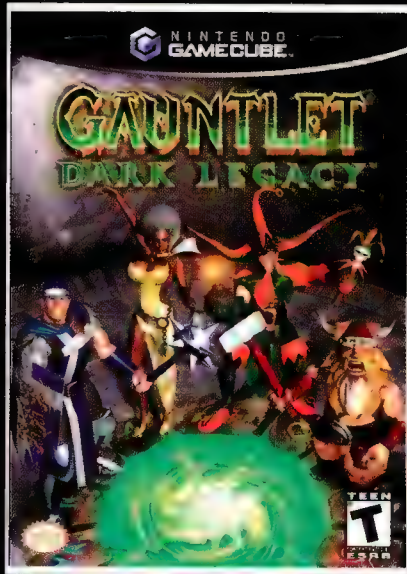


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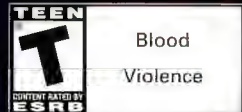
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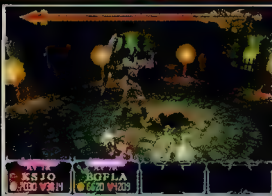
MIDWAY

4-PLAY AT ITS BEST

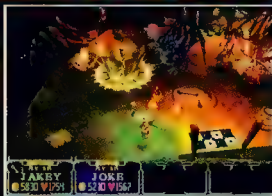
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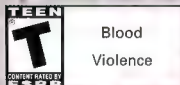
Terrifying Boss Battles



Spectacular Magic Attacks



1-4 Player Co-operative Action



PlayStation²



Available March 2002
Sneak Preview at
gauntletdarklegacy.com

PS2

PREVIEW
GALLERY

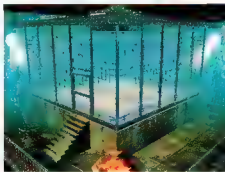


RUN 'N GUN 'N HUM

Do you think a game about a do-gooder dolphin is weird? Check this out—the developers of the original 16-bit *Ecco* games went on to produce *Kolibri*, the world's only hummingbird-themed shooter. If you're the unfortunate owner of a Sega 32X, you owe it to yourself to track down this biological oddity.

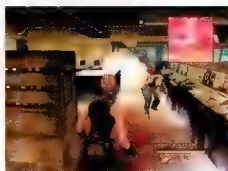
Virtua Fighter 4

Sega's bold claims that its PlayStation 2 version of *Virtua Fighter 4* would look just as good as its arcade counterpart seem to be true. Take a close look at these PS2 screens and tell us you're not impressed. But it isn't just the incredible graphics that have us excited about *VF4*. With *Tekken 4* posing serious competition on the home front, developer **AM2** has tweaked the timing of the game to feel more like *VF2* than *VF3*. In essence, *VF4* will be less frustrating and more easy to pick up for novice players, while maintaining the depth the series has long been known for. The game also uses an artificial intelligence system that actually learns how you fight and mimics your tactics. Our kung-fu is good. Very good...and *VF4* is just what we need this **March** to tide us over until *Soul Calibur 2* in 2003.



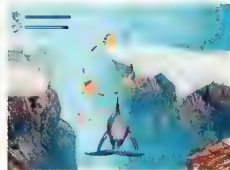
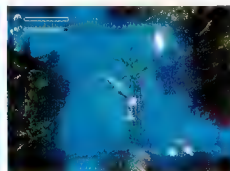
Headhunter

This tactical-espionage title from **Sega** was originally supposed to come out here last year for the Dreamcast. Of course, with the DC dying, those plans were scrapped. Now that *Headhunter's* been picked up for the PS2, however, we may yet see this cool little game on our shores. Think of it as sort of an *MGS2*-lite. The emphasis lies much more on nonstop shooting action than stealth. We'll let you know if a U.S. release is scheduled.



Ecco the Dolphin

If you missed it on Dreamcast, now's your chance to catch **Sega's** underwater adventure on PS2 (**available now in the U.K., TBA in the U.S.**). You play Ecco, a dolphin with stars on his forehead, as he uses his bottleness to sniff out trouble and defend Earth from a race of aliens called the Foe. Along the way you'll solve puzzles, fight undersea enemies (like great white sharks) and acquire a taste for sushi. Yum!



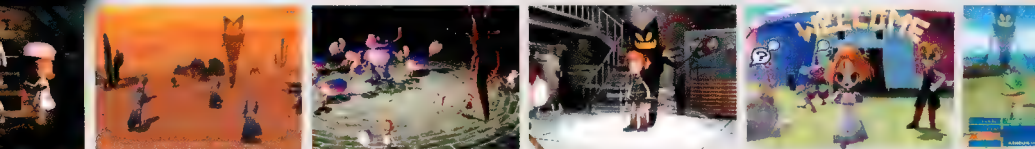




PlayStation 2

ARE YOU IN CONTROL OF YOUR SHADOW?

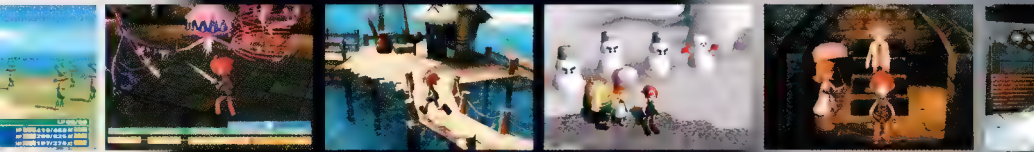
Don't be certain. At least, not until you meet Ari, a young boy from the village of Tenel who has lost control of his to the spirit of a 300 year old evil king. Now it's up to you to join him on a quest to help win it back. Along the way, solve puzzles, decipher mysterious clues and fight battles in a bizarre adventure that will test your wits, skill and make you question the proof of your own reality.



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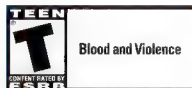
PlayStation 2

SQUARESOFT



FINAL FANTASY X

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The idea of a game starring a stuntman is not exactly a new one; like many great ideas, it's come and gone before. Witness Codemasters' *Ultimate Stuntman* for the NES, published in the U.S. by the now-defunct Camerica. Playing sort of like *Spy Hunter*, the game pitted you against Dr. Evil (no, not the *Austin Powers* one) in a quest to rescue your girl.

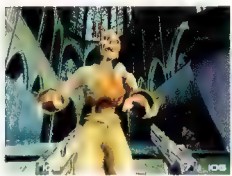
Stuntman

Take a look at these new shots of **Infogrames' March** release, *Stuntman*. Developed by **Reflections** (the same team behind the *Driver* series), the game dares you to perform a series of automobile stunts for an action movie. The flashier you drive, the more points you get. It seems like a natural step for Reflections to make a game like this. After all, the best parts of *Driver 1* and *2* were the chase-oriented minigames.



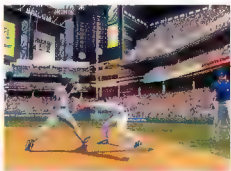
TimeSplitters 2

All the exploding crates, monkeys and Play-Doh enemies you could want are in the demo we saw of **Eidos'** shooter sequel, which is due out this **spring**. The game's opening sequence and gameplay reminded us a lot of *N64's GoldenEye*, which could be a plus. And even though *TS2* looks plain, it runs smoothly on the PS2. Developer **Free Radical** is focusing heavily on the single-player game after *TS1*'s mediocre solo offering.



Triple Play 2002

Some baseball games try to impress with mountains of stats, every conceivable option, and details most could give a crap about. On the other side, **EA's Triple Play** shoots for a flashy presentation and friendly, arcade playability. It's worked so far, so why mess with a good thing? Most of the changes in this year's edition are purely cosmetic and don't necessarily affect gameplay. They include more accurate player bodies and faces, additional camera angles (here's a ton already), plus play-by-play and color commentary by Bob Costas and Harold Reynolds (that'll be cool). The title is slated for a **March** release.



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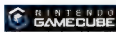
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PlayStation.2





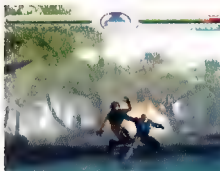
PREVIEW
GALLERY



MORE X, LESS MEN
Recently, 20th Century Fox announced that the sequel to 2000's hit film *X-Men* will be named *X2*. This oddly titled film will open on May 2, 2003, and word is Halle Berry's Storm sports a sexy makeover. Rrrrow!

X-Men: Next Dimension

Activision's latest mutant massacre brings the frenzied action of the popular *Mutant Academy* fighting games to the PS2. Eight-way movement, complex combos and aerial raves flesh out the gameplay, and massive, multi-tiered arenas with destructible objects offer *Dead Or Alive* 3-style action. Favorites like Wolverine and Psylocke return from previous games, while nine mutants make their debut in this installment. Visually, the game shines with glossy newness. Although not quite as sexy as Halle Berry in a bodysuit, the graphics represent a serious leap forward for the series. Our telepathic powers point to a **September 2002** release.



Fatal Frame

If you've found Capcom's *Resident Evil* series to be less than horrifying as of late, **Capcom** has an alternative up their sleeve that they hope will put the bumps back on your goose. *Fatal Frame* follows the adventures of Miku, a young lady trying to find her missing journalist brother who went off to investigate the *Blair Witch*-y disappearance of a writer researching the old Himura Mansion. Will these young people never learn?

Naturally the house is haunted by hordes of tortured souls, but Miku can blow them back into the ether by using her mother's special camera as a weapon. Miku can recharge her camera by finding extra-powerful rolls of film scattered around the mansion.

The premise makes *Fatal Frame* seem like a goofy sort of *Ghostémon Snap*, but the game controls very well and does a great job of scaring the \$#!@ out of you. Fans of *Silent Hill 2*'s *Se7en*-esque graphics will delight in the similarity of *Fatal Frame*'s aesthetics. Give it a shot when it ships in **March 2002**.



Freekstyle

Like *SSX Tricky*? Like freestyle motocross? Then **EA Sports BIG** has just the game for you. *Freekstyle* borrows the insane air and gonzo attitude of *SSX* and adds a pinch of realism by including some of the biggest names from the freestyle motocross world, like Mike "Metz" Metzger, Brian Deegan, "Mad" Mike Jones and the Flyin' Hawaiian, Clifford Adoptante. Imagine launching yourself off a 200-foot cliff and performing a Superman seat grab, a Saran wrap and a 360 all before you land. The game's eight venues, including Crash Pad II and Big Sky, are packed with shortcuts and hidden paths. In addition to Circuit, Race and Freestyle modes, the game allows two to four players to compete in head-to-head, split-screen action. Death defiance is scheduled to begin this **spring**.



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TAINTED LOVE

Thanks to what must be a large pile of money, *Smash Court* is the only game to feature the lovely Anna Kournikova. But perhaps you don't remember the not-so-lovely computer virus that bore her name. The worm traveled via Outlook and deleted files on recipients' systems. People thought they were getting a nude pic of the tennis star but instead got wiped.

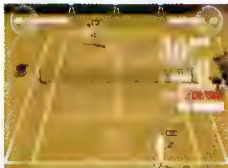


Smash Court Tennis

Namco will make quite a "racquet" this **spring** when it releases *Smash Court Tennis* for PS2.

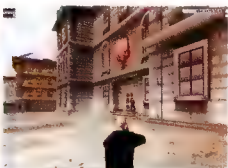
Playing as one of eight top pros, such as Andre Agassi, Pete Sampras and—*sha-wing!*—Anna Kournikova, gamers will be able to compete in the world's top tournaments, including Wimbledon, the U.S. Open and the Australian Open.

The game will also support up to four players with a multi-tap for doubles competition.



Hitman 2: Silent Assassin

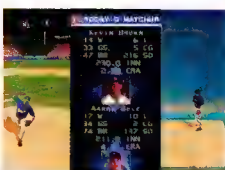
Even though the original game was only for PC, **Eidos** and developer **IO Interactive** promise the sequel will be just what console gamers want. In **May**, you'll take the role of an amnesia-stricken hitman as you travel to exotic lands, meet interesting people, and kill them. This is a gory, globetrotting mystery. Be sure to pack a sweater and some heat.



All-Star Baseball 2003

To quote Yogi Berra, "This is like déjà vu all over again." *ASB 2002* came out not more than seven months ago, and now **Acclaim** is already releasing the 2003 version this **February**—it's madness!

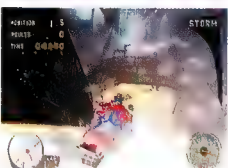
New features include trading cards (they display players' stats, just like real baseball cards), broken bats and two new stadiums. The big question remains, though, will it be bug free, or will those nasty glitches still be hanging around?



Sled Storm 2

The original *Sled Storm* was the snowmobile racing game to own for PlayStation, and this PS2 sequel looks equally promising. Developed at **Electronic Arts Canada** (the frostbitten freaks responsible for the *SSX* series), *Sled Storm 2* has a distinct arcade look and feel. Racers fill their S.T.O.R.M. meters by smashing through objects ranging from signs to entire buildings. S.T.O.R.M. boosts pump up the action by providing increased power, invulnerability and over-the-top stunts. The game's seven environments range from an Australian mountaintop course to an iceberg in the Bermuda Triangle.

The game's DTS surround sound and HDTV support will also make it a great way to show off your entertainment center, when it drops this **March**.





PREVIEW



THE CARD-E CONNECTION

In Japan, Nintendo is releasing a set of Animal Forest trading cards that utilize the new Card-e Reader peripheral for Game Boy Advance. Each card showcases a particular animal, and stores data that can be used with the Animal Forest GC game. We say, throw some NES games on them babies!

Animal Forest

Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Nintendo
Players: 1
Genre: Communication Game
Release: TBD 2002
Web Address: www.nintendo.com
The Good: Innovative, fun, laid-back gameplay.
The Bad: Cutesy characters may offend image-conscious guys.
And The Ugly: Take care of your home or roaches'll invade (eww...).



Everything in *Animal Forest* takes place in time, using the GC's internal clock. Seasons change, holiday events take place, and so on.



"Communicate" by writing letters.



THIS OLD FOREST

Animal Artistry



One of the new features exclusive to the GameCube version of *Animal Forest* is the ability to create your own designs and logos for use on various in-game objects (clothes, umbrellas, wallpaper, etc.). Using the supplied paint program (top), we re-created an old plumber friend of ours and slapped his image on a flag.



Back in issue #144 last summer, we previewed a quirky little import N64 title called *Animal Forest*. Although this charming "communication" game from Nintendo never saw the light of day in America, a recently released GameCube update—known as *Animal Forest +* in Japan—most likely will.

As you'd know if you read our first preview, *Animal Forest* is a unique and different type of game in that it's not really goal-based. There's no main objective to pursue, no evil dragon to slay, no princess to save. Instead, as a newcomer to a forest village, your only purpose is to live life as you see fit, communicating with the locals, doing odd jobs for cash or items, decorating and expanding your home, and indulging in such leisurely activities as bug-catching, fishing and playing video games. Or you can just be a lazy bum—the choice is yours. The laid-back atmosphere and open-endedness of the gameplay will surely intrigue fans of games like *Harvest Moon* or *The Sims* (PC).

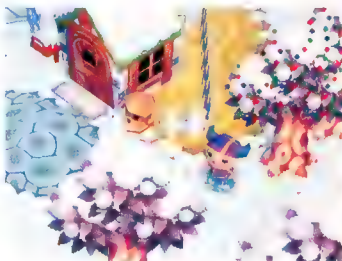
Furthering the communication aspects of the game is the fact that up to three other people can "move in" to your community (friends, family

members—whoever) and co-exist in your little "hood, interacting with each other by leaving messages, sending letters, trading items and the like. You can even take your memory card to a friend's place and use it alongside his or her save data so you can "visit" each other's villages, just to hang out, or maybe to trade stuff like fruits or rare items. GameCube can make animal friends in another person's town, which could lead to said animals packing up and moving to a new "system." The possibilities are nearly endless, and this is what makes *Animal Forest* so addictive and fun.

The GC version of *AF* sports a host of minor tweaks to the N64 game, in addition to some entirely new features like a design editor (see sidebar), a museum for donating fossils, fish and other rare objects. This disc also has a tropical island that you can visit if you have a Game Boy Advance hooked up to your 'Cube.

Nintendo has confirmed a U.S. release for *Animal Forest* on their Web site, but they haven't set a release date yet. With any luck, we'll be settling into our new woodland homes before the end of the year.

—John Ricciardi





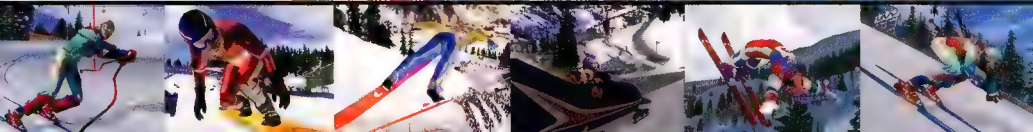
GOLD RUSH



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AVAILABLE FORMATS



PlayStation 2



AVAILABLE FORMAT



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PREVIEW
GALLERY



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Poor Europeans. Thanks to trademark infringements with an old Atari 2600 game, the original Super Nintendo *Star Fox* adventure was known as the unassuming *Star Wing* in the U.K. The N64 Sequel? *Lylat Wars*. Let's hope they get a real title for *Star Fox Adventures*—maybe it'll just stay *Dinosaur Planet* over there.

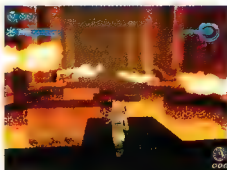
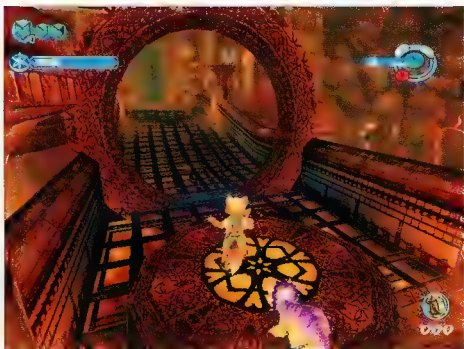
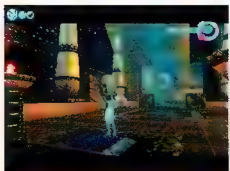
Bloody Roar: Primal Fury

Hey, furry fighting-game fans! **Activision** is bringing out a bona-fide brawler for the GameCube this **March**. *BR: PF* brings back the cast of the PS2 game, *Bloody Roar 3*, while adding a pair of new characters. Unlike *BR3*, which only let you destroy walls at the end of a round, you can knock 'em down at any time now. But, the new two-tier beast meter that powers-up your fuzzy ass for double the damage is the main adjustment.



Star Fox Adventures

With GameCube *Zelda* taking up its new love-it-or-hate-it Looney Tunes look, gamers hoping for a slightly more realistic-looking 3D adventure game may want to set their sights on **Nintendo's** upcoming *Star Fox Adventures*. It's no secret that *SFA's* main gameplay is heavily inspired by the two N64 *Zelda* titles, but according to developer **Rare**, there'll be plenty of other play styles as well, many of which have yet to be revealed (apparently those nifty Arwing flight scenes we've shown in past issues are just a taste of what's to come). Barring any more delays, expect it in stores on **March 25**.





airblade

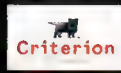
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ANTI-GRAVITY. The next evolution
 of boarding is here. No wheels. No snow.
 No surf. Just air, air, and more air.
 See ya when you finally come down.



Mild Violence
 Mild Language

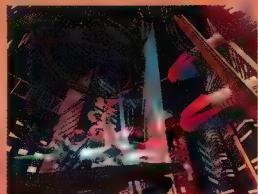
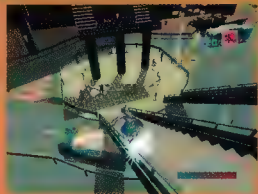


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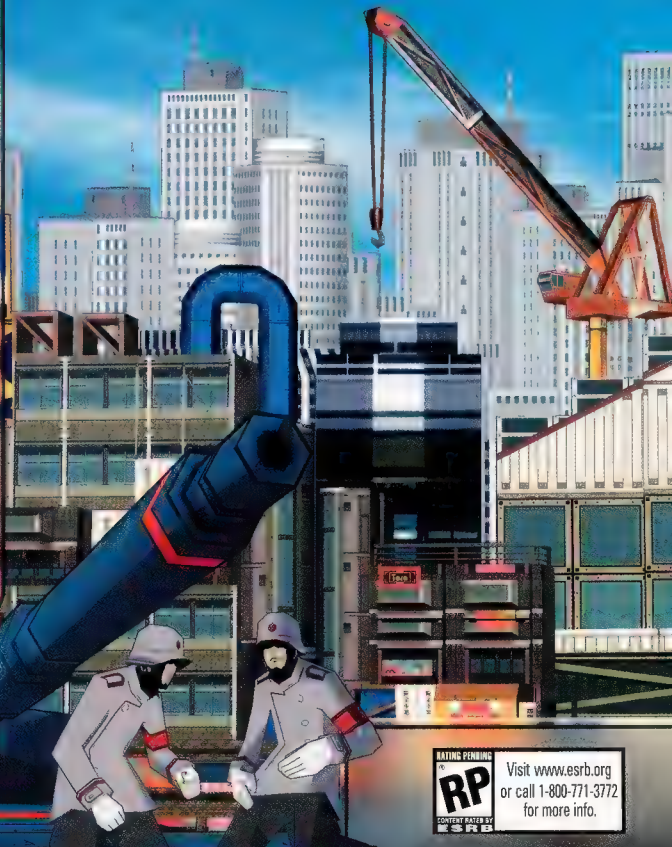
EXPRESS YOURSELF



...and
...and's incredible stunts and
...and new tricks and attacks, JSR
...and really hip action-adventure was
...and led of its time.

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TO THE EXTREME IN THE ROLLING REVOLUTION



The setting: Tokyo. The year: 2024.
Transportation mode: rocket-powered skates.
JSRF: Jet Set Radio Future is all about extremes. Extreme
Music. Extreme Action. Extreme Style. Jet Set Radio
Future is all about pushing into flying, breaking cities, tearing
down bad guys and gangs. Enter a world where freedom
and style go hand in hand and freedom of expression is
the only rule. JSRF: Jet Set Radio Future is all about
extremes. Extreme Music. Extreme Action. Extreme Style.



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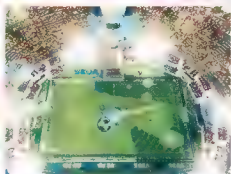
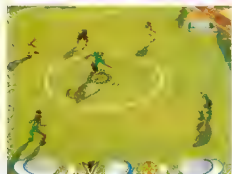
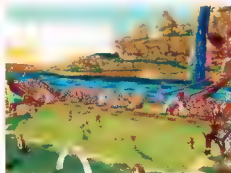
PREVIEW
GALLERY



EVOLUTION WEB WORKS
Those who can't get enough of the cute ragamuffin explorers of the *Evolution* series would do well to check out developer Sting's *Evolution* Web site. It has cool bonuses like screensavers and wallpaper, but unfortunately the site is mainly in Japanese. Click carefully at www.sting.co.jp/evo2/ to find what you need.

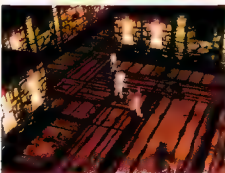
Soccer Slam

This spring, **Visual Concepts** and **Sega** take a break from simulating reality to bring us *Soccer Slam*, a three-on-three arcade romp based on the world's most popular sport. Seeing that this is essentially the *NBA Showtime* of soccer games, expect plenty of wacky power-ups, special moves and effects. A quest mode allows your players to improve with each victory, as you gun for the Continental Cup.



Evolution Worlds

Evolution Worlds, the latest from series developer **Sting** and publisher **Ubi Soft**, is purported to be a mix between the original two games in the series, although these screens closely resemble *Evolution 2*. Once again you'll be joining the hyper-cute anime kids Mag Launcher and Linear Cannon (yes, everyone in the game is named after weapons—don't ask) on their *Indiana Jones*-style adventures. Of course, *Indy* movies never have three-hour sequences of Harrison Ford traversing a randomly generated maze; let's hope that *Evolution Worlds* doesn't have that either, for once. We do know that the series' excellent turn-based battle system will be back. Expect more mystic ancient CyFrame technology and twisty passages in **spring 2002**.



NBA Street

Few play street-style basketball better than the crew at *EGM*. You should see Previews Editor Greg Sewart's 360° behind-the-head jam—it's a beautiful sight (yes, some white men can jump). When it comes to video game hoops, *NBA Street* is no slouch either. If you're unfamiliar, *Street* is a truck-centric, three-on-three contest where style points are weighed as heavily as the final score. You progress through several cities, challenging the local heroes as well as real NBA players (see Michael Jordan, top right).

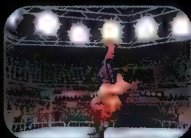
Gameplay is virtually identical to the PS2 version (once you get used to the small-ish GameCube controller, that is). An additional Washington, D.C. court and rewards system are the new features exclusive to this GameCube edition. **EA Sports** plans on releasing the game in **March**.



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Blood
Violence

PlayStation 2



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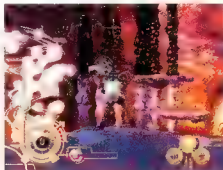
PREVIEW



REAL-LIFE VALKYRIE
When we're not busy choking our video chickens at *EGM*, we're off to www.valkyrievideos.com, a one-stop wonderland of strength and beauty. Nothing's sexier than a built chick whose neck is thicker than your thigh.

Gun Valkyrie

- Platform:** Sega
- Developer:** Smilebit
- Players:** 1
- Genre:** Action
- % Done:** 85%
- Release Date:** March 2002
- Web Site:** www.sega.com
- The Good:** Lush visuals and creative level designs.
- The Bad:** Steep learning curve for the controls.
- And The Winner:** *GV* might be more like *Metroid* than Retro Studios' upcoming *Metroid Prime* slated for the GameCube.



A big part of *Gun Valkyrie's* platforming action is learning to manage your jetpack's fuel reserve while jumping from ledge to ledge.



It's clear that somebody over at Smilebit watched *Starship Troopers* too many times. Yes, Hudson, *GV* is a bug hunt.

THE TUG STUMP

Gun Valkyrie originally started out as a Dreamcast game that used both a control pad and a light gun. The previous incarnation gave you full 3D movement with the analog stick in one hand, while popping caps with your gun in the other. Heck, if it's better than *Resident Evil Gun Survivor*, we'll take it!

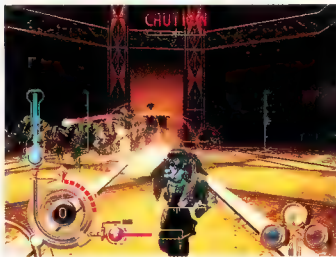
Smilebit, one of Sega's most talented development teams, is about to unleash a pair of its latest games on the Xbox. One—*Jet Set Radio Future*—you've no doubt seen plenty of coverage on. But what's this about a mech-based 3D shooter called *Gun Valkyrie*? Well, Sega finally sent us a playable this month and we're here to spill the beans.

For a straightforward action game, *GV* sure has a ton of back story. Its mad-scientist-corrupted-by-absolute-power motif is kind of over-the-top, but the industrial revolution-era premise does lend the game a unique flavor. So even while the individual missions feel somewhat disjointed, *GV* gives you plenty of reading material to tie it all together.

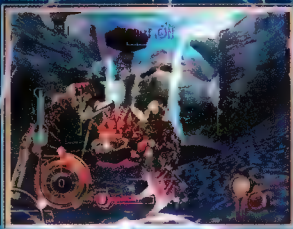
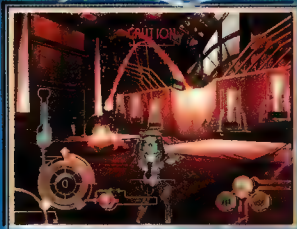
As you can see from the screenshots, it's hard to argue with *GV's* presentation. The game runs fast, looks gorgeous, and is ripe with creative vision. What these pictures don't convey, however, is the steep learning curve of the controls. *GV* uses both sticks on the pad to control movement and targeting...but strangely enough, you can't strafe. That's right, no strafing. Instead, you've got to master your jetpack for evasive maneuvers. You dash from side to side by pushing in on the left stick together with a direction, and pull off quick 180-degree turnarounds the same way on the right stick. And these are just the movement controls; you've also got to worry about targeting, switching weapons, and keeping an eye on your jetpack's replenishing fuel supply.

True, *Valkyrie's* overly complex controls had us stymied for a while. They're manageable, and eventually, you do get good at it, but the game just doesn't feel as intuitive as say, *Zone of the Enders* on the PS2. Of course, a lot of it may have something to do with the hectic battles. And at its heart, that's what *GV* is all about. Too bad the controls probably won't change too much before the game ships. We'll reserve final judgement until we get our mitts on a reviewable copy. Until then, keep drooling.

—Che Chou



GUNVALKYRIE



INTRODUCING GUNVALKYRIE

AN INVADING ALIEN ARMY. A GUN-TOTING BLONDE VIXEN. A LONE SCIENTIST'S DEADLY DISCOVERY. WELCOME TO GUNVALKYRIE, WHERE ONLY YOUR WITS AND CUTTING-EDGE ARTILLERY CAN SAVE THE WORLD FROM TOTAL ANNIHILATION. YOUR MISSION: EXTERMINATE A DEADLY ALIEN SPECIES, CAPTURE A MAD SCIENTIST AND RE-ESTABLISH ORDER TO AN OUT-OF-CONTROL PLANET. THE WHOLE WORLD IS COUNTING ON IT.



Blood and Gore
Violence



BELIEVE IT OR NOT,
HER BEST FEATURE IS
HER TRIGGER FINGER.



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worst fear is
no longer the
dawn.



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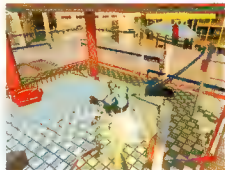




PREVIEW

Jet Set Radio Future

Platform:	Sega
Developer:	Smilebit
Players:	1-4
Genre:	Action-Adventure
Play Time:	75%
Release:	February 2002
Also See:	Tony Hawk 2X
Web Address:	www.jsrf.com
The Good:	Streamlined control means that the rockin' ain't stoppin' for anything.
The Bad:	Concerned parents will condemn vandalism again.
And The Why:	In 2024, Professor K looks like someone's grandpa.



There's nothing like pulling off a wild grind, and now grinding is easier than ever. You'll automatically slide up and down nearly everything.

Sega canned the thumb-busting painting routines of the first game. Tagging is now accomplished with one speedy move.



STAYING FRESH

Triple Treat



Jet Set Radio Future carries on its forerunner's level design with three different types of stages.

Paint the Town: When you first arrive in a new area, your only goal is to tag like mad. Unlike the first game, the police resistance during these stages is minimal. You can pull off some crazy tricks, explore the area freely, and locate secrets.

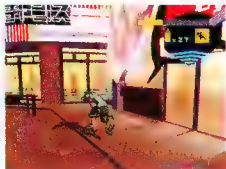
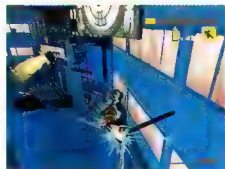
Character Challenges: As you progress, other grinders will challenge you to a duel of skills. If you can successfully mimic their tricks or beat them in a race, they'll join your team.

Boss Attack: When the crooked cops corner you, it's time to get all arty on their faces. Tag huge crowds of cops while avoiding a beatdown.

Are you hyped for *Jet Set Radio Future*? Should you be? Instead of bemoaning the commercial failure of its predecessor or delivering a monologue about the value of creativity in gaming, we're letting you make up your own mind about this unique in-line skating/vandalism/action game. Break out the #2 pencil and take this handy quiz to find out if Sega's hipster sequel is right for you.

Question #1: Did you purchase *Jet Grind Radio* for the Dreamcast?

- a) Yes
- b) No, because I didn't have a Dreamcast.
- c) No, vandalism offends my moral sensibilities.



Question #2: Do stylish, cel-shaded graphics (just check out the screens on these pages), huge, new environments, and dozens of on-screen characters turn you on?

- a) Yes...oh, yes.
- b) No, cel-shading is freaky and distracting.
- c) No, large levels intimidate me, so I only play Pong.

Question #3: How do you feel about gameplay innovations like faster tagging, backward skating, turbo boosts, trick combos and easier grinding?

- a) Sounds sufficiently phat to me.
- b) I prefer my games to be convoluted, slow and incomprehensible.
- c) Rollerblading is a crime, even if it's fast and fun.

Question #4: Does the prospect of controlling futuristic versions of playable skaters from the first game and hip, new guys and gals excite you?

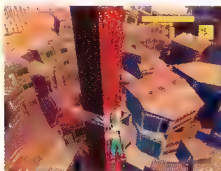
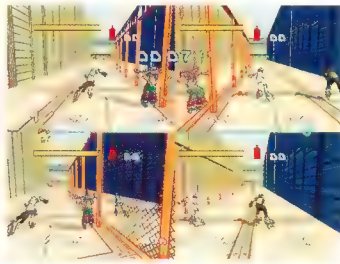
- a) Yep, I can't wait to see Cube's new outfit!
- b) No, I only have eyes for a certain Mr. Hawk.
- c) No, a great multitude of characters makes me feel insignificant.

Question #5: Will you enjoy a bevy of multiplayer options, including both cooperative and competitive modes for two to four players?

- a) Yes, but I may have to sell my plasma to afford three more Xbox controllers.

LUCKY TAGGERS

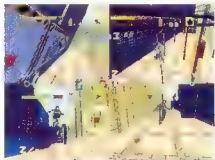
Despite the massive controversy surrounding a graffiti-themed game, Sega has supported the graffiti-art community with both *JSRF* and its prequel. Aspiring artists were able to submit their tags to graffiti@jsrf.com last fall for a chance to have their work included in the game. You'll spy the lucky winners' art in the final version.



- b) No, I usually just play single-player modes.
c) No, I have no friends to play with. Well, no real ones, anyway.

Question #6: *JSRF*'s soundtrack is a wicked mix of punk, techno, rock and rap with dope remixes by the Latch Brothers and no sight of Rob Zombie's "Dragula." Do you dig?

- a) I'm down with that.
b) Nope, I only play games with "Dragula."
c) No, I hate music.



Question #7: What is a baloo?

- a) A bear
b) A small jacket
c) Sculch

OK, time to tally up your *Jet Set Radio Future* excitement. Award yourself one point for each time you marked "A" as your answer. Each "B" and "C" you get absolutely no points. Add up your score.

How did you fare?

0 points: Perhaps this is not the game for you. Either you have extremely specific tastes in games or you're hopelessly unhip.

1-4 points: You're not a *Jet Set* fanboy, but you have some serious potential to bust stuff up on the mean streets of Tokyo.

5-6 points: Odds are that you enjoyed the first game, so you'll appreciate the myriad improvements to the sequel.

7 points: You bought an Xbox for this game, dressed up as Beat for Halloween, and fantasize about making out with Gum. In other words, you've had *JSRF* preordered for six months by now. 🍌

—Shane Bettenhausen

THE MAN BEHIND THE FUNKY TUNES

Hideki Naganuma is the musical maestro behind *JSRF*. Whether he's composing funky, original tunes or remixing phat beats, his contribution to the game is integral. *EGM* picks his brain.



EGM: What do you think about the ability to rip music to the Xbox hard drive as WMA files? Will *JSRF* use this feature?

HN: For games, there will be various sorts of uses and possibilities. However, if it is a system in which everyone can obtain songs of near CD-sound quality without permission by creators or owners of copyrights, I cannot say it is a perfect function. *Jet Set Radio Future* does not utilize this function.

EGM: You've included tracks from Guitar Vader, a Japanese indie punk band, in three of your games: *Romania* (Dreamcast, import only), *JSR*, *JSRF*. Do you have a close relationship with

these cool rockers?

HN: Yes. I am on very good terms with them and often go to their shows. I am looking forward to seeing them make their way into foreign markets in the future, and if there is something I can do to help them out (remix, arrangement, etc.), I will definitely do so.

EGM: When you chose to include Rob Zombie's "Dragula" in the U.S. *Jet Grind Radio*, were you aware of just how many other games have featured that song?

HN: No, I did not know. This was an idea suggested by Sega of America for the American users—I was not the one who chose the song.



PREVIEW

WWF FANS SAY NO TO CRACK

The recent "Kiss My Ass Club" storyline, in which a number of WWF personalities had to kiss owner Vince McMahon's posterior to keep their jobs, was reportedly cut short due to viewer complaints.

WWF Raw Is War

- Platform:** THQ
- Developer:** Anchor
- Players:** 1-4
- Genre:** Wrestling
- Score:** 75%
- Release:** Winter 2002
- Also try:** *SmackDown!* (PS2)
- Web Address:** www.thq.com
- The Good:** Most realistic visuals in a wrestling game to date.
- The Bad:** Only six wrestlers in the ring at the same time, compared to nine in *SmackDown!* (PS2)
- And The Ugly:** Ric Flair's flabby man-breasts.



The SmackDown Hotel. Population: "Stone Cold" Steve Austin.

5'8", 150-lb. Spike Dudley launches himself at 7', 326-lb. Kane with the reckless abandon of a mosquito about to tangle with a truck windshield.



BREAK ATTACKS

Bum Rush

WWF Raw reaches a new milestone in unsportsman-like conduct by allowing you to attack your opponent before he even gets to the ring. But watch out—there's a good chance he'll see you coming and reverse your attack, putting you at an early disadvantage.

The WWF may be the one surviving pro wrestling organization, but competition for top wrestling video game honors remains as hot and sweaty as a boiler-room match. Acclaim's excellent *Legends of Wrestling* temporarily stole the spotlight from *WWF SmackDown!* Just *Bring It*, but THQ is preparing to answer with yet another WWF title, *Raw Is War* for Xbox.

Because it's a brand-new game for a brand-new system, *Raw* is a bit short on extras. If *Just Bring It* is a fully loaded Cadillac, *Raw* is more like a stripped-down Honda Civic. It has no Season or Story modes, and there aren't many match types. More exotic gimmick matches, such as Ladder, Table and Hell in a Cell, are nowhere to be found. The game's 45-

character roster is a bit bizarre, too, populated with such scrubs as K-Kwik and Haku instead of recent WWF invaders DDP, Ric Flair and Billy Kidman.

Those shortcomings aside, developer Anchor (of *Ultimate Fighting Championship* fame) has created a robust, realistic (if that word can be used with a straight face in reference to pro wrestling) game. Collision detection is the most advanced we've seen in this genre, allowing you to break up moves in progress or take out two or three guys with a single haymaker. For the first time ever, players have the opportunity to assault opponents on their way to the ring. You can even add insult to injury by robbing their accessories, including sunglasses or bandannas, and donning them yourself! Graphically, the game looks even better than the sharp-looking *SmackDown!*. The grapplers have changing facial expressions, and the dramatic camera angles and picture-in-picture instant replays effectively mimic a WWF broadcast. There's even a lingering haze in the air (perhaps from all the pyro) for added realism.

Although hardcore wrestling fans may be disappointed by its lack of extras, *WWF Raw* looks like it could be a contender. **♣** —Gary Mollohan





CLASS BEGINS 3-02

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PlayStation 2

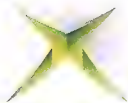


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PREVIEW
GALLERY



INSPIRATIONAL MUSIC
Sure, you know that Tony can land a gnarly hand plant and pull off a wicked 900, but do you know what his favorite foods are? The birdman enjoys sushi and Bagel Bites.

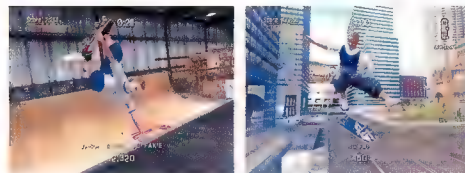
RalliSport Challenge

Microsoft knows that rally games are a dime a dozen nowadays, which is why this **March** release will feature two racing styles very uncommon to the genre: hill climbing and ice racing. We got to play a bit of *RalliSport* recently, and these two new modes are definitely cool. Overall, the game's running really fast and looking great. Unfortunately, MS has no plans for network support for head-to-head racing.



Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3

First, Xbox owners were blessed with *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2X*, a compilation of the first two Pro Skater games plus a whole bunch of extras. Next, they'll be receiving a retooled version of *THPS3* in **March**, courtesy of **Activision**. The game's engine and special effects have been rewritten to take advantage of Xbox's hardware capabilities. Gameplay is faster and smoother, especially in the two-player split-screen.



Test Drive

This **March** the *Test Drive* series will be reborn. Since everyone from Microsoft to Sony's done the exotic sports car-racing thing, **Infogrames** is trying something new with this title. In *Test Drive* you'll play a lowly driver trying to gain a rep in the seedy underworld of street racing. Every opponent you face along the way will have a unique driving style to contend with, as well as some really sweet rides you can win from them.

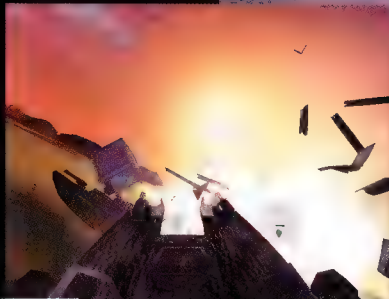


Out here,

amongst the clouds

and the sea,

a chain gun.



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PREVIEW GALLERY

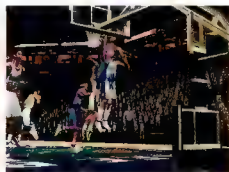
Knockout Kings 2002

If Will Smith's *Ali* has you itchin' to kick some ass, then you'll be in luck this **March**. **Electronic Arts'** latest brawler lets you fight with (or against) the legendary boxer and a slew of other modern-day punching bags (such as Lennox Lewis and Oscar De La Hoya). This year, EA is trying to get rid of the stiff, clunky feel that has saddled down the series. The early version we tried has boxers who respond quicker and move more smoothly. And who can blame them? A new, hip-hop soundtrack makes it easy to float to like a butterfly in the ring, and the suddenly chatty announcers give this game the excitement it sorely needed.



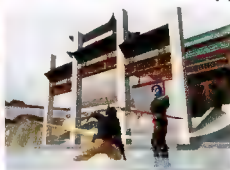
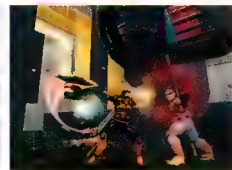
NBA Inside Drive 2002

Much like *NFL Fever*, **Microsoft's** new hoops game (out by the time you read this) ambitiously tries to deliver realistic gameplay at breakneck speeds. What really stands out to the baller in all of us are the sweet passes that include arcing lobbs to the post and dizzying cross-court bouncers that would make Jason Kidd proud. But once you get to the hoop with those, how about the reward? Bill Nielsen, *Drive's* product manager, says, "The Xbox hard drive and sound chips are letting us do incredible stuff with the audio." In other words, the crowd noise, taunts and stadium music should sound just as good as being there.



New Legends

Designed by the mastermind behind *Jedi Knight* for the PC, *New Legends*, **THQ's** great Asian adventure, offers similar hack-'n'-slash action, viewed from a third-person perspective. With dozens of weapons and spells at Sun Soo's (good guy) disposal, Xao Gon's (bad guy) demonic forces don't stand a chance. *New Legends*, which should be out by the time you read this, also features great character designs.

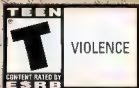




**he land was eternally dark, evil prevailed,
and there appeared to be no hope at all.**

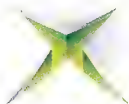
And as if that wasn't enough, the young wizard had aged 30 years in a day and a pack of wild hell hounds was trying to devour him. He used his orb and a lava spell to torch the wretched beasts and ran for his life. He continues on his quest to become a master sorcerer, but he still has nowhere near the 45 spells he needs to defeat the darkness.

Not even near the end



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PREVIEW GALLERY

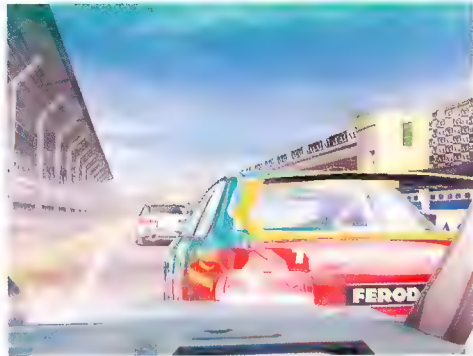


TERRIBLE CONNECTIONS
What do John Carpenter's *The Thing*, the made-for-TV movie *Evoks: The Battle for Endor* and a toasty bowl of Quaker Oats have in common? Wilford Brimley. Yep, that kindly oldster hawks oats, dances with furballs, and gets brutally mauled by a killer plant.

Pro Race Driver

Codemasters has set out to simulate the life and times of a professional racecar driver, not just the hours spent laying rubber on the track. While this doesn't mean you'll see your motor jockey making his morning coffee or getting his prostate examined, significant story elements will be dotting his path on the road to winning...um...whatever racecar guys win. Money, we guess, and maybe a nice trophy.

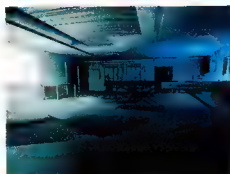
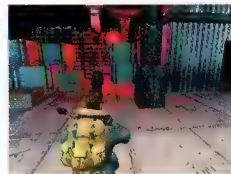
These are the first in-game Xbox models we've seen for *Pro Race Driver*, which is due in **June 2002**. Aiming for photorealism in all the cars and tracks, the developers are mimicking real-world locations and showing damage on the vehicles as it occurs. What's more, the autos are all licensed, so if you've got qualms about busting up your real-life ride, you can simulate the experience with impunity on *PRD*.



The Thing

Universal Interactive is out to prove that even a 20-year-old horror film can still make a reasonably scary game. *The Thing* is the first console offering from London-based **Computer Artworks**, whose PC experience is helping this puzzle-laden action title look really nice on the Xbox.

For all you dinosaurs who were around to enjoy the 1982 flick, the game takes place in the same Antarctic setting as the movie, just shortly afterward and without the thespian stylings of Kurt Russell. Depending on how you interact with the game's characters, you'll have varied success in solving puzzles and completing the objectives that lead to your ultimate goal of annihilating the alien "thing" that torments the frigid research base. Universal is shooting to get this *Thing* out the door by **fall 2002**.





PlayStation 2

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PROTOCOLCULTURE OVERDOSE

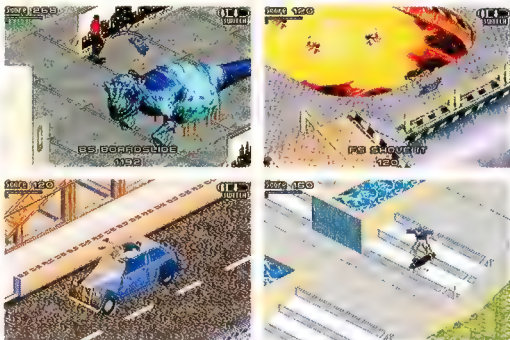
It would require a small thesis to explain the saga of why both *Robotech* and *Macross* are now available on DVD. Looking for English voices? Check out ADV Films' *Robotech* Box Set. Want the original Japanese dialog? Try Animeigo's *Macross* discs.

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3

The wizards at **Activision** have once again aimed their shrink ray at Tony Hawk, and the results are sure to impress come this **March**. *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3* has everything that made its PlayStation 2 cousin a smash, including trick-linking revert moves and expansive, interactive environments.

Los Angeles, new to this latest preview version, has its trademark Walk of Fame, lots of snooty pedestrians to knock down, and an entire movie set to wreck. But watch out for the punks loitering in front of the nightclub—they'll kick Tony's ass if they get the chance.

The game also has a Kid mode that helps younger Game Boy Advance players shred with the best of 'em and a slew of multi-player games (which don't require multiple copies of the game), including Trick Attack, Free Skate, Tag, King of the Hill and the ever-popular H.O.R.S.E.



Lunar Legend

Game Arts' *Lunar* seems an odd choice for a GBA port, considering how much the series relies on full-motion video cinemas to tell its story. Still, this game is looking great, and should play really well if the previous games are any indication.

No publisher has been announced for *Lunar Legend* as of yet.



Robotech

A lot of us who grew up watching *Robotech* have always wanted to pilot one of those bad-ass veritechs against a horde of attacking Zentraedi. Now **TDK Mediactive's** gonna let us do it on the go with their first *Robotech*-licensed game.

This is a side-scrolling shooter based on the first *Robotech* war (*Macross*), and is due sometime **this spring**.



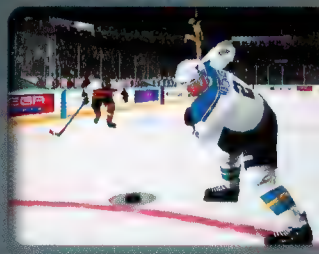


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Pain is temporary. Bragging rights are forever.



Dreamcast



EVERYONE
E
Violence
COOLEST GAME IN THE NHL
ESRB

PLAYER
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X9

TIME
4:24

OLD MEETS

Super Ghouls 'n Ghosts for Super Nintendo, circa 1991



David Siller has treasure buried beneath his desk. "Some people collect stamps or comics," says Siller, the director of research and development for Capcom Digital Studios (CDS). "I collect games, and these boxes are filled with them." Lifting the lids of the worn boxes under his desk reveals hundreds of cartridges and discs for every system. "I have all the good 8-bit and 16-bit stuff I want," Siller says. "I have four or five Super Nintendos, three 8-bit Nintendos. I have several Genesises, including the little Genesis III I keep over there." He nods in the direction of the tiny black console, hooked to one of several TVs in his office, right next to a Neo•Geo arcade board he just bought off eBay.

Siller, who came to Capcom's only U.S.-based studio four years ago from Universal Interactive (where he co-designed *Crash Bandicoot*), keeps all this stuff at hand because, for starters, he just likes games. But he says his stash also makes priceless reference material for when he wants to show something to the development staff. "After all," Siller says, "great gameplay never goes out of style."

That might as well be CDS' official motto. For the past two years, the studio has been working on *Maximo: Ghosts to Glory*, the PlayStation 2

homage to Capcom's classic *Ghosts 'n Goblins*/*Ghouls 'n Ghosts* series (hence *Maximo's* subtitle). The game ships Feb. 14, but it's been preceded by nearly a year of hype thanks to its mix of old and new: the way it crunches classic gameplay from the old-school side-scrollers Siller keeps in his office with gee-whiz 3D visuals. "Capcom had made classics like *Trojan* and *Knights of the Round*, *Magic Sword*, the *Ghosts 'n Goblins*/*Ghouls 'n Ghosts* series," Siller says. "So we thought, 'What if we took cute little elements of those and an all-new set of characters and we built the 22nd-century version of the franchise?' But the intent here wasn't to re-create the 16-bit era: It was just to create a great 3D game. So many 3D games have gotten away from that instantaneous fun factor, that easy entry, tight controls and instant fun."

Should you believe his hype? Turn to page 134 and see how we reviewed the game to find out, but the short answer: yep. *Maximo* is indeed an instantly fun 30-level carnival ride through crisp, creepy, detailed environments coupled with spot-on control and gameplay moments that'll conjure up genuine nostalgia in anyone old enough to remember the value of a good ol' double-jump. You guide title character Maximo, a bona-fide knight in shining armor (or heart-covered undies,

NEW

By Crispin Boyer 'n Che Chou

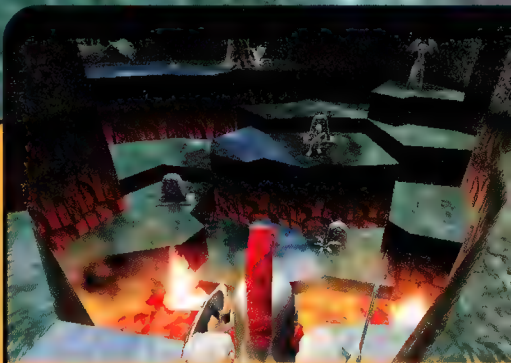
MAXIMO

CAPCOM
RESURRECTS
CLASSIC
GHOSTS 'N
GOBLINS
GAMEPLAY
FOR A NEW
GENERATION
OF GAMERS

Maximo: Ghosts to Glory for PlayStation 2, Oct. 2, 2002

depending on his state of well being), who's "younger and cooler than [*Ghosts 'n Goblins*] King Arthur," Siller says. "I mean, Arthur never did a downward-stab move or a 360 spin attack. These are some of the things we can do in a polygonal world."

The plot's as old-school as the gameplay: Maximo's on a quest to rescue his kidnapped girlie, along with four other sorceress hotties, who are scattered throughout environments taken from *Classic Gaming 101*: graveyard, swamp, ice world, lava world and fortress. The levels themselves flow kinda like stages in that other old-school homage, the *Crash Bandicoot* series, with Maximo dicing baddies along each level's path. The difference here is that *Maximo*'s stages—although still linear—are wider, giving you more room to wander. "*Crash* is like a two-



The illustrious gameplay tradition of platform jumping is alive and kickin' in *Maximo*. But watch your step: Environments have a bad habit of shifting beneath you—and that's no bubble bath boiling down there.



Bad skull day: Like in the *Ghouls 'n Ghosts* games, Maximo preserves his boxer-clad keister by collecting armor. If he maxes out his armor and has a certain power-up, Maximo temporarily turns into the invincible Skeletoor lookalike seen here.

lane street," says Lead Game Designer Scott Rogers. "Our game is like a six-lane highway."

Gamers who take a Sunday-driver pace and go exploring will find plenty. *Maximo* is jammed with secrets, beginning with hidden treasure chests that, like in the *Ghouls 'n Ghosts* games, pop up if you probe nearby. And then you'll find coins and gems you can spend on armor, power-ups or nifty extras like monogrammed boxers. But it's the power-up system that really gives *Maximo* its oomph. Elemental sword powers, souped-up shields, special combos, mega-powerful attacks—you'll find about 50 abilities in all. And many power-ups combine with others

"So many 3D games have gotten away from that instantaneous fun factor..." —David Siller

to unleash even more useful abilities, such as a lightning attack you link with your shield throw to zap baddies across the room. "The system that we came up with is similar to what's in *R-Type*," says Mark Rogers, *Maximo*'s producer, "in that you build up stuff and get more and more abilities as you play the game." Of course, one of the frustrating things with that classic shooter is that once you build up an arsenal of power-ups and then die, you spawn back to life with just a paltry laser. *Maximo*'s designers handled that hassle by giving the hero a belt on which he can lock powers, thus keeping them even if he dies. You start the game with slots for three abilities; by the end you'll have

earned an additional four, making for a total of seven slots in all. "You have a lot of options to customize your character," Mark Rogers says, "which gives the game a lot more depth."

Since Maximo gets his power-ups from fallen enemies, the designers have worked triple overtime to make the game's baddies fun to fight. Consequently, foes come in particular varieties that adopt a certain fighting style, forcing you to watch them for their weaknesses. One skeletal pirate, for instance, shuffles around with a sword stuck through his back, so that its point pokes from his torso. The only way to off this guy for good is to whack him from behind, which knocks him down face

forward. Then, while he's struggling to his feet, you need to finish him with a leaping downward-sword stab. Knock him onto his back instead and you'll be in for some hurt, since you'll fall on

the sword sticking from his chest if you jump on him. In other words, you better look before you leap into battle with any of these bad guys. "We didn't want players to just walk up, smash an enemy, and then move on to the next guy," says Scott Rogers. "We tried to make it so you have to put a little bit of thought into the combat, so you can be rewarded for being clever."

CDS is hoping to reap some rewards of their own with *Maximo*. The game is the breakthrough title this team needs to establish itself as Capcom's worthy stateside studio—as well as unload some bad bag-



That's the Stuff

"The best way to think of Maximo is that it's not a sequel or part of the *Ghouls 'n Ghosts* franchise," says Lead Designer Scott Rogers, "but it's part of the same world." Ah, that explains all the familiar faces, enemies and sequences that pop up in Maximo. Behold, just a few *Maximo* moments of gameplay greatness that harken back to *Ghouls 'n Goblins* and its super sequels...



Bone Towers



Knight-eating Plant

Do not adjust your set: The perspective in *Maximo* wobbles behind our hero, an homage to the off-kilter camera effects in director Sam Raimi's *Evil Dead* flicks. "The first versions of our 'Creepy Cam' were making people seasick," says Producer Mark Rogers, "so we toned it down and refined it."



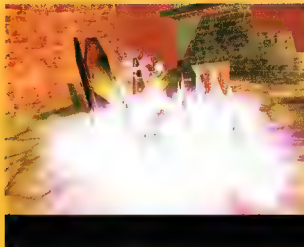
Hearty Briefs

gage from the past. CDS's only noteworthy prior game is *Final Fight Revenge*, a Japan-only Saturn port of the coin-op 3D sequel to *Final Fight*. And the only reason it's noteworthy is because...well, it didn't turn out so hot. The team blames the Saturn's underpowered 3D hardware. "But I'm really glad we did that game," says Senior 3D Animator Primo Navidad. "It really taught us about limitations." And it also cleared the decks for CDS to work on *Maximo*, the game Siller and his team really wanted to make.

But the project, which in the beginning was targeted for the Nintendo 64, hit more than a few hurdles during its two-year development process. When the N64 market started going sour, *Maximo* became a Dreamcast title. Then, just as the team had an early graphics engine up



Mr. Wizard



To the max: With the right gear, **Maximo** can unleash brutal barrages. Take the Ring of Pain power-up, for instance. It turns his wimpy downward-stab attack into the mother of all buttstomps.

and running, the Dreamcast market started sinking, too. The target platform shifted again, this time to the PS2.

Meanwhile, the team was knocked for a loop by another bombshell: the European-developed PlayStation game *Medevil*, which featured themes—and even a couple of levels—similar to those in *Maximo*. “We saw that game and thought, ‘OK, they’re obviously trying to do a 3D *Ghouls ‘n Ghosts*,’” says Scott Rogers. “So what can we do, as the real, official unofficial *Ghouls ‘n Ghosts* sequel, so we won’t be compared to *Medevil*?” In the end, *Maximo*’s designers had to scrap two entire levels that were just too much like some stages in *Medevil*—unkind cuts, to say the least. “We were sitting back kicking ourselves going, ‘No! They did a windmill stage! They did wheatfields!’” says Senior Game Designer Bill Anderson. “Oh God, we had all this great game-play and we had to scrap it.”

But the most radical design change came about a year into the project. Back then, *Maximo* was geared toward an older audience, with blood, guts and realistic undead enemies. Imagine Capcom’s recent monster-bashing action game *Devil May Cry* and you’ll have the right

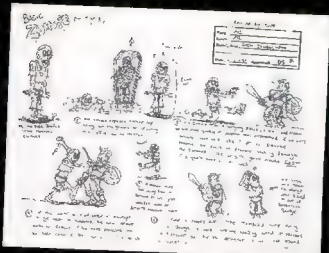
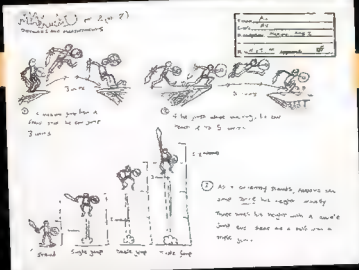
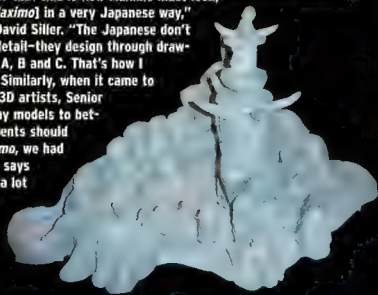
idea. Unfortunately, Capcom of Japan thought *Maximo* had a little too much in common stylistically with *Devil May Cry*, as well as the gritty *Onimusha*, so they decided the game should be made more kid-friendly to help diversify their lineup. That’s when illustrator Susumu Matsushita, who’s renowned for his cover art for the Japanese game mag *Weekly Famitsu*, was brought in to redesign *Maximo*’s characters and make them more anime and cartoony. The violence and gore were toned down, but no one on the team seems to miss it. “I think in the long run, it worked for us,” says Scott Rogers, “because now there’s a lightheartedness to the game. And the animators could make everything a little silly. It just seems to fit the game better.” And it doesn’t hurt that Matsushita’s designs lend the game global appeal. “If we catch the Japanese player’s eye,” Siller says, “then we would have an ‘in’ for that market, and we wanted to make a game everyone would enjoy.”

Mark Rogers wants to show us his monkey. That’s what the producer of *Maximo* calls the 2-foot metal contraption that looks like a tidbit Terminator endoskeleton tangled in wires on his desk. We figure it’s some extravagantly expensive Sharper Image robo-toy. We’re right about the expensive part. The monkey is actually a \$10,000 fully articulated skeletal tool that 3D artists used a few years ago to plot out computer animation. They’d bend the metal bones into position, jab a but-

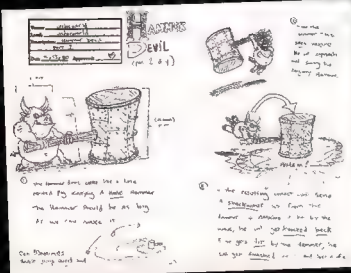
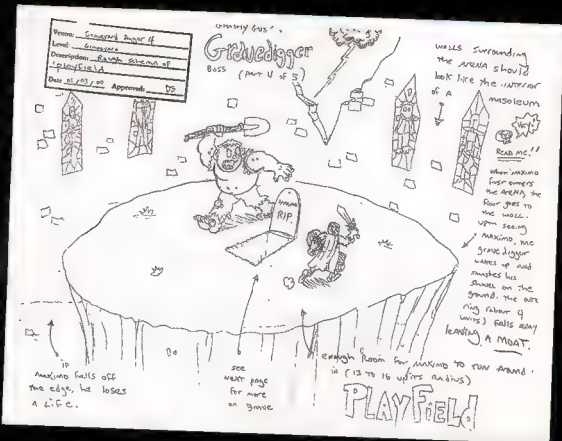


Best-laid Plans...

It isn't every day that American developers churn out a game with such cohesive vision and design as *Maximo*. To find out what CDS did right in the two years leading up to the game's release, you need look no further than their Sunnyvale, Calif., offices where it all took place. Tacked on every nook and cranny of wall space are endless sheets of picturesque design docs, posted as a daily reminder that this is how *Maximo* must look, feel and play. "We designed [*Maximo*] in a very Japanese way," explains CDS Director of R&D David Siller. "The Japanese don't use text to describe things in detail—they design through drawings and diagrams, by showing A, B and C. That's how I learned to do it 15 years ago." Similarly, when it came to conveying level designs to the 3D artists, Senior Designer Bill Anderson built clay models to better illustrate how the environments should look. "When we proposed *Maximo*, we had a lot of illustrations on paper," says Anderson, "but we didn't have a lot of stuff for Capcom to look at. The clay models, along with the paper material, actually got the budget approved and everything rolling."



Maximo's designers plotted every enemy, boss and move in cartoony sketches that actually pack as much personality as the game itself. Go to egm.gamers.com for a closer look at these mini works of art.



ton—and presto!—the on-screen 3D model would assume the monkey's pose. It was a time-consuming process that most 3D artists abandoned when animation software became more powerful.

But it's still a handy tool for Mark Rogers. "I keep this clunky, expensive thing on my desk to remind me how wasteful game development can be sometimes," he says, "how not to do things." Rogers, a laid-back Brit who could stunt-double for Val Kilmer, has been at this whole game-biz thing for quite a while, having worked with Euro publishers Ocean and U.S. Gold. In fact, the entire CDS team is staffed with veterans. The lead programmer worked on *Yie Ar Kung-Fu* and *Double Dribble*. The designers had a hand in *Odworld: Abe's Oddysee* for PlayStation. The collective gameography of these guys goes on and on. They know how to make games. And for *Maximo*, the designers are tak-

ing the simple approach, using straightforward sketches and even clay models—rather than a novel-length design document—to get their ideas across to the art and programming staff (see sidebar above).

It's actually a very Japanese way of making games, which would explain why *Maximo* has that made-in-Japan look and feel. "Japanese developers tend to make the best games," Siller says. "They're very thorough. They're very creative. They're very artistic. But we didn't sit here and say, 'Let's make a Japanese-style game.' Our doctrine was, 'Let's make a Capcom game. Let's proudly be part of Capcom R&D.'" That meant that CDS had to stand up to Capcom's own standards. Every game developed by Capcom is subject to internal review by all seven of the company's game-design divisions. "They go, 'This power-up sucks, this area should be improved,' stuff like that," Mark Rogers says. But if



you think such critique can be withering, it's nothing compared to when Capcom R&D head honcho Yoshiaki Okamoto—whose credits include everything from *Time Pilot* to *Gyruss* to *Resident Evil*—scrutinized *Maximo* every six months over the course of the project. “Mr. Okamoto is a force of nature,” Producer Rogers says. “You can stand against the wind if you wish and get battered, or you can bend like a willow, take his advice, and improve your game.”

It was a grueling process, sure, but after playing *Maximo*, we figure it worked. This game is good. And even better: The CDS guys are starting the process all over again for a sequel (which should really be no surprise when you see *Maximo's* ending). “We pretty much put everything we wanted into this game,” Anderson says, “but I think the next iteration will surprise people. It won't just be a clone of this game with new environments. There will be many new elements added.” And



they are...? “We can guarantee that *Maximo* will be in it,” Anderson adds dryly. OK, so the team isn't ready to dole out many details. They are toying with the idea of putting in a triple jump, which was nixed from *Maximo*, and we might see some different-colored spirits that do different things in the sequel. Capcom is also mulling over bringing *Maximo* to other platforms. When we point out to Producer Mark Rogers that the game's all-ages appeal would fit well on the GameCube, he says, “You're not the first person to say that. A few people from Nintendo have said that, too.”

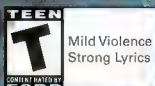
So you better get used to this *Maximo* guy. Like his old-school ancestor Arthur did 17 years ago in the original *Ghosts 'n Goblins*, he's kicking off a brand-new franchise for Capcom that could spread to all the consoles. And if his first game is any indication, we figure *Maximo* might someday wind up in the gaming's pantheon of revered characters. Or at the very least he'll find a home in that cardboard box of classics Siller keeps under his desk. 🍄



Think these screenshots look good? The game looks even better. *Maximo* comes to life with hi-res crispness—even objects in the distance are clear and detailed. It's the PS2's sharpest-looking game yet.

ADDICT

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PlayStation 3

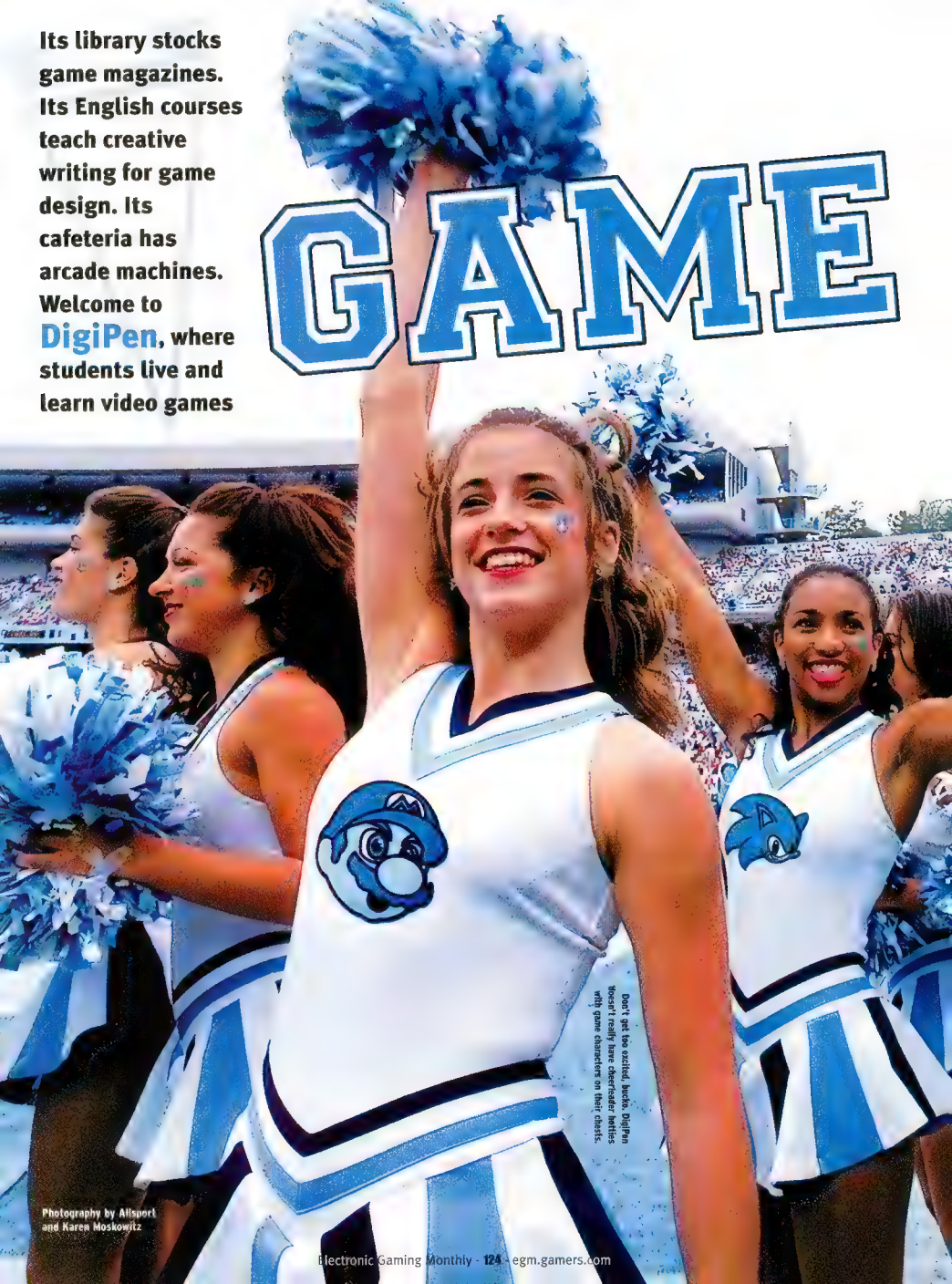


INFOGRAMES

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Its library stocks
game magazines.
Its English courses
teach creative
writing for game
design. Its
cafeteria has
arcade machines.
Welcome to
DigiPen, where
students live and
learn video games

GAME



Don't get too excited, Mario. DigiPen
cheerleaders really have character: theirs
with game characters on their chests.

Photography by Allsport
and Karen Moskowitz

BY DAVID KUSHNER

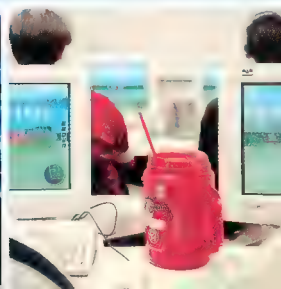
SCHOOL



If you want to survive at the world's premier video game university, then you better get to know the Gulps. The Gulps are the suite of gargantuan sodas on tap at the 7-11 across the fence from the DigiPen Institute of Technology's main building outside Seattle. A reasonably thirsty person might spring for the wee Gulp, a 16-ounce cup. A *Survivor* finalist might suck down the 44-ounce Super Big Gulp. But the students at DigiPen will settle for nothing less than the Double Gulp, a hideous troth that, in some parts of the world, would make an adequate latrine for a family of six.

The Double Gulp holds 64 refillable ounces of Mountain Dew, just about enough caffeine and sugar to get one through the 12-hour days of calculus, C++ programming and sexual deprivation that come with the school's \$12,000 annual tuition. It's the bittersweet tonic of life at DigiPen. Playing games is a hell of a lot of fun. Learning to make them is a fun lot of hell.

Hang around the school for a few days and you'll hear this refrain from the students, who are busting their butts to make the grade, to the faculty, who are busting the students for the sake of giving video games a good name. "When I first got here," says weary 24-year-old student Drew Canitz, "they told me 'happy boot camp.'" Canitz wrinkles his forehead and adds, "Yeah, right. A boot camp that makes you fat!"



"SERIOUS SCIENCE"

A funny thing happened on the way to the video game revolution: The games became too fun—so fun that gamers are shelling out \$10 billion a year on the stuff. To keep up with demand, game companies need talented artists, designers and programmers who can not only create cool games but also withstand the deadlines, deal with the chaos, and just plain get along.

Problem is, where do companies go to find such ace coders? It was just such a question that inspired an entrepreneurial Lebanese gamer named Claude Comair to launch an early version of the DigiPen school in 1994. Since 1988, Comair had been running a computer-

animation company under the same name in Vancouver, Canada. Short for "digital pen," DigiPen was a 10-person outfit that specialized in creating 3D simulations for everything from TV commercials to architectural walk-throughs. Business was good—too good, in fact, because Comair suddenly found himself at a loss for skilled and experienced new employees. So he scratched his head one day and thought about who he might call for advice.

He dialed Nintendo, which at the time ruled over 80 percent of the game market. Surely they'd know where to find crack programmers. Turned out they didn't. Instead, they commiserated with Comair about how there was nowhere in the world, not any university, that was teaching how to make games. A light bulb cracked. Comair thought, "I'll start a school!"

Comair and his chief operating officer, Jason Chu, spent the next three years consulting and negotiating with Nintendo to transform DigiPen into something previously unimaginable: a school for gamers. With classrooms filled with equipment donated by Nintendo, Comair and Chu developed a two-year curriculum in 1994. The coursework would be necessarily intense: 13-hour days, six days a week, covering all the essentials from math to game design. They planned to take in 30 students. By April, they had received 1,200 applications.

It didn't take long to see that such a school wasn't the only thing in demand. Within months, 11 of the 30 students were offered jobs from companies such as Electronic Arts, Sega and Iguana Studios

DigiPen's finals are grueling. Between 15 and 30 percent of the students wash out.



(makers of the *Turok* titles).

Konami gave five DigiPen students the royal treatment: It flew them out for interviews, sending gift baskets to their rooms and whisking them around in limos.

By the time the first class was ready to graduate in 1996, a third of the original students had already left for jobs in the games biz. "It confirmed our belief," says Chu, "that there was a need in the industry for a school that teaches people how to make games."

But credibility was less easy to secure from the educational establishment. DigiPen in 1996 was still not officially authorized by an educational body. As they made the rounds, Comair and Chu began to see that, despite their success or the size of the game industry, people on the outside simply weren't getting it. "They would not respect game-making as a serious science," says Chu.

The duo finally found respect across the border in Washington state. The Higher Education Coordinating Board in Olympia agreed to approve the school as long as it added humanities courses to the rigorous computer-science curriculum. In total, DigiPen would require a whopping 154 credits in video game studies compared to the 120 credits required by most schools for a four-year degree. Beyond that, the board had just one more demand: When talking about the school, lose the word "games." The Board was worried that if the school marketed, say, a bachelor's degree in Game Development, parents and students would get the wrong idea—that everyone just sits around and plays *Final Fantasy* all day. "If we put the word 'game' in the degree title," Chu says, "it would always require explanation, particularly to the older generation. So why not just call it something they understand?" DigiPen decided ultimately to grant degrees in "Real-Time Interactive Simulation." The younger students, Chu and



can kick back and watch their very own game dudes jumping around their screens.

John Corpening, a 28-year-old sophomore from Las Cruces, N.M., literally has dudes jumping on his PC. "The Dudes" is the name he and his project team gave to the characters in their game, *Geode*. Down the hall from the Games 100 class, Corpening shows us their work-in-progress. About 20 students are slaving at PCs in this room. Because their days run from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m., students at DigiPen spend the bulk of their time on site. With souped-up computers and T-1 connections at school, there really is no reason—let alone time—for the students to schlep home. Instead they hunker down with their Double Gulpers and 7-11 hot dogs in their homerooms to work on their games.

"...[FOCUSES] ON INTERACTIVE STORYTELLING, THREADS, AND MULTIPLE END-GAME SCENARIOS."

—From the catalog description of DigiPen's ENG 400 class

Corpening's game takes place within a hollow geode rock, in the mid-1940s, just after the nuclear tests in New Mexico. The high concept, he tells us breathlessly, is that some kid was in a rock store and had buried his egg-salad sandwich in the stones right before the bombs went off. Triggered by the nuclear boom, the egg salad mutated inside the geodes, giving life to a tiny colony of so-called "Dudes." They live to conquer and expand, taking over each other's territory. To make matters more complicated, a fat naked god named Howard occasionally floats

by on a puffy cloud to hurry them along. Hey, why not?

Corpening taps the keyboard as the little Dudes, who resemble long-lost characters from a *Ren and Stimpy* cartoon, make their way across the screen. The game is clever and has its share of tricks. A needle in the upper right-hand corner of the screen shows which way the geode is lying within the rock bin. If the rock is, say, leaning to the side, the Dudes' gravity is affected, making the player feel like he's running up a hill when the floor in fact looks flat. *Geode* also runs a nifty little language-parsing program that randomly spits out proper names from dozens of languages. At the moment, the Dudes all have Vietnamese names like Khai and Ping.

Corpening, who quit pursuing a master's in environmental engineering to attend DigiPen, says that game production warms both his left and right brain juices simultaneously. "There's nothing

more intellectually satisfying than both technical and creative," he says. "No degree gives you that like video game programming."

Make no bones about it, though: It's the technical side that often wins out at DigiPen. Video games, certainly, are nothing without the programming code that tells the machine how to display graphics, produce sound, and respond to the gamer's rat-a-tat-tat tapping of the controls. In typical classes, students might have to, say, interpolate a quaternion curve or wrestle with the concept of a cubic spline. And that's the fun part.

"THERE'S NOTHING MORE INTELLECTUALLY SATISFYING THAN'S BOTH TECHNICAL AND CREATIVE."

—DigiPen student John Corpening



DigiPen, by necessity, takes pains to round out the mind-bending math work with humanities courses. Even the most ardent programmers, for example, have to suffer through the touchy-feel stuff of English, Art and Sociology. Still, these courses all bear the imprint of DigiPen's unique brand. A mythology class, for instance, is spun as Mythology for Game Designers. As described in the catalog, the class explores "the monomyth of the hero's journey and how a game developer may redefine the archetypal figures and adventures therein." In ENG 400: Creative Writing for Game Design, students "focus on interactive storytelling, threads, and multiple end-game scenarios."

Even Erhardt's game-project boot-camp class mingles the brain freeze of code crunch with the high-minded pursuit of what makes a game a game. "Why do people play games?" Erhardt asks the students after they've completed their stress tests.

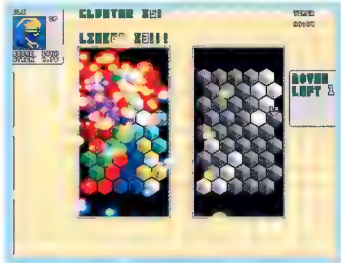
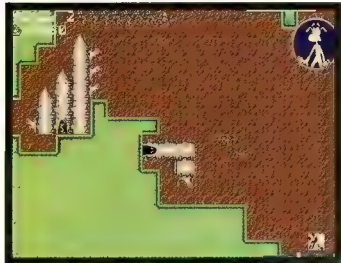
"Bragging rights!" yelps a skinny kid in the back with two-tone hair.

"To waste time!" volunteers another.

"To think!" says a third. Erhardt stops in his tracks, raises an eyebrow and sways his head vaguely. "To think?" he repeats, then steers the discussion into a seemingly less sticky area: "What is the only thing someone needs to play a game?"

"Hardware!" suggests one kid. "Eww," Erhardt responds, "ever hear of Dungeons and Dragons? What kind of hardware do you need to play that? Again, what is the only thing someone needs to play a game?"

A fat kid wearing a Korn shirt barks, "A brain!"



DigiPen students design games of every type, including puzzle titles like *Matrix Attack* (left), and John Corpening's *Geode* (far left).



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Erhardt sways his head again. "So," he responds acidly, "you're saying that the only thing a game requires is that you're not brain dead?" Everyone laughs. But it's hard to tell if Erhardt thinks the kid nailed the answer or missed the point. Without explanation, he limps to his desk in his black brace and taps a few keys at his PC. A raucous electric guitar suddenly rips through the room at full volume followed by a digital hip-hop beat. The students crane their necks. Unbeknownst to them, this is a tune Erhardt found online and decided, spontaneously, to stream into the classroom. It's a song that, as the lyrics roll, speaks to the essential reason why everyone is here suffering through the math, the projects, the stress. The lyrics: "I'm a game designer and there ain't none finer/I spend most of my time dreaming/Got this idea, see, yeah it came to me/And it's gonna be the next big thing!/Yeah, it's gonna be the next big thing!"

Throughout the room, young heads bob.



"NO GIRLS"

"You want to see where we keep the time machine?" says Nicholas Phillips, co-leader of DigiPen's most ambitious group of game developers, Team Neinstein. Phillips, who sports a circular bicep tattoo and a green shirt that reads "I Enjoy the Taste of Beer," is giving a tour of the house Neinstein members share by a lake in Redmond. It's a fairly typical bachelor pad, complete with a makeshift weight room in the garage, a heap of N64 cartridges by the tube, and a 5-foot inflatable beer bottle leaning against the living-room wall.

"OK, there really isn't a time machine here," Phillips says, although we wouldn't be surprised to find it. Phillips and his group are



pretty much the resident whiz kids on campus—a brainy and iconoclastic crew of seniors who were given the elite and exclusive opportunity to work on a Nintendo 64 game. Good grades, hard work and a flair for game design earned the guys the privilege of tinkering with Mario's wares. And what a uniquely educational privilege that is. It's teaching them not only how to work the hardware, but what they might expect from the real business and politics of the big-league gaming world.

Nintendo, as they have quickly learned, is like the Area 51 of game development: so secretive and guarded that the students have to fill out reams of nondisclosure agreements just to get their hands on the goods. Even to get inside

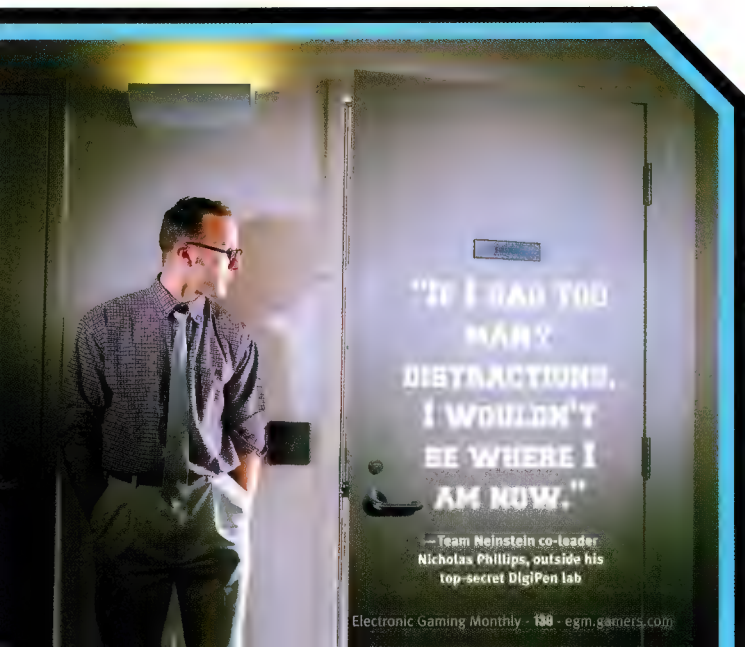



the halls of DigiPen, visitors need special electronic security badges; if one forgets to return the badge after leaving, the school will E-mail immediately to get it back. Though the Nintendo of America office is literally right next door, students are barred from entering that domain. A double-door leading from the DigiPen wing to Nintendo is emblazoned with a staunch warning in large red letters: "Stop! Alarm Will Sound!" Students can't even sneak their way into Team Neinstein's lab without retribution.

That lab, Phillips shows us back on campus, is in a room called Einstein. All DigiPen classrooms are named after scientists or artists: Galileo, Van Gogh, Newton. Sitting in Einstein, as the name suggests, is an honor. Phillips' crew took their name because there were nine of them on the team originally, thus Neinstein.

Though it looks like an extension of their home—Oreo wrappers, herbal-supplement pills and empty Double Gulp—the work here remains Nintendo's domain. For the past three semesters, the company has kept a stranglehold over Neinstein's project, a game called *Fantasy Fighter*. The students are not allowed to take any of their goods off campus. They can't invite friends in to check out their work.

At the moment, they're battling with the school just to be able to show their game to Sputnik, a local group of professional game





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developers who volunteer to critique student work. Allowing the pros to see their games, they've been told, could leak out potentially damaging details about the classified hardware (believe it or not, Nintendo is still secretive about their N64 hardware—even after they've moved on to the GameCube and Game Boy Advance). For this reason, Weinstein won't be able to show prospective employers the game they completed because it has to run off proprietary Nintendo wares. Instead, Sputnik will have to settle for a complimentary videotape. "Man," says Devin Jorlett, another member of the team, "I'd pay the school \$1,000 just to let me have one copy of the game to show people."

Jorlett has reason to want to



flaunt the team's work. He and the other guys are already making plans to launch their own development company upon graduation. This dream to create the next big thing in gaming is what drew them each to DigiPen. Jorlett quit a lucrative gig to come here. Phillips bailed out of the University of Wisconsin. Such migratory paths are typical of the school's students. David Devaty, a 23-year-old from Cleveland, left the distinguished enclave of the University of Chicago. Jeremy Brown, an exceptional student from Pensacola, Fla., completed high school at age 14 to begin pursuing his love of game design.

The hotbed of ambition creates a competitive atmosphere that separates the mere gamers from

the game gods. Many students crack from the pressure. "Some kids out of high school, they just die here," Jorlett says. One problem DigiPen has is its washout rate, which ranges between 15 and 30 percent—surprising numbers considering the incentive to stick around. Nearly 90 percent of all graduates have obtained game-related jobs upon departure.

To make it, the seniors say, requires a staggering amount of focus and discipline—no hangovers, no parties, no weekends off. "If I had too many distractions," says Phillips, "I wouldn't be where I am now." By distractions, Phillips means more or less all the usual collegiate stuff that students take for granted: parties, football games, even, alas, sex. When we ask what's the hardest thing about life at DigiPen, a kid walking by with a backpack volunteers the answer: "no girls."

"SEGAHOLIC"

If you want to make it at DigiPen, then you better get acquainted with GameWorks, the sprawling arcade launched just across the bridge in downtown Seattle. Late one Friday afternoon, the place is a kaleidoscope of action. Two meaty guys in black Raiders jerseys wield prosthetic fire hoses in Sega's *Brave Firefighters* game. A giggling teen couple races laps under a real-life NASCAR vehicle suspended from the ceiling. A wiry guy shimmy on the pads of *Dance Dance Revolution*.

Meanwhile, a prospective DigiPen student named Brennan Sweeney is unleashing some rounds in a light-gun shooter. Sweeney, a 15-year-old high school sophomore, has traveled here with his father from Auburn, Ala., to check out the school firsthand. Though one might expect a kid's dad to be skeptical of a school devoted to video games, Sweeney's father proves that the times may be changing. He doesn't just approve of his son's potential collegiate track—he's giddy about it. "At home," he beams, "Brennan's always on the computer or his Sega Dreamcast. He's a Segaholic!"

As for Brennan himself, he's not sure quite what he'll find at DigiPen. It's still a big mystery. "I figure they probably play a lot of games," he says, "but I'm sure it's also pretty intense." Maybe he'll make it after all. 🎮

GET SCHOOLED

Do you want to be a video game star? DigiPen is not your only choice for this kind of high-tech higher education. Here's a look at some of the other schools that offer computer-game-related studies or degrees. For more computer-related info:

FULL SAIL PAUL WALKER EDUCATION

Location: Winter Park, Fla. (near Orlando)
Skippy: Offers a "Game Design Associate of Science" degree, plus extensive coursework in digital media, film/video production, and recording arts. <http://www.fullsail.com>

SEAFORD UNIVERSITY

Location: Stanford, Calif. (near San Francisco)
Skippy: Dr. Henry Lawson offers Ivy League caliber courses such as "History of Computer Game Design Technology, Games and Business." <http://www.seaford.edu>

EASTERN BRUNSWICK COMPUTER INSTITUTE

Location: Lower Brunswick, Canada
Skippy: EBCCI's Interactive Entertainment Technology specializes in career training for educational and entertainment software. <http://www.ebcci.ca>

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT IRVINE

Location: Irvine, Calif.
Skippy: Assistant Professor Robert Nideffer, author of *Game Design: A Playable Approach*, is assigning a junior design computer games and games here. If you're looking for a mentor, try him. <http://www.uci.edu>

CARRIEE MELLON

Location: Pittsburgh, Pa.
Skippy: Offers a Master of Entertainment Technology through the school's College of Fine Arts and School of Computer Science. <http://www.cmu.edu>

UNIVERSITY OF MONTA TUCKER

Location: Denton, Texas (near Dallas)
Skippy: Professor Ian Finkler teaches courses in game programming amid the hub of Dallas game companies like software, Ritual Entertainment and Ensemble Studio. <http://www.umt.edu>

GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Location: Atlanta, Ga.
Skippy: Offers a game programming degree through the computer science department, including classes such as "Video Game Design and Programming." <http://www.gatech.edu>

LOUISIANA UNIVERSITY

Location: Bloomington, Ind.
Skippy: Dr. Robert Appelmus teaches a course of the educational use of video games in "The Impact of Games and Simulation in Instruction." <http://www.louisiana.edu>

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Location: Los Angeles, Calif.
Skippy: USC's Institute for Creative Technologies is a hubbed for computer simulation research, including work for the military. <http://www.usc.edu>

PARSON'S SCHOOL OF DESIGN

Location: New York, N.Y.
Skippy: Offers programs in computer art and game design. <http://www.parsons.edu>



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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

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

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

Crispin's angry outbursts during Halo sessions have become so R-rated that we've banished him to live under the sea. In a recent post-card, Cris said that Little Mermaid slut is one cheap 5%&ing sniper!

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure
Current Faves: Maximo, Halo, Pikmin



Che Chou West Coast Editor

After watching *Lord of the Rings*, Che hit the local ren fair in search of hot elven babes. No such luck, but he did get to chill with Lord British, Gary Gyax and some fat guy who plays *Magic: The Gathering*.

Favorite Genres: Fighting, Racing, RPG
Current Faves: FFX, Maximo, GTA3, C-Strike



Jonathan Dudlak Associate Editor

Turning 24, means having to look out for your fragile, wilting body. So Jon stocked up on Vitamin C pills and has been downing them by the stack. Gotta live to see that sweet auto insurance discount at 25.

Favorite Genres: 2D Fighters, Shooters
Current Faves: Maximo, Halo, Genma Animusha



Dan "Shoe" Hsu Editor in Chief

It's been nine months since Shoe's been back at EGM, and he still hasn't left the offices yet. He wishes he could find time to go play with the neighborhood kids, but alas, work and Halo keep him indoors.

Favorite Genres: Everything
Halo (yes, still), *Puyo Puyo*



Chris Johnston News Editor

Chris' addiction to *Super Smash Bros. Melee* continued this month when he decided to play through it again just to unlock everything in his U.S. copy. Will he be able to defeat Giga Bowser once again?

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure, Music
Current Faves: Halo, SSBM, Super Mario World



Jeanne Kim Associate Editor/Art Director

After battling her way through another crazy month at EGM, Jeanne found herself in the office's haunted south hall, and like her boy Harry Potter, discovered (to her dismay) one of EGM's terrible secrets.

Favorite Genres: RPG, Shooters, Adventure
Current Faves: Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance, FFX

Game of the Month



Super Mario World pg.145

You are dealing with a man who is an expert— with fireballs, with turtle shells, with his bare hands. A man who's been trained to ignore pain, to ignore weather, to live off the land and eat things that would make a billy goat puke. In Vietnam, his mission was to dispose of enemy personnel, to kill, period. War by attrition. Well, Mario was the best...



Mark MacDonald Executive Editor

Mark took a well-earned vacation this month with his lady to that little island just north of the Donut Plains in *Mario World*. It was beautiful, he says, except for Luigi and his tiny green Speedo. Damn Italians!

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure, RPG
Current Faves: Maximo, Super Mario World



James Mielke West Coast/Web Editor

Playing *MotoGP 2* all month has rekindled the coals that fire Milky's furnace. If anyone out there owns a Ducati dealership and would just love to cut the Milkman a break on a Monster S4, give him a holler.

Favorite Genres: Fighting, Action, Adventure
Current Faves: Fatal Frame, VFA, Maximo, Rez



Greg Sewart Reviews/Previews Editor

Sewart rediscovered his love for everything Sonic this month. *Sonic Advance*, *Sonic on GameCube*, *Sonic* toys in *Shenmue II* and even *Sonic Meatballs!* Sonic's the bomb, no matter what MacDonald says.

Favorite Genres: Racing, RPG, Action
Current Faves: Shenmue II, Halo, Sonic Advance

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

To disguise his week-long absences, Dean constructed a crude yet convincing model of himself. He's probably out on one of his famous driving blinges. That, or the circus in town. We're not sure which.

Favorite Genres: Sports, Racing
Current Faves: NFL 2K2, NBA 2K2



Kraig Kujawa Senior Associate Editor

To punish him for slacking off on the Halo playin', Shoe put his foot down and made Kraig do push-ups every time he died in a 30-minute Deathmatch. He's currently recuperating at Elmhurst Hospital.

Favorite Genres: Sports, Strategy
Current Faves: NFL 2K2, NBA 2K2, Halo



Dan Leahy Editor in Chief, GameNOW

If ever there were an award for "most mythical video game sports championships won" it would go to Dan. Seriously, who wants to listen to the fine details of his great game against RlyzzCoolgator? Nah.

Favorite Genres: Sports, Action
Current Faves: NBA 2K2, Pikmin, Madden 2002



Publisher: Namco
Developer: Criterion Studios
Featured In: EGM #151
Players: 1-2
Try Instead: Dark Summit
Best Feature: Lovely visuals
Worst Feature: Fluffy controls
Web Site: www.namco.com



If I won a contest where I could invent any means of transportation and have it delivered to my door, an anti-gravity hoverboard would be near the top of my list. Lord knows I could get used to scooting around like those lucky kids in *Back to the Future Part II* pretty quickly. And while *Airblade* almost makes my dreams come true, multiple factors keep my feet stuck in the mud. "**Xtreme games with a story**" is a micro-genre I hope goes the way of the dodo. Hoping to justify your playtime (and purchase) by weaving a sinister plot into the action, *Airblade* stumbles where it could have soared. Each level's mission objectives require you to destroy a specific set of objects (spotlights, moving trucks, radar dishes, limousines, etc.) by grinding on them, and to defeat enemies by performing tricks at/on them. It's a flimsy premise made worse by some crappy collision detection and less-than-stellar camera work. Even the deep moves list and responsive controls are defeated by the completely floaty, magic carpet-style anti-gravity physics. Instead of feeling like the Silver Surfer, you feel like the Silver Slacker, lazily loafing around on your hoverboard. On the flipside, the graphics are nice, and the visually diverse backgrounds are large and full of interactive elements. I can see that Criterion was trying to make something a little different than just the same 'same of', but that doesn't mean it's good.

Milkman

The more I played *Airblade*, the more I got the impression that the guys who made it must hate me. Why else would they craft such a slick graphics engine and fill the game with so much future-cool potential, then run the whole thing into the ground with sluggish control and level objectives so frustrating I nearly put my fist through the wall. The trick system is basic: As long as you don't run into a wall in mid-trick, you won't wreck, so all you gotta worry about is the iffy collision detection. But it takes five freakin' seconds to recover from a tumble, which makes it that much harder to clear the objectives in time, which means—argh, my hand!

Crispin

Airblade's graphics are so good, you're almost willing to forgive the game's terrible premise and execution. It's too bad the lush, colorful environments and detailed character models are wasted on such a generic extreme-sports game. *Airblade* sabotages everything it gets right with gameplay problems. For example, the controls are easy to pick up, but the game feels dumbed down. It's like a **Tony Hawk clone for crumb**. *Airblade's* mission-based goals miss sound intriguing, but it's actually super-frustrating: You've got to complete every goal on a single run; screw it up and you've got to do it over...and over...and over again. A real shame, this is.

Che

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	5	4	4



Publisher: 3DO
Developer: Team 366
Players: 1-2
Also Try: The cool two-on-two mode
Includes: Lots of geeky baseball stats
Best Feature: Very realistic
Worst Feature: Presentation still a bit ho-hum
Web Site: www.highheat.com



I've always said that if 3DO spilled up this franchise's graphics, they would have a winner on their hands. Well, they've finally done it. Better late than never, right? Now I'm not saying that this game looks so good that it re-creates Randy Johnson's mulllet like never before. Rather, I'm just happy that for once, **High Heat's graphics won't scare you away before you get to enjoy the game underneath.** That may not sound like a ringing endorsement, but the amazing gameplay is what makes this worth the price of admission. This is the only next-generation title that realistically re-creates every facet of the game. There was a nary a play that made me roll my eyes in disbelief (most baseball games have my peepers spinning like a slot machine by the seventh-inning stretch) and the post-game scoresheet was so detailed that it looked like it was ripped right out of *Baseball Weekly*, both literally and figuratively. I'd even go out on a limb and bet that this brainy game crunches more numbers than Rosie O'Donnell's dietician. Suffice it to say, this is one great simulation. If other games have spoiled you by letting you smack 20 home runs and 30 base hits a game, then you're in for a rude awakening. You'll have to string together bloopers, sacrifice flies and steals to manufacture valuable runs. But don't let that scare you away. Baseball is much more fun when you don't have to aim for the fences at every at-bat.

Kraig

High Heat has always been strong on realism and authenticity. Its presentation, however, left a lot to be desired. That's not the case anymore. I'm not sure what technology 3DO used, but the players' faces look like they were peeled off the real guys. Overall, the graphics, animation and sound are much improved. More importantly, the game is intelligent and relatively glitch-free. (Nothing ruins the fun faster than a fielding bug.) I only wish the pitches were less arched, but with the option to speed up the delivery, it's not much of a gripe. *HH 2003* is currently the most balanced and challenging baseball game you'll find for the PS2.

Dean

True baseball junkies will get their fix from *High Heat*. **Arcade enthusiasts need not apply here**, as *HH* does a fabulous job of modeling real pitcher/batter duels. Working the count for balls and strikes, looking for the right pitch, or throwing your "out" pitch are not just clichés in *High Heat*. That satisfying level of strategy and depth is carried throughout the game. Realistic stats and outcomes are the norm here, and your managerial skills will be tested. If you long for the visual gloss of *All-Star Baseball* or *Triple Play*, then *High Heat* might look a little rough around the edges. If you're a fan of this series, or crave simulation baseball, *HH 2003* is a must.

Dan L.

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	6	9



Publisher: 3DO
Developer: 3DO
Featured In: EGM #148
Players: 1
Try Instead: *SSX Tricky*
Best Feature: Sprawling mountain courses
Worst Feature: Disorienting gameplay
Web Site: www.3do.com



Let's see...trick-charging control scheme? Check. Pyrotechnic light shows? Check. Music that fades when you catch big air? Check. Yep, **Jonny Moseley Mad Trix has copied SSX's formula in every way**, right down to the white guy with the big 'fro. The only novelty here—besides the two planks of wood under your feet instead of a board—is the level design. Half the stages are set in real-world cities (like Las Vegas, Rome and Washington, D.C.) where Moseley himself always wanted to ski but couldn't because of pesky city ordinances and basic laws of meteorology. It's a neat idea, until you play it. You begin the game with plodding skiers; what's supposed to be a 50-mile-per-hour rocket ride feels more like a brisk power-walk at the mall with grandma. The control system suffers from a serious case of "grind-suck," too: Jab the grind button anywhere near an edge—even 10 feet away—and you get yanked to it like you're caught in a tractor beam. It makes for loads of disorienting moments when you catch air above multiple edges, which pull you to and fro as you try to grind. I figure the designers were trying to make the trick system as forgiving as possible (pulling off spins and flips is easier here than in *SSX*). But then why does my skier tumble at random? And why did it take a day for me to score high enough to finally reach the second level? Maybe these guys should borrow a few more gameplay ideas from *SSX*.

Crispin

If there's one good thing you can say about *Mad Trix*, it's that the developers knew the only game worth ripping off is *SSX*. And rip it off they did, right down to the control setup and painted arrows on the turns. Unfortunately, they screwed up just about everything else. The first time I hit the grind button and watched my skier waver from one side of the screen to the other, that was it. In this game I've seen guys land on their heads and somehow keep going like nothing happened, but then land square on their skis and bail. I've been turned around and found myself skiing back up the hill even faster than I was coming down.

Jonny Moseley is just a mummy.

Greg

At the outset of the game, Jonny conjures up a real noodle-scratcher: "What if it snowed in San Francisco?" By now, I'm sure he's sorry he asked. Apparently when it snows in San Francisco, some poor skiing sap tries to re-enact *SSX* as he careens off assorted debris and slowly oozes downhill (or uphill if you like, it doesn't seem to matter to the game). Meanwhile, to highlight your "sick" tricks, Bing Crosby belts out "extreme" clichés and street slang as eloquently as a *Moviefone* recording. The whole damn experience is like watching your dad perform "Who Let the Dogs Out?"—you want it out of your line of sight as quickly as possible.

Jon

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	5	2	4

Maximo: Ghosts to Glory



My, what big hands you have: Boss battles (left) are *Maximo's* main events. Most of the six big baddies worked us hard until we learned their patterns (and you really have to look at these guys to figure them out), although one left us saying, "Eh, that all you got?"



It's the unofficial sequel to *Ghosts 'n Goblins*. It's resurrecting classic gameplay in 3D. Its characters were designed by a famous Japanese artist. Blah, blah, blah—all that's nice. But the only thing you really need to know about *Maximo* is it's one helluva fun game. Enemies gang up and—smash!—you shatter three at once with a spin attack. Jump, double jump and—whew!—you barely stick your landing on a chip of rock above a toxic bog. Bosses thrice your size—gulp!—snatch a few lives before you figure 'em out. No huge go-anywhere worlds or collect-'em-up crap here; *Maximo* just dishes out a good ol' time. And the slick power-up system (see below) takes the old-school fun a step further, giving you loads of tinkering opportunities. Some abilities build on others for added technique, which—along with enemies that have specific weaknesses—makes for combat that doesn't become ho-hum after the umpteenth fight. And the game's undead world comes alive with sharp visuals, funny animation and tunes that harken back to the good ol' *GMG* music. Things do drag a bit in the middle, with a series of swampland levels that seem a tad too similar. I wish camera control was tighter, too: Swinging the view behind *Maximo* requires that you bring him to halt—the last thing you wanna do with goons in pursuit. But these gripes won't deter you from slaying through the 29 levels—then playing it all again to open that secret stage.... **Criffin**

I like the name *Maximo*, but I think a more appropriate title for this game would be *Polished*. There's just no other word for it. Gameplay? Polished to a shine. A killer set of moves, truly unique and valuable power-ups, awesome use of offense and defense for combat, and laser-precision controls that leave only yourself to blame. (Not to mention the best continue and save system I've seen in a long time.) Level Design? Buffed 'til it gleams. Intricately designed stages, with meticulously placed secrets, enemies, traps and rewards. And the graphics? Razor-sharp. The only dull spots are the sometimes naughty camera and repetitive skeleton enemies. **Mark**

It's rare to see a 2D-to-3D conversion that isn't a pathetic hack-job these days, so I was busting out of my heart-patterned boxers for *Maximo*. True, it doesn't have that can't-put-it-down quality of a *GTA3* or *MGS2* (*Maximo's* levels are too formulaic), but you can't help but get a little buzz on the simple but elegant gameplay. I don't know what kind of smack the graphics are on, but they just pop out of the screen at an almost unbearable intensity; it's a very cool effect. Best of all, the creative enemies and bosses are more than tough enough to keep you in your place. I was hastily reminded how much I can suck, and it actually felt kinda good. **Jonathan**

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom Digital Studios
Featured On: Pg. 116
Players: 1
Also try: Dusting off your Super Nintendo
Best Feature: Old-school gameplay
Worst Feature: Unresponsive camera
Web Site: www.capcom.com



We've blabbed about how *Maximo* is old-school this and classic that, but greenhorn gamers may wonder what the hoopla's about. So for all you PlayStation-generation whippersnappers, let's count the ways this game shows its old-school roots. Veterans can sit back and nod sagely....

Maximo keeps you on your toes: Like the best old-timey side-scrollers, every enemy, platform and power-up here is placed to keep you thinkin' and movin'. Only a well-timed double jump'll get you to that ledge in the distance, but you better kill the zombie up there first. Fun? You betcha. But that also means...

Maximo is tough: Sudden-death pits abound in later levels, and you will utter salty language. Especially because....

There ain't no free rides in Maximo: Unlike modern games that let you save every 10 foot-steps, *Maximo* makes you earn your continues (by nabbing spirits) and game saves (by spending money). Want unlimited continues? Then you'll have to work for them. But it's worth it 'cause....

Maximo's a big game: You get five hub worlds with five stages each—and plenty of secrets. Still, it all comes down to one move....

Maximo can do a double jump: 'Nuff said.

MAXING OUT MAXIMO: THE MOST POTENT POWER-UPS

By the end of the game, *Maximo* can lock seven power-ups in his belt and thus keep 'em even if he croaks. But with dozens to choose from, which seven powers should you stick with? David Siller, Capcom Digital Studios' director of R&D, gives us his picks:



Shield of Midas
 Sucks up treasure from afar



Increased Armor
 Because you can never have too much protection



Throw Shield
 A must for nailing hard-to-reach baddies



Mask of Sorrow
 Go on a 20-second invulnerable rampage



Long Sword
 'Cause in this game, size does matter



Second Strike
 Adds follow-up quickie slash to your moves list



Gold Seeker
 Makes it easier to uncover hidden chests

That was then...

THIS IS NOW!!

GAMENOW

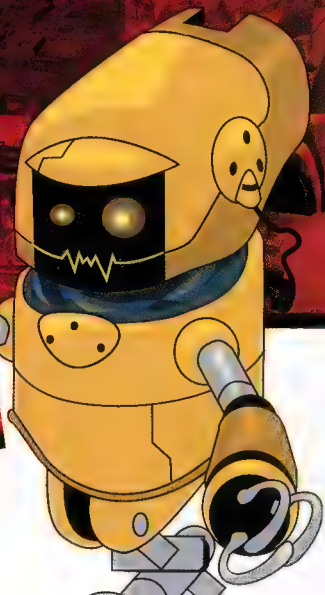
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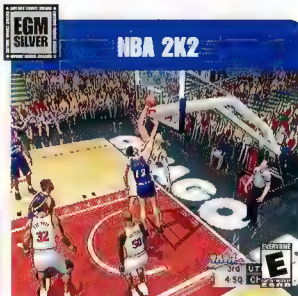




Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: Electronic Arts
Big Afros: None
Players: 1-2 (1-8 with Multi-Play)
Unstoppable: Kansas
Best Feature: Fight songs
Worst Feature: Limited modes of play
Web Site: www.easports.com



Publisher: Namco
Developer: Namco
Featured In: EGM #147
Players: 1-2
Best Feature: Beautiful bikes, beautiful sights
Worst Feature: The 'cycles steer like your old bike with the banana seat
Web Site: www.namco.com



Publisher: Sega
Developer: Visual Concepts
Featured In: EGM #149
Players: 1-2 (1-8 with Multi-Play)
Funny: John Stockton's stick legs
Best Feature: Intuitive, addicting gameplay
Cheerleaders: Oh yeah, hubba, hubba
Web Site: www.segasports.com



EA Sports is jilting gamers by passing the baton from one average basketball game—*NBA Live*—to another: *March Madness 2002*. Before we go into the gameplay, the first question that comes to mind is "Where's the freaking Dynasty mode?" Every EA game in recent memory has made use of this feature, and it makes even more sense in a college setting. We need the chance to recruit new athletes, graduate players, and fashion a team to our liking. EA has robbed us of that opportunity. Dumb. The other stupid part is that you can't even simulate one season of college hoops, as there are only two play modes. It's either Play Now, Tournament or get out. Definitely not what we expect of EA, the king of options. *March Madness* also suffers from the same droll gameplay that plagues *NBA Live*. Stiff, often overly lengthy, animations lead to a pretty lousy-feeling game of basketball. Rebounding and jump shots (core points of *Live*) seem to have been tweaked for the better, but there's not much else to praise. Stealing the ball is almost comically easy at times, and I'm still, not sold on the camera presentation for this one. Give me the opportunity to create our own, user-defined view (a la *Madden*) and be done with it. I'll never have to bitch about the camera again. **It's a shame that while EA's other college product flourishes (the stellar *NCAA 2002*), this one is destined for no-man's land.**

Dan L.

No matter what collegiate paint EA stirs into this pot of crap stew, it still doesn't change the fact that *Madness 2002* plays like this season's disappointing *NBA Live*. All of the floaty physics, bad player control and unrealistic play from that game have made it into this one, with the biggest difference being a bunch of college fight songs. Whoopee! At least *NBA Live* had some sick features that made it palatable. This, on the other hand, has no season play, something standard in sports games since Hoover was president. Half the fun of college sports is moving your team up the ranks, but EA seemed intent on draining every bit of fun out of this mundane game.

Kraig

If you have a soft spot for *NBA Live 2002*, you'll get a similar tingle for *March Madness 2002*. Both look and play about the same. Unfortunately, both still lag well behind *NBA 2K2*. The control in *March Madness* is solid, if a little fidgety. The players trot around the court taking baby steps. Other animations (like the two-hand push foot) also look a bit unnatural. The lack of a Season mode puts a cap on the replay value as well. Half the fun of sports sims is taking your favorite team through a season. EA assures us next year they won't forget that important feature. Drawbacks aside, the title is good enough to have some yucks with. Rent it for a night.

Dan

Ever since I hopped on my first motorcycle (a 500c Kawasaki) at the age of 9, bikes have been my true love. For years I have waited for a game that captures the spirit of two tires on tarmac, and while *MGP2* comes close, it lacks the right stuff. That's not to say *MGP2* isn't decent. It's one of the better 'cycle games I've played, but it's hardly comprehensive. Example: *MotoGP 2* may double the number of tracks from the first game, but it still doesn't offer the full 16-track circuit of real GP racing. Likewise, the 500c class (including riders and teams) is intact, but the 250 and 125cc classes are notably absent. Still, these are gripes only the anal would notice, and *MGP2* actually features a wealth of modes and challenges diverse enough to satisfy any gamer. What won't satisfy any gamer is the evil learning curve. Unlike car racing games, with all their wanton powersliding, the easily flippable nature of 'cycles allows little room for error or improvisation in finding the perfect line, and because of a small, but significant oversight, finding that line is a teeth-gritting experience. By substituting a single brake for true front and rears, Namco's made controlling your 'cycle doable, but not optimal. It's like playing *Ridge Racer* without the powersliding. Against *MGP2*'s flawless CPU riders this small nuisance becomes a big headache in a hurry, making the game worth the trouble only if justice is a virtue you possess in spades.

Milkman

MotoGP 2 may look and feel exactly like last year's prequel, but considering how good that game was, it ain't a bad thing. If you're into bike racing, there's really nothing on any system that comes close to *MGP* in regards to realism, handling or graphics. In fact, the handling is so dead-on that gamers who've used to racing on four wheels will likely find the learning curve here a tad steep. You really need to woeah it down going into the turns, and not jam on the gas too quickly for fear of having the rear wheel jump out on you. But if you've got the patience to master the nuances of bike racing, *MotoGP 2* is a totally satisfying experience.

Greg

I have no doubt whatsoever that straddling a crotch rocket at speeds of 200+ mph in real life takes enormous skill and concentration. Why? Because *MotoGP 2* told me so. This game is damn serious about the sport of superbike racing. All the official licenses, riders and bikes are here in fabulous detail. But don't even think about playing this game unless you're willing to bulldoze its steep learning curve. It took me hours upon hours of nonstop playing just to win the first race in Season mode. If you can stay on your bike long enough to appreciate it, *MGP 2*'s excellent weather effects and pervasive sense of speed will immerse you in its cutthroat reality.

Che

How many different ways can I say a sports game is insanely good? *NBA 2K2* has turned into a legitimate dynasty. Look the word up—it means the series is large and in charge (I'm so street), and will probably remain that way for several years to come. For the sake of people who have never played past editions (not everyone bought a Dreamcast), I won't compare too much. It's important to note, however, that no other PS2 baller comes close. The presentation is simply incredible: The flickering reflections on the shiny court surfaces, the rowdy fans in the front rows, the hot-momma cheerleaders—they all look straight out of a TV broadcast. The players appear realistic and move naturally; they don't trot around like robots as in certain other PS2 BB sims. And the variety of animation is huge. It seems like every physical action is matched with the appropriate reaction. Two players collide, and it actually looks like there's real inertia at work (no human pinball here). To sum it up, *NBA 2K2* does the little (and not so little) things so well, you're free to become totally immersed in the contest. I don't know how I could lay it out more simply than that, but that's the main reason it's so good. Multiplayer contests are, as always, the most entertaining way to play the game. Not to sound like a kiss ass, but it's great to finally have a high-caliber basketball franchise like this. Now the challenge will be keeping it fresh from season to season.

Dean

Basketball is a high-scoring game, which makes it ironic that most computer opponents don't have a clue on how to put points on the board. The 2K2 guys, however, can light it up with more ferocity than a pit bull at a beef jerky convention. First time on the court, they beat my cocky ass by 20. I made adjustments and still lost by 27. *NBA 2K2* doesn't cheat to win. It makes that clichéd "extra pass" that TV announcers talk about to get to the hoop. The beauty of the game is that its sweet graphics and charged-up atmosphere make even losing fun. And if you can't beat the Lakers before long, well, have your little sister play against you for chrisakes.

Kraig

It's a three-peat. This is the best damn basketball game out there, again. VC has owned the court since releasing *NBA 2K* back in 1999, and *NBA 2K2* only takes the franchise to greater heights. Stunning player models and lifelike animation (aside from that silly steal lunge) grab your attention. Quick-hitting gameplay and a solid layer of depth keep you coming back for more. *NBA 2K2* shines brightest in the multiplayer setting, but it's also a worthy single-player experience thanks to some nifty A.I. My one complaint, as is the case with most VC games, is that the Franchise mode needs to be more user-friendly. Other than that, this game is so money.

Dan L.

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	6	3	5

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	4	4	8

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
9	8	7	9

ESPN International Winter Sports 2002



Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami CEO
Also Try: *ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding 2002*
Players: 1-2
Web Site: espnthegames.com

Best Feature: Believe it or not, Curling!
Worst Feature: Figure Skating

Something just seems wrong about taking control of athletes who spend their lives training to shave a half second off their downhill ski times, and crashing them into an orange safety fence five seconds into the run. Truly, hitting L1 at just the right time or tapping X and O alternately doesn't approximate the Olympic experience, nor is it really that fun as a video game. *Winter Sports* is more like being the hot-dog vendor at the Olympic park. You get to watch all the events, but don't really have all that much fun being there. I did, however, finally find out what the hell curling is and had some fun beating the European rat out of the old Austrian dude once I got the hang of it. Ski jumping was the other event I found to involve some actual skill beyond just pressing a button at the appointed time. But a clumsy menu system and lack of event variety just added to my overall apathy toward this game. It would have been more fun if it let you skip a curling stone out of the arena once in a while or fling a snowboarder into a scotch pine...maybe next year.

Jonathan

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	5	3	6

ESPN's Winter X Games 2002 Snowboarding



Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami CEO
Players: 1-2
Better than a: Snowball to the nuts
Winter X Games VI: Feb 5
Web Site: espnthegames.com

Best Feature: Pretty graphical package
Worst Feature: Gameplay is pretty shallow

When gauging this latest entry into the highly crowded snowboarding genre as a purchase, you must first decide among which two camps you belong. The first camp is that of the X Games devotee. If you rank among this lot, then Konami's latest snowboarding update might be of some appeal. The majority of things found in the real-life X Games (riders, equipment, courses) are found here. Want to play as Travis Parker? Go for it! Want to grind all over Truckee, Calif.? No problem, dude! The available options, moves and mountains are extensive enough to keep any X freak happy. Which brings us neatly to camp two, that of the fair-weather fan who cares not a whit about the X Games license. Casual couch-boarders will be hard-pressed to decipher the labyrinthine menu interface, struggle with the low-gravity physics, or bother with the no-skills-required grids. This is a shame because the game boasts some delightful high-resolution 1080 *Snowboarding*-on-track graphics, and a fantastic create-a-player mode. Oh well.

Milkman

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
4	6	2	4

Smashing Drive



Publisher: Namco
Developer: Gaelco
Featured In: EGM #151
Players: 1-2
Soundtrack: So bad, it's good
Best Feature: Tons of crap to smash into
Worst Feature: Tacky graphics
Web Site: www.namco.com

Take a look at the screenshot; I already know what you're thinking: "Oh great, another *Crazy Taxi* rip-off." And hey, who can blame ya? *Smashing Drive*, with its gaudy pedestrians and perpetual rush-hour traffic, does look a lot like *CT*, but the similarities here are only skin-deep. For one thing, SD isn't nearly as complex—you don't actually pick up or drop off any passengers. All you have to do is haul ass from point A to point B before the timer hits zero, a task that's easier said than done. More so than any previously released urban racer, SD's city streets are swarming with people, cars and other destructible smash fodder. And just because you're snaking through the crowds, collecting power-ups, knocking stuff over, jumping off ramps, terrorizing civilians and making a huge mess of everything, doesn't mean the game lacks finesse. You come to appreciate the responsiveness of the controls, and through repetition, you learn exactly when to slam that handbrake for the perfect hairpin turn. But wait, repetition! Yes, repetition. While it's true that all the alternate routes in SD make the game highly replayable, there are still only a handful of tracks that add up to a total estimated playing time of oh, let's say...15 minutes before you've seen just about everything. There's just no getting around the fact that SD is a no-frills port of a fun arcade game. Definitely one of Namco's weakest arcade-to-home conversions.

Ché

Are you absolutely dying to play a new *SF Rush* or *Cruis'n* title? If so, Namco's wacky, arcade-style racer will career right up your alley. Check your realism at the curb—racing through burning buildings, movie theaters and shopping malls is lighthearted, silly fun. Though, as with most arcade ports, the single-player experience is over too quickly, with only 10 short stages. You'll get way more mileage out of the fun Versus mode. Also, it's not much of a snowpiece for the power of the GameCube. Weird colors and simplistic objects lend it an N64-ish quality that isn't flattering. Overall, it makes one helluva rental, but only a moderately satisfying purchase.

Shane

Since it's a pretty straight arcade port, *Smashing Drive* is over in a blink. The tracks are full of cool shortcuts and power-ups, and it's too brief to make much of a one-player game. So unless you want to replay repeatedly and find all of the secrets, you'll find yourself bored after half an hour. Thankfully, Namco has added a Versus mode, and that's what saves this one. The heated competition to reach the goal adds a lot to the game. Add its graphics, bony graphics and some strange music (Euro-pop techno-rock opera insanity, like something you might overhear at a communist disco), and you have a strange package that's best rented.

Christian

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
4	4	5	3

Sonic Adventure 2: Battle



Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sonic Team
Featured In: EGM #151
Players: 1-2
Supports: GC to GBA Link Cable
Best Feature: Cool Chao raising options
Worst Feature: Too few Sonic and Shadow levels
Web Site: www.sega.com

Sega has a wonderful opportunity here. Being able to rerelease some of their biggest titles on different platforms means a whole new slew of gamers could become big Sega fans. So you'd think that Sonic Team might spend some time fixing all the camera problems that plagued *Sonic Adventure 2* on the Dreamcast, or even balancing the game to the point where you'd spend less time flying around searching for emeralds, and more time playing as Sonic or Shadow. Don't get me wrong—SA2 is still an extremely solid, playable game. But the niggling control problems caused by the sometimes-erratic camera angles tend to keep you from falling in love with the experience after they've caused the death of Sonic or his friends for the hundredth time. And I'm sorry, but the extra multiplayer levels they added for this version don't help matters at all. This series has always been about running really fast through lots of loops and cool obstacles. Changing the main focus to exploration and shooting-based multiplayer minigames was not the best move. I will give Sonic Team one thing, though: The new Chao raising option (where you can download your monsters to your GBA) works so much better than the old DC VMU option. I actually care about raising those little buggers now. All in all, if you're craving a platformer on the GameCube, SA2 is still worth a purchase. Just be prepared for a lot of frustration.

Greg

Even with minor additions, the 'Cube version of *Sonic Adventure 2* is a letdown. Sonic Team, if you're listening, this is what you need to do: Fix the camera! What's the point of letting you move around in 3D when the forced camera angles and relatively small paths would be better served as 2D copy *Klonoa 2*'s side-scrolling style, and then you wouldn't have to worry about the piss-poor camera, because it's taken out of the equation. After you've done that, trim the cast list. Leave in Sonic, Shadow and maybe Tails but remove everyone else. Their levels are slow and boring. Maybe then the blue 'hog with the 'tude will return to his former glory.

Chris

I enjoyed this game when it was on the DC, but was irked by the uneven quality of the gameplay and the stubborn camera. Now that *Sonic's* on the 'Cube, the game looks as good as ever, but the problems remain and irritate me more than before. The Sonic/Shadow levels are fun (straightforward, hi-speed platform jumping and racing), but the ultra-lame fetch-quests of the other characters bring me down. And though the new multiplayer levels are nice, fixing the horrible camera should have been the priority. My advice to Sonic Team is to put the spotlight back on Sonic, kick the supporting cast to the curb and be done with this nonsense.

Milkman

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	5	5	6

NBA Courtside



Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Left Field Productions
Featured In: EGM #145
Players: 1-4
Also Try: NBA Street
Best Feature: Oh-so-sweet animations
Worst Feature: Mars-like gravity
Web Site: www.nintendo.com



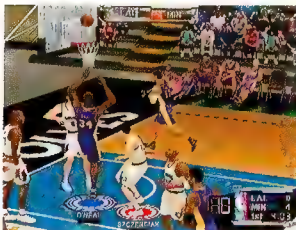
CREATE A RON JEREMY

Creating a player isn't an earth-shattering feature anymore, but being able to make a porn-star lookalike? Now that's truly something to cherish.



Nintendo's here-again, gone-tomorrow sports lineup makes games like *Courtside* feel a lot like the ex-girlfriend you regret breaking up with: It comes around every couple of years, only to remind you of what you've been missing.

This year's *Courtside* has little in common with previous editions of the b-ball franchise, aside from Kobe Bryant's mug on the box. Yet, this completely revamped baller manages to sport a polish that makes it feel like it's been refined for years. The surprisingly deep features set is more robust than even the most established basketball franchise. And when you're tired of playing NBA hoops, you can dive into a three-on-three streetball-style contest, or tinker with a player creator so intricate you can field a full team of Ron Jeremys, detailed right down to their body hair. If that's not a hoop dream, we don't know what is.



Voyeurs take note: If anyone was doin' the nasty in the luxury-box suites, you could see it all.

Street ball anyone? If you're tired of grinding it out with NBA regulations, a nifty Arcade mode offers a nice change of pace. This three-on-three match-up uses over-the-top slam dunks, brutal blocks and six-point shots to juice up the action. Think of it as *NBA Street* lite.



First off, I want to thank the guys who did the rosters for this game. It's the NBA game this year where my crappy Houston Rockets weren't rated as having less talent than the floorboards they play on. Because of those sympathetic (or drunk) roster writers, I was able to take my Rockets to the championship. But not because the game is easy. In fact, it took me awhile to learn how to out run-and-gun the computer in *Courtside*. The A.I. plays well enough on defense to keep the scores realistic and will light up the board if you let your guard down. Sometimes I was tempted to step aside and let the computer drive in so I could watch it strut its stuff. Many of the jump hooks, fakes and elaborate lay-ups have to be seen to be believed, especially the humorous stuff in the Streetball mode. One special move includes a ballerina's spinning pirouette that's mesmerizing, yet easy to do thanks to the intuitive controls. In fact, the painless Practice mode gets you comfortable and playing like an overpaid NBA star in just minutes. Shame you can't pass like one. *Courtside*'s passes are so floaty that it feels like you're heaving change-ups cross-court. Defenses have more time to react to deflect the ball, occasionally creating an extra (and hopefully not costly) turnover. But it's nothing that will stop you aspiring John Stockton from racking up the assists, and it certainly doesn't ruin an otherwise rock-solid hoops game.

Kraig

NBA Courtside is a game that tries to appeal to the arcade-lovin' fans of *NBA Street*, while simultaneously hanging on the shrtails of those who prefer a little reality in their ballin'. And while it features pleasant graphics and a good (but not great) set of features, *Courtside* lacks the electricity that defines the best b-ballers. Perhaps it has something to do with the odd layout of the controller buttons, the polite speed at which the players run around, or maybe it's the repetitive, subdued commentary that kept me reaching for the caffeine. Not to suggest *Courtside* is a waste of time, but given the choice, I'd just rather play *NBA 2K2*.

Milkman

I may feel the urge to make a crack about Kobe's mini-fut, but his game is no joke—it's serious fun. I'd have to put it in the same league as *NBA 2K2*. Maybe not as polished, but a smooth-playing, smart and intuitive basketball game. It's got a lot of neat features, too. The C-stick has replaced icon passing; simply point it toward a teammate and zap—the ball goes to him. Easy, eh? Another cool feature is the adrenaline button, which lets you control the intensity of your special moves and dunks. And the hyper-spastic Street mode, while no *NBA Street*, holds up well. I wouldn't buy a GameCube just for *Courtside*, but it's a gimme for GC jockeys.

Dean

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	6	7	8



Publisher: Kemco
Developer: Nat'a Digital Works
Featured In: EGM #150
Players: 1-2
Best Ride: Backdraft
Best Feature: Cool movie-music soundtrack
Worst Feature: Extremely average in every way
Web Site: www.kemco-games.com



I think the developer of *Universal Studios* must be schizophrenic. On the one hand, this game seems made for kids: cutesy graphics, very simplistic controls and a tour guide in the form of Woody Woodpecker. On the other hand, the difficulty level is a little high even for adult gamers; especially the movie trivia section, which features questions about some flicks the biggest movie buffs on our staff have never seen. It's easy to see that Kemco was hoping this would be "fun for the whole family," but I doubt it'll really succeed in appealing to any age group. Instead, it's mediocre for all—too hard for the youngins', and not nearly engaging or long enough for the pre-teen-and-up crowd. It's too bad, too, because I think the whole premise is pretty cool: Travel around the (overly difficult-to-navigate) Universal Studios theme park and go on a bunch of different movie-themed rides (read: minigames). It's just that the minigames are so dull. Even some of the best ideas—like the DeLorean chase on the *Back to the Future* ride or the dino-shooting gallery from *Jurassic Park*—are far too slow and boring to keep you coming back for more. About the biggest things *Universal* has going for it are the authentic movie soundtracks playing during each level. In short, **don't bother with this one, no matter how much you might want a new GameCube game.** Universal may be worth a rental for kids, but not a purchase. **Greg**

When fellow reviewer Che Chou saw me playing this game, he said, "Have fun with that turd." He was right and wrong about likening this game to excrement. On one hand, no serious gamer will want to touch this with a 10-foot plunger. It's kiddie stuff, with bare-bones gameplay that poorly rips off classics like *Excitebike*, *Panzer Dragoon* and others. But that's the point: This is kiddie stuff. *Theme Park Adventure* is not meant for old farts or hardcore gamers. So even though it can take less than two hours to beat, **this game should be plenty fun for the very young ones in your family.** It's simple, colorful and well-designed. **Shoe**

Surprisingly, this is **not as bad as I expected.** Note that I didn't say "good." Underneath its exterior as an ad for Universal's theme parks are movie-themed minigames that are unpolished and simplistic, yet strangely fun. They don't even look that good, with bland, washed-out textures that would be more at home on N64 than GC. But there's just something very satisfying about yelling, "Chomp on that, jaws!" aloud while hurling boxes at the giant shark. (Or, "Eat DeLorean, Biff!" during *Back to the Future*.) It's a shame more time's spent just navigating the meandering park layout than actually playing. Plenty lame, but this would make an enjoyable rental. **Chris**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY
3 3 5 3



Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Acclaim Studios
Players: 1-4
Weirdness: Player celebrations look bizarre—think a drunken James Brown
Web Site: acclaimsports.com



When *Quarterback Club* was first introduced on the Nintendo 64, its spectacular graphics blew us away. People were using phrases like *Madden-killer* and—gulp—best football sim ever (groan). But since its flashy debut, the series has steadily deteriorated. Hit-or-miss A.I. and (at times) comical gameplay are not the best features to build a franchise around. And unfortunately **QB Club 2002 doesn't completely break from its past.** When it comes to graphics, it still almost looks like an N64 game. Isn't the GameCube supposed to be powerful? The sound and play-by-play could best be described as anemic, but passable. Gameplay and A.I., however, are actually better than in previous editions. The whole thing plays a little like an older version of *Madden Football* (lots of fan-coverage and a big-time passing attack). The new QB Challenge is the best part, though. It's worth renting *QB Club 2002* just to play these minigames that have a bunch of quarterbacks competing in skilled events (throwing, agility, etc.). Otherwise, stick with *Madden NFL 2002*. **Dean**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY
3 4 4 4



Publisher: EA
Developer: Radical
Featured In: EGM #148
Players: 1-2
Try Instead: *Crazy Taxi 2* (DC)
Web Site: simpsonsroadrage.com



I slugged the Xbox version of *Road Rage* a couple issues ago, not for its blatant plagiarism of *Crazy Taxi*, but rather for its many gameplay issues. I kept my expectations low going into the GameCube version this month and saved myself the disappointment. This is the exact same game as its Xbox and PS2 counterparts, which means you'll still have to deal with irritating load times and janky collision detection problems (it's easy to get your car stuck on objects and buildings). What's worse is that *RR* still has **very little in the way of depth.** Like *CT*, the object is to make some dough by driving the denizens of Springfield around town. The faster you truck, the bigger the buck. But man, did these cats miss the point of *CT* or what? *RR* doesn't reward you for weaving through traffic, pulling off jumps or causing near-misses. In fact, there isn't much technique here at all. Leave out these moments of skill and all you've got is a very bland rip-off staring the cast of our most beloved animated series. Sorry *Simpsons* fans, this is not the game it could have been. **Che**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY
3 6 1 5



Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Featured In: EGM #151
Players: 1
That damn new little doll enemy
Best Feature: Soul-sucking power-up system
Worst Feature: Controls in the thick of combat
Web Site: www.capcom.com



Resident Evil in ancient Japan: That's a pretty good primer for *Onimusha*, in case you missed the original PS2 version released just one year ago. *Oni's* lighter on the puzzles and heavier on the combat than *RE*, but wandering room to room, cleaving down undead evil creatures will definitely feel familiar. The story was silly then, and it's still silly now, but what I enjoyed about *Onimusha* was the combat: You can dart quickly in any direction and sock the souls left by fallen enemies to power up a nice array of different weapons (including three blades, a bow and a gun). So you'd think this new, improved version with added outfits, areas, enemies and a harder difficulty level would be even better, right? Wrong. *Gemna's* tougher and more numerous bad guys do lengthen the game a bit, but they also **highlight the flaws in the already weak controls.** With no lock-on system (you attack whatever is closest) and a "left or right to turn, forward to move" scheme (like *RE*), things get confusing and frustrating when you are surrounded, which is now much more often. Plus, you can't use the analog stick, and must constantly hold in the Xbox controller's very resistant L and R buttons (to strafe and block)—it's an ergonomic nightmare. The graphics still look sharp, and striking down ninjas and horned demons holds enough thrills to make *Gemna* a worthy rental for psies, but if you already had your way with the PS2 version, don't bother. **Mark**

I didn't get around to playing the PS2 version of *Onimusha*, but after playing *Gemna*, I'm really sorry that I didn't. It's the perfect mix of *Devil May Cry* and *Resident Evil*—not as repetitive as the former and less sluggish than the latter. *Gemna* is the kind of game you don't want to put down once you start playing. The constant action and comfortable pacing just make you want to **block out the world and finish it in one sitting.** As in *RE*, however, the pre-rendered backgrounds force you into some cramped camera angles; an axe-wielding demon's ass in your face is a bitch. *Gemna's* not easy but well worth the day you'll spend on it. **Jonathan**

This is my first time playing through *Onimusha*, so this review is for those of you who missed the PS2 version. You'll love this game if you dig all the ingredients that make up a typical *Resident Evil*: static backgrounds, finding items and clues in the environments, constantly switching camera angles, and those RC-car controls (which a lot of people hate but work really well here). *Gemna's* feudal-Japan setting meshes with the genre perfectly. If the game weren't such a sadist—**you're gonna have to be tough and persistent to make it through this one**—and if it weren't so short (about half the length of an average *RE*), I'd say it's a must-buy for any gamer. **Shoe**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY
3 3 3 3



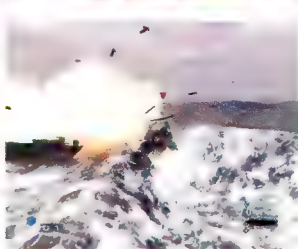
Publisher: Microsoft
Developer: Stormfront Studios
Featured In: EGM #151
Players: 1-4
Also Try: *Cel Damage*
Best Feature: Oh, the sparking water!
Worst Feature: Crappy hand-drawn level interiors
Web Site: www.bloodwake.com



Samurais had it easy. They didn't have to worry about dodging missiles, napalm showers, or hails of gunfire when they were protecting the Emperor's butt. Their only concern was avoiding a sword to the groin or some other less vital body part. If only life were so simple as a Chinese sailor.

Blood Wake rewrites the history books by making ancient Chinese naval warfare, well, not so ancient. The only clue that your vessels (or "junks") are cut of a cloth woven in the past are their wooden hulls. The rest of their chassis consist of hardened steel and advanced weaponry (and occasionally a big, green decorative snake) that could easily sink a modern-day aircraft carrier. Or at least the one built in the early '80s that travels back in time in *The Final Countdown*.

When the waves start crashing, you'll be thankful for the resilience of your hip, hybrid



Get into a big tussle, and expect massive ripples to follow. They don't call this Blood Wake for nuttin', you know.

rig (its uniqueness is more useful than for just reeling in the chicks, you know). No matter how many times you get flipped over, dunked or submerged, the only thing that'll ultimately sink you is another boat. And plenty of those are lurking around, of course.

Like your ship, each class of enemy vessel has its own set of armaments, whether it be a speedy scout with pop-gun weapons, or a hulking transport that repeatedly blows its wad with obnoxious flurries of guided missiles and cannon fire. As you beat missions and progress through the war (as told through cheesy pen and parchment drawings that wouldn't make it on a PBS kids' show), your own fleet of selectable battleships increases as well. These boats can be used in multiplayer battles fought in unlockable arenas. Before you know it, your armory will become so advanced that you'll be sinking your buddy in a rig that looks like it belongs in a *Thunder in Paradise* calendar. How could you ask for anything more?

The waves may be thrilling, but the vanilla level design keeps *Blood Wake's* multiplayer fun in check (below). It's not so boring that you don't want to torpedo your friend, so much as you would just rather play the more interesting single-player adventure.



At first glance, it's easy to misjudge this as the latest *Twisted Metal* rip-off. But that would be like saying that Richard Simmons is just another personal trainer. Unlike other vehicular combat games, *Blood Wake* has an eye-popping hook: gigantic, *Perfect Storm*-worthy waves that flip and roll vessels realistically during combat. The foamy wakes rippling behind boats create wonderful chop—throw a well-timed torpedo or two into the mix, you can make boats do flips that would make dolphins envious (if it's possible for a game to make you seasick, this would do it). You won't need a barf bag right away, though. *Blood Wake* eases you into the captain's chair with calm seas and moonlit nights that make you want to break out the Chardonnay in between torpedo launches. But be patient, and the action will drop anchor on your ass with tough escort, protect, gather and stealth objectives that add a welcome twist to the standard "kill everything" fare. Don't worry, you can get your mindless blasting fix with multiplayer combat. But you'll have to work for it: To play with the cooler firepower and versus modes you have to finish most of the single-player game. And even with everything unlocked, the bland arenas make it more fun to beat the missions instead of your friend. That's a little unusual for a game in this genre, but then again, **nothing is very ordinary about this surprisingly deep and original game.** **Kraig**

Avast ye mateys, Asian invasion starboard! Fire torpedos! Charge electric bolts! Scrub the poop deck! OK, so that last one's pushing it, but all (and more) preceding it lies at your wet fingertips in *Blood Wake*. Heavily arcadey, *BW's* fishy guts lie in its massive water physics and wave-sloshing fire fights. But to get to the heartier ships and cooler weapons, you'll need to get at least halfway through the single-player mode, and **repetitive mission-based gameplay risks players preemptively abandoning ship.** Stay on board though, and both single- and multiplayer offers a good amount of light shooter fun. Just be sure to ignore its cheesy sea war tale. **Jeanne**

I love action games long time, but rarely do I wake up and think to myself, "It would be nice to play an 'Oriental' boat combat game today." Despite my apathy, Microsoft must see a niche for *Blood Wake's* Asian-charged *Hydra Thunder*-meets-*Twisted Metal* gameplay. Now, **I could stomach this mundane premise if the controls didn't work my nerves.** With enemy boats constantly zipping past you, targeting them requires responsive controls. But since the left analog stick bears the burden of controlling acceleration and direction (including reverse), it's an endless struggle to face the desired direction while your foes tear you a new one. Not fun. **Milkman**



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Publisher: Sega
Developer: Visual Concepts
Featured In: *ESGM #149*
Players: 1-4
Best Move: The Spin
Best Feature: Fast-paced gameplay
Worst Feature: No multiplayer franchise
Web Site: www.segaspports.com



Sing it with me, Blink 182 fans. "All the...small things...ba ba ba da da da..."—you know the rest. It should be the theme song for the comparison between *NFL 2k2* and the latest, and best *2k2* on the Xbox. It's the small, almost transparent, changes that offer a real difference on Microsoft's black box. First off, everything just looks solid. Flicker, flutter, jaggies and interlacing aside, I know me a good-lookin' game when I see one, and this *2k2* is the best of any console version. It gets even better once everything is kicked into action. The camera doesn't suddenly pan with the ball upheld as in the PS2 version. **There's also none of the choppiness you might have seen on PS2.** Here, everything operates like Brett Favre running a two-minute drill. It's all about precision, baby. Control is razor-sharp and more suited to displaying some nice twitch skills. That's in stark contrast to *Madden*, where players respond as if they're in the gravitational pull of a black hole. *NFL 2k2* tries to mix the best elements of sim and action-style football, and I'll vouch that it does so admirably. There are some features that need ramping up, and the single-player experience is one of them. Franchise menus and options aren't conducive to long-term fun. The passing game is also fickle; long routes often seem cut short. Other than that, this is a good reason to extend your football season.

Dan L.

I take back what I said about the Xbox being no better than the PS2 for sports games. After my encounter with this *NFL 2k2*, I see the box in a whole new, glorious light. Seriously, **this baller runs so well on the Xbox, I doubt I'll pick up the PS2 version again.** Its inspired mix of fluid animation, pinpoint control, and big-play potential is just too attractive to dismiss. Kill-joys will complain that the players turn on a dime, but don't you listen to them. Once you get proficient with the control stick, you'll appreciate the exaggerated cutting ability. It's all about faking out would-be tacklers with your crazy-quick moves. Xbox + *NFL 2k2* = love.

Dean

It's only taken a few months for the Xbox's football field to get more crowded than a Taliban bomb shelter, but this fantastic *2k2* game still stands out. Sega spent a few months improving upon the great (but flawed) PS2 version, and the result is more drastic than six months of *Tae-Bu*; this Xbox edition is a finely tuned machine. **The great A.I. and lightning-fast game speed pulls off an uncommon balance of realistic football with an arcade edge.** The only downsides are the chunky menus and a Franchise mode that makes managing a fictitious team seem harder than the real deal. Luckily, the sweet gameplay makes these flaws very easy to overlook.

Kraig



Publisher: Microsoft
Developer: VR-1 Entertainment
Featured In: *ESGM #148*
Players: 1
Try Instead: *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance* (PS2)
Best Feature: It reminds us of *Gauntlet...*
Worst Feature: ...but it's not as fun as *Gauntlet*
Web Site: www.nightcaster.com



A part of me wants to believe that the crew at VR-1 Entertainment came up with Nightcaster by colliding into each other at the water cooler. Designer A says: "Hey, you got your *Gauntlet*-style hack-'n'-slash game in your *Zelda*-wannabe RPG!" Designer B retorts with the opposite and—voilà!—a turkey is born. But wait, *NC* could have been a decent game. It takes twitch-style arcade gameplay, where you run around shooting monsters with attacks, and fuses it to RPG mainstays like narrative, character development and non-player character interaction. It's too bad that somewhere along the way, the game lost focus. As it is now, *NC* is too shallow to be an RPG and too complicated to be a quick-fix good time. You're not just hauling and kicking ass every which way with your magic wand; no, you also have to think about which spells are most effective against which type of creature, and pick them by cycling through your list of spells—all in real time. Sure, this ain't no bad when you're up against a few ice slimes you can torch with fireballs. But take on a mixed cluster of baddies, each with a different weakness, and you're screwed. Rounding out *NC*'s package of crap is a tedious back story you don't have to read, pathetic bystanders you don't need to speak with, a 3D world you don't have to explore, and a ton of squandered potential for what could have been a decent action-RPG. Another disappointing adventure on the Xbox. **Chris**

Totally unremarkable and highly repetitive in both gameplay and level design. *NC*'s strongest attraction—its hack-and-slash action—amounts to nothing more than constant uneventful cycles of attack and retreat. Having to choose the right magic attack (fire, ice, dark, light) to optimize damage against a monster with the opposite disposition also disappointingly fails to shatter the monotony, since what you fight just ends up being a different colored version of the same banal set of creatures. And with a cheesy skip-through story, all *NC*'s got is its OK spell animations. Other than that, say nighty night to *Nightcaster*.

Jeanne

The developers of *Nightcaster* probably hope you'll be so busy admiring the great-looking visuals that you won't notice the **unbelievably bland and repetitive gameplay.** Here's a common setup: Find a group of enemies, quickly attack with whatever spell you can, then turn tail and run so you have time to choose the right spell to repeatedly cast on the remaining colored-coded enemies. That's fun for, what, five minutes? Not even its RPG-style story can save *NC* from mediocrity. You stop caring around the 20th time you hear about something terrible happening while you weren't around. It tries to be arcane and deep, but it doesn't do either very well.

Chris



Publisher: Bandai
Developer: Bandai
Players: 1-2
Rips-off: *Super Smash Bros.*
Best Feature: Fight your favorite Digimon against each other in real time
Worst Feature: Zip originality
Web Site: www.bandai.com



Digimon card battles digivolve to...*Digimon: Rumble Arena* Finally, the opportunity to pit Digimon against Digimon in paw-to-claw combat! Imagine, no more recycled attack animations in turn-based battles, no confusing cards to juggle, and no filler story-encumbering action. In *Rumble*, see old-disc-shooters Tai and Agumon pick a fight with season three's Takato and Guilmon, or choose any of the starting nine Digipartners. Each stage guarantees a *Smash Bros.*-like display of punch and kick attacks, double jumps, random item power-ups and downs, out-of-the-ring-type stages, digivolving (designated by a meter), and special attack combos specific to the Digimon or its evolved form. Sure, *DRA* can't touch a game like *Street Fighter* as far as move complexity goes. In fact, its moves pathetically only require one button plus a direction to execute, but its fighting fundamentals, packaged in a super-simplified way, make it accessible for almost anyone (especially young kids). Moreover, *Arena* works despite its generic fighting-game style, because it never purports to be original in the first place. Its one purpose is to let fans fight Digimon in real time, and that's exactly what it offers. Only gamers expecting more will be disappointed. Unlockable characters and m'n'g games (though only three) round out the gameplay satisfaction factor. Unsurprisingly **contrived, but surprisingly solid and OK fun is Rumble in a nutshell. Jeanne**

Without a doubt, this is the **best Digimon game I've ever played, but it's still nothing special.** At best, *Arena* is a poor man's *Smash Bros. Melee*. Control is awkward, combat is stiff, and the characters aren't evenly matched. Worse still, the difficulty takes a huge leap at the last boss, Reavermon (who's also the cheapest character). The only real fun I had was in Vs. mode, pummeling Jeanne's Renamon into the ground with Agumon. RESPECT THE AGUMON! Ahem, excuse me. But even Vs. has one super-fatal flaw: you can't both select the same character. What the hell? Digimon freaks will love it just for the characters, but the game's pretty weak.

Chris

When I first popped in *Rumble Arena* I thought, "You've gotta be kidding me. Bandai made a *Smash Bros.* game, but with Digimon?" Then I played the game and realized that this was no joke, no sir. *Rumble Arena* isn't as bad as it could have been, but it's still not such a hot potato. While the ambitious *Smash Bros.* styled arenas (complete with power-ups) are neat, this extravagance taxes the poor PS2's graphic capacity, making everything look grainy and unkempt. Now the aesthetics are forgivable, but the **weak no-link coin fighting system makes this game the perfect button-masher for young 'uns, and no one else.**

Milkman





Super Mario World, Super Mario Advance 2



Our choice for most frustratingly difficult stage in *World*: Special World's "Outrageous" level (below). Fear it. If you can finish it starting as little Mario (no Yoshi or power-up items), you have EGM's official permission to eat a whole package of Girl Scout Thin Mint cookies. You earned it.








This is the ultimate proof that 2D games will never die. *Mario* is simply a joy to play—effortlessly fun to control, and nearly impossible to put down. Check out the collage of all your moves on this page. That's more than any other platformer, ever, and yet it never overwhelms you; everything just comes naturally. Graphics and controls haven't suffered one bit in the translation to the GBA, and other refinements (such as the added map menu) improve on an already top-notch title. Levels are honed to perfection: Every block, every enemy, and every secret is placed with devious precision, all in a variety of stages vast enough to explore every facet of the excellent gameplay. If I'd never seen it before, this incredible game would likely score even higher—but since I already jumped through every nook and cranny of this *World* years ago, much of the excitement of exploration and discovery I remember was lost this second time (and I can't be alone, given that *SMW* was a Super Nintendo pack-in game). Finding all five Yoshi coins each level and a few secrets time blurred from memory were enough to keep me playing until I unlocked everything (no small feat in a game this huge), but I guess I'll just have to continue waiting for the original Mario adventure that the GBA deserves. Still, whether or not you played it before, *Mario World* is a must-own cart that deserves a permanent slot (right next to *Castlevania*) in any GBA carry case.

Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Nintendo
Featured in: EGM #149
Players: 1-4 (linked)
Try to Finish: In only 16 levels
Multiplayer: Same as the last *Mario Advance* (you can even link MA2 with MA3)
Best Feature: Refined and responsive controls
Worst Feature: Same game as 10 years ago
Web Site: www.nintendo.com

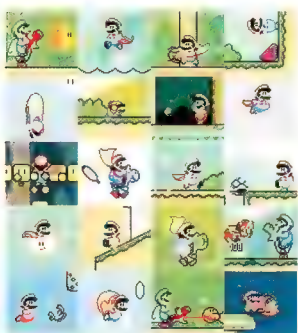


IT'S A ME, AGAIN

Hey, you old farts who remember *Super Mario World* when it was first released for the Super Nintendo—drop the Metamucci and get out your reading glasses, 'cause this is for you. It's a list of what's new and different for the GBA:

- Luigi now plays differently than Mario (higher and longer jump, fire balls bounce higher, etc.). 
- Stopping play to watch new *Beverly Hills 90210* no longer necessary.
- Map menu added to keep track of the different paths between levels (96 in all), and Yoshi coins (five are hidden in every level—get them all to turn them into Princess coins). 
- Being hit with the cape no longer makes Mario small; now he stays big and just loses the cape. 
- New opening and cutscenes after finding all 96 level paths and every Yoshi coin. 
- Need to beat the game to re-enter towers and castles (on the old version you just held R and L).
- Can switch between Mario and Luigi at any stage by pressing the R button.
- Princess' kiss at the end of the game less passionate (no tongue this time). 
- Original scored straight 9's way back in EGM #25, new version scores... well, OK, that's the same.

Oh, that's right. This is why we were excited about the GBA. Amidst the sea of mediocre and downright craptacular recent releases for the handheld, we had almost forgotten. Nintendo themselves revived our faith in the lil' powerhouse with another updated classic—this time, the over-10-year-old platformer *Super Mario World*. The sheer variety of gameplay is astounding: Mario runs, jumps, grabs, throws, swoops, spins, dive bombs...well, just look at all the stuff below. What we have here is a true classic, whose addictive gameplay bears out the cliché: Simple enough for kids and casual gamers, but deep enough for the hardest of core. This is Nintendo at its finest.



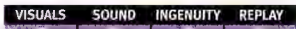
Mark

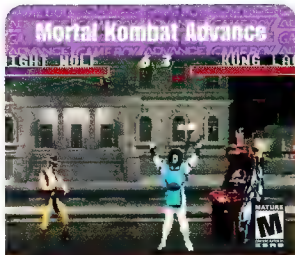
Of all the *Marios*, *World's* my least favorite—but it still love it. It's like trying to decide which color of Skittles is best: They're all good. And even though *Super Mario World* is a 10+-year-old game, it's still one of the best platformers ever, now perfectly ported to GBA. How can you not love it? Flying around with the cape, 96 stages (some with multiple paths), ridin' Yoshi, uncovering secret areas like the Star Road—this is one hell of a game. The improvements are welcome but unnecessary. Will anyone honestly play as Luigi? Maybe if you have to do everything, but he's too slow and awkward. In the end it makes no difference; *SMW* is great.

Chris

One of the best platform games of all time is now available in handheld form for only \$30...honestly, what more could you ask for? The GBA conversion of *Super Mario World* is almost flawless, with just a few minor quirks that only hardcore fans of the original will notice (such as the occasionally tiny sound). The few new features are mostly welcome ones (playing as Luigi is cool, though I miss the two-player mode), and the page that tracks your progress is a godsend. I'm a little disappointed that they made it easier, and it's lame that the *Mario Bros.* multiplayer game hasn't changed. Oh well—still a must-own game and a true classic.

John R.





Publisher: Midway
Developer: Virtcraft
Players: 1-2 (Linked)
It's Official: Lowest scoring game, ever
Try Instead: Any GBA fighting game 'cept this
Best Feature: Lots of kombatants
Worst Feature: This kart is a buggy, unplayable piece of crap. It can kiss our collective asses.
Web Site: www.midway.com

No, this **0.0** score is not a misprint. Yes, *MK Advance* is that horrible. A lot of bad fighting games are out there; I can say without hyperbole that this one is a million times worse than all of them put together. *MKA* is the most incomplete, half-assed, piece of (insert any expletive here) I've ever had the misfortune of playing. An honest features list on the back of the package would read something like this: "More than 20 playable characters! Each one features a tiny handful of moves that you may or may not be able to execute! And once you do perform them, we don't guarantee that they'll work properly! Watch missile attacks pass right through your opponents at long range! Also marvel at how your characters move or fall in strange and awkward ways! You may call it sloppy programming, but we call it...well, sloppy programming! Take on advanced computer opponents that can play like idiots and cheaters at the same time! Check out three, count 'em, *three* completely unoriginal modes that you've seen countless times before, and only one that you can play by yourself! Contains the most number of problems, bugs, and unpolished or missing features of any game, ever! Bonus: This cart offers a couple of hidden guessing games—try to figure out who combatant counts on your own (our display doesn't tally them correctly), and try to decipher our inconsistent and unbalanced damage system!" Ugh. **Shoe**

Since *Mortal Kombat's* roster is largely comprised of two dudes multiplied and color-swapped, Midway had plenty of space left to make *MK Advance* pretty. So if you can get away with just watching it from a distance, stop there. The designers apparently had zero time to complete it; between the bugs and intoxicated spaceman physics, no sane individual would have let this out the door voluntarily. It's basically a stripped-down *MK Trilogy* with a ton of mechanical glitches. **If a circus train wreck was ever more accurately embodied in digital format, I haven't seen it.** Midway should have just ported *MK2*—it's a better game and a more realistic endeavor. **Jonathan**

Hmm, I wonder why Midway didn't send us a copy of *MKA* early for a timely review? Ah, that's why—'cause it's a steaming pile of bloody dog crap. *MK* games always been hit or miss (mostly misses since *MKII*), but this is ridiculous. Buggy, unbalanced gameplay, spastic computer opponents (who go comatose on low difficulty levels), slowdown—you name it, it sucks. And where are the secrets and gore we all know and love? Why didn't they just port an old Super Nintendo *MK*? I'd rather watch the god-awful second *MK* movie, from inside a prison cell, while gargling cat piss than play this abomination any longer. If you bought it, return it. Now. **Mark**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY



Publisher: THQ/Sega
Developer: Dimps
Featured In: EGM #151
It's As: Sonic, Knuckles, Amy or Tails
Players: 1-4 (Linked)
Supports: GameCube to GBA Link Cable
Best Feature: This is classic, 2D *Sonic*. The cool GC-to-GBA Chao raising is nice, too
Worst Feature: Not enough stages
Web Site: www.thq.com

It sure is nice to see that the first GBA *Sonic* title isn't just a remake of some game we used to die to death to years ago, yet still retains the fast, simple gameplay we remember so well. *Sonic Advance* definitely feels old-school—right down to a couple classic Robotnik boss machines in the final level—but it's an **all-new adventure that long-time fans of the series will love.** One of my biggest fears going into this review was that Sonic and friends run so fast it might be hard to keep track of the action on such a small screen. Not so. The game is lightning-quick, but it's also easy to play, even if you're in a moving car. It could have a lot to do with the simplistic level design (let's face it, exploring large, intricate areas has never been a hallmark of the *Sonic* games). But *Sonic Advance* does stray from the beaten path a little, thanks to the different play styles afforded by the four characters. They also add a bit of replay value to what is a relatively short game. In fact, that's my biggest gripe with this game: It's over way too soon. Dimps should have included about twice as many levels. And while the multiplayer games are sorta neat, they're not compelling enough to make you want to play them more than a few times. The Chao Garden makes up for it, though. Being able to raise your Chao from *Sonic Adventure 2* using this GBA game is pure genius, and shows off the incredible promise of Nintendo's GC to GBA Link Cable. **Greg**

First the good: *Sonic Advance* is the best 2D *Sonic* game since *Sonic CD*. The redrawn characters are slickly animated, the backgrounds are bright and colorful, and the stages are the most cleverly designed levels in a *Sonic* game ever. Dimps even managed to stick in some of the new moves for each character from *Sonic Adventure 2*. Sweet stuff. Problem is, though the game supplies four characters to play as, the only one worth bothering with is Sonic. (Thankfully, playing as the others isn't mandatory like in *Sonic Adventure 2*.) The best part of the game, for me, is the Chao Garden GBA-to-GameCube feature, that lets you raise virtual Chao. **Milkman**

Finally, a real *Sonic* game. I'm an old-school fan of Sega's mascot, and *Advance* returns to the gameplay that made the series great. You know what I'm talking about: Run, jump, lose all your rings, and repeat until you reach the end. Simple but fun—isn't it great? Levels are reminiscent of the old games' best, and with the fresh coat of paint, **Sonic and pals have never looked better in 2D.** Still, I could've done without Knuckles and Amy. They can't match the thrill of blasting through as Sonic or Tails. Hidden stages add an exploration factor, but in the end they're sorta lame. Those small graphics aside, forget *Adventure*. This is what *Sonic* should be. **Chris**

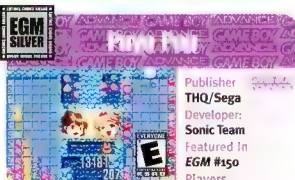
VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY



Publisher: THQ/Sega
Developer: Developer.
Wow
Try Instead: *Pokémon Puzzle Challenge* (GBC), *Tetris DX* (GBC)
Players: 1-2 (Linked)
Web Site: www.thq.com

You've probably seen *Columns* around at some point. In arcades, on the Sega Genesis, etc. You may have even tried it out. After all, it looks awfully simple and entertaining. But chances are, if you're not one of those puzzle-game freaks who spend half their lifetimes mastering *Tetris*-wannabes in order to outnerd their nerd friends, then you've not interest right away. That's because, the **Columns formula really isn't that fun.** The rigid gameplay mechanics force you to match pieces vertically (which won't get you far) or diagonally (the best way to set up combos). The latter necessitates hardcore puzzle-game thinking and planning, and thus, makes this a rather ho-hum experience for most average folk. (Though most hardcore puzzle-game players whom I know don't like *Columns* either.) This *GBA* version doesn't do much to make the recipe more tasty; it gives you Magic Gems (which you collect and trade) that let you attack your opponent's screen in different ways. But when the foundation is already soft, this extra *Game* Guff, innovative or not, can't make the *Column* any stronger. **Shoe**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

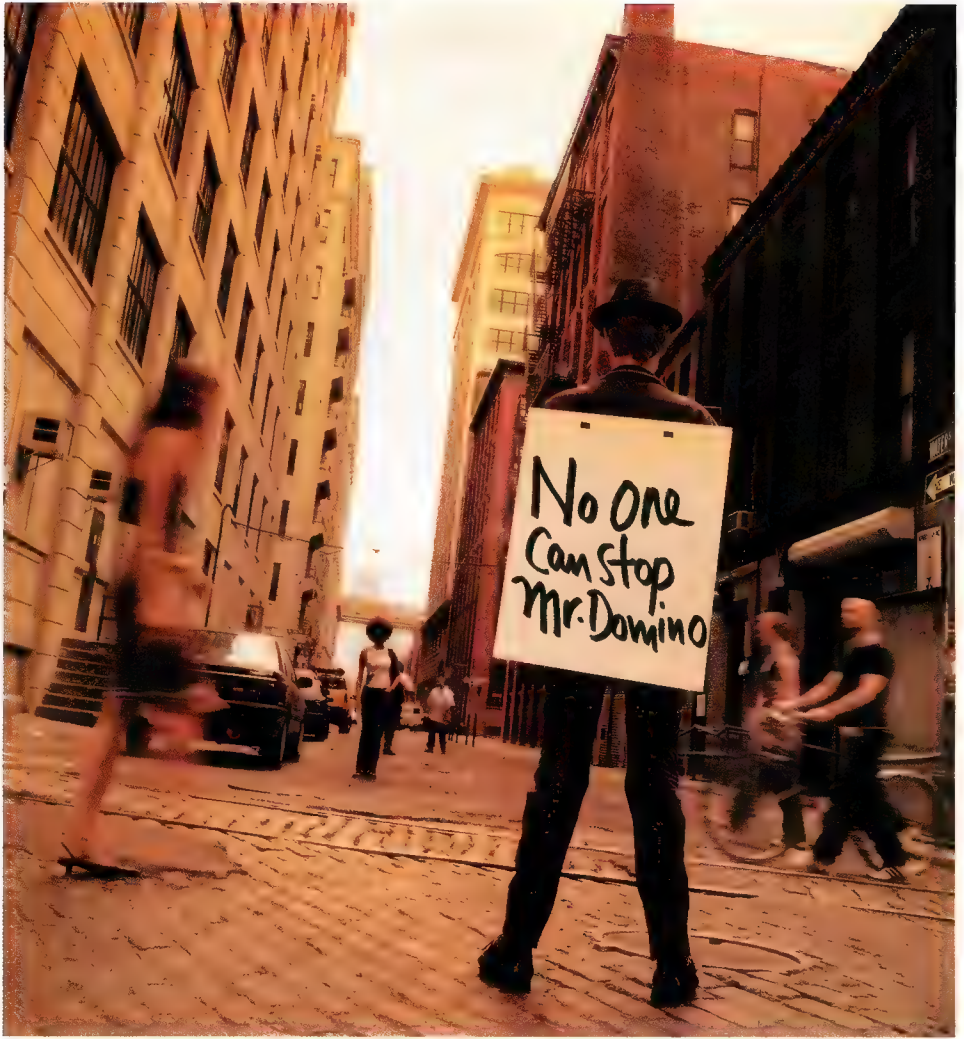


Best Feature: It's easy to play, easy to master
Worst Feature: One killer combo from your opponent, and you're toast in no time

Publisher: THQ/Sega
Developer: Developer.
Sonic Team
Featured In: EGM #150
Players: 1-4 (Linked)
A.K.A. *Stacking Turds*
Web Site: www.thq.com

Now here's a puzzle-game remedy that'll put the zowzers back in your trousers. *Puyo Puyo* is an amazingly simple concept. Even if good ol' *Tetris* was a noggin-scratcher for you, you'll be able to figure this one out, no sweat (that is, unless you're...olor-blind). Just line up four pieces of the same color in any fashion, and you have yourself a match. The beauty of this formula is, it allows most people to set up rudimentary combos without a hitch. Even advanced players will dig this, as you can (with a little thought and planning) set up massive chain reactions that will make you look like Bad-Ass Game Supreme. **This is why a previous edition of Puyo landed the #82 spot of our 100 Best Games Ever list** (issue #150). This *GBA* version is a great deal too: Not only does it keep the original stuff intact, but it offers variation on play (like junk blocks that take extra hits to get rid of) and even better, a four-player link mode using only one cartridge. Outside of *Tetris*, *Tetris Attack* and *Pokémon Puzzle Challenge*, this is probably the best handheld puzzle game around. **Shoe**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY



Hints, codes, reviews, screen shots, release dates, movies, updated everyday.

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Tricks of the Trade

By Peter Felank

Hope you enjoyed last month's onslaught of new tricks. Peter stepped up to the plate and is well on his way to proving himself a worthy successor to "Trickman" Terry. Stay tuned to see what tips he'll come up with next!

TRICK OF THE MONTH

Max Payne

FPS

UNLOCK EVERY LEVEL

To unlock all levels, play through subway A1 then return to the main menu via soft reset (hold Start and hit Select). Enter the following button combination: Up, Down, Left, Right, Up, Left, Down, Circle. This will open all levels and chapters. Choose any one of them in the Load Levels selection. Then, choose Continue and load away.



ESPN NFL Primetime 2002

USE IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

Enter all of these fabulous codes in the codes section of the main menu.

1 Higher Jumps and Dives

SUPERMAN

Reliant Stadium

HOWDY

Ball Carrier Shield

CAN'T TOUCH THIS

Aloha Stadium & Pro Bowl

Teams

ALOHA

Instant Fumbles

READY TO FUMBLE
(Note: Press L2 to fumble)

Controller Scoring

SCOREBOX

Weather in Domed Stadiums

SHAKE IT UP

Show Everybody

SHOW EVERYONE

Giants: Citizen Kabuto

ENHANCE YOUR EXPERIENCES

Enter each of these codes as your user name in the game to enable each of the following modes.

2 Green Screen

SNIPEME

Front Camera

XTRASEE

Unlimited Ammo

FALLOUT

Rainbows

DOROTHY

Red Screen

ANGRY

Infinite Jet Pack

38HK

Blue Screen

UDDOIT2

3 Invincible

MOLITOR

Unlimited Mana

BGDA

All Missions opened

MBP4UJP

Cheat Menu

ALPUN

(Located in the Extras Menu on title screen.)

Amped

VARIOUS PASSWORDS

All text is case-sensitive. Input codes into the Cheats section of the Options Menu. After entering the code, choose Done and you will hear a swooshing sound confirming the code has been entered properly.

Opens all levels to play

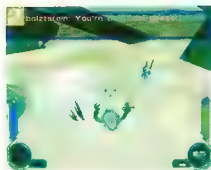
GimmeGimme

Easier landings on jumps

StickIT

4 Opens Steezy character

ChillinwSteezy



Increased speed

ZIPster

Turns tree collision off

buzzsaW

5 Perform higher jumps

MegaLeg

Dark Summit

CHEATS AND CHALLENGES

Get a load of these cheats:

Alien Unlocked

Hold the Back + Start buttons and press Y, L, X, B, R, A, R, X. Now you will have challenges 43, 48, 49 & 50 unlocked and have bomb piece #5.

All Boarders

Hold the Back + Start buttons and press Y, L, X, B, R, A, R, B

More Points

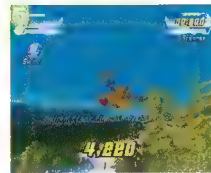
Hold the Back + Start buttons and press Y, L, X, B, R, A, R, A. Now you will have 9 million lift points and 9 million equipment points.

Challenges Finished

Hold the Back + Start buttons and press Y, L, X, B, R, A, R, Y. Now you will have challenges unlocked except 43, 48, 49, 50. You will also have all bomb pieces except #5.

Slow Motion Mode

Hold the Back + Start buttons and press Y, X, B, L. Then, press L + R in the air for slow motion.





TOP 5 TRICKS

The top 5 games of the last month for your tricked-out pleasure:

1. Star Wars Rogue Leader: Rogue Squadron II

Get Your Ships On

Fly the friendly Star Wars skies with this bunch of unlockable ships.

Slave 1 Ship

Finish all missions with a silver medal or better.

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.)

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 day-time 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.

2. The Simpsons Road Rage

Holiday Road Rage

Change your PS2's internal date to the following to unlock these secret Simpsons characters: New Year's Krusty 1/1/02

Thanksgiving Marge

11/22/01

Halloween Bart

10/31/02

Christmas Apu

12/25/01

3. Half-Life

Slow motion

At the Cheats screen, input Right, Square, Up, Triangle, Right, Square, Up, Triangle.

Maxed Ammo

Head to the Cheats screen and press Down, X, Left, Circle, Down, X, Left, Circle.

Alternate Gravity

Get to the Cheats screen



Legends of Wrestling

GET US ALL

1 All Wrestlers

To get all those sweaty wrestlers at your disposal, go to the main menu. Press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, Triangle, Triangle, Square.

OLD-SCHOOL PLAYERS

Dory Funk

Beat Career mode using Tony Funk.

Robert Gibson

Beat Tag Tournament.

Jimmy Hart

Beat Career mode using a "Loved" legend.

King Kong Bundy

Complete Career mode and finish the Southeast Territory.

Ricky Morton

Beat Tag Tournament.

Captain Lou Albano

Beat Career mode with a hated wrestler.

Michael and David Von Erich

Beat Career mode with Kevin Von Erich.

Fritz Von Erich

Beat Career mode with Kerry Von Erich.

Mr. Fuji

Win the tag-team belts in Tournament.

Sabu

Beat Career mode with the Sheik.

2 Ivan Koloff

Win a non-tag tournament.

Max Payne

CAN YOU SAY "SWEET?"

While playing the game, pause it at any point and enter these codes to enable them.

3 Invulnerability

L1,L1,L2,L2,R1,R1,R2,R2

NOTE: Invulnerability doesn't always stay on. Watch your health after an auto save. This can get you killed.

4 All Weapons, Full Ammo and Eight Painkillers

Press L1, L2, R1, R2, Triangle, Circle, X, Square.

James Bond in Agent Under Fire

THAT IS HOW IT'S DONE

Complete these levels with the listed point amount or more to open special items.

5 Level 2: 50,000

Golden CH-6

Level 3: 70,000

Infinite missiles for the car

Level 4: 70,000

Golden accuracy

Level 6: 90,000

Golden grenades

Level 7: 100,000

Lotus Esprit

Level 5: 90,000

Golden clip

Level 8: 100,000

Rapid fire

Level 9: 110,000

Golden armor

Level 10: 120,000

Golden bullets

Level 11: 130,000

Regenerating armor

Level 12: 130,000

Unlimited ammo for Golden Gun

HIDDEN WEAPONS

You will need to earn point totals and certain medallions before you can access the following hidden weapons.

Level 1: 50,000 and all 007 medallions

Rocket manor

Level 2: 50,000 and all 007 medallions

Golden Gun for multiplayer

Level 3: 70,000 and all gold medallions

Multiplayer Stealth Bond

Level 4: 70,000 and all 007 medallions

Gravity Boots

Level 5: 90,000 and all 007 medallions

Multiplayer Guard character

Level 6: 90,000 and all 007 medallions

Viper weapon for multiplayer

Level 7: 100,000 and all gold medallions

Alpine Guard character for multiplayer use





TRICKS

TOP 5 TRICKS

(CONTINUED)

3. Half-Life (cont.)

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.

Invisible

Go to the Cheats screen and press Left, Square, Right, Circle, Left, Square, Right, Circle.

Alien Mode

Go to the Cheats screen and press Up, Triangle, Up, Triangle, Up, Triangle.

4. WWF SmackDown! Just Bring It

PS2

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.

5. Doom

Cheat me up, Scottie

Pause the game before entering each cheat.

All weapons, items, keys

Hold L + R and press A, B(2), A(5).

Invincibility

Hold L + R and press B(3), A(5).

Advance levels

Hold L + R and press A, B, A(2), B(2), A(2). You will advance about five levels.

Radiation suit

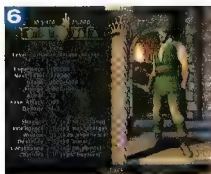
Hold L + R and press B(2), A(6).

God mode

Hold L + R and press A(2), B, A(5).

Berserk mode

Hold L + R and press B, A, B, A(5).



Level 8: Get 100,000 and all 007 medallions

Calypto for multiplayer use

Level 9: 110,000 and all 007 medallions

Open the full arsenal modifier

Level 11: 130,000 and every 007 medallion

Poseidon Guard for multiplayer

Level 12: 130,000 and all 007 medallions

Opens Carrier Guard

Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance

HACK AND SLASH, BABY!

Chop your way through dungeon crawl after dungeon crawl with these tips:

Unlock Gauntlet mode

Finish the game using any difficulty setting.

Unlock Extreme mode

To play on Baldur's Gate's crazy hard setting, you'll have to finish the entire game in Gauntlet mode.

6 Level Up

Press and hold R3, Triangle, R2, L1, and then press Left on the D-pad. This cheat automatically takes you to level 20, and gives you access to all the feats (depending on the current number of slots available). It also gives you level one feats on all of your character's class-dependent feats and an additional 75,000 gold pieces.

7 Invulnerability and Warp

Use anytime during game. Press and hold R2, L1, Left D-pad, Triangle and press the Start button. This cheat when entered will bring up a menu.



Airblade

HERE'S HOW YOU DO IT

Unlock Oscar
Finish the game with an A ranking in all levels.

Unlock JJ Sawyer
Finish the game with an S ranking in all levels.

Unlock Naomi
Finish the game with a B ranking in all levels.

Unlock The Insider
Finish the storage level with a B ranking in all levels.

New Kat outfit
Finish Score Attack mode with high scores in all levels.

New Ethan outfit
Finish Stunt Attack mode.

Batman: Vengeance

8 DARK KNIGHT CHEATS

At the main menu of the game enter these codes. There is no time constraint so take your time. If entered properly, a sound plays.

Cheat mode
L2, R2, L2, R2, Square, Square, Circle, Circle

Infinite Handcuffs
Square, Circle, Square, Circle, L2, R2, R2, L2

Infinite Batlauncher
Circle, Square, Circle, Square,



L1, R1, L2, R2.
Infinite batarangs and electric batarangs
L1, R1, L2, R2.

GAMECUBE

Extreme G3

I HAVE THE NEED TO CHEAT

If you entered the code correctly, a message will appear telling you what you have enabled. Note: All L and R references are to the shoulder buttons, not the directions on the pad.

1 Infinite shields and turbos

At the Press Start screen, press L + R, Z, L + R, Z.

Note: The effects of this code only last for one race and must be re-enabled before the start of the next race.

Infinite ammunition

At the Press Start screen, press L, R, L, R, L + R, Z.

All teams and tracks

At the Press Start screen, press L(2), R(2), Z(2), L + R + Z.

Double prize money

At the main menu, press L, R, Z, L + R.

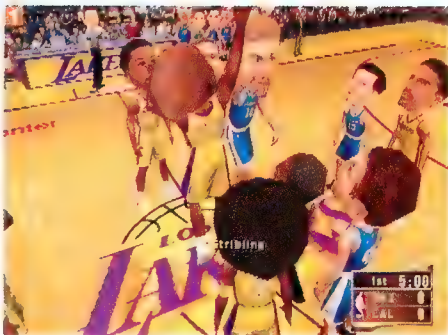
2 Extreme lap challenge

At the main menu, press L, R, L, R, L, R, Z, L + R.

StarCom team

Successfully complete XG career





Ball Perspective
betheball
Cool Looks
radical
Groovy Clothes
theysofive



Men in Black: The Series Crashdown

I GOT THE HOOK-UP

At the password screen, which is the last option at the main menu, enter each of these codes to unlock some goodies.

Turbo

RUNSLIKETHEWIND

Blurry Graphics

MENINBLURRR

All Weapons

MAGICPOCKETS

Sunglasses

TINTEDSPECS

Overhead View

ALISENSEEVIEW

One-Shot Kills

ONESHOTSPLAT

Unlimited Ammo

UFO

mode to unlock the hidden StarCom team.

Quick start

Hold forward during the countdown without touching the accelerator. As soon as "Go" appears, hit the gas button to get a quick boost.



NBA 2K2

BUST OUT SOME HOOPS

Enter these passwords at the Code Selection screen. Please

note that all codes are case-sensitive.

Hidden Team

vc

Extra Players on Hidden Teams

Marrinson (Note: Be sure to enter the Hidden Team code first.)

1 Big Heads

heliumbrain

Monster Players

alienbrain

Infected Players

tvirus

Extra Taunting

sohappy

Freaky Commentary

whatamisaying

GameShark Codes



Grand Theft Auto III

Must Be On [M]

72CB4343FoC15E4F

6F5E501F7FE05A78

Isaac Inf HP

53AFEE8C9FBD0D37

C3B5B9BD7890E182

Isaac Inf PP

D65CD14AA516730D

46DC252AF33185E4

Isaac Max LVl

2CAB311D4773E36C

Isaac Max AT

9650CD4C11F2C6E0

Isaac Max DF

F47C2E06556CAD85

Isaac Max AG

B4584C506BF24634

Isaac Max LK

66387C0E6762569A

Garet Inf HP

6C697CD97F47E001

B6979B9A34A7DB73

Garet Inf PP

47481F9E355400DC

71DF4FC783FB296

Garet Max LVl

5DFDEBF16C5FC71

Garet Max AT

FB38C1E857E55D9F

Garet Max DF

9B041A9432D3899F

Garet Max AG

B5B620F28E9B4647

Garet Max LK

CF7F12EA99DE5647

Jenna Inf HP

E802A1C1BA9AA227

E3D0B7AEF256219D

Jenna Inf PP

AD815B89324D718

41714BA509446A8

Jenna Max LVl

9A36B7AEC03BBC63

Final Fantasy X

Must Be On [M]

0E3C7DF2 1645EBB3

0C08E7C3 F8A9A297

Infinite Gil

3C28CEF7 85F19EFF

Al Behd Translated

3C28CDBF BFFFFF

Super HP/MP For All Characters

3C120FF2FC6FEF2

3C120F32FC6FEF6

Max Stats

3C120727 A4DF0FFF

3C12073B F862CE11

3C120737 2CBDFE0A

3C120747 2CBDFE0E

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TRICKS

Halo's Inner Circle

By Mark MacDonald



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, E-mail 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.



CO-OP STRATEGY:

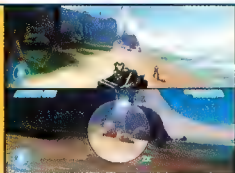
Ah-ah-ah-Staying Alive, Staying Alive:

Stuck in a tough section of a level? Have one player stay way back and the other

player charge. If the attacker dies, you'll respawn back to the hiding player's spot.

Sniping with a cannon:

Have one player zoom in while the other mans the Jackal jeep's rear gun. Use the magnified view to aim the cannon and weaken the alien shields, then have the other player blast 'em in the head!



YOU GOT QUESTIONS, WE GOT ANSWERS:

Q: Can I pilot one of those cool Covenant tanks?

A: No, unlike the human tanks, you can't snipe a Covenant tank pilot separately from the vehicle. And even if you kill all the aliens around a tank before anyone can hop in, you can't sit the empty seat yourself. Damn. **Q:** How can I play *Halo* against the EGM editors?

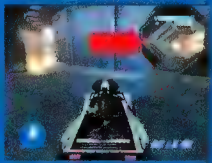
A: First, in case you missed our primer on playing *Halo* online last month, go to www.gamespy.com/support/tunnel_max.html and download the software for your PC. (You'll need an ethernet hub and credit card to charge a \$20 fee to.) Once you hook up, look for the player named—what else?—sushi "EGM" X. We're usually only on once or twice a week for a few hours (almost always close to midnight CST), but if you beat us, you can brag about it to your friends! Maybe they even care! Good luck.

Q: Any other new secrets?

A: Yep! At the very end of the

final level "The Maw," just after the five Hammer dropship can

A: To pack more up crates, look for a funny potty-mouthed alien in a hallway off to the right. Thanks to HaloJake@aol.com.



? METAL GEAR SOLID 2 WATCH

By Mark MacDonald



With this issue we bid a fond adieu to the *MGS2* Watch. Thanks for writing in—see you back for *MGS3*!

IMPORT MGS2:

A few more pics from the Casting Theater mode added to the Japanese version of *MGS2*.



BEFORE YOU PUT AWAY MGS2 FOR GOOD, TRY THIS STUFF:

When you meet back up with Snake near the end of the game, put away your sword and punch him (watch out when he gets back up—he's pissed!) until he passes out, then you can shake him down for his dog tags.

Jason Fiest
jason_leigh55@hotmail.com

In the tanker near the start of the game, in the same room as the Vulcan Raven doll, casting a shadow, close the open locker door and take a picture of the



manly poster there. Turn it into Otacon for some funny comments. (Also, try taking two or three pictures of that poster to really fluster him.)

Max Reichard
phono_max@hotmail.com

Try shooting Fatman with the M9 tranquilizer gun a few times. He'll mock you with comments like "Is that a BB Gun?"

Chris Palmer
Paintballsniper2@aol.com
For our sizeable audience of perverted readers: Equip a girly mag and go into one of the bathroom stalls on Strut C; call the Colonel for a hilarious exchange. Also, try pushing L1 and R1 while Snake is making



his "o" face in the Tanker episode (look at the girly posters in first-person view and call Otacon on the Codec) to hear what he's thinking. Sick!

Finally, this isn't a trick, but we just had to include it. Tarik Zaidi sent us the above image, wondering if it was legit. This, "Mr. Zaidi," is what we in the business call a complete load of horse manure. Nice try!

Smash Bros Academy



By Chris "CJ" Johnston & James "Milkman" Mielke

TRICKS

So you've bought Nintendo's King of the Hill-style brawler but you're having trouble unlocking a few things? Well, we've put together some strategies for beating the hardest challenges, all the while giving you the low-down on a few secrets you probably didn't know about. Who loves you more than we do? If you've got a fancy tip, game setup or anything else *Smash Bros.* related, E-mail it to us at egm@ziffdavis.com (subject: Smash Academy), and you could see it here next month.

SILLY RABBIT TRICKS ARE FOR KIDS

- ★ Once you've unlocked all the secret characters in *SSBM*, you have a 1-in-251 chance of seeing Mew pop out of a Pokéball during battle.
- ★ And after you've unlocked the rest of the secrets, there's a 1-in-251 chance that Celebi will pop out of a Pokéball.
- ★ Once you unlock a secret character or stage, it's added to the list that can be seen during the rolling demo of the game.
- ★ Having problems going yard with the sandbag in the Home

Run Contest? Soften it up with stationary attacks (like Yoshi's down + A in the air) before whacking it with the bat. If you do it right, you should be able to hit it over 1,000 feet no problem.

If you're tough enough to beat event 51 in the Event Match mode (see handy tips below), you'll unlock a Sound Test mode. Now you can listen to those sweet tunes whenever!

EGM MAKES YOUR LIFE EASIER!

BEAT EVENTS 50 AND 51

The final two events will have you your ass if you don't have the right stuff.

Event 50: Great Basketball Match! Master Hand's the right hand; now meet the left! It's hard enough to contend with that damn floating glove at the end of the Classic Match mode, but in Event 50 of the Event Match you gotta take on two hands: Master Hand and Crazy Hand. Beating these guys isn't easy, as they both have

absolutely no reservations about ganging up on you. Using a character who has a good air attack, like Yoshi (or aerial Down+A moves, pretty frisky) or Link (his Up+B move will slice and dice nice). Concentrate on beating Crazy Hand (left) before finishing Master Hand (right).

Event 51: The Ultimate Giga Bowser's Maw and Kamek's Evil! While the formidable Giga Bowser, Mewtwo and Ganondorf may seem impressive, they're hard to beat (especially since each has three lives at his disposal), it can actually be fairly simple. The easiest way to pass this trial is to pick Kirby as your character, waddle to the edge of the stage, and

release your grip and drop off the ledge. Tap X rapidly to float upward and away, then watch in amusement as the mighty Giga Ganondorf and Giga Bowser stumble over their lives in their vain attempt to attack you. Once they've thrown their lives away falling over the edge, leaving you relatively unharmed, you win. The considerably less-militant Mewtwo remains in your way. Beat his landing egg and the fat lady sings. Congratulations!

MORE WAYS TO KICK YOUR FRIEND'S ASS

Pokéball Frenzy

The premise:

- Turn off all items except Pokéballs and change their frequency to very high.

The result:

- Pokémaniacs will be in hog heaven when the fireworks start. With two to four people tossing Pokéballs around, it'll be chuck, duck, and cover as it's anyone's guess what will emerge from every ball thrown. Try turning the damage ratio up for extra flavor.

Bomb-omb Baseball

The premise:

- Turn off all items except Bomb-ombs and Home Run Bats, then set them at their very high frequency.

The result:

- You make like the Babe and try to whack your buddies out of the ring. Of course, you could opt not to take up the wood and just go mano-a-mano with your opponents, using nothing but manly throw moves. But watch out for the added danger of Bomb-ombs.

Smashing Changes

Check out the differences between the U.S. and Japanese versions of *SSBM!* The Japanese Proximity Mine (from *Perfect Dark*) has been replaced in the U.S. version with a motion-sensor Bomb (listed as from a "Top Secret" game). Also, the Topis in the *Ice Climber* stage are seals in the Japanese game, but we got Sasquatch/goat-looking things in the U.S. version.

U.S.

JAPANESE

U.S.

JAPANESE



FINAL WORD

Old Games We'd Like to See Remade...Or Not?



Dean Hager
Managing Editor

Dean: Call me crazy, but I'd love to play an update of the 1985 arcade game *Choplifter*. It wouldn't be that tough to make, either. All it needs are a few decent 3D environments, battle-equipped choppers and some prisoners to rescue. Come on, someone make it.



Crispin Boyer
Features Editor



Crispin: Hey, dumbass, ever hear of *Black Down*?



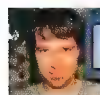
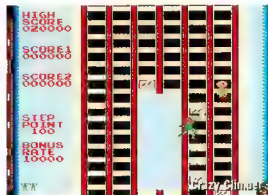
Mark MacDonald
Executive Editor

Dean: What? Hm....

Crispin: Good ol' *Crazy Climber* is ripe for a remake. Pretty much all the systems have dual-analog joypads now to simulate the coin-op's twin-stick climbing controls. And if we learned anything from *MGS2*, it's that modern consoles can render bird turd with scientific precision.



Chris Johnston
News Editor



Jeanne Kim
Associate Editor

Mark: Hey, dumb-freaking-ass, ever hear of *Hyper Crazy Climber*?

Crispin: Oh yeah...wait, no.

Mark: Oh...well, it came out in Japan for the PlayStation a few years back. But since we seem to be wallowing in the ancient old-school for these suggestions, how about *Frontline* (with tanks that control like *Halo's*) or *Commando* (the Capcom game, not the Arnie flick)? And don't make 'em into first-person shooters either. Alas, how I miss the old action/shooting genre!



Craig Kujawa
Sr. Associate Editor

Cyril: Most of the games I hoped would be given the 3D treatment have already been done and turned out like crap. Remember the bad *Contra* and *Castlevania* remakes? How bout the lame 3D *Pac-Man*,

Pong and *Centipede* attempts? I think some games were only meant to exist on the X and Y planes.

Chris: One of my favorite games of the old school that's never gotten a sequel or an update is Atari's *Kangaroo*. Yeah, it was sort of a *Donkey Kong* rip-off, but man, it was fun. Games today don't have enough marsupials in 'em, darnit!



Kraig: I dunno. I'm not into the marsupials anymore. That was so last year. I'd much rather see a *Donkey Kong* remake that actually plays like the classic, instead of an update on a two-bit rip-off like *Kangaroo*.

Jeanne: I'd agree to being dragged by the hair into a cave just to see my favorite Atari caveman in B.C.'s *Quest for Tires* make a 3D comeback.

Kraig: Sounds kinky. But I'd like to see a new *Burgertime*. I've played the old one for ages, and I'm drooling at the prospect of a great 3D burger-cookin' simulator. Maybe McDonald's could use it to train aspiring fryers. If not that, *Herzog Zwei* is another classic that never gets enough attention. Some hackers are prettifying it up for the PC, but I'd like to see the real deal with all the fixings.



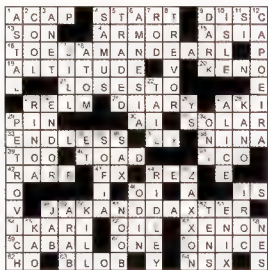
Che: Man, forget about your damn hamburgers. What we need is a 3D *Contra* game worthy of its name. The *Metal Slug* games are nice and all, but I need some of that Hans-and-Frans-in-the-jungle-armed-with-spread-guns action right about now.

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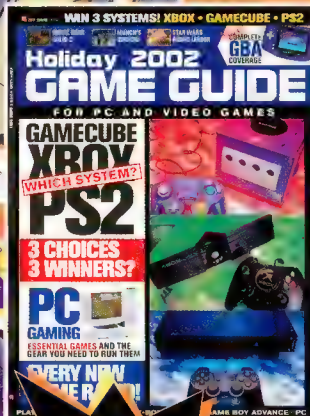
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www.eidos.com
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www.ea.com 85, 100-101
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www.encoresoftware.com
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www.fullsail.com
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www.lucasarts.com
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www.namco.com
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 114-115, 160
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 19, 40-44, 48-49, 60-61, 65, 68-69, 77-78, 158-
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Answers to crossword puzzle on p. 46

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Mortal Kombat V

It's been nearly five years since *Mortal Kombat* left arcade goers feeling black and blue all over. Next month, *EGM* gives you the exclusive juicy details on *Mortal Kombat V*, the series' glorious return to the fighting-game arena. Can *MKV* pull off the fatality it needs to put the franchise back on top? We drop by developers Midway to find out the hard way. Also be sure to peep our Gamers' Choice Awards for the best of 2001!



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*All editorial content is subject to change.

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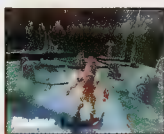
The Official U.S. *PlayStation Magazine* will have an exclusive look at the next step in Lara Croft's evolution. And look for continuing coverage of *Final Fantasy X* and a comprehensive hardware roundup. Also featured: *Maximo* and *State of Emergency*

GAMENOW

March 2K2

On sale Feb. 19

- **III Contest**
- **Wreckless**
- **Sled Storm 2**
- **Mario Advance 2**
- **Shadow Hearts**



Sega strikes back in 2002

Next month *GameNOW* takes a look at some of the best Sega has to offer in 2002. Look for previews on *Virtua Fighter 4* (PS2), *Gun Valkyrie* (Xbox) and more. Cozy up to reviews, where you'll find verdicts on *Maximo*, *Blood Wake*, *Kobe Bryant Courtside* and *NBA 2K2*. On the strategy side, we'll throw some *Jak & Daxter* tips your way. Don't miss 20+ pages of the latest codes and tips.



COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

March 2K2 Unreal II

On sale Feb. 5



Reviews

- **Ghost Recon**
 - **Return to Castle Wolfenstein**
 - **Battle Realms**
 - **Wizardry 8**
 - **IL-2 Sturmovik**
- #### Demos
- **BlackWarrior 4: Mech Knight**
 - **Aliens vs. Predator 2**
 - **Battle Realms**
 - **Myth III**

The first-ever hands-on look at the most spectacular first-person shooter the folks at CIGW have ever seen. Don't miss their gameplay impressions and new exclusive screenshots of the game that could redefine the genre. This jam-packed issue will feature more than 20 reviews, an exclusive first look at *SWAT 4*, and a hands-on preview of *Heroes of Might & Magic IV*. Plus: nominees for our 2001 Games of the Year. Be here for all this and more!

JAK AND DAXTER

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EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Violence

NAUGHTY DOG

PlayStation 2



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